

**Learningguild** is an international educational and social movement based in Melbourne. Here we introduce our packet of documents

# ERSON

(Early Response to Students' Ongoing Need).

That need is **to develop one's powers of reasoning and expression**, and it applies to all who are engaged in tertiary study. In it they should be learning to reason cogently for themselves and to write and speak with clarity in particular areas of enquiry and in general.

Many students (both native and non-native speakers of English) now enter tertiary or even postgraduate education without much acquaintance with principles of reasoning or of grammatical and lively sentence-construction in English. Their need is for an updated and English version of what was called in the early centuries of universities the *trivium*, the set of the three paths grammar, logic and rhetoric, rightly regarded as an indispensable prerequisite of genuinely tertiary education.

It makes a great difference to students' progress and welfare if they are enabled **early** in their courses to recognize any disabling weaknesses they may have and find out how to remedy them, and in any case to identify ways in which they can **increase** their ability to think hard and write and speak well.

Dr John Howes, the President of Learningguild, has worked in this field (the true general borderland of secondary and tertiary education) for thirty years, after being Senior Lecturer in Philosophy at Melbourne and Professor and Head at Cape Town. The exam papers he has set half-yearly since 1987 for the Learningguild Certificate in Reasoning and Expression were described in 2010 by the late Professor John Silber, former President of Boston University, as "the best tools for developing writing skills that [he had] seen". Dr Howes has guided many students individually: people preparing for IELTS, undergraduates and postgraduates, and persons who have just wanted to know more about English and write or speak it better.

This packet of documents ERSON assists a student to understand what he or she needs to work on in order to remedy weaknesses and/or make good progress in both reasoning and expression. Although the sum of the normal prices of the documents is \$14, they are being offered as a set for just \$10 (or even \$8: see below), as one of Learningguild's contributions to education and to make our work more widely known.

First comes BG (A Basic Guide to Writing Good English). It is likely that everyone will find there some advice or some terms with which he or she was not previously familiar.

Then come two booklets mentioned there, *Sentences to Study and Change (SSC)*, which includes an initial explanation of "the parts of speech", and *Learningguild Notes on English 1 (LNE 1)*.

In *Reasoning*, John Howes summarizes much of the "Clear Thinking" tradition in Victorian secondary education. (For about 40 years until 1983 students in Years 11 and 12 were, very valuably, required in examinations to explain **weaknesses** in an argumentative passage they had not seen before.) He attends especially to the forming and testing of hypotheses in any field. Ignorance of these matters is incapacitating for an undergraduate or postgraduate.

Finally there is the latest pair, named May 2014, of exam paper for our Certificate (see the previous page) and detailed report on that exam. The three grades A, B and C and the three levels within each of B and C make this exam a very good test of a candidate's powers and progress at many stages of achievement. Find out when you can take it – perhaps as a diagnostic test of where you are now?

Those who obtain this packet are warmly invited both to go to our extensive website [learningguild.org.au](http://learningguild.org.au) and to join Learningguild. Membership in Australia is normally by subscription of \$11 (\$16.50 for a couple), which gives members a 20% discount on our literature. Thus for \$19 a person may become a member and obtain the packet.

Enquiries may be made to Dr Howes or his wife Margaret at 9380 5892 or [learningguild@gmail.com](mailto:learningguild@gmail.com). Tuition is available.