

Unit 1 Using photo warning labels on cigarette packets

Interviewer: Around four million people worldwide die every year from smoking-related illnesses according to the World Health Organisation. It is estimated that some 360,000 people are admitted to hospitals in the UK every year because of smoking-related illnesses. Cancer groups from Britain and the EU have begun demanding the introduction of warning labels similar to those introduced in Canada in 2001. So we went out on the streets of London to find out what Londoners feel about this.

Interviewer: Excuse me, could I ask you what do you think about smoking?

Woman 1: Well, I don't smoke, but my boyfriend smokes and, to be honest, I'd like to see him stop. Like a lot of people, I think he smokes 'cause it's cool.

Man 1: What? I thought that was part of my appeal. No, but seriously, I don't see anything wrong with smoking. It's a question of personal freedom.

Interviewer: British anti-smoking groups are pressuring the government to introduce photographic warning labels like these ones used in Canada on cigarette packets. What do you think of them?

Man 1: *(coughing)* Oh, this is too much.

Woman 1: Wow, I think these are brilliant, a really good idea. I think it would be pretty hard to look cool with a photo of mouth cancer sitting on the table in front of you.

Man 1: I'm not so sure. I don't spend much time thinking about whether to give up smoking or not. She does most of that for me. *(laughs)*

Interviewer: Hello...what are your views on smoking?

Woman 2: Well, I'd like to quit...sure, but it's not easy when so many of my friends smoke.

Man 2: I hate it. Every time you go out with people who smoke, you come out reeking of smoke. It's really a nasty habit.

Interviewer: Here are some anti-smoking warning labels from Canada. Would you like to see them on cigarette packets here?

Man 2: Um, well, I think we should have them here, but the problem is that the Government makes about £8 billion a year from cigarettes. I think it's a question of whether the UK government can give up its addiction to taxes on cigarettes.

Woman 2: Mmm... These are certainly very graphic. Are they for real?

Interviewer: Yes, they are. Do you think these might convince you to give up smoking?

Woman 2: Well, I think they might. I'd hate to have to look at one of those labels every time I reach for a cigarette.

Interviewer: To date, the Canadian government has had considerable success with its anti-smoking programme. Smoking rates among young people dropped from 28 per cent to 18 per cent between 1999 and 2003. The question remains, do the EU and the British government have the courage to follow Canada's lead? It may just come down to a question of image. Reporting from London, this is Patricia Connolly for Channel Six news.

Unit 2 Interview with Gunther von Hagens, creator of the Body Worlds exhibition

Von Hagens: Remember that you are mortal. That is what is suggested to everyone who attends the exhibition, especially by the gestalt plastinates themselves. I was what you are. You can become what I am. And that brings us to body donors. The people who are exhibited here made a very conscious decision during their lifetimes to be available to the next generation for the sake of anatomical instruction.

First, people attending the exhibition should get a clearer idea of their own bodies. We live in an artificial world. Normal persons are no longer conscious that they themselves are nature. Secondly, the intention was to present anatomy in a very concrete way.

This exhibition is not about art or science, it's about instruction. Instruction in the fullest sense of the word in that people attending the exhibition can realise their own vulnerability. In a prophylactic sense, since if people see how unhealthy habits or lifestyles concretely affect their own bodies, for example smokers' lungs, heart attacks, or meniscus damage, it will help them to gain a greater appreciation and perhaps a renewed sensitivity toward their bodies.

My models are the Renaissance anatomists who pioneered the initial enlightenment in this field: Leonardo da Vinci and Andreas Vesalius. For the first time, they discovered the beauty of bodily interiors at

a time when the beauty of bodily exteriors was the focus of an entire artistic epoch.

[PAUSE]

In the late Middle Ages, Andreas Vesalius was the first to assemble a skeleton. He literally took it from the grave and returned it to society.

I see myself in this tradition and I am continuing it with the possibilities of plastination. By making it possible to solidify soft tissue, plastination permits bodies to be exhibited not only as skeletons, but also as skeletons with muscles and organs at the same time. And I do not display people as incomplete specimens. I do not use dissection to remove organs. Instead, I provide insights into bodily interiors. People can look inside.

Unit 3 The American Dream

Interviewer: What is the American Dream?

Girl (15 years): My American Dream is to be a famous musician.

Man 1: I perceive it as the opportunity or equal opportunity to set goals and to be able to achieve them and have an education and an environment that's equal for everyone so everyone can work and set their goals and live the lifestyle in the environment they wish to live in.

Man 2: The American Dream means different things to different people depending on their background, their experiences they've had in life so far and their heritage. For me the American Dream is to preserve the freedoms that our ancestors have worked so hard to acquire for us and to leave a situation that continues to better for the generations that follow.

Interviewer: Do you think you are living the American Dream?

Woman 1: I have no complaints. I have a family, a home, an education, privilege of going to church when I want to.

Man 3: Well, I don't know if I'm living the American Dream, but I'm certainly striving to get there. Right now, I'm in college to obtain my degree so that I can get a better job and provide a better life for my family.

Interviewer: According to a recent study, 79 per cent of African Americans will only experience poverty in their lifetime. For white Americans, the percentage is only 24. Why do you think this is?

Woman 3: The number of individuals who have broken families within the African-American community is much greater than within the white community. Education is another big part of it. Having a good education will allow someone to go further within this country. And unfortunately, African Americans...the number of individuals in that group having higher education is much lower.

Man 3: There are a lot of African Americans that are born into poverty. And a lot of them don't get out of the environment. They succumb to the environment and become a part of the environment rather than trying to seek a life outside of it. I think also, too, the system in some ways there are some advantages that are handed down to folks that the African-American community doesn't get to experience.

Interviewer: How would you describe a successful person?

Girl: Having a job, having a family, making money, not exactly being rich but at least having some food and shelter.

Woman 2: Someone who's happy and productive in whatever capacity they choose, law-abiding. I think someone who has chosen an outlet, creative or otherwise, and is working towards fulfilling it.

Woman 1: Living the good life of friends, security, that sort of thing, but it's not how many playthings you have.

Interviewer: How important is success to you?

Woman 3: Very important. For me, there are a lot of different areas of success. And for me, it's more building a stable community, family and being able to contribute something back.

Man 1: I think success is the American Dream. So I would rank it number one for me to be successful and (that) raising my family and providing for my family.

Unit 4 Bullying in the workplace

Cynthia Banks: Welcome to *Straight Talk*. I'm Cynthia Banks. When someone brings up the subject of bullying, people often think of school playgrounds and badly behaved children. But there is another type of bullying that is nearly as widespread — bullying in the workplace. To talk about it, we are joined today by management consultant Martin Halverson.

Martin Halverson: Hello, Cynthia.

C. Banks: Hello, Martin. First, let's hear from Gemma, an executive assistant whose boss bullied the whole office.

Gemma: As far as I'm concerned, this guy was really over the top. Some of us were actually wondering whether he had some kind of mental problem. Take meetings, for example. If someone started to make a comment or a suggestion, he'd just shout, 'Shut up! Who's talking to you?' And worse, you know, swearing at people. Personally, I felt traumatised. Even when he wasn't in the office there was no let-up, he was calling every two minutes to scream at people about something or other.

C. Banks: So Martin, what do you make of this?

M. Halverson: Well, this behaviour certainly seems to be extreme, although incidents can take many forms, not just the more obvious ones like shouting, making someone look small, or humiliating them in front of others.

C. Banks: Such as?

M. Halverson: There's also a lot of passive-aggressive behaviour, for example, spreading negative rumours about somebody, or simply not talking to them, not returning phone calls, or delaying action on something a co-worker needs to do a job.

C. Banks: How widespread would you say this problem is?

M. Halverson: A number of studies have looked at this in depth. In a recent University of North Carolina study, researchers followed 1,600 workers over four years. The results were fascinating. There is a definite lack of social stability in the US workplace; rudeness, disrespect and bullying – all of these are becoming more and more common. Lots of swearing, even fighting. We even heard of scientists throwing equipment at colleagues.

C. Banks: Where does this problem originate?

M. Halverson: Researchers say that intense competition and rapid change are often to blame. And we have to remember that the bullies often have a special status in the company, perhaps they are higher up the corporate ladder, or they have some special talent or skill. Most companies usually have a well-defined policy about bullying in the workplace. The problem tends to be a lack of will to enforce these anti-bullying rules, especially against people in positions of authority.

C. Banks: Are you saying management sometimes makes exceptions for these people? What effect does this have?

M. Halverson: Yes, there can be serious side-effects if the policy is not enforced. It causes a lot of mental and emotional stress. In the North Carolina study, 22 per cent of people said they actually worked less hard when they were bullied. About half said they lost work time worrying about an incident or whether the bully would target them again. And most dramatically, 12 per cent of the people who responded actually changed their jobs to get away.

C. Banks: That's a big loss to the company. What can be done about it?

M. Halverson: Basically it's best to adopt a zero-tolerance policy. No exceptions, no matter how small the offence is, no matter who the person is. Companies really should become aware of how much this kind of behaviour costs them – just how much it reduces efficiency.

C. Banks: Well, now let's hear from Roger, a former computer technician for a software company, who has experienced...

Unit 5 PETA's I'd rather go naked campaign against wearing fur

Narrator: The 'I'd rather go naked than wear fur' campaign began in 1990. *The Wonder Years* were on TV. Nelson Mandela was out of jail. And the Go-Gos were planning a reunion.

Go-Gos: We're the Go-Gos and we'd rather go naked than wear fur.

Dan Mathews: And when the Go-Gos announced that they were having a reunion tour and they're all PETA supporters. We asked them if they would pose for a poster.

Narrator: The poster 'I'd rather Go-Go naked than wear fur' was inspired by an activist in Florida.

D. Mathews: There was an activist down there named Holly Jensen who had a fur protest. And she outfitted herself in a flesh-coloured leotard and made a sign with a magic marker that just said I'd rather go naked than wear fur. And she sent us photos of this protest, as a lot of activists do. And when I was going through the photos, I saw that one and I thought, you know, there's something there.

Narrator: There was definitely something there. The poster was used by newspapers nationwide. And soon the whole country was talking about the fur issue. A 'Go' was dropped and the campaign spread with protests in Italy, Germany and Japan. Celebrities were enlisted. Singers, supermodels, actors all bravely disrobed. PETA staffers volunteered by the dozens: interns, campaigners, founders.

And a funny thing happened, fur sales slipped. From *Fur Industry Magazine*, *the Trapper* and *Predator Caller*, Sept. 2001, fur industry directories reveal that in 1972, there were 779 established fur garment makers in the United States. Twenty years later, in 1992, that number had dwindled to only 211.

But what is this craft that sparked a decade of naked activism? Simply put, it's a billion-dollar-a-year industry that has taken fur-bearing animals out of the forests of fairytales and the Discovery Channel and dropped them straight into the middle of a horror novel.

On a fur farm, what you first notice is the pacing, round and round in psychotic circles. Animals crazed with boredom and stress. Next, you see the filth. Urine and faeces encrust the cages of fastidious animals, who, in the wild, would spend hours cleaning themselves. Finally, the mutilations sink in. Legs gnawed to the bone. Eyes and ears lost to infection. Cage mates cannibalised. The cage doors do eventually open. But the world outside is brief and horrible.

The animals whose lives have been lost to the fur industry can't be brought back. But over ten thousand fur coats have been donated to PETA from people sickened by animal cruelty. Over the years these furs have been distributed to homeless people who can't afford to buy their own coats, have been used to make bedding for orphaned wildlife, have been distributed to refugees in frozen, war-torn Afghanistan.

Woman: Don't go out in the woods. Them animal activists will get you.

Unit 6 Talking about beauty contests

Commentator 1: ...yeah, yeah, beauty pageants, or contests as you call them in the UK, have been around for over eighty years.

Radio presenter: Yes, they still seem to be going strong, although we don't see the Miss World contest on TV in the UK anymore, because a lot of people here see it as old-fashioned and out of date. Even adding intelligence and personality tests to the Miss World contest didn't keep the UK TV audiences interested, although the show is still broadcast around the world. But how did beauty contests start?

Commentator 1: The first beauty pageant took place in Atlantic City in 1921. Called the National Beauty Tournament, it was basically to get tourists to stay in Atlantic City after the end of the summer season – after the Labor Day holiday in early September.

Radio presenter: So how exactly have the beauty contests changed since those days?

Commentator 1: Well, it took several decades for many of the basic rules to become established, such as only being able to win a competition once, not being married and having no children, well, with the exception of the Mrs America beauty pageants...

Radio presenter: Why exactly is it that contestants need to be unmarried and have no kids?

Commentator 2: Well, that's a good question... I mean, as the beauty contest has developed these early rules have stayed the same.

Commentator 1: There were a number of highly publicised scandals over the years involving Miss America contestants. Several early winners ran off with their male chaperones. One Miss USA winner in 1957 actually turned out to be married with two children.

Commentator 2: There were problems with some Miss World contestants too. The 1974 winner turned out to be a single mother, and in 1980 Miss World resigned after posing naked for a magazine!

Radio presenter: I find it quite interesting that the contest doesn't have a rule against plastic surgery, given the other strict rules.

[PAUSE]

Commentator 1: Yes, it does seem a little hypocritical, but how are you supposed to prove someone has breast implants or other cosmetic surgery? It would be quite difficult to do.

Commentator 2: Well, I tend to think that the beauty contest is more about some kind of 'ideal' world, and not the real world. And I think a lot of the newer beauty contests you see today are a reflection of that.

Radio presenter: Such as?

Commentator 1: Well, to go back to the question of plastic surgery. China has recently had its first Miss Artificial Beauty contest for plastic surgery patients, one of whom used to be a man. But she didn't win though.

Commentator 2: True, it seems to me that that's a good example of how the beauty pageant is being used today to promote acceptance of different people...the idea that 'everyone is beautiful'. In Botswana, they hold the Miss HIV Stigma Free, which I think is a brilliant way to promote the issue of AIDS and acceptance. The contest shows just how far beauty contests have come today...

Unit 7 Is war good for the economy?

Teacher: Hello, everyone.

Class: Hi.

Teacher: OK, in this session we're going to look at another aspect of economics – how war can affect the economy of a country. Carla and Steve are doing a presentation on this for us today. Carla, Steve...

Carla: The question is: Is war good for the economy? Well, it's an interesting question, but like most economic issues, it's difficult to answer it with a simple 'yes' or 'no'. The truth of the matter is that although wars can be both a positive and negative economic stimulus, economies are often driven forward by wars.

Class: That's true.

Steve: If you look back to the 19th century and World War I, you will find that governments paid for war by printing more money. And, of course, printing money tends to increase inflation. People need more and more cash just to pay for basic necessities, like food. In Germany after World War I, in the 1920s, there was such hyperinflation that prices went up every day.

Carla: While the US economy survived World War I intact, it faced its own crisis with the stock market crash of 1929. This led to huge unemployment when many companies went bankrupt, and later non-stop deflation as the price of goods began dropping, but no one was buying because they had no jobs or money. To counter this, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's government adopted a key idea of economist John Maynard Keynes...increasing government spending.

Steve: It's a bit like jumpstarting a car, when the battery's dead. You need a huge jolt to get the engine roaring again. US government money was the huge jolt of cash needed to get the economy going again, and large-scale New Deal projects, such as the Tennessee Valley Authority, gave work to thousands of people. When World War II came, many more jobs were created in arms manufacturing and related industries like steel and coal.

Carla: While the number of manufacturing jobs does go up during a war, war often still leads to heavy damage to industry and infrastructure in war-torn regions. Also, there is the high cost in human life. Many European countries lost nearly a whole generation of men in the two World Wars. More women entered the workforce, but there were still significant labour shortages as a result.

Steve: And we come back to the issue of inflation. Since 1945, you can see a pattern of increased inflation with each war. The Korean War began in 1950. In that year wholesale prices increased by 12 per cent in the US and 21 per cent in Britain. Vietnam was arguably even worse. The US government spent about 15 per cent of its GDP on the war, and this led to a deep recession in the 1970s.

Carla: If we take the example of more recent wars, like the one in Iraq, war has certainly been bad for the Iraqi economy, but for America the biggest impact has been on oil prices, which were pushed up to record levels. There may have also been some effect on consumer and business confidence, which is much harder to calculate.

Teacher: Thank you, Steve and Carla. Does anyone have any questions...

Unit 8 Bjorn Lomborg: The Skeptical Environmentalist

Peter Heinlein: The Earth's environment is steadily improving. Global warming is nothing much to worry about. The real danger is the Kyoto Treaty, which will cost too much and do almost no good. Those are the ideas of a Danish professor and former Greenpeace activist who has written a book titled, *The Skeptical Environmentalist*. The book, which has recently been published in English, is causing outrage in the environmental community.

His fans call Bjorn Lomborg an outstanding representative of a 'new breed of scientists – mathematically-skilled and computer-adept'. One favourable review predicts his new book will overturn our most basic assumptions about the world's environment. But to his detractors he is not a scientist at all, but a fraud: a statistics professor who they claim makes selective use of statistics to support a right-wing, anti-environment agenda.

He explains that he started out as an environmental activist.

B. Lomborg: I'm an old Greenpeace, left-wing kind of guy and thought basically, yes, things were getting worse and worse. When I read an interview with Julian Simon, an American economist, that tells us things were actually getting better and better, contrary to common knowledge. I thought, No, it can't be true. But then he said, 'Go check it yourself,' ... so I'll have to get his book, to see that it was probably wrong. And it was sufficiently good, and it looked sufficiently substantiated that it would actually be fun to debunk. So I got some of my best students together and we did a study course in the fall of '97.... We wanted to show, you know, this is entirely wrong, this is just right-wing American propaganda. As it turned out over the next couple of months, as we did this, we were getting debunked for the most part.

P. Heinlein: Professor Lomborg says the project convinced him that environmental groups, the so-called Greens, are exaggerating their claims of global environmental gloom and doom.

But he says those exaggerations and sometimes, he adds, even outright falsehoods, often become part of conventional wisdom, often accepted by a majority of people because he says green groups seem to enjoy more credibility than government or business lobbies.

B. Lomborg: Now everybody knows that businesses, you know, when they come and say 'don't worry about the environment,' that may be true, but they might also have a good reason for saying this, profit reasons, ulterior motives. So we're sceptical about them. But we're not in the same way sceptical about green groups, but they also have an agenda. They are also lobby groups.

P. Heinlein: One of Professor Lomborg's favorite targets is the Kyoto Treaty on global warming. A host of recent studies predict catastrophic

consequences for the environment from a rise in global temperatures. The United Nations Panel on Climate Change, backed by 3,000 scientists, has thrown its full weight behind the argument that global warming is happening faster than expected, and that ratification of the Kyoto Protocol is urgent.

Professor Lomborg concedes that global warming is real, but calls the Kyoto Treaty a monumental waste of money.

B. Lomborg: Basically, Kyoto will do very little to change global warming. On the other hand, Kyoto will be incredibly expensive. It will cost anywhere from \$150–350 billion a year, now that's a lot of money that should be compared to the total global aid of about \$50 billion a year. And so basically the idea is to say just for the cost of one year of Kyoto we could give clean drinking water and sanitation to every single human being on Earth. This would avoid two million deaths a year, and would help half a billion people from not getting seriously ill.

P. Heinlein: That argument has sparked a furious outcry from environmentalists. Klaus Heinberg, a professor of environmental sciences at Denmark's Roskilde University, accuses Professor Lomborg of twisting facts and manipulating statistics.

Klaus Heinberg: His main argument is that we can use the money we have earned through industrialism to repair all the bad things going on, and that kind of argument is dangerous. And he made these weird comparisons which normal people make to make fun, I mean, like 'if all children in Europe would stop eating ice cream, then we could have enough money for eliminating some diseases in Africa.' He uses that kind of argument seriously, and he does that in the climate and Kyoto connection.

P. Heinlein: Peter Heinlein for *VOA News...*

Unit 9 Hanni, the seeing-eye dog

Presenter: Traversing the busy streets of Chicago isn't always easy, especially in the winter. On any given day, a pedestrian has to deal with unpredictable traffic, sidewalk holes, snow, ice and city buses. Now, imagine that you're blind. Writer Beth Finke navigates Chicago's many obstacles with the help of her seeing-eye dog Hanni. Hanni is a tail-wagging mix of yellow Lab and Golden Retriever. She was schooled at the Seeing Eye in Morristown, New Jersey.

It's the oldest school of its kind in North America and tomorrow it celebrates 75 years of training dogs as companions to the blind. Hanni's eyes and Beth's patience have formed an effective bond that make an ordinary walk home from the gym an example of true collaboration. We accompanied Beth and Hanni recently as they walked home from Michigan and Balbow in Chicago's South Loop.

Beth: I think most people think you're standing at an intersection; you're with a dog; the dog looks up, sees the green light and then pulls you ahead. What really happens is you're at an intersection; you listen to your parallel traffic so that is the traffic that's going with you, the same direction you want to cross. When you hear the parallel traffic going forward and you sense that the traffic in front of you has stopped, then you tell the dog. In Hanni's case, I would say: 'Hanni, forward.' And then she'll look right and left to make sure it's safe and then she'll go.

Okay, here, I can hear parallel traffic, but I don't know how long they've been going so I'm going to wait and let the whole cycle begin, because I can hear the car idling in front of me. And when he goes, then I'll know...I'll know to listen until we go parallel again. There are some intersections where I actually count...one, one thousand, two, one thousand, but I haven't done it at this one. At Clark and Pope, I count sometimes to get a general idea about when it's going to cycle again. This one's a fairly easy one to cross because it's...there's a steady flow of traffic in both directions. And it's generally pretty predictable except for when the L (train) comes by. *[To Hanni] Leave it! Thatta girl.*

There are certain times when the dogs will stop. And you'll feel in front of you with your foot and there's not a kerb there. And you feel in front with your hand and there's not an obstruction there and you don't know why they're stopping.

It must be a car pulling out of a garage, I guess? Or a parking lot? It's never happened before. I usually...actually, it's not exactly rush hour, but I do try not to walk at this time of day, because there's more traffic. If I can avoid it... *[To Hanni] Hanni, can you go forward? No? Good girl. There you go. Good girl, Hanni! That was perfect. What a good girl you are. You pretty proud of yourself? You should be. You should be. That was very good. Because I didn't know what was going on.*

I feel kind of bad for Hanni. Sometimes we're at a corner and she...it's green and she's not going. And I think the people around me are thinking: 'What a loser seeing-eye dog!' But really, she's waiting for me. I'm waiting to hear the people going.

Unit 10 Behaviour-modification camps for teenagers

Peter: I don't believe it! Have you read this article?

Mary: No, why?

David: What article are you talking about?

Peter: Well, it's about this school in Jamaica called Tranquillity Bay. If you want to call it a school, it sounds more like a maximum security prison to me. It's a 'behaviour-modification programme for troubled teenagers'.

Mary / David: Oh!

Mary: Oh, wait a second, I think I've heard about that. Isn't that the one where really strict American parents send their kids?

Peter: Yeah, most of the kids are American, but a few come from Canada and the UK. Let's see, it's part of some larger group called the 'Worldwide Association of Specialty Programs and Schools', or 'WWASP' for short.

David: Never heard of it.

Peter: It's just so harsh. Listen to this 'the children are often taken from their beds in the middle of the night by private guards, handcuffed, and flown off to Jamaica.' Oh, and then, get this, when they get there 'they are put in isolation for up to a week until the staff think the child is under control. Then, they're given a uniform, a haircut and join a 'family' of 20 students. Boys and girls are kept separate. And an older student, a 'buddy', is given complete control over the new student.

Mary: Family? Sounds a bit like a cult.

David: Well, I think brainwashing is par for the course. This got me thinking...my sister wrote me about this guy she met on an exchange visit in Massachusetts who'd been to a behaviour modification camp in the US. It really messed him up. He said staff members beat him and used pepper spray on him.

When his parents came six months later, they didn't believe anything he told them. Anyway, he was 18 the next year and the school couldn't hold

him anymore, so he left. He's in university now, but he still gets nightmares about the place. And he doesn't speak to his parents any more.

Mary: How can they get away with this kind of stuff?

Peter: Well, the article said that most parents gave their permission, not knowing or maybe not even caring what the staff did so long as they got results. And I guess it does work for some 'troubled teens'. Well, I guess it'd better, since it costs \$40,000 a year.

David: Uh, I suppose if you have a choice between getting nightmare treatment or conforming to their rules, most people eventually give in... But I mean what does that do to someone's mental state to be treated that way.

Mary: So are these like the worst teenagers in the world or what? Tell me they're murderers or heroin dealers or something really bad.

Peter: That's actually the worst part. Many children were sent there for doing things like playing truant, not working at school... oh, and trying cigarettes or even cannabis. Ooooooh. And sometimes, if they're girls, they might have become 'sexually active' or had a boyfriend the parents didn't approve of.

David: Really?

Mary: That makes me really angry. How could parents do that to their children?

David: Yeah.

Unit 11 Tropical storm causes flooding in Haiti and the Dominican Republic

Reporter: On May 24th, excessive tropical rain showers drenched the Caribbean island shared by the Dominican Republic and Haiti. NASA's weather satellites reported that within 24 hours, over 60 centimetres of rain had fallen on the central mountain regions dividing the countries. By early morning on the 25th, several rivers had burst their banks sending walls of mud, water and debris down into the low-lying areas. This was the worst disaster to hit Haiti in over a decade.

In the two countries more than three thousand people have died in the floods. In Haiti, there were 1,191 dead and 1,484 have 'disappeared'. In the Dominican Republic, 691 are reported dead or missing. And more than 50,000 people have been left homeless in both countries.

The situation in Haiti was made much worse for a number of reasons. As the poorest country in the Americas, the majority of Haiti's 8 million people have been cutting down the island's limited forest resources for fuel and shelter. It is estimated by officials that over 90 per cent of the forests in the country are gone. The United States Agency for International Development reports that it has planted some 60 million trees in the region, but it estimates that 10 to 20 million trees are being cut down every year. Without the trees and their root systems to hold back the deluge of water, small streams quickly became torrents, carrying with them gravel, silt and mud.

US forces had been sent to Haiti to provide security after the fall of Haiti's President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, and US Marine helicopters airlifted 100,000 tonnes of food and water in the first few days of the disaster. However, some international aid agencies have complained that the US helicopters stopped their relief efforts too soon. A Marine spokesman said it was due to pilot fatigue. As a result, the rest of the aid supplies had to be carried by foot into the areas affected. United Nations forces which have just arrived are expected to aid in this effort.

In a cruel irony, the floods came on the tail end of one of the country's worst droughts. A large number of crops had already failed and many Haitians were by now in dire need of food aid. Officials are also concerned about the possible outbreak of disease with the large number of bodies unaccounted for.

Haitian officials and international governments are now looking at solutions to the problem of Haiti's deforestation in an effort to alleviate future floods in the region. Some solutions proposed have included importing wood from Canada, the United States and Guyana, and possibly propane from Venezuela or Trinidad. This is Jenny...

Unit 12 Click kanji: Is English the only language for the internet?

Jonathan

Kent: Kuala Lumpur, in many ways, it's rather like the internet. In the early days, it was English-speaking people, in this case, it was the British who built much of its infrastructure, like the railway station and the

courthouses. But as it's grown, people of many races have left their mark, and its future is without doubt multicultural. And like the internet, communication in Kuala Lumpur takes place in many different languages. But when you want to find your way around, the street signs in Kuala Lumpur all use Western letters. It's the same on the net. It makes things simple for those familiar with the 26 letters of the English alphabet, but more difficult for everyone else. People from countries that use their own scripts are demanding equal treatment. The biggest group are Chinese speakers. They want email and web addresses including top level domain names like '.cn' for China in Chinese characters – characters, which are very close to Chinese people's hearts.

Tso Yu Ling: It's a part of our life, our culture and everything that we do every day. And take for example, the name in Chinese cannot be translated into other languages, you know, the same as it is. So why couldn't it be allowed on the internet? We want our name. That's our identity.

J. Kent: But that's a task in itself. These characters may have originated in China but variations are used right across East Asia – 150,000 in all – and the number keeps growing. The internet's old 16-bit coding wasn't up to the task, so programmers have had to upgrade to cope with the thousands of symbols. To make matters worse, there are often clashes between one country's set of characters and another's.

James Seng: Because the Chinese characters are used in different languages from Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Vietnamese, some characters that look the same mean different things in different languages. Some characters that look different actually mean the same thing in some languages.

J. Kent: In Japan, these characters mean 'male' – in China, 'napkin'. These ones mean 'modern'. In China, they say 'zian dai'; in Japan 'gendai'; in Korea 'hyundai' – each the name of a major corporation, but the characters are the same. So who will get to use them on the internet? These are major headaches for the people who make the net work smoothly. So the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, or ICANN, has been meeting in Kuala Lumpur to try to find a solution. It's partly a technical problem. Some languages, for instance, are written right-left, not left-right. But mainly, it's a people problem.

Paul Twomey: How do we get communities to come together and agree that you express certain characters in similar ways across countries or even across languages? [PAUSE]

J. Kent: That means getting agreement on a standard way of writing things in Chinese, Arabic, Thai, Tamil and other scripts, perhaps 300 languages in all. And that's the hard part, not least because some people think the internet's framework should stay in English. They say that by allowing internet addresses in different scripts, you'll destroy the web's ability to connect. Others disagree, saying that if you don't, countries like China will simply set up their own internet, inaccessible to the rest of the world. However, most believe that common sense will win out.

P. Twomey: I got a business card today in Japanese, but in this part of the world they also give it in English. Because the person who's giving it to me knows that they are interacting with people in Japanese and people in English. We'll probably have people having email addresses potentially in both, but the key question is: 'Does the mail system still work in either case?'

J. Kent: And that's going to matter to a lot of people. There are now more than 100 million broadband users worldwide and almost half of them are here in Asia. In a few years' time, most internet users will live here. And experts say it's set to transform the economy of the region. Like it or not, the internet is fast outgrowing its Western roots.

Unit 13 Extract from: *Outfoxed: Rupert Murdoch's War on Journalism with The O'Reilly Factor* interview with Jeremy M. Glick

B. O'Reilly: In the Personal Story segment tonight we were surprised to find out that an American who lost his father in the World Trade Centre attack had signed an anti-war advertisement that accused the USA itself of terrorism.

Al Franken: Jeremy Glick is the son of a Port Authority worker who died in 9/11. He had signed an anti-war petition and O'Reilly had to have him on.

Jeremy Glick: And they were so persistent about getting me on the O'Reilly show 'cause they found out that I was on the advisory board and signed a statement that was against the war and that I was

directly impacted by 9/11. The success that I had on the O'Reilly show had to do with just practice and preparation. I taped the shows and what I did was I took a stop watch that I used to use for running sprints in high school and I would see when he has a hostile guest and I would time how long it takes for him to cut them off.

B. O'Reilly: I was surprised and the reason I was surprised is that this ad equates the United States with the terrorists.

J. Glick: I said I'm shocked that you're surprised, and basically just made the only point I wanted to make.

Our current president now inherited a legacy from his father and inherited a political legacy that's responsible for training militarily, economically and situating geopolitically the parties involved in the alleged assassination and murder of my father and countless of thousands of others, so I don't see why...

B. O'Reilly: Let me stop you here. Alright...

J. Glick: ...it is surprising that I would want to come back and want to support escalating Bush's aggression to that area...

B. O'Reilly: It is surprising and I'll tell you why. You are (*espousing*) a far-left position...

J. Glick: It was extremely intimidating sitting down the studio, 'cause he's really tall, and like dude, he lords over you.

B. O'Reilly: You see, I'm sure your beliefs are sincere, but what upsets me is I don't think your father would be approving of this.

J. Glick: Well, actually my father thought that Bush's presidency was illegitimate.

B. O'Reilly: Maybe he did, but I don't think he'd be equating this country as a terrorist nation as you are.

J. Glick: Well, I wasn't saying that it was necessarily like that.

B. O'Reilly: Yes, you were. You signed this and it absolutely said that.

A. Franken: Jeremy was pretty cool during it and he was giving his political views, which were very to the left of O'Reilly's.

J. Glick: And he said I don't really care what you think politically. And I said obviously you do care because: a) you brought me on the show, and b) I told him that he uses 9/11 and sympathy with the 9/11 families and the lives lost to rationalise his narrow right-wing agenda.

J. Glick: You evoke sympathy with the 9/11 families.

B. O'Reilly: That's a bunch of crap.

J. Glick: ...so that means...I'm a 9/11 family...

B. O'Reilly: I've done more for the 9/11 families..., by their own admission, I've done more for them than you will ever hope to do.

J. Glick: OK.

B. O'Reilly: So you keep your mouth shut.

J. Glick: Well, you're not representing me...

B. O'Reilly: You shouldn't be exploiting those people.

J. Glick: You're not representing me.

B. O'Reilly: And I'd never represent you. You know why?

J. Glick: Why?

B. O'Reilly: Because you have a warped view of this world and a warped view of this country.

J. Glick: Well, explain that. Let me give you an example of a parallel experience...

B. O'Reilly: No, I'm not going to debate this with you.

J. Glick: ...let me give you an example of parallel experiences...

B. O'Reilly: No...

J. Glick: ...on September 14th, on September 14th.

B. O'Reilly: Here's the record, here's the record. Alright. You didn't support the action against Afghanistan to remove the Taliban. You were against it.

J. Glick: Why would I want to brutalise and further punish the people in Afghanistan?

B. O'Reilly: Who killed your father!

J. Glick: The people in Afghanistan...

B. O'Reilly: Who killed your father!

J. Glick: The people in Afghanistan didn't kill my father.

B. O'Reilly: Sure, they did! The Al Qaeda people were trained there.

J. Glick: The Al Qaeda people, well what about the Afghan...

B. O'Reilly: See, I'm more angry about it that you are!

J. Glick: So what about George Bush?

B. O'Reilly: What about George Bush? He had nothing do with it.

J. Glick: The director, senior, as director of the CIA.

B. O'Reilly: He had nothing to do with it!

J. Glick: So the people that trained a hundred thousand mujahadeen, who were...

B. O'Reilly: I hope your mom is not watching this.

J. Glick: Ah...

B. O'Reilly: I hope your mother is not watching this.

J. Glick: It was unfair for O'Reilly to evoke both my mom and my father in the interview, especially when I wasn't.

Unit 14 Talking about comic book superheroes

Presenter: We're coming to you live today from the Comic Book Expo. In this part of the show, we'll be looking at comic book superheroes. Are they good role models for children? Joining us today, we have comic book cartoonist Jim Bailey.

Jim Bailey: Hello.

Presenter: ...and comic book historian Dr. Joanne Sykes.

Joanne Sykes: Hi.

Presenter: I'd like to start with you, Joanne. Maybe you can give us some background on comic book superheroes.

J. Sykes: Probably we should start with the golden age of comics...that's from 1938, when Superman first appeared, to 1954. We find the basic blueprint for this group of heroes was along the same lines as Superman. Mostly, they were superior beings...invincible. In fact, it's not until about ten years later that Superman's only weakness, green kryptonite, was introduced.

Presenter: Jim, your grandfather was a comic book cartoonist at this time. What did he tell you about this period?

J. Bailey: Well, a lot of these characters were created during World War II. The types of characters and plots often reflected the uncertainty of this time. I mean, you could argue they were really propaganda pieces, you know, invincible heroes versus evil-doers... and the heroes always win. A good example is the cover of the first Captain America comic in 1941 showing him punching Hitler.

Presenter: What about these early superheroes as role models for young readers?

J. Sykes: To put it simply, these early superheroes would have helped children to learn about society's values early on. I mean it's quite straightforward – good guys against bad guys. It's good to fight crime and help people. Vulnerability aside, they're not very different from the heroes in Ancient Greek mythology.

Presenter: How does this change as comics develop?

J. Sykes: By the 1960s, we have characters like Spider-man... He's a teenager...

J. Bailey: Yeah, with a lot of problems in his life.

J. Sykes: That's right. He lives with his Aunt May because his parents are dead, and he worries about everything...about the women in his life, his career as a photographer and paying the bills. He even becomes a hero by accident, after getting bitten by a radioactive spider.

Presenter: You're a big Spider-man fan, Jim. What do think about him as a role model?

J. Bailey: Spider-man is a very complex character. He's the super teen, facing all the same problems teenagers face, but even more so. And in terms of what kind of role model he represents, I think it's a very positive one. He's human, just a kid really.

Presenter: Joanne, are comic book superheroes just for boys?

[PAUSE]

J. Sykes: Do comic book superheroes appeal to everyone? Well, yes and no. Obviously, as a genre comic books are dominated by male figures. In terms of the female characters you find two basic types. There's the Wonder Woman type, an independent character like the men. Then, there's the Batgirl type, which tends to be just a helper, an extension of a male character like Batman.

Generally, in terms of the empowerment of girls, many critics point out that these women all have a Barbie-doll look – an ideal that can't be met. Well, I wonder... how many men could have or would want to have a body like the Incredible Hulk?

J. Bailey: If I could just mention one thing...

Unit 15 A teenage single mother talks about her life

Stephen Nolan: Now, Courtney Cassidy has been creating quite a stir recently. The young blonde lady has had the press queuing up for interviews in the past. She does not have an agent. She does not have a public relations company. She doesn't have a record deal. She doesn't have a film deal. She doesn't have a television deal. She has no rich, famous or well-connected parent, or friend or lover. She's simply had three lovers who've produced children

with her. And, well, she's very young. Courtney had her first kid aged fourteen years. Good morning, Courtney.

Courtney

Cassidy: Hello. Good morning.

S. Nolan: Courtney, nice to talk to you today. Obviously, I've been reading about you in the papers. You first became pregnant at fourteen.

C. Cassidy: Yeah, that's right. I was in a relationship for four and a half years. It took me two and a half years before I actually fell pregnant or had intercourse.

S. Nolan: And how was that for you?

C. Cassidy: Um, I planned the pregnancy myself so it wasn't so shocking because I wanted a baby.

S. Nolan: And did you not think at fourteen years of age you were too young?

C. Cassidy: No, my sister is...become pregnant at the same age as well. So I thought if she could do it, I could.

S. Nolan: Now, obviously, some people will be feeling very, very sorry for you. They will be giving you a lot of sympathy. Do you think it's sympathy that you need, Courtney?

C. Cassidy: I don't want people to feel sorry for me or give me sympathy. I can do it on my own. I don't need people to feel sorry for me.

S. Nolan: Do you think you can be a good mother at fourteen years of age?

C. Cassidy: I can give my babies as much loving as a 34, 38-year-old woman could.

S. Nolan: You might be able to give them as much love but you can't really give them experience. You're still developing yourself at the age of fourteen, aren't you?

C. Cassidy: Yes, but...I don't know, I bring my children up...I've brought all my children up as good as any other woman could, if not better.

S. Nolan: What makes you think that?

C. Cassidy: 'Cos...I don't know, I gave them stability. I've gave them love. I've gave them caring. I've gave them what they wanted basically in life.

S. Nolan: Now of course, what you haven't given the first child is a father because you've fallen out with him, haven't you?

C. Cassidy: Yeah, I fell out with him. That was no fault of my own though. He had another girlfriend whilst I was pregnant and me not knowing. Two

weeks after my little girl was born, he finished with me to go out with this girl.

S. Nolan: Did you not feel like getting married to him?

C. Cassidy: I wanted to get married, yeah. But obviously he'd got another girl...sorry, a girlfriend with him by that time.

S. Nolan: So that was your first child, age fourteen. Then, you had your second child, what age were you then?

C. Cassidy: I was fifteen or sixteen. Sixteen, I was.

S. Nolan: Two children by sixteen. And you didn't know the father's last name?

C. Cassidy: No.

S. Nolan: Why not?

C. Cassidy: 'Cos it was one night out after having my first daughter, I was going out with all my friends. I got too drunk, gone home, had intercourse with someone I don't know. Woke up the next morning and he wasn't there.

S. Nolan: Do you regret doing it now?

C. Cassidy: Yes.

S. Nolan: So that was the second child. Have you tried to seek out the father? Have you tried to find him?

C. Cassidy: No, 'cos my partner I'm now with brings up all my three children the same.

S. Nolan: And you had the third child, aged?

C. Cassidy: My third child, how old was I when I had it?

S. Nolan: Yes.

C. Cassidy: I was seventeen.

S. Nolan: Now obviously Courtney, when you get to seventeen years of age and you've three kids, you're surely saying to yourself the majority of my friends are not like this. I am doing something that is rather extraordinary here. Should I be doing this?

C. Cassidy: Well, I don't care what people think of me. At the end of the day, this is the life that I wanted. I can live my career when I'm older and my children are older. I'll still be young at the end of the day. So that's what I think...

S. Nolan: What kind of sex education were you given in school?

C. Cassidy: By the time, I had sex education, I was already pregnant with Laina, my first daughter. So...

Unit 16 The science curriculum in Arizona

Anne Minard: Late last month, the Arizona department of education visited Flagstaff as part of a quick series of public meetings around the state to get input for classroom standards for science. They got an earful from people you might expect to care, like science teachers. Julie Bias, a teacher at Granite Mountain Middle school in Prescott, showed up to tell the department she worries about the proposed buffet-style plan for middle schools which would touch on a variety of science topics each year, rather than going in depth into one area per grade level like the schools do now.

Julie Bias: We're teaching an incomplete unit in cells, where genetics is not covered and then, moving on to a weather unit, doesn't make much sense. On number three, this seems to be surface sampling of the science areas instead of learning an area in depth.

A. Minard: Some local teachers worry about the effects of the new standards on existing in-depth programmes like the third-grade focus on astronomy at Flagstaff's DeMiguel School. Another teacher complained that the fourth grade is too soon for students to get a lesson on the parts of an atom like the new standards suggest. But not everyone was there to criticise the nuances of the standards. Just like it has in every other state that's grappled with new science standards, the process in Arizona has brought out the age-old debate between creation and evolution. Al Scott is a Flagstaff resident who says evolution has no place at all in the science curriculum.

Al Scott: The theory of evolution is not science. And I submit to the board that it ought to be removed from the scientific curriculum and placed in philosophy or some other curriculum, not in science. Because it's not science, it is in fact a religion. It believes that the origin of life started with a rock. Now, I don't know whether any of you here evolved from a rock, but I didn't. And my ancestors aren't monkeys.

A. Minard: Others took a gentler approach and simply asked the committee to present the theory of evolution in such a way that students are invited to critique it and not just accept it as fact. Tom Horne, Arizona's superintendent of education, seems to agree. He says he thinks his department

has found a pretty good solution that will work for people on both sides of the debate. It has to do with changing a couple of key words in the teaching standards themselves, like in this example.

Tom Horne: Reforms Objective 9, the original one was: 'Use patterns in the fossil records to support the theory of organic evolution.' The proposed revision is: 'Evaluate patterns in the fossil records that support the theory of organic evolution.' I think the use of the word 'evaluate' helps convey the idea that you can both support and criticise different forms of evidence.

A. Minard: Horne says supporters of evolution need not worry about the future of science education in Arizona as long as he's in charge.

T. Horne: Well, as long as I'm state superintendent of schools, we are going to have generally accepted scientific knowledge in our science classrooms. And evolution is part of that.

A. Minard: But Skip Evans, network project director with the National Center for Science Education, is wary. His group's main focus is keeping an eye on the nation's science classrooms to make sure creationism doesn't get any more time at the chalkboard. But he says the proponents of creationism and its sister theory called 'intelligent design' are sneaky.

Skip Evans: Creationists have switched their tactics over the last couple of years. In the past, they've wanted to bring in some kind of alternate theories, you know, even traditional biblical creationism or maybe now it's sort of the next evolutionary step in creationism – intelligent design creationism. But that's largely failed so what they've done is resorted to this sort of fall-back procedure and say, you know: 'We want to teach both the evidence for evolution and the evidence against evolution.' Now to the average person that sounds very reasonable. However, what they'll bring in to the curriculum as evidence against evolution is bad science. It used to be a lot easier just to knock down, you know, creation science. But like any organism that's going to survive it's going to have to adapt. And anti-evolutionism has adapted very well to its current environment.

A. Minard: Evans worries that changes like some of those proposed for Arizona's curriculum are a foot in the door for sacrificing good science in favour of religion.

The three-week public comment period on the new science teaching standards has come and gone

with hardly any public notice and no press coverage. And that alarms Skip Evans. The revised standards are expected to go to the state board for final approval as early as next month. And they could be phased into classrooms over the next several years. For Arizona Public Radio, I'm Anne Minard in Flagstaff.

Unit 17 Space Debris – European Space Agency

Narrator: Space. This is the year 2005 when satellites have been launched into space for nearly fifty years. Thousands of these manmade objects are orbiting the Earth. And most will remain there for decades. Only a few are still in use. The rest are space debris.

Heiner

Klinkrad: What one can say is the number of space objects that we know of is in the order of 9,500. And these objects are typically larger than 10 centimetres in the low Earth orbit, up to 2,000 km. And they are typically larger than about one metre in the geostationary orbit. Now if you go to smaller sizes, the number of objects increases dramatically.

And if you go to one-centimetre objects, then probably we have half a million objects up there.

Narrator: The dramatic increase of space debris – the result of a lack of awareness during the early phases of space exploration. Back in the 1980s, several hundred satellites per year were put in orbit around the Earth, mostly as spy satellites. With them came the upper stages of rockets that lifted them in space. Today, even fuel tanks and old astronaut gloves are migrating in space around the Earth.

H. Klinkrad: Space debris is a big problem because there are many objects, sometimes very small objects which have a very high velocity and a high kinetic energy, which can cause lots of damage.

Narrator: Space debris or micrometeorites sometimes crash into abandoned rocket fuel tanks or batteries orbiting Earth. This causes explosions, creating clouds of new space debris with innumerable tiny bits and pieces. Since the beginning of the space age, there have been almost 200 explosions in orbit, under half of which involve old rocket bodies. Because space debris is travelling so fast, even pieces of one centimetre or less in size can cause big damage.

H. Klinkrad: The object that we see here is an aluminium block, a solid aluminium block which was hit by a tiny sphere which is 1.2 centimetres in diameter. And you see that this caused quite a bit of damage. This bullet, if you like, was fired at this block at a velocity of 6.8 km a second, which is less than the orbital speed. You don't just have this crater morphology, but you can also have detachments like this. So in a worse case, this could have separated. And with high velocity, this detachment could have moved through a cabin of a space station and might have caused lots of damage.

Narrator: So space debris is not only an aesthetical or an environmental problem, if the debris increases further, there is danger that even space exploration could suffer dramatically, says Heiner Klinkrad.

H. Klinkrad: If you do not enforce space debris mitigation measures in very near future, it may happen that collision events become prevailing in the long term. And then you may reach a situation where collisions totally dominate and whatever you do, you cannot get control of the situation anymore. Ultimately, this may lead to a situation where in certain altitude regions you cannot conduct any safe space missions anymore.

Unit 18 Brazil: Computers in the *favelas*

Paula Gobbi: This small courtyard in front of the church is the only recreation area in the San Carlos *favela* – a slum of forty thousand people. This hillside shanty town is one of the 630 *favelas* in Rio De Janeiro, where poverty, unemployment and drug dealers reign. Over a million people live in Rio's infamous *favelas* surviving on little more than the minimum wage of 80 dollars a month. Yet this information technology school set up in a small room of the church is helping the poor strive for a better future.

A simple clicking on the keyboard, two dollars inscription tuition and five dollars monthly fee has transformed life for 21-year-old Eloisa Fajeira. Eloisa makes a living filming children's party videos. And with the newly acquired computer skills, her business is growing.

Eloisa Fajeira: I work with my brother filming parties. We have a video and a karaoke. And the

computer has helped us because we can now make brochures and attractive covers for the videos. We can now put the child's photo on the front of the video along with our name and address to get more business. We can also add graphic designs to make it look better. Before we only had local clients here in the poor areas. Now we get work from other neighbourhoods, even from rich people.

P. Gobbi: Eloisa says it's hard for her and her brother to find traditional jobs because nobody wants to employ people from the *favelas*. And it's also hard to get qualifications if you live in the slums. Former computer analyst Rodrigo Baggio set out to close that gap six years ago when he founded the Committee to Democratise Information Technology. He started out with just five PCs donated by a big international company. Today, nearly 75,000 young people have been trained in basic computer skills. Some have gone on to higher training programmes in one of over 240 schools in the slums where the scheme operates.

Rodrigo Baggio: In our project, we have a very concrete product, the information technology citizenship school. Each school needs to be a self-sustainable and self-management school. With the technology, we talk about citizenship, human rights, ecology, sexuality, non-violence. The idea is to use information technology like a citizenship tool to change lives and to change poor communities.

P. Gobbi: Rodrigo Baggio confirms that change is possible.

R. Baggio: About eighty-six per cent of our students said they changed their lives after our class. This means things like they come back to the public school. They change their behaviour inside the public school. They change their behaviour inside their families. They didn't work more in drug dealers. They have a productive way to spend their time.

P. Gobbi: Rodrigo Baggio's next goal is to provide internet access for all the schools participating in this scheme – creating an online exchange for the poor communities to discuss their problems, and providing more opportunities for people to better themselves and their communities through better employment prospects. And following on from the success of this project in his homeland, Baggio's ambition has gone global with similar schemes in Colombia, Uruguay, Mexico and Chile.

Unit 19 A laughter therapist talks about Laughter Clubs

Mark Colvin: India's giggling guru, Doctor Madan Kataria, is no stranger to ABC audiences, our Delhi Bureau discovered him more than a decade ago, and he's appeared on ABC Radio, TV News, and the Foreign Correspondent programme. But he's never brought his laughing gear to our shores till now.

This weekend, Doctor Kataria will touch down in Melbourne to kick-off a belly-laughing tour, which will also take in Sydney and Brisbane. South Asia Correspondent Geoff Thompson spoke to Doctor Kataria today, after visiting a laughter club in New Delhi this morning.

Geoff Thompson: Laughter Club starts with a warm-up, as about 15 people standing in a New Delhi public park begin their day with a giggle about... well, anything really. Leading this group is local giggling guru, Doctor Umesh Sahgal, who balances his stressful daily life as a dentist with morning of cackling and silly movements – a bit like an exercise group in which everyone's as high as a kite.

Umesh Sahgal: But we do it in a different way. We do all by laughing, we don't do it seriously, we keep on laughing through all the exercises for 20 minutes, and after that we just laugh for no reason. So that everyone is happy, you know, when they leave this place. They are just fresh for the whole day. They can go and fight their own stress and tension in a good, better way.

G. Thompson: Is it difficult to laugh on cue early in the morning?

[PAUSE]

U. Sahgal: Well, on your own you can't laugh, but when you see others laughing you start laughing yourself.

G. Thompson: And laugh you do. It's hard not to when surrounded by complete strangers all giggling themselves stupid, jumping on one leg or pretending to make milkshakes or even flapping and squawking like birds.

Mumbai-based Doctor Madan Kataria is the founder of Laughing Clubs and has spread his guffawing enthusiasm for laughter's health benefits all over the world. This weekend, Doctor Kataria kicks off a new tour of Australia in Melbourne. But the laughter bug is already booming in Australia, with 30

clubs and about five thousand members. And it all started with Doctor Kataria's idea nine years ago.

Madan Kataria: The idea of Laughter Club came to my mind on 13th March 1995, and I went to a public park and told people, 'I want to start a Laughter Club', and they started laughing at me, they said, 'Doc, are you all right?' I said, 'No, I'm serious about it. Let's start a Laughter Club.' And they ridiculed, they said, 'This is not a good idea', and then I could find four people who were ready to laugh at me. That was the beginning of the Laughter Club.

G. Thompson: Laughter Clubs are sometimes called Laughter Yoga, and do involve breathing exercises. But for the most part you just stand around and laugh, something which even cynical journalists can't help finding contagious. You got anything that can make Australian people laugh?

U. Sahgal: Yes, I think we can. We can. We can make everyone laugh. See we made you laugh also... weren't you laughing...?

G. Thompson: Yes, you did.

U. Sahgal: That's what I told you. This is a contagious disease, you know. Even if you are not laughing, when you see others laughing you start laughing yourself. So at least you have a smile on your face when you see others laughing, and when you join the stream, you start laughing yourself.

Club member 1: But start laughing with me. And now you laugh more. You see, this way the laugh is spread all over world, not only in India, all over the world, this is pretty.

Club member 2: Now you have to laugh and record your voice.

Unit 20 Holiday reps meet in a Spanish seaside resort

Andrew

(Manager): Well, we can't wait any longer. Let's get started.

Justin: Sorry, sorry. I overslept, must have forgotten to set the alarm.

Andrew: Alright, you're here now. Look can everyone try to be here on time tomorrow? I mean, how hard is it to get up in time for a meeting at 11? Now, let's talk about today. Lindsay, what's on for today?

Lindsay: OK. Today things begin at one o'clock. I've organised a boat trip over to Las Salinas. The theme is

Mexican Getaway. To get them in the mood everyone gets a cheap Mexican sombrero as they go on the boat. Nicole is handling the activities on board.

Andrew: Nicole, what have you got?

Nicole: Well, I hired a local DJ...Tom 'Mega' Watts...he plays mostly trance and deep house. Those girls from Bristol were wanting more deep house, so I think he fits the bill. We've found some CDs of Mexican music, so we can have some of that on the way back. And we've got Mexican costumes for all of the reps.

All: Oh, right.

Andrew: Okay, that sounds about right. What are they going to do besides dance and drink?

Nicole: Well, Lindsay and I've got a few party games lined up too, with shots of tequila for the winners.

Andrew: Yeah, well, that'll liven things up. Which reminds me Justin, what else will they be drinking?

Justin: Well, it goes with the Mexican theme...margaritas, two kinds of light Mexican lager, and the tequila too, of course.

Andrew: Anything to eat?

Justin: Oh...yeah,...some nachos with salsa and guacamole and a few other things.

Andrew: OK...Just remember when we get back that the local cops don't want anyone carrying open bottles of alcohol through the town. It's a 50-euro fine on the spot. We want people to have a good time but we need to try and keep the noise down too. We don't want them coming off the boat shouting and yelling and throwing up all over the police like last time...and we definitely don't want anyone to get arrested.

Oh...and I had an email from Head Office, saying there's been a lot of bad publicity at home about Brits binge drinking in Spanish holiday resorts, so I have to remind all you reps that we have to keep on good terms with the people who live here, and the police too.

Justin: No worries. I'll be sticking with those Scottish lads to keep 'em in check. Remember those two guys who passed out after a drinking bout in the main street in June. Someone took all their clothes and they got their pictures all over the papers. Mind you, the police were pretty restrained about that one.

All: That's true.

Andrew: That's what I like to hear. Oh, I need to say something about the rep show...