



The Australian Journal of **INDIGENOUS EDUCATION**

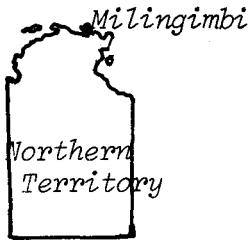
This article was originally published in printed form. The journal began in 1973 and was titled *The Aboriginal Child at School*. In 1996 the journal was transformed to an internationally peer-reviewed publication and renamed *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*.

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ACROSS AUSTRALIA



FROM TEACHER TO TEACHER

ALL'S WELL AT MILINGIMBI

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One day a teacher came to me declaring he was totally unable to teach oral English to his Grade 1 class. A young teacher in trouble. Of course I must give a demonstration lesson. I sat the children on chairs in a circle and started out with the patter, "I'm David, you're Fred", "I'm David, you're Jane", "I'm David, you're Bill". As we proceeded I noticed one lad, even by this early stage, was attempting hand-stands on his chair. "Come on. Stop that nonsense and sit down", I growled, after my quieter pleadings had been ignored. The little five-year-old, knowing virtually no English, stopped, looked me straight in the eye, then grinning, gave himself three light pats on the bottom and sat down. I got out of that lesson as fast as I could, hoping the teacher was satisfied with the demonstration. He wasn't.

Several years elapsed. We all knew that what we were doing or were supposed to be doing wasn't having much effect, but we didn't know what to do about it. One day it all came home to me. I went up to see a teacher in his room and overheard the following exchange: "O.K. kids, put your books away, we're going to do oral English." There was some rattling and shuffling as books were stuffed in desks and rulers were dropped on the floor, then the lesson started:

"This is a pencil".

"This is a pencil", twenty voices chimed.

"This is a rubber".

"This is a rubber", they sang back again.

And so on, *ad nauseam*. I thought to myself, "The best part of that lesson was the 'O.K. kids, put your books away, we're going to do oral English'."

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Then one day, *All's Well* hit Milingimbi. The following is a report on how we introduced this teaching method through adult education, with some observations on the effectiveness of the course in general.

DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSE

1. The Need for a New Approach to Oral English

For some time we had been concerned about the traditional means of approaching the teaching of oral English as used in Aboriginal schools and Aboriginal adult education centres in the Northern Territory. The majority of these courses had been devised according to the traditional teaching principles. By this we mean "the right sequencing of phonetic, grammatical and lexical elements according to alleged degrees of difficulty, usefulness, teachability and range" (Silva, 1975). It may be argued that the authors of these courses (for example, Gloria Tate) never intended that their material should become the basis for a rather dull series of drills. Nonetheless, more often than not, this is what happens in the classroom and the material, by its very formal and highly structured nature, encourages teachers to take an uninspiring approach. Very few teachers with whom we had been associated had felt their use of the traditional approaches to be effective. More often than not, however, this had been the only approach they knew and they had simply struggled on as best they could. Many teachers will admit that the 45 minutes of oral English patterns, drills and complementary activities they supposedly taught, rapidly shrivelled away to ten minutes per day at the most when they were left to their own devices.

Other problems that confronted us were specifically related to adults. We wanted to find a course that would cater for a wide range of students. We were aware that motivation for learning and the approach of adults to learning were extremely important factors that needed to be taken into account and be understood. We also felt a need for a course that suited Aboriginal learning styles. That is, one that was oral rather than written, that maximised the strengths in the area of drama and mime, that was context specific and authentic in itself and one that allowed for a process of trial-and-error to take place. Our decision to run some kind of new course was influenced, too, by the often expressed wishes of Yolngu* people at Milingimbi to learn to speak English. The traditional courses had been tried with adults and had failed. We needed something different, something that at least looked as though it might meet some of

* Yolngu : the Aboriginal people (pronounced yule-ngoo).

the conditions outlined above. *All's Well* was our choice.

2. Structuro-Global Audio-Visual (S.G.A.V.) Methodology

All's Well is a S.G.A.V. course. The S.G.A.V. method of teaching foreign languages was first developed in France. As the name suggests, it uses audio-visual aids to present language through total global structures.

The normal commonsense approach has always been to present language starting with simple patterns and gradually increasing their semantic and/or grammatical complexity. S.G.A.V. methodology rejects this simple to complex approach. The emphasis is placed upon initial global perceptions of language and on personal, progressive assimilation of speech structures. The method is based on the following principles:

a) *Priority is given to oral language.* The written text often has a negative effect on the language learner as the familiar alphabetical letters, when seen in the foreign language, tend to trigger automatic articulatory responses from the mother tongue. The written text also tends to take the learner away from total global perceptions of language and thus delays the grammatical and phonological conditioning that is the aim of initial language learning.

b) *Everyday spoken language must be used and learnt in real life situations.* The S.G.A.V. method is truly situational. It presents everyday situations and structures that the learner is most likely to need. The learner participates in the situations through the audio-visual method and responds verbally to those situations.

c) *Priority is given to phonic work.* One of the early tasks in language learning must be the acquisition of the phonetic system of that language. When we hear another language spoken we instinctively filter it through the phonological structures of our first language. We thereby tend to misinterpret any new sound sequence that is not the same as in the mother tongue. We do this by interpreting the new sounds as a combination of possible sounds in the mother tongue. The S.G.A.V. method introduces new sounds in such a way as to make it easier to assimilate the phonetic system of the new language.

d) *Correction should be through the ear, rather than through the mouth, hence correction of sound production is based on intonation and rhythm in the global sentence.* For anyone who wishes to learn a language, automatic reactions and reflexes have to be created. To do this the S.G.A.V. method uses all language resources - breathing,

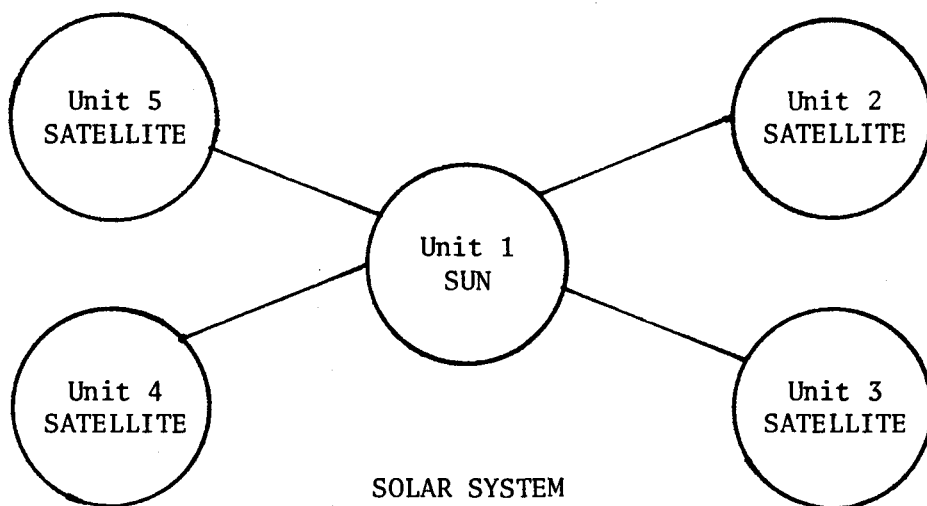
facial expressions, gestures, body movement, pauses, sentence stress and length, intonation and rhythm. Intonation and rhythm in particular are emphasised as main elements of the phonological structures that are being created. For the beginner these are the way through to the correct pronunciation of a sound pattern.

e) *Progression is a personal thing which happens as an individual develops. It is not dictated by the person who structures the course.* S.G.A.V. methodology stresses that language acquisition must be approached not only from the point of view of the language, but also from the point of view of the learner. The learner's psychological needs, the degree of resistance he brings, his ability to work in groups with others - all these and other personal factors must be considered. Different individuals will progress at different rates. The S.G.A.V. method allows for this and does not try to fit all learners into the same pattern.

f) *Language learning is global.* Students do not analyse the new language. Rather the phonological, semantic and grammatical structures are taught globally. Real, total, complex and meaningful language is presented to the student from the beginning. From a global understanding the student comes to an appreciation of the structures of the new language.

3. The *All's Well* Courses

All's Well I and *All's Well II* are commercial English language courses that use advanced S.G.A.V. methodology. *All's Well I* is a language course for beginners. It is made up of four groups of units called 'solar systems'. Each of these four solar systems contains five units of work. A 'sun' unit and four 'satellites'.



The sun unit is the central unit of work for each solar system. The student is presented with rich, complex language through audio-visual situations. From this total presentation comes a global perception of speech. The material in the sun unit is then re-presented and re-worked through the satellite units. Gradually the student assimilates from the material those elements and speech structures that he requires for his own immediate language needs. The course stresses natural dialogues. Before the student produces language, however, he is exposed to it, hears it and 'feels' it through a variety of techniques. For example, gestures and body movements, tapping out rhythms and reproducing intonation patterns precede the spoken word.

All's Well II is an intermediate language course. It aims at giving the students a means of expressing their opinions and feelings with greater subtlety and precision. The course is made up of eight units, each one covering a different topic or notion. The notions are: advertising; business; employment; the mass media; facing the foreign reality (coming to terms with the new society); past and present; crime; you now. These eight units use the appropriate type of language for each theme. Each unit has two audio-visual situations which are used to create an atmosphere. Thus two facets of the same theme are presented to the students.

4. *All's Well* in Operation

All's Well was originally run at Milingimbi on an experimental basis. We decided to offer two courses - *All's Well I* for women in a three-hour morning session and *All's Well II* for men in a three-hour afternoon session. The teacher, Ms Eve Ogonoski-Rebane, was one of the course developers for *All's Well II*. She played a major role in the success of the courses at Milingimbi. (*All's Well* emphasises the teacher's role as group leader and animator. Special training courses are offered in the *All's Well* approach.) A typical *All's Well* session contains some or all of the following activities:

- a. *Situation.* This is presented through film strips and sound recordings which attempt to convey the characters' emotions, feelings and psychological depth. The situations are lively, and they help to stimulate natural dialogue. The material is used in a variety of ways - the intonation patterns are listened to, speech rhythms tapped out, the dialogues mimed with and without the sound and the situations, or parallel ones, are acted out by the students.

- b. *Listening Tests.* These "have a listen in" tapes aim to give the students practice in comprehending spoken English. There is no visual support and no response is required. The students simply listen to the tapes several times during a session. Gradually they come to a global understanding of the text without analysis or translation. If the text is part of a sun unit, it will be rich and full. The situations and "have a listen in" tapes in the satellite units are much easier and re-work the material in the sun unit.
- c. *Silent Filmstrips and Language Games.* Silent filmstrips are included to allow for creativity and spontaneity. The students are encouraged to express themselves freely, drawing on the stock of structures already acquired. Language games help the students avoid boredom, let the students express themselves in the situations in which they are interested and, through language use, help consolidate knowledge in a relaxed way. A typical silent film for *All's Well I* shows a man in a dreary office transported through his daydreaming to a sunny beach, then being rudely brought back to reality by the arrival of his boss.
- d. *Reading and Writing in Situations.* Reading and writing are introduced in the latter half of *All's Well I*. Reading is always linked to listening and often to writing as well. The reading and writing activities are directly related to the material in the situations. For example, in the unit in *All's Well II* on advertising, the students write their own advertisements.

To run the programs a minimum of equipment is needed: a reel-to-reel tape recorder, a filmstrip projector and a screen. There are excellent teacher's handbooks for both courses and student workbooks which should be regarded as essential. One piece of equipment that is desirable but not essential is called a Suvag. This is basically a filtering device which is interposed between the tape recorder and its speaker. The Suvag filters out some sounds and heightens others. It is used to let students hear more clearly the intonation patterns and rhythms of the language.

AIMS OF THE *ALL'S WELL* COURSE

Our aims in experimenting with the *All's Well* courses were:

1. To try the S.G.A.V. method at Milingimbi and see if it would -
 - a) cater for the different levels in ability within any reasonable sized group;
 - b) cater for the different learning styles of yolngu people;
 - c) cater for the different motivations, approaches and language needs of adults;
 - d) cater for semi-literate adults; and
 - e) improve the learners' capacity to use spoken English.
2. To provide a general stimulus and resource for teachers grappling with the problems of teaching English as a second language.
3. To convince yolngu men of the efficacy of adult education by providing a course which gave immediate results obvious to the learner and which fulfilled personal educational goals.
4. To investigate the suitability of the semantic approach to teaching English to yolngu children. (A semantic approach, as opposed to a linguistic approach, is one in which the subject matter is chosen on the basis of its meaning rather than its linguistic structure).

EVALUATION OF THE COURSE

1. Introduction

The *All's Well* courses are somewhat open-ended in that the amount of time needed to cover a course is flexible. This can vary from around 120 hours through to 300 hours or more depending on the depth to which each unit is taken.

At Milingimbi we ran *All's Well I* and *All's Well II* for 80 hours each over a period of six weeks for just over 30 students. This was insufficient time to fully cover either course. It was quite enough time, however, for us to observe the courses in progress and to evaluate their effectiveness.

At the commencement of the program we considered various approaches to evaluation. We decided that the most practical approach was to observe the course throughout and to continually record all relevant behaviour of the students. The main observer was to be a person who had a thorough knowledge of the local situation and who

had worked in this area with some of the students before. Many of the sessions were taped for sound and both movie film and video-tape records were made. This gave us a record of individuals speaking at length their personally constructed English, examples of spontaneous utterance and examples of dialogues. We also collected examples of writing done during the course.

2. Observed Behaviour Changes in the Students

The most obvious change in the students was their increased level of confidence in using English. This applied to virtually every student. Many of them, particularly the women, came into the courses with a basic stock of English language, but language that they were not able to use for meaningful communication. By the end of the course virtually all students were noticeably more able to attach English to their emotions and behaviour. It was in the affective domain where results were first evident. People who previously never attempted to use English were confident and able to express themselves in the second language.

It was felt that many of the students when they entered the course had a block towards English, a certain negativeness. Through the varied approach, completely different from anything encountered before, they began to really *hear* English again. Their attitudes towards using the language changed, it took on an acceptability and they began using the skills they already possessed and built upon them. In a very real sense they had been freed from their own restrictions and hopefully will go on to learn more English.

Some of the many observed examples are:

- . One of the women had been a health worker at the hospital for over ten years. In all that time she had never said more than a few shy words, usually in the vernacular, to the sister-in-charge, who was astonished when she started speaking directly to her in English in a much more outgoing manner.
- . During a church service conducted in both English and Gupapuyngu, the minister asked the mixed yolngu and balanda* congregation a question in English. There was a pause,

* Balanda = Europeans. (The a's are pronounced like the 'u' in but).

followed by a strong, confident "Yes", from one of the course participants, when normally only balanda would have responded. This was an indication that the 45-year-old woman had followed the English sermon sufficiently well to respond at the correct time. She had not simply ignored the English part of the service.

- . a 40-year-old woman who was a part-time instructor in adult education at the centre had shown a strong reluctance to speak in English, even during traditional lessons in English which she had unfailingly attended. All her conversations with the adult educator had been in Djambampuyngu but by the third week of the *All's Well* course she was speaking spontaneously to her in English and making casual asides to other students in English. This was indeed a breakthrough.
- . After the third week of the course the teacher began inviting the women in the class to her house in pairs. It was noticeable that they were not bringing younger yolngu relatives with them to interpret for them and they participated informally in sustained conversations in English of over one hour's duration.

It became obvious to observers of the courses that many of the students were learning how to learn. Students readily learned to tap out the language patterns and speech rhythms as a formal exercise and then were seen using this device of their own accord later in the course. Much learning took place during the teabreaks and during informal sessions. The processes used in the course were observed being used outside of the course as the following examples illustrate:

- . Two of the men attempted to make a radio broadcast in English on a cassette recorder at home after the session on broadcasting styles of English speech.
- . One student introduced the nightly pictures in the lavish language that he had been using in one section of the course. This same person, when a tea break was announced, spontaneously announced and encouraged people to have tea and biscuits in the manner previously studied in a unit on advertising.
- . A teaching assistant who often had long discussions with the school principal, after attending the course began taking notes of these discussions, something he had never done in an association of over eight years.

One of the most striking features of the course was the enjoyment the participants derived from it. The attendance figures, when contrasted with those of all previous attempts to hold language courses, showed clearly the continuing appeal of the course. The fact that people came and kept on coming was a significant achievement in itself.

3. Strengths of the Method

a. *Group Formation.* (Refer to Tables I and II for statistics on course participants.)

If effective learning is to take place within a group situation, that group must be carefully structured. Our experience has been that for yongu adults, common educational goals have not been a sufficient basis for group formation.

Previously, for a language course, we would not have grouped together people who had been to school with those who had not. Nor would we have grouped together older and younger people. Traditional courses required that students be at approximately the same level of ability or achievement. In our endeavours to see that we brought together people of the same age, the same sex, similar abilities and those who were acceptable to each other for social reasons, we often finished up with groups as small as two students. It is obviously not feasible to run a major course for such small groups.

The *All's Well I* group comprised 16 women with ages ranging from 25 to 49 years. Abilities in English varied from total illiteracy in English through to several who could write a comprehensible letter in both English and the vernacular and who could carry on limited conversations in English.

The *All's Well II* group comprised 15 men with ages ranging from 18 to 43 years. Abilities in English ranged from a Grade 1 - 2 level of reading and oral English to one young man who spoke and wrote fluently in both English and the vernacular.

Both courses functioned well with these larger groups. That students were at opposite ends of the achievement scale did not seem to matter greatly. People were able to take from

Table 1 : *All's Well I Group - Women*

Student	Age	Job	Schooling	Previous Ad. Ed.	Attended Hrs/81	Literacy Level
1	40	P.T.Lit. Teacher	-	F.T. 2½ yrs	78	Reads vernacular
2	43	H.D.	-	F.T. 2½ yrs	81	Reads vernacular
3	40	H.D.	-	F.T. 2½ yrs	81	Reads vernacular
4	37	Domestic	-	1 hr/day 2 yrs	63	5/6 vernacular reading course
5	29	Cleaner	Primary	Occas. courses	78	Reads and writes simple English
6	35	H.D.	2 yrs as teenager	H.T. 1 yr	81	5/6 vernacular reading course
7	25	Women's Centre Trainee	Primary	H.T. 1 yr	81	Reads and writes simple English and vernacular
8	33	Store Domestic	4 yrs as teenager	1 hr/day 1 yr	78	Reads and writes little English, reads vernacular
9	35	H.D.	2 yrs as teenager	H.T. 1 yr	51	2/3 vernacular reading course
10	34	Cleaner	-	1 hr/day 2 mths	75	Illiterate in English and vernacular
11	31	Health Worker	v.little	1 hr/day 1 yr	81	5/6 vernacular reading course
12	49	P.T.Trad. Studies Teacher	-	1½ hrs/day 1½ yrs	75	1/3 vernacular reading course
13	40	H.D.	1-2 yrs as teenager	Occas. courses	63	Reads and writes vernac- ular, reads English
14	42	Teaching Asst.	v.little	1 hr/day 1 yr	81	Reads and writes vernac- ular and simple English
15	32	P.T.Vern. Lit. Teacher	Primary	F.T. 1½ yrs	81	Reads and writes vernac- ular and simple English
16	34	H.D.	v.little	H.T. 1 yr	45	1/3 vernacular reading course

H.D. Home Duties; F.T. Full Time; P.T. Part Time; H.T. Half Time

TABLE 2 : *All's Well II* Group - Men

Student	Age	Job	Schooling	Previous Ad. Ed.	Attended Hrs/81	Literacy Level
1	33	Teaching Asst.	Primary	Short course vern.Lit.	43	Reads and writes simple English
2	37	Motor Mech.	4-5 yrs	-	48	Reads and writes simple English
3	32	Store Asst.	Primary	Short courses maths.	46	Fairly good English
4	27	Welder	Primary	-	75	Reads and writes simple English
5	18	Mech.	Post- primary	-	75	Very simple English
6	30	Builder	Primary	-	36	Very simple English
7	27	Mech.	Primary	-	75	Reads and writes simple English
8	20	Cashier	Post- primary	-	30	Fairly good English
9	25	Canteen Asst.	Post- primary	-	48	Reads and writes good English
10	18	Builder	Post- primary	-	60	Reads and writes simple English
11	19	-	Post- primary	Driver ed.	42	Good, fluent in English
12	40	Teacher	3 yrs as teenager	Short courses maths, English vern.	55	Reads and writes vern- acular and simple English
13	43	Pastor	3-4 yrs as teenager	Short courses English writing	55	Reads and writes simple English
14	36	Store Asst.	Primary	-	66	Reads and writes simple English
15	21	Lit. Worker	Post- primary	-	36	Good, fluent in English

the course material according to their individual levels of perception, comprehension, need and readiness to accommodate it. There was no embarrassment. They were able to retire back into the group if they chose. The group was supportive of weaker members. Our instructor commented on how naturally and quickly the groups formed and started working, in comparison with groups organised according to 'western' oriented patterns that she had previously worked with.

A group of 16 students seemed to be approaching the maximum a teacher could handle satisfactorily. At the other end of the scale, less than five would be inadequate as there is much sub-group work requiring at least two groups of three people each.

Consideration was given to conducting two mixed groups but the yolngu made it clear that this was not desirable to them, so the idea was not pursued. It was interesting to note that the four men who dropped out of the course were those who had no close family ties within the group. It is hard to prove the importance for yolngu of working with close relatives, but they themselves automatically choose to do so when the choice is theirs.

It is important to emphasise that the *All's Well* courses still require carefully structured groups. However, they do allow for a far wider range of ability within the groups than do most traditional methods. Overall, group work as opposed to individual work seemed to suit the yolngu. The design of the courses for group work proved particularly successful in this respect.

b. *Aboriginal Learning Styles.* Recent research at Milingimbi (Harris, 1977) has documented details of the learning styles of yolngu people. Briefly, yolngu were found to learn:

- 1) Through observation and imitation rather than through verbal instruction, be it oral or written.
- 2) Through personal trial and error.
- 3) Through real life performance rather than from set practice.

- 4) Through context-specific skills and situations rather than from abstract situations attempting to teach context-free principles.
- 5) Through being person-oriented rather than information-oriented.
- 6) Through successive approximation to an efficient end product.

Taking each of these points in turn, *All's Well* can be shown to be a far more suitable approach for teaching English as a second language to Yolngu students than any other traditional method. It encourages close observation and imitation by the students. There are long periods for perception and lots of listening for passive assimilation. The students listen to words and sentence patterns that are filtered through the Suvag. They hear intonation patterns, they tap out the rhythm, they try to imitate the intonation, and so on. Trial-and-error is encouraged. Any response is encouraged. The students learn through successive approximations. They are not expected to produce immediately, nor to be 100% the first time. The situations attempt to be as authentic as possible. The language used is *real* language that can be used in everyday life. Many of the activities revolve around interchanges and dialogues between the students. In other words, real life performances. The skills learnt are very much context-specific. There is no formal grammar lesson where attempts are made to teach underlying principles. Rather it is believed that the students, through trial-and-error, structure the language for themselves as they use it and learn how it works. The role of the teacher is still very important to the success of the courses, but there is a far greater freedom for the teacher to interact with the students and to relate to them on a personal basis. There is no 'perfect' response. Each student responds in his own way and at his own level. This may mean only one word initially, but slowly a stock of language builds up that can be used.

- c. *Appropriateness for Adults.* There were a number of reasons given by people for their attendance at the courses. Many of them were simply frustrated with their own lack of basic education. Most of the women and some of the men were trying to acquire skills in English necessary for them to function as fully independent persons in the community. Others were primarily trying to improve their job skills. They saw English

as important to their work and recognised their inadequacies in this area. (For example, such people as health workers, teachers and shop assistants.)

Probably all participants were curious about the course and were motivated to attend by a desire to be 'involved' along with others. For some of the more advanced students this may have been the dominant motivation at the start of the course. Over the six week period other factors must have come into play.

One of the most important motivating factors was the self-evaluation built into the courses. The 'have a listen in' tapes served this function. These were tapes that the students listened to but were not required to respond to in any way. As the courses progressed and they came to understand more and more of the content, they realised that they were making progress. This ability on the part of each student to recognise progress within himself was, we believe, a very important motivating factor for further learning.

The approach of adults to the learning process is different from that of children in school. The adults came into the program as individuals or in small groups of close relations. Children at school find themselves in a class with their peers without very much individual choice involved.

In yolngu society it is important not to show oneself as not knowing or to put oneself in a position where others may possibly make fun of a lack of knowledge or ability. In learning situations adults as well as children tend to hold back, if they feel unsure, in order to avoid embarrassment. The emphasis of the *All's Well* method on private accommodation and perception rather than on public demonstration, was particularly suitable in this way. The use of drama and mime was an effective way of distracting some students from personal embarrassment because, in dramatic situations, an individual tends to adopt a different personality and lose himself in role-playing.

The content of the course was also suitable for adults because the notions that the courses were structured around were taken from an adult world rather than from a child's world. For example, finding your way around town, conflict relationships,

getting a job, the foreign reality, opinion and personal thought, justice, the business world, the media.

- d. *The Problem of Illiteracy.* *All's Well* is primarily an oral English course. *All's Well I* does not depend on literacy skills. Progress in reading and writing does not effect progress in oral skills. After situation six of the twenty situations in *All's Well I*, a number of reading and writing passages were introduced which were taught as pre-reading and pre-writing with this particular group of students.

Both *All's Well I* and *All's Well II* could be used with literate students who would draw quite differently from the resource materials. The point is that reading and writing in *All's Well I* were an extension and an added avenue for oral/aural skills, not a pre-requisite on which language depended. Reading and writing sections of the courses were not essential to their being taught. They could be altered or omitted. This demonstrated the flexibility of the course materials.

It is important that the course was not structured around simple sentences that were used for *teaching* either oral/aural or literacy skills. Rather, the course was structured from the students' point of view around notions with which they could empathise and to which they could respond orally. Reading as input, and writing as output, were seen as much more difficult and therefore as much later extensions of aural and oral skills respectively.

The reading and writing passages in *All's Well I* form a good basis for further work in these skills. We are not convinced, however, that the course would teach illiterate people to read and write. Our experiment was too short to allow any student to cover all units, so we are not in a position to make a valid judgment.

What we were impressed with was the ways in which *All's Well I*, in line with its total philosophy, taught the function of literary English as a meaningful communication. This was also brought into *All's Well II*. Semi-literate people, through this course, saw a purpose in reading and writing - for example the note taking, the recording of songs and letter writing. The process of reading and writing took on meaning.

4. Adult Education for Men

Adult education courses for men have never been successful at Milingimbi, possibly because they have been identified in their minds with 'school' and so with 'children's business'. When *All's Well* was being planned, we first thought we would try mixed groups, because at least the women could be relied upon not to drop out.

For social reasons, mixed groups were not acceptable so, with some trepidation, we decided to offer an *All's Well II* course to the men. We were not unduly surprised when over 20 men expressed an interest, but we were surprised when they kept on attending. Their drop-out rate was higher and attendance rate lower than for the women's group. The reasons for this include the fact that:

- a. In yolngu society men traditionally hold positions of power and importance. They do not see themselves as 'bound' in the sense that many women do.
- b. Since the school began in the early 1950's it was the boys who were able to continue their education whereas the girls tended to leave school early to marry and have children. Adult education presents the women with a second chance, but need for further education is not strongly felt by the men.
- c. Other commitments such as conferences, council meetings and work prevented some men from attending regularly.

The response to the course showed us that the men do want further education. The attendance rate speaks for itself. During the course and after it, many men expressed a desire to undertake further study with English.

5. Attendance Patterns

The pattern of attendance is shown in Tables I and II. The attendance of the women was much better than for any previous adult education course conducted for them. This, despite family responsibilities, children at home during school holidays, illness and the call of the card games. One woman suffered fractured ribs in an accident but missed only two days in spite of the fact that it was painful to move about.

Referring to Table II, the men were, in many cases, in responsible jobs from which it was difficult for them to be always free, although it was the council's resolve to free men as much as possible for the purpose of attending the course. Other distractions were also apparent, but not to the usual extent. On pay days there were requests for an extended tea break rather than absences for the whole afternoon. Habitual drinking bouts were a distraction but did not cause complete drop-out by any. Pressures of work, particularly by those with responsible jobs on which the running of the community depended, prevented regular attendance by some. The following is an example of how the people generally felt about the courses:

Three of the men who participated in the course were approached individually. Each one was asked how he liked the course. Each responded in the vernacular, "Good!". It was suggested to them that the course was just 'so so', in an attempt to draw out further comment. All replied emphatically, "No, it was a very good course, I liked it very much." One went on to say how he could really feel himself learning - that, from a man who already had an average grasp of English and could communicate in it.

ALL'S WELL FOR THE CLASS TEACHER

The *All's Well* courses proved to be a tremendous impetus to all members of the school staff to re-examine their oral English courses. By comparison with *All's Well*, the average classroom lessons were dull and uninteresting. The school as a whole followed one of the standard traditional courses. Most teachers admitted that they followed it under sufferance, only because they knew of no better method. In the months following the initial *All's Well* experiment the teachers started to build up a professional library of books and articles on the Teaching of English as a Second Language. Most of them agreed that their present approaches were archaic and as a first step they acquainted themselves with current developments on approaches and theories of language learning.

Some teachers began using a course called *Come and Play* which incorporates tapes and filmstrips and uses S.G.A.V. methodology. It is an earlier course, however, and not as rich and varied as *All's Well*. Other teachers began devising their own courses using S.G.A.V. principles. Large sequence pictures were used instead of filmstrips and the dialogues were created and taped by the teachers.

It should be noted that the *All's Well* courses are not intended for young children. The notions are adult in content, and not suited to primary grade use. Several post-primary groups were taken through *All's Well I*. They coped with the material and enjoyed the course. However, the main input *All's Well* had on teaching in the school was that it stimulated teachers to re-examine their own work and to seek out or devise more appropriate materials and methods which were usually based on S.G.A.V. principles.

CONCLUSION

All's Well stresses the recognition of the students as a resource. Each student is an active participant in the learning experience. Too much emphasis has been placed in the past on the 'teachability' of material and its 'accessibility' to the teacher rather than on its 'learnability' by the students and its 'acceptability' to them. In Vygotsky's (1962) words:

The learner must be an active processor of information; a person taking initiatives, and not a passive absorber of content.

S.G.A.V. courses try to maximise the chance of this happening. Our previous approaches, stultifying in the extreme, all but denied the chance of this happening in the classroom.

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