

eViews

An interview with Anna Laugesen.
(There is some background noise in this recording.)

GLOSSARY

to do a degree	to complete a university course (first level)
to lay out	to arrange, to display
to scan	to copy
copy	written content especially for advertisements
ads	advertisements
task	duty, part of a job
copywriting	the business of writing copy (text)
graphic designer	creator of printed material
RSI	Repetitive Strain Injury
to switch	to change
to swell	to enlarge, make bigger
to dread	to fear, to be afraid of
to get rid of	to eliminate
to alter	to change or modify
to lean on	to rest on
to edit	to check and correct (writing)
hard copy	printed pages
slightly	only a little
to clear up	to get better
to wind down	to gradually stop
deadline	time by which a task (e.g. job or project) must be completed
to grip	to hold firmly

COMPREHENSION EXERCISE

1. What did Anna study at university?
2. How long was she unemployed?
3. Where is Christchurch? Is it big or small?
4. Who had the desktop publishing bureau where Anna started working?
5. Give examples of some of the work that she did.
6. Advertisers give you a terrible-looking photograph and ask you to ...
7. That sort of work was really stressful because...
8. Why did she enjoy this work?
9. She started having a lot of problems because...
10. Who did she go to for help? Why did she choose this person?
11. What changes did she try making?
12. Why did she decide that she needed a career change?
13. What did she decide to do instead?
14. How long did her physical problems take to get better?
15. What used to make things worse?

ANSWERS

1. Australian and New Zealand History.
2. Six months.
3. Christchurch is a small city in New Zealand. (Population 300,000 out of a total of 3,300,000)
4. Her parents.
5. She did layouts for overhead slide presentations and lots of marketing material.
6. Advertisers give you a terrible-looking photograph and ask you to make it look fantastic in full colour.
7. That sort of work was really stressful because the advertisers would not give you any help and you were expected to come out with something really great with the limited material they give you.
8. She's a very aesthetic person and she loved the visual aspects.
9. RSI.
10. She went to a physiotherapist because her work paid for it.
11. She tried changing the desk, the chair, the mousepad, the heights of the work surfaces, and the chair position.
12. She was tired of trying different methods to alleviate the RSI and decided it was not really going to get any better if she was still working at a computer.
13. Editing.
14. A year.
15. Stress, caused by deadlines and not taking breaks.

LESSON PLAN

1. Students think of 5 different jobs, totally randomly.
2. Work-related illnesses and injuries are very common. Students work in pairs and think of all the things that could go wrong in a working day for people doing the jobs they have thought of. Also in their own jobs, if they are working.
3. Go through the glossary. Check meaning and pronunciation.
4. Go through the comprehension questions and check understanding.
5. Play the interview. Check answers to questions. Repeat and pause where necessary.
6. What advice would they give someone who had the same problem as Anna when she was working in desktop publishing? See how many different structures students can come up with to do this.

E.g. "You should see a doctor"

"Why don't you see a doctor?"

"You'd better see a doctor."

"If I were you, I'd see a doctor"

"How/What about seeing a doctor?"

"Have you thought of seeing a doctor?"

"Don't you think it would be a good idea to see a doctor?"

Make sure students understand the above structures which are used for giving advice. Also, that they notice whether the infinitive or gerund is used. See if they can suggest any others. Also elicit and/or give them ways to respond to suggestions e.g. "Thanks, that's a good idea."

"Yes, I might try that."

"Yes, that's worth a try."

"Actually, I've already tried that and it didn't work."

"I'm not keen on that because..."

and any others they can think of.

7. Students work in pairs and write down 4 problems they have had, or could imagine having. (For example: "you borrowed a friend's book and you've lost it on the bus" or "you've invited friends for dinner, you have nothing prepared yet and your boss has just asked you if you could possibly work until 8 p.m. tonight to help finish preparing an urgent report".) Put 2 pairs together to make a group of four, pool the problems of the group and swap the problems with another group.
8. One student takes a problem, reads it out and the other students take it in turns to suggest solutions. Begin with the student to the left of the one asking for advice. The student with the problem gives the piece of paper to the student whose solution he/she likes best. The student with the most pieces of paper at the end wins the title of "Agony Aunt/Uncle".
9. What was the best problem and solution.

TRANSCRIPTION

- eV You mentioned that you've been in desktop publishing?
- Anna Yeah, that started when I left university, I did a degree in history, New Zealand and Australian history, and I got into desktop publishing because I'd been 6 months without a job, I was still looking for something, and Christchurch is a small city. New Zealand's a small country and Christchurch is a small city inside New Zealand and there's not really a lot of opportunities out there, it was through my parents, they've got a desktop publishing bureau and colour printing and imaging bureau, and somebody left and they needed somebody new so, I jumped at the chance to work full-time.
- eV Can you explain what desktop publishing is?
- Anna Sure it's... desktop publishing is laying out on screen, it's laying out text and photographs either in magazines, books or business presentations, pamphlets, lots of flyers and pamphlets. The kind of work that I was mainly doing was for business people, overhead slide presentations, lots of marketing material as well. Later on I moved into laying out magazines, colour magazines, which is much more interesting but high pressure... due to the deadlines that you're working to, and as well due to advertisers. You're having to lay out ads for the advertisers, and the magazines and, they don't really know a lot about desktop publishing and what it involves and they don't really know what you do to put something together, so they give you a terrible looking photograph and they ask you to scan the photograph and ask you to make it look fantastic in full colour, and write something really interesting about their company. So doing all that sort of work was really stressful, because the advertisers would not give you any help at all, and you were expected to come out with something really great with the limited material that they give you.
- eV So were you doing the copy for ads as...
- Anna Yeah, you could often end up doing the copy as well, I mean it's not part of your job but like any job, you end up doing ten other tasks as well. Copywriting in itself I think can be a really well paid job if you specialise and do that but... it's more well paid I think than maybe desktop publishing is, but I just ended up doing it as part of my job.
- eV Do you enjoy the work?
- Anna I enjoyed the work a lot. When I was desktop publishing, I liked it a lot. It's very visual and I'm a very aesthetic person, and I loved the visual aspect of doing it, and creating. You were being creative a lot of the time. It's not as creative as being a graphic designer but you do get to learn some of the graphic design programmes and elements and get to do that as well. So I did really enjoy that side of it a lot. The only thing I didn't enjoy, I think, was sitting at a computer for 10 to 12 hours per day. It's tiring and I started, after a while I started to have problems with RSI, in my wrists and fingers and shoulders as well, and that's one of the reasons that I switched to editing. I was getting swelling in my fingers and pain in my wrists and an awful lot of shoulder trouble as well, cause I'm quite tall, and I was having a lot of trouble with my posture, and just getting too much shoulder pain. Then, after a while I just dreaded the thought of going to work, because I thought "God, I've got to sit there for 8 hours and try and find a comfortable position to do my work in", and it just wasn't being fun anymore.

eV So who did you go to about that?

Anna I went to physiotherapy because my work paid for me to have physio for it, and so I was going twice a week to have physio, which did help. It definitely did help, and it got rid of a lot of the pain, but to me that wasn't any sort of solution. I thought I shouldn't need to go twice a week in the first place and decided I needed the career change because either way, it's not really going to get any better if you're going to have to sit at a computer 10 hours a day.

eV And did you try altering different chairs, different mouses, different desk heights?

Anna Yeah, I had about three different desks, numerous different chairs, mousepads, mousepads with gel inside to lean your wrist on. I had someone come in... a professional come in to adjust all the heights of everything.

eV What, an ergonomics adviser?

Anna Yeah, a physiotherapist, and she came in and told me exactly where my keyboard should be and my screen in relation to... what height the screen should be, and the chair and what position and to adjust the position of the chair every couple of hours... have the back a little further back so you're not sitting in the same position. Yeah I went through the whole course, but I think in the end I just decided that I wanted to change. I was just tired of trying different methods and...

eV But you changed to editing. Isn't that sitting in front of a screen?

Anna Well! No luckily I didn't want to get into onscreen editing which is what you have to do if you're working as a legal editor. Law firms are very much at the front of electronic publishing. What I wanted to do was to edit on paper, to edit words on paper, and there is still a lot of that traditional editing manuscripts, hard copy, editing poetry or editing books. And I find it much easier to read on paper than I do on screen anyway. I need to see something on paper, on hardcopy to make sense of it. I still have a little trouble reading a copy on screen. It doesn't sit right with me somehow. I need to physically hold it, and see it. I can't work properly just on screen. I didn't grow up working on computers, I was probably just at the edge of that generation. There's people probably just 5 years younger than me that are more used to it than I am.

eV And how are the wrists now? Are they...

Anna They're fine now. I only have a slight... slightly deformed finger, and that's the only thing I have got left to remind me about it, so it's not too bad at all.

eV And how long did the problem take to clear up?

Anna It probably took a year, because these things build up over a long time and it takes a long time, I think, just to slowly wind down as well. It just doesn't go like that. One of the things that I used to do too, where I went wrong was, when you're under a lot of stress... a deadline... I stopped taking breaks completely. You know, you'd work for a couple of hours straight just to get something done, and then when you're stressed you're holding... I'd be finding I was holding the mouse really, really tightly, and sort of gripping hardly so sort of tensing all these muscles in your fingers and up your arms.