

April 12, 2001

Mr. Ian Lyons, President  
Applied Scholastics International  
7060 Hollywood Boulevard  
Hollywood, CA 90028

Dear Ian,

This review of Mr. L. Ron Hubbard's philosophy on teaching and learning is based on my personal study and application of his learning methodologies as well as my observation of the results of applying such methodologies in my son and in my students. Mr. Hubbard's writings and lectures on educational technology cover every facet of teaching and learning, including the learner's ethics and attitude, as well as the ability and interpersonal skills of the teacher. But my comments are limited to the fundamentals of studying prescribed by Mr. Hubbard. Specifically, they address the difficulties caused by misunderstood words, by employment of unattainable learning gradients, and by the absence of physical representations of objects and concepts being studied. My confidence in the validity of Mr. Hubbard's basic study methods is unshakable. It is also refreshing to observe that contemporary successful learning methods incorporate and recommend more and more techniques rooted in Mr. Hubbard's views about studying.

**Significance of understood words in learning:** Mr. Hubbard emphatically claims that confusion and inability to learn comes after going over a word that the person did not understand. He also claims that an undefined word can even cause a person to give up studying and abandon a subject. I did not have to take these claims at face value. A semi-casual observation of my students over time validated these claims beyond doubt. Time and again, I have observed altering student facial expressions upon their encountering a phrase in my lectures that they did not understand. Recently, I was lecturing about product costing in class and students were enthusiastically attentive and taking notes until they noticed the phrase "Lumber and pulp mill" on the displayed lecture outline. The shift in their interest level could not be ignored. They had stopped taking notes, although I had made important comments for nearly two minutes. Knowing Mr. Hubbard's study technology, I glanced at the screen and noticed the "killer" phrase. I asked if anyone knew what the word "pulp" meant? None of the 20 students in class had a correct definition for the word. Fortunately, all my students are required to bring a dictionary to class. As soon as they looked up the meaning of pulp (a shapeless mass) in the dictionary, their eyes lit up and we could continue with the lecture.

Following is a quote from "Guided Reading," a 1996 book by Irene C. Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell ([http://www.crystalsprings.com/shopsite\\_sc/store/html/5035W4.htm](http://www.crystalsprings.com/shopsite_sc/store/html/5035W4.htm)):

Vocabulary is integral to reading. If children do not understand the meaning of the words they read, the process becomes meaningless decoding. No student should ever have to struggle along producing nonsense. As teachers, we want students to understand a wide range of words. An important part of comprehending is quick, fluent access to word meanings.

**Irene C. Fountas** is a professor at Lesley College in Cambridge, Massachusetts. A classroom teacher and language arts specialist in the public schools for more than twenty years, Fountas is also the recipient of several awards. She is the author of numerous books and articles including [\*Guided Reading: Good First Teaching for All Children\*](#) (Heinemann, 1996), [\*The Essentials of Guided Reading\*](#) (Heinemann, 1997), and [\*Help America Read: A Handbook for Volunteers\*](#).

More and more educators are recognizing the dictionary as an essential learning tool. Following is a quote from *Oxford Student's Dictionary: Book by A.S. Hornby*:

This dictionary is aimed at intermediate students who need to extend their vocabulary and develop their reference skills. This second edition has been revised and updated in line with the view of an ELT dictionary as a learning tool and an aid to writing and speaking as well as comprehension. ...

**Importance of employing attainable learning gradients:** "A gradient is a gradual approach to something taken step by step, level by level, each step or level being, of itself, easily attainable -- so that finally, quite complicated and difficult activities can be achieved with relative ease. ..." From *Basic Study Manual* by L. Ron Hubbard.

According to Mr. Hubbard, confusion results when one hits too steep a gradient in studying a subject. When a student encounters difficulty in performing task "B" pursuant to completing a prerequisite task "A," that student did not really understand something about task "A," but jumped to studying task "B," that represented too steep a learning gradient for the student. But the true difficulty really rests with the tail end of studying task "A" which he felt he understood. In one of the courses I teach we cover computer based accounting applications. The course content follows a smooth learning gradient whereby students are expected to progress uniformly with other students. Nevertheless, inasmuch as students in the course come with diverse academic backgrounds and learning abilities, inevitably, some students become briefly frustrated and unable to continue their work. In discussions with colleagues I have come to learn that some faculty members give up and blame the students' inability to learn as the problem. On the other hand, because of my intimate knowledge of L. Ron Hubbard's study technology, I quickly

uncover where a student was bogged down and remedy the situation. As a result, my students perform considerably better and produce completed course projects that are considerably superior to what they produce in their other courses.

The importance of maintaining an attainable learning gradient is vital and it is being recognized as such by researchers in the fields of education and robotics, as well as by many technology firms. Following is an excerpt from a recent press release by Micro 2000, a developer of O/S-independent PC hardware diagnostics, in relation to the introduction of "PC Hardware Made Easy," the first PC hardware course designed for the absolute beginner:

CEO Rob McFarlane said: "Through research, we found every PC course out there was missing one key element; a simple learning gradient anyone can follow. ... With PC Hardware Made Easy, we assume nothing and begin with absolute basics so students won't get lost. This makes PC Hardware Made Easy an excellent primer for the beginner wanting to become an IT industry professional.

<http://www.electronichouse.com/news083000micro2000.html>

**Value of physical representation of concepts in learning:** The importance of demonstration and physical representation of concepts and objects about which one studies is undeniable. Not only the student will have difficulty grasping what is being studied, but also visibly manifest distinctly recognizable reactions. According to Mr. Hubbard, such physiological reactions could range from boredom to exasperation. Attempting to educate someone to operate a machine in the absence of the machine can be a futile task. As Mr. Hubbard states, "Imagine trying to learn how to run a tractor with no tractor to look at!"

Consistent with Mr. Hubbard's findings and recommendations, teaching techniques that are solely based on the demonstration method are becoming acceptable practices in some corners of the world. "Teaching by Demonstration" is a technique used by Massey University in New Zealand (<http://www.massey.ac.nz/>) to instruct practical skills. Following is a quote from a web site associated with the University:

A demonstration is a teaching technique in its own right, and not just a visual aid - it's teaching by showing. Demonstration technique involves both a spoken explanation and a visual; practical part using physical equipment and materials. You can present a demonstration to teach a skill, or to explain a concept or principle through an active, visual process.

<http://webnz.com/wnp/onlinec/virtcamp/index.htm>,

<http://www.wnp.ac.nz/onlinec/introcer/alpha/demintro.htm>.

Teaching by demonstration is considered among the established/formal teaching techniques with distinct advantages. Following are some reasons why teaching by demonstration is an effective method of helping students to master practical skills, or to understand processes:

1. A demonstration makes learning easier and creates interest. The visual learning helps students to remember.
2. A demonstration focuses attention and can dramatize important points.
3. Teachers use some demonstrations to reduce hazards, such as showing a process using acids or high voltage apparatus. In this type of demonstration, the students usually only watch, and don't repeat the actions themselves.
4. Demonstrating to a group helps the learners to share the learning experience, through interplay of ideas, observations, questions and comments on what they have watched.
5. Giving a demonstration lets you introduce students to correct techniques for operating equipment, setting up experiments, observing safety precautions, and so on.
6. Your demonstration, as a skilled and experienced operator, sets the standards (e.g. speed or accuracy) that you expect students to reach after sufficient practice. It can also reduce the time the students need to practice, and reduce the likelihood of trial and error learning.

<http://webnz.com/wnp/onlinec/introcer/chunk1/demon/dm1a.htm>

Teaching with demonstration has proved to be effective, not only in adult learning, but with children as well. Following is a quote from Life Way Christian Resources web page:

Displays, demonstrations, and activities in which children have direct contact with situations, places, objects, or people about whom they are studying all qualify as demonstration and direct experience learning. Showing or tasting unleavened bread, displaying a photograph of old Roman coins, touching a rock from the Holy Land, interviewing the pastor, watching the Lord's Supper preparation, and being involved in a mission action project are all examples of demonstration or direct experience methods.

<http://www.lifeway.com/kidtrek/wk062999.asp>

Throughout my studies and teaching career, I have maintained strong interest in pedagogical research and have published several journal articles and made a number of presentations at professional meetings addressing methodologies to improve instructional effectiveness. Additionally, I have participated in myriad teaching innovation and

instructional effectiveness seminars and workshops, and have routinely experimented with new teaching ideas and methodologies. Whereas students' perception of my teaching performance varied with the instructional approaches I employed, none of these techniques produced measurable lasting improvements in my ability to teach or in student learning. Such was not the case, however, with Mr. Hubbard's Study Technology principles.

Admittedly, it is not feasible to fully duplicate Mr. Hubbard's Study Technology in its true sense in a university setting. Nonetheless, I have made persistent effort to educate those in my environment about the Study Technology and have consistently used those study principles recommended by Mr. Hubbard that could be meaningfully and effectively implemented in our university teaching and learning environment.

Sincerely,



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About Dr. Rubik Atamian: My formal education is in the fields of accounting, statistics, and computers. I received my Master of Business Administration degree in 1979, and my Ph.D. degree in accounting in 1984, both from The University of Texas at Austin. I have taught graduate and undergraduate level accounting and information systems courses since January 1983, on a full time basis at three major universities in Texas, namely, The University of Texas at Austin, Texas Tech University, and The University of Texas - Pan American.