MANAGING HISTORICAL PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES: A STUDY OF THE EFFICACY OF A TEACHING HANDBOOK PREPARED FOR FIRST-YEAR VISTA UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

THESIS

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the teaching of primary and secondary sources in history at secondary and tertiary level. The various methods used to teach these aspects of the nature of history are compared to the Vista University teaching model. To establish the effectiveness of the Vista Block A module for HIS100 students, two test instruments were devised to assess their skills in handling primary and secondary sources. Their skills in identifying relevant points from a passage of historical prose were also tested.

A number of statistical techniques were applied to the data from the test instruments. This data was analysed in qualitative and quantitative terms. The results of this analysis suggested that students would probably benefit from a skills-orientated approach to studying history. On the basis of this study, it is recommended that the existing Vista teaching model be revised or amended so that a more effective method of teaching students about the nature of historical sources can be introduced.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The effective teaching of primary and secondary sources in history depends largely on four factors: the teaching method employed, the skill of the teacher or lecturer, the academic ability of individual students and, finally, their educational background. There are no short-cuts to finding the best possible method to teach the nature of history at tertiary level. In South Africa, particularly at the so-called black universities, there is a need for the teaching staff to provide tuition which is adapted to the disadvantaged educational background of many of their students. It 'is not just a matter of the student being capable of coping with the institution, but also of the institution being capable of coping with the student.' (Hartshorne, K., 1991, p. 37). This does not necessarily imply a drop in standards but rather a search for new, better methods to help students develop skills in thinking and learning about history. The very relevance of history to a changing South Africa in which the old apartheid system is crumbling, makes the study of this subject even more important at university level. (Giliomee, H., 1987, p. 2).

The main focus of this study is the teaching of the nature

of history in Block A of the Vista University HIS100 course, particularly the ability of students in handling primary and secondary sources. Most of the students at Vista become secondary school teachers and the way they study history at university level will influence the way they will teach it at school level (Steele, I., 1976, p. 7). The skills and knowledge these students acquire at Vista will undoubtedly effect their teaching of the subject as qualified teachers. They need to learn that history does not consist of 'cut and dried narrative' but that it is composed of many tentative explanations and open questions (Burston, W. H., et al, 1972, p. 218).

The present teaching model at Vista relies heavily on comprehensive study manuals which means students very rarely consult other sources when preparing for examinations and tests. The only time they do read more broadly around a given topic is when an assignment is written. This lack of practice at examining various historical sources results in rote-learning for examinations and tests, and poorly written, plagiarized material in essays. This researcher believes that three tests and three assignments for the year is inadequate for improving the analytical and writing skills of first year history students.

The acquisition of these skills is necessary as the

inferior black education system has left students ill-prepared for self-guided study at university level (Marcum, J.A., 1982, p. 60). In Zambia a similar situation exists. Large classes, book shortage, equipment shortage and poorly trained teachers result in repetitive exercises and rote-learning in schools. When inadequately educated students arrive at university they are expected to have already acquired the skills needed for accurate comprehension and critical analysis of material, yet over 60 percent of first-year students admit to having problems with understanding academic work (Wilson, 1984, p. 7). Research has shown that language skills are especially important when students make notes, summarize material and write essays (Jardine, R.W., 1986, p. 61). To improve their skills, students need to be taught how to communicate effectively within 'meaningful contexts', ie not through meaningless drills but through the study of a subject which forms part of their university course (Delpit, L.D., 1986, p. 384). Academic support programmes have little value unless they are based on material which students use in the course of their studies. Using 'artificial' material for the sake of skills training in comprehension and writing will have little impact on students' language proficiency.

Other research has shown that besides poor language skills and inferior schooling, black students seem to manifest poor cognitive skills even though their intellectual

ability is not in question (Olivier, 1988, p. 94). Teaching children in a second language at primary school level retards the development of thinking and reasoning in the home language according to Burroughs of the Human Sciences Research Council (The Star, April 1991).

If these assertions are accurate, then it is the task of Vista University to provide adequate skills training to improve the academic performance of its students. Each department should be responsible for the teaching of skills applicable to its discipline. It has been found in America, for example, that minority students in some law faculties need training in reading, comprehension and interpretation skills to a) find main ideas and b) distinguish between a fact, judgement or inference. Lecturers or teachers of minority groups in America realized that to handle problems of poor writing, they had to 'grapple with a social problem that begins with nursery school and persists throughout the educational process - inequality of education' (Stone, 1983, p. 316). In the predominantly black universities of South Africa, a similar situation exists due to an inferior apartheid education system imposed upon the black majority.

If university students are to improve their skills at handling primary and secondary sources, then evidence questioning and note-making techniques should be taught at

the first-year level. The making of notes from prose material is central to the study of history (Ward, 1966, p. 215), particularly for the preparation of essays, tests and examinations. Research has shown that most secondary school pupils and undergraduates copy notes verbatim and sequentially; they have problems identifying important or relevant points and rarely paraphrase important ideas (Hidi and Klaiman, 1983, p. 378).

One of the objectives of this study was to evaluate the skills of Vista students in selecting main or important points from secondary source material. The inability to recognise main ideas in a passage of historical writing decreases academic performance, thus the capacity to understand textual information is a necessary skill for success in academic institutions (Stevens, 1988, p. 21). Students need practice in selecting relevant points to specific questions or secondary-primary sources in order to improve their marks.

Another objective of this study was to establish whether a strong need existed to amend or improve the existing Vista method of teaching students about the nature of primary and secondary sources in history. To do this, a number of other approaches to teaching the nature of history were examined at the secondary and tertiary levels of education (Chapters 2 and 3). Any methodological features deemed applicable or suitable to the Vista context would be

recommended to the proponents of the Vista teaching model. The results of this study could be utilised to remodel the existing method or provide a springboard for more conclusive research on the question of teaching students about the nature of secondary and primary sources.

To clarify the research context, background information on Vista University together with the sample chosen to represent the Vista (Soweto) HIS100 group, is discussed in Chapter 4. Responses to a questionnaire were analysed to outline the main characteristics of this research sample. Once the sample had been selected, test instruments were devised to establish the proficiency of Vista HIS100 students in handling secondary and primary sources (Chapter 5). Their results in these tests were compared to their Block B assignment and final examination results. A number of statistical techniques were used to describe the results of this study (Chapter 5 and 6). Various conclusions and recommendations were based on these results; they are discussed in Chapter 7.

This report attempts to show that Vista HIS100 students at the Soweto campus need more training in historical skills, specifically in coping with primary and secondary sources, in order to improve their academic performance in the short term. Perhaps a long term aim would be an overall improvement of graduate teachers' skills so that their

expertise in historical sources is shared with the wider community of secondary school history pupils.

CHAPTER 2

APPROACHES TO TEACHING THE NATURE OF HISTORY AT SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL

INTRODUCTION

The prime purpose of this chapter is to illustrate the number of various methods employed to teach students about the nature of history at secondary school level. The focus will be mainly on the nature of primary and secondary sources and how the nature of history is taught at this level of education. Emphasis will be placed on the practical approaches taken by three educational bodies which stress evidence-questioning in their teaching of primary and secondary sources, and these will be compared to the Vista University model as discussed in Chapter 3.

The approach to teaching history, as adopted by the three institutions, could be summed up as follows: 'The task of the teacher becomes not one of telling students what they should know ... but rather of guiding the student through material that has been designed to engage his interest ... and to enable him to work through to at least tentative solutions largely on his own' (Fenton, E., 1966, p.510). The teacher's role is to assist pupils to find their own answers. Similarities and differences between the

distinctive teaching models will become apparent as the chapter unfolds.

By examining first the secondary school approach to teaching pupils about the nature of history, it becomes possible to apply certain principles to the Vista teaching model. For example, the use of practical exercises involving primary and secondary sources could be implemented at tertiary level. By handling historical sources in a similar way to that employed by practising historians, Vista students would hopefully improve their understanding of the concept 'What is history?'. The purely abstract, largely theoretical approach to teaching the nature of history at Vista should be superseded by an enquiry-based methodology whereby students are given practical exercises in handling historical sources.

1. The Amherst Project

The Amherst Project began in 1961 to facilitate discovery learning in American high school history classrooms. By 1964 it had grown into a fully developed research and development project. This enquiry-based approach to studying history developed as a result of new curricula including courses which taught sociological and anthropological concepts: these courses seemed more effective in teaching pupils the skills of 'critical judgment and perspective' (Brown, R.H. in Fenton, E.,

1966, p.444). The Project conveners consisted of history teachers from local high schools and teacher-training colleges in the Amherst area who realized something had to be done to safeguard the future of history within the curriculum. Teaching pupils to accumulate factual information which they had to reproduce in examinations was acknowledged as 'dull teaching' and did little to motivate pupils to achieve well in history (Fenton, 1966, p. 432).

One of the main objectives of the Project was to develop in pupils the need to question and criticize historical sources (textbooks included) so they could arrive at their own conclusions about past events. Summer writing camps for teachers were set up to provide the necessary material for discovery learning in history. This inductive approach to learning aimed to teach in pupils an understanding of the nature of history, 'in short to encourage him to relate knowledge to inquiry and to help him develop the intellectual tools of inquiry' (Brown, in Fenton, E., 1966, p. 445). These 'intellectual tools of inquiry' are also very necessary skills that university students need to acquire when studying history.

The full range of kits in the Project are as follows: Communism in America, Hiroshima, the Korean War, Freedom and Authority in Puritan New England, What happened on Lexington Green?, an Inquiry into the nature and methods

of History, Conscience and the Law, Lincoln and Emancipation, the Embargo of 1807, Imperialism, Collective Security in the 1930s, Liberty and Law: the nature of individual rights, the American West as myth and reality, God and the government: Problems of Church and State. All these units were designed so that pupils of any standard (grade), intelligence and experience could make use of them. Each unit was designed in such a way that they would be adaptable to a wide range of teachers, often working in different conditions from one another (for example, teaching in an underprivileged community).

Units are taught as isolated exercises studied concurrently with the existing syllabus. Teachers are encouraged to adapt the material in each unit to the particular needs of a class; they are 'free to keep, delete, or replace documents or entire sections as circumstances warrant' (Brown and Halsey, 1970, p. 1). Teachers also have the freedom to select the amount of time they will spend on each unit, as circumstances permit within each school. In this study, the unit entitled, 'What happened on Lexington Green? An Inquiry into the Nature and Methods of History' will receive priority as it deals specifically with the nature of history. It will also serve as an example of the methods employed by the Project in each unit.

The unit consists of three sections plus an introductory exercise on the arrest of Marquette Frye in August 1965. The introductory exercise uses a contemporary event to focus pupils' attention on the main questions of the unit: Why do individuals see things differently? How does one reconstruct the past using conflicting eye-witness accounts? What are the wider implications of one's answers to these questions? The introduction and the three sections which follow it require pupils to engage in 'detective' work (enquiry-based learning) to establish the truth about past events.

The introductory exercise on the Watts Riots of Los Angeles provides the pupils with three accounts of the arrest of Marquette Frye, the incident which sparked off the Riots in August 1965. A brief introduction gives the pupils a factual account of the arrest and the ensuing riots before instructing them to read the conflicting accounts. One is by two authors in a publication entitled 'Burn, Baby, Burn!' (based on interviews and testimony heard by an investigating commission), the second is the police version, and the third is the Frye's account as reported in an interview published in 'Ebony' magazine.

The teachers' manual provides some guidelines on tackling the exercise. It suggests, for example, that one tactic would be to concentrate on events that occurred after Mrs Frye intervened in the incident (as her son was about to

be arrested for drunken driving). Pupils could then be led into a discussion of how one deciphers what actually happened in the recent past when confronted with different versions of the same thing. 'Detective' work of this nature prepares the pupils for their encounter with original documents of the distant past. At the same time, it gives them an idea of the professional historian's problem when piecing together fragments of evidence from the past.

The Project's unit on the nature of history uses the incident at Lexington in April 1775, just prior to the outbreak of the American War of Independence, to teach pupils three basic questions concerning the nature of history: a) What is history? b) What is reality? and c) What do historians do with history and reality? (Brown and Halsey, 1970, p.1). This unit consists of three sections.

In the first section, pupils are provided with documentary evidence on the historic events at Lexington Green. They are then expected to play the role of the historian who is studying the evidence before drawing pertinent generalisations from it. The focus was to be on who fired the first shot. Pupils should realise that it is virtually impossible to discover who fired the first shot at the encounter between British soldiers and American militia.

Four documents are provided on the Lexington incident for this section: a) A newspaper report published two weeks after the event had occurred, b) A sworn statement by an American Colonist in April 1775 of what he had observed, c) Another sworn statement by a colonist but given in June 1826, d) The testimony of thirteen Lexington militia-men in April 1775. All these statements on the incident come to three-and-a-half foolscap pages.

Section 2 of the unit deals with the approach taken by historians when examining fragmentary or incomplete evidence, ie the difficulty of establishing the reality of the historical event. Pupils are given nine excerpts taken from history books written by British and American historians. Teachers are advised to guide pupils toward understanding the problem of why these intelligent scholars, considered honest, should hold such widely differing views about who fired the first shot at Lexington. Pupils must come to the realization that historians of different generations will always have conflicting interpretations because of the influences of the contemporary society in which they live. This realization will bring pupils closer to understanding the concept, 'What is history?'. The main focus of section 2, therefore, is more on the nature of history rather that the events of Lexington.

The third section takes the question of what history is somewhat further by contrasting it with other ways of comprehending reality, as one would find in the natural sciences and literature (Brown and Halsey, 1970, p. 2). Five documents are attached to this section. The pupils are expected to compare the ways in which historians, social scientists and writers comprehend reality. Document 1 describes how a scientist is able to control the subject matter being studied; document 2 looks at the work of a sociologist; documents 3 and 4 concern the work of writers. Once pupils have read these documents, they should be in a position to note the factors which make history unique when compared to other disciplines. The last document is an extract on Plato's 'Allegory of the Cave' in which Plato 'explores the relationship of knowledge to perception' (Brown and Halsey, 1970, p. 14). In this way, the problems encountered by historians in their research endeavours are brought home to pupils in a practical manner because they employ the same methods when examining the Lexington affair. Pupils would also be told that no cut and dried answers are forthcoming when dealing with past historical phenomena.

To assist teachers in presenting the material to their pupils, a teachers' guide is provided. This guide helps teachers to point out those problems encountered by historians when dealing with evidence. For example, the

guide would point out that the opposing commanders at Lexington would be expected to have different perspectives on the events of the day. The implication is that teachers should give specific assistance to pupils when dealing with primary sources to make the exercise a fruitful learning experience. Before pupils begin looking at the larger question (discussing the nature of evidence itself), they should first experience the difficulty of ascertaining a fact from the existing evidence (Brown and Halsey, p.7).

The Amherst Project seems to have a flexible approach to teaching the nature of history. It is never prescriptive: teachers are encouraged to either include or exclude material which may be too difficult or too easy, depending on the ability of the pupils undertaking a particular study. Without having any recourse to an evaluation study of the Project, it is difficult to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the material, nevertheless, certain features are worth commenting upon.

The material used in the unit on the nature of history was well organised, generally interesting and would encourage pupils to 'think' about the nature of history. By studying both primary and secondary sources, pupils would have a better understanding of the work undertaken by practising historians. Some of the more negative features of the material concern the length of certain excerpts

(primary or secondary sources), the difficulty of the style or language, and the danger of rejection by pupils because of the foregoing reasons. Such features would no doubt have a negative effect on an innovative, enquiry-based approach to learning history.

2. Schools Council History 13-16 Project

This project was initiated in England in 1972 to provide an alternative approach and syllabus to the traditional method of teaching history in secondary schools. Its research phase was conducted between 1973 - 1976 at selected schools throughout England. Instead of history teachers merely making history an interesting chronological study of the past, the project aimed at encouraging teachers to "'consciously ... improve their pupils' thinking abilities'" (Dickenson, A. and Lee, P., 1978, p.42). One of the aims of this study is to teach HIS100 students at Vista 'thinking' skills, to assist them in going beyond just rote learning about the past. The History 13 - 16 Project approach to teaching the nature of history has, therefore, important methodological implications for the Block A history module at Vista University.

The Schools council History Subject Committee set out four curriculum objectives before embarking on the considerable task of providing an alternative approach to history. The

project was expected to:

a) Examine the role of history in an area of curriculum change
b) Revitalize the teaching of history in secondary schools
c) Encourage pupil involvement in the learning process
d) Find ways of assessing understanding instead of merely testing rote-learning in public examinations (Shemilt, 1980, p.1).

Rote-learning of history in schools meant that pupils never learnt to be sufficiently critical of the textbook's interpretation of historical evidence. History was too often taught as a received body of information which was then learnt and regurgitated for the examinations (Dickenson and Lee, 1978, p.1). Thus, the advent of the Schools Council 13-16 Project was welcomed by many history teachers in England.

The rationale of History 13-16 is based on two principles or aims: a) History at secondary level must meet the social and personal needs of adolescents to warrant inclusion in the syllabus, and b) History should be taught as an 'approach to knowledge' rather than as a 'body of knowledge' (Nichol, J., 1976, p.36). The latter point is supported by Sylvester who argues that history should be seen 'as a heap of materials which survives from the past and which historians can use as evidence about the past'

(Sylvester, D., 1976, p.36). This 'heap' of materials to which he refers is made up of primary and secondary sources. To make history more meaningful, interesting and worthwhile for pupils, they should learn the skills necessary to undertake active enquiry into the various sources available. The History 13-16 approach rejects the passive acceptance of information by pupils taught in the traditional 'chalk and talk' method. Historical enquiry should be based on a 'hands on' approach where pupils develop meaningful interaction with the past through a variety of practical exercises such as writing, discussing and analysing. Such exercises should be based both on secondary and primary sources.

The History 13-16 syllabus is a three-year course which comprises five main segments:

1. What is history?
2. History around us
3. Enquiry in depth
4. Modern World studies
5. Study in development

For the purposes of this report, only segment 1 on 'What is history?' will be examined in detail; the other segments will be discussed very briefly once the relevance and importance of segment 1 has been fully explained. The 'What is history?' section requires greater exposition because it is central to an understanding of the different

approaches taken towards teaching the nature of history at secondary and tertiary level discussed in this study. The History 13-16 approach to teaching the nature of history has important ramifications for the Vista approach presented in the HIS100 Block A module. It is pertinent to the Vista approach because it describes history as 'an activity of enquiry into the past'; primary and secondary sources are the materials through which pupils actively reconstruct the past using 'detective skills' (Sylvester, D., 1976, p.17). The Vista approach is more abstract and theoretical in comparison with the History 13-16 method of teaching students about the nature of history.

The 'What is history?' segment in booklet form for each student introduces pupils to several important characteristics about the nature of history as a discipline. These characteristics are dealt with in five units. A teachers' guide is provided which explains the objectives of each unit and gives teachers some ideas on how to teach the various units.

The first unit (People in the Past) guides pupils towards a definition of history, and understanding of the concept of time and then defines the most common terms used by historians. Pupils are required to complete two tasks, one is to draw a time-line representing their own lives from the time they were born until the present. They mark specific events on that line depicting, for example, their

last summer holiday. The other task is to look at a person of their grandparents' age using the same time-line to follow certain events of that imaginary person's life. By fist applying a chronological framework to their own lives, pupils will find it easier to understand the work of professional historians, particularly their emphasis on when past events occurred.

The second unit (Detective Work) focuses on the central role of evidence in history. Pupils are given three exercises whose objective is to give direct experience in handling and interpreting evidence. At the same time, they learn that evidence is often incomplete and that conclusions reached by historians are sometimes inconclusive in nature (Parkin, R., 1973, p. 345).

The first 'detective' exercise is a contemporary event, the death of a student, Mark Pullen, in 1975. Pupils are given evidence from which they work out the events leading to his death. The second exercise provides pupils with incomplete evidence on 'Tollund Man'. They are given pictorial evidence and other clues relating to this person whose remains were found in a marsh in Denmark. Pupils then attempt to establish the cause of death, how long he had been dead, and so on. The third exercise is entitled 'The Mystery of the Empty Grave' which once again entails a reconstruction of the past using available evidence. As

in the previous unit, pupils investigate a contemporary event before going back into the more distant past. The approach enforces in the pupil's mind the similarity between historical study and detective work: both deal with various kinds of evidence.

The third unit (Looking at Evidence) takes the study of evidence a step further. It looks specifically at the difference between primary and secondary sources. Pupils are told in the booklet that examples of primary sources are, to name a few: a castle, Magna Carta, a Greek coin, a newspaper. Examples of secondary sources are given as: a published book ('The Story of Magna Carta' by C.W. Hodges, 1946), a journal (History Today) and any history essay written by a pupil. Once again, pupils are given written exercises on an individual basis. Pupils are asked to examine different types of evidence on three topics: Classical Greece, Medieval Knights and Britain in the 1960s. A filmstrip is shown on Classical Greece and pupils are given questions to answer (What is this piece of evidence? What can it tell one about Classical Greece?). The filmstrip and the booklet's photographs of primary sources give pupils a concrete idea of primary sources.

The next unit (Problems of Evidence) examines problems that arise when historians deal with historical evidence. Two case studies which focus on controversial events in

which the contemporary account (primary) is compared with later interpretations (secondary), for example, the Suffragette Derby of 1913 are then dealt with. Pupils are taught to use evidence and to see it is sometimes incomplete, biased and contradictory.

The fifth unit (Asking Questions) highlights the kinds of questions which historians normally ask about motivation and causation: a) what happened? and b) why did it happen? To introduce pupils to the idea of questioning the past, this unit begins with three simulation exercises. These exercises aim at getting pupils into the habit of asking a variety of questions to understand peoples' motives. The unit begins with three contemporary situations: a) why should a girl with the British equivalent of standard eight leave school to become a nurse? b) why does a senior history teacher apply to become a headmaster? c) what caused a passenger train to collide with a goods train? Pupils are given details on each of the above situations with questions to help them find the answers to the problem. From these exercises it should become apparent to pupils what the main types of questions are that a historian can ask about historical events and characters. Following Parkin, these questions could be:

1. What was the immediate cause of the event?
2. Who was concerned in the event?

3. What were the motives of the people concerned - political, economic, ideological, social?
4. Were there any limiting factors or circumstances?

(Parkin, R., 1973, p. 358).

An exercise on the voyages of discovery is given to the pupils to show them how events in the past can be explored more thoroughly by working on these questions.

One of the principles behind the questioning approach to history is the promotion of historical understanding and the effective retention of the material being studied (Smith, J., 1985, p.9). To take this argument further, it is worth quoting the words of C.A. Mace:

> Information is more readily retained, as ... it is more readily acquired, when it comes in answer to a question. If we ask no questions, experience no curiosity and no perplexities, it is doubtful if we shall ever learn or, if by chance we learn, whether we shall retain. We forget because we do not 'effectively' want to know.
> (Mace, C.A., in Smith, T., 1985, p. 10)

The Amherst and History 13-16 Projects endorse this questioning approach to studying history unequivocally. The questioning method is also subscribed to by the NECC and Open University approach, as we shall see.

The importance of the History 13-16 approach to the teaching of history is that it teaches pupils to understand what history is about by following an evidence-based method. According to Shemilt, the evaluator of the Project, the 'basic idea that History is

based on evidence, that evidence is of many types, and that it varies in reliability, came within the capacity' of all pupils who participated in the Project (Shemilt, D., 1980, p. 16).

Shemilt's evaluation study is not, in his own words, a scholarly research report but a monograph which aimed to provide sufficient information on the 'Project's nature, possibilities and problems' to any teachers considering the implementation of History 13-16 in their schools (Shemilt, D., 1980, see Preface). The Project evaluation consisted of three studies:

a) The performance of about 500 Project pupils on a number of concept tests was compared to that of the same number of non-Project pupils.
b) 75 Project pupils were matched for I.Q., sex and social background with 75 non-Project pupils.
c) Interview data from 78 Project and 78 control (non-Project) pupils was used for a 'matched pairs' comparison. Pupils' understanding of historical narrative explanation and methods was examined in the interviews.

The main outcome of Shemilt's evaluation was that 'experimental pupils seem more accustomed to giving and seeking explanations, see more problems and puzzles in History, ... are generally more bold and vigorous in their thinking' than control pupils (Shemilt, 1980, pp. 13-14).

13-14). He also established that most pupils involved in the Project's 'What is History?' section understood the basic idea that history is based on evidence which can sometimes be unreliable. Pupils taking traditional history courses did not seem sufficiently aware of this fact; the same could be said of HIS100 students at Vista. At present, history taught in most departments of education in South Africa still adheres to the textbook approach. Learning by discovery is not outwardly encouraged hence the lack of historical enquiry and associated skills displayed by most first-year university students.

In conclusion, Shemilt argues that the History 13-16 approach to history is not easy for pupils or teachers but it shows that history 'answers the social and personal needs of adolescents' (Shemilt, 1980, p. 91). As a problem-solving activity, history should be part of any curriculum concerned with teaching children to think in a rational manner. The concept of an evidence-based, questioning approach to learning history has yet to be introduced in most South African schools.

3. National Education Co-ordinating Committee

South Africa has also seen attempts to introduce new ways of teaching history at secondary level. The approach has been similar to the one adopted by the Amherst and History 13-16 projects, namely, a focus on teaching pupils the

skills necessary to understand the nature of history. The importance of 'discovery' learning is emphasised by concentrating on primary and secondary sources, the material from which history is written.

The NECC, originally known as the National Education Crisis Committee, was formed as a result of the crisis in education during the 1985 - 1987 political unrest in South Africa. Black education was once again in turmoil and in need of urgent redress as pupils called for 'liberation now, education later'. The NECC supported the call for equal education and a revision of the curriculum for all pupils in the country. It took practical steps to initiate changes in the teaching of history by publishing the book 'What is History? A New Approach to History for Students, Workers and Communities' in 1987.

The aim of this pack, as the book is referred to by the authors, was twofold: a) to give students an understanding of what history is about, ie, history 'is based on evidence which the historian selects and interprets' and b) to emphasise the importance of history by illustrating how knowledge of the past helps one to understand the present, and by understanding the past, one is able to shape the future (NECC, 1987, P.2).

The main focus of the pack is the development of certain

skills needed to interpret historical evidence. The authors of the publication outline three main objectives which they hope will be achieved by their publication:

a) Development of skills in information gathering (notemaking) and critical analysis of such information.

b) Skill in formulating one's own conclusions.

c) Development of language skills through reading, writing and talking.

To deal effectively with the material in the publication, the authors recommend that students sit together in groups of six with an elected co-ordinator to facilitate the discussion. The entire pack would take 10-12 weeks to complete if it were to be allocated five 40-minute periods a week. Conscious of the existence of an official syllabus, the authors suggest that teachers could integrate certain topics into that syllabus.

The pack is divided into four units:

Unit A: Why study history?

Unit B: What happened in history?

Unit C: Time in history.

Unit D: Working like an historian.

The focus throughout these units is the study of evidence in history which is also central to the Amherst and History 13-16 projects. The material in each unit has been designed specifically for discussion and group work, hence the designation of various activities for each unit.

For example, Unit A has only one activity, Unit B has 12 activities, Unit C has four activities and Unit D has 20 activities. A brief description of each unit will follow.

Unit A introduces briefly the importance of studying history. Working in groups, pupils are expected to discuss the viewpoints of different writers towards history expressed in six extracts. The exercise allows the pupils to express their own views on the topic; this encourages them to think about the topic and to apply the study of history to their own lives.

The significance of primary and secondary sources in history is handled in Unit B, the most important section for this study. Before a distinction is made between these two types of sources, students are given a number of examples of how historians set about compiling evidence through 'detective' work. Illustrated examples of primary sources are then provided by the pack, such as old photographs, the Freedom Charter and a slave auction poster. The term, primary source, is defined as 'Evidence which comes from the actual time of the people and events. These are called PRIMARY SOURCES because they are first hand evidence' (NECC, 1987, p. 14).

Secondary sources are defined as '... evidence which comes from historians who are writing about people and events at

a later date. These are called SECONDARY SOURCES because they are based on primary sources. In a secondary source the evidence has already been selected and interpreted' (NECC, 1987, p. 17). Copies of the outer covers of published books and journals are given as illustrated examples of secondary sources.

Activities 4 - 13 ask students to perform certain tasks related to primary and secondary sources, namely, the use of old photographs, a quiz to distinguish between primary and secondary sources, critical examination of conflicting evidence, and the use and abuse of evidence. All these activities are geared towards active participation by students within their groups, the underlying intention being to increase their understanding of historical evidence. Instead of simply being given examples of primary and secondary sources, students using this pack are compelled to analyse evidence set before them in a critical manner. This is probably the most effective way to reach an understanding of historical concepts.

Unit C is entitled 'Time in History' and consists of four activities. The first activity is modelled very closely on the History 13-16 approach to teaching pupils about the importance of time in history. It instructs pupils to draw a time line depicting important events in their own lives and that of their grandparents. Other activities include measuring time in centuries, arranging significant

events of the past 50 years in chronological order and working out the most important dates of the events leading to the birth of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union after reading an extract on the topic. Unit C thus provides pupils with some indication of how historians arrange evidence in chronological order.

Unit D, 'Working like an Historian', is the last section of the pack. It has 20 activities which concentrate on developing the critical faculties of students by asking them to interpret the importance of various primary and secondary sources relating to South African history. 'Activity 18: What happened on June 16, 1976' for example, provides a number of excerpts (speech by Verwoerd on Bantu education, an eyewitness account, extracts from newspapers, etc) and photographs on the Soweto unrest. Pupils are instructed to use these pieces of evidence to 'build up the story' of the Soweto uprising. They are also given questions to assist them to recreate the story. Some examples are:

- What does the evidence tell you about the type and standard of education in black schools?
- Why do you think the government provides this type of education for black students?
- What does the evidence tell you about who was protesting and why?

Other activities deal with the analysis of newspaper

articles, the analysis of causes behind events like the 1946 goldminers' strike and using the past to understand the present. Each activity encourages direct pupil participation in the historical process: the material compels them to think for themselves about historical issues.

The NECC approach to history is essentially 'History from below' in content and evidence-based in methodology. It is, or was, an attempt to provide teachers with an alternative approach to teaching history. In other words, it became 'part of the process of compiling new courses and study materials for 'People's Education' (Khanyile, V., 1986, p. 93). It would seem that the proponents of 'People's Education' have made little headway against existing education systems in South Africa and that the traditional textbook approach to teaching history will in all likelihood prevail until the education system undergoes either a radical or evolutionary change sometime in the future. Nevertheless, the NECC has made a valuable contribution towards history teaching in South Africa at secondary level.

CONCLUSION

The Amherst, History 13-16 and NECC approaches to teaching the nature of history are all closely linked. Evidence-questioning by pupils entails full participation in the learning process; this is in contrast to the

traditional textbook-centered, 'chalk and talk' method of teaching history. Before assessing the value of evidence-questioning (discovery learning) for the Vista teaching model solely from secondary school methods, a study of three tertiary approaches (including Vista) to teaching the nature of history require discussion. This will be done in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

APPROACHES TO TEACHING THE NATURE OF HISTORY AT TERTIARY LEVEL

INTRODUCTION

Understanding the concept 'What is History?' is also very important at tertiary level. University students need to understand the nature of history if their study of the subject is to be meaningful and fulfilling. The depth of a student's understanding of history may depend, to some extent, on the methods employed at university level. This study compares three approaches to the teaching of the nature of history: 1) Open University 2) UNISA 3) Vista. All three institutions use study manuals to guide their students through the material. Differences and similarities in methodology will become apparent as the chapter unfolds.

1. The Open University

The Open University is a British institution based in Milton Keynes, England. It provides distant teaching through a variety of media: textual material, radio and television. Tutorial assistance is also provided on a regional basis. Students are able to meet with appointed tutors living in their region. These tutors are often teachers, college lecturers or retired academics suitably

qualified to handle material from the Open University's humanities course. The nature of this academic support makes the Open University distance teaching system far more elaborate than the UNISA system.

Students taking the Humanities Foundation Course spend several weeks on an introductory course dealing with the humanities as a whole. Thereafter, they spend 12 weeks looking at various individual disciplines making up the humanities (history, anthropology, philosophy, etc). According to Arthur Marwick, the historian who prepared the 'Introduction to History' component of the Humanities course, the four-week block is not simply 'concerned with particular facts about particular periods in the past' but rather with the aims and methods of history (Open University, 1976, p. 5).

The aims of Open University courses are always carefully articulated. This is apparent in the aims of the 'Introduction to History' block which are as follows:

a) To see history as a relevant subject in terms of human experience
b) To appreciate history as a serious discipline
c) To make students aware of the 'richness and complexity of primary source material'
d) To introduce students to various problems associated with the handling of source material

e) To demonstrate to students how history is written
f) To provide students with the skills necessary to assess the merits of divergent secondary authorities
g) To assist students in learning the skills required in composing historical essays

(Open University, Part 1, 1976, p. 5).

Part 1 of the block entitled 'Introduction to History' deals with the nature of history and why it is important. Part 2 examines primary sources; Part 3 looks at the basic problems of writing history and Part 4 deals with common pitfalls in historical writing. An assignment is written at the end of each unit which amounts to one essay a week in this block. Each unit comprises different sections (for example, Part 2: Primary Sources consists of Historical Research, The Variety of Primary Sources, etc) with written exercises for students at the end of each particular section.

For the purposes of this study, the next point to consider is the Open University's method of teaching the importance of primary and secondary sources in understanding the nature of history.

The distinction between primary and secondary sources is defined in Part 2. This is linked to the main occupation of the professional historian which is to convert the raw material of history (primary sources) into a finished

product (secondary source). The historian is not involved in research simply to publish a book or article but is also contributing to an extension of human knowledge in a particular field. Once this is made clear to the student, Marwick then elaborates on the different types of primary sources utilised by historians (Official documents, letters, etc).

Students are also introduced to ways of evaluating critically the authenticity of sources such as documents and artifacts. The first method to test authenticity is internal criticism where historians examine the material of the sources, the style of writing, and so on. The second method is external criticism where the historian 'asks a series of questions designed to establish whether the purported facts ... are in accord with other known facts' (Open University, Part 2, 1976, p. 31). Once the source is considered authentic, the next task awaiting the historian is to establish its reliability (Is it objective? Biased?). An exercise is then given to the students whereby they have to answer questions about a letter written in 1774. Once again, students are expected to apply in a practical manner the historical principles they have read about in the textual material.

The next important facet of primary sources to be discussed concerns the imperfect and fragmentary nature of

such sources. It is argued that the fragmentary nature of evidence causes controversy and endless debate among historians, particularly those studying medieval or ancient history. The sometimes over-abundance of evidence for the modern historian leads to problems of selectivity. This in turn leads to disputes among historians over the omission of certain evidence.

Once again, at this point in the study guide, students are given an exercise to test their understanding of the fragmentary nature of primary sources. They are instructed to read two published excerpts on ancient London to see whether they can distinguish which excerpt most realistically recognises the problem of fragmentary evidence in history. This type of activity is lacking in the Vista study manual unless, of course, an organised and dedicated lecturer provides this kind of material to his class in the form of photocopied handouts.

In Part 3, a number of important features about secondary sources are discernible. For undergraduate students, secondary sources will always be their main source of information when it comes to writing assignments. This point is stressed at the very beginning of the unit entitled 'Basic problems of writing history'.

To help students distinguish between primary and secondary sources, they are given a task which requires them to

state which of seven extracts are primary or secondary. The answers are provided on the next page so that students can check their responses.

The second exercise in this unit enhances the students' understanding of how secondary sources are composed. They are given extracts of primary material about a fictitious politician and instructed to compile a paragraph of historical writing typical of a secondary source. Space is provided for this task in the study guide. Once they have completed their paragraph, they are expected to examine three specimen answers which vary in quality. The merits of each specimen answer are discussed in detail (Open University, Part 3, 1976, pp. 10-11).

This method of involving students in a practical way with the writing of history is similar to the NECC and History 13-16 approaches to understanding history. The most noticeable difference lies in the provision of specimen answers by the Open University method, so far the only 'pack' to do so in this report. Financial constraints at Vista could inhibit the use of handouts on primary and secondary material for class exercises in historical writing but the inclusion of such material with accompanying specimen answers could be arranged for study manuals. The cost of this extra stimulus material in study manuals would be included within the tuition fees of

each student, thereby preventing any outcry against extra costs being incurred by students.

The importance of selection in historical writing is discussed so that students recognise the importance of acquiring this skill when writing their own assignments. They have to learn to select only relevant factors from the various secondary sources they consult for a particular assignment. The following exercise is given to them to develop their selection skills when making notes from a secondary source:

> Imagine you are writing an essay on 'Signs of Change in Fifteenth Century Europe' and you are using as your source the first chapter of the text book 'Early Modern Europe' by G. N. Clark ... The exercise here is to list in the space provided below the points relating to change in the fifteenth century which you have selected from the first chapter. The idea is to avoid listing points which do not relate to this particular question
> (Open University, Part 3, 1976, p. 18).

A specimen answer is provided on page 20 of the unit. The nature of the exercise is well suited to teaching students the skill of notemaking from secondary sources. Vista students would benefit greatly from such a practical approach in their study of the Block A module in HIS100. It is for this reason that the competence level of Vista students was evaluated in two test instruments described in Chapter 5. The test instruments required students to apply certain skills to exercises dealing with primary and secondary sources, similar to the methods employed by the

Open University's 'Introduction to History' course. The results of the test instruments are discussed in Chapter 6.

An important feature of the Open University approach to teaching students about primary and secondary sources is the stress on active involvement by the students. They are expected to write down their views, ideas and solutions on any exercises provided by the unit compiler. Guidance is provided throughout all the units in the form of written discussions that accompany each exercises. As in all study, the effectiveness of this system no doubt rests on the diligence of individual students and tutors.

2. University of South Africa

UNISA is a distance teaching university. It provides tuition to its students through the medium of study guides, tutorial letters and audio cassettes. The first year history course (HST100) is composed of 17 chapters, beginning with 'The Study of History' in chapter one of the Study Guide before proceeding with South African history from pre-colonial times until the 19th Century.

The Study Guide constitutes the principal component of the UNISA history course. Students are instructed to study each chapter in detail whilst making notes on important points. After they have worked through a chapter,

students are expected to answer questions at the end of the chapter. These questions are not for evaluation by tutors but are simply for greater understanding of the material. Relevant chapters in a prescribed textbook supplement the notes students make from the Study Guide.

The main aim of the first chapter is to study the nature, method and uses of history. It is divided into six sections:

1. What is history?
2. Why study history?
3. How do we study and write history?
4. What are the different kinds of history?
5. Historical writing and historiography.
6. The relationship between history and other subjects.

The most important and relevant section in terms of this report is section three. It is subdivided into four categories: a) Finding sources of information, b) Using the sources and asking questions, c) Giving an interpretation, d) The historian's method.

Historical research is defined as a scholarly investigation of all existing evidence, both primary and secondary, with the aim of the extending our knowledge about the past. The usual list of sources available to historians is given, including documents, oral traditions etc. Primary sources are defined as 'those which came

into existence during the actual period of the past which the historian is studying' (UNISA, 1989, p. 6). A diary entry is referred to as an example of a primary source. A secondary source is defined as a 'second-hand view of what actually took place' because the historian changes the 'raw material of history ... into a piece of historical writing' (UNISA, 1989, p. 7).

Linked to the importance of primary and secondary sources for the historian is the issue of interpretation. Students are told that historians tend to ask different questions about past events; this leads to different answers and therefore a variety of interpretations results. The outcome is that debate between historians over the past is never-ending: this means simply that no history of a particular topic is ever definitive or conclusive.

The question of fragmented evidence is also raised by the HST100 Study Guide. The historian does not recreate the past solely by using his imagination but uses the evidence at his disposal. The often fragmentary nature of that evidence means that the historian has to 'speculate about what could have taken place ... in an attempt to bring the past to life' (UNISA, 1989, p. 8). It would seem that the Study Guide is attempting to show students that when they consult secondary sources for essay material, they should

be constantly aware that the historian's interpretation is often speculative. Nothing is totally conclusive or absolute in history.

The UNISA approach to teaching students about secondary and primary sources is brief and largely abstract, unlike the Open University which is more practical in its approach. There is no attempt to get students to encounter and wrestle first-hand with concrete examples of primary and secondary material. The basic aim of the first chapter of the HST100 Study Guide seems to be a short introduction to the nature of history in a general way and aspires to nothing more.

3. Vista University

Due to the nature of this research report, a closer look at the teaching of history at Vista is necessary to complete this chapter. Particular attention will be paid to the first-year course (HIS100). The HIS100 course covers, very briefly: a) The meaning and nature of history, b) The evolution of man and early civilizations, the relationship between Europe and Africa from the Greek classical period until slavery in the 19th century, c) Pre-colonial southern Africa and d) Colonial Southern Africa until the 19th Century.

Each student is given a study manual and a tutorial letter to cover each section of the work. The study manual is a

detailed guide through the syllabus and is virtually a textbook in format and content. Students are required to write one assignment and one test for each block, except Block D, which does not form part of the evaluation procedure for the year mark. This year mark counts one third of the total HIS100 course; the examination mark makes up the remaining two thirds. Students have to obtain a minimum of 35 percent in order to qualify to write the final examinations.

Vista's 'Introduction to History' is taught during Block A of the course. Block A takes up the first eight weeks of the academic calendar and deals with the basic aims, theory, methods and techniques of history. The study manual is divided into six themes:

1. What is history?
2. History as science
3. Objectivity
4. Sources
5. Interpretation and criticism
6. Auxiliary sciences and related disciplines

An in-depth discussion of themes 4 and 5 is required to explain Vista's approach to teaching students about the nature of historical sources. Before this is done, a brief look at themes 1, 2,3 and 6 is needed.

Theme 1 examines the different meanings of the word

'history', the basic concerns of the historian and the scope or field of history. Theme 2 (History as science) studies the development of the modern discipline of history, beginning with Thucydides in fifth century B.C. and ending in the twentieth century with the Annales school of history. The second part of theme 2 deals with the nature of history as a discipline. The development of a more accurate and 'scientific' approach to studying the past is discussed in detail. At the end of the theme, the manual concludes that history 'is perhaps neither art not science, but "sui generis", ie a discipline on its own' (Vista HIS100 manual, 1990, p. 43). This conclusion on history as science, as well as most of the content in theme 2, is very similar to the Open University's Part 1 segment on 'What history is and why it is important'. Both institutions seem to have used similar material in their preparation of study guides, hence the uniformity of content on the nature of history.

In theme 3 on objectivity in history, the manual discusses the subjective element present in the study of history. It asserts that a historian can never be completely objective but that should not prevent him or her from striving to attain the highest possible degree of objectivity. Reference is made to past historians like G M Theal, Ranke and the Prussian School to see how they handled the problem of objectivity in their writing. Their attitudes to objectivity are discussed in general

terms: at no stage are any extracts from their writings used to illustrate by way of example their particular interpretations of history. In the Open University approach, students are instructed to read excerpts from history books and to detect any signs of biased or subjective writing which may exist in the passages. They are given practice in reading historical writing in a critical manner which probably enhances their understanding of objectivity and subjectivity in history.

Theme 4, entitled 'Sources', is subdivided into three sections: historical research; the variety of primary sources; and the nature of primary sources. The section on historical research focuses on three main steps undertaken by historians involved in research: a) collection of material, b) criticism/testing of that material and c) assimilation and presentation of that material. Students are told that collecting material for an assignment is a form of research but research for the professional historian is defined as follows: 'research means diligent and scholarly investigation in all the available primary and secondary sources carried out ... in order to extend human knowledge' (Vista HIS100 manual, 1990, p. 63).

The manual goes on to explain the distinction between primary and secondary sources in the following manner. A

primary source 'is a source which came into existence during the actual period of the past which the historian is studying' (Vista HIS100 manual, 1990, p. 63). It is usually a first-hand account of some event and Sir Harry Smith's version of the events at Boomplaats is mentioned as an example of a primary source. A secondary source 'is the interpretation of the historian written later when looking back upon a period in the past' (Vista HIS100 manual, 1990, p. 64). Students are told that the finished product created by the historian is a source to be used by other scholars, students, etc.

The section on the different varieties of primary sources explains that historical data is transmitted in three ways: by word of mouth; by pictures or figures; and by writing. Examples of written sources are chronicles, official documents; pictorial and figured sources are houses, pyramids, and so on; oral sources are given as poems, tales, legends and the like. At no stage in the manual is any primary extract given as an example, nor do any diagrams exist. Large seminar classes do not permit individual lecturers to engage in any meaningful discussion of concrete examples of primary sources.

In the section on the nature of primary sources, the various types of sources are explained in detail. There is a comprehensive explanation of official documents, legal documents, letters, diaries and journals,

autobiographies, memoirs and, finally, newspapers. The reliability and veracity of these historical sources is discussed in a fairly detailed manner. Subjectivity and reasons for falsification are also dealt with by the manual. Inaccuracy and bias in newspapers is examined in an abstract and theoretical manner with no specific examples provided by the manual.

Theme 5, entitled 'Interpretation and Criticism', is also closely linked to the understanding of historical sources. Its objectives are: to teach students about the qualities a historian requires to interpret primary sources correctly; to show them how the historian uses internal and external criticism to establish the authenticity and reliability of primary sources; to explain why history is constantly being reinterpreted; to inform students about the main schools of thought in South African historical writing.

Unlike the Open University's approach to interpretation and criticism, the Vista approach is purely theoretical. At no stage are students expected to apply in practice what they have learnt in theory. Even during a seminar period there is little opportunity to test the students' grasp of the work unless the lecturer discards the allotted topic for that period. If the latter were done, it is likely that students would voice their opposition -

they know that the seminar topics are important for examination purposes.

If one looks at a seminar topic for Block A in 1991, one will notice immediately the connection between seminar topics and examination questions. For example, the seminar topic, 'Discuss the factors which must be taken into consideration when evaluating the competence and veracity of the historian' is closely linked to the examination question, 'Name five aspects which require attention when one is testing the competence of the writer of an historical source'. During a seminar period, a lecturer either leads a discussion on the relevant topic or allows a student volunteer to present the seminar to the class before facilitating a general discussion. A student who volunteers to present the seminar topic is given a few days to prepare the material. All students receive a tutorial letter outlining details on lecture and seminar topics per week for a particular block. They should know well in advance what theme will be dealt with each week. There is no prescribed textbook for Block A, unlike the Open University's 'Introduction to History', and the study manual provides each student with the necessary information required for all lectures and seminars.

In theory, students should all arrive at a seminar period well prepared to participate in the discussion, but in

practice, only a small minority actually participate in any discussion which may result. All too often, the lecturer ends up doing most of the talking. This problem of minimal numbers participating in class discussions is not unique to Vista. It also seems to happen elsewhere whenever a class group is too big and perhaps intimidating for many students. The perennial problem of ill-prepared students is also a factor.

The alternative to a class discussion is to split the class into smaller groups, ranging from 3 - 10 per group. These groups then discuss the topic among themselves before a group leader reports back to the whole class. This approach has been used by various lecturers in the History department at Vista (Soweto) with some success at third year level. At first-year level, it becomes more difficult to organise group discussions within the lecture hall as large numbers (100+) militate against this method. Inadequate space simply compounds the problem.

The multi-campus nature of Vista precludes the use of widely differing methods of teaching students about the nature of history as uniformity is crucial to the existing system. As a result of the above uniformity, enforced by the study manual approach, students at Vista lack concrete practice in confronting problems faced by professional historians in their everyday work. Their personal

understanding of historical concepts in Block A is rarely tested by written exercises unless their lecturers take the time to devise such exercises and also mark them.

The assignment for Block A has for some years followed the same format. Students are given a history essay which they have to read through carefully, making a list of all the mistakes in composition and technique. They do not comment on grammar or accuracy of factual content. The main purpose of this assignment is to teach them the correct use of footnotes and references. They are instructed to use their 'Guide on how to write a history essay' to assist them in this task. Lecturers are expected to elucidate the main points of this guide during one seminar period which is a very considerable task. The guide is 37 pages long and is perhaps too detailed for students who seem to lack motivation to improve their writing skills. Instead of explaining at great length the characteristics of a good history essay, the guide should rather provide exercises in making notes which students would then use to practice writing short essays. In this researcher's experience, only a minority of students seem to study the guide. This is apparent from the first essay they write in Block B: most students copy virtually verbatim from two or three sources before compiling an essay in an unsatisfactory 'scissors-and-paste' fashion.

The contents of the Block A Study Manual have very little

relevance to the Block A assignment. It is only the Block A test which attempts to evaluate the students' grasp of those features which constitute the nature of history. Nevertheless, even this test does little to reveal the students' comprehension of what history as a discipline is all about. The example which follows is typical of a Block A test:

1. Name and explain each of the basic concerns of the historian (5)
2. Distinguish between primary and secondary sources (5)
3. Name five important aspects of Leopold van Ranke's approach to history (5)
4. Define objective and subjective knowledge and explain, with examples, what is meant by objectivity and subjectivity in history (10)
5. Name four auxiliary sciences used in the study of history and state what is studied by each of these (10)
6. Name the strengths and weaknesses of the Marxist approach to history (10)
7. Name five important aspects of the Annales school's approach to history (5)

TOTAL: 50

The Vista approach to teaching students about the nature of primary and secondary sources is very similar to that of UNISA. Little or no stress is placed on students actually grappling with such sources in a practical manner. The approach is largely theoretical and constrained by the multi-campus system of the University which forces tutors to follow the guidelines set down by the study manuals and tutorial letters. There can be little modification of the existing method of teaching historical sources until the University changes or adapts its teaching model.

CONCLUSION

The tertiary approaches to teaching students about the nature of history, described in this chapter, share a number of common features. The three most important similarities are: a) the use of study manuals, b) the attempt to explain what history is about and, c) the study of various types of historical sources utilised by historians in their writing of history. Although these features are common, there are variations in the method of teaching students about the nature of history. UNISA and Vista share an abstract, largely theoretical approach while the Open University places more emphasis on a practical, exercise-orientated method. Even though the Open University and UNISA are both distance-teaching institutions, their methods of teaching history differ considerably.

In comparison, Vista is involved in contact tuition. Its student body is drawn largely from the black community as all Vista campuses are situated within or alongside urban black townships. On the strength of the data obtained from the questionnaire, discussed in Chapter 4, one may argue that this student body originates from a disadvantaged socio-economic community. Assuming that the apartheid system in South Africa provided these students with an inferior education, then the Vista approach to

teaching the nature of history is too abstract and impractical for students who need practice to develop and hone their understanding of history. Vista exists within a distinctive social and educational milieu and this factor must be taken into account when seeking ways of improving the efficacy of its teaching system.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH CONTEXT: VISTA UNIVERSITY (SOWETO)

Vista University is a very young university within the South African tertiary education context. It was established officially in terms of Act number 106 of 1981 after a government-appointed commission had undertaken an investigation into the university needs of urban blacks in 1978. The new university came into being on 1 January 1982 with its administrative headquarters in Pretoria. The first academic year of the various campuses began in January 1983. The University was granted full autonomy by the State in 1984.

Vista University owes its existence partly to the apartheid policy of separate development in education and partly to the breakdown of the rigidness of that policy by the 1980s. The sheer force of demographic developments in the urban areas compelled the government to accept the permanence of black people within 'white' South Africa. The growing potential black student population could no longer be realistically accommodated in homeland universities, hence the need for the creation of a new, mainly black multi-campus university situated in or on the outskirts of black townships.

The Vista concept may be seen as an extension of 'imposed, separatist education' (Marcum, 1982, p. 26) even though it

is ostensibly non-racial in its intake of students and staff. The placement of campuses within or near black townships ensures that the vast majority of the student population is black (African) in composition. It could also be argued that the above state of affairs has reduced a certain amount of pressure on the so-called 'white' universities, particularly those with a distinct Afrikaner ethos in the major centres like Johannesburg and Pretoria, from having to open their doors to a possible increase of prospective so-called non-Europeans in search of higher education. With the increasing disintegration of statutory apartheid, it was probably hoped that Vista would provide the necessary outlet for aspirant black students in the main urban areas of the country, thus leaving the particular ethos of certain white institutions essentially intact in the face of political and social change.

There are seven contact tuition campuses (Soweto - Johannesburg, Mamelodi - Pretoria, Daveyton - East Rand, Sebokeng - Vaal triangle, Welkom, Mangaung - Bloemfontein, Zwide - Port Elizabeth), a teaching centre in Kimberley and a correspondence tuition centre in Pretoria. The latter is known as the Further Training Campus. It was taken over from the Department of Education and Training (D.E.T.) in 1982; its chief purpose is to improve the qualifications of practising teachers and it makes up the largest student component of the University. The tuition system of the Further Training Campus is very closely aligned to the University of South Africa (UNISA) model.

There is no direct link between the contact tuition departments and the correspondence departments in the teaching of academic subjects. Centralized administration is the only common denominator. In this sense, Vista University may be seen as having two distinct segments which together make up one whole.

TABLE 4.1 GROWTH OF VISTA UNIVERSITY

STAFF				STUDENTS		
Year	A	B	Total	C	D	Total
1982	14	5	19	-	300	300
1983	76	57	133	610	2 400	3 010
1984	151	107	258	1 485	4 767	6 252
1985	173	126	299	3 055	7 082	10 137
1986	214	149	363	2 573	11 718	14 291
1987	255	159	414	3 752	14 909	18 661
1988	282	176	458	4 573	17 164	21 737
1989	315	218	533	5 577	18 148	23 725
A: Academic Staff B: Administrative Staff				C: Contact Tuition Students D: Correspondence Students		

Table 4.1 illustrates the growth of the University in all its campuses. The total number of students at the Soweto campus itself in 1990 was 1566 (This figure was never static due to students dropping out of university at various intervals during the year).

Vista presently has three faculties: Arts, Education and Management Sciences. A Law faculty will be introduced in 1991 and a Science faculty in 1992. The various departments for contact tuition are as follows:

Accounting	Education	Private Law
African Languages	English	Psychology
Afrikaans	Geography	Public Administration
Business Economics	History	Sociology
Commercial Law	Economics	Mathematics & Statistics

Besides offering degree courses, from undergraduate to doctoral level, the University also offers various certificates and diplomas for primary and secondary school teaching.

The first year intake stood at 657 in February 1990. Of that number, 185 registered as full-time HIS100 students. This figure represents the total population from which the sample has been drawn for the purposes of this research. The part-time class has been excluded from the research for a number of reasons: the group was small (36 registered), attendance was usually erratic (with the usual once a week class consisting of around 30% of the possible total), and, thirdly, most of the group were practising teachers and generally older than the full-time students.

To obtain general background information on the Vista HIS100 population, a representative sample of 51 students completed a questionnaire with Section A concentrating on biographical data and Section B on note-making data during one of the set lecture periods (see Appendix A). Students were not forewarned of the questionnaire to ensure normal class attendance. The major characteristics of the first-year group, gleaned from the questionnaire analysis, will provide greater clarity on the Vista (Soweto) context (see Appendix B).

Data on Section A will be analysed first. To begin with, 92 percent of the students were between 18-30 years old while eight percent fell within the 31-40 grouping. Most students were in their early twenties which seems to indicate that most of them matriculated at an age older than the white student norm of around 18 years. There are a number of factors which could account for this first-year university age, one being the ruling of the D.E.T. that black children begin school at seven years old. Socio-political factors could also play a role in that disrupted schooling would extend the school life of many black township pupils, particularly since the 1976 Soweto unrest.

The sex ratio is tilted in favour of males who make up close on 60 percent of the sample (virtually the same statistic if found when one looks at the whole HIS100 group or population). In connection with the marital status of the sample, only eight percent are married, and they are all females.

The most common home language spoken by the students is Zulu (23%), followed by the Sotho-Tswana languages (South Sotho - 20%, North Sotho - 14%, Tswana - 20%), Xhosa (11%), Tsonga (6%), Swazi (2%) and Venda (2%).

When it comes to schooling, most students attended government schools (76%) with about 10 percent listing private schools as their source of secondary education. The remaining 14 percent failed to specify the type of

schools they attended. Nearly half the schools attended are indicated as being found in Soweto (49%) while homeland schools make up 31 percent with the remainder being found elsewhere around the country and in the Witwatersrand region.

Another aspect of secondary education is that the vast majority of respondents (69%) clearly indicated that their schooling was inadequate for tertiary-level education. This could stem from the legacy of Bantu Education which is associated with the D.E.T.'s curriculum, and therefore considered inferior by the black community. Many students are also conscious of the inadequate qualifications of their high school teachers, one of the many legacies of apartheid.

One could also infer from the questionnaire that the bulk of the students still live with their parents (65%) with the remainder staying with relatives, friends or with their own families (those married). Close on 60 percent of the houses lived in by the students are privately owned with 96 percent having electricity available. Only 31 percent of the students of the sample acknowledged having a separate room in which to study undisturbed. Because of this lack of study space experienced by the more disadvantaged students, many students have expressed informally to this researcher the need to have residential accommodation on the campus but, at present, such accommodation is against University policy.

Most respondents (70%) stated that their parents were paying for their university education, with about 16 percent relying on loans and bursaries. Around eight percent depended on loans and their own income to pay for their studies. The cost for a B.A., as an example, for one year at Vista was R 1 680 in 1990. This fee covers all courses and appropriate study manuals. As a comparison, the cost of a B.A. at the University of the Witwatersrand in 1991 was R3 910. This difference in cost would prove an important drawcard for the more financially disadvantaged sectors of the population hoping to attend a university, and one could argue that Vista caters more for this group than the affluent who have access to more distant or more 'acceptable' universities.

The questionnaire also revealed some interesting details on the education level of the respondents' parents. More than half the respondents (55%) had fathers whose education level was standard six or lower. Mothers fared slightly better with 47 percent of the respondents indicating their mother's education level to be standard six or lower. Taken together, only 13,5 percent of the students' parents possessed a matric certificate. In terms of tertiary education, a minority of respondents (3%) indicated that their parents had attended university while four percent had parents with technical college or technikon-type education. Only eight percent of the sample had mothers with training college qualifications while no fathers featured in this category. The remainder of the parents had passed either standards 7, 8 or 9 (22,%%).

In the light of this data, one may come to two conclusions. Firstly, the students may be academically disadvantaged simply because of the home environment which may not be intellectually stimulating. Secondly, even though a student may have poorly educated parents, he or she may be highly motivated to achieve academic success because of that very disadvantage. This researcher would argue that most Vista students fall into the former category and, for that reason, they need greater practice in handling academic material at university level to improve their cognitive abilities. The analysis of the secondary and primary source test instruments will provide further data in support of this argument.

As one would expect from a HIS100 sample, the majority of respondents (61%) plan to take history as one of their major subjects. English (37%) is the second most popular course as a major subject, followed by Geography (17%), Private Law (15%), Education (10%) and Zulu (10%). Other subjects like Economics, Psychology, and so on, make up the balance of subject choices (see Appendix B).

Linked to the choice of major subjects is the career choice of the respondents. An overwhelming majority of Vista students favour education as a career and this is substantiated by the results of the biographical questionnaire. The HIS100 sample shows that 70 percent of the respondents hope to follow a teaching career. This is followed by Law (14%) with careers like Social Work, Civil

Service, Journalism, and so on, scoring a low two or four percent. Vista University, at this stage in its history, is essentially involved in teacher-training.

With the continued growth of the urban black population in South Africa, it is likely that Vista will continue to provide training of educators for the urbanized black community well into the future. The following figures confirm the growth of the urban black community:

TABLE 4.2 PERCENTAGE OF S.A. POPULATION IN URBAN AREAS

Year	White	Coloured	Asian	Black	Total
1951	78,4	64,7	77,5	27,2	42,6
1960	83,6	68,3	83,2	31,8	46,7
1970	86,8	74,1	86,7	33,1	47,8
1980	87,9	75,2	89,8	37,9	52,6
1985	89,6	77,8	93,4	39,6	55,9

(Central Statistical Services, 1986, p. 1.6)

By 1990, the actual black population living in urban areas probably exceeded 40%, because of problems associated with census enumeration in Black areas of South Africa.

Section B of the Questionnaire dealt with the issue of note-making in history. In response to question 1, 'What do you understand by the term "note-making", 20 percent of the students revealed a good understanding of the term; 45 percent had a fair understanding and 35 percent had a poor grasp of the term. Their responses were compared to the definition of note-making by Smith:

> Making notes properly means being able to write down the MAIN POINTS about something you are reading or listening to. It also means being able to write the main points ... in as many of your own words as possible. (Smith, 1985, p. 31)

Question 2, 'Were you ever taught note-making skills in history at high school?' disclosed that 32 percent of the respondents had been taught note-making skills while 68 percent admitted to having no such training. For question 3, 72 percent admitted sometimes having difficulty with understanding exactly what an essay-type question was asking whereas 28 percent had no difficulty with interpreting such a question. Question 4, 'Do you find the making of notes for a particular topic from a history book an easy task?' had a fairly balanced response with 41 percent of the students finding note-making from a history book an easy task and 53 percent finding such a task difficult. The other six percent admitted that even though they generally found it an easy task, there were times when it was difficult to make notes from a published source.

In response to question 5, 64 percent of the respondents admitted to having difficulty in selecting main points from a passage of historical writing; 36 percent indicated having no difficulty with selecting main or relevant points. Some of the responses from those students who found it difficult to identify main points were as follows:

- 'as soon as you understand the content it is easy to pick up the relevant points'
- 'I first look at the key words in the topic then start to analyse it'
- 'I usually make sure about what I am reading about'

The most common reason for easy identification of main

points was understanding the topic and being able to identify key words.

The implications of the questionnaire findings will be discussed in Chapter 6 when student scores on the test instruments are analysed. Some of the data obtained from the questionnaire will be used to explain the shortcomings of student performances in the test instruments.

Study manuals are used as the basis for all courses, and the Vista teaching model relies heavily on these study aids. Study material is presented in weekly segments. There are usually three contact sessions or lecture periods a week where lecturers are meant to encourage group discussion, and not to lecture in the traditional way. This model envisages the lecturer changing his role from 'dispenser of knowledge' (lecturing) to 'facilitator of learning (encouraging self-study, questioning, motivating) within the learning context (Du Plessis, 1989, p. 11).

The basic functions of study manuals at Vista may be summarized as follows:

a) To explain content details, foster comprehension, lay foundation for critical thinking and analysis
b) To enable students to attain proficiency in subject matter at own pace
c) To enable students to prepare for class participation
d) To provide a fairly comprehensive record of

material to be covered, particularly if insufficient books are available

e) To assist students to develop good study skills

(Vista University, 1987, pp. 4-6)

The use of study manuals could also be linked to the multi-campus nature of Vista. To maintain equal standards at all campuses, it is necessary for students to use the same study manuals and to write the same examinations. The so-called 'Question Bank', which stores a variety of questions on computer, is based in Pretoria at Vista headquarters. It ensures that all examination questions, based on a uniform syllabus, are untainted by the possible bias which may arise were lecturers from a particular campus asked to set a particular paper. The Question Bank eliminates the danger of campus examiners stressing work which would benefit their own students to the detriment of other students at different campuses. The manuals thus ensure that the syllabus for a particular course is followed very closely by all academic staff.

Finally, it must be noted that the present tuition system will be changing to a unit (semester) system in 1992. At the present time, there are effectively three terms with no mid-year examinations and teaching usually ends around late September of each year. It remains to be seen to what extent students will benefit from the unit system when certain sections of the syllabus will be examined and written off in June.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND PRELIMINARY RESULTS

INTRODUCTION

To test the efficacy of the HIS100 Block A module at Vista University, two test instruments were designed to evaluate the students' grasp of primary and secondary source material after they had completed the Block A module. It will be remembered that theme four of this module deals with historical sources.

This chapter describes the operation of the two test instruments, the 'secondary' test and 'primary' test; the sample used to participate in the testing programme; the preliminary subdivisions of the sample into three groups and, finally, the initial analysis of results obtained from the three groups of the sample. Chapter 6 will deal more specifically with Group 3 results. The reason for this will become clearer as the present chapter unfolds.

The 'secondary' test instrument will be described first as students spend most of their time dealing with secondary sources at undergraduate level. The 'primary' test instrument will be discussed immediately thereafter.

'SECONDARY' TEST INSTRUMENT

This test instrument aimed specifically at evaluating the

students' prose comprehension, note-making skills, clarity of expression, language use and their understanding of the term 'secondary source'. It was hoped that an evaluation of their skills would also indicate to what extent theme four of the Block A module had equipped students to handle secondary source material when preparing notes to write an essay-type assignment. The test instrument was applied six weeks after Block A had been completed.

By applying the secondary source test instrument at this stage of the course, students had to rely on their knowledge of secondary sources acquired during the Block A module. By this time, students were regularly using secondary sources in preparation for seminars and for the writing of their Block B assignment; this made them familiar with such material. It must be remembered, however, that students received no specific skills training or practice in handling secondary sources during Block A. Theme four of the Block A study manual deals primarily with the characteristics of secondary sources. At no stage in this theme are students given practical exercises in effective note-making or summarising of main points found in prose material.

An edited extract from Bronowski's book, 'The Ascent of Man', formed the basis of the 'secondary' test instrument. The extract discusses the nomadic lifestyle of the Bakhtiari people living in the Zagros Mountains of Iran. The Bronowski article was chosen because the Vista HIS100 syllabus includes the history of Khoisan peoples in

Southern Africa, particularly the disintegration of their nomadic lifestyle in the face of European colonisation. Bronowski used the Bakhtiari people to illustrate that cultural evolution and the development of mankind could not progress until man began to follow a more sedentary lifestyle, ie, he had to cease being a nomad (see Appendix C). The Bakhtiari extract was seen to be relevant to the HIS100 course and therefore suitable for the secondary source test instrument.

After the Bronowski article was chosen, the test instrument was devised using appropriate guidelines explicit in Smith's article on making notes in history (Smith, J., 1985, pp. 14-18). Smith describes the technique of note-making as an activity whereby pupils at the secondary level of education produce a record of what they are reading. He considers this activity as a very necessary and important skill when studying history. Students must be shown how to make notes and also be given opportunities to practise note-making skills at secondary level. 'Most [pupils], if not taught properly, will fall into the habit of uncritical, unselective transcribing and verbatim copying at length from their sources' (Smith, J., 1985, p. 14). Such a criticism can also be applied to first-year university students studying history. This researcher has found 'uncritical transcribing' and 'verbatim copying' a major feature of HIS100 assignments at Vista University (Soweto). One aim of this study is to suggest ways of eliminating this problem.

Smith shows how pupils could be introduced to note-making

skills by using a worksheet provided in Appendix 1 of his published pamphlet (Smith, J., 1985, pp. 31-33). An example of how a passage of text can be broken into separate points, depending upon what one is looking for, is given. Stress is laid on knowing what specific information is required before embarking on note-making. The 'secondary' test instrument utilised one of Smith's guidelines, namely, asking students to identify main points which are relevant to a particular question or task.

Students participating in the test instrument were each given a copy of the Baktiari extract (see Appendix C) during a normal double lecture period of 75 minutes in duration. Students were told verbally that they had five tasks to complete and that they had to complete those within the lecture period. The only other verbal guideline given to the participants was the number of main points they could expect to list in Task A: this was given as between 20 - 30 possible main points. The reason for this guideline was to avoid participants being unsure of the amount of detail required in their summary of main points.

The purpose of Task A was to get students to select the main points of Bronowski's argument and summarise those into note form, using their own words as far as possible. All their main points had to be numbered consecutively as they worked their way through the text. Another purpose of Task A was to assess the students' note-making

abilities when dealing with a secondary source. The results of this exercise or task were essential to this study as it would indicate whether HIS100 students needed greater practice in note-making techniques to improve their academic results, particularly in essay-type assignments.

Once the students had made a summary of the article's main points, three specific tasks were set to gauge the students' ability at selecting relevant points applicable to certain topics from the Bakhtiari extract. The first topic concerned the lack of change in Bakhtiari lifestyle over hundreds of years (Task B); the second topic dealt with features typical of any nomadic people (Task C); the third topic focused on the significance of the Bazuft river crossing (Task C).

To save time and to test the ability of the students in selecting relevant points which related specifically to the problems in tasks B, C and D, they were instructed to use the main points summarised in Task A to answer the questions. In other words, instead of having to write out a paragraph in order to answer the three questions, each student would choose those points he or she thought were relevant to a particular task by selecting the number listed in Task A which contained the point which was required. For example, if a student selected 25 main points for Task A, that student would have to read through all 25 points first to select the relevant points appropriate to Task D which deals with the significance of the Bazuft river crossing.

Assuming that the student's selection of main points for Task A are the same as the researcher's selection, then the points relevant to task D's topic would be numbers 23 (Biggest challenge is crossing the flooded Bazuft river), 24 (Successful crossing baptises boys into manhood) and 25 (For the old, failure to cross the river means death: accepted custom). At times it was necessary to adjust the memorandum to accommodate slight differences in each students's response. For example, the memorandum's point number 14, 'Life unchanging as every day is like the next', accommodated a student's selection of the same point given separately:

15. Nomadic life is without features
16 Every night the journey ends and every morning the journey begins

Students were given credit for any answers which contained the necessary key words or appropriate material.

In using Smith's technique as a training exercise, it is useful at times, to ensure that some, but not all, points should be used to answer more than one question. This can help the learner to see that the same piece of information can be used in several different ways, or is relevant to more than one problem. For example, point number 9 of the memorandum: 'Technology simple and portable: matter of survival' is also applicable to tasks B (why the lifestyle of the Bakhtiari has hardly changed) and C (aspects of life typical of any nomadic people).

The purpose of task E was to establish the students'

understanding of the term 'secondary source' without having had recent need to rote-learn a set definition. The aim was to see if they understood the term several weeks after having learnt about it in Block A. Too many students simply learn definitions or historical terms without really understanding such terms. This is a universal problem, however, and is not only attributable to Vista students. Another aim of this study is to find ways of helping students at Vista to overcome this problem, thereby improving their academic performance in the long term.

The majority of participants completed the test instrument within the set time, which indicates that the time allocated was more than adequate for the test. The test instrument was never intended to place students under any time pressure to complete the task. Instead, it was hoped that students would work at their own pace, as one would expect them to do when compiling notes relevant to an assignment.

To evaluate the students' skills in handling secondary source material, a scoring system was devised to permit a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data provided by the participants. In Task A, each relevant main point was given one mark, if it coincided with the memorandum (Quantitative analysis). To establish the students' ability in comprehension, explanation and basic language skills, a further two marks were allocated to each point (Qualitative analysis). The memorandum comprised 25 main facts. One mark was given for each relevant point and

two marks for each point's qualitative accuracy. This meant the maximum marks for Task A were 75. The raw scores obtained from this scoring system form the basis for the statistical procedures which are described later in the chapter.

PRIMARY SOURCE TEST INSTRUMENT

The primary source test instrument was based on a document related to American plantation slavery during the nineteenth century (Appendix D). This example of a primary source, a public notice of a sale of slaves and cattle, was originally compiled in 1852. It was considered appropriate for a number of reasons: Vista students study the Atlantic slave trade in Block B, slavery at the Cape is studied in Block D, and a variety of questions applicable to primary material could be asked. These included literal questions (cost of the two most expensive slaves?), interpretive-reasoning questions (reasons for some slaves being more expensive than others) and evaluation questions (the reasons for the document being useful to historians). All the questions were planned to test the students' skills in handling ad analysing primary source material (Nichol, J., 1985, p. 47). The last question required the students to explain why the source was considered to be a primary source.

The scoring mechanism to evaluate the students' performance in the 'primary' test was as follows:

a) Every question which merely required the presentation of basic facts or factual accuracy was allocated one

point for each fact asked for.

b) Those questions which required more elaborate explanation or reasoning were allocated an extra two marks for clarity of expression and accuracy. If the explanation was somewhat vague or poorly expressed, only one mark was given; for total irrelevance or lack of sense, a zero was awarded.

The 'primary' test comprised seven questions with the maximum score being 45 (see memorandum, Appendix D).

Each student's results for these two test instruments were compared with their 1990 Block B assignment and examination results. A comparison of the test instrument results and Block B result was considered appropriate because the Block B assignment is the first history essay that students write at university level. Students are expected to make notes from recommended secondary sources and to use those notes to write an essay, limited to four foolscap pages. They are forbidden to use the study manual as a direct source. The essay topic concerned the origin, growth and demise of the Swahili city states along the east coast of Africa until the seventeenth century.

The final examination for 1990 was also used as a comparative result to see how students' marks related to the test instrument results, ie to observe whether their scores were similar. Theoretically, there should be little difference between their test instruments and examination-Block B results as good students should score well in the examination, Block B and test instruments. This study will show what type of relationship exists

between these sets of scores by using various statistical techniques.

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF TEST INSTRUMENT SCORES

In both secondary and primary source test instruments, the quality of answers provided by students was also assessed. Even though this researcher may have had certain subjective judgements or expectations of the standard that students should adhere to, it was still considered necessary to obtain a general impression of the students' abilities in terms of language use, ie clarity of expression and accuracy, in their answers to questions in the test instruments. One threat to the validity of this assessment could be the subconscious expectations of this researcher in regard to the students' level of competence in English (Borg, W. and Gall, J., 1989, p. 642).

To test the quality of students' answers to tasks A and E of the 'secondary' test and questions 2(c), 3, 4, 5 and 7 of the 'primary' test, their responses to each question were classified according to the following criteria: a) good, b) fair, c) poor. Two marks were allocated for a good, clear explanation, one mark for a poor, vague explanation and zero marks for an incorrect or totally irrelevant explanation. The percentage of students who obtained a good, fair or poor results was recorded; this data will be discussed in Chapter 6.

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF TEST INSTRUMENT SCORES

The first step taken in the quantitative analysis was to

calculate the total mark obtained by each student who participated in either the 'secondary' or 'primary' test. All these raw scores were converted into percentages to simplify the computation procedures. Frequency tables for each group are shown in Appendix E. The results and implications of the analysis of these frequencies will be discussed in Chapter 6, with Group 3's results forming the basis of the discussion in this chapter. The decision to emphasise Group 3's results will become apparent as the present chapter (Chapter 5) evolves.

The next step entailed the calculation of a) the sample mean for each test instrument result, and b) the sample mean for the 1990 Block B and examination results (see Table 5.1). Following the calculation of the mean for each variable of the three groups (Secondary source test, Primary source test, Block B result, Examination result), the standard deviation was computed to show how the scores were spread out (see Table 5.1). The standard deviation revealed the differences in the spread of scores between all variables in the sample groups. The standard formula used to calculate standard deviation was applied to the scores (Behr, A.L., 1983, p. 22).

Up to this stage in the research proceedings, the strategy was to analyse each group separately and to make appropriate generalisations about the Vista population mainly from the first two samples (Group 1 and 2). Once the means for all the groups had been tabulated, it can be seen that the performance of Group 1 and sub-Group 3 was very similar, after examining the mean and standard

deviations for the secondary test. Similar close means and standard deviations can be noted between Group 2 and sub-Group 3 of the results of the primary source test. It can, however, also be seen that the performances of the students in each of the four tests (when the horizontal columns of table 5.1 are examined) show large differences in mean and standard deviation, except for Group 2.

TABLE 5.1 MEAN SCORES AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR SAMPLE GROUPS

	Secondary Source Test	Primary Source Test	Block B Assignment Results	Examination Results
Group 1 No Mean SD	 88 33.94 13.93		 88 53.09 11.04	 88 46.09 17.14
Group 2 No Mean SD		 47 52.40 14.79	 47 54.08 11.41	 47 46.96 14.33
Group 3 No Mean SD	 30 35.97 12.69	 30 53.10 13.34	 30 55.07 12.10	 30 47.60 14.27

Because of the close comparisons between the means and standard deviations of Groups 1 and 3 on the 'secondary' test, and between Groups 2 and 3 on the 'primary' test, it was decided to see if some parts of the analysis could be confined only to the results of the Group 3 students. To test whether this was statistically acceptable, the Critical Ratio test was applied to the relevant data (see Table 5.2).

To establish whether there was a significant difference

between the mean test scores of Groups 1 -3 of the Vista sample on a number of variables, the following hypotheses were set up:

H_o : $\mu_1 = \mu_2$ There is no mean difference between the test scores of the three sample groups.

H_A : $\mu_1 \neq \mu_2$ There is a mean difference between the test scores of the three sample groups.

The conventional formula for Critical Ratio was used:

$$CR = \frac{\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2}{\sqrt{\frac{S_1^2}{N} + \frac{S_2^2}{N}}}$$

This formula was applied to six pairs of variables and the CR or z-score for the Critical Ratios are shown in Table 5.2.

TABLE 5.2 CRITICAL RATIOS FOR PAIRED VARIABLES

1.	Group 1	(Secondary) + Group 3 (Secondary)	=	0.737
2.	Group 1	(Block B) + Group 3 (Block B)	=	1.058
3.	Group 1	(Exam) + Group 3 (Exam)	=	0.474
4.	Group 2	(Primary) + Group 3 (Primary)	=	0.215
5.	Group 2	(Exam) + Group 3 (Exam)	=	0.191
6.	Group 2	(Block B) + Group 3 (Block B)	=	0.358

The z-values for a two-tailed are respectively 1.96 and 2.58 on a normal distribution table. As none of the CR scores was greater than the z-values (1.96 and 2.58) for a two-tailed test on a normal distribution table, it meant that the null hypothesis of no difference between the test means of the three groups was accepted. It now became

possible to concentrate on Group 3 for all subsequent analyses. The techniques used to analyse Group 3's results more fully, the results from these techniques and some interpretation of them will be dealt with in Chapter 6.

SELECTION OF SAMPLE

The subjects who participated in the two test instruments (one for secondary material and one for primary material) came solely from the Soweto campus of the University. To keep the study as naturalistic as possible, students were not forewarned of their participation in the test instruments. Those students who attended a so-called normal lecture were used as participants in the tests. The general characteristics of this HIS100 group, obtained from the questionnaire, were discussed in Chapter 4.

At Vista, attendance at lectures is not compulsory and no register is taken of students who may be present. Because of the provision of a comprehensive study manual (described in Chapter 3) class attendance is often far from satisfactory. It is for these reasons that out of a class of 185 registered students in 1990 for HIS100, only 88 students participated in the 'secondary' test and 47 students were present for the 'primary' test. Thirty students participated in both tests which took place in successive weeks in May 1990. Students were instructed to put their names on the scripts of each test instrument; this made it easy for the researcher to establish which students wrote both tests. The 'secondary' test was administered first because students would be more familiar

with handling such material as virtually all sources they consulted for assignments and tests would be secondary in nature.

To simplify the sample categories under discussion, ie, the 'secondary' test subjects, the 'primary' test subjects and those subjects who participated in both tests, they will be referred to as Group 1 (n = 88), Group 2 (n = 47) and Group 3 (n = 30) respectively.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this particular research method, partially described in this chapter, was to find some appropriate manner to test the skills and ability of Vista students in handling primary and secondary sources in history. By comparing their test results with their Block B and Examination scores, it was hoped that such a comparison would reveal the kind of relationship (significant or not) that existed between these variables. The decision to use Group 3 as the main sample to represent the Vista (Soweto) HIS100 population necessitated the need for a separate in-depth analysis of its results. This analysis is dealt with in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6

RESEARCH RESULTS

Before discussing the research results of Group 3 in any detail, a reminder of the main objectives of this study is necessary. The three main objectives are: a) to establish the ability of Vista HIS100 students to handle primary and secondary sources, b) to identify their skills in selecting main points from a passage of prose, and c) to compare the Vista teaching model to those of some other secondary and tertiary institutions which also focus on the importance of secondary and primary sources in their study of the nature of history.

The sample representing the Vista population was limited to Group 3 after a Critical Ratio test (see Chapter 5) disclosed that the mean scores from each variable, (ie the 'secondary' test, the 'primary' test, the Block B and Examination scores), were sufficiently similar to warrant the exclusion of Groups 1 and 2 from the analysis. The focus of this chapter will be on the quality of answers reflected in the 'secondary' and 'primary' tests, as well as the implications of the numerical data exhibited by Group 3 in both test instruments. These two aspects of the research results will be discussed separately.

A. RESULTS OF QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

In the 'secondary' test instrument, answers to Task A

(concerned with listing the main points in the extract) and E (concerned with defining the term 'secondary' source) were examined in terms of relevance, language use, clarity of expression, etc. For Task A, each main point identified by a student was worth three marks in total. Ideally, each student should have identified 25 main points relevant to the Bakhtiari article, hence a final total of 75 marks for Task A (3 x 25 = 75). The three marks for each point were broken down as follows: one mark for the selection of a relevant point, two marks for quality of answer, ie a good, clearly written answer was awarded two marks, a fair answer one mark and a poor answer zero. These scores were then totalled with a maximum final mark for Task A of 75. Thus, if a student attained 53/75 (70%), this mark, expressed as a percentage, was used to allocate the student's score to one of three broad categories. For a good score, a student had to score between 70-100 percent; for a fair score 50-69 percent; and for a poor score 0-49 percent. This criteria or standard of evaluation was adjudged to be the most appropriate as many universities consider any marks below 50 percent a fail, marks between 50-69 percent would be considered fair (between a third and second class pass) while marks from 70-100 percent (equivalent to an upper second or first class pass) would be seen as good to very good.

Task E was worth four marks: two for accuracy in defining the term 'secondary source' and two for quality of answer. The quality of each student's answer was also evaluated in

terms of the three broad categories applied to Task A.

This scoring system was devised to assess in the simplest way possible the quality of students' answers to both the 'secondary' and 'primary' tests. The aim was not to look at the quality of answers for its own sake but to link the quality of presentation to the quality of content.

Group 3's responses in terms of these categories (good, fair, poor) can be seen in Table 6.1. The low percentage score for good answers in tasks A and E is an indication of the small proportion of students who provided good, clear answers to each task. For Task A, only 27 percent of the students achieved fair answers whereas for Task E, only 40 percent achieved a fair mark, ie their responses were adequate. A large number of students produced poor answers in both their selection of main points (Task A) and definition of the term 'secondary source' (task E).

TABLE 6.1 QUALITY OF ANSWERS DISPLAYED IN THE SECONDARY SOURCE TEST

QUALITY	Task A (Point selection)		TASK E (Secondary source definition)	
	/30	%	/30	%
GOOD	0	0	5	17
FAIR	8	27	12	40
POOR	22	73	13	43
	30	100	30	100

It is immediately noticeable that in Task A, no students

obtained a good mark. Large numbers of students obtained poor quality answers. This might be attributable to a number of factors. Some of the most prominent shortcomings displayed in answers are the poor command of language (English) and inaccuracy of points and lack of relevance. To illustrate this, a number of student responses to Task A are compared to the memorandum of each task in Table 6.2.

TABLE 6.2 COMPARISON OF STUDENT RESPONSE TO MEMORANDUM IN TASK A

NO *	STUDENT RESPONSE	MEMORANDUM
2	Bakhtiari from Mongol	Name originated from Mongol leader, Bakhtyr
10	Everything they needed was exported or was not of their make-up	Acquired manufactured goods by bartering
11	They were people who did not think of introducing new ideas	Lifestyle prevents development of specialised skills or innovation

* Refers to the number of the main point in the memorandum

If one looks at the shortcomings of answers to point number 2 in Table 6.2, it is clear that it is inaccurate in content. 'Mongol' should read 'Mongolia'. This response was awarded 0/2 for quality of presentation. A typical response to point number 10 is inaccurate because the Bakhtiari would not 'export' goods they required. If one assumes that the student meant everything required by the Bakhtiari was imported, it is still inaccurate because many of their basic material needs were made by themselves. One student's response to point number 11 is also an example of note-making shortcomings: the student

has not interpreted Bronowski's point correctly and fails to understand that a nomadic lifestyle hinders certain innovations.

When compared to Task A, student responses to task E were substantially better, as can be seen in Table 6.1, in terms of quality with a higher percentage of students achieving good (17% of the group) and fair (40% of the group) results and a smaller number obtaining poor (43% of the group) results. Before assessing the quality of answers to task E, a look at the memorandum's answer for this task is necessary:

> The article is classified as a secondary source because Bronowski has taken primary or raw material on the lifestyle of the Bakhtiari and interpreted it in a particular way thereby converting it into a finished historical product or published secondary source. (4)

Two marks were awarded for a correct or accurate explanation and a further two marks were given for the quality of language and clarity of expression for each student's answer. An example of a good answer to task E is: 'It is a secondary source because it is the interpretation of the historian. Historian has used primary sources to write it.' A fair answer would be something like 'It is extracted from the primary source which acted as a witness of the life of those nomad people' whereas a poor quality answer would be 'It is because it was written long ago before the people of Baktari could have got civilization' or 'It is because is can be rewritten and renewed'. It is disturbing, however, that 43% of the group could achieve no more than a 'poor' result when it is remembered that this idea was

extensively discussed in the students' module.

Tasks B, C and D were not assessed for quality because students were not expected to write out answers in prose form; they wrote down only those numbers of their selected main points taken from Task A which they deemed relevant to the questions in B, C and D (see Chapter 5 for a more detailed explanation).

In Table 6.3 the quality of answers found in the primary source test instrument are shown. Questions 1, 2(a), 2(b) and 6 are straightforward factual-type questions unsuitable for qualitative evaluation (see Appendix D). They simply required students to select relevant facts - there was no need for students to interpret the material. The implications of the data in table 6.3 will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

TABLE 6.3 QUALITY OF ANSWERS DISPLAYED IN THE PRIMARY SOURCE TEST

Quality	2(c)	3	4	5	7
Good	13	23	13	37	30
Fair	33	20	7	37	33
Poor	54	57	80	26	37
	100	100	100	100	100

Table 6.3 shows that the quality of answers to questions 2(c), 3, 4 and 7 is inferior to that of question 5, the latter question being the only one where the percentage of good answers outweighs the percentage of poor answers: 37% of the students scored fair answers and the same percentage scored good answers. This is due largely to

the greater ease or simplicity of question 5: a greater proportion of students seemed to cope well with the question. Most students identified the relationship between age and skill of each slave and his or her value in monetary terms to the slave owner with comparative ease. Those students who scored a poor mark in answer to question 5 tended to misunderstand the question or had badly worded explanations, as the following examples show:

- Economic was the major thing for slave and plantation was one of the important even the cotton and tobacco.
- The ages show the likely outcome of a slave.
- The main significant aspect about this is that, the white man who conducted kidnapping, didn't had time to select the best and instate take who ever they met. Custody was conducted on hit and run basis.

One reason for more than half the students scoring poor marks for question 2(c) is that 47 percent of the group ignored or omitted answering the first part of the question (Explain why you think slaves in (b) were more valuable than the slaves numbered 19, 25 and 34). Other reasons are: an incorrect answer to both parts of the question and vague or poorly expressed answers. For example, one student answered for part of the second half of the question (Write a sentence giving your reason for the cheaper cost of each of these three slaves [19, 25, 34]): 'No. 34 was old enough and was not expected to do any labour as a slave and mules were not preferable because the economy was based on stock like cattle'. This student, among others, shows a misunderstanding of slavery and also of the economy of Georgia in 1852. One student even suggested that some slaves were 'occupying the high

income posts', which suggests complete misunderstanding of the term slavery.

Question 3 was worth seven marks in total. Five marks were allocated for facts and interpretation; two marks were given for quality of language use and clarity of expression. It yielded poor results with 57 percent of the sample obtaining low marks in terms of quality (see table 6.3). This is mainly attributable to poor performance in the content section of the question which naturally had a direct bearing on the quality assessment. If the first part of question 3 was worth three marks (most common type of work done by slaves), the second part worth two marks (what do the three categories of slave labour tell us about U.S. slavery?) and the quality of answers assessed out of two marks, then it can be said that the score for the quality of answers hinged largely on the accuracy of answers to the two sections of question 3. In other words, incorrect facts or inaccurate interpretation of question 3 were mainly responsible for the poor performance of the sample in connection with answer quality. A number of examples will illustrate this point:

- Labour. Householder or housework and good cooker. American slaves were taken to custody with 2 hours after sale.
- To work on cotton and this tell us that American slavery was not heavey but mild to light work done.
- House-cleaning. Stock-keeping. Crop-plantation. although regarded as slaves, certain rights were given to them.

Those students who attained good or fair results for

question 3 usually provided accurate, clearly expressed answers. Most of them correctly identified the most important labour categories of slaves but lost marks on the implications of labour categories for American slavery. Three of the better answers are worth quoting:

- Working as Rice planter, as cotton planters and Housework. Slaves were kept for production of crops and working in the house.
- Prime cotton hand ... prime rice planter ... prime field hand. American slavery was bad, cruel and outrageous because men worked in the fields and women worked in houses, and it was also an exploitation of black individuals.
- Prime rice planter; Cotton and house-keeping and nursing. This tells us that they were mainly imported for the sake of plantation (rice) and house-keeping.

TABLE 6.4 SCORES FOR QUESTION 3

A. Results of students scoring good/fair answers

Score	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
No. of Students	-	2	5	6	-	-	-	-

B. Results of students scoring poor answers

Score	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
No. of Students	-	-	-	-	4	5	6	2

Table 6.4 illustrates how students fared out of a total of seven marks for question 3. It can be seen that 13 students obtained good or fair results, but the majority (17 students) obtained poor results. Thus, it would seem than many students manifest deficient skills when answering questions of an interpretive-reasoning nature. Table 6.3 (quality of answers for primary source test) substantiates this contention for all questions (except

number five) which were used for a qualitative assessment of answers to the primary source test. Perhaps a solution to insufficient skills in handling primary and secondary sources is greater participation by students in practical exercises apparent in the Amherst, History 13-16, NECC and Open University approaches to teaching the nature of historical sources.

Table 6.3 also reveals that question 4 was the most difficult for 80 percent of the students. The question 'Write a sentence about the implications of the widely differing items on the sale, as mentioned in the final paragraph of the advertisement' produced only a small group of students (20%) obtaining good or fair results. Some of the following answers by students will help to explain why 24/30 students obtained no marks for question 4 (memorandum's answer: 'Suggests that slaves on same level as livestock, ie their status was on a par with animals'):

- Horses, Mules and Cattle were used other purposes like transportation and milk
- It is that purchases must be drawn from as far as possible with two objectives
- The implication of these items shows that there were many horses, mules and cattle

In contrast to these poor answers, a good answer was the following:

> Final paragraph of advertisement implies that these people did not see much difference between animals and humans. Slaves were treated like animals.

This answer scored 3/3 as it is accurate and clearly articulated, unlike most answers to question 4. It is clear, once again, that HIS100 students at Vista need

greater practice in handling interpretive-reasoning questions when dealing with primary sources. It is insufficient to learn the theoretical meaning of the term without understanding how the historian interprets primary sources.

Responses to question 7 of the primary source test were perhaps the most balanced of all responses in terms of answer quality, ie good, fair, poor (see Table 6.3). Most students (63%) had some idea of why the advertisement on the sale of slaves and stock was classified a primary source. Those who scored no marks for the question (33%) generally had little idea of the meaning of the term 'primary source' or they explained it in a confused, inarticulate manner as the following examples illustrate:

- Because the information written here is not relevant
- It is a primary source because it has no records of from where was this information taken
- Because this is the only source that one has been given
- It is the primary source because it is from the eye witness and has been done oral

The significance of the answers to question 7 lies in the quality of responses. At least 63 percent of the students retained some understanding of the term 'primary source' six weeks after the completion of Block A, without having written specific exercises on interpreting primary sources during the block itself. Had they done so, it is conceivable that the results for question 7 may have been even better.

In conclusion, it can be claimed that the overall quality of responses to the questions in the test instrument questions was disappointing but not unexpected. The present Vista teaching method tends to emphasise oral discussion between lecturer and student, which is commendable in itself, but it does little to promote the writing and comprehension skills of students. Students who do not participate in class discussions, the silent majority, need alternative ways of improving their understanding of historical sources. To ensure that written exercises are properly done, they should be evaluated by lecturers with the marks counting towards the year mark. Other recommendations will be made in Chapter 7.

B. RESULTS OF QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

The numerical data obtained from the two test instruments will be discussed in this section. This data is presented in percentages to simplify the statistical analysis as scores for Block B and the examination results are always presented as percentages. The results of the data will be described in several stages.

The scores for the 'secondary' test were evaluated out of a final total of 98 marks (see Appendix C). The 'primary' test was evaluated out of 45 marks. In the 'secondary' test, students were given no indication of the value of each task except for Task A where this researcher gave them verbal guidelines on the number of main points they could expect to find (between 20 - 30). This advice was considered necessary to prevent students selecting too few

or too many main points, much in the same way as they would be told to limit the length of their Block B essay to four pages.

For the 'primary' test, participants also received no specific value for each point but most of the questions had to be answered in the limited space provided on the answer sheet. This space gave students some idea of the detail expected for each question (see Appendix D).

To ensure that participants responded to the tests as naturally as possible, they were given no indication that the quality of their answers would be evaluated. It was for this reason that students were not informed about the importance of language use, clarity of expression and accuracy of answer.

The results for Group 3 obtained from the statistical method will be discussed in five stages:

1. Analysis of mean scores
2. Analysis of frequency distribution
3. Analysis of standard deviation
4. Analysis of scattergrams
5. Finally, results of the relevancy analysis for the 'secondary' test will be discussed in section C of this chapter.

1. Analysis of Mean Scores

Table 6.5 presents the average scores for each variable within Group 3. The data show that students performed

better in the 'primary' test ($\bar{x}$ = 53.1) than in the 'secondary' test ($\bar{x}$ = 35.97). The CR value (5.09) exceeds the z-value of 2.58 at the 0.01 level showing that there is a statistically significant difference between students' results on the two test instruments. (If the value of CR is more than 2.58 then significance is at or greater than the 1% level). One possible reason for this might lie in the nature of the two tests. The 'secondary' test had closely related tasks, with the answers to tasks requiring selection of relevant points (B, C and D) being dependent on Task A. Consequently, if a student performed badly in Task A he or she would attain poor results for the ensuing tasks. The exception would be task E which simply required an explanation of the term 'secondary source'.

TABLE 6.5 ANALYSIS OF MEAN SCORES

Variables	Group 3 ($\bar{x}$)
Secondary test	35.97
Primary test	53.10
Block B	55.07
Examinations	47.60

The 'primary' test had a greater variety of questions for students to answer, some purely factual and comparatively simple, while others were more difficult because of their interpretive nature. It was therefore possible for students to obtain good marks for the factual-type questions and so improve their overall score for the test.

The difference in mean scores between the Block B and examination results is significant at the 5% level (CR = 2.19) where the z-value is 1.96 on a normal distribution table. Any number of factors could explain the difference in scores between these two variables (motivation, examination anxiety, differences in amount of work, etc) but these differences fall beyond the scope of this study.

The emphasis in the remainder of this section on mean scores is on the relationship between the remaining four paired variables:

1. Secondary test and Block B scores
2. Secondary test and Examination scores
3. Primary test and Block B scores
4. Primary test and Examination scores

The 'secondary' test ($\bar{x}$ = 35.97) and Block B ($\bar{x}$ = 55.07) mean scores are significantly different at the 1% level (CR = 5.96). This difference between average scores may be attributed to factors like the differences in types of material used for evaluation of student performance in the two variables although, superficially, they were both concerned with types of historical skills and their interpretation. It has, however, been shown that the Vista module is abstract in its presentation, and this is also characteristic of the Block B test. The 'secondary' test, however, requires the student to apply his understanding of historical skills to a specific 'real-life' situation. The material for the 'secondary' test was, in other words, unfamiliar to the students, unlike the course material for Block B which students had more time to assimilate. Even though most students

completed the 'secondary' test well within the allocated time, it is still possible that their responses to the test were governed by the time factor. Knowing that the 'secondary' test did not count towards the year mark might also have encouraged many students to complete tasks A-E in the shortest time possible.

The difference in mean scores between the 'secondary' test ($\bar{x}$ = 35.97) and examination ($\bar{x}$ = 47.60) is significant at the 1% level (CR = 3.34). Both scores are unsatisfactory, but the examination mean is higher, possibly because students are able to rote learn material from the study manual and reproduce it in the examination. This was not possible for the 'secondary' test because students were not given an opportunity to learn the material beforehand.

Table 6.5 shows that the means for both tests are below the acceptable standard for a pass at university level, ie 50 percent. The fact that students performed badly both in the 'secondary' test and examination shows that the purpose of this study is justified: Vista students would appear to need guidance and practice in handling secondary sources, and to a lesser extent, primary sources, to improve their academic performance. One possible interpretation of these results is that students at Vista (Soweto) need greater practice in a) making notes from secondary sources, b) writing paragraphs and c) writing history essays to improve their understanding of the nature of historical sources because the final examination for HIS100 is composed of five and 10 mark paragraph

questions and 25 mark essay questions. Examination questions for Blocks A and B are generally short questions which mainly require students to recall rote-learning of the material in the study manuals. The questions are similar to the example of the Block A test question given in Chapter 30. Questions on Blocks C and D require students to interpret material and to present their arguments in essay form. For example, two typical examination questions on block D (White colonisation of S.A.) are:

- Critically discuss the role of missionaries in the emancipation of the Khoikhoi. (25)
- 'The attitude of the VOC towards the free burghers was determined by its character as a commercial firm.' Do you agree? Substantiate your answer. (25)

Insufficient practice in writing essays could be a possible reason for poor examination results in history at Vista. Other reasons for under-achievement at university are numerous (poor schooling, parents' education level, etc.) and cannot be discussed here.

Table 6.5 also shows a close relationship between the mean scores for the 'primary' test ($\bar{x}$ = 53.10) and Block B essay results ($\bar{x}$ = 55.07). The difference between these two means is not significant at the 5% level (CR = 0.60). A similar close relationship between means is what one would have hoped to find between the 'secondary' test and the other variables in Group 3. This would have shown that Vista students were displaying the same level of skills and understanding of the nature of history for each variable.

The final combination of paired variables in Table 6.5 comprises the 'primary' test mean (53.10) and examination mean (47.60). The CR-value (1.54) shows that the difference in means is not significant at the 5% level. This indicates that students handled both the 'primary' test and examination in a comparable manner. Interpretation of these results is given limited attention in this thesis because primary sources play an insignificant role in the final examination.

2. Analysis of Frequency Distribution

To see how scores were grouped in each variable, a frequency table and histogram for each variable was drawn up. The frequency tables for Groups 1-3 are shown in Appendix E (see Tables 1 - 10). Histograms depicting the data from the frequency tables will now be used to analyse only Group 3's results. It will be remembered that this group was chosen to represent the Vista (Soweto) HIS100 population after the CR-test showed that there was no significant difference between Groups 1 and 3 on the 'secondary' test and Groups 2 and 3 on the 'primary' test.

Figure 6.1 shows that the largest single group of students is clustered between 30-39 percent for the 'secondary' test. The main bulk of students obtained results ranging between 20-49 percent. This histogram also shows a positively skewed distribution of scores (Tenbrink, T.D., 1974, p. 443). It also shows clearly how small was the number of students (17%) who achieved a pass mark of 50 percent and over. This suggests that many students lack

the necessary skills to identify effectively main points from a secondary source.

FIGURE 6.1 HISTOGRAM FOR SECONDARY SOURCE TEST ($\bar{x}$ = 35.97)

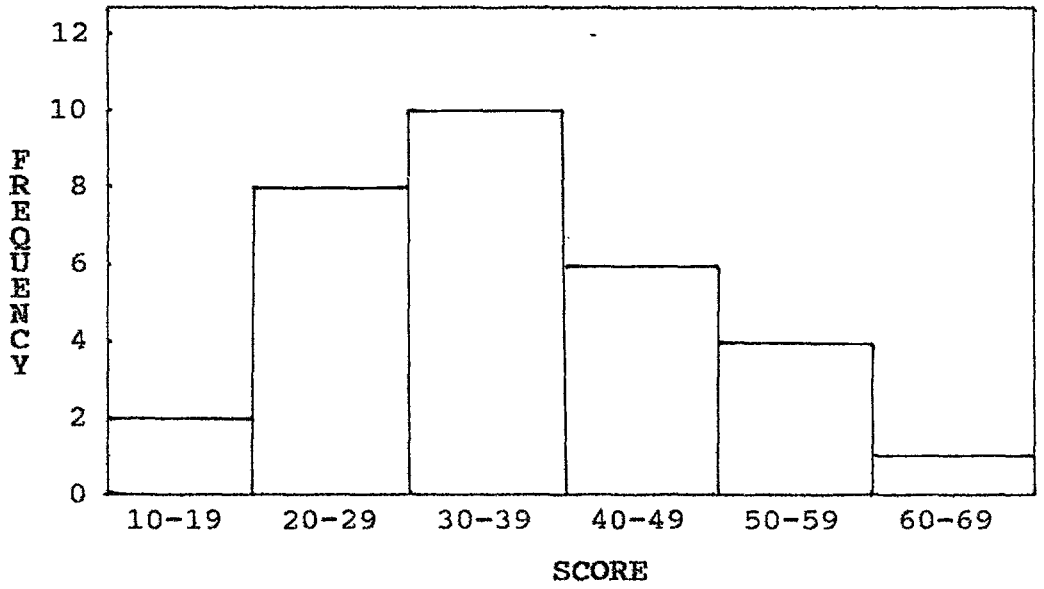
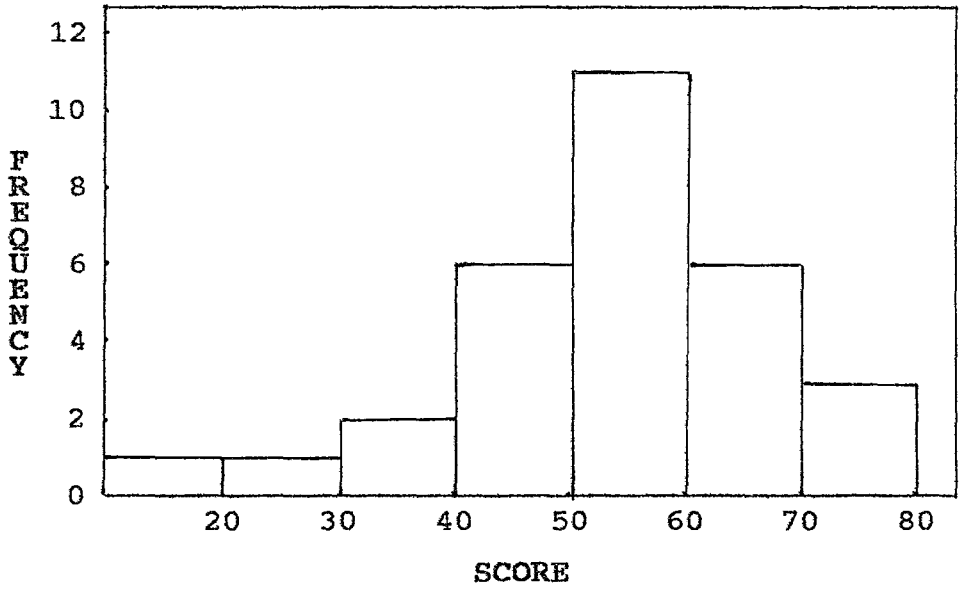


FIGURE 6.2 HISTOGRAM FOR PRIMARY SOURCE TEST ($\bar{x}$ = 53.10)



It has already been shown that students fared considerably better in the 'primary' test than in the 'secondary' test. If one examines Figure 6.2, it is clear that the largest single group of students scored marks between 50-59 percent, a far better result when compared to the 'secondary' test. The number of students who achieved a pass (+50%) for this test is 67 percent. In these circumstances it is not surprising to find the strongly negatively skewed distribution revealed in the histogram.

Figure 6.3, showing Block B results, indicates that the category or class with the highest number of students is 40-49 percent. Most students obtained marks between 40-69 percent with 63 percent scoring above 50 percent. More than a third achieved less than 50 percent for Block B's assignment. The histogram also shows a lack of symmetry, ie the distribution of scores is neither positively or negatively skewed, and is, in fact a bimodal distribution.

The low success rate exhibited by the histogram could be attributed to poor note-making skills and a lack of practice in writing history essays at tertiary level. Block A (Introduction to History) provides students with very little practice in writing history, as was shown in Chapter 3. The results of the questionnaire on note-making, discussed in Chapter 4, reveals that many students (64%) have difficulty in selecting relevant points from a secondary source. Many (72%) also admitted that they sometimes had difficulty in understanding exactly what an essay-type question was asking. These

factors could explain why so many students (37%) scored below 50 percent for the Block B assignment.

FIGURE 6.3 HISTOGRAM FOR BLOCK B SCORES ($\bar{x}$ = 55.07)

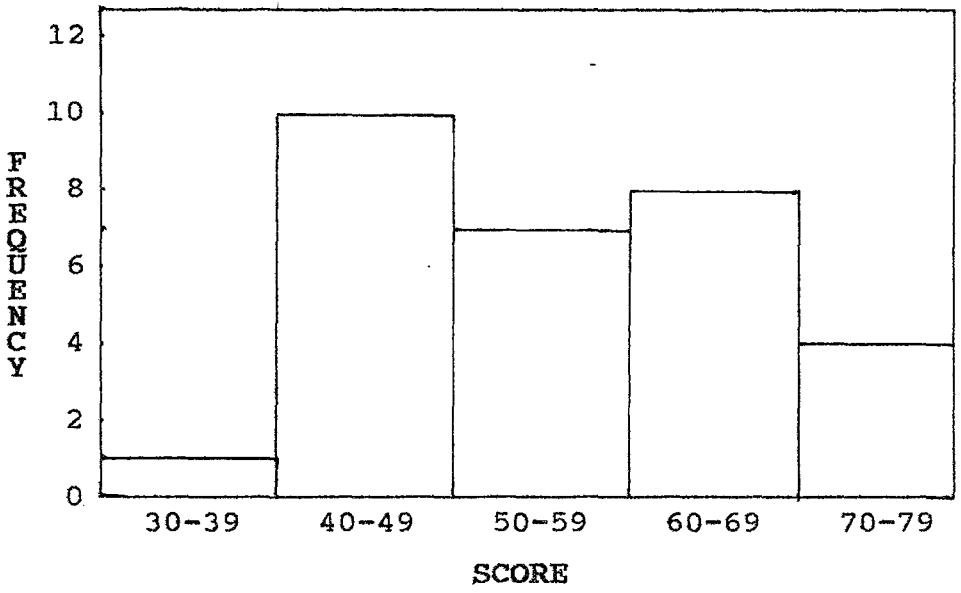
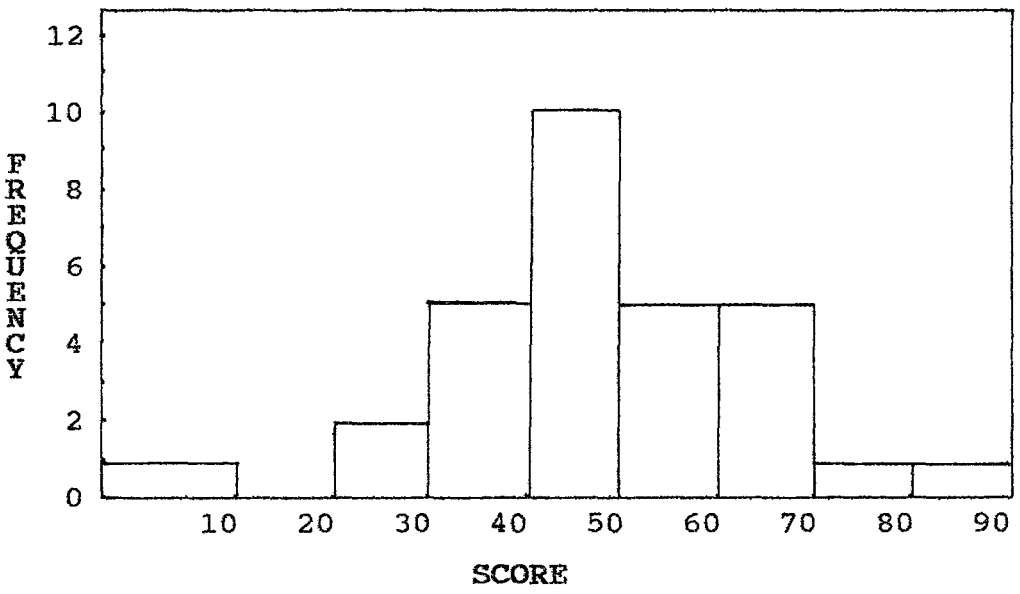


FIGURE 6.4 HISTOGRAM FOR EXAMINATION RESULTS ($\bar{x}$ = 47.60)



The histogram for the examination results (Figure 6.4) shows the largest bulk of students (93%) attaining scores between 30-69 percent, with only 40 percent achieving a pass of 50 percent. The shape of the histogram may be described as fairly symmetrical. It is not within the scope of this report to explain why a majority of HIS100 students failed the 1990 final examination. It is possible, nevertheless, to argue that an emphasis on skills training in comprehension, note-making and writing in history could improve such unsatisfactory results.

3. Analysis of Standard Deviation

To establish the variability of scores for Group 3, ie whether the scores were reasonably close together or spread out, the standard deviation of each variable was calculated. Table 6.6 displays the range and standard deviation for each variable in Group 3.

TABLE 6.6 RANGE AND STANDARD DEVIATION FOR GROUP 3 VARIABLES

VARIABLE	RANGE	MEAN	SD
Secondary Source Test	47	35.97	12.69
Primary Source Test	57	53.10	13.34
Block B	44	55.07	12.10
Examination	85	47.60	14.27

The range is not considered a very stable measure of variability (Gay, 1990, p. 348), but in Table 6.6 it is useful in showing how the scores for the examination are more widely spread. To illustrate, the highest score for

the HIS100 1990 examination was 85 percent and the lowest zero percent. The next lowest score was 22 percent, thus it is highly probable that the student who scored zero did not write the examination hence the particularly wide range of scores when compared to the other variables in the table. The standard deviation for all Group 3 variables is large. This means that students generally achieved a wide range of results for each variable.

4. Analysis of Scattergrams and Correlation Coefficient

To show visually the strength or magnitude of the correlation between the six paired variables for Group 3, a series of scattergrams were drawn up (Borg and Gall, 1989, p. 595). The appropriate 'r' value for each paired variable is then discussed in conjunction with the relevant scattergram. The formula used to calculate the Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient (r) was the one recommended by Behr (Behr, 1983, p. 45).

The first scattergram (Figure 6.5) shows a very low relationship between students' scores for the 'secondary' test and 'primary' test ($r = 0.19$). Knowing a student's score on the X-axis (primary source) would thus have little value in predicting his or her score on the Y-axis (secondary source).

FIGURE 6.5: SCATTERGRAM FOR GROUP 3
SECONDARY AND PRIMARY SCORES

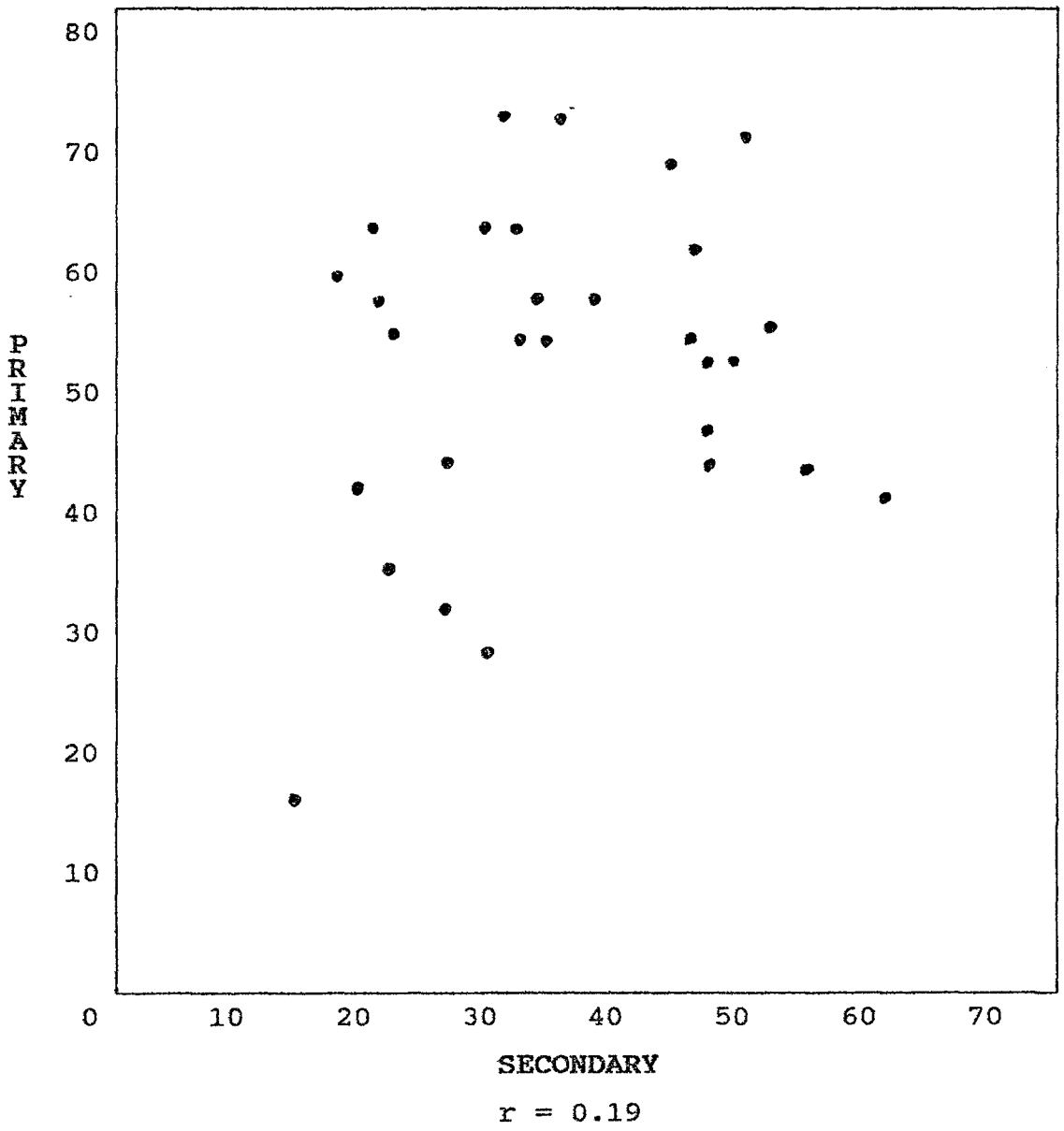


FIGURE 6.6: SCATTERGRAM FOR GROUP 3
SECONDARY AND BLOCK B SCORES

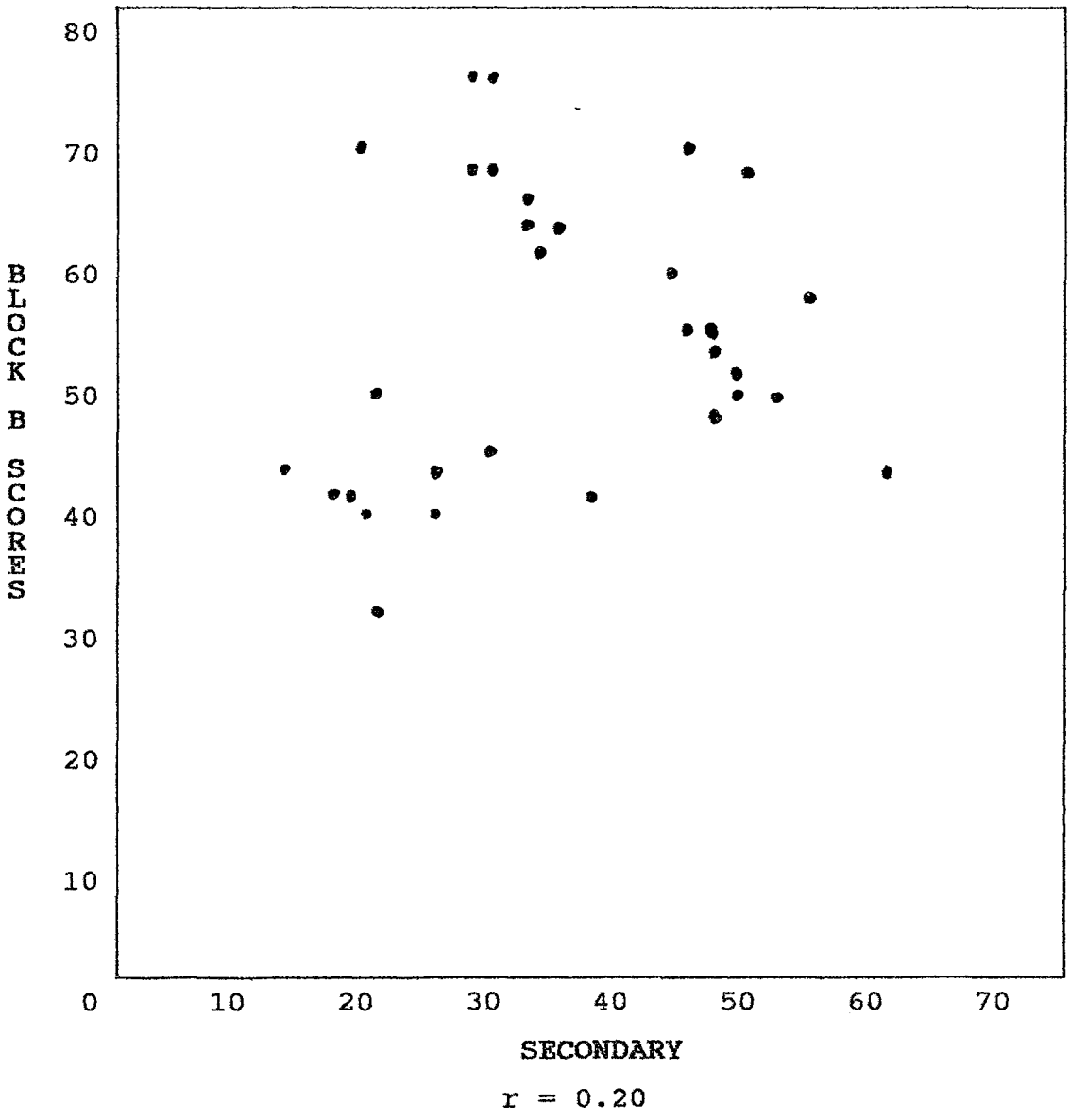


FIGURE 6.7: SCATTERGRAM FOR GROUP 3
SECONDARY AND EXAMINATION SCORES

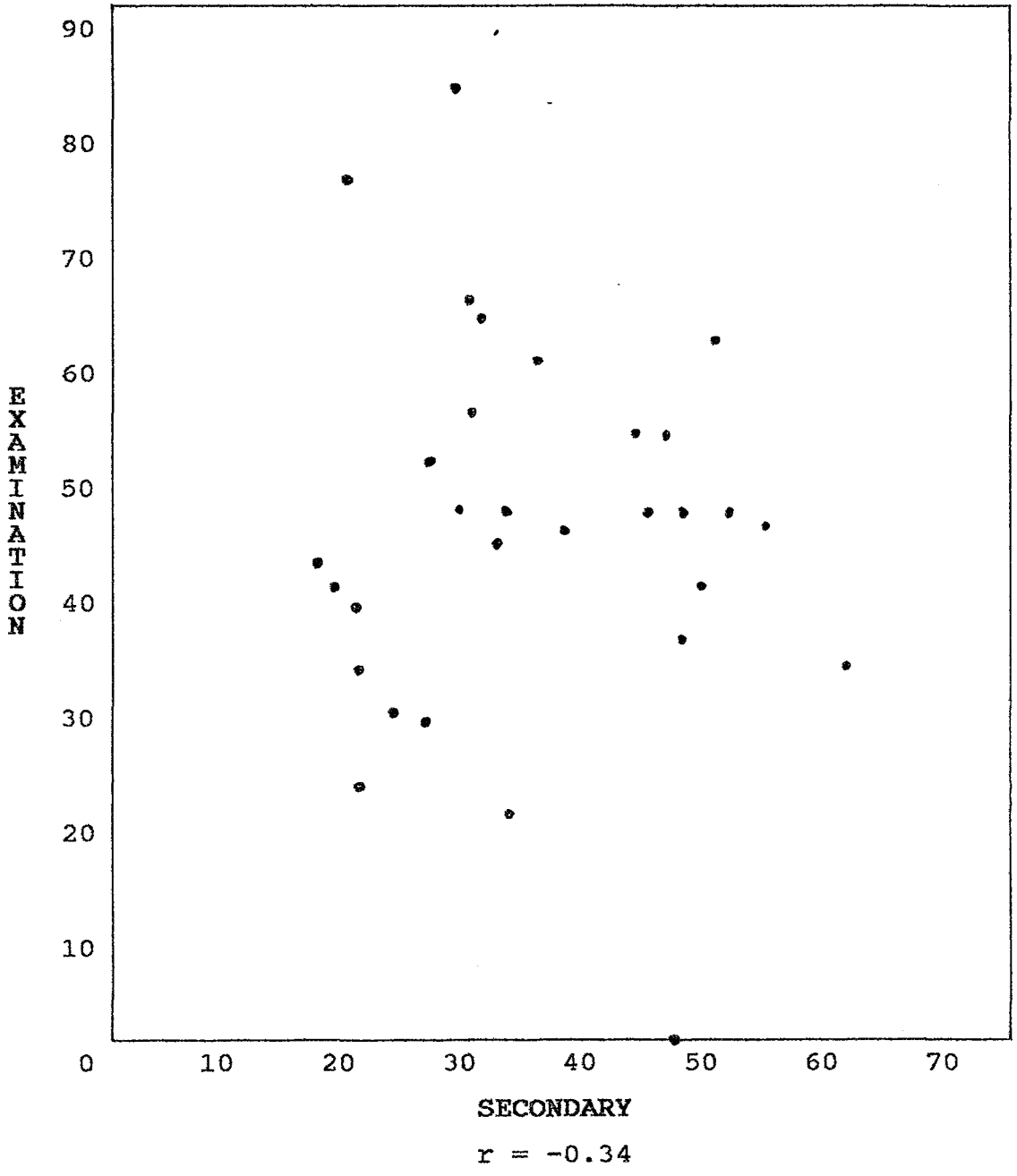


FIGURE 6.8: SCATTERGRAM FOR GROUP 3
PRIMARY AND BLOCK B SCORES

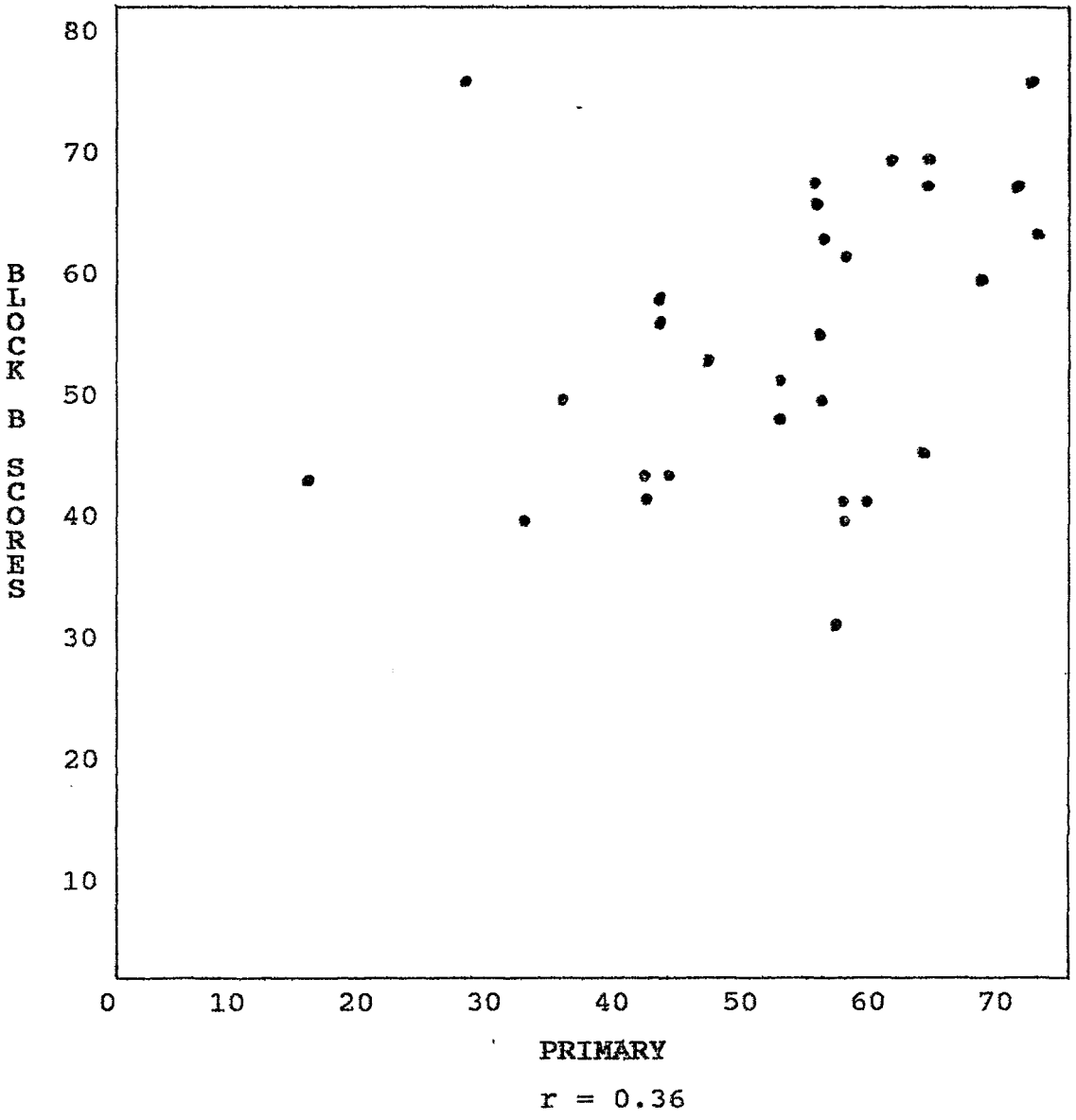


FIGURE 6.9: SCATTERGRAM FOR GROUP 3
PRIMARY AND EXAMINATION SCORES

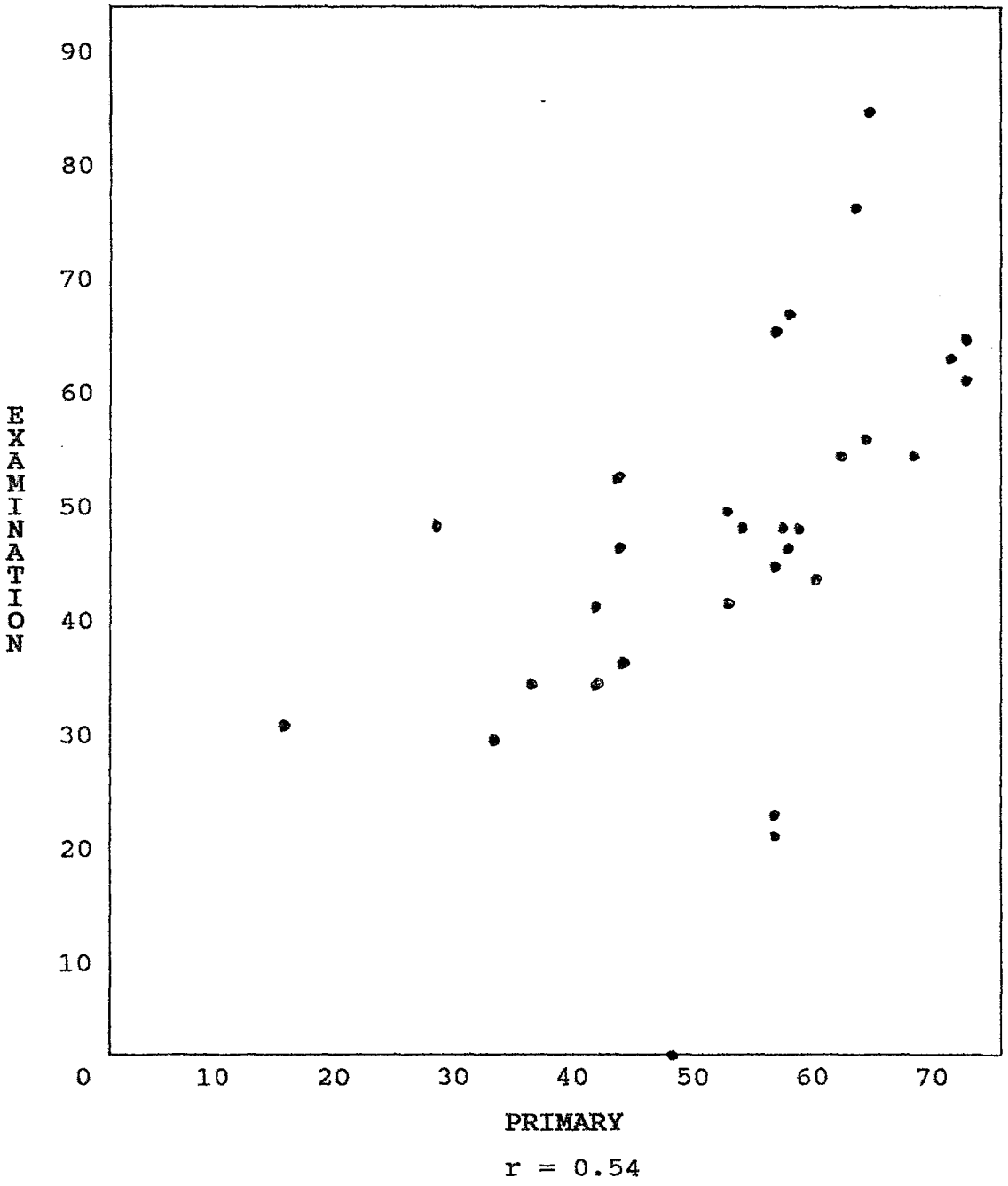
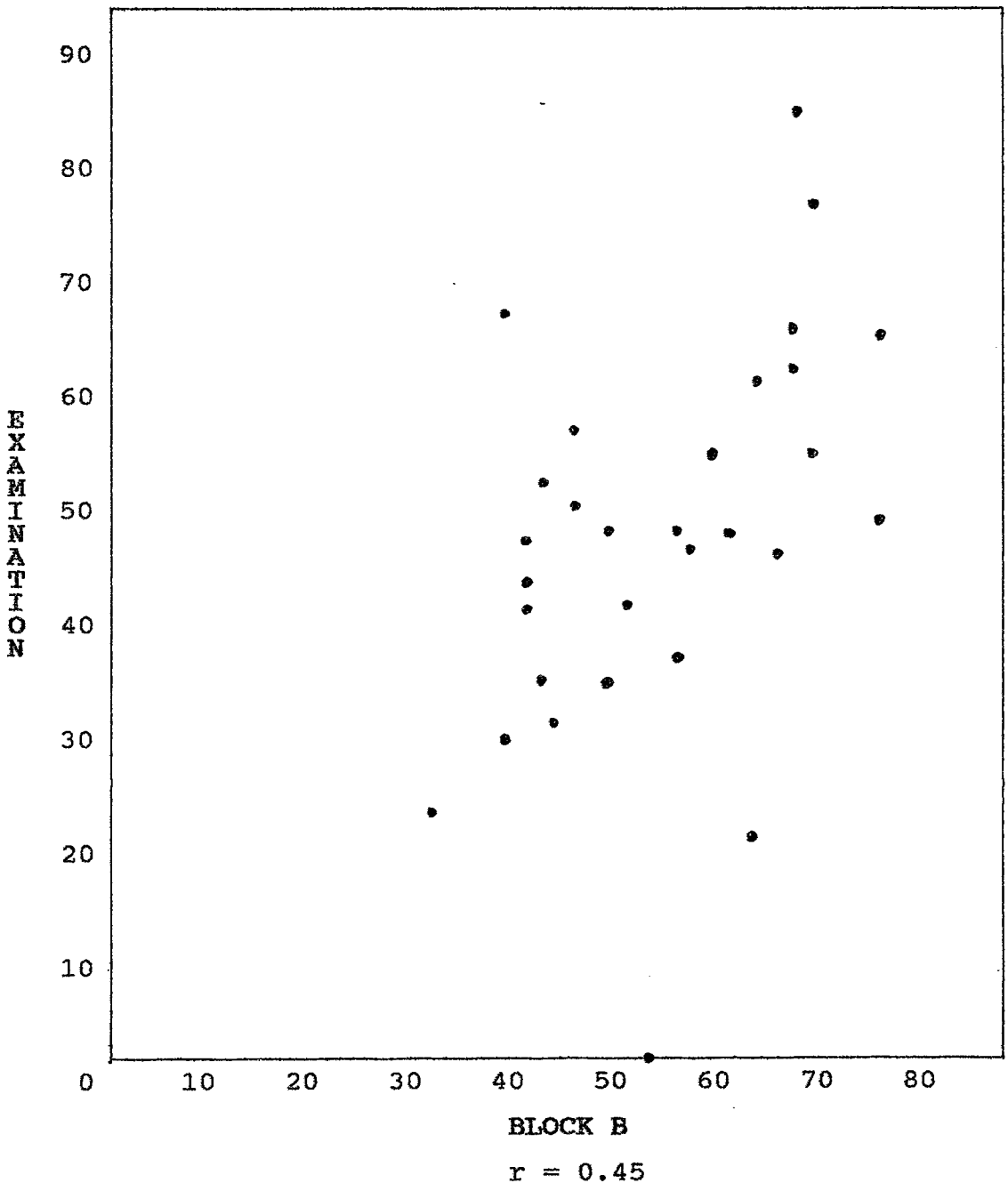


FIGURE 6.10: SCATTERGRAM FOR GROUP 3
BLOCK B AND EXAMINATION SCORES



The relationship between the 'secondary' test and Block B shown in the second scattergram (Figure 6.6) also reveals a very low correlation (r=0.20). The objective of an evidence-questioning, skills-orientated method of teaching the nature of history would be to achieve a high positive correlation between the 'secondary' test and Block B variables. Further research would be necessary to evaluate the efficacy of such an approach to teaching history at tertiary level.

The third scattergram (Figure 6.7) shows that there is an indifferent relationship between the 'secondary' test and examination scores. The r-value (-0.34) shows a very slight negative relationship between the scores of the two variables.

The first three scattergrams depict low or near zero correlation for the scores of the different paired variables. The last three scattergrams portray a higher degree of correlation. There is at least some semblance of uniformity in the scores achieved by individual students on the two forms of assessment. The scattergram for 'primary' test and Block B scores (Figure 6.8) has an r-value of 0.363, ie a positive correlation although the strength of the relationship is slight. For the 'primary' test and examination scores, the scattergram (Figure 6.9) also shows a fairly positive correlation between scores (r = 0.539). Figure 6.10 is very similar in appearance to Figure 6.9, ie the scattergram shows a fairly positive relationship between scores (r = 0.45). In other words, if a regression line (the line of best fit) were drawn

from left to right, most scores would be clustered at a reasonable distance from this line in Figure 6.9 and Figure 6.10. The presence of a zero score on the Y-axis (primary) may be termed an 'outlier' because a student's score on one axis was markedly different 'from the general pattern established by other subjects in the sample' (Borg and Gall, 1989, p. 368). This student or outlier probably scored zero on the X-axis because he or she never wrote the examination.

TABLE 6.7 CORRELATION COEFFICIENT AND CR VALUES

NO.	PAIRED VARIABLES	r	CR	LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE *
1	Secondary-Primary	0.19	5.09	Significant at 1%
2	Secondary-Block B	0.20	5.96	Significant at 1%
3	Secondary-Exam	-0.34	3.34	Significant at 1%
4	Primary-Block B	0.36	0.60	Not significant at 5%
5	Primary-Exam	0.54	1.54	Not significant at 5%
6	Block B-Exam	0.45	2.19	Significant at 5%

* If CR exceeds 2.58 (z-value), then difference considered significant at the 1% level. If CR exceeds 1.96 (z-value), then difference significant at 5% level.

To conclude this section on the results of the quantitative analysis, the implications of the results will be assessed.

Firstly, students seemed to do somewhat better in the 'primary' test than in the 'secondary' test. It may be possible, therefore, with further training, to get them to examine evidence in a more critical manner. It would seem that the fairly high correlation between Block B and

examination results is due, possibly, to the similar type of evaluation method, ie both tests ask for much regurgitation of material from the study guide.

Another important feature of these results is how low all the 'r' values are with the 'secondary' test (see Table 6.7). There is even a negative 'r' between Secondary and Examination results, ie students who did well on one test tended to do badly on the other and vice versa, even though the relationship is slight. A negative correlation might mean, in this instance, that one is comparing very different kinds of test. It may be that the Secondary test, especially those tasks requiring relevance, asked students to think independently and critically, something they were probably never taught sufficiently at school or during the Block A module. This could explain why they did badly in the Secondary test - they were unable to rote learn the material unlike for the Block B test or final HIS100 examination.

C. RESULTS OF RELEVANCY ANALYSIS

One of the aims of this study was to ascertain the skills of the Vista sample in selecting relevant or main points from secondary sources. Such a skill is necessary for writing history essays and also for preparing learning material for tests and examinations. Group 3 students' selection of main points for Tasks A - D of the 'secondary' test were used to calculate the proportion of relevant to irrelevant points, based upon a flexible interpretation of the memorandum in Appendix C.

In the earlier parts of this thesis, the students' responses to Tasks B, C and D were assessed, exclusively, on their ability to select, from their summaries (Task A) those points needed to answer the three specific questions about the Bakhtiari passage.

There is, however, another way of looking at their responses. In some cases, a student might not only omit one or more points needed to give a complete answer to a question, but he might also include other points which are not relevant to the question. Some way of assessing this kind of response is necessary.

In an extreme case, a student might simply repeat each point from his summary of the passage as the answer to each of the specific and more restricted questions. In conventional techniques, such a student would score full marks for each of the questions. This would not mean, however, that he was able to recognise relevance.

No students were as lacking in discrimination as this hypothetical example. Three examples can be given, however, of types of inappropriate or irrelevant responses. Two of these are taken from Task B and one from Task D. The marking memorandum for Task B suggested that eight points from the initial passage were relevant to answer the question. The first example would be of a student who selected 12 points of which six coincided with the memorandum, so that he scored 6/8 (or 75%) for relevancy. Some account, however, needs to be taken of

his six inappropriate or irrelevant points. One way would be to give him a score of six irrelevant points out of the eight needed for the question (6/8 or 75%).

A second example might be that of a student who selected only six points of which four were correct (enabling him to score 4/8 or 50%). His irrelevancy score would be 2/8 (25%).

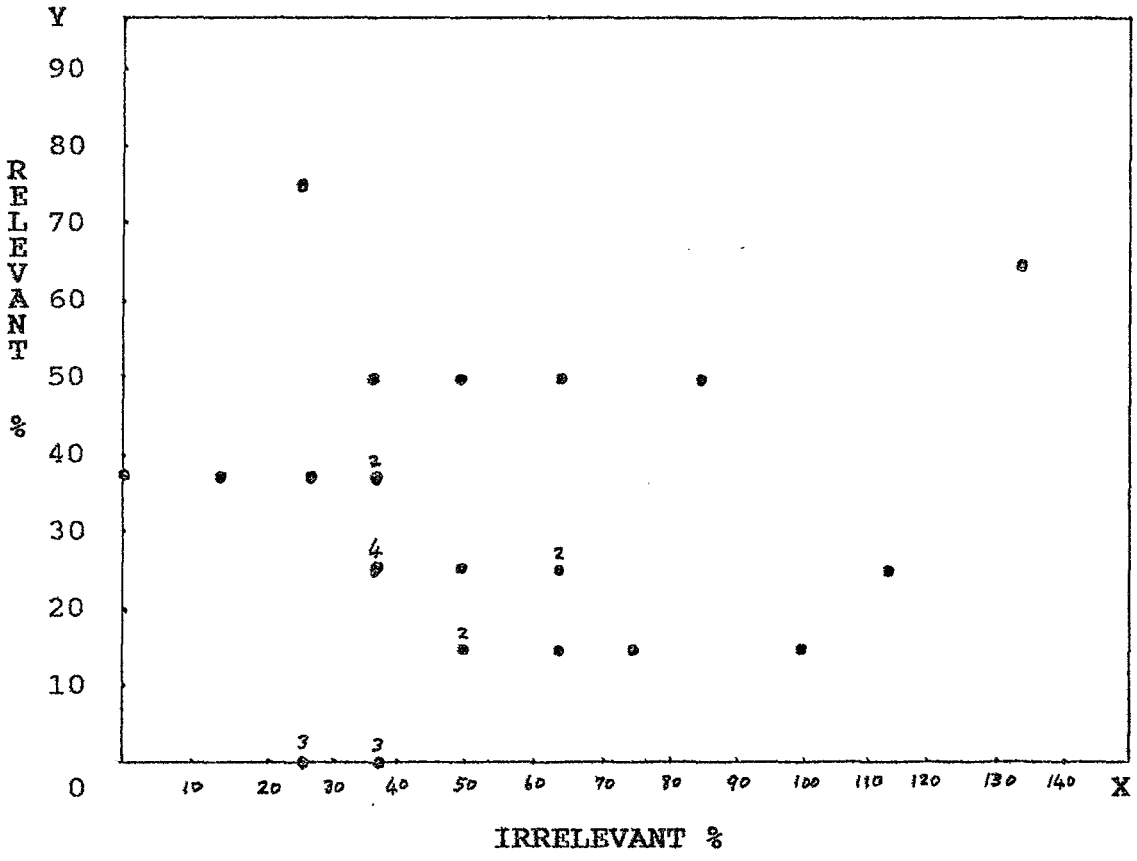
A third example is taken from Task D, where only three points from the original text are required for an adequate answer. A student might choose only two points, but both of them were correct, and so would gain a relevancy score of 2/3 (67%). He would have no irrelevant points, and, therefore, would score zero percent for irrelevancy.

In this scoring procedure, the lower the relevance score and the higher the irrelevance score, the worse the student would have done in each of Tasks B, C or D. In the subsequent analysis of relevance and irrelevance scores, material is presented in percentages only.

To see pictorially how individual students in Group 3 (N = 30) fared in each measure (relevant and irrelevant), scattergrams for each of Tasks B, C and D were drawn up. The relevant against irrelevant percentage scores for each student was plotted, with the horizontal axis (X) in each figure referring to relevant scores while the vertical axis (Y) refers to irrelevant scores. Each point or co-ordinate in the scattergrams represents a pair of scores for one or more students. In the cases where more

than one student share the same scores (or co-ordinate), the number of students sharing that particular co-ordinate is indicated above the appropriate point. For example, the first point on the horizontal axis in Figure 6.11 shows the number '3' above the point representing co-ordinates 0 and 25, thus three students obtained the same relevance and irrelevance scores for Task B.

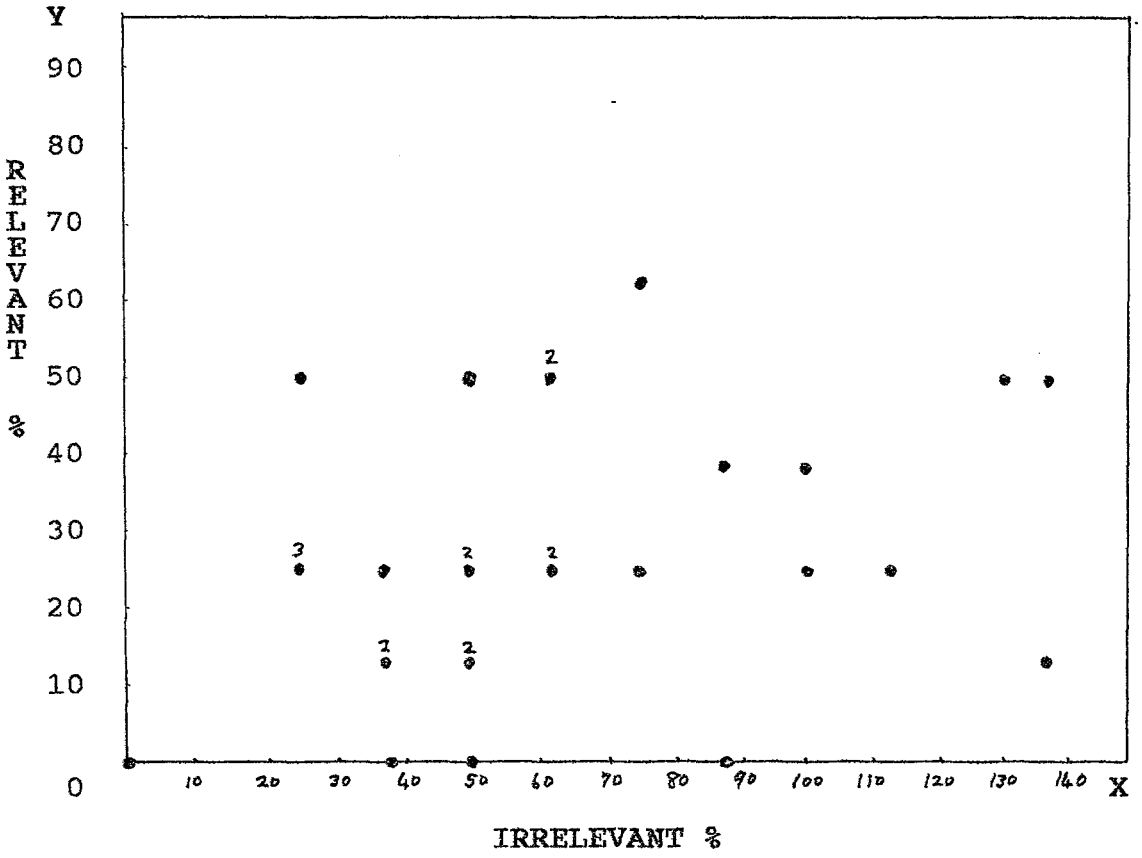
FIGURE 6.11: SCATTERGRAM FOR TASK B



The scattergram for Task B (Figure 6.11) shows that no linear pattern exists between relevant and irrelevant scores. In this case, X cannot be used to predict Y because no systematic relationship between relevant and

irrelevant scores for Task B seems to exist.

FIGURE 6.12: SCATTERGRAM FOR TASK C

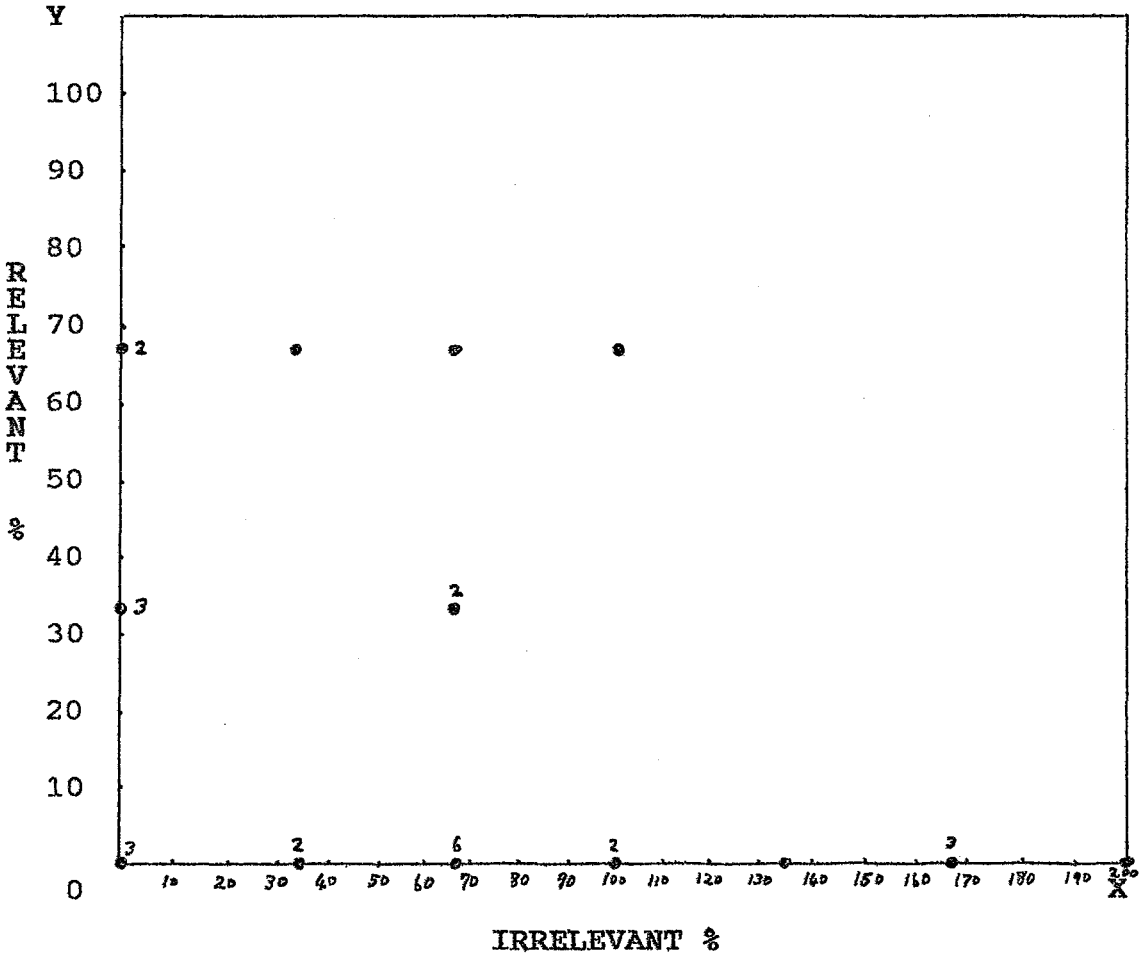


Task C's scattergram also shows that virtually no relationship exists between relevant and irrelevant scores (Figure 6.12). The only pattern noticeable is that the score of 25 on the Y-axis is matched by virtually the whole range of scores on the X-axis, but this trend is insufficiently developed to tell us anything useful about the relationship between relevant and irrelevant scores for Task C.

The scattergram for Task D (Figure 6.13) shows a limited

general pattern between X-values and Y-values. What is apparent is that a zero value for relevancy (Y-axis) is matched by almost the whole range of irrelevancy scores (X-axis), ie from 33% to 200%. Conversely, a zero value for irrelevancy (X-axis) is matched by almost two thirds of the relevancy scores (Y-axis), ie from 33% to 100%. Nevertheless, this data tells us very little about the relationship between students' performances in the selection of relevant and irrelevant material.

FIGURE 6.13: SCATTERGRAM FOR TASK D



The general trend in all three scattergrams suggests that there is no distinct relationship between the selection of relevant and irrelevant scores. In other words, a student who scored fairly well in the selection of relevant points for Tasks B and C could just as easily score badly in his selection of relevant points for Task D. The data also shows that a student could score high marks for irrelevancy in all three tasks (a bad score) while another student could score well for relevancy in all three tasks (a good score). Thus, where there is virtually no pattern in the data, no correlation seems to exist.

A series of stem-and-leaf diagrams will be used in this section to illustrate the shape of the distribution of scores attained by students in their selection of relevant and irrelevant points for the 'secondary' test. These diagrams are also useful in showing whether the data forms a normal distribution or whether such a distribution is skewed in a particular direction (Borg and Gall, 1989, p. 367). It is important to note that both sets of scores (relevant and irrelevant) represent frequency distributions and do not reveal sets of scores for individual students.

A stem-and-leaf display is useful for exploratory data analysis. It is a 'convenient method for displaying all of the individual scores on a particular measure' (Borg and Gall, 1989, p. 364). It also allows one to condense the data, much as a frequency distribution does, but the individuality of the data is retained, ie all the

individual numbers or scores can be recovered by putting the 'stem' with a 'leaf'. For example, the middle digits in Figure 6.14 provide the stem while the digits on either side of the stem provide the leaf. To illustrate further, the number 6 in the middle column, or stem, of Figure 6.14 represents 60%, thus one student scored 63% for relevance and five students scored 63% for irrelevance for Task B.

FIGURE 6.14 STEM-AND-LEAF DIAGRAM FOR TASK B: RELEVANT AND IRRELEVANT SELECTION OF POINTS

Relevant Score		Irrelevant Score
00000	0	0
333333	1	3
5555555	2	555555
888888	3	8888888
	4	
0000	5	0000
3	6	33333
5	7	5
	8	8
	9	
	10	00
	11	3
	12	
	13	8
N = 30		N = 30
Mean = 27		Mean = 52

In Figure 6.14 (Task B), the diagram shows that most scores for relevancy are gathered at the lower end of the scale. In other words, a majority of students scored poor results for relevance ($\bar{x}$ = 27) when answering the question on why the Bakhtiari lifestyle had hardly changed over hundreds of years. For irrelevancy, students fared better with 15/30 scoring below 50 percent ($\bar{x}$ = 52). The fact that 24/30 students achieved less than 50 percent for relevance could be attributable to two main factors: a) students found the Task difficult or b) a poor selection

of main points for Task A would probably affect their selection of points for Task B adversely. Thus, their initial note-making of main points is crucial to the success of any task or assignment they may tackle, hence the need for practice in this domain of history.

FIGURE 6.15 STEM-AND-LEAF DIAGRAM FOR TASK C: RELEVANT AND IRRELEVANT SELECTION OF POINTS

Relevant Score		Irrelevant Score
00000	0	0
33333	1	
55555555555	2	5555
88	3	8888
	4	
000000	5	0000000
3	6	3333
	7	55
	8	88
	9	
	10	00
	11	3
	12	5
	13	88
N = 30		N = 30
Mean = 26		Mean = 63

Figure 6.15 displays the results for Task C. The scores for relevancy are clustered around the lower range of values; a pattern similar to that for Task B's relevant scores. This outcome for Task C shows that over 75 percent of the sample scored less than 50 percent for relevancy ($\bar{x}$ = 26). In contrast, the number of students achieving above 50 percent for irrelevancy is 21/30 (70%), an unsatisfactory result. Another important feature of this diagram (Figure 6.15) is the number of students scoring over 100 percent for irrelevancy (6/30 or 20%). They selected far more irrelevant points than the number of relevant points identified by the memorandum (8) to

answer the question 'Write a paragraph on why the lifestyle of the Bakhtiari has hardly changed ... list the number of each point you would use as indicated in your summary of Task A'.

FIGURE 6.16 STEM-AND-LEAF DIAGRAM FOR TASK D: RELEVANT AND IRRELEVANT SELECTION OF POINTS

Relevant Score		Irrelevant Score
000000000000000000	0	0000000000
	1	
	2	
33333	3	333
	4	
	5	
77777	6	777777777
	7	
	8	
	9	
00	10	000
	11	
	12	
	13	3
	14	
	15	
	16	777
	18	
	19	
	20	0
N = 30		N = 30
Mean = 23		Mean = 61

Figure 6.16 shows a large number of students (18/30) scoring zero percent for relevance. A mean score of 23 percent for relevancy, coupled with a high mean for irrelevancy (61), would seem to suggest that many students struggled to understand the significance of the Bazuft river crossing when dealing with Task D. This could be attributable to most students disregarding this important aspect of the Bakhtiari's journey when summarising the main points of the article in Task A. The reason for a fairly high number of students scoring zero percent for

irrelevance (10/30) may be ascribed to three different factors: a) some students provided no answers for Task D, b) others obtained 3/3 for relevance (or zero percent for irrelevance) and c) the remainder misinterpreted or misunderstood the question. The latter result should be the goal of all students: to achieve zero percent for irrelevance or 100 percent for relevance when identifying material for learning or essay writing.

To conclude this section on relevancy, a brief discussion of the mean scores for relevance and irrelevance will follow. For Tasks B, C and D of the 'secondary' test, the mean score for relevancy is less than the mean score for irrelevancy. When confronted with a specific question on secondary material, most students demonstrate an inadequate understanding of what constitutes a relevant point for that particular question. This problem is also evident in the majority of essays written by HIS100 and HIS200 students at Vista. The findings of the questionnaire, discussed in Chapter 4, confirm that students often struggle with the interpretation of essay questions and the selection of relevant points. One could hypothesize that training in note-making may improve students' results in handling secondary material (Norton and Hartley, 1986; Hidi and Klaiman, 1983; Peck and Hannafin, 1983). Providing Vista students with note-making training to deal specifically with secondary sources in history, and the effects of such training, could provide the basis for further research.

In the final chapter of this thesis, the research findings

will be summarized, their implications discussed and some recommendations will be made.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was carried out to investigate a number of different methods employed for teaching the nature of history, specifically the roles of primary and secondary sources in history writing and interpreting, and to establish the competence of Vista HIS100 students in handling such historical sources. If the students exhibited a poor understanding or inadequate handling of primary and secondary sources, then it could be argued that there should be a change in the Vista method of teaching such historical material. Using some of the ideas in the Amherst, History 13-16, NECC, Open University and UNISA approaches to teaching the nature of primary and secondary sources, a restructuring of the Vista teaching method might be recommended.

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH METHOD

The basic research method used was essentially twofold. Once the topic had been introduced (Chapter 1), the next step was to examine a number of secondary education methods used to teach students about the nature of history (Chapter 2). An investigation of some approaches to teaching tertiary students about the characteristics of primary and secondary sources then followed (Chapter 3). To establish the context of the research and to show something of the background of the research sample, a biographical questionnaire was completed by first year

history students at Vista University (Soweto). The results were analysed and discussed in Chapter 4.

Once the sample was identified, the research method and some preliminary findings were described (Chapter 5). A number of statistical procedures were employed to obtain qualitative and quantitative data from the final sample (N = 30). The results of the research method were explained in conjunction with appropriate figures and tables (Chapter 6).

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Group 3's results on both tests instruments ('secondary' and 'primary'), and also on the official forms of assessment (Block B assignment and final examination), produced a low level of performance (see Table 6.6). It was found that the 'secondary' test ($\bar{x}$ = 35.97 and SD = 12.69) yielded the poorest results, followed by the Examination ($\bar{x}$ = 47.6 and SD = 14.27), 'primary' test ($\bar{x}$ = 53.1 and SD = 13.34) and, finally, the Block B results ($\bar{x}$ = 55.07 and SD = 12.1). The poor performance of students in the 'secondary' test is a cause for concern, particularly their selection of relevant material for specific tasks (see Appendix C). Such a skill is crucial to the study of history, particularly for first-year students, because it is required frequently for writing essays, preparing for tests, etc.

There are a number of possible reasons one could give for the poor results displayed in the 'secondary' test. It is

likely that first-year students at Vista have little experience in relevance selection: it is unlikely that they received adequate training in such a skill at school (68% admitted to having received no such training - see Chapter 4). It would seem that there is a need for it to be built into university 'tutorial-type' training, currently under-utilised at Vista university.

The heavy dependence of students on the Study Manual to provide them with all the necessary details inhibits the need for students to learn the skill of selecting relevant points. Thus, for the various block tests and the final examination, everything in the Manual is relevant; everything is learned and reproduced in mainly rote-memory answers to rote-memory questions. The qualitative assessment of answers to both test instruments, discussed in Chapter 6, also yielded generally poor results (see Table 6.3). The quality of answers was assessed according to specific criteria (linked to language use, clarity of expression, etc), with answers being evaluated in terms of three broad categories: a 'good' answer was awarded between 70-100 percent, a 'fair' answer 50-69 percent and a 'poor' answer between 0-49 percent.

The conclusions and recommendations ensuing from the research results will now be discussed.

CONCLUSIONS

The qualitative analysis of the 'secondary' test revealed that students achieved better results for task E (defining a secondary source) when compared to Task A (listing main

points from a secondary source). This outcome was attributed to a poor command of language and inaccuracy of selection of points displayed by the responses to Task A. The poor quality of answers noted in Task A could also be linked to the nature of the test instrument. It is possible that many students considered the prospect of making notes on the main points of the Bakhtiari article a fairly daunting task and, therefore, lacked the necessary motivation to do it well, especially as the test instrument did not contribute in any way towards the year mark.

The really poor answers, in terms of quality, to the various questions posed by the 'secondary' test (and also the 'primary' test), have a number of wider implications. One is the problem of generating ideas or concepts in a non-mother tongue. Perhaps a solution to this problem is greater practice in language use, in this case, English. Another way to improve students' skills in handling historical sources, written in English, is working on comprehension summaries. Practice in dealing with interpretive questions could lead to greater confidence on the part of students in coping with such questions.

The quality of answers for Task E of the 'secondary' test were considerably better. Most students displayed a reasonable understanding of the term 'secondary source'. The reason for 43 percent of the sample scoring poor marks for quality of answer was ascribed to an inadequate control of language to express clearly their understanding

of the term. It could also be, however, that 'bad writing' is a 'direct consequence of an inability to read and think critically' (Stone, 1983, p.320).

In comparison to the secondary source test, a qualitative analysis of the primary source test demonstrated that the sample achieved slightly better marks in terms of quality (see Table 6.3). Students seemed to find the primary source test easier to handle, perhaps because the extract and questions were shorter and simpler, the material easier to interpret and they may have had more time to spend on each question due to the brevity of the slavery article.

For the quantitative analysis of the research results, a number of significant findings can be discussed. Firstly, the mean scores for the secondary source test ($\bar{x}$ = 35.97) and primary source test ($\bar{x}$ = 53.10) reveal that students achieved far better results in the latter test. Group 3's mean score for Block B ($\bar{x}$ = 55.07) has a closer relationship with the primary source test ($\bar{x}$ = 53.1) than with the examination result ($\bar{x}$ = 47.6). The difference between the Block B and 'primary' test mean is not significant (CR = 0.60) whereas the difference between the Block B mean and Examination mean is significant at the 5% level (CR = 2.19). The average scores for the examination and secondary source test are both below the pass mark of 50 percent.

An evaluation of the mean scores for each variable of Group 3 was followed by the calculation of the standard

deviation for this group. A high standard deviation for each variable (see Table 6.6) shows that the sample produced a wide range of results with little uniformity in the spread of scores.

Histograms depicting secondary source, primary source and examination results show a relatively normal distribution of scores, ie fairly symmetrical in shape. In contrast, the Block B histogram shows little symmetry with 10/30 students scoring 40-49 percent, 7/30 scoring 50-59 percent and 8/30 scoring 60-69 percent (see Figure 6.3). The distribution of scores is not normal, but is bi-modal. This implies that, although a majority of students found the Block B assignment relatively easy to pass, a large group also found it quite difficult and failed to pass.

The scattergrams for the first three variable combinations (secondary and primary; secondary and Block B; secondary and examination) portray little or no correlation. For the last two variable combinations (primary and Block B; primary and examination) a reasonably positive correlation exists. It could be concluded from these results that students require more practice in dealing with secondary source material. This does not mean that students were more adept at handling primary sources. It may have been that the 'primary' test was easier than the 'secondary' test. Another factor which accounts for the better results in the 'primary' test is that the questions themselves have done the 'relevance selection' for the students. They were asked to note similarities and

differences between particular slaves, and having noted these, it was easier for them to explain why some slaves were cheaper than others (question c). Yet even with this aid, less than a quarter of the students could obtain a good score. It is also possible that students may have done better in the 'secondary' test had the article been shorter, the topic on something other than the Bakhtiari, etc. Nevertheless, student inadequacy at Vista in dealing with secondary material is a cause for concern as so much of their study of history revolves around secondary sources.

The results of the relevancy analysis, displayed by scattergrams (Figures 6.11, 6.12, 6.13) and stem-and-leaf diagrams (Figures 6.14, 6.15, 6.16), show that, in general, students fared badly in the selection of relevant points for tasks B, C and D. The scattergrams show that virtually no relationship exists between the students' selection of relevant and irrelevant points, ie students who scored good results for Task B in terms of relevance could just as easily perform badly in their selection of relevant points for either Task C or D. Most students seemed to demonstrate inadequate skills in identifying relevant points applicable to a specific question. Judging from these poor results for relevance, it would seem that students would probably benefit from greater practice in selecting important points from prose material.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A review of some of the approaches taken in teaching

students about the nature of secondary and primary sources (Chapter 2 and 3) compels one to favour the skills-based approach to teaching history at both the secondary and tertiary levels. This mode of teaching history seems the most likely to succeed in creating a critical thinking history student. In his evaluation of the History 13-16 project, Shemilt found that pupils tended to understand history better when solving problems linked to the sources at their disposal (Shemilt, 1980, p. 52).

If one assumes that the nature of history is inquiry-based, then rote learning of facts for the sake of knowledge is a distortion of the discipline. Thus, it would make 'infinitely more sense to train the student to be a sophisticated and careful inquirer than it does to fill him full of facts' (Brown, 1965, p. 446). Knowing that the majority of students at Vista plan to become teachers (70%: see Chapter 4), it would presumably make more sense to teach them an awareness of the true meaning of history, which is acquired more readily through an enquiry-based method, rather than the traditional Vista approach which emphasises rote learning of 'known' facts. The limited material resources (both secondary and primary) of the Vista libraries, however, and the financial constraints on the University as a whole, would make the direct application of an enquiry-based method for the teaching of Block A, HIS100, inappropriate as an immediate goal, but a start could be made on a very small scale. Examples of original documents could be incorporated into tutorial letters with accompanying

written exercises, similar to the Open University system discussed in Chapter 3. Seminar periods could also provide a forum for critical discussion of concrete examples of primary and secondary sources.

To improve students' skills in selecting important or relevant points from secondary sources, a shortcoming demonstrated by this study, students at Vista should receive instruction and practical exercises in note-making. This would assist them to improve their essay marks and, hopefully, their overall academic performance. Although research has shown that note-making from written sources does not necessarily facilitate effective learning (Hidi and Klaiman, 1983, p. 378), it does not imply that note-making techniques have little value for essay writing. Vista students, mostly studying history in their second language, need practice in expressing themselves in written English and the most effective way to improve their writing is probably through practice. Students who perform badly in academic tasks are usually those unable to differentiate important or relevant points from irrelevant or superfluous ideas (Kiewra, K., 1987, p. 235). The Vista sample which participated in the secondary source test instrument manifested similar tendencies; perhaps instruction, training and practice at the beginning of the HIS100 course would assist students in handling historical material before they write their first full-length essay in Block B. Further study in note-making training and related skills, together with an evaluation of the efficacy of such training, could provide another fertile

area of research.

It should be remembered, however, that these recommendations or suggestions depend on the diligence, motivation and long-term goals of both student and teacher. Very little research in education is absolutely conclusive but it is hoped that this report has contributed to the understanding of some specific problems facing educators in the field of history. To build a new, apartheid-free South Africa, educators equipped with critical-thinking faculties are needed in increasing numbers to facilitate the upliftment of disadvantaged communities. Graduates who have learnt to think critically and rationally will benefit society far more than those who have simply regurgitated learnt material en route to a university degree.

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HIS100 STUDENTS AT VISTA UNIVERSITY

Please complete the following questions:

SECTION A

1. What is your present age?

   .....

2. Male or female?

   .....

3. State whether married, never married or presently unmarried.

   .....

4. Did you attend a private or government school (specify type)?

   .....

5. Was this school situated in Soweto, Johannesburg, a homeland, a neighbouring Rand township or elsewhere?

   .....

6. Do you believe that your school education provided you with adequate skills for study at a university?

   .....

7. What is your home language (eg North Sotho)?

   .....

8. Are you living with your parents?

   ..... If not, state with whom you are living (eg own family, relatives, friends, other):

   .....

9. Is the house you live in a) privately-owned?
   b) state-owned?

   .....

10. Do you have electricity in the home you live in?

    .....

11. Do you have a room in the house you live in to study without being disturbed?

    .....

12. Which of the following is your main means of financial support as a student?

    a) Yourself
    b) Parents of relatives
    c) Loan
    d) Bursary

    .....

13. Do you often talk to friends or family in English on an informal basis?

    .....

14. Do you read newspapers (written in English) on a regular basis?

    .....

15. If yes, which of the following do you read most often?

    a) The Star b) The Sowetan
    c) The Citizen d) Business Day
    e) Weekly Mail f) Sunday Times
    g) South h) New Nation

    .....

16. What is/was your father's level of education?

    .....

17. What is/was your mother's level of education?

    .....

18. Name the two major subjects you hope to major in for your degree.

    .....

19. What career are you planning to follow on completion of your degree?

    .....

SECTION B

1. What do you understand by the term "note-making"?

   .....

   .....

   .....

2. Were you ever taught note-making skills in history at high school?

   .....

3. Do you sometimes have difficulty understanding just what an essay-type question is asking?

   .....

4. Do you find the making of notes for a particular topic from a history book an easy task?

   .....

5. Do you sometimes have difficulty in identifying the main or relevant points from a passage of historical writing? Give reasons for your answer.

   .....

   .....

   .....

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION

APPENDIX B

RESULTS OF QUESTIONNAIRE IN PERCENTAGE TERMS

SECTION A

1. Age:

18 - 30 yrs	92
31 - 40 yrs	8
Average age	26

2. Male/Female:

Male	57
Female	43

3. Marital Status:

Married	8
Unmarried	92

4. Schooling:

Private	10
Government	76
Unspecified	14

5. School area:

Soweto	49
Homeland	31
Rand Township	6
Johannesburg	2
Elsewhere	8
Unspecified	4

6. Schooling adequate for university:

Yes	31
No	69

7. Home Language:

Zulu	23
South Sotho	20
North Sotho	14
Xhosa	11
Tswana	20
Tsonga	6
Swazi	2
Venda	2
Unspecified	2

8. Residence:

Parents	65
Relatives	21
Friends	2
Own Family	8
Not Indicated	2
Other	2

9. Home Ownership:

Private	59
State	41

10. Electricity:

Yes	96
No	4

11. Separate Study:

Yes	31
No	69

12. Financial Support:

Parents/Relatives	70
Parents/Self	6
Bursary/Loan	16
Self	4
Loan/Self	4

13. English Conversation:

Yes	73
No	21
Sometimes	6

14. English Newspapers read regularly:

Yes	96
No	4

15. Newspapers read often:

Sowetan	61
Star	55
Sunday Times	23
New Nation	18
Citizen	6
City Press	8
Weekly Mail	2

16. Father's Education:

Std 6 or lower	55
Std 7	2
Std 8	12
Std 9	4
Std 10	17
Technikon	6
College	0
University	2
No answer	2

17. Mother's Education:

Std 6 or lower	47
Std 7	4
Std 8	21
Std 9	2
Std 10	10
Technikon	2
College	8
University	4
No answer	2

18. Major subjects for degree:

History	61
English	37
Geography	17
Private Law	15
Education	10
Zulu	10
Sociology	8
Economics	8
Public Administration	8
Psychology	4
South Sotho	4
North Sotho	4
Afrikaans	4
Business Economics	2
Tswana	2
Roman Law	2

19. Career:

Education	70
Law	14
Social Work	4
Broadcasting	4
Public Service	2
Geology	2
Journalism	2
Unspecified	2

APPENDIX C: SECONDARY SOURCE TEST INSTRUMENT

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The extract below examines the lifestyle of a nomadic people whose harsh, unchanging way of life has remained the same for the past 10 000 years. The sparse vegetation of this mountainous region necessitates a constant trekking of people and their flocks in search of adequate grazing throughout the year.

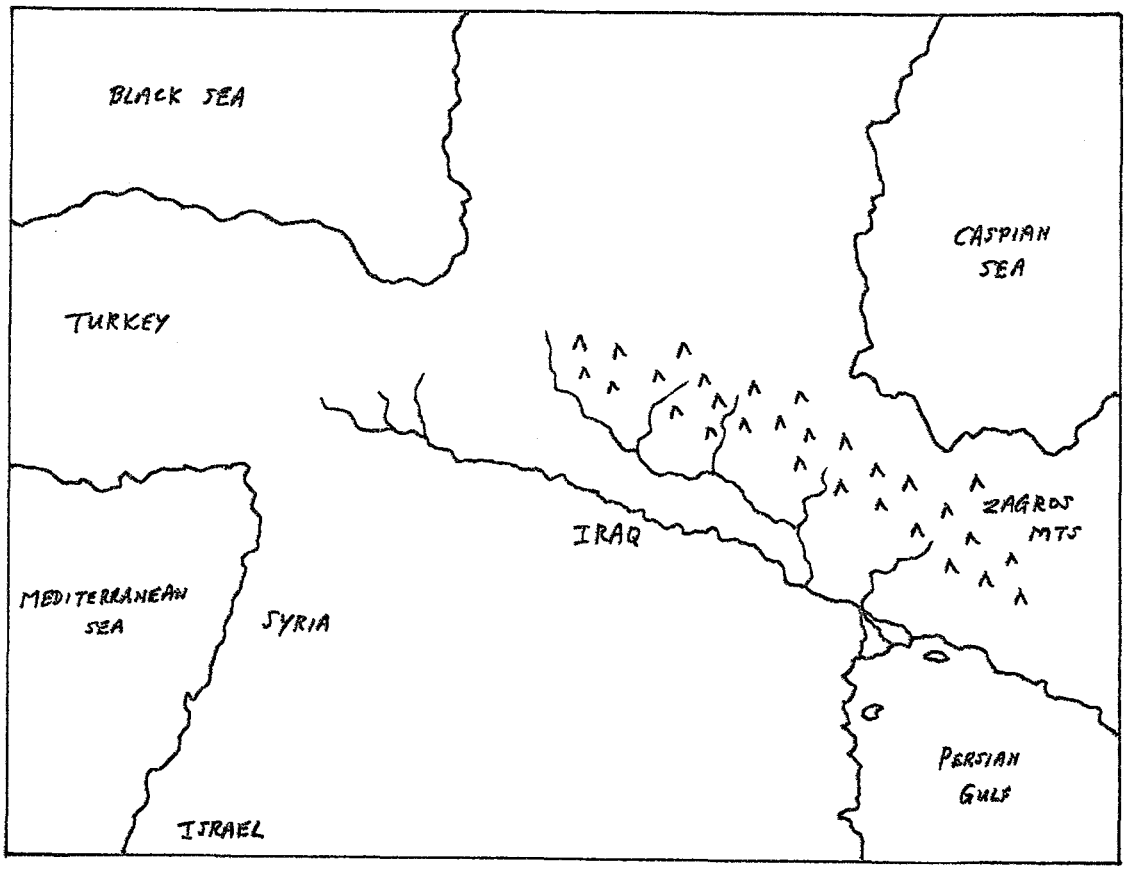
Bronowski uses the Bakhtiari of Iran (Persia) to illustrate that civilisation could not develop while mankind followed a nomadic lifestyle. Man had to become a settled villager before civilisation could reach its present level of sophistication.

A. Your task is to select the main points of Bronowski's argument. Write these facts down in note form, using your own words as you summarize the main points. Number each point consecutively, for example:

    1. Bakhtiari are nomads (Taken from the first two lines).

Please consult the map and glossary to assist you in your task.

THE MIDDLE EAST



THE BAKHTIARI (SECONDARY SOURCE)

Everything in nomad life is immemorial. The Bakhtiari have always travelled alone, quite unseen. The Bakhtiari take their name from a legendary herdsman of Mongol times, Bakhtyar. Their flocks were all-important; they are not out of the mind of the storytellers (or the marriage councellor) for a moment.

Before 10,000 BC nomad peoples used to follow the natural migration of wild herds. But sheep and goats have no natural migrations. They were first domesticated about ten thousand years ago - only the dog is an older camp follower than that. And when man domesticated them, he took on the responsibility of nature; the nomad must lead the helpless herd.

The role of women in nomad tribes is narrowly defined. Above all, the function of women is to produce men-children; too many she-children are an immediate misfortune, because in the long run they threaten disaster. Apart from that, their duties lie in preparing food and clothes. For example, the women among the Bakhtiari bake bread - in the biblical manner, in unleavened cakes on the stones. But the girls and women wait to eat until the men have eaten. Like the men, the lives of the women centre on the flock. They milk the herd, and they make a clotted yoghourt from the milk by churning it in a goatskin bag on a primitive wooden frame. They have only the simple technology that can be carried on daily journeys from place to place. The simplicity is not romantic; it is a matter of survival. Everything must be light enough to be carried, to be set up every evening and to be packed away again every morning. When the women spin wool with their simple, ancient devices, it is for immediate use, to make the repairs that are essential on the journey - no more.

It is not possible in the nomad life to make things that will not be needed for several weeks. They could not be carried. And in fact the Bakhtiari do not know how to make them. If they need metal pots, they barter them from settled peoples or from a caste of gypsy workers who specialise in metals. A nail, stirrup, a toy, or a child's bell is something that is traded from outside the tribe. The Bakhtiari life is too narrow to have time or skill for specialisation. There is no room for innovation, because there is not time, on the move, between evening and morning, coming and going all their lives, to develop a new thought - not even a new tune. The only habits that survive are the old habits. The only ambition of the son is to be like the father.

It is a life without features. Every night is the end of a day like the last, and every morning will be the beginning of a journey like the day before. When the day breaks, there is one question in everyone's mind: Can the flock be got over the next high pass? One day on the journey, the highest pass of all must be crossed. This is the pass Zadeku, twelve thousand feet high on the Zagros. For the tribe must move on, the herdsman must find new

pastures every day, because at these heights grazing is exhausted in a single day.

Every year the Bakhtiari cross six ranges of mountains on the outward journey (and cross them again to come back). They march through snow and the spring flood water. And in only one respect has their life advanced beyond that of ten thousand years ago. The nomads of that time had to travel on foot and carry their own packs. The Bakhtiari now have pack-animals - horses, donkeys, mules - which have only been domesticated since that time. Nothing else in their lives is new. And nothing is memorable. Nomads have no memorials, even to the dead. The summer pastures themselves will only be a stopping place - unlike the children of Israel, for them there is no promised land. The head of the family has perhaps a flock of fifty sheep and goats. He expects to lose ten of them in the migration if things go well. If they go badly, he may lose twenty out of that fifty. Those are the odds of the nomad life, year in and year out. And beyond that, at the end of the journey, there will still be nothing except an immense, traditional resignation.

Who knows, in any one year, whether the old when they have crossed the passes will be able to face the final test: the crossing of the Bazuft River? Three months of melt-water have swollen the river. But this, here, now is the testing day. Today is the day on which the young become men, because the survival of the herd and the family depends on their strength. It is the baptism to manhood. For the young man, life for a moment comes alive now. And for the old - for the old, it dies.

What happens to the old when they cannot cross the last river? Nothing. They stay behind to die. They accept the nomad custom; they have come to the end of their journey, and there is no place at the end.

Extract from J. Bronowski, 'The Ascent of Man', pp. 60 -64.

GLOSSARY

1. immemorial - originating in distant, ancient past.
2. nomad - a person who belongs to a wandering community of pastoralists.
3. Mongol - people of central Asia; in 1206, swept into Europe led by the legendary Genghis Khan.
4. unleavened - bread made from dough containing no yeast.
5. caste - group of people within a society given special status or position for specific purpose, eg., gypsies.
6. melt-water - in spring and early summer, melting snow causes rivers to overflow their banks.

B. Now imagine you have to write a paragraph on why the lifestyle of the Bakhtiari has hardly changed. List the number of the points you would use to write this paragraph, ie, do not write out all the words but simply list the number of each point you would use as indicated in your summary of the main points.

_____

C. Imagine you have to write a paragraph on the aspects of life that are typical of any nomadic people. List the number of the points that you think would be relevant to this task.

_____

D. Finally, imagine you have to write a paragraph on the significance of the Bazuft river crossing for the Bakhtiari. Once again, list only the points you think are relevant by writing down the appropriate numbers.

_____

E. Explain why Article A is classified as a secondary source.

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for your participation.

MEMORANDUM

ANSWERS TO TASK A

1. Bakhtiari are nomads
2. Name originated from Mongol leader, Bakhtyr
3. Their flocks essential for survival
4. In the past, used to follow wild herds
5. Once sheep/goats domesticated, nomads had to lead them
6. Females inferior in status to men
7. Prime function of women is to produce men-children
8. Other functions: food preparation and clothe-making
9. Technology simple and portable: matter of survival
10. Acquire manufactured goods by bartering
11. Lifestyle prevents development of specialised skills or innovation
12. Only old, unchanging habits survive
13. One ambition: son to be like father
14. Life unchanging as every day is like the next
15. One daily concern: get flocks over next mountain pass
16. Crucial to find new pastures as mountain grazing quickly exhausted
17. Six mountain ranges crossed in yearly migration
18. Only one advance in 1 000 years: pack animals now used
19. Nothing memorable therefore no memorials
20. The Bakhtiari have no final destination or promised land
21. Family head expects stock losses every year
22. Bakhtiari display resigned acceptance of their nomadic existence
23. Biggest challenge is crossing of flooded Bazuft river
24. Crossing of river baptises boys into manhood
25. For the old, failure to cross river means death: accepted custom

3 x 25 (75)

ANSWERS TO TASK B

1, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 20, 22. (8)

ANSWERS TO TASK C

3, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 20, 22. (8)

ANSWERS TO TASK D

23, 24, 25. (3)

ANSWERS TO E

The article is classified as a secondary source because Bronowski has taken primary or raw material on the lifestyle of the Bakhtiari and interpreted it in a particular way thereby converting it into a finished historical product or published secondary source. (4)

Answers for Tasks A - E will be analysed in terms of each

relevant point counting one mark (Quantitative analysis) except for Tasks A and E which will entail an additional two marks for correct use of language and clarity of expression (Qualitative analysis).

TOTAL: 98

APPENDIX D: PRIMARY SOURCE TEST INSTRUMENT

SALE OF SLAVES AND STOCK

The Negroes and Stock listed below, are a Prime Lot, and belong to the ESTATE OF THE LATE LUTHER MCGOWAN, and will be sold on Monday, Sept. 22nd, 1852, at the Fair Grounds, in Savannah, Georgia, at 1:00pm. The Negroes will be taken to the grounds two days previous to the Sale, so that they may be inspected by prospective buyers. On account of the low prices listed below, they will be sold for cash only, and must be taken into custody within two hours after the sale.

No.	Name	Age	Remarks	Price ($)
1	Lunesta	27	Prime rice planter	1 275.00
2	Violet	16	Housework and nursemaid	900.00
3	Lizzie	30	Rice, unsound	300.00
4	Minda	27	Cotton, Prime woman	1 200.00
5	Adam	28	Cotton, Prime young man	1 100.00
6	Abel	41	Rice hand, Eyesight poor	675.00
7	Tanney	22	Prime Cotton hand	950.00
8	Flementina	39	Good Cook, Stiff knee	400.00
9	Lanney	34	Prime cotton man	1 000.00
10	Sally	10	Handy in Kitchen	675.00
11	Maccabey	35	Prime man, Fair carpenter	980.00
12	Dorcas Judy	25	Seamstress, Handy in house	800.00
13	Happy	60	Blacksmith	575.00
14	Mowden	15	Prime cotton boy	700.00
15	Bills	21	Handy with Mules	900.00
16	Theopolis	39	Rice hand, Gets fits	575.00
17	Coolidge	29	Rice hand and Blacksmith	1 275.00
18	Bessie	69	Infirm, Sews	250.00
19	Infant	1	Strong likely boy	400.00
20	Samson	41	Prime man, Good with stock	975.00
21	Callie May	27	Prime woman, Rice	1 000.00
22	Honey	14	Prime girl, Hearing poor	850.00
23	Angelina	16	Prime girl, House or Field	1 000.00
24	Virgil	21	Prime field hand	1 100.00
25	Tom	40	Rice hand, Lame leg	750.00
26	Noble	11	Handy Boy	900.00
27	Judge Lesh	55	Prime Blacksmith	800.00
28	Booster	43	Fair mason, Unsound	600.00
29	Big Kate	37	Housekeeper and Nurse	950.00
30	Melie Ann	19	Housework, Smart Yellow girl	1 250.00
31	Deacon	26	Prime rice hand	1 000.00
32	Coming	19	Prime cotton hand	1 000.00
33	Mabel	47	Prime cotton hand	800.00
34	Uncle Tim	60	Fair hand with Mules	600.00
35	Abe	27	Prime cotton hand	1 000.00
36	Tennes	29	Prime rice hand and Coachman	1 250.00

There will also be offered at this sale, twenty head of Horses and Mules, along with thirty head of Prime Cattle. Slaves will be sold separate, or in lots, as best suits the purchaser. Sale will be held rain or shine.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE TO ARTICLE B

Read the article entitled SALE OF SLAVES AND STOCK which is an example of a common occurrence in America, particularly in the South, during the slave years. Slaves in America had been imported from Africa since the early 17th century, once plantation crops like cotton and tobacco became profitable. Being labour intensive, the demand for manpower encouraged the importation of slaves across the Atlantic from Africa for nearly 200 years. Slavery was only officially abolished in all American states in 1863.

Now answer the following question:

1. Apart from slaves, list three other things that were to be sold at the same time:

   _____ (3)

2. a) What is the cost of the two most expensive slaves?

   _____ (1)

   b) List their names and then add the following information:

	First Slave	Second Slave
Name	_____	_____
Sex	_____	_____
Age	_____	_____
Work	_____	_____

(8)

   c) Explain why you think these slaves in (b) were more valuable than the slaves numbered 19, 25 and 34, then give reasons for the cheaper cost of each of the slaves numbered 19, 25 and 34:

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

(5)

3. What type of work (list three) is most common among these slaves and what does this tell us about American slavery?

_____

_____

_____

(5)

4. Write a sentence about the implications of the widely differing items in the same sale, as mentioned in the final paragraph of the advertisement.

_____

_____

_____

(1)

5. What do you see as significant about the wide ranges in age, occupation and price of these slaves?

_____

_____

_____

_____

(2)

6. The advertisement is useful to a historian doing research on American slavery because it (underline the answer of your choice):

a) Tells exactly how much slaves cost in 1852
   Correct / Incorrect
b) Shows men worked in the fields and women worked in the houses
   Correct / Incorrect
c) Suggests that some people did not see much difference between humans and animals
   Correct / Incorrect
d) Shows that all slaves were black
   Correct / Incorrect
e) Tells exactly how cruel slavery was in the U.S.
   Correct / Incorrect
f) Is an objective example of one aspect of slavery
   Correct / Incorrect

(6)

7. Why is the advertisement classified as a primary source?

_____

_____

_____

(2)

TOTAL: 33

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

MEMORANDUM

1. Horses, mules, cattle (3+0)

2.a) $1 275.00 (1+0)

b)

Lunesta	Coolidge
Male	Male
27	29
Rice planter	Rice planter/blacksmith (8+0)

c) Both slaves young, presumably fit and skilled workers with many years ahead as valuable labourers and therefore a good investment for any prospective slave buyer (2+2)

19: Still a baby therefore of no immediate value as slave
25: Handicapped by lame leg - limited value as worker
34: At 60, past his prime therefore has limited use as worker

(3+2)

3. Rice, cotton, house. Most slaves required for plantation and domestic work, ie, American slavery used slave workers for mainly physically demanding manual work. American slavery exploited people for selfish ends.

(5+2)

4. Suggests that slaves on same level as livestock, ie, their status was on a par with animals.

(1+2)

5. Slaves, no matter their age or occupational skills, remained slaves until death. The age and skill of each slave was used as a yardstick to determine his value in monetary terms.

(2+2)

6.a) Incorrect
b) Incorrect

c) Correct
d) Incorrect
e) Incorrect
f) Correct (6+0)

7. It is a source that came into existence during the actual period of the past which the historian is studying. It is a record or first-hand account of an event which occurred in September 1852. (2+2)

TOTAL: 45

Every question is allocated marks for relevance or factual accuracy but questions 2(c), 3, 4, 5 and 7 are given an extra two marks for language use, ie, two marks for good, clear explanation or only one mark for poor, vague explanation and zero for total irrelevance or near illiteracy.

APPENDIX E: FREQUENCY TABLES FOR GROUPS 1 - 3

TABLE 1: FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION FOR GROUP 1

Classes	Secondary Test	Block B	Examination
0 - 9	5	0	4
10 - 19	7	0	0
20 - 29	21	0	7
30 - 39	25	4	17
40 - 49	19	28	22
50 - 59	9	29	20
60 - 69	2	19	11
70 - 79	0	8	6
80 - 89	0	0	1
n =	88	88	88
Total % points =	2987	4672	4056
Mean =	33.94	53.09	46.09
SD =	13.92	11.00	17.14

TABLE 2: FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION FOR GROUP 2

Classes	Primary Test	Block B	Examination
0 - 9	0	0	2
10 - 19	2	0	0
20 - 29	1	0	3
30 - 39	6	2	8
40 - 49	10	14	15
50 - 59	14	14	8
60 - 69	8	13	8
70 - 79	5	4	2
80 - 89	1	0	1
n =	47	47	47
Total % points =	2463	2542	2207
Mean =	52.40	54.08	46.96
SD =	14.69	11.41	14.32

TABLE 3: FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION FOR GROUP 3

Classes	Secondary Test	Primary Test	Block B	Examination
0 - 9	0	0	0	1
10 - 19	2	1	0	0
20 - 29	7	1	0	2
30 - 39	10	2	1	5
40 - 49	6	6	10	10
50 - 59	4	11	7	5
60 - 69	1	6	8	5
70 - 79	0	3	4	1
80 - 89	0	0	0	1
n =	30	30	30	30
Tot % points =	1079	1593	1652	1428
Mean =	35.97	53.10	55.07	47.60
S D =	12.68	13.33	12.10	14.27

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