

Lecture: Study Gradients and Nomenclature

In this lecture about Scientology study tech and the handling of misunderstood words, Hubbard mentions Commander Thompson's "association of words" as a point of research in 1947. (Thompson died in 1943; Hubbard was involved with a VA disability claim in 1947.)

The other point is, is always let a student get into trouble before you help him out. Don't ever help out a student before he's in trouble. This guy is doing his Comm Course drills right straight through to the bitter end, he does them like a little wound up doll, everything is beautiful and smooth and so forth, well, what are you trying to do - find something to train? I mean, what are you going to do, rack this guy over until you can find something - till you create something that can be wrong Or why would you - why would you do anything with it? See, I'm just making the point: Why would you do anything with this?

Your participation is not invited there by any difficulty. You see, why worry?

And that is one of the reasons why study uniformly spread across a group is a mistake. See? Students run into trouble that the Instructor doesn't detect and other students aren't running into trouble and they just try to make a medium average of trouble for the whole course, the whole class, you see? Well, the way to do is to let a student run into all the brick walls he wants to run into and the only thing you've got to be alert for is a student who has run into a brick wall. Now, when he has run into the brick wall, recognize that he has bit a gradient, bit a stage or a point beyond where he didn't understand something; that elementary.

And the next must is: Don't ever take up with him what he doesn't understand. It's a waste of trouble - waste of time. He doesn't know what he doesn't understand. Always cut it back. "What were you studying immediately ahead of this?"

Same formula I gave you before, "What moment there weren't you in trouble?"

"Oh, I wasn't in trouble over this and that, and so forth, that was all easy."

"All right, what moment did you get into trouble on it?"

"Oh well, it's - oh - oh - oh - terrible and terrible and terrible, oh - oh - oh - oh - oh ..."

"All right."

Now, you've made a bracket there, haven't you, you've got parentheses; you've got the point of no trouble and you've got the point of trouble and now you must recognize that in the dead center, between, you will find the real trouble. Now, the clever Instructor, knowing this, could spot it right on out.

Actually he doesn't have to be terribly clever, but it's a matter of "All right, you say you were doing fine with this bulletin right up to this," and we finally spot it.

I would even go so far, if I were having a lot of trouble, to slam the guy on the meter. Meters are made to be used. And I'd say, "Now, you're doing all right on this first paragraph, you're doing all right on the next paragraph and you say you ran into trouble here about paragraph five. Well, let me look at paragraph five; yeah, there is a typographical error there in paragraph five. That's perfectly correct, there is one.

Now, let's see, you had number four - number four, you didn't have any trouble with number four, paragraph four here, which starts so - and - so and so - and - so; you say you didn't have any trouble with that?"

"No, no, I didn't have a bit of trouble with that."

"All right, now let's see, let's get down toward the end of paragraph four - paragraph four here; now, will you please listen to this sentence: "So - and - so, so - and - so, so - and - so.. . clang! What is the meaning of the word 'disability'?"

"Oh, well, Christ! Nobody could define 'disability'!"

You got the idea? It isn't even that any big mental quirk sits behind it. No vast amount of case has to be taken into it. He just doesn't dig this word, man! Why he doesn't dig it, we don't even care, but he doesn't.

Now, what's very interesting is this is one of the first points of research, 1947, is the influence of a mislearned word on a life and that was the point of research. I'd picked up some of this from Commander Thompson on association of words and there are numerous other things about this, but I had jumped to an unreasonable assumption about this. As far as I was concerned it was relatively provable or unprovable, but it was relatively nowhere. They talked about association, they talked about this, they talked about that.

Then I assumed, "Then it must be that a word will make somebody sick." Well, what could be wrong with a word?

So I started tracing backwards and getting people to redefine words and that sort of thing. I won't say I had any remarkable luck because there was no auditing technology that went along with it, but believe me people were sure interested.

—L. Ron Hubbard

Lecture 6 August 1964: Study: Gradients and Nomenclature