

**A SURVEY OF THE WRITING APPROACHES FOLLOWED BY ESL
TEACHERS IN PORT ELIZABETH SECONDARY SCHOOLS WHERE
AFRIKAANS IS THE FIRST LANGUAGE**

COURSEWORK THESIS

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ABSTRACT

In this study an attempt is made to describe and illuminate the current approaches to ESL writing in secondary schools in the Port Elizabeth-Despatch areas where Afrikaans is the first language of the pupils.

Teacher and pupil questionnaires were used as a means of data collection through which the approaches, practices and attitudes to the teaching of ESL writing in the secondary schools in the survey area could be reviewed and assessed. The teacher questionnaire revealed that most respondents appeared to have a limited awareness or understanding of basic composing processes, especially the role of multiple drafting and teacher intervention in the form of interactive feedback. There is also evidence that there is a limited understanding of how these activities can be effectively implemented in a classroom situation.

The pupil questionnaire was used as a means to extend the understanding of teacher approaches to ESL writing as revealed in the teacher questionnaire, to enable comparisons to be made and to evaluate the writing approaches currently practised in the ESL classroom. Many of the observations revealed in the teacher questionnaire were echoed in the analysis of the pupil questionnaire, especially the limited roles of planning and feedback, treatment of error, attitude to writing and the limited improvement in writing as pupils progress through the secondary school. The analysis also revealed that pupils were reluctant to expose, or share their work with audiences, were pre-occupied with error and viewed the teacher as grade-giver, grammarian and topic-provider. Topic selection was also revealed as a factor which influenced the pupils' negative or indifferent attitudes to writing.

Although the process approach was considered a traditional approach to writing by 1986, the analysis and review of the questionnaire data has revealed that a fair assessment of the state of ESL writing in the survey schools would place the current writing approaches in the

traditional product- centred, form-dominated, teacher-centred mould. For this position to change, research pedagogy will need to become part of teacher training and the classroom so that there can be greater teacher awareness and understanding of composing processes and their implementation in the classroom. This is necessary, because research findings have revealed that a genuine orientation to a process approach and the application of composing strategies followed by good writers will result in improved writing progress and pupils having a more positive attitude to writing.

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GLOSSARY:

- L1 - First Language
- L2 - Second Language
- ESL - English Second Language
- CED - Cape Education Department

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CHAPTER 1

1.0 INTRODUCTION

According to Ann Raimes (Teaching ESOL Writing, World Net Video, 11 March 1990), writing is an under-used skill in language learning and is considered the last and least important skill to be learned, its use being limited to a means of testing that which has already been learnt.

The thoughts expressed by Raimes accurately reflect the status of writing in our present secondary school system. Writing's value in language learning as a reliable and necessary means for generating language and as a tool for thought and instruction (Raimes 1983:549, Raimes 1985:252, Marshall in Applebee 1984:150) has either been neglected or underrated. However, it is probable that writing has a limited role in the curriculum because teachers are uninformed or naive about the complexity of the composing process and view writing as a "once off" activity (Pratt 1990:454), and not a process in need of "continuous revision and refinement" (Kilfoil and van der Walt 1989:155). As a result, writing instruction is often limited to an explanation of the writing topics and the correct formulation of the product with little or no emphasis on the writing process. The teacher often assumes that the pupil knows how to write and uses what the pupil produces as a test of that ability (Hobelman and Wiriyaichita 1990:37). However, research has shown that writing is a difficult skill to acquire logically and that it must be "taught to be acquired" (Tanchotikul 1990:39).

1.1 PRODUCT-CENTRED APPROACHES

The traditional product-centred approaches focus on the finished text or product, and the writing that is produced will often not reflect the actual writing process. Composing processes such as pre-writing activities, planning, drafting and idea development through redrafting and revision

of the text, teacher-pupil interaction and feedback will seldom be emphasised as these activities are not the focus of the writing class. The focus will rather be on the form, correctness and evaluation of the final product. The inner intellectual process of composing as well as the complex and sometimes frustrating experience committed and experienced writers go through as they write, will be virtually ignored.

Flower and Hayes describe the typical role played by the traditional ESL composition teacher:

We help students to analyse the product, but we leave the process of writing to inspiration. (Flower and Hayes 1977:449)

Studies have revealed, however, that there are many problems associated with product centred approaches. For instance, pupils tend to distance themselves from their writing tasks and are less likely to respond in a personal and meaningful manner when they are concerned with teacher expectations and surface details such as, correct layout, incorrect spelling, omitted and incorrect punctuation, and grammatical errors. Interest in the message gives way to the details of the presentation (Marshall in Applebee 1984:110) and the language itself, rather than the purposes for which the language is used, becomes the focus (Britton 1978:24 in Zamel 1982:198). This pre-occupation with expression and grammar can inhibit idea development (Perl 1979 in Spack and Sadow 1983:577) as the process of discovery is constantly interrupted by undue attention to form. According to Perl, these premature and rigid attempts to correct and edit "truncate the flow of composing" (1980:22 in Zamel 1982:198).

Thus, grammar, teacher and product-based approaches to writing serve neither as "substitutes nor prerequisites for instruction in the process of composing" (Lauer 1980:54 in Zamel 1982:206). If, then, a teacher-centred approach is maintained, crucial elements of the composing process will continue to be undervalued and the writing experience will continue to be "trivial" and an "unproductive exercise" (Langer and Applebee in Applebee 1984:170).

Furthermore, writing will maintain its mundane, tedious and burdensome stature in the English second language (ESL) Syllabus for both teachers and pupils.

1.2 PROCESS-CENTRED APPROACHES

Current research in writing has shown that with effective use of composing processes (pre-writing exercises, planning, drafting, revising and feedback), the product can improve (Zamel 1982, Krashen 1984, Pratt 1990, Keh 1990). However, although the heuristic procedures that enable pupils to produce meaningful pieces of writing are "surprisingly simple" (Flower and Hayes 1977:450), pupils need help "to get going, delve, explore and shape the meaning of the piece" (Mason 1989:23). Therefore, teacher and peer intervention in the form of written or oral feedback are essential components of the writing process as they are the means whereby the pupil is guided to the successful articulation of the product. The necessity of the ESL composition teacher having an interactive role is explained by Blanton:

... to allow them (pupils) to perceive the development of their ability to write as the multi-faceted, gradual and organic process that it is. (Blanton 1987:112)

The importance of concentrating on the writing process and not on the final product is further highlighted by Langer and Applebee (in Applebee 1984:169-181) who report on a number of studies where they expected to find instruction at its best. They found that there was "a systematic and pervasive failure in the quality of the instructional interaction between teacher and student" even when there was a concerted effort to implement process-orientated activities. The reason for this finding was that the emphasis in instruction usually remained firmly on the successful completion of the product, as the teacher saw it, rather than on helping students extend their composing skills. The subsequent writing experience became a "relatively trivial experience" where the "pupils polished content or form the teacher had selected as the focus of instruction" (Langer and Applebee 1984:170).

According to Langer and Applebee's study (1984), if writing in the classroom remains teacher-controlled, no matter how well intended, and meaning is preempted by the teacher, the structure of the interaction will inevitably break down and the instructional goals will be subverted (Langer and Applebee 1984:171). However, a study by Carroll (1984:325 in Zamel 1987:701) revealed that students of teachers who had an orientation to process writing showed "statistically significant and educationally important increases in their writing performance" compared with students of teachers who had not shown such an orientation.

It is, therefore, a cause for concern that although the ESL research field has recognised the complexity and importance of the composing process (the process approach was considered "traditional" by 1986 according to Shih 1986:624 in Raimes 1991:410), and the interactive role of the teacher and pupil as well as the relationship between writing and instruction (Hobelman and Wiriyaichitra 1990:37, Leki 1991:8, Raimes 1991:409, Winer 1992:66), teachers are still dominated by a concern with the product. The nature of the composing process, therefore, needs to be brought to the attention of a broader spectrum of teachers as few teachers realise that their instructional interactions will directly affect the quality of their pupils' work. The Cape Education Department (CED) syllabus in the Education Gazette for the Senior and Junior Secondary Course for ESL Ordinary, Higher and Standard Grade in its Policy and Objectives on Written work (October 1986, Part LXXXV No. 8:639) recognises the importance of the following composing processes in the final point under **WRITING**:

3.4.6 to plan, draft, revise their work

The document, however, does not explain why the processes of planning, drafting and revising are important or how to institute them. For the teacher there is no "demystification" (Mason 1989:23) of why these composing strategies are necessary, and, therefore, teachers will often continue to oversimplify the process of composing (Emig 1971:98 in Zamel 1982:196) and to emphasise the product, rarely realising that their instructional interactions will directly affect the quality of their pupils' writing.

This situation highlights the apparent dichotomy between research and what happens in the classroom. In spite of the fact that process research studies have shown "encouraging" (Pratt 1990:453) and "positive" (Keh 1990:11) results in writing content, organisation, grammar and student attitude to writing, this has often not been successful in "transforming or informing pedagogy" (Zamel 1987:699). Studies of teaching writing highlight the gap between research and practice and bear out Hairston's claim (1982 in Zamel 1987:699) that despite the paradigm shift in writing approaches, teachers often remain uninformed of the importance of composing processes in the teaching of writing and cling to the traditional models of instruction, remaining "static and insular" in the way they approach the "dynamic and highly context-orientated process" (Rose 1981 in Zamel 1987:700) frequently making use of the approaches they suffered under as students (Winer 1992:62).

1.3 ESL WRITING RESEARCH : A BRIEF OVERVIEW

No English language teacher with a concern for method can say that the last quarter of a century has been a dull time ... Rapid shifts in approaches to language and language teaching ... have been reflected in the teaching of writing to non-native speakers. (Raimes 1987:36)

1.3.1 Changing paradigms

The field of teaching in ESL has been in the midst of a paradigm shift since the mid-60s as one conceptual model has given way to another causing a disorderly "proliferation of methods and theories" (Raimes 1983:549). And, according to Stokes (1984:4), these shifts have affected the teaching of writing more than any other skill area.

Raimes states that twenty-five years ago, writing was characterised by an approach that focused on linguistic and rhetorical form and since then, research has "gone into the woods" (Raimes 1991:407) in search of the "ultimate method" (Raimes 1983:538). The search has seen the decline of the behaviourist approach where writing was ignored except as a means

of transcribing oral sentence structures, and the ascent of the functional communicative approaches in the 1970s which emphasised writing as an expressive skill. As this shift appeared in second-language teaching, research into the way native speakers write began to change radically how writing was taught in the mother tongue.

Influenced by first language (L1) research on composing processes, second language (L2) researchers started reacting against the form-dominated approaches and developed an interest in what L2 writers actually do as they write. Research sought to identify the processes that writers go through while practising their craft and concern for accuracy and product was replaced with a concern for process, meaning, interaction, feedback and multiple drafts. The emphasis, therefore, moved from the traditional product-based model which gave insight into the behaviours, composing strategies and difficulties of writers. With these studies there arose a demand for new directions in writing research and pedagogy (Murray 1968, Young 1978 in Spack 1984:650).

1.3.2 Product to process

It was realised that in producing the final product, writers do not follow a linear and neat sequence of planning, organisation, writing and revising (Emig 1971, Perl 1980, Flower and Hayes 1980, Sommers 1980, Raimes 1985). Instead, researchers recognised the cyclical and recursive nature of the writing process and the fact that writers move back and forth on a continuum discovering, analysing and synthesising ideas and that the process that creates the precision is itself "messy" (Shaughnessy 1977 in Zamel 1982:205).

The methods of teaching writing as a process were initially developed for writers using their L1, and research revealed that the adoption of this approach yielded positive result (Odell 1974, Hilgers 1980 in Raimes 1985:231). When the traditional product-based approach followed by ESL teachers continued to produce stiff prose, repetition of errors, inadequate

development of ideas, lack of involvement in topics and a lack of confidence in the student's ability to write well in English, ESL researchers became convinced that the product-based approaches were not meeting the needs of the students or the goals of the course (Spack and Sadow 1983:576). Clarification and guidance was, therefore, sought from the writers and teachers in L1 who were challenging the traditional method of teaching composition.

1.3.3 Influence of L1 research on L2

Although research in ESL writing at this time was almost non-existent (Zamel 1976, 1982:196), ESL researchers had become aware of the paradigm shift in L1 writing instruction and described how ESL writing could benefit from first language research (Zamel 1976, Taylor 1981, Watson 1982, Spack 1984). The findings of Zamel's case study of advanced ESL college students (1982:203) indicated that they employed composing strategies similar to those of native speakers:

Their writing behaviours suggest approaches to the teaching of composition that ESL teachers may have felt were only appropriate for native speakers but which, in fact, may be effective for teaching all levels of writing including ESL composition. (Zamel 1982:203)

Jones and Tetroe's study of transfer across languages also found "strong and direct data for the transfer of L1 skill to L2" in writing and concluded that "second language composing is not a different animal from first language composing" (Jones and Tetroe 1983 in Raimes 1985:231). Raimes (1987) also believes that there are similarities between the composing process of ESL and L1 and acknowledges that many of the teaching techniques recommended for L1 are appropriate for ESL.

Process-orientated research in ESL became dominated by studies that sought to identify strategies and behaviours L2 writers share, and do not share (Raimes 1985), with their L1 counterparts, and which demonstrate that composing processes are "universal and transitive across languages" (Zamel 1984 in Hall 1990:43).

However, although similarities between composing in L1 and L2 were found to exist, it was difficult to form conclusive generalisations on which to base pedagogy (Raimes 1985:231). For example, Zamel's case study (1982, 1983) and Jones and Tetroe's study (1987) involved discrete groups of advanced ESL writers and graduate students respectively. Therefore, Silva reacting to Zamel's study, states:

Thus, there seems to be a tacit assumption that L1 and L2 writing are essentially the same phenomenon - that the linguistic, cultural and experiential differences of L2 writers are of negligible or of no concern to ESL composition teachers. This assumption seems counter-intuitive and would appear to militate against the experience of most ESL composition teachers and L2 writers. (Silva 1988:517)

Therefore, although it was generally accepted that attention to process was necessary to enable students "to gain freedom to express themselves" (Winteroud 1973:708 in Spack 1984:657), this was not seen as sufficient. Spack (1984:664) stated that studies needed to be undertaken and teaching practices developed that were uniquely suited to ESL composition instruction. Raimes (1985) also stated that L2 students should not be treated like native language students and that a pedagogical shift in the teaching of L1 writing did not necessarily determine what was needed in SL practice:

... we need to know what our students do **differently** from what basic writers do ... what characterises them as writers grappling not only with a written code but with a linguistic code that is still being acquired. (Raimes 1985:232)

1.3.4 Problems of the L2 writer

ESL student writers have all the worries of the native speaker and many more besides, for all of them have to learn the phonology, grammar, syntactic structure, vocabulary, rhetorical structure and idiom of the new language (Raimes 1983 in Hedge 1988). Raimes (1985:250), therefore, called for "some middle ground" as observation of pedagogical strategies used by

native speakers could not be solely depended on to give insight into the strategies for teaching practices which uniquely suit ESL composition (Spack 1984:664). Silva (1988:517) also stated that it would be wise to interpret the findings of L1 studies very carefully into L2 writing contexts.

The difficulties of ESL writers appear to stem from the **constraints** of the act of composing: time, topic, audience, purpose and the impact of these four variables on the pupil's ability to generate ideas, plan, organise, write, revise and edit (Raimes 1985 in Raimes 1987:442).

In order to overcome the constraints of the L2 writer, Raimes (1985:250) suggests that these writers need "more of everything" in the composing process and not larger doses of instruction to improve their writing. According to Raimes, L2 writers need more time more opportunity to **talk, read and write** to "marshal the vocabulary they need to make their own background knowledge accessible to them in their SL" They also need more instruction and **practice on generating, organising and revising ideas**, more **attention** to the rhetorical options available to them and more emphasis in **editing for language form and style**.

Therefore, although it is clear that ESL students have their own particular language problems which require attention, it must be remembered that writing as a process is only partially linguistic and language does not have to stand in the way of ESL composition. Regardless of language proficiency, a writer also needs to develop the essentially non-linguistic intellectual and cognitive skills which underlie writing (Taylor 1976 in Taylor 1981:10). Since so many ESL students never acquire a proficiency that even approaches that of a native speaker, and most only control the language in an incomplete way, the postponing of a pedagogy on content in favour of form cannot be justified (Taylor 1981:10).

1.3.5 Importance of a process approach to L2

In order to develop the skills that underlie successful writing, pupils need to be aware that writing is not a "once-off activity" (Pratt 1990:454), and that revision and redrafting based on teacher or peer feedback are essential components of any writing experience.

However, since many pupils even lack systematic strategies for finding a focus, beginning writing and developing their ideas, they may never be able to write well if they have not been exposed to composing strategies and guided through the writing process. Pupils must be given time and direction in both pre-writing and writing activities and be taught not only how "to talk about and even relearn or re-examine their experiences ... prior to writing" (Judy 1980:39 in Zamel 1982:204) but how to "explore topics, develop ideas and discover relationships" (Lauer 1980:57-59 in Ike 1989:45) in the writing process. Therefore, instruction in writing should begin with:

... the more fundamental process of where writers get their thoughts in the first place and then get them underway. (Shaughnessy 1977:245 in Zamel 1982:203)

The teachers' role in this process is vital as their interaction with their pupils provides the feedback which enables ideas to be generated and the emerging texts to be continuously shaped, developed and revised.

1.3.6 Towards an integrated writing approach

Although ESL writers, linguistically proficient and otherwise, with inadequate composing skills would certainly benefit from the incorporation of a process-centred approach, this would be insufficient without more help in coping with the demands of "writing-as-text" (Arndt 1987:259). This means that the teaching of ESL writing must not only help inefficient writers become more efficient with regard to writing strategies; it must help all writers produce more

effective texts by "enriching knowledge of linguistic resources in the L2" (Raimes in Connor 1987:678). Raimes, therefore, recommends that product as well as process be attended to and that a new model for SL composition teaching be considered. This model would not see writing only as one of the language skills to be learned, but also as an effective way for a learner "to generate words, sentences, chunks of discourse and to communicate them in a new language" (Raimes 1985:252), through the application of heuristic devices to focus on meaning but also on rhetorical and linguistic features after ideas have found some form. (Raimes 1985:247-248)

Although product research has been harshly condemned by some composition theorists, the relationship between process and product has been recently re-assessed and there have been calls for an **integrated** theory of writing that includes both process and product (Arndt 1987:257, Connor 1987:680, Leki 1991:11).

Recent developments in text analysis methodology are helping to integrate the product and process perspectives. By describing sequential texts within the process, text analyses are contributing to the understanding of the writing process. Text analyses are also improving the tools with which teachers and students can talk about student writing (Connor 1987:678). Among the products that have been analysed have been transcripts of processes of writers commenting on their own writing (Flower and Hayes 1981 in Connor 1987:678), analyses of students' revisions of their own writing (Sommers 1980, Zamel 1983) and studies of teacher comments on students' writing (Zamel 1985).

Equally important for the argument on behalf of an integrated theory of process and product in ESL, is Raimes's (1985:24) analyses of the "think aloud" protocol of unskilled ESL writers writing essays. Raimes found that ESL writers concentrate on the challenge of finding the right words and sentences to express their meaning, so she recommends that when teaching writing "we consider the need to attend to product as well as process" (Raimes in Connor

1987:678). Therefore, the role of the product is again being recognised not only in writing research but also in the teaching of writing.

Arndt states that "it may be ill-advised, and perhaps even impossible, to divorce the processes and the product from each other" as at the heart of effective writing lie "the techniques for successful fusion of thought and language in the rhetorical context" and "the organic and integrated nature of writing cannot be dichotomized into process and product" (1987:257). Therefore, according to Connor:

The aim is to develop a unified theory of ESL writing, which includes both process and product while accounting for the many levels of language (eg. syntax and discourse). (1987:680)

CHAPTER 2

2.0 THE PROCESS APPROACH

2.1 AN INTRODUCTION

Although the process approach to writing is not a new approach and it has been around since the early 1970s (Keh 1990:294), it appears that many ESL composition teachers only get as far as an awareness of the approach for one reason or another. It is unfortunate that crucial elements of the composing process continue to be undervalued in the classroom (Collins 1990:50), because research has shown that a process approach to writing produces "overall positive results" (Keh 1990:12).

A process approach to writing is not one consolidated approach, but rather a whole series of approaches based on the perception of writing as a process (Liebman-Kleine 1986:785 in Pratt 1990:454). Raimes (1983:11) points out that all approaches overlap but if cognisance is taken of what is involved in good writing, a balanced approach to writing can be attained.

These factors include:

- * an awareness of audience and purpose,
- * the value of writing several drafts to develop ideas, and
- * appropriate feedback from either the teacher and/or peers as readers (from Hobelman and Wiriyachitra 1990:38)

The approach is also described as a "multi-draft" process by Keh (1990:294). The first draft is to enable the writer to discover meaning or ideas and the second and third (and possibly more) drafts are to revise the ideas and the communication thereof. Keh also stresses that reader feedback is a "fundamental element" in all stages of the process because it is the means whereby the writer is guided through the writing experience. Feedback or response

in the form of comments, suggestions and questions provides the input for revision and is the mechanism by which the writer is pushed through the various drafts to the eventual end-product.

The following model represents the basic stages that any writing experience should encompass. The stages are not mutually exclusive and any stage can be repeated or omitted according to the needs of the pupil.

STAGES IN THE WRITING PROCESS

INPUT	<u>Pre-writing stage</u> - for the generation of ideas and topics: brainstorming/listing/reading/ quick writing/listening/surveying - DATA GATHERING	
WRITE FIRST	<u>Free-writing stage</u> - a means DRAFT to discover ideas: jotting ideas/fragments/writing longer pieces - DATA GENERATION	R
PEER/TEACHER FEEDBACK	<u>Feedback</u> - focus on content only: add/delete/change/reorder - IDEA STRUCTURING	E
WRITE SECOND DRAFT	<u>Planned writing outline:</u> changes in content/re-start/ develop ideas/logic/sense - IDEA ORGANISATION	C
PEER/TEACHER FEEDBACK	<u>Major revision</u> - reread and check content and form: focus on structure/order/logic - add/delete/change - IDEA ORGANISATION AND STRUCTURING	R
THIRD/FINAL DRAFT	<u>Minor editing/polishing</u> - check form: correctness of grammar and spelling/ format/layout - IDEA REFINEMENT	S
EVALUATION	<u>Assessment</u> - writer and readers in terms of purpose - WRITING EVALUATION	I
		V
		E

(Note: The above model is based on models put forward by Keh 1990:10, Pratt 1990:457 and a paper by Meyer 1989:41-42)

Writing is, therefore, a **series of stages** rather than a "once-off" activity (Pratt 1990:454) during which revision and redrafting takes place continuously until the product is considered satisfactory for its purpose and audience by the writer. During all the stages, up to the final draft, meaning is stressed rather than form (Hobelman and Wiriyachitra 1990:37) because research has revealed that a concern for correct use of language and a fear of error can seriously inhibit idea development (Perl 1979 in Spack and Sadow 1983:577). It is important, therefore, that the process of redrafting and revision, which is vital in all stages of the process, never be mistaken for error correction.

The teacher becomes the consultant and facilitator in the different stages during which the product is taking shape and provides the main source of formative feedback to guide the pupil from one draft to the next, to advise on procedures and to monitor the on-going work so that the pupil's writing can be improved and developed. However, the feedback provided by the teacher will be ineffective unless it persuades pupils to act on the feedback given and encourages them to go back and reassess their work (Hyland 1990:279). Therefore, although the teacher is expected to interact with the pupils' writing continually and provide on-the-spot advice and comment during all the writing stages, the pupils' role is not passive. Pupils have to be encouraged to take responsibility for the shaping and editing of their writing and for "internalising the teacher's responses to form the 'inner dialogue' which facilitates the writing process" (Pratt 1990:454). The ultimate aim of feedback would, therefore, be for pupils to develop the "crucial ability of re-viewing their writing with the eyes of another" (Zamel 1982:206).

An approach which reinforces the need for **review and feedback** is Pica's **interactional approach** (1989:7-8). It takes into account insights from second-language acquisition theory and research, and emphasises intensive writing input and appropriate feedback to students' writing. The following description of Pica's approach illustrates the salient characteristics of an effective and productive writing experience:

The interactional approach encourages pupils to attend to the process of writing by giving them extensive opportunities for **practice** and **revision** but the stimulus for these opportunities is based on **feedback** from teacher and peers and is not generated by the students' own private interpretation. (Pica 1989:9)

This description of the interactional approach has not only underlined the need for practice and revision which is stimulated by feedback from teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil interaction, it has also emphasised that writing is not an "isolated activity" (Kilfoil and van der Walt 1989:155) but rather a "collaborative activity" (Hedge 1989:11), a cooperative enterprise whereby writers and readers construct meaning together (Phelps 1985 in Connor 1987:677). Vygotsky explains why interaction is important in the writing process:

... talking about one's ideas helps pupils move from "maximally compact inner speech to maximally detailed written speech" (Vygotsky in Janks 1987:152 in Dison 1988:49)

2.2 THE IMPORTANCE OF DRAFTING/REVISION AND FEEDBACK IN THE PROCESS APPROACH

Although all the stages involved in the process of creating a meaningful piece of writing are vital, research studies on the implementation of a process approach have highlighted and stressed the importance of the following processes for successful writing:

- * **draft revision:** "to organise and develop a sustained piece of writing on to the product" (Keh 1990:294), and
- * **teacher/peer feedback:** "the drive which steers the writer through the process of writing on to the product" (Keh 1990:294).

2.3 DRAFTING / REVISION

The purpose of a draft is not to ensure a perfect piece of writing, but to teach the process of structuring and elimination. For "writing is a craft and through redrafting can be improved" (Ainsworth 1990:62).

Current research on the process of writing has emphasised that writing is a complex intellectual activity that demands a flexible, recursive sequence during which "confusion and contradiction may be inevitable but temporary in the evolution of a piece of writing" (Trimmer and McCrimmon 1988:9). Raimes states that "organisation does not occur to us first" (1983:116) and it is only in both revision and drafting that shifts in thinking might occur that may challenge students to construct new meanings for themselves in the course of writing (Dison 1987:49). Drafting and revision, therefore, become the vehicle for the development and organisation of ideas as the choices that have created a piece of writing are re-examined and re-evaluated in terms of the purpose of the writing. Drafting and revision are, therefore, "indispensable stages" (Hyland 1990:270) in the writing process and vital for "organising and developing a sustained piece of writing" (Trimmer and McCrimmon 1988:7).

If redrafting and revision are essential for effective and successful writing, the pupils' (and teachers') complacency about the handing in of first-sitting work needs to be challenged. It is almost impossible to produce coherent and meaningful writing in one draft as good writing seldom flows out complete and polished. In fact, "one of the best kept secrets at school" (Smith 1982:196 in Chenoweth 1987:27) is that good writers produce multiple drafts and revise drafts constantly as they go through "cycles of revision" (Butturff and Summers 1980:103 in Zamel 1985:95). Therefore, the pupils' notion that they can produce a perfect copy effortlessly at the first sitting needs to be sabotaged and they must be forced "back into chaos" (Sommers 1982:154 in Zamel 1985:96) to reshape and restructure their writing. Pupils need to realise that to rewrite is not an indication of failure, but that "continual clarification and exploration may be necessary before their meaning becomes articulated" (Zamel 1985:95).

When pupils begin to write with the knowledge that their initial writing attempts must be changed and developed and that "change is desirable and necessary in the writing process" (Keh 1990:10), rewriting will be viewed not as extra work, but as a beneficial and necessary

part of the writing experience. Rewriting can thus become a means to boost pupils' confidence in their ability to write effectively as they will understand that writing is a process of discovery and that they have "to write and write and write" (Taylor 1981:9) in order to find out what they have to say.

This finding is confirmed by Perl (1979 in Taylor 1981:6) in her study of the composing processes of five unskilled college writers. Perl's subjects demonstrated that writers know more fully what they mean after writing, because it was only after they had seen their ideas on paper that they were able to reflect upon, change, and develop these ideas further. The act of writing is, therefore, a complex process wherein writers use language as a tool to discover and clarify meaning in order to express their thoughts clearly. Perl's findings were confirmed by Chenoweth:

... writers often start writing without knowing exactly what to say, and, as they write their preliminary drafts, they discover what it is they want to say. (1987:26)

However, as important as redrafting and revision is, teaching pupils to revise is **not easy**. Discovery is hard work: "Writers don't find meanings; they make them" (Flower and Hayes 1980 in Spack 1984:654). Revision not only entails extra work and is time-consuming, but second-language pupils often lack "native-like intuitions about vocabulary, syntax, tone, style formality and organisational patterns" (Taylor 1981:11), so they often fail to see problems in their own writing. However, with adequate preparation and discussion, pupils should find neither the initial task nor the redrafting beyond their abilities (Hyland 1990:278) and through the act of redrafting, they will discover the true purpose and value of revision. Pupils will be able to see that their second drafts have an ease and a flow lacking in their first attempts:

This is ... what the teacher wants, and what the students need to prove to themselves: that real rewriting produces major differences, and often major improvements. (Lewitt 1990:3)

Therefore, although the task of rewriting is difficult and can take as much or more effort and thought as starting a new piece of writing, it is a rewarding task as the advantages of redrafting or editing the first draft "quickly become apparent" (Hyland 1990:278). The improvements in the subsequent drafts are often clearly observable, and in the final drafts, they are "often spectacular" (Hyland 1990:279).

Although Urzua (1987:295) has questioned whether revision "stimulated by self, peers or teacher" can lead to better writing and/or overall language use, Chenoweth (1987:29) in her study on rewriting, believes that revision is productive and will lead to eventual improvement. Comments from her pupils reveal that although rewriting takes a lot of effort, their writing improved in the process and this sense of improvement is a highly motivating factor which will encourage pupils to persevere and eventually become skilled writers (Taylor 1981, Dison 1989, Lewitt 1990, Keh 1990).

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Although drafting and revision are essential in the composing process, these stages are dependent on the direction and guidance that is offered in the form of written or oral feedback on the written drafts. According to Raimes:

... revision of a text produced with little direction or commitment makes little sense for the writer. (1987:461)

Therefore, feedback in the composing process is vital as it is the "drive which will steer the writer through the process of writing on to the product" (Keh 1990:294).

2.4 TEACHER RESPONSE / FEEDBACK

Feedback is a "fundamental element" (Keh 1990:294) and according to Gaskill (1987 in Hall 1990:43), an essential component in virtually any model of the writing process. The

following summary of response approaches illustrates the different forms of feedback available to the writer in the writing class through which the final product can be successfully articulated:

1. **PEER FEEDBACK**

- 1.1 **Peer revision** - early in the process with a focus on content (organisation of ideas, development with examples).
- 1.2 **Peer editing** - final stages of drafting with a focus on grammar, punctuation etc.

2. **CONFERENCING**

Can be used at any stage of the writing process.

Types of conferencing:

- 2.1 **Individual** - 10-15 minutes
- 2.2 **Group (2-3 pupils)** - 20-30 minutes
Question and answer sessions - focusing firstly on content, and secondly, on surface-type problems.

A non-directive approach is used - based on counselling techniques in which the teacher asks for more information, shows appreciation for what the student says, uses acceptance and approval words and tells the students that their ideas are not strange. This builds self-esteem, reassures and gives confidence to write.

3. **WRITTEN COMMENTS**

- 3.1 **Point out:**
- * specific problems: explain the reasons for them and makes suggestions
 - * areas of confusion or breaks in logic
 - * inappropriate grammatical forms
- 3.2 **Interact with the writer, respond to the content.** Never overwhelm with comments, write comments in the margins and a summative comment at the end of the paper pointing out strengths and weaknesses, one-word comments are found to be the least helpful and the summative comments are read first and praise must be offered first and then problem areas. (Keh 1990:294-303)

Feedback, therefore, whether it is in the form of peer feedback, conferencing or written comments, is essential in the writing process as it provides the input from a reader which enables pupils to view their work through the eyes of their audience as they are directed "to

reconsider, elaborate, or extend" (Zamel 1987:710) their drafts and to make necessary and meaningful revisions. However, for feedback to be effective, it needs to be a "collaborative activity" (Hedge 1989:11) in which the teacher participates with pupils in their exploration, encourages them to take control over the feedback they receive and to go back and continuously reassess their work. Comments made will be worthless if they do not "provide insights and information upon which the student can act to reshape and restructure their meaning" (Murray and Johanson 1990:98). Perpignan states:

The tasks of the learner and the teacher are interdependent, the responsibility lies on both sides. (Perpignan 1990:227)

To encourage pupils to go back and reassess their work and not to ignore or misconstrue what the teacher has suggested, it is important that teachers participate with their pupils in their exploration by making comments or responses that are "conversational and discursive rather than coldly abrupt in red ink" (Hyland 1990:279). Keh (1970 in Keh 1990:301) urges the teacher to communicate "in a distinctively human voice, with sincere respect for the writer as a person and a sincere interest in his (sic) improvement as a writer". She also recommends that teachers do not overwhelm students with comments and marks but should rather limit comments to fundamental problems, keeping in mind that the students cannot pay attention to everything at once.

It is a motivating factor, however, that teacher comments and feedback can create the desire in pupils to do something differently in the next draft because "thoughtful comments create the motive for revision" (Sommers 1982 in Urzua 1987:282).

Therefore, not only is the manner in which teachers respond to writing important, but when they respond is also vital if there is to be a rewarding development of the text. A common feedback situation is one in which the teacher takes in the pupils' writing at the end of the writing process and, after evaluation, provides written comments, queries and observations.

Under these circumstances not only is dialogue over the task not possible, but pupils seldom read and note the comments made on work once it has been evaluated. In fact, the same weaknesses are often repeated in the next written piece. For feedback to be productive, therefore, it must take place during the writing process (Beach 1979 in Keh 1990:11, Krashen 1984:11) and before the work is completed so as to facilitate more writing and to reinforce the idea that continual clarification and exploration may be necessary before meaning becomes articulated (Zamel 1985:95). Teachers are also far more likely to respond to the pupils' work as "work in progress" (Zamel 1987:710) if the pupils' writing is observed while it is progressing and there can be discussion and negotiation to bring the "actual effort as closely in line with desired intention as possible" (Brannon and Knoblauch 1982:162 in Zamel 1985:97). The importance of constructive and interactive feedback is clearly summarised by Zamel:

The reader can discover the underlying meaning and logic of what may appear to be an incoherent text and instruct the writer to reshape, modify and transform the text; the writer can simultaneously discover what lies behind and motivates the complex reactions of the reader and help the reader to understand a text that up to this point may have been ambiguous, elusive or unintelligible. (Zamel 1985:97)

However, not only is it important that teachers stop responding to texts as fixed and final products; they should also be conscious of **what** they comment on and should not focus solely on surface-level features of writing in their feedback. Errors should not distract the teacher from responding to the meaning of the pupils' writing and encouraging them to make sense of their ideas themselves. So when responding to a draft, a teacher should provide positive advice to reinforce a pupil's progress and feedback which reveals a concern for the clarity of the message by means of, for example, comments on logical sequence, development of an idea or improved use of connectives to enhance meaning rather than comments which indicate, for example, that the pupil "has not yet mastered the tense" (Keh 1990:290).

Perl (1979 in Spack and Sadow 1983:577) points out that if teacher's comments continually stress a concern for correct form, fear of error can seriously inhibit idea development in the

pupil and good writing will come to mean correct writing and nothing more. Shaughnessy (1977 in Taylor 1981:9) also highlights the fact that pupils are often reluctant to explore ideas if they are constantly interrupting their fluency to look for errors. Krahnke and Christinson (1983:638) remind SL teachers that error is inevitable and natural in the process of language acquisition and most of the errors that learners produce result from an inadequate but gradually increasing control over a new linguistic system.

The traditional focus on error (identification-explanation-correction) by the teacher, therefore, needs to be reviewed and modified into a range of feedback activities which will involve greater independence and risk-taking on the part of the pupils. Such activities will require pupils to rely more on constructive and formative feedback, and futile exercises such as the repetitive writing out of mistakes or correction of errors by pupils will need to be phased out.

Possible solutions are suggested by different researchers to overcome the traditional focus on error. Krahnke and Christinson (1983) suggest that formal correctness be accorded a somewhat lower place on the instructional scale than it has traditionally had and be considered "secondary to instructional experiences" (1983:643). Hendrikson (in McKay 1984:147) suggests that "stigmatising errors" and "high frequency" errors should be corrected and treated first. Krashen (1984:11) recommends that when teachers respond to compositions, they should avoid all grammar and spelling errors until final editing since the idea of feedback is to give the pupils a clear message that content and expressing thoughts is most important and that they should focus on the meaning of statements rather than on faulty grammar.

An interesting marking system is suggested by Gwin (1991:2), which he calls the "Red, Green and Blue System" to engender the notion in students that writing is a means of communication and not a grammar exercise. As the name of Gwin's system suggests, three different colours are used to give feedback to his pupils. The blue (or black) pen is used for

making comments on content at the end of the composition (written in complete sentences and paragraphs), red is used for marking the parts that communicate well and a green pen is used to indicate aspects that need revision. The intention of this system is that pupils will come to see comments as the response of a concerned reader to a writer and not an indication of error.

Pupils can also participate in the feedback process by indicating problem areas on the written draft or give their work an assessment using given criteria before handing it in. The teacher can then respond to this assessment when marking the assignment, agreeing and/or disagreeing, and pointing out where the pupils' own assessment is faulty.

We have found that this actually helps us to see what the student has been trying to do, and results in our evaluating the assignment in a more positive light. (Murray and Johanson 1990:100)

However, before a form of self-evaluation can be successfully initiated, learner training may be necessary to introduce pupils to the idea of evaluating and assessing their own texts. Its implementation can be aided by giving each pupil a personal checklist (Keh 1990:12, Gwin 1991:5) of specific problem areas because pupils often find it difficult to recognise their own (and others') errors. In a study by Mangelsdorf (1992:274), students stated that the task of peer feedback should be "carefully structured" and organised for it to be effective. Without the pupils receiving adequate review guidance, their responses may tend to be negligible because of vague feedback, or they may lead students "to incorporate inappropriate ideas into their texts" (1992:278). However, peer feedback is considered a beneficial technique (Gwin 1991:4) because it gives pupils the opportunity to take responsibility to make constructive efforts to correct their own mistakes, to assess their work before the teacher does (Ike 1990:43) and to "revise their drafts more reflectively" (Mangelsdorf 1992:281).

Whole class discussion and revision practice will also allow pupils to practise the skills of response and assessment, while furthering their understanding of the needs of both readers and writers. However, it should be remembered that although pupils need to be encouraged to correct obvious mistakes and clarify vague and ambiguous language use, global revision should always be stressed: "the overall meaning and purpose of the writing" (Trimmer and McCrimmon 1988:85).

Ironically, it is pointed out by Shaughnessy (1977 in Zamel 1987:709) that it is in the context of creating, sharing and valuing meaningful content, encouraging exploration and risk taking that product concerns can be effectively addressed. Elbow (1985:288 in Zamel 1987:709) supports Shaughnessy's conclusion:

People can be more careful and get their final drafts righter when they spend some of their time unhooking themselves from the demands of audience and inviting themselves to get it wrong.

Research has endorsed these findings on feedback (Spack and Sadow 1983, Zamel 1984, 1985, 1987, Blanton 1987, Chen 1988, Pica 1989, Keh 1990, Hobelman and Wiriyaichitra 1990, Lewitt 1990, Perpignan 1990) and in the light of the reciprocal, dialectical process suggested, teachers should begin to re-examine their typical response approaches and attempt to respond without bias to what pupils have written as teachers' biases determine how they comprehend the text. The teacher must respond "where the student is, not where the teacher wishes the student was" (Taylor 1982:144). The role of the ESL composition teacher, then, is:

to interact with our students in a variety of roles to allow them to perceive the development of their ability to write as the multi-faceted, gradual and organic process that it is. (Blanton 1987:112)

It is important to remember, however, that although most theorists acknowledge the important role of the composing processes in the writing class, the introduction of a process-orientated approach is more complicated than simply "substituting a new approach for an earlier alternative" (Langer and Applebee 1984:187). If the revised instructional applications do not have a proper conceptualisation of the process approach and its implications for writing instruction then the subsequent process-orientated writing activities will be in danger of becoming futile exercises, no more successful than the pre-determined, teacher-centred activities they were meant to replace. Research has demonstrated that writing can only be successfully taught if the composing processes are not "trivialised" (Langer and Applebee 1984:169,188) and this will occur if instructional applications:

- * lack a framework for integrating process-orientated activities, or
- * emphasise the successful completion of the product, or
- * inadequately and improperly incorporate composing processes as a series of activities or steps.

The strategies highlighted by current research on writing processes have not only raised serious questions about many predominating classroom practices, but have also suggested effective alternative approaches to the teaching of writing. Teachers must now reassess old approaches and expectations and break from a cycle of instruction that keeps pupils from improvement "by reinforcing counter-productive and mechanistic models of writing" (Hartwell 1984 in Zamel 1987:708).

To summarise, research into the relationship between instruction and writing development has revealed that there are likely to be positive and observable changes in pupil progress and attitude to writing when they are no longer exposed to instruction that is based on absolute and shortsighted notions about good writing. Growth and development in writing will be attained when pupils are encouraged to create and negotiate meaning and to explore and take risks in order to discover and perfect their message. This will not always be easy to put into practice as pupils will have to "unlearn" (Zamel 1987:708) old approaches and will have to

be cured not only from what I call "one draftphobia" but their total reliance on the teacher's criteria of acceptability and evaluation. However, these aims are attainable; as Murray (1978 in Marshall 1984:103) states, "the process can be described, understood and therefore learned."

2.5 CONCLUSION

It is cause for concern that despite the rapid growth in SL writing research and the fact that by 1986 a process approach to writing was considered a traditional writing approach (Shih 1986 in Raimes 1991:410) many teachers have not struck out "along this new path" (Raimes 1991:410). A possible reason for this is that teachers often do not perceive the findings of research as being relevant to their own teaching practices and this reinforces what McDonough calls the "dichotomy between theory and practice" (1990:103).

Winer (1992) in a study which sought to examine the process of changing awareness about the process of writing and the teaching of writing in ESL by integrating training and development in teacher education, concluded, however, that research on ESL teacher education had not specifically addressed the teaching of writing.

Therefore, the fact that the analyses of the survey findings in Chapter 4 and 5 revealed that research into writing has to a large degree not extended its influence into the ESL writing classes in the geographical area surveyed, is not an unusual finding. Teachers continue to emphasise the traditional "explain-plan-write" product-orientated instructional approaches and appear to be generally unaware of the essential roles to be played by the processes of teacher and pupil feedback as well as drafting and revision in the creation of "substantive" (Leki 1991:10) writing.

It is the intention of this study, therefore, to focus on the extent to which the composing processes of **draft revision** and **feedback** have been successfully incorporated into the instructional process in the ESL writing class. The reason for this focus is twofold. I feel, firstly, that the need for and function of these two activities are not fully appreciated or understood by secondary teachers in the Cape educational system. And, secondly, although teachers appear to have a vague awareness of the terms, they seem to be totally ignorant of how these strategies can be successfully and practically implemented.

CHAPTER 3

3.0 THE SURVEY : INTRODUCTION

The survey was selected as the method of research to investigate and describe the writing approaches of ESL secondary school teachers as well as the responses of Standard 9 pupils to the practice of writing in schools in the Port Elizabeth area where Afrikaans is a medium of instruction.

The studies were small-scale surveys and use was made of non-probability convenience sampling (Cohen and Manion 1987:99- 100). Despite the disadvantages that arise because of the non-representativeness of non-probability sampling, it was adequate for this study as the research was preliminary and exploratory in nature, the findings were to be treated tentatively and there would be no generalising beyond the findings of the sample. For this study to be more representative of the actual ESL writing approaches in the survey area, the findings of the survey would have to be extended through follow-up interviews and/or classroom observation. The use of these research techniques would be necessary to explore and validate the survey findings and to present a more accurate assessment of ESL writing approaches as practised in the survey schools. Interviews would enable the researcher to probe the responses of the teachers and pupils as documented in the questionnaire in order to gain a clearer understanding of the respondents' comments and responses. Classroom observation would provide an ideal opportunity for the researcher to gain insight into the actual approaches in the teaching of writing and to assess realistically the extent to which composing processes are actively used in a writing class.

The reader should be aware that as researcher, I focused on the practice of ESL writing in Afrikaans and dual-or parallel-medium secondary schools not only because of their accessibility, but also because of my familiarity with the educational system of which they are a part and their approaches to ESL teaching. My analysis, discussion and interpretation of the survey data will, therefore, reflect not only an analysis of the findings, but also my subjective understanding and knowledge of the practices and approaches to ESL writing in the secondary schools at this time. I have been an ESL teacher for thirteen years (four years at a coloured school and nine years at white schools) in Port Elizabeth and I am, therefore, in some ways, an "insider". The design of the questionnaires and the analysis of the data will, therefore, reflect and be influenced by my beliefs and by the knowledge I have of the approaches, practices and attitudes of secondary ESL teachers (and pupils) to the teaching of writing in schools in this area.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the survey was threefold:

1. to identify and describe the writing approaches followed by **ESL teachers** in secondary schools where **Afrikaans** is the first language in the Port Elizabeth area
2. to investigate the perspectives and responses of **Standard 9 pupils** to the teaching of writing in secondary schools in the Port Elizabeth area
3. to evaluate the findings in terms of current research into writing pedagogy

3.1.2 The survey populations

The survey population for the **first questionnaire** included secondary school ESL teachers at seven white and three coloured schools in the Port Elizabeth-Despatch area. The size of the population sample was 59 and was comprised of approximately all the ESL teachers in the white Afrikaans- medium and dual-or parallel-medium schools that were teaching in the

survey area at the time of the study as well as the ESL teachers from three coloured Afrikaans-medium and dual-or parallel-medium high schools in the Port Elizabeth area. The sample size of 59 is considered to be adequate; Cohen and Manion state that "a sample size of 30 is held by many to be the minimum number of cases" (1987:101) if researchers plan to use some form of statistical analysis on their data.

The use of racial categories in both the collective data and its analysis is necessitated by the nature of the apartheid education system, Afrikaans-medium schools being divided into two categories: white and coloured. The categories are used in order that readers may be aware of the extent to which the sample is representative of all Afrikaans-speaking teachers. Secondly, they are retained in the collection and analysis of the data, in order to see whether any differences in home language, qualifications, ESL experience, practices and attitudes emerge between teachers from different departments of education.

The sample selection in terms of teachers from racially segregated departments of education is not representative of the total population of teachers in the survey area. Most of the white ESL teachers in the Port Elizabeth-Despatch area teaching at the time of the survey and a representative section (25%) of the coloured ESL teachers also teaching at the time of the survey, took part in the research. The selection of the schools was mostly dependent on convenience, accessibility and principals allowing teachers to complete the required questionnaires.

The sample population for the **second questionnaire** was made up of 118 Standard 9 pupils from four white secondary schools in the survey area where Afrikaans is a first language (See Table 5.1). Once more, accessibility and convenience were the main criteria for the selection of schools from which the sample pupil population would be drawn. Four of the schools where the teachers had been part of the sample population for the teacher questionnaire, were used to form the sample population for the pupil survey.

3.1.3 Methods of collecting survey material

a) Designing the self-completion questionnaires

Two separate questionnaires were designed for dissemination to teachers and pupils in the survey area (See Appendices A and B) once the main "areas of interest" (Cohen and Manion 1987:104) were identified and the specific information requirements relating to these areas itemised.

The design of the teacher questionnaire and the structuring of the questioning format centred on gaining information on the following four main interest areas (See Appendix A):

1. Personal information
2. Academic qualifications and experience
3. The teaching of writing in ESL
4. Attitude to writing

The first two sections (Questions 1 and 2) were characterised by "closed" (Johnson 1992:114) question formats which required the respondents to select from a limited number of responses. The closed-format questions were designed to gain and analyse quantitative information with ease i.e personal information (Appendix A / Questions 1.1 - 1.4). The response rate to these questions was good because the questions were generally easy to respond to and did not require a great deal of thought and time.

However, Questions 3 and 4 required the respondents to answer not only the closed-formatted questions, but also to rate (Appendix A / Question 3.7) and to give reasons for or explain their responses to certain questions (Appendix A / Questions 3.13, 4.1 and 4.4). Respondents also had to describe their approaches to certain teaching activities (Appendix A / Question 3.10) and give their opinions on other aspects of writing that they regarded as important (Appendix A / Question 3.9) in open-ended questions. The open-ended questions were formulated with the intention of not only "gaining qualitative information" but also of "discovering new variables in responses" (Johnson 1992:114). The responses to the

open-ended questions were generally poor; the typical responses being clipped, vague, fragmented and, at times, not relating to the questions asked. This finding is supported by Cohen and Manion (1987:107), who state that open-ended questions should be avoided in self-completion questionnaires because not only are they demanding of time, they are also a less satisfactory way of eliciting information as they cannot probe the respondent to find out what is meant by a particular response.

In the structuring of the questions, an attempt was made, as far as possible, to avoid jargon, negative phrasing and unclear instructions. This was not always successful, as even after the piloting phase and a critique from the respective education departments, some respondents still indicated that they did not understand what was expected of them, and expressed uncertainty about certain terms i.e. meaning of "teacher response" (See Appendix A / Question 3.10.1 and **Problems with Terminology** at the end of Chapter 3).

The **pupil questionnaire** was designed during the piloting of the teacher questionnaire, and, unlike the teacher questionnaire, the design of the pupil questionnaire did not centre on the structuring of distinct areas of interest but rather on a questions which "flowed" to promote ease of answering. The questionnaire was designed, firstly, to gain a general profile of the typical Afrikaans-speaking, ESL Standard 9 pupil regarding: ESL and writing results, and home language as some pupils attending schools where Afrikaans is L1 also have English or English and Afrikaans as home languages (See Appendix B / Section A); and, secondly, to gain a perception of the pupils' views on, understanding of and attitudes to different composing processes in the writing of a composition (Appendix B / Section B). The questions in Section B were generally close-format (because of the problems experienced with the open-ended questions in the teacher questionnaire) and the few open-ended questions required only phrase or word responses (Appendix B / Questions 10 and 15).

The response rate of the pupils to the close-format and open-ended questions was good,

allowing the analysis of the data to be comprehensive. No specific problem areas were highlighted.

After the piloting of the teacher questionnaire with a group of ESL teachers at a teacher-centre meeting, and the pupils' at a local school, revisions to the questionnaires were made. The questionnaires were then submitted to the Executive Director of Education at the Cape Education Department and to the Chief Executive Director of Education and Culture of the House of Representatives. After further revisions the questionnaires were re-submitted for approval and permission was granted by both departments for research to be carried out at the relevant educational institutions.

b) Dissemination of the questionnaires

Appointments were made with the selected schools' principals to gain permission for the dissemination of the teacher questionnaire to their ESL staff during the second school term (April to June 1991). The questionnaires would take approximately 30-35 minutes to complete and to fulfil departmental regulations, they had to be completed by the teachers voluntarily after working hours. The completed questionnaires were collected from the schools a week later.

The pupil questionnaires were given to Standard 9 ESL pupils at four high schools in the Port Elizabeth area between June and July of 1991 to be completed during class periods (approximately 50 minutes). The Standard 9 ESL teachers at the selected schools assisted with the execution of the questionnaires and were extremely helpful and co-operative, making the dissemination of the pupil questionnaires an encouraging and easy task.

3.2 QUESTIONNAIRE PROBLEMS

3.2.1 Teacher questionnaire

a) Process terminology

With regard to the teachers' responses to the questionnaire, it could not be taken for granted that they responded to the writing concepts as they are generally understood in process terminology (I was also reluctant to explain the meaning of these concepts to the teachers or give examples of their use as my explanations influenced the respondents' answers during the pilot running of the questionnaire). Although the practice of drafting or planning appears to have been recognised as being important by teachers in their responses (Tables 4.11 (A and B), 4.12 (A and B) and 4.13), it is improbable that these assessments have all been interpreted in the context of "process understanding" (revision of multiple drafts) but rather as a single activity which has occurred in some form before the writing of the product.

An assessment of "pupil and teacher response" in Tables 4.11 (A and B) and 4.12 (A and B), verifies the inference made about the understanding of teachers of process terminology. "Teacher response" was, in fact, interpreted by 12,4% of the teachers commenting on their approaches to "teacher response" as an "explanation of how to write the essay" (Table 4.14 / A and B). A further discrepancy is revealed in the rating and ranking of the role of "teacher response" in Tables 4.11 (A) and 4.12 (A). In Table 4.12 (A) respondents revealed a very low evaluation (10 out of 12 writing activities) of the role of teacher response in the creation of a piece of writing although it was rated as "very" to "fairly important" in Table 4.11 (A).

A further discrepancy is revealed with the rating of "very important" for "error correction" in Table 4.16; when it received the lowest ranking in importance for writing activities in Table 4.12. It is problematic that the respondents recognised that error correction is not important when equated with other activities in the writing process and yet rated it as important for the

teaching of writing (Appendix A / Question 3.8).

b) Poor and non-responses

Generally, the respondents completed the open-ended-type questions poorly and inadequately (Appendix A / Question 3.10). These questions were not only incorrectly interpreted (leading to faulty explanations) but the respondents also tended to give inadequate and sketchy descriptions when they were required to explain and describe specific approaches to certain activities in the classroom or give reasons for their responses.

The section which received the highest percentage of non-responses was, again, the open-ended questions where the respondent was asked to explain a response or give a description of an approach. These questions required thought and effort which is time-consuming. A possible solution to this problem is to have fewer open-ended type questions, or open-ended questions that require simpler responses, and more of the "choose-and-tick" variety (although these often reveal more quantitative information).

c) Structuring of questionnaire

In the structuring of the teacher questionnaire, the respondents were not asked to indicate whether they had been exposed to any research (conferences, courses or journals) or if they had participated in any kind of research. This information would have enabled the study to analyse whether research had any direct influence on teaching practice in the survey area. Although the respondents would have been exposed to some form of theory and research in their Higher Education Diploma (HED) year, the study is only able to make the observation that second language theory in language study and writing appears to have had limited or no application in the classroom situation as revealed by the survey findings.

d) Coloured and white population samples

Although the group of white teachers surveyed consisted of most of the ESL teachers teaching in the area at the time of the survey, the sample of "coloured" teachers represented approximately 25% of the total coloured ESL teaching population. As this imbalance may have influenced the results of the study, the findings for each group has been recorded separately in the tables, in addition to the provision of figures for the sample as a whole.

3.2.2 PUPIL QUESTIONNAIRE

a) Sample population

As the sample for the pupil survey was drawn from white schools, it is not representative of the attitudes and responses of the coloured pupil to writing. Any findings resulting from the pupil questionnaire, therefore, can only be generalised to white teaching practices and pupil populations.

b) ESL and writing results

In Section A (See Appendix B), the pupils were required to indicate their symbols for writing and ESL results. It would perhaps have been clearer for them (and more accurate) had they rather been required to indicate their usual mark for writing out of a certain total i.e. 15/30, and to give their last exam result.

c) Structuring of questionnaire

In Table 5.13 (Appendix B / Question 7) the respondents were required to indicate the activities that were included during the writing experience from a list provided. It is important to note, before the findings in Table 5.13 can be assessed, that unfortunately no provision was made for the role of "discussion" or other forms of teacher-pupil or pupil-pupil interaction (besides personal interaction with the draft through rereading) during the writing experience. These activities, therefore, could not be commented on in the assessment of the processes

that are listed as occurring during the writing experience.

*

The results of the first survey, the study of the teaching of writing as revealed by the **teacher questionnaire**, will be analysed and discussed in Chapter 4. The second survey, the study of pupil responses to writing approaches in schools as revealed by the **pupil questionnaire**, will be analysed and discussed in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 4

4.0 THE TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

4.1 DATA ANALYSIS

4.1.1 Personal Information, Qualifications and Experience

The first two sections (Appendix A / Questions 1 and 2) of the questionnaire have been combined to present a general profile of the respondents and their identifying characteristics as revealed in Tables 4.1 to 4.5.

TABLE 4.1: NUMBER of respondents by racial grouping

	No.	%
White	36	61,0
Coloured	23	39,0
TOTAL	59	100,0

TABLE 4.2: SEX by racial grouping

	M	%	F	%	TOTAL
White	8	22,1	28	77,8	36
Coloured	11	47,8	12	52,2	23
TOTAL	19	32,2	40	67,8	59

(M = Male, F = Female)

TABLE 4.3: HOME LANGUAGE by racial grouping

	E	%	A	%	E & A	%	TOTAL
White	16	44,4	10	27,8	10	27,8	36
Coloured	12	52,2	2	8,7	9	39,1	23
TOTAL	28	47,5	12	20,3	19	32,2	59

(E = English; A = Afrikaans)

TABLE 4.4: QUALIFICATIONS by racial grouping

	U	%	U & C	%	C	%	TOTAL
White	34	94,4	2	5,6	-	-	36
Coloured	6	28,1	3	13,0	14	60,9	23
TOTAL	40	67,8	5	8,5	14	23,7	59

(U = University; C = College)

TABLE 4.5: TEACHING EXPERIENCE IN YEARS by racial grouping

	0-3	%	4-7	%	8-11	%	12-15	%	>15	%	T
White	10	27,7	10	27,7	11	30,5	2	5,5	3	8,3	36
Coloured	11	47,8	6	26,1	2	8,7	1	4,4	3	13,0	23
TOTAL	21	35,6	16	27,1	13	22,0	3	5,1	6	10,2	59

A synthesis of the data tabled above reveals the emergence of a teacher that is typically: female (67,8% / Table 4.2), English-speaking (47,5% / Table 4.3), university-qualified (67,8% / Table 4.4) with 0-3 years teaching experience (35,6% / Table 4.5). As an ESL secondary teacher in the Port Elizabeth area for over 13 years, I feel that this description is a relatively accurate reflection of the typical white ESL teacher.

The main differences between the two sample population groups is in the area of male/female spread and qualifications. Regarding male/female spread, Table 4.2 reveals that 77,8% of the white teaching-population sample is female and the male, 22,2%. The coloured sample, however, reveals a very balanced male/female spread (Table 4.2). This is perhaps indicative of the fact that the coloured male still regards teaching as a profession of status, while his white counterpart appears to be more interested in occupations and careers that have greater promotional opportunities and benefits.

Regarding qualifications, Table 4.4 also reveals that the majority of the white teachers have university qualifications (94,4%) whereas most of the coloured teachers have college diplomas (60,9%). The difference in qualifications between the two sample groups in the survey population is indicative of the phasing out of teachers in white secondary schools who

do not have university qualifications, whereas the "coloured" teacher is still allowed to teach at a secondary school with a college diploma, although this is presently being phased out as well.

The finding that the typical ESL teacher is "English-speaking" also needs commentary. Although a synthesis of the survey data reveals that the typical teacher is English-speaking, a study of Table 4.3 reveals that over half the ESL teachers (52,5%) either speak both Afrikaans and English (32,2%) or are Afrikaans-speaking (20,3%) at home. If these statistics are considered, less than half (47,5% / Table 4.3) the respondents have English exclusively as a home language. Therefore, more than half the teachers, according to the findings of the survey, would rather be a teacher who speaks English, but who at home speaks English and Afrikaans or only Afrikaans.

Table 4.6 provides a summary of teacher training received in L1 and/or ESL either in postgraduate studies or at teachers' training colleges.

TABLE 4.6: TEACHER TRAINING for ESL and L1 by racial grouping

Group	L1	ESL	L1 @ ESL	No response	Total
White	7	7	21	1	36
Coloured	5	5	11	2	23
TOTAL	12	12	32	3	59
%	20,3	20,3	54,3	5,1	100,0

Although it appears as though most of the teachers in Table 4.6 have received some form of teacher training in ESL (20,3% and 54,3%, a total of 74,6%), the benefit of the training has to be assessed.

In order to assess the perceived value of the training the respondents received, the questionnaire required the teachers to evaluate their training. In Table 4.7, half the

respondents (50.9%) assessed it as having shortcomings and a further 11,3% assessed it as being inadequate. From a total of 53 respondents, only 20 (37,7%) felt that their training had been adequate. Table 4.7 below gives a summary of their responses:

TABLE 4.7: TEACHER TRAINING ASSESSMENT by racial grouping

RESPONSES	WHITE	COLOURED	TOTAL	%
Adequate	12	8	20	37,7
Inadequate	4	2	6	11,3
Shortcomings	17	10	27	50,9
TOTAL	33	20	53	100,0

} 62,2%

The shortcomings of the courses were more specifically, classified according to the following criteria:

TABLE 4.8: Classification of COURSE SHORTCOMINGS by racial grouping

SHORTCOMINGS	WHITE	LOURED	TOTAL	%
Not catering for SL needs	15	6	21	22,3
Academically orientated	12	11	23	24,5
Little grammar emphasis	18	5	23	24,5
Little skills emphasis	17	10	27	28,7
TOTAL	62	32	94	100,0
%	66,0	34,0		

The assessment that teacher training was inadequate and/or had shortcomings was substantiated by the following quotations from the questionnaire:

"Subject specialisation is essential."
 "They should only allow teachers to teach English, or any subject for that matter, if they have had the training."
 "Training we received at college has not really armed us for the problems we encounter as ESL teachers."

To compound the negative assessment of teacher training, Table 4.6 reveals that 20,3% of the teachers who are teaching ESL have not received formal training in this area. The problem is further exacerbated by the fact that there are teachers who are teaching English although they do not have any formal qualification. The following quotation illustrates this point:

"Seeing that I do not have academic qualifications to teach English, I have found it (the questionnaire) irritating."

It is apparent from this study that if 62,2% (Table 4.7) of the respondents feel that they have been inadequately prepared to teach ESL, there is a small probability that the aims and objectives for the language teacher as outlined in **The Education Gazette of 1986 for the Senior Secondary Course: Syllabus for ESL** will be adequately met. The teaching of writing, although it is considered the most difficult skill to teach, is the most important (Kilfoil and van der Walt 1989), because a considerable portion of class time is spent on writing. Examinations are based almost entirely on the execution of writing tasks and writing constitutes **one-third** of the ESL mark in the final examination. However, as long as teachers remain uninformed or inadequately informed of the strategies and approaches basic to the teaching of any language as a second language, writing, along with the other language skills to be taught, will not receive the benefit of what research has found to be relevant to the teaching of a SL.

4.1.2 The Teaching or Writing in ESL

In Question 3 of the questionnaire the respondents described the function and practice of writing in their respective schools by describing and commenting on their approaches to certain writing activities, expressing opinions about the importance of certain activities in the teaching of writing and revealing their understanding of certain composing processes. It was encouraging that the more than a third of the respondents indicated that the teaching of writing was important (supporting Kilfoil and van der Walt's claim 1989), and described their responses to the teaching of writing as, firstly, one of "benefit", and, secondly, one of "pleasure" (Table 4.9).

TABLE 4.9: Respondents' **PERSONAL RESPONSE** to the teaching of writing
(See Appendix A / Question 4.3)

Response	W	%	C	%	TOTAL	%
Irritation	9	16,4	6	17,2	15	16,7
Pleasure	18	32,7	9	25,7	27	30,0
Time waste	-	-	4	11,4	4	4,4
Benefit	21	38,2	13	37,1	34	37,8
Futility	7	12,7	3	8,6	10	11,1
TOTAL	55	100,0	35	100,0	90	100,0

Note: * W = white and C = coloured
* respondents could give more than one response
(bold = highest score)

4.1.3 Pupil Writing Progress

However, despite the fact that writing is perceived as an important skill to be taught, pupil writing progress in the secondary school was assessed by half the respondents as being only "fair" (Table 4.10). This limited rate of writing progress or development as assessed by the respondents is illustrated in Table 4.10.

TABLE 4.10: **PUPIL WRITING IMPROVEMENT ASSESSMENT**
(Appendix A / Question 3.12)

	W	%	C	%	TOTAL	%
Substantial	-	-	1	5,0	1	1,9
Satisfactory	9	26,5	5	25,0	14	25,9
Fair	19	55,9	8	40,0	27	50,0
Minimal	6	17,6	6	30,0	12	22,2
Non-existent	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	34	100,0	20	100,0	54	100,0

Note: W = white / C = coloured
(bold = highest score)

In Questions 3.1 to 3.5 (Appendix A) the respondents indicated their time allocation for writing and the number of writing tasks completed per term. Half the sample populations' respondents indicated that they allocated more than six periods to writing per term, and the other half allocated four to five periods (approximately 15,0 - 20,0% of the periods allocated to ESL per term). The figures below summarise the number of writing tasks written per term:

TASKS	No.	%
> 4	7	12,1
4	14	24,1
3	27	46,6
2	10	17,2
1	-	-
	58	100,0

(bold = highest score)

46,6% of the respondents indicated that the average number of writing tasks per term was three. This means that for each writing task, on average, two periods per term are allocated. If discussion, planning and guidance as indicated in Table 4.13 are to be part of the composing process, the time allocation per writing task appears to be inadequate, especially if the average time given to complete a writing task is 45 minutes (only seven teachers (11,9%) stated that they allowed their pupils to take from one day to one week to complete a writing task).

Respondents also indicated that most writing tasks are completed at school (i.e. in the periods allocated to writing). The following table is an indication of where most of the pupils' writing occurred:

Home	:	13,6%
School	:	45,8%
Home @ school	:	40,6%

If, as the table indicates, most of the writing tasks are done at school, not only is the time allocation for the completion of a writing task (two periods of 45 minutes) inadequate, but the planning, discussion and interaction time will also be limited. Although, the above statistics indicate that 40,6% of the pupils may plan and write at home and at school, the most likely procedure would be for pupils to plan and write at school (45,8%), and then for them to complete the writing task either at home or in class in a maximum of 90 minutes. Thus, it appears that most writing tasks would be performed not only with limited discussion,

interaction and planning, but with a time constraint as well. Therefore, although it appears that the respondents' pupils are writing approximately twelve pieces of writing per year, the actual time given to planning and interaction over the writing tasks is limited because although most of the writing occurs at school, the actual time given to the completion of a writing task is approximately 90 minutes,² three times per term. Research reveals that simply increasing writing frequency will not result in significantly increased proficiency (Krashen 1984) if there is not the accompanying attention to the composing process. Practice in writing is essential (Taylor 1981, Lewit 1990, Perpignan 1990); however, practice does not entail the writing of more pieces of writing per term, rather it is "the writing practice for the development of an efficient composing process" (Krashen 1984:41) as a result of continuous redrafting and revision.

Research has also revealed that **writing can improve** with the implementation of a process approach (Pratt 1990, Keh 1990). Therefore, the limited assessment of pupil progress reflected in Table 4.10 need not necessarily be self-fulfilling, but is possibly a result of writing not being taught as a process in need of continuous drafting, revision and refinement. The assessment of pupil writing progress as limited or "fair" as revealed in Table 4.10 will continue if the traditional teacher-centred "explain-plan-write" instructional framework remains operational in the survey schools (See Table 4.13) and pupils continue to express themselves by offering up unretouched and underprocessed versions of their own thoughts.

4.2 TEACHER RATINGS OF DRAFTING AND RESPONSE PROCESSES

In order to ascertain how important the incorporation of composing processes are in the teaching of writing in the survey schools, teachers completing the questionnaire were asked to rate the importance of the following processes in the teaching of writing. Their ratings are revealed in Table 4.11. (See Appendix C for a graphic representation of the respective sample population's ratings of teacher response and drafting as depicted in Tables 4.11 / A and B.)

TABLE 4.11: Ratings of the IMPORTANCE of **TEACHER RESPONSE** and **DRAFT PROCESSES** in the teaching of writing (Appendix A / Question 3.8)

A. **WHITE** sample

ACTIVITIES	Very W	%	Fair W	%	Little W	%	Not W	%	T
Teacher response	16	45,7	16	45,7	3	8,6	-	-	35
Pupil response to own writing	19	55,9	15	44,1	-	-	-	-	34
Rough draft	19	54,3	13	37,1	3	8,6	-	-	35
Proof reading	12	35,2	20	58,9	2	5,9	-	-	34
Revision of drafts	11	32,4	15	44,1	8	23,5	-	-	34

(Note: W = white)
(bold = highest rating)

B. **COLOURED** sample

ACTIVITIES	Very C	%	Fair C	%	Little C	%	Not C	%	T
Teacher response	9	42,8	11	52,4	1	4,8	-	-	21
Pupil response to own writing	21	95,5	1	4,5	-	-	-	-	22
Rough draft	15	71,5	4	19,0	2	9,5	-	-	21
Proof reading	11	50,0	9	41,0	1	4,5	1	4,5	21
Revision of drafts	9	42,8	6	28,6	5	23,8	1	4,8	21

(Note: C = coloured)
(bold = highest rating)

All of the composing processes listed in Table 4.11 were recognised by the respondents as being "very" or "fairly" important with Table 4.11 (B) revealing very high positive ratings for "pupil response" (95,5%) and "rough draft" (71,5%). Not one of the respondents in Table 4.11 (A) rated the processes as being unimportant, and very few rated them as being of "little" importance. The same observation can be made for Table 4.11 (B), with the exception of one teacher rating "proof reading" as unimportant and one teacher rating "revision of drafts" as unimportant. The general findings of Tables 4.11 (A and B), therefore, reveal that the respondents recognised the importance of these processes in the act of writing. However,

unimportant. The general findings of Tables 4.11 (A and B), therefore, reveal that the respondents recognised the importance of these processes in the act of writing. However, the ratings of these process-orientated activities in the teaching of writing must be evaluated in the light of the ranking these processes received in Tables 4.12 (A and B) in order to make a realistic assessment of the findings in Table 4.11. (See Appendix C for a graphic representation of the respective sample population's rankings of various writing activities as depicted in Tables 4.12 / A and B.)

TABLE 4.12: RANKING of WRITING ACTIVITIES
(Appendix A / Question 3.7)

A. WHITE Sample

<u>IMPORTANCE OF ACTIVITIES</u>	
1.	Writing for meaning
2.	Exchange of ideas
3.	Topic choice
4.	Rough drafts
5.	Pupil response
6.	Revision
7.	Models
8.	Vocabulary aid
9.	Evaluation
10.	Teacher response
11.	Publicizing of pupil work
12.	Correction of errors

B. COLOURED Sample

<u>IMPORTANCE OF ACTIVITIES</u>	
1.	Pupil response
2.	Exchange of ideas
3.	Rough drafts
4.	Teacher response
5.	Vocabulary aid
6.	Evaluation
7.	Revision
8.	Topic choice
9.	Models
10.	Writing for meaning
11.	Publicizing of pupil work
12.	Correction of errors

A study of the rankings in Tables 4.12 (A and B) reveals that although "rough draft" and "revision" received similar middle-order rankings (3/4 and 6/7 respectively), there are

discrepancies in the rankings in importance of "pupil response" and "teacher response" as process activities.

A study of Table 4.12 (B) reveals that the ranking of "pupil response" as 1 supports the high rating of 95,5% it received in Table 4.11 (B). The ranking of "pupil response" in Table 4.12 (A) as 5 also supports the lower, but positive rating of "very important" by 55,9% in Table 4.11 (A). Thus, the respective rankings appear to support the ratings these writing activities received in importance.

There is, however, a discrepancy in the ranking of "teacher response" as 4 in Table 4.12 (B) and 10 in Table 4.12 (A). Although both population groups in the survey sample had rated this activity as "very" to "fairly" important in Tables 4.11 (A and B), it is encouraging that "teacher response" received a higher ranking in Table 4.12 (B) when assessed with other activities in the writing process. The lower ranking of "teacher response" in Table 4.12 (A) suggests that although the role of teacher response was recognised by the respondents as being "very" (45,7%) and "fairly" (45,7%) important in Table 4.11 (A), the essential role to be played by the teacher in terms of **response** or **feedback** was undervalued or seen as being less important when assessed with other composing activities.

A study of the ratings for "rough drafts" in Tables 4.11 (A and B), 54,3% and 71,5% respectively, reveals that "rough drafts" received a ranking of 4 in Table 4.12 (A) and 3 in Table 4.12 (B). "Revision" received a rating in Table 4.11 (A) of "very" (32,4%) and "fairly" important (44,1%) and these ratings are reflected in its ranking of 6 in Table 4.12 (A). In Table 4.12 (B), "revision" received a lower rating of 7, which is also in accordance with its rating of "very" (42,8%) and "fairly" (28,6%) important in Table 4.11 (B). It is also evident in Tables 4.11 (A and B) that the importance of planning and drafting has been recognised, and in Table 4.12 (A and B) "rough draft" received a higher ranking than "revision".

4.2.1 Planning and Drafting

An analysis of the responses to the questionnaire will reveal that the **rough draft** is rated and ranked as being an important element in the process of writing and should, therefore, have a recognised role in the teaching of writing in the survey schools (See Tables 4.11 / A and B, 4.12 / A and B and 4.13). However, in order to ascertain the teachers' approaches and views on this practice, the respondents were asked to describe or comment on their approaches to this activity in the teaching of writing in an open-ended section of the questionnaire (Appendix A / Question 3.10.3).

The drafting approaches of the white and "coloured" sample populations have been collated collectively in Table 4.13 because of the populations' similar ratings and rankings of the importance of "rough draft" in Tables 4.11 (A and B) and Tables 4.12 (A and B). Table 4.13 below summarises the respondents' comments on their approaches to **pupil planning and drafting in the teaching of writing**.

TABLE 4.13: TEACHER APPROACHES to PUPIL PLANNING / DRAFTING
(Appendix A / Question 3.10.3)

COMMENTS	No.	%
Use of drafts/planning	30	53,6
Discussion	7	12,5
Teacher must guide	4	7,1
Editing	4	7,1
Own responsibility	3	5,4
Brainstorming	3	5,4
Insufficient time	3	5,4
Set schemes	1	1,8
Plan in their minds	1	1,8
TOTAL	56	100,0

Although Table 4.13 reveals that slightly more than half the respondents (53,6%) made use of some form of drafting or planning and over a third (33,9%) used various prewriting techniques such as discussion, brainstorming, schemes and teacher guidance (never mentioned synonymously with rough drafting), it is revealing that some teachers (7,1%) saw "planning"

as an opportunity for correcting errors or "editing". For some of the respondents (12,6%), drafting or planning did not even form part of the writing process, as they did not even insist on rough drafts because they considered it the pupils' own responsibility (included in this figure are those who stated there was insufficient time to plan or that planning had be done in the mind).

These findings reveal that although there appears to be some form of planning in at least half the classes in the survey area, there are varied interpretations of how planning and drafting are implemented in the practice of writing. The use of the multiple draft as an integral part of planning and revision in the writing class appears not to be the practice in most of the survey schools.

4.2.2 Teacher Response and Feedback

Although Table 4.11 (A and B) revealed that at least 45% of the respondents recognised the importance of "teacher response" as being "very important" (45,7% / A and 42,8% / B) and "fairly important" (45,7% / A and 52,4% / B), its ranking of 10 in Table 4.12 (A) emphasised that it was considered by the white population sample as being less important when equated with other activities in the writing process. This low ranking is a cause for concern because the white respondents appeared to view the teacher's role as being less important in the shaping of their pupils' texts than "topic choice" (3), "models" (7) or "evaluation" (9) (Table 4.12 (A)).

However, Table 4.12 (B) ranked "teacher response" as 4, and this revealed that the "coloured" sample appeared to rate the teachers' response role as more important for the shaping of their pupils' texts than "evaluation" (6), "topic choice" (8) and "models" (9) when assessed with other composing activities.

However, in order to gain a greater understanding and to provide a description of the respondents' approaches to "teacher comment or feedback", they were asked to describe or

comment on their approaches in an open-ended section in the questionnaire. The comments of the two sample groups are tabled separately because of the different rankings "teacher response" received in Table 4.12 (A and B).

TABLE 4.14: TEACHER APPROACHES to TEACHER RESPONSE
(Appendix A / Question 3.10.1)

A. **WHITE** sample

RESPONSES	No.	%
Positive / motivational	24	70,6
Error indicator	5	14,7
At end	2	5,9
Explanation of writing	1	2,9
Guidance/help/remedial	-	-
Personal interaction	-	-
No response	2	5,9
TOTAL	34	100,0

(bold = highest score)

B **COLOURED** sample

RESPONSES	No.	%
Positive / motivational	8	38,1
Error indicator	3	14,3
At end	-	-
Explanation of writing	2	9,5
Guidance/help/remedial	2	9,5
Personal interaction	-	-
No response	6	28,6
TOTAL	21	100,0

(bold = highest score)

Before these responses can be analysed and discussed, it must be emphasised that although only 5,9% (Table 4.14 (A)) of the respondents specifically stated that their comments were made at the end of a piece of writing, it can be assumed that teacher response during the writing process in the survey schools is not the usual practice. The reason for this assumption is that:

- * 18,1% indicated that the rough draft is of "little importance" (Tables 4.11 / A and B), and
- * 46,4% of the respondents do not mention the use of the rough draft in planning (Table 4.13)

To support the above suggestion that the role of teacher feedback is limited in the writing process is the indication that drafting and revision (where teacher response is most important) are not priority activities in the composing process. Although the "rough draft" received relatively positive rankings in Tables 4.12 (A and B) and its motivational and positive role is recognised by the respondents in Tables 4.14 (A and B), it would appear that there is frequently little time allocated to this process in the writing class, and that teachers do not use it as a form of interaction during the writing process.

"Revision" received a lower ranking (6/7) than "rough draft" (3/4) in Tables 4.12 (A and B) and it was also rated by about 24,0% of the sample population as being of "little" or "no importance"; only about 37,6% rated it as being "very important" (Table 4.11), thus also revealing the limited role of teacher response in the revision of drafts.

In Chapter 2 the importance of teacher feedback and response in the process of writing was explained and emphasised, and although the respondents have indicated in Tables 4.11 (A and B) that they appreciate to some extent the importance of teacher response, there is still a need for greater awareness that teacher feedback in the composing process is an **interactive** activity which takes place **during** the writing of a composition to give pupils direction, guidance and encouragement to return to their work and to shape, re-organise and develop the emerging text. There is, furthermore, also little indication that different forms of **pupil-teacher, pupil-pupil and pupil-text interaction take place.**

Although "exchange of ideas" as a form of interaction was placed second in the rankings for writing activities in Table 4.12 (A and B), Table 4.15 below reveals that half the respondents judged it as only being "fairly important". The only other type of interaction was in the form

of teacher- talk, "explanation of writing", by 12,4% (2,9% and 9,5%) of the respondents in Tables 4.14 (A and B). Again, because of the similar rankings of "exchange of ideas" in Tables 4.12 (A and B), the ratings in importance of the two sample population groups will be tabled together in Table 4.15.

TABLE 4.15: Ratings of **IMPORTANCE** of **EXCHANGE OF IDEAS**
(Appendix A / Question 3.8)

ACTIVITY	Very	%	Fair	%	Little	%	Not	Total
Exchange of ideas	24	42,9	28	50,0	4	7,1	-	56

(bold = highest rating)

The practice of making comments and giving feedback is, therefore, rarely interactive and normally takes place after the product has been corrected and evaluated, even though this practice has been shown by research to be less useful than when there is "dialogue or interaction between pupil and teacher" (Krashen 1984:11). Such comments have also been described by Charles (1990:287) as being "misguided or unsatisfactory" because of the mismatch between the intentions and concerns of the writer and the marker.

A study of the respondents' comments to describe their approach to "teacher response" (Appendix A / Question 3.10.1) also reveals that there appears to be no clear and uniform response pattern, and the comments that are made appear to be indiscriminate, inconsistent and unsystematic; not the type of thoughtful commentary described by Sommers (1982:165) which helps pupils "to engage with the issues they are writing about or ... to think about their purposes or goals in a specific text". This tendency is illustrated in the range of short, vague, diverse, fragmented, generalised and ambiguous comments the respondents gave to describe their approaches to teacher response/feedback, some of which are quoted below:

"comments are important",
 "short - and avoid repetition",
 "constructive, positive, recommendations and suggestions",
 "try to pinpoint each pupil's weaknesses",
 "mention good points first and then make suggestions about improvements",
 and
 "pupils take too long to write a composition".

If the comments made on the writing of pupils are as vague and disjointed as the descriptions the respondents gave of their approaches, they will, according to Cohen and Robbin (1976 in Robb, Ross and Shortreed 1986:84), often "negate any positive effect" in pupil writing because the key to successful commenting is to have what is said in the comment and what is done in the classroom "mutually to reinforce and enrich each other" (Sommers 1982:176) and not for feedback to be a "termination of the exercise" (Hyland 1990:279).

The role of the teacher in feedback is vital in the process of writing because without the prompting and guidance of teacher response or feedback, pupils will seldom revise or develop their texts. This is confirmed by Raimes when she states that "students will only see the importance of revision if the teacher expects it" (Raimes in Hedge 1988:263). Raimes's statement is corroborated by a teacher's comment on the questionnaire: "Few bother with this - unless forced to".

The fact that teachers downgrade their "response role" could be a reflection of their lack of expertise and experience (Tables 4.6 and 4.7) in setting and responding to written work or, less obviously but more importantly, the fact that process-orientated activities can pose a real threat to teachers' conceptions of their instructional role. Langer and Applebee (1984:187) suggest possible reasons why the effective inclusion of process-orientated activities in our present writing programme may represent a threat to some teachers:

...the teacher must shift from a position of knowing that the pupil's response should be, to a less secure position in which there are no right or wrong answers. This shift may pose too much of a threat to some teachers, particularly those who are uncomfortable as writers themselves.

However, although marking and commentary systems revealed by the survey appear to be inadequate and any form of sharing or interaction (dialogue and/or discussion) in the writing class appears to be limited, the one type of interaction the teacher has with the pupil is in the form of written comments (even if they are normally made at the end of the written text) and, therefore, teachers need be made aware of the "formative" (Charles 1990:286) and "productive" (Hyland 1990:279) function that interactive teacher comments can have in re-directing the pupil to the developing text by encouraging revision and redrafting. It is, therefore, encouraging that Table 4.14 (A and B) revealed that over half the respondents (58,2%) identified the "positive" and "motivational" roles of teacher response in the writing process, even though few highlighted the role of "guidance" (3,6%).

4.3 THE ROLE OF ERROR CORRECTION AND PUPIL CORRECTION

Although it was expected that errors in writing would be stressed and commented on in teacher response, a relatively low percentage of the respondents (Table 4.14 / 15,3%) saw "teacher response" as a means whereby error in written work was brought to the attention of the writer (error identification being synonymous with teacher comment). This statistic which, in the researcher's view, reveals a positive and encouraging trend, is supported to some extent by the rankings in Table 4.12 (A and B) where "correction of errors" received the lowest rankings in activities of importance in the writing process.

However, the trend described above and revealed in Tables 4.12 (A and B) and 4.14 (A and B) is somewhat contradicted by the findings of Table 4.16 which reveals that 42,9% of the respondents rated the importance of error correction by teacher as being "very important" and half the respondents (50,9%) rated pupil correction as being "fairly important" in the writing process. Two teachers stated that error correction by the teacher was "not important" and only one teacher stated that pupil correction of writing tasks was "not important".

The sample populations' responses to approaches to error correction and pupil correction have been tabulated together in Table 4.16 because of the identical rankings this activity received in Tables 4.12 (A and B), and the similar response of 14,0% that teachers' comments were error indicators in Tables 4.14 (A and B).

TABLE 4.16: Teacher ratings of the **IMPORTANCE** of **TEACHER ERROR CORRECTION** and **PUPIL CORRECTION** in writing
(Appendix A / Question 3.8)

ACTIVITY	Very %	Fair %	Little %	Not %	Total
Error correction by teacher	24 42,9	18 32,1	12 1,4	2 3,6	56
Pupil correction of writing tasks	20 36,4	28 50,9	6 10,9	1 1,8	55

(bold = highest rating)

A detailed analysis of the responses given by the respondents explaining their approaches to "correction of work" is summarised in Table 4.17 below:

TABLE 4.17: **TEACHER APPROACHES** to **CORRECTION OF WORK**
(Appendix A / Question 3.10.4)

RESPONSES	No.	%
Pupils must do all corrections	13	23,6
Teacher corrects:		
all errors	2	3,6
common errors	6	11,0
disturbing errors	1	1,8
basic errors	1	1,8
specific errors: (i.e. punctuation, spelling, tense, concord, sentence structure)	8	14,6
		} 32,8%
Pupils correct own work	1	1,8
Peer group marking		
Remedial (to teach rules)	5	9,1
Use of code in margin in red pen	2	3,6
doesn't help	1	1,8
No response	15	27,3
TOTAL	55	100,0

Error correction still appears to be an important activity in the evaluation of writing as the following synthesis of data from Tables 4.14 (A and B), 4.16 and 4.17 reveals:

- * 14,0% of the respondents viewed their role in responding to pupil compositions as that of an "error indicator" (Tables 4.14 / A and B);
- * 42,9% considered error correction to be "very important" (Table 4.16), and
- * 32,8% viewed it as important to correct a variety of form errors when marking pupil compositions (Table 4.17).

Although Table 4.12 (A and B) revealed that teachers supported the view that error correction is the least important activity in the writing process, it is surprising that the findings in Table 4.16 and 4.17 suggest that at least half the respondents still revealed a tendency to emphasise grammar and other errors in written work. What these teachers, in all probability, are doing is reinforcing their pupils' tendency to focus on sentence-level problems as well (See Tables 5.16, 5.18 and 5.19).

It is also illuminating that a closer study of Table 4.17 reveals that a relatively high percentage of teachers feel that all errors should be corrected by the pupils (23,6%) or that they (the teachers) should correct all errors (32,8%). 14,6% of the teachers specified that they focused on specific errors such as spelling, punctuation, concord/tense errors and sentence structure, and only one teacher (1,8%) suggested that only disturbing errors (errors affecting meaning) should be corrected. Chenoweth (1987:25) questions the practice of error identification and correction and questions whether the teachers who choose to only correct grammar, spelling, punctuation and form errors can say they are helping their pupils to write better. This point is exemplified by one respondent who stated: "They (the pupils) do not take much notice or interest in their corrections." Raimes also explains that the result of responding exclusively to errors in written work is that the pupil becomes "trapped within the sentence" and editing skills are stressed rather than "the creative act of communicating meaning" (1988:261-262).

The typical writing process is described by Raimes:

They (pupils) worry about accuracy; they stop after each sentence and they go back and check it for inflections, word order, spelling and punctuation, breathe a sigh of relief and go on to attack the looming giant of the next sentence. (1988:260)

A pre-occupation with error by teachers can result in writing becoming a mere reinforcement of grammar teaching with error-free sentence production as its main target (Watson 1982:6). This practice also encourages many pupils to believe that "good writing is correct writing and nothing more" (Shaughnessy 1977 in: Taylor 1981:8 and Perkins 1983:666).

Perhaps part of a teacher's concern with error is based on the fact that SL pupils will invariably make more grammatical errors which "capture the attention" of the teachers because of insufficient planning and revision. Table 4.13 (A and B) revealed that only half the respondents (53,6%) encouraged some form of planning and it is a probability that the respondents will resort to marking correct usage of language and spelling because content is often lacking in substance and meaning, paragraphs have to be restructured for logic and clarity and entire sentences have to be changed or deleted.

However, McKay (1984 in Murray and Johanson 1991:89) also suggests that teachers are often preoccupied with error because grammatical errors can be fairly easily identified and explained. Other aspects of writing such as unfamiliarity with a topic, lack of relevance and poor organisation do not offer such clear solutions. However, despite the continued emphasis on error in written work, problems will remain, as one teacher who responded to the question of approaches to error correction stated: "Correcting doesn't help" (Table 4.17).

Considering the findings of research, it is revealing that 50.9% (Table 4.16) of teachers felt that "pupil correction" in essay writing was "fairly important" and 38,9% felt that it was "very important" (Table 4.16). Only 3,6% of the respondents indicated that it was unimportant. Again, the low ranking for error correction in Table 4.12 (A and B) does not appear to reflect what respondents feel to be important according to their responses in Table 4.16. Their description of their approaches to pupil correction of errors is summarised in Table 4.18.

TABLE 4.18: TEACHER APPROACHES to PUPIL ERROR in written work
(Appendix A / Question 3.10.5)

RESPONSES	No.	%	
All corrections must be done	11	23,9	
Some corrections must be done	1	2,2	
Correction of:			
common errors	4	8,7	
specific errors (i.e. style, punctuation, repeated errors, spelling, tense, concord)	8	17,4	} 26,1%
Remedial in language period	4	8,7	
Discuss personally	3	6,5	
Use of codes/symbols	2	4,3	
Use of editing before handing in	1	2,2	
Peer correction sometimes	-	-	
No response	12	26,1	
TOTAL	46	100,0	

An analysis of Table 4.18 reveals that the traditional focus on error correction (identification-explanation-correction) by the teacher is still evident with the most common approach by the respondents to "pupil correction" being that corrections had to be done (23,9%). Secondly, the findings revealed that the respondents felt it was important to identify the types of errors that pupils were expected to correct (26,1%) and, thirdly, that pupil error was the basis of remedial work in the language class (8,7%). However, research has shown all these error-correcting and error-identification exercises are "very limited" in their effect (Krashen 1984:42) and it is, therefore, evident that teacher approach to error in the light of current research and the findings of the survey needs to be reviewed and modified.

It is illuminating that although only one teacher stated that "no corrections should be done" (Table 4.17) and this teacher was the exception in this section of the questionnaire, a number of the respondents in their evaluation of pupil writing progress appeared to be aware of the futility of error correction:

"Common errors never disappear",
 "The grammatical errors don't seem to improve",
 "Grammatical errors persist",
 "Pupils repeat the same errors", and
 "Pupils tend to make the same errors throughout their high school years in spite of concentration on those errors by teachers".

4.4 ATTITUDE TO WRITING

The final section of the questionnaire (Appendix A / Question 4) focuses on attitudes to writing. The respondents were required to assess the attitudes of their pupils to writing. The responses of the two population samples have been listed separately in the table to highlight the similarities and differences of their responses. The findings of their assessments are summarised in Table 4.19 below:

TABLE 4.19: ASSESSED PUPIL ATTITUDE TO WRITING
 (Appendix A / Question 4.1)

RESPONSE	W	%	C	%	TOTAL	%
Dislike	5	11,6	5	23,8	10	15,6
Indifference	5	11,6	8	38,1	13	20,3
Tolerance	21	48,9	8	38,1	29	45,3
Enthusiasm	12	27,9	-	-	12	18,8
TOTAL	43	100,0	21	100,0	64	100,0

Note: * W = white / C = coloured
 * more than one response could be given
 (**bold** = highest score)

Although the survey findings reveal a similarity in the responses of the two sample populations to "tolerance", the coloured sample reveals an equal response to "indifference" and "tolerance". In Table 4.19, 48,9% of the white respondents assessed the attitude of their pupils to writing as being one of "tolerance", whereas 38,1% of the coloured respondents assessed pupil attitude to be one of "tolerance" and "indifference".

The added finding of 23,8% for "dislike" reveals a totally negative assessment by the coloured

respondents of pupil attitude, as no respondent stated that the pupils' attitude to writing was one of "enthusiasm". The white respondents, however, indicated a more positive assessment, with 27,9% stating that pupils' attitude was one of "enthusiasm" and to a lesser extent, one of "indifference" (11,6%) and "dislike" (11,6%). The overall assessment of "tolerance" is, however, supported by the pupils in their response to attitude in Table 5.8 where "acceptance" reflected pupil attitude to writing the closest.

The respondents were required to account for their assessment of pupil attitude in an open-ended question and their responses are summarised in Tables 4.20.

TABLE 4.20: REASONS for ASSESSED PUPIL ATTITUDE TO WRITING
(Appendix A / Question 4.2)

A. **WHITE** sample

RESPONSE	No.	%
Topic choice	12	35,3
Apathy	9	26,5
Enthusiasm	5	14,7
Depends on ability	4	11,8
Errors	3	8,8
Lack of time	1	2,9
Lack of reading	-	-
Afrikaners resist	-	-
TOTAL	34	100,0

(bold = highest score)

B. **COLOURED** sample

RESPONSE	No.	%
Apathy	9	42,8
Lack of reading	4	19,1
Errors	3	14,3
Afrikaners resist	3	14,3
Topic choice	2	9,5
Enthusiasm	-	-
Depends on ability	-	-
Lack of time	-	-
TOTAL	21	100,0

(bold = highest score)

The two sample populations have revealed different reasons for their overall assessment of pupil attitude as one of "tolerance" (Table 4.19).

In Table 4.20 (A), the respondents indicated that "topic choice" (35,3%) followed by "apathy" (26,5%) were the two most common reasons for pupil attitude to writing. It is, however, encouraging that five respondents (14,7%) gave "enthusiasm" as a reason for pupil attitude and that errors were assessed as having a minor effect on pupil attitude. The findings of the coloured population sample in Table 4.20 (B) supported the negative findings of Table 4.19 in that no teacher indicated a positive assessment as a reason for pupil attitude. The most common explanation for pupil attitude was assessed as "apathy" (42,8%), followed by "lack of reading" (19,1%), "errors in work" (14,3%) and "Afrikaners resisting" the study of English (14,3%). Topic choice was only indicated by two respondents (9,5%) as being a reason for pupil attitude.

If the two samples are combined, "apathy" is revealed as the most common reason for the respondents' assessment of pupil attitude. It appears that many of the respondents felt that many pupils wrote because they "had to" and often saw no purpose for what they were doing. "Topic choice" is also identified as being important in determining pupil attitude to writing, and this finding is supported by the pupils' reasons for their attitude to writing in Chapter 5.

In line with these findings, most of the explanations were based on negative reasons, and the few respondents who gave "enthusiasm" as the reason for pupil attitude were the exception.

Table 4.20 (A and B) revealed that the respondents tended to feel that error had a limited influence on pupil attitude to writing. However, research into writing indicates otherwise. Semke (1984 in Ross, Robb and Shortreed 1986:84) reporting on his research findings (and supported by the findings of Tables 4.16, 4.17 and 4.18 which highlight the apparent importance of error in written work), stated that overt correcting of student's writing tended

to have negative side effects on both the **quality** of subsequent compositions and on student **attitudes** towards writing in a second language. The tendency to over-emphasise and be pre-occupied with error in writing in the survey schools is perhaps a contributing factor to the limited success of the respondents in helping pupils to improve not only their writing (Table 4.10) but their attitude to writing as well (Table 4.19). This view is supported by practioners outside this study:

... for as we have subsequently learned, if too much emphasis is placed on errors too early in the writing process, it undermines students' confidence and prevents them from developing their ideas. (Murray and Johanson 1991:89)

4.5 CONCLUSION

The survey of the sample population has revealed a number of interesting findings concerning the approaches and attitudes of teachers to the practice of ESL writing. These findings will be assessed and discussed under the following headings:

- 4.5.1 Planning and drafting
- 4.5.2 Teacher response
- 4.5.3 Pupil response
- 4.5.4 Error correction
- 4.5.5 Teacher and pupil attitude to writing

4.5.1 Planning and Drafting

Most of the respondents, although they acknowledged the importance of some form of planning and drafting, appeared to have no understanding of the role of multiple drafting, and there appeared to be limited use of active planning and drafting processes in the surveyed ESL writing instruction framework. Teachers also appeared to make little use of the pre-writing activities of interaction and invention, as the findings revealed that the role of discussion, idea sharing and brainstorming were limited as pre-writing and writing activities in the writing process. The current planning and drafting approaches as revealed in the findings of the study appear to be still largely teacher-centred with the teacher choosing the topic, explaining the task, allowing the pupils to plan and then the writing task being completed at school or at home.

4.5.2 Teacher Response

Most respondents indicated an appreciation for the positive and motivational role of teacher comment. However, some saw teacher response as a means to indicate error rather than as a form of interaction with the pupil in order to provide feedback so that content can be developed, re-organised and shaped. Although the coloured respondents indicated that they ranked teacher response as relatively important in the writing process, the white respondents rated it as less important when assessed with other writing activities, this ranking, perhaps being a truer reflection of the role of teacher response in the present writing system. Teacher comment would, therefore, frequently be made once the writing task had been completed, its interactive role as revealed by research limited, and its function minor in the development of a pupils' writing.

4.5.3 Pupil Response

This is one of the processes which appears to have been poorly understood by the respondents and whose function needs to be developed in the ESL writing class. Although pupil response was recognised by all respondents as being very important, it is not clear if this process was understood by the teachers in the survey as their responses to this activity in the questionnaire appeared to reveal a limited understanding of the process term and its practice in the classroom. It is my opinion that most respondents interpreted "pupil response" as the importance of pupils responding positively to the teaching of ESL writing (rather than just tolerating it).

In process understanding, however, "pupil response" is a pupil's active and involved response to all the composing processes and their interaction with the selection of the topic, pre-writing activities, planning, drafting and revising processes and the teacher's comments on the draft.

If, however, writing tasks are completed with time constraints and attention is focussed on the completion of the writing task (as is suggested by the survey findings), the essential role of pupil response in the writing process will seldom be adequately developed.

4.5.4 Error correction

Although it appeared that teachers in the study realised that the role of error in writing is less important in the writing process when compared to other activities (See Table 4.12), the findings indicate that there is still a pre-occupation with error in written work. Teachers need to focus on responding to content and the development of ideas rather than the indication of error in written work, especially in the drafting stages of the writing task. A consequence of the present practice is that the effective role of teacher response has not been realised and the teachers' main function appears to be the evaluation of the writing task and highlighting and explanation of errors.

4.5.5 Attitude to Writing

Pupil attitude to writing has been assessed by the respondents as one of "tolerance". This is possibly because the practice of writing in the present schooling system is teacher-centred, and, without adequate planning, guidance and stimulation, pupils see little or limited progress in their writing. This situation can be demotivating and it can be a possible cause of the negative attitudes expressed by the coloured respondents, and, to a lesser extent, the white respondents, to writing.

Teachers can be influenced in the same way as their pupils by limited improvement or progress in their pupils' work. They can also become demotivated and their response to the teaching of writing will be likewise affected. It is, however, encouraging that most of the respondents indicated that their response to the teaching of writing was one of "benefit" and "pleasure".

Clearly, based on the findings of the survey, there is a need for teachers to become aware that not only the quality of pupil writing but pupil attitude to writing in SL can improve if there is a true orientation to a process approach to writing. Teachers will also need to become aware of the importance of their role in creating an environment which will activate the successful implementation of a process approach in the writing class as well as reassessing the role of error and error correction and topic choice in the writing class. Such an approach to writing will have to take into account all the factors that are involved in good writing (See the model for **Stages in the Writing Process** in Chapter 2) and the present concern for product will have to be replaced with a concern for the "wandering path" (Leki 1991: 10), the composing process the pupil uses to get to the product.

CHAPTER 5

5.0 THE PUPIL QUESTIONNAIRE

In order to complement the study and analysis of the writing approaches followed by ESL secondary school teachers as well as their understanding of writing as a process activity (as revealed by the findings of the teacher questionnaire in Chapter 4), the research was extended to include a study of the pupils and their responses to the practice of writing in the survey area.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the pupil survey was threefold:

1. to provide a **pupil perspective** to serve as a means to highlight and reveal areas that were problematic and motivational from a pupils' point of view,
2. to provide a basis for the making of **comparisons** (between pupil and teacher perspectives), and
3. to allow for a more **objective evaluation** of the approaches and attitudes to writing as the findings will not reflect the teachers' responses exclusively.

5.1 DATA ANALYSIS of the PUPIL QUESTIONNAIRE

5.1.1 Personal information

The population sample consisted of white pupils, most of whom (99,2%) came from Afrikaans-speaking backgrounds with the exception of one pupil who spoke both English and Afrikaans at home. The sample was also a fairly balanced representation of male and female viewpoints as is illustrated in Table 5.1.

TABLE 5.1: SEX of Standard 9 respondents
(Appendix B / Section A)

	Number	%
Male	50	42,4
Female	68	57,6
TOTAL	118	100,0

5.1.2 Writing assessment

The respondents were asked in the questionnaire (Appendix B / Section A) to give symbols representative of the evaluations they usually received for their **writing assignments** (Table 5.2) as well as the symbol they received for their **ESL examination result** (Table 5.3). (These assessments would be based on the marks they received for written work, and their half-yearly or final examination results.)

TABLE 5.2: SYMBOLS for WRITING ASSIGNMENTS
(Appendix B / Section A)

SYMBOL	DESCRIPTION	No.	%
A (80-100%)	Excellent	1	0,8
B (70-79%)	Very Good	16	13,6
C (60-69%)	Good	48	40,7
D (50-59%)	Satisfactory	40	33,9
E (40-40%)	Weak	11	9,3
F (30-39%)	Very Weak	2	1,7
TOTAL		118	100,0

(bold = highest score)

The writing assessments appear to indicate above average results as 40,7% of the pupils indicated that they received writing assessments of "C" (60-69%). The writing assessment spread revealed in Table 5.2 tended to follow the trend of the respondents' overall ESL examination result (a mark calculated from the respondents' Setwork, Creative writing, Language and Oral marks) quite closely (See Table 5.3).

TABLE 5.3: SYMBOLS for ESL EXAMINATION RESULTS
(Appendix B / Section B)

SYMBOL	DESCRIPTION	No.	%
A (80-100%)	Excellent	3	2,5
B (70-79%)	Very Good	21	17,8
C (60-69%)	Good	43	36,4
D (50-59%)	Satisfactory	37	31,4
E (40-40%)	Weak	14	11,9
F (30-39%)	Very Weak	-	-
TOTAL		118	100,0

(bold = highest score)

A study of Table 5.3 reveals that C symbols were again the most frequently achieved score (36,4%), followed by scores of D, B and E. These results were also higher than the average marks obtained by white schools in the Eastern Cape for ESL (the 1992 Eastern Cape June average mark for the ESL examination was 56,0%). The number of pupils achieving A symbols for writing (0,8%) and ESL examination results (2,5%) was also characteristically small and in keeping with the overall results of candidates in Eastern Cape schools (3,4% of the pupils in Eastern Cape schools received A symbols for their ESL June 1992 examination). It is also a reflection of the standard attained by these pupils that there were no Standard or Lower Grade passes (F/FF) as they all received a Higher Grade pass (E symbol and above).

In order to compare the teacher's assessment of their writing ability with their own personal assessment of their abilities as writers, the pupils were also asked to rate themselves as writers. Their responses are summarised in Table 5.4.

TABLE 5.4: Pupils' RATING of their WRITING ABILITY
(Appendix B / Question 18)

RATING	SYMBOL	No.	%
Excellent	A	2	1,7
Good	C-B	21	17,8
Average	D	81	68,6
Weak	E	11	9,3
Very Weak	F	3	2,6
TOTAL		118	100,0

(bold = highest score)

Table 5.4 reveals a discrepancy in the pupils' formal writing ability as measured by their teachers ("C" Table 5.2) and their personal assessment of their ability as revealed in Table 5.4 ("D"). Most of the pupils (68,6%) saw themselves as "average" writers, and the reasons they gave for this assessment varied from "marks received" to being a "weak speller". However, it is interesting to note that the pupils' personal assessments of their ability as writers in terms of "A" and "F" symbol evaluations (Table 5.4) followed the measured distribution of marks as revealed in Tables 5.2 and 5.3 quite closely.

The following were the most common reasons given by the respondents for their personal assessment of their writing abilities:

TABLE 5.5: REASONS GIVEN for PERSONAL WRITING RATING
(Appendix B / Question 19)

REASONS	Merit Order	No.	%
Marks received	1	23	39,0
Errors in work	2	9	15,2
Poor writing ability	3	9	15,2
Teacher's response	4	8	13,6
Enjoy writing	5	6	10,2
Weak speller /	6	1	1,7
No confidence /		1	1,7
Don't talk English /		1	1,7
Don't read English		1	1,7
TOTAL		59	100,0

(bold = highest score)

Nearly half the pupils (39,0%) based their writing ability assessment on marks achieved and this was followed by errors in work (15,2%), poor writing ability (15,2%) and teacher response (13,6%). However, 10,2% of the respondents responded more positively and based their writing assessment on the fact that they enjoyed writing. The other reasons that were given to explain their assessment were of less consequence when compared with the weight "marks" received as a basis for assessment. The high frequency of "average" (Table 5.4) as a personal evaluation for writing ability could possibly be a result of the tendency in teachers to "overmark" (the giving of "errors in work" (Table 5.5) as a reason for perceived writing ability) which often makes the return of written work a "discouraging experience" (Hyland 1990:279).

Although marks and the correction of errors are important in the assessment of written work (Leki 1991:11), overmarking may be the cause of pupils not only developing poor estimations of their ability as writers but an aversion to writing and an incorrect understanding of the role of error correction in the development of content. Therefore, teachers need to be aware of research findings regarding the marking of compositions and the role of error correction.

5.2 PUPIL ATTITUDE

5.2.1 Attitude to the act of writing

In order to ascertain the respondents' attitude to writing, they were asked to select from the list of options reflected in Table 5.6 the one which reflected their attitude the closest.

TABLE 5.6: PUPIL ATTITUDE to writing
(Appendix B / Question 1)

ATTITUDE	No.	%	
Excitement	12	10,2	} 43,3%
Pleasure	39	33,1	
Acceptance	45	38,0	
Boredom	16	13,6	} 18,7%
Resentment	6	5,1	
TOTAL	118	100,0	

(bold = highest score)

More than a third of the pupils (38,0%) described their response to the act of writing as that of "acceptance" and although this question in the questionnaire had the highest frequency for pupils giving no explanation for their choice, statements such as the following were given by some pupils to explain their selection of "acceptance":

- * "You have no choice, you have to do it"
- * "We don't have a choice. We have to write even if we want to or not"
- * "It's my work and I must do it for the marks"

It is, however, encouraging that the response of "acceptance" was followed by the positive responses of "pleasure" (33,1%) and "excitement" (10,2%). The fact that nearly half the pupils (43,3%) found pleasure or excitement in the act of writing and based their explanations on the importance of topic, audience, discovery and expression, illustrates the importance of purpose and process in the writing act. Some of the explanations for the pupils' **positive responses** to writing are listed below:

- * "It's a **Pleasure** to use your imagination and to let other people read it"
- * "It could help you with your spelling and language, how to do it correctly"
- * "It's very nice to write essays when the topic is nice"
- * "I get the chance to put my feelings on paper as well as my opinion about things"
- * "It's a way to express myself"

Only 18,7% of the pupils described their attitude to writing as one of "boredom" (13,6%) or "resentment" (5,1%). Although some of these pupils failed to provide a reason for their selection, some of the reasons they gave are listed below:

- * "We get stupid topics"
- * "The subjects that are given to us are very boring"
- * "I can not spel"
- * "I hate it"
- * "It seems to be boring"
- * "I do not like the topics"
- * "The topics stink"

In order to account for their attitude to writing as revealed in Table 5.6 the respondents were also required to attempt to explain their responses. The range of reasons suggested by the respondents are summarised in merit order in Table 5.7.

TABLE 5.7: REASONS given for ATTITUDE to writing
(Appendix B / Question 2)

REASONS	No.	%
Enjoyment	26	29,9
Have to do it	14	16,1
Enjoy topics	13	14,9
To express	7	8,0
Hate topics	6	6,9
Boring	4	4,6
To be creative	3	3,4
Marks	2	2,3
Do not enjoy	2	2,3
Hate	2	2,3
No comment	2	2,3
Lazy	2	2,3
Depends on mood	2	2,3
Cannot spell	1	1,1
Okay	1	1,1
TOTAL	87	100,0

a) Influence of Topic on Attitude

Although there is a medley of reasons given to explain attitude to writing, it would appear that many of the pupils who enjoyed or did not enjoy writing linked their enjoyment or lack thereof to the topics given. Comments such as the following indicate that a positive or negative attitude to writing can be topic-related:

<p>"I have to do it, but I don't like the topics", "The subjects are very boring", "It is pleasure when you are given the right topic, then you can write with pleasure", and "I like to write about exciting things"</p>

Table 5.11 identifies the respondents' attitude to topic choice as being very even or balanced; "positive" and "neutral" receiving the same response of 36,3% and "negative" receiving a somewhat lower response of 27,2%. Pupils, therefore, have no definite opinion about topic choice, and perhaps the response of "acceptance" best describes their generalised viewpoint (See Table 5.6).

The apathy that is felt by many pupils about their topic choice can perhaps be explained by the fact that the teacher is responsible for at least 70% of the topics. Pupils are thus given little or no opportunity to develop and select topics from their own range of interest or experience.

TABLE 5.8: RESPONSIBILITY for TOPIC CHOICE
(Appendix B / Question 4)

Teacher and pupil	50,8%
Teacher	37,3%
Pupil	11,9%

(bold = highest score)

Table 5.8 does not present an entirely gloomy picture as at least 11,9% of the pupils indicated that they were responsible for their topic choice. However, this statistic could also mean that they were responsible for the topic they chose from a selection given by the teacher. Although half the respondents indicated that "teacher and pupil" were responsible for topic choice, it would be a presumption to assume that the choice was a result of pupil-teacher interaction. It is likely that, once again, the teacher provided the selection on which pupils had to base their choice. In spite of the ambiguity presented in the statistics, it can be assumed that topic choice tends to be teacher-controlled with 37,3% of the pupils indicating that their teachers were responsible for topic choice and 50,8% stating that their teachers were partially responsible.

The pupils were required to describe their response to their topic choices in terms of the criteria listed in Table 5.9

TABLE 5.9: Respondents RESPONSE to TOPIC CHOICES
(Appendix B / Question 5)

RESPONSE	Order	No.	%
Acceptance	1	53	45,7
Motivation	2	22	18,9
Excitement	3	17	14,7
Irritation	4	14	12,1
Depression	5	10	8,6
TOTAL		116	100,0

(bold = highest score)

Once again (as with the pupils' attitude to writing in Table 5.6), the highest score is that of "acceptance" (45,7%) with pupils stating that they have "no choice" and "have to" accept the topics given. The relatively low percentages for "excited" (14,7%) and "motivated" (18,9%) is also a cause for concern because it appears that pupils are often uninspired by their writing topics and their resultant writing tasks will reflect this attitude.

Pupils were required to provide reasons for their responses to topic selection as revealed in Table 5.9. A summary of their responses is given in Table 5.10. A study of this Table as well as Tables 5.7 and 5.9 lends support to the indication that most of the pupils' attitude to writing appears to be **strongly dependent on topic choice**. Interestingly, the 3,4% who enjoyed their topics did so because they were allowed to select their own topics. However, the most common response was that the topics were "boring" (15,3%).

TABLE 5.10: REASONS for RESPONSE to TOPIC CHOICE
(Appendix B / Question 6)

REASONS	No.	%
Boring topics	18	15,3
No choice / must do	16	13,6
If exciting	11	9,3
Enjoy / like writing	9	7,6
Hate / dislike	9	7,6
Interesting topics	5	4,2
Uninteresting topics	5	4,2
When Motivated	5	4,2
Okay topics	4	3,4
Limited topic choice	4	3,4
My selection	4	3,4
Try to do something with topic	4	3,4
Unfamiliar topics	4	3,4
No responses	20	17,0
TOTAL	118	100,0

The responses of the respondents to the subject of topic choice indicated the prevalence of a teacher-centred classroom (See Table 5.8). This situation has been discredited by research which encourages the writing experience to be pupil-centred. It is suggested that pupils should interact with teachers to help the teacher to know what kinds of writing they are interested in doing and what kinds of topics they are interested in writing about.

5.2.2 Pupil Attitude to Various Composing Activities

In order to ascertain the respondents' attitudes to various processes within the writing experience, they were required to indicate "positive", "neutral" or "negative" responses to a range of writing activities. Their responses are summarised in Table 5.11. (See Appendix C for a graphic representation of pupil attitude to various writing processes in the writing act as depicted in Table 5.11).

TABLE 5.11: ATTITUDE to various PROCESSES in the writing act
(Appendix B / Question 23)

Writing activities	POS No.	%	NEUT No.	%	NEG No.	%	TOTAL
Teacher comment	65	58,0	42	37,5	5	4,5	112
Errors in writing	48	42,5	44	38,9	21	18,6	113
Spelling errors	52	46,4	41	36,6	19	17,0	112
Rough copies	39	34,5	44	38,9	30	26,6	113
Planning	54	47,0	46	40,0	15	13,0	115
Essay marks	42	38,9	42	38,9	33	28,2	117
Timed writing	16	14,0	48	42,1	50	43,9	114
Discussion	47	41,2	49	43,0	18	15,8	114
Proof reading	43	38,4	50	44,6	19	17,0	112
Reading of work to pupil	33	29,5	37	33,0	42	37,5	112
Choice of topic	41	36,3	41	36,3	31	27,4	113
Corrections	33	29,0	47	41,2	34	29,8	114

(bold = highest scores)

The bold responses indicate the highest scores the various processes received, and it is interesting to note the importance of the role of teacher in the writing experience as "teacher comment" received the highest score overall. 58,0% of the respondents rated their attitude to teacher comment as "positive", and this response is encouraging as well as sobering in terms of the vital role that teacher comment has in the writing process and the responsibility it places on the teacher to give appropriate and formative responses to written work.

It is perhaps understandable that "timed writing" received the lowest positive rating (14,0%) because it often takes the form of "exam essays" about which pupils are frequently anxious and tense. Timed writing also received the highest negative score, 43,9%, which is much higher than the negative ratings the other processes or activities received.

Each of the activities listed in Table 5.11 elicited a high response rate (the respondents were only required to tick the appropriate columns); therefore, the table is able to reflect a **generalised attitude rubric** to various activities in the writing process. It will be used to provide a basis for comparison, comment and evaluation when analysing and discussing the respondents' specific responses in the questionnaire to some of these activities in their writing.

5.3 WRITING PROCESSES

5.3.1 Drafting and Revision

In order to ascertain what use is made of the different composing strategies in the writing process, the pupils were required to indicate which of the activities listed in Table 5.12 preceded their writing experience.

TABLE 5.12: Activities **PRECEDING** the **WRITING EXPERIENCE**
(Appendix B / Question 3)

ACTIVITY	No.	%
1. Teacher explanation	56	25,5
2. Planning	42	19,1
3. Group discussion	30	13,6
4. Idea sharing	23	10,4
5. Brainstorming	23	10,4
6. Picture stimulus	18	8,2
7. Reading of article	16	7,3
8. Note taking	12	5,5
TOTAL	220	100,0

Note: respondents could circle more than one response
(**bold** = highest score)

From Table 5.12 it is evident that "teacher explanation" of the topic usually precedes the writing act, followed by some form of "planning". This appears to be the common procedure for most writing tasks as 53,6% (Table 4.13) of the respondents in Chapter 4 confirmed that they made use of some form of drafting and planning followed (less frequently) by discussion (12,5%) and teacher guidance (7,1%) as part of the writing process. Pupils' familiarity with the procedure as revealed in Table 5.11 is possibly an explanation for their positive attitude to planning (47,0% expressed a "positive" and only 13,0% expressed a "negative" attitude to planning) as part of their writing process. Table 5.11 also revealed a relatively even response rate of attitude to "rough copies" indicating an acceptance by the pupils of this activity:

34,5% - Positive
38,9% - Neutral
26,6% - Negative

Planning and rough copies, however, were not the only pre-writing activities the respondents were exposed to as they also indicated that use was made of other forms of pre-writing activities besides "teacher explanation" and "planning". These activities include: "group discussion" (13,6%), "idea sharing" (10,4%) and "brainstorming" (10,4%). Less use appears to be made of forms of stimuli such as pictures and articles from books and magazines. The procedures indicated by the pupils are supported by the teachers' responses in Chapter 4 (Table 4.13 also indicated that at least 19,7% of the respondents made use of at least one of the various forms of pre-writing activities such as discussion, brainstorming, guidance and outlining).

A study of the pupils' responses to the pre-writing activities listed in Table 5.12, therefore, indicates that "teacher explanation" is the most common activity preceding the writing act followed to a lesser degree by "planning". Although some use is made of the more interactive, pupil-centred and idea-generating activities (numbers 3 - 8), their use in the writing class is limited. These observations support the assumption that the role of class, pupil and teacher interaction and use of stimulus in Port Elizabeth classrooms before the act of writing is limited. Pupils, therefore, frequently entered the writing experience and write their compositions with insufficient stimulus, interaction and planning.

In order to expand on and develop the role of planning in writing, and to focus on the specific form of planning that is frequently used in the survey schools, the respondents were required to select from a list (which is reproduced in Table 5.13), the activities that were, in fact, part of their pre-writing and writing process.

TABLE 5.13: PROCESSES INCLUDED DURING the WRITING EXPERIENCE
(Appendix B / Question 7)

PROCESSES	MERIT	No.	%
Reading of written work	1	60	34,1
Editing (correction of errors)	2	39	22,2
Use of dictionary	3	26	14,8
Rough draft	4	18	10,2
Note taking	5	14	7,9
Outline	6	13	7,4
Reading aloud of rough draft	7	6	3,4
TOTAL		176	100,0

Note: Pupils were allowed to circle more than one response

A study of Table 5.13 reveals that at least 80% of the pupils tended to hand work in that had not been subjected to drafting (only 10,2% stated that they made use of rough copies and the rest of the respondents did not select this as an activity which preceded the writing of an essay). Most of the respondents (37,5%) indicated that they concentrated on **rereading** (34,1% "rereading" and 3,4% "reading aloud") and **editing** (22,2%) as "shaping" processes in the writing of an essay. This tendency is supported by Table 5.11 which reveals that only 17% of the pupils indicated a negative attitude to "proof reading" while 38,4% revealed a positive and 44,6% a neutral attitude to this writing activity.

Therefore, in the composing process, not only does it appear that reading and rereading of the draft are the most important shaping processes and rewriting and revision are undervalued as process activities, but 22,2% (Table 5.13) of the respondents rated "editing (correction of errors)" as more important than the rough draft as a process to be included during the writing experience. These findings not only indicate that limited attention is given to the **active use of drafting processes** in the writing class, but that editing and proofreading appear to be the most important shaping activities in the writing process. Although these activities are important, they are superficial and not sufficient to develop and explore the given topics when they are practised exclusively or independently.

5.3.2 Teacher/pupil interaction

An analysis of Table 5.12 reveals that 13,6% of the respondents indicated that "group discussion" and 10,4% that "ideas sharing" were activities that preceded the writing experience. Table 5.11 also indicated that the respondents' attitude to discussion was mostly one of neutrality (43,0%), followed by a positive response (41,2%) and a low negative response (15,8%). It, therefore, appears that the respondents at the survey schools are not opposed to discussion and idea sharing as interactive activities although they appeared to be reluctant to share their writing with a wider audience and interact by "reading work to pupils". 37,5% of the respondents expressed a negative attitude to this activity, 33,0% a neutral attitude and 29,5% a positive attitude. This indication that pupils appear to be less willing to interact or share their actual writing with a wider audience is perhaps a result of their lack of familiarity with this practice and years of teacher-centred education.

This point was illuminated further when the respondents were asked to indicate whether they enjoyed their work being read by others. Their responses are summarised in Table 5.14.

TABLE 5.14: ENJOYMENT OF WORK BEING READ by OTHERS
(Appendix B / Question 16)

RESPONSE	No.	%
YES	66	55,9
NO	52	44,1
TOTAL	118	100,0

The responses reflected a relatively balanced reaction by the respondents. Leki (1991:9) states that if pupils know that their writing will actually be read by real people, other than the teacher, people who care about the message not the medium, then writing often becomes easier, because knowing who the audience is and what the audience already knows helps the writer to decide what to say and how to say it.

However, if the respondents have not been exposed to sharing their work, it is understandable that peer feedback and response can produce a negative reaction because of "the fear of exposure of one's work" which is often based on "past experiences of ridicule or severe criticism" (Winer 1992:65). In order to gain an understanding of the respondents' reasoning behind their YES/NO responses, they were required to reveal who read their compositions other than their teachers.

TABLE 5.15: READERS of RESPONDENTS' WORK
(Appendix B / Question 15)

READER	No.	%
Friend/s	65	48,9
Me	16	12,0
Mom	10	7,5
Parents	9	6,8
Family	5	3,8
No one	28	21,0
TOTAL	133	100,0

Nearly half the pupils (48,9%) indicated that their friends were an important audience and this admission can be exploited by teachers in the writing process. However, teachers also need to be aware of the negative attitude expressed by the respondents in Table 5.11 to this form of interaction and the indication that in Table 5.15, 21% of the respondents stated that "no one" read their work and a further 12% stated that they were the only readers of their work. Perhaps, these statistics reflect a reticence on the part of some the pupils to make use of discussion and sharing, but they also highlight the fact that pupils are possibly not being exposed to these activities in their present situation.

In order to pursue and further analyse the respondents' response to sharing, they were asked to indicate with which people in Table 5.16 they enjoyed discussing their work.

TABLE 5.16: People with whom respondents **ENJOYED DISCUSSING** their work
(Appendix / Question 21)

PEOPLE	No.	%
Friend/s	76	50,6
Peers	31	20,7
Teacher	25	16,7
Parents	18	12,0
TOTAL	150	100,0

Note: Respondents could circle more than one choice

Table 5.16 reveals that pupils rate teacher-pupil interaction as less "pleasing" than interaction with their friends and peers', emphasising the fact that a teacher-centred classroom is often not conducive to obtaining the best responses in pupils. The potential audience of **friends and peers** as an audience and as a means to promote and generate discussion is again underlined as 71% of the respondents felt that they would enjoy discussing their work, ideas or problems with friends or peers. Pupils seem to feel less restricted and more at ease when they are discussing their ideas with their immediate age-group and this fact could be exploited in the writing class. Perhaps this scenario will be daunting for many teachers because the character of the classroom will change and become noisy as pupils work together in groups to write, read each other's writing and comment on it. However, as is pointed out by Keh (1990:303):

Overall, students ... (feel) peer feedback ... (is) **valuable** in gaining a wider sense of audience. (1990:303)

The respondents were also required to describe what benefits they felt they would gain from discussing their work with different people and their responses are summarised in Table 5.17. The responses revealed that although sharing was viewed primarily as a means of error correction (31,6%) and "to help" (23,8%), the respondents were also able to see its benefits as a means of idea generation (13,1%) and motivation (10,5%). Again, the low scores for "enjoy" (1,3%) and "to gain confidence" (1,3%) support the finding that the role of discussion has not yet been appreciated by most of the respondents.

Table 5.17 reveals the responses the respondents gave when asked to attempt to assess the benefit they felt they would gain from discussing their written work with the people in 5.16.

TABLE 5.17: BENEFITS to be gained from DISCUSSIONS
(Appendix B / Question 22)

RESPONSES	No.	%
Correct errors	24	31,6
To help	18	23,8
Gain ideas	10	13,1
To improve	9	11,8
To motivate	8	10,5
No benefit	5	6,6
Enjoy	1	1,3
Gain confidence	1	1,3
TOTAL	76	100,0

The respondents, again, assessed the role of discussion as a means to develop ideas (13,1%) and to motivate or encourage (10,5%) as being limited. Rather, they revealed that the benefit to be gained from discussion was restricted to error correction, "correct errors" (31,6%) or remedial, "to help" (23,8%). If "to improve" is included with the "to help" response, the remedial role indicated as a benefit of discussion would be 35,6%, and it can be assumed that this benefit would usually be for the correction of errors rather than the development of content. The negative findings in pupil attitude towards the sharing of the respondents' written work with peers in Table 5.11, is again highlighted with only two pupils stating respectively that they would "enjoy" or "gain confidence" from such a discussion.

The findings of Tables 5.15, 5.16 and 5.17, therefore, indicate that although the respondents appear to be keen to interact and share their writing with peers and friends, they feel that the benefit to be gained from these interactions is to enable them to correct errors in their work rather than develop or rethink their content. However, the successful implementation of a process approach to writing requires a pupil-centred classroom environment, and, therefore, it is encouraging that the responses given by the respondents to idea sharing and discussion generally reveal positive attitudes to the practice of peer-and-friend interaction.

5.3.3 Teacher response and feedback

In Chapter 4, the teachers explaining and describing their approaches to **teacher comment** (in an open-ended question) stated that the role of teacher comment was very important, especially to motivate pupils and highlight errors (See Tables 4.14 / A and B). Although only four teachers specified that their comments were normally made after the work had been marked and evaluated, the assumption was made that this practice is typical for most written work marked (See comment on page 51). Pupils, therefore, viewed teacher comment similarly; a written comment on their essay which frequently highlighted their errors, usually made after the composition had been marked and evaluated. The typical return of essays is aptly described by Gwin:

When the compositions are returned, students generally take note of the overall mark given, probably feel little motivation to carefully scrutinise the red-ink comments, and usually shelve (or throw) the paper away to be forgotten, then repeat the same errors on their next composition. (1991:2)

Teacher feedback or interaction, as revealed by the findings of the survey, is, therefore, usually limited to "teacher explanation" of the topic (Table 5.12) and teacher comment, usually made at the end of the written task. The importance of teacher comment, however, cannot be underestimated and teachers should be aware of the very positive role their feedback can have on a pupils' work. Isolated comments at the end of a piece of writing serve little purpose and, therefore, teachers must be aware that their comments must be "interactive to be genuinely effective" (Hyland 1990:285).

Pupil attitude to "teacher comment" as revealed in Table 5.11 received the highest positive rating for its role in the writing process. 58,0% of the respondents indicated that they viewed teacher comment positively and only 4,5% indicated a negative response. Respondents, however, appeared to rate the more interactive role of discussing their written work with their

teachers less positively. Only 16,7% (Table 5.16) stated that they would enjoy this more personal interactive activity. However, the respondents' positive response to teacher comment in Table 5.11 reveals the potentially productive role that teacher comment can have in the writing class. At present this is not the case as is revealed by the respondents' responses to teacher comment in Table 5.18.

TABLE 5.18: Response to **TEACHER COMMENTS**
(Appendix B / Question 11)

RESPONSE	No.	%
They help me to avoid errors	47	33,8
I read them	44	31,6
They motivate me in my writing	41	29,5
They are of no use to me	5	3,7
I ignore them	2	1,4
TOTAL	139	100,0

Note: Respondents could circle more than one response

The responses of the respondents to teacher comment is generally favourable with the pupils recognising the motivational (29,5%) and remedial (33,8%), role of teacher comments. It is encouraging that only 1,4% of the respondents indicated that they ignored teacher comments (although more may actually do so in practice) or stated that they were of no use (3,7%). A third of the pupils (31,6%) stated that the comments were read but there was no indication that what was said was acted on.

5.4 ERROR IDENTIFICATION AND CORRECTION

In order to ascertain what the respondents thought the role of the teacher's comment was, they were asked to indicate whether there was a need for teachers to comment on the following in writing:

TABLE 5.19: IMPORTANCE of TEACHER COMMENT
(Appendix B / Question 12)

Where is teacher comment necessary	Merit Order	No.	%
Spelling errors	1	58	24,8
Grammar errors	2	57	24,5
Vocabulary use	3	48	20,6
Punctuation errors	4	23	9,9
Content	5	21	9,0
Layout	6	17	7,3
Paragraphing	7	9	3,9
TOTAL		233	100,0

}
}
}
} 79,8%

(Respondents could select more than one response)

The majority of the pupils (79,8%) considered the chief function of teacher comment to be the identifying of surface-level spelling, punctuation and grammar errors and only 9% indicated a need for teacher comment on "content". This is possibly because teachers often comment primarily on these errors and, therefore, the role of teacher comment has been relegated to this position. This bears out Gwin's observation that "Unfortunately, when we mark ... we note the grammatical errors ... encouraging this view of writing" (Gwin 1991:2). Leki (1991:11) states that although there is a place for error-free writing, it does not have to be the main goal of the writing class.

Content was rated as fifth in importance for teacher comment in Table 5.19 with only 9,0% of the respondents indicating that teacher comment had a role to play in the development of content. Pupils obviously saw the role of comment on content as being less important than that of error correction and identification. This is because they possibly perceived the role of teacher comment to be that of an error-indicator in order to help them to avoid the same surface-level errors in the next piece of writing. Comments about content were perhaps considered unnecessary as the respondents were usually not given the opportunity to develop their ideas and resubmit. However, Krashen (1984:11) points out that error identification of any degree or kind has not been found to have any significant effect on writing ability.

Respondents were finally asked to focus on the **ONE** aspect of writing (from the list in Table 5.20) that they felt to be the most important for teacher comment. Their responses are reflected in Table 5.20.

TABLE 5.20: THE MOST IMPORTANT AREA FOR TEACHER COMMENT
(Appendix B / Question 13)

AREA	No.	%
Grammar	29	28,5
Spelling	28	27,5
Vocabulary	18	17,6
Content	18	17,6
Layout	9	8,8
TOTAL	102	100,0

} 56%

Again pupils revealed that teacher comment and feedback appears to be synonymous with error identification and correction and not with the development and organisation of content. Although Keh (1990:11) states that grammar queries should only be answered after content has been discussed to avoid teachers and pupils confusing error correction with rewriting and revision, and Perl (1979 in Spack and Sadow 1983:577) warns that idea development can be seriously inhibited by a concern for correct form and a fear of error, the practice of teacher comment having limited application for content, as depicted in Table 5.20, appears to have become the practice in the schools in the survey area.

5.5 PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED IN WRITING

A study of the tables and pupil comments reveals that writing for the respondents is often not an exciting and meaningful experience. Many problems have been outlined including that of a limited and unexciting topic choice, a concentration on error, a reluctance to share, a lack of adequate knowledge and use of writing processes and a teacher-dominated writing environment. In order to specifically identify and itemize the constraints the pupils experience in their writing, they were asked to rate the following as problems.

TABLE 5.21: RATING of PROBLEMS experienced in writing
(Appendix B / Question 20)

PROBLEMS	ORDER
Boring Topics	1
Not enough time	2
Insufficient preparation	3
Not enough help	4
Lack of motivation	5
No purpose for writing	6

5.5.1 Topic choice

Again the problem of **topic choice** is highlighted. This underlines the importance of "rhetorical context" (Leki 1991:9) in which the pupils are writing. Although there are many different kinds of writing and many reasons for writing, pupils must write about what they are interested in and know about, and especially, what they really want to communicate to someone else. Writing is easiest to do and is likely to have the highest quality when the writer is committed intellectually to expressing something meaningful through writing. (Leki 1991:9)

As topic choice has a strong and important influence on the attitude of the respondents to writing, it would be interesting to analyse the respondents rating of different **forms** or genres of writing. This rating could influence the type of topics selected by teachers (and pupils) and could be instrumental in guiding or helping of pupils with writing forms that have received a lower ranking by the respondents. Table 5.22 gives the ranking of different writing forms.

TABLE 5.22: RANKING of different WRITING FORMS
(Appendix B / Question 3)

No.	WRITING FORMS
1.	Friendly letters
2.	Narrative essays
3.	Post Cards
4.	Diaries
5.	Dialogues
6.	Descriptive essays
7.	Advertisements
8.	Reviews
9.	Reports
10.	Argumentative essays
11.	Notices
12.	Telegrams
13.	Letters to the press
14.	Instructions
15.	Business letters



Friendly letters were by far the most popular writing form, followed closely by **narrative essays**. As would be expected, topics that pupils can relate to on a personal level and that are within their realms of experience received a higher rating. This would also explain the higher ratings for **Post Cards**, **Diaries** and **Dialogues** as writing forms. Forms of writing such as **Letters to the Press**, **Instructions** and, especially, **Business Letters** (the lowest ranking) had a low interest level because of their limited relevance to the life and experiences of the school-going respondents.

This does not mean that pupils must only be exposed to pleasurable or personal writing experiences as Hobelman and Wiriyachitra (1990:37) make the observation that students need to learn the styles and formats of writing purposes and the grammatical and lexical terms relevant to those purposes. Ease with a range of forms or "genres" and an awareness of the different conventions required in communicating with different audiences are both desirable attributes of a writer, but without a purpose, pupils will never be effective writers.

... if genuine pupil-purpose is saved for another day, while pretend purposes are employed to develop facility and familiarity children may pay a heavy price. (Collins 1990:57)

In a writing class, therefore, pupils need to be taught not only how to use the process to their advantage as language learners and writers, but also how to produce an acceptable product for a variety of writing purposes. However, although there is a need for pupils to learn the styles, formats and grammatical and lexical terms relevant to a variety of writing purposes, it is important to remember that the possession of the skills will benefit the pupils little in if acquiring these skills "they have developed an aversion to driving" (Collins 1990:57). It is also important to remember to warning of Raimes that writing teachers should not be led back "to a reliance on form and prescription" (Raimes 1991:420). Rather, the aim of SL writing instruction should be that the pupils have an understanding of the processes involved in writing and an ease with:

... a range of forms and an awareness of the different conventions required in communicating with different audiences ... (Collins 1990:57)

5.5.2 Timed Writing and Preparation

As a solution to the problem of timed writing, Keh recommends that pupils be exposed to "in-class timed writing" (1990:11) with the intention of helping pupils to:

1. practice a method of idea-generation under timed conditons, and
2. approximate students' real-life classroom situations.

Keh states that although this practice may seem a contradiction of the process approach, she feels that timed writing can serve as a "bridge between the rather relaxed process approach" (1990:12) and the pressure of the exam system. The exam-type writing sessions could help students "speed up" their writing by making use of elements of the process approach and reducing the panic engendered by a blank exam paper.

5.5.3 Motivation and purpose

The lower rankings of "motivation" (5) and "purpose" (6) appear to indicate that the

respondents feel they receive sufficient motivation, and that their writing tasks, generally, have a purpose. These indications are encouraging and should be motivating factors for their teachers.

5.6 PUPIL PROGRESS ASSESSMENT

The respondents were asked to attempt to assess the improvement they felt they had made in their writing as they had progressed through high school. Their responses are summarised in Table 5.23.

TABLE 5.23: AN ASSESSMENT of WRITING PROGRESS
(Appendix B / Question 24)

PROGRESS	No.	%
Substantial	5	4,3
Satisfactory	56	47,9
Fair	41	35,0
Minimal	10	8,5
Non-Existent	5	4,3
TOTAL	117	100,0

(**bold** = highest score)

A study of Table 5.23 reveals that the respondents were generally satisfied with their progress with nearly half (47,9%) indicating that they felt their progress was "satisfactory" (indicating a more positive assessment of their progress than their teachers in Tables 4.10 / A and B). This rating of progress was followed by an assessment of "fair" (35,0%). It is encouraging that only 8,5% rated their progress as "minimal" and 4,3% as "non-existent". Interestingly, the same number who rated their progress as "non-existent" also rated it as "substantial".

The teachers assessment of their pupils' improvement in writing as they progress through high school is revealed in Chapter 4 (Tables 4.10 / A and B). More than half the teachers indicated that they assessed their pupils' progress to be "fair" (50,0%), followed by "satisfactory"

(25,9%). Although their rating for "substantial" was similarly small (1,9%), it was encouraging that, unlike the pupils, none of the teachers assessed pupil progress as being "non-existent". Although these findings are based on the respondents' subjective assessments of pupil writing progress, the resultant expectation can be a motivating or demotivating factor. Both teachers and pupils can maintain the current standards attained by pupils by accepting that the marks gained in writing are binding and that improvement is often limited. These ratings, whether based on actual data or assessments, can according to research findings improve if there is an orientation to a process approach in the writing class which, according to Keh, "produces positive overall results" (1990:12).

5.7 CONCLUSION

The pupil survey revealed that pupils appeared to have definite and differing perceptions of what was important in the process of writing and that their attitudes and perceptions of the processes involved in ESL writing were often influenced by the teaching approaches to which they had been exposed. These responses and attitudes are of importance to the teacher as they will enable the teacher to become aware of pupil attitude to writing as well as the pupil's understanding of the processes involved in the creation of a piece of writing. These findings can be used to develop and encourage the processes the pupils have responded to positively (i.e. the sharing of work with peers or friends) and to shape and reassess the responses which have been rated or assessed by the pupils as important or unimportant (i.e. the importance of error in written work and the unimportance of comment on content).

The findings as revealed in the pupil questionnaire will be assessed and discussed under the following headings:

- 5.7.1 Topic choice
- 5.7.2 Planning
- 5.7.3 Interaction and teacher response
- 5.7.4 Error correction
- 5.7.5 Pupil attitude to writing

5.7.1 Topic Choice

In responding to issues of attitude to and progress in ESL writing, the pupils revealed that their response to and reason for writing progress or lack of it was often topic-dependent. Although most of the pupils stated that they accepted their topic choices, this response was followed by more negative responses of "irritation" and "depression" (See Table 5.9). Research has revealed that negative attitudes to writing are frequently associated with rigidity and boredom with topics in writing classes and it is, therefore important that pupils become more involved with topic selection (not from the teachers' list, but topics they have personally generated). According to Collins (1990:55), pupils will become more positive towards writing when their topics are more meaningful and they are put "at the centre of the action".

5.7.2 Drafting and revision

Pupils indicated a positive response to planning, although it appeared that for most, planning meant "re-reading" and "revision" and only a few indicated that they made use of the rough draft. Although some of the pupils indicated that they made use of some pre-writing activities such as "idea sharing", "brainstorming" and stimulus material, most of the pupils rated "teacher explanation" as the most important pre-writing activity. If editing processes continue to be the most important activities before and during the writing of a essay, and pupils write with the perception that only errors need to be corrected, their content will often be inadequately processed.

Research has, however, revealed that the implementation of drafting (not just re-reading of essays) and revising (not just error-correcting) as composing processes will lead to improvements in the final drafts that are often "spectacular" (Hyland 1990:279).

5.7.3 Interaction and teacher response

The respondents generally revealed a positive attitude to discussion and although they indicated that they did not enjoy reading their work to their peers, it was encouraging that they indicated that they would enjoy discussing their work with their friends and/or peers. Teachers need to be aware of these findings so that they can make active use of this ever-present and valuable source of audience in the classroom. Teachers also need to be aware of the finding that pupils will often need to be encouraged and motivated to read and listen to the work of others.

Although the pupils also indicated a very positive attitude to teacher comment (emphasising the potentially productive role that this process can have if implemented interactionally in the writing class), only a few pupils indicated that they would enjoy discussing or sharing their work with a teacher. This is possibly because the respondents have only been exposed to teacher response and comment at the end of essays, and, therefore, they have only interacted with teachers through teacher comment on their work which usually identifies and comments on error. This finding is supported by most of the respondents specifying that teacher comments were important to help them avoid error and very few indicating that teacher comment was necessary for shaping content and providing guidance.

Research, however, suggests that teacher feedback or response is useful when done between drafts, is content-specific and offers specific strategies for revising the text. If teachers continue to limit their responses to a comment at the end of a piece of writing, and pupils are not given the opportunity to reassess their work and to resubmit, their comments will be futile.

5.7.4 Error correction

The findings have revealed that pupils have usually equated the processes of planning, revising, sharing and teacher comment with error identification and correction. This practice is often the result of teachers paying too much attention to grammatical errors when they mark and they are, therefore, encouraging this response in pupils.

Research has, however, revealed that error identification of any degree or kind has not been found to have any significant effect on writing ability (Krashen 1990:3), rather it is unhelpful and even detrimental to the learning of writing (Lewitt 1990:3). Teachers need to be aware that continued emphasis on error in essay writing is unproductive as idea development can be inhibited, certain errors will probably never disappear and pupil attitude will often be negatively affected. Error-free writing is not the ultimate goal, rather the substance, the content, even with errors.

5.7.5 Pupil attitude

The general attitude of the respondents to writing appeared to be one of acceptance followed by pleasure. This response, although it appears to be relatively positive, is based on the pupils responses to marks gained, errors in work, teacher response and topic choice rather than a response of pleasure and excitement based on the enjoyment and adventure of expressing thoughts and ideas.

An orientation to a process approach would necessitate a change in the character of the writing class as revealed by the survey. The writing class would have to become more pupil-centred and pupils would have to be encouraged to generate their own topics, to work together in order to discuss, generate and organise ideas and to share their writing with their peers and teachers in order to get the opinions of an audience to help them develop what they wanted to say. Pupils would also have to be encouraged to produce several drafts and not to view planning as re-reading and correcting of grammatical errors. Writing is a natural outlet for pupils' reflections on their experiences and should not become a means for catching grammar, spelling and punctuation errors. Although pupils should be taught strategies that can help them create a product which is grammatically acceptable, error-free writing is not the ultimate goal, rather it is the use of effective composing processes and the paths that pupils use to get to the product that are vital.

However, these goals will remain beyond the reach of many teachers and pupils if writing classes do not become more exploratory, less punitive, less demoralising and the pupil writer less alone.

Teachers need to be more aware of the interactive role of teacher comment to give direction and "on-the-spot" (Hobelman 1990:38) advice on **content (not only expression) before** the composition is completed so that the pupils can be directed on how to reshape, modify and transform the text, and not for their comment and response to just focus on the correctness of surface-level features of writing.

CHAPTER 6

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Students in English language classrooms no longer do the same kind of writing activities that they did 25 years ago. (Raimes 1987:36)

Research has revealed how the teaching of writing has changed from the traditional product-centred approaches that focused on "linguistic and rhetorical form" (Raimes 1991:408) and ignored the "enormous complexity of composing" (Zamel 1987:697) to a wide variety of approaches based on writing as a process. Although the process approach is now generally included among the traditional approaches in SL writing classes, there is the acceptance that SL teachers need to know **how** writers produce a written product and, therefore, it appears that the thrust of process-orientated research has been its provision of "unifying theoretical and methodological principles" (Raimes 1991:422).

The process framework has, however, become less prescriptive and writing instruction is "less clearly defined now in 1991 than it was in 1966" (Raimes 1991:412). There is no longer the security of the "explicitly mandated reality" (Clarke and Silberstein 1988:692 in Raimes 1991:411) of one clear approach and no specific and absolute ways of teaching SL writing are recommended. According to Silva (1988: 519), there is no need "to line up neatly behind one particular orientation to or ideology of L2 composing" at this point in SL development and Zamel recommends that "a variety of methodologies" (1988:522) be embraced because of the complexity of the composing process and the varying abilities of the SL pupil.

The combination of complexity and diversity makes it imperative for us not to seek universal prescriptions ... (Raimes 1991:422)

Within the process framework, therefore, teachers are encouraged to consider a variety of approaches, their underlying assumptions and the practices that each approach generates and to draw eclectically from all methods for an approach suited to the needs of their pupils.

Hobelman and Wiriyachitra (1990:37) recommend a "balanced approach" for intermediate pupils or "heterogeneous classes" (Raimes 1991:422) which would take into account all the factors involved in **good writing**, including the role of purpose and audience, the value of writing several drafts and the development and refining of ideas through interaction and feedback until the final draft is completed.

Therefore, the principles of the process approach are still regarded as important in all writing approaches, and Raimes in her evaluation of the past twenty-five years of writing instruction identified the emergence of five "traditions of recognition" (1991:421), two of which illuminated the fundamental principles of process-based approaches:

- * the complexity of composing, and
- * the learner's process

Therefore, as theorists "emerge from the woods" (Raimes 1991:423), practitioners can perhaps be relieved that rather than prescribing new approaches, they have again recognised the importance of understanding the complexities of the writing process, the diversity of the SL pupil and the role of teacher in the classroom and in research.

6.2 THE INFLUENCE OF PROCESS RESEARCH ON PRACTICE

Despite the rapid growth in research and classroom applications, and although it has been about 15 years since the process-based approach to writing was introduced and the concept frequently mentioned in discussions of theory and research, its application to classroom instruction has not developed correspondingly. According to Raimes, "teachers did not all strike out along this path" (1991:410) and this finding is supported by the observations of the present study as well as other studies of SL writing practice which indicate that process

research is not transforming or informing pedagogy (Zamel 1987:697;699).

A number of theories have been offered to explain why the teaching of writing continues to be taught according to "reductionist and mechanistic models" (Zamel 1987:697). Young and Lee (1985:189 in Winer 1992:76) suggest that new attitudes and approaches were not transferred to teachers because they were often not exposed to "the principles underlying a new approach". Zamel (1987:697), while researching the problem of the application of research and theory in the classroom, found that studies of composing processes often lacked an "educational context" (Kantor 1984:72 in Zamel 1987:701) and that the incorporation of change in the classroom was often problematic. Raimes made the following observation concerning the introduction of the process approach into the classroom:

The radical changes that were called for in instructional approach seemed to provoke a swift reaction, a return to the safety of the well-worn trail where texts and teachers have priority. (1991:410)

Jo and Steven McDonough (1990:103) also stressed the need for research to stem from current practice in real classrooms with an emphasis on teachers' rather than researchers' observations. A consequence of regarding teachers only as recipients of information and not involving them in the research process is that the findings of research would often not be perceived as having relevance for their classrooms and their own teaching practice. Secondly, if such research failed to set up explicit "linking premises" (Phillips 1980 in McDonough 1990:103), showing how research might have relevance and applicability in the classroom, bridges between theory and practice might never be built.

The consequences, therefore, of the apparent dichotomy between research and practice are that teachers are less likely to feel that a new approach is a more effective way of teaching and that the findings of research are relevant to their own teaching practices. It is, therefore,

not unusual to find that teachers reject theory outright, showing a preference for practical hints, new ideas, or techniques that can be used directly in the classroom. Such a practice, according to the McDonoughs, is not productive or helpful as it serves to:

... reinforce the dichotomy between theory and practice, building a world where teachers talk about techniques, and researchers and theoreticians talk ... about research and theory. (1990:103)

The problem is, however, more complex and wide-ranging than a rejection of theory on the part of practising teachers. Researchers need to recognise the centrality of the teacher's role in the understanding of the teaching and learning process and involve teachers in the research process so that they can become initiators of insights into teaching and learning. To support this view, Zamel made the observation that qualitative studies of writing and writing instruction were having far greater impact on teachers and the teaching of writing because these studies were not "stripped" of context:

... they involve the complexity of constraints and variables that more tightly-controlled experiments seek to hold constant, and because they [the studies] do not remove writing from the reality that most teachers can identify with. (1988:521)

Therefore, the "gap between research and pedagogy" (Zamel 1987:711) will be more effectively closed when teachers become researchers and there is a "bottom-up" orientation to language teaching and research.

6.3 SURVEY FINDINGS

6.3.1 Influence of research

An analysis of the teacher and pupil questionnaires appears to confirm the gap or "mismatch" (McDonough 1991:108) between theory and practice. The survey findings revealed that the ESL writing approaches in Afrikaans-medium and parallel-or dual-medium secondary schools in the Port Elizabeth area tended to be teacher-, form- and product-dominated, emphasising the error identification and correction while the use of composing processes, especially drafting and feedback, appeared to be incidental.

The concern of the researcher is that the findings of the study are indicative of writing approaches in many schools, not only in the survey area, but in South Africa. Although literature appears to suggest that the process approach is standard practice in most SL writing classes at present (Raimes 1991:410), and that the trend is away from error-free writing to "substantive writing even with errors" (Leki 1991:10), the findings of this study have indicated that process-based approaches to writing have yet to make their entrance in many of the second-language writing classes in the survey area.

The survey findings revealed that research and literature stressing the importance of composing processes and the exploratory nature of writing had been largely ignored or unheard of, and in spite of countless studies emphasising the futility of error correction, teachers and pupils still appeared to strive for error-free writing.

The teacher questionnaire findings not only revealed that the respondents were often unfamiliar with process terminology but their descriptions of their approaches to various process activities (i.e. drafting and teacher/pupil response) often illustrated that they had little understanding or knowledge of practice or theory on which a process approach to writing was based. It was also apparent that the respondents' understanding of certain activities was superficial because of the tendency for responses to similar or follow-up questions to have limited corroboration. This situation was illustrated, in particular, in the teachers' responses to correction of errors. Although the importance of "error correction" was ranked as the least important in activities in the composing process in Tables 4.12 / A and B (supporting research findings), 42,9% of the respondents expressed a concern for error correction in Table 4.16 (See Appendix A / Question 3.8), and rated this activity as being very important. In the respondents' subsequent descriptions of their approaches to error correction, 23,6% revealed that they expected their pupils to correct all errors and 32,8% corrected a range of errors (See Table 4.17). Only one teacher stated that the correcting of errors did not help.

Many of the teacher-questionnaire findings were also validated by the findings of the pupil questionnaire. The pupils' responses not only reinforced and supported the finding of the apparent importance of error identification and correction in writing (See Tables 5.17, 5.19 and 5.20) but also the teacher-questionnaire findings that exposure to planning and discussion was limited (See Table 5.13).

The pupils also tended to rate writing practices with which they were familiar, positively; whereas practices with which they were unfamiliar or less familiar, were rated negatively (See Table 5.11). This observation also supported the finding that the pupils in the survey schools were often not exposed to certain process procedures. The pupil questionnaire revealed that the respondents indicated a positive response to forms of planning, errors in writing (especially spelling errors) and teacher comment. However, they responded less positively to use of rough copies and discussion, and negatively to the process the sharing of their writing with a wider audience.

Specific observations concerning the respondents' approaches to and interpretations of different writing processes were discussed in the conclusions to Chapters 4 and 5 and, in particular, they illustrated a lack or limited application of process orientation in the following areas:

- * **topic choice;**
- * **correction and identification of errors;**
- * **pre-writing (idea-generating) activities:** especially, discussion and interaction;
- * **writing development activities:** especially the processes of teacher/pupil response and feedback, rough drafting and revising; and
- * **attitude to writing.**

6.3.2 Bridging the gap

According to Winer, it would appear that teachers often followed the models they "suffered under" (1992:62) at school and teach according to the traditional "explain-plan-write" mould they were exposed to as pupils. New approaches, therefore, need to be demystified for

teachers before the gap, or rather chasm, between theory and practice can be effectively bridged. However, for this to happen, teachers would not only need to understand the principles upon which the different approaches are based, they would also need to experience and be exposed to the actual processes involved in the creation of a piece of writing.

By participating with our students in their own exploration, we are more likely to discover why our students write the way they do and what behaviours and strategies are employed ... (Zamel 1987:710)

A study by Winer (1992:57) of students in teacher training supported Zamel's observation and revealed that teaching students who experienced "active participation" (1992:76) in specific writing techniques and recognised their own struggles and ways of succeeding in their writing would be able to empathise with the struggles of their students. These teachers would be able to lessen the distance between themselves and their students and remove much of the unfair burden of unrealistic models of the writing process and of writing competence. According to Winer, the teachers' increased self-awareness and greater understanding of their own writing process could lead directly to changes in their own teaching.

Therefore, before a change to a process orientation can be realised and translated effectively into the present system, there would need to be a change in teacher awareness and understanding of the processes involved in the creation of a piece of writing as well as a change in attitude towards the practice of writing in the SL curriculum. Although the change that would be involved in an orientation to a process-based writing approach might be threatening to some second-language teachers, the findings of research have revealed that an approach that does not recognise the writer's processes and the recursive nature of writing is still "in the woods" (Raimes 1991: 407). A consequence of the present product orientation is that teachers and pupils will continue to "tolerate" or be frustrated by the writing experience and the trend of limited progress in writing as revealed in the survey will be maintained.

6.3.3 Where to now?

The findings of the study have revealed that writing theories and research appear to be "pedagogic intuitions" as they have had little impact on the practice of SL teaching in the survey area. However, the researcher has to some extent attempted to bridge the gap by revealing the importance of a process approach to the teaching of writing to teachers and students at local institutions. The research findings were presented to teachers who had taken part in the survey and the approaches to the teaching of writing as revealed by the responses to the questionnaire were described and evaluated in the light of current process research. Writing workshops were also presented to ESL teachers at local teacher centre meetings and workshops as well as to black teachers at in-service training seminars. The results of this study and the influence of process research on writing practice were also presented to HED students as part of their ESL methodology course at the University of Port Elizabeth.

However, these attempts by the researcher to inform the teaching community of process research and its application into writing approaches will be of little value unless the survey findings are followed up and noted not only by researchers and personnel associated with the teaching profession but by teachers as well. The trends revealed in the survey findings will probably continue unless there is a concerted effort by educational and research bodies to bring theory into the teaching context and for teachers to become the researchers themselves.

According to McDonough (1991:108), the "mismatch" between theory and practice can only be resolved when teachers have adopted an informed and motivated "research stance" and become "co-inquirers" (Zamel 1987:710) in research. Credit, therefore, needs to be given to "practioners' lore" (North 1987 in Raimes 1991:423) in classroom-based and action research, and teachers need to be encouraged to use their knowledge to argue to the value of what they know and how they came to know it. In this way greater opportunities for conducting research can be unlocked and the knowledge of language teaching can "increase in greatness, and therefore, relevance" (McDonough 1991:108).

6.4 CONCLUSION

Although the process approach has dominated discussions of ESL writing for several years, it has been criticised by various writers (Horowitz 1986:445). Controversy has not only centred around the apparent dichotomy of process and product in the teaching of writing but also, more recently, on the role of "real" writing (Raimes 1991:414). In a writing class, pupils need to be taught not only how to use the process to their advantage as language learners and writers, but also how to produce an acceptable product (sometimes error-free) for a variety of writing purposes. The major flaw in a process approach to writing is, therefore, cited as its being writer-based and failing to give pupils an accurate picture of other types of writing. Rodrigues has commented:

Writing without structure accomplishes as little as writing a mock structure ... (Students) need structure, they need models to practice, they need to improve even their mechanical skills, and they still need time to think through their ideas, to revise them, and to write for real audiences and real purposes. (1985 in Horowitz 1986:445)

In a writing class, therefore, pupils need to be taught not only how to use the process to their advantage as language learners and writers, but also how to produce an acceptable product for a variety of writing purposes. It is an erroneous assumption that writers work in a "cultural vacuum" (Horowitz 1986:447) as the form in which a writer expresses meaning owes just as much to the constraints of the writing situation, the genre and the specific demands of the task as it does to the writer's mental process.

However, it is important that teachers in the present study realise that even as different approaches to writing make their appearance, the composing process is not to be undervalued, as the most important content in writing is learning how to use the language and express ideas effectively (Hairston 1990 in Raimes 1991:414).

APPENDIX A

**ENGLISH SECOND LANGUAGE RESEARCH
TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE:**

APRIL/JUNE 1991

**QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE TEACHING OF WRITTEN WORK IN PORT
ELIZABETH SECONDARY SCHOOLS WHERE AFRIKAANS IS A FIRST
LANGUAGE**

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Please read the instructions carefully before you complete the questionnaire.
2. Ignore the numbers on the right side of the margin.
3. Where applicable the questions should be answered by **CIRCLING** the code number concerned.

RESPONDENT NUMBER

**For office
use only**

1. PERSONAL INFORMATION

1.1 Sex: Male 1 Female 2

1.2 Home language:

Afrikaans 3
English 4
Afrikaans and English 5
A black language 6
Other 7

1.3 Grade of your post:

Principal 8
Deputy-Principal 9
Head of Department 10
Teacher 11

1.4 Level at which English is taught:

First Language (L1) 12
Second Language (L2) 13
L1 and L2 14

2. ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

2.1 Institution where academic and/or professional training was received:

University 15
Teachers' training college 16
University and teachers' training college 17

			1-3
			4
			5
			6
			7
			8

2.2 Type of Tertiary Institution / College / Technical College / University where **TRAINING** for the teaching of English was mainly received:

9

2.3 Trained to teach English as:

First language (L1) 18
 Second language (ESL) 19
 Both L1 and ESL 20

10

2.4 If you have had training in English teaching methodology, choose ONE of the following statements which applies to you:

My training:

2.4.1 was adequate 21
 2.4.2 had many shortcomings 22
 2.4.3 did not prepare me 23
 for teaching at all

11

2.5 If you circled code 22 or 23 in 2.4 indicate which of the following reason(s) explain(s) the unsatisfactory circumstances. For each statement circle the code in either the "Yes" or "No" column.

Yes	No
-----	----

2.5.1 The course did not cater for the needs of the second language teacher

24	25
----	----

12

2.5.2 The course placed too little attention on the grammar of the language

26	27
----	----

13

2.5.3 The course was too academically orientated for the needs of language instruction

28	29
----	----

14

2.5.4 The course placed too little emphasis on language skills' methodology ie writing, reading

30	31
----	----

15

2.6 Years of experience in teaching ESL in the secondary school:

0 - 1 32
 1 - 3 33
 4 - 7 34
 8 - 11 35
 12 - 15 36
 Over 15 37

16

2.7 Standards to which ESL is taught:

2.7.1 Highest:	_____	38
2.7.2 Lowest :	_____	39

17

3. **THE TEACHING OF WRITING IN ESL**

3.1 Number of periods per **TERM** allocated to the teaching of **WRITING**:

More than 6	40
4-5	41
3	42
2	43
1	44

18

3.2 Length of a teaching period:
_____ minutes

45

19

3.3 Time normally allowed for the completion of writing tasks:

20

3.4 Where writing takes place:

Mostly at school	46
Mostly at home	47
At school and at home	48

21

3.5 Number of pieces written per **TERM**:

More than 4 (<u>Specify no. _____</u>)	49
4	50
3	51
2	52
1	53
None	54

22

3.6 The following are a list of writing **FORMS**. Indicate the **FREQUENCY** of their use in writing activities in a school **YEAR** by ticking the appropriate column:

The figures below can be used for an indication of frequency:

- Often = 10+ times per year
- Fairly Often = 6-8 times per year
- Seldom = 1-2 times per year

	Often	Fairly Often	Seldom	Never	
Journal writing					23-40
Free writing					
Structured writg					
Dialogue					
Interview					
Diary					
Review					
Narrative					
Expository					
Argumentative					
Discursive					
Descriptive					
Personal letters					
Business letters					
Letters to media					
Report					
Minutes					
Memoranda					

3.7 Rate **IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE** (1 - 12) which of the following activities you regard as most important to the teaching of writing in ESL : **(RATE ALONGSIDE THE CODE)**

Teacher response	55
Pupil response	56
Correction of errors	57
Exchange of ideas	58
Evaluation	59
Rough draft/s	60
Revision/editing/proof reading	61
Topic choice	62
Models/Forms for writing	63
Publicizing pupil's work	64
Vocabulary aid	65
Writing for meaning	66

41-52

3.8 Rate the importance of the following in the teaching of writing by **CIRCLING** 1,2,3 or 4.

	Very	Fairly	Little	Unim- portant	
Rough drafting	1	2	3	4	53
Teacher response	1	2	3	4	54
Pupil response	1	2	3	4	55
Error correction	1	2	3	4	56
Pupil correction	1	2	3	4	57

Revision of drafts	1	2	3	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	58
Proof reading	1	2	3	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	59
Models of writing	1	2	3	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	60
Exchange of ideas	1	2	3	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	61
Frequent writing	1	2	3	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	62
Personalised help	1	2	3	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	63
Pupil evaluation	1	2	3	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	64
Teacher evaluation	1	2	3	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	65
Style	1	2	3	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	66
Sense of audience	1	2	3	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	67
Personal experience	1	2	3	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	68

3.9 Add **ANY OTHER** aspect of teaching writing which you regard as important:

3.9.1 _____

 _____ 69

3.9.2 _____

 _____ 70

3.9.3 _____

 _____ 71

3.9.4 _____

 _____ 72

3.10 Briefly describe **YOUR APPROACH** when attending to the following tasks associated with the teaching of writing:

3.10.1 Teacher comment/response: _____

 _____ 73

3.10.2 Topic Choice: _____

 _____ 74

3.10.3 Pupil planning/drafting: _____

75

3.10.4 Correction of work: _____

76

3.10.5 Pupil error in written work: _____

77

3.10.6 Evaluation: _____

78

3.11 Briefly attempt to **DIFFERENTIATE** between your **APPROACH** to the teaching of writing in Std 6 and in Std 9:

3.11.1 Std 6: _____

79-81

3.11.2 Std 9: _____

82-84

3.12 As pupils progress through the senior school the **IMPROVEMENT** in their writing is:

Substantial	67
Satisfactory	68
Fair	69
Minimal	70
Non-existent	71

85

3.13 Attempt to account for your response to 3.12:

86-87

4. ATTITUDE TO WRITING

4.1 Pupils' response to writing is **GENERALLY** that of:

Dislike	72
Indifference	73
Tolerance	74
Enthusiasm	75

88

4.2 Suggest reasons for your answer to 4.1

4.2.1 _____

4.2.2 _____

4.2.3 _____

89

90

91

4.3 Your personal response to the teaching of writing is **GENERALLY** that of:

Irritation	76
Pleasure	77
Time wasting	78
Benefit	79
Futility	80

(**MORE THAN ONE** response may be circled)

92-93

4.4 Suggest reasons for your response(s) to 4.3. (Please suggest a reason for **EACH** circled response.)

4.4.1 _____

4.4.2 _____

4.4.3 _____

4.4.4 _____

94

95

96

97

4.5 What, do you feel, is the **PURPOSE** of teaching writing?

4.5.1 _____

4.5.2 _____

4.5.3 _____

98

99

100

5. **GENERAL**

5.1 Comments on the questionnaire:

This is a study on the teaching of writing in the secondary school. All information given will be confidential and used only as research material.

Thank you for your help.

APPENDIX B

PUPIL QUESTIONNAIRE - WRITING (ESL)

JUNE 1991

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Please **READ THE INSTRUCTIONS** before you complete the questionnaire.
2. Where applicable, the questions should be answered by **CIRCLING** the code number concerned.
3. Ignore the numbers on the right side of the margin.

RESPONDENT NUMBER

For office use only

A. GENERAL:

- | | | |
|--------------------|-------|---|
| Present standard | ===== | 1 |
| Male/Female | ===== | 2 |
| Symbol for English | ===== | 3 |
| Symbol for writing | ===== | 4 |
| HG/SG | ===== | 5 |
| Home Language | ===== | 6 |

1-3

B. WRITING - ESL

1. Which of the following **BEST** describes your attitude to writing. Circle **ONE** response only.

- | | |
|------------|----|
| Excitement | 7 |
| Pleasure | 8 |
| Acceptance | 9 |
| Boredom | 10 |
| Resentment | 11 |

4-9

2. Attempt to give a reason for your answer to 1 above.

10

3. The following is a list of writing types. Rate them in order of preference **ALONGSIDE THE CODE.** (1 - 15)

- | | |
|-------------------------------|----|
| Business letters | 12 |
| Friendly letters | 13 |
| Letters to the Press | 14 |
| Descriptive essays/paragraphs | 15 |
| Narrative essays (Story) | 16 |
| Argumentative essays | 17 |
| Reviews | 18 |
| Reports | 19 |
| Post Cards | 20 |
| Diaries | 21 |
| Notices | 22 |
| Dialogues | 23 |
| Advertisements | 24 |
| Explanations/Instructions | 25 |
| Telegrams | 26 |

11-13

14-28

-2-

3. Which of the following PRECEDES (goes before) your writing experience. (More than one response can be circled)		
Teacher explanation	27	
Group discussion	28	
Reading of an article	29	
Picture stimulus	30	
Idea sharing	31	
Planning	32	
Note taking	33	
Brainstorming	34	<input type="checkbox"/>
		29-31
4. Who is responsible for your topic choice?		
Teacher	35	
Pupil	36	
Teacher and pupil	37	<input type="checkbox"/>
		32
5. Which of the following BEST describes your response to the topics about which you have to write? (One response only)		
Excitement	38	
Motivation	39	
Acceptance	40	
Irritation	41	
Depression	42	<input type="checkbox"/>
		33
6. Attempt to give a reason for your response to 5 above.		
		<input type="checkbox"/>
		34-35
7. When writing a piece of writing, which of the following do you include in the process:		
Reading out aloud of rough draft	43	
Note taking	44	
Rough draft (indicate number of drafts)	45	
Outline	46	
Rereading of written piece	47	
Editing (correction of errors)	48	
Use of reference works ie dictionary	49	<input type="checkbox"/>
		36-40
8. How long does it normally take you to complete an item of writing?		
		<input type="checkbox"/>
		41-43
9. Where do you usually write your essay?		
Home	50	
School	51	
Home and School	52	<input type="checkbox"/>
		44

-3-

10. How do you feel about your essay marks?		<input type="checkbox"/>	45-47
11. Which of the following statements on teacher comments apply to you?			
I ignore them	53		
I read them	54		
They help me to avoid errors	55		
They are of no use	56		
They motivate me in my writing	57		
		<input type="checkbox"/>	48-50
12. Is there a need for a teacher's comment on the following in your writing. (Circle ANY of the following)			
Grammar errors	58		
Spelling errors	59		
Punctuation errors	60		
Layout	61		
Paragraphing	62		
Content	63		
Vocabulary use	64		
		<input type="checkbox"/>	51-57
13. Which do you feel is the MOST IMPORTANT aspect of your writing that teachers SHOULD comment on from 12 above? (Write only ONE response.)			
		<input type="checkbox"/>	58
14. How do you feel about your teachers comments. (Circle ONE response only)			
Excited	65		
Motivated	66		
Indifferent (neutral)	67		
Depressed	68		
Angry	69		
Encouraged	70		
		<input type="checkbox"/>	59
15. Who besides your teacher reads your written piece?			
		<input type="checkbox"/>	60-61
16. Do you enjoy your essay being read by others?			
Yes	71		
No	72	<input type="checkbox"/>	62

-4-

17. Attempt to give a reason for your response to 16 above.
- 63-65
18. How do rate yourself as a writer?
- | | |
|-----------|----|
| Excellent | 73 |
| Good | 74 |
| Average | 75 |
| Weak | 76 |
| Very Weak | 77 |
- 66
19. Attempt to give a reason for your answer to 18 above.
- 67-69
20. Rate the following (1 - 6) as **PROBLEMS** you experience in writing.
(Rate alongside the code)
- | | |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| Not enough time | 78 |
| Insufficient preparation | 79 |
| Boring topics | 80 |
| Not enough help/direction | 81 |
| Lack of motivation | 82 |
| No purpose for what you are writing | 83 |
- 70-75
21. Do you enjoy discussing your written work with any of the following people.
(Circle **ANY** of the following)
- | | |
|------------------|----|
| your teacher | 84 |
| your class mates | 85 |
| your parents | 86 |
| a friend | 87 |
- 76-77
22. Attempt to describe the **BENEFIT** that would be gained from such a discussion.
- 78-79

-5-

23. Briefly describe your **ATTITUDE** to the following aspects of writing by **TICKING** the appropriate response in the table below:

	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Teacher comment			
Grammar errors			
Spelling errors			
Rough copies			
Planning			
Essay marks			
Timed writing			
Discussion			
Proof reading			
Reading of work to pupils			
Choice of topic			
Corrections			

80-91

24. As you have progressed through school can the **IMPROVEMENT** in your writing be described as:

Substantial	88
Satisfactory	89
Fair	90
Minimal	91
Non-existent	92

92

25. Attempt to give a reason for your response to 24 above.

93-95

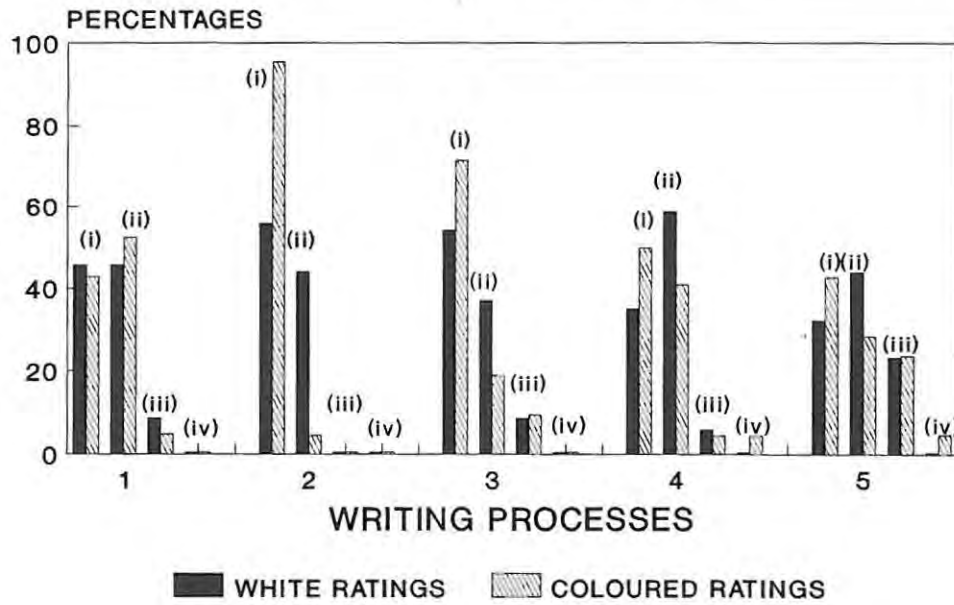
THIS IS A STUDY ON THE TEACHING OF WRITING IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL. ALL INFORMATION GIVEN WILL BE TREATED CONFIDENTIALLY AND USED AS RESEARCH MATERIAL.

Thank you for your help.

APPENDIX C

- GRAPH 4.11 (A and B) : Ratings of importance by teachers
- GRAPH 4.12 : Rankings of writing activities by teachers
- GRAPH 5.11 : Pupil attitude to writing processes

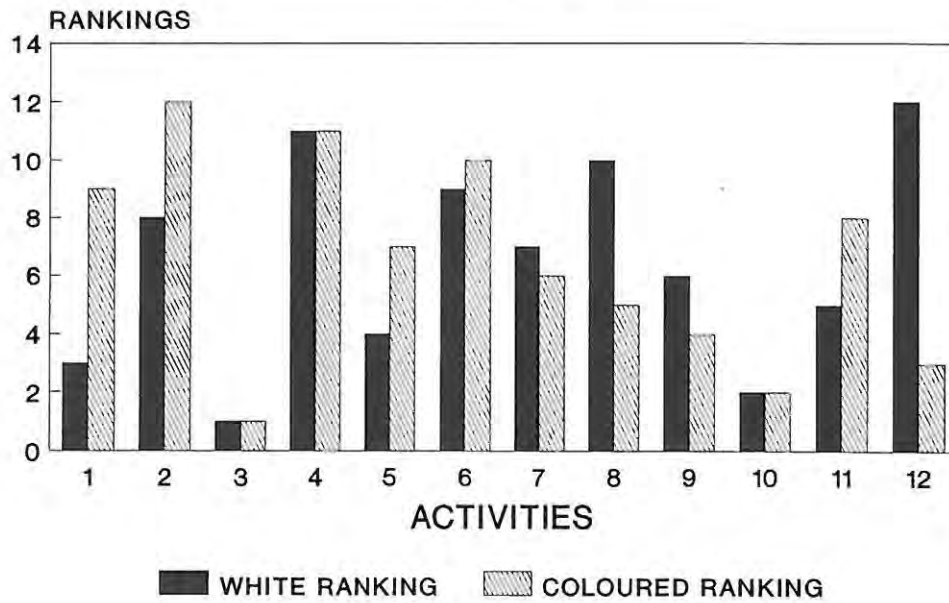
RATINGS OF IMPORTANCE OF WRTG PROCESSES Tables 4.11 (A and B)



KEY

- | | | |
|-------|---|-------------------------------|
| 1 | = | Teacher response |
| 2 | = | Pupil response to own writing |
| 3 | = | Rough draft |
| 4 | = | Proof reading |
| 5 | = | Revision of drafts |
| | | |
| (i) | = | Very important |
| (ii) | = | Fairly important |
| (iii) | = | Little important |
| (iv) | = | Not important |

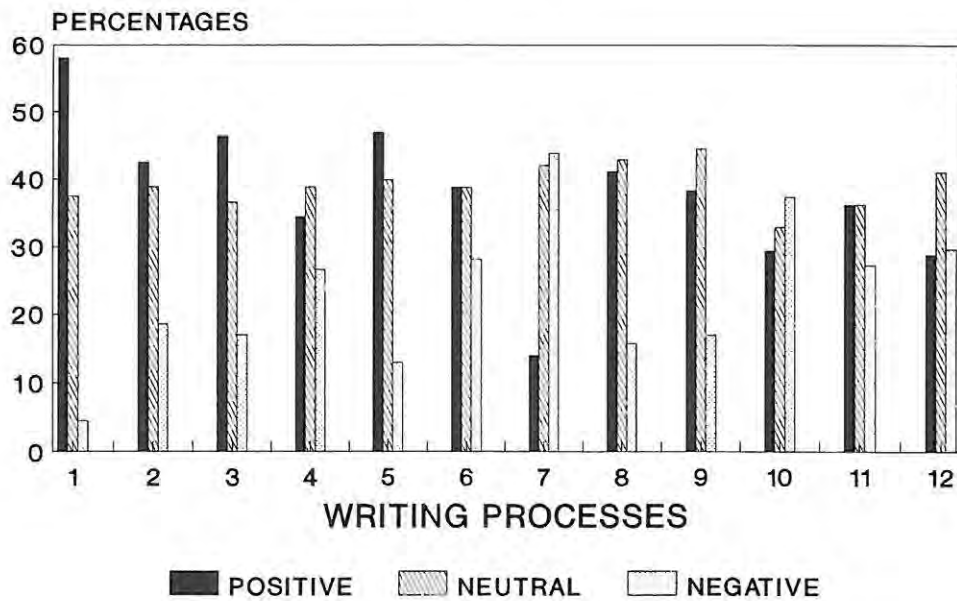
RANKING OF WRITING ACTIVITIES
TABLE 4.12



KEY

- | | | |
|----|---|--------------------------------|
| 1 | = | Teacher response |
| 2 | = | Pupil response |
| 3 | = | Correction of errors |
| 4 | = | Exchange of ideas |
| 5 | = | Evaluation |
| 6 | = | Rough draft/s |
| 7 | = | Revision/editing/proof reading |
| 8 | = | Topic choice |
| 9 | = | Models/forms for writing |
| 10 | = | Publicizing pupils work |
| 11 | = | Vocabulary aid |
| 12 | = | Writing for meaning |

PUPIL ATTITUDE TO WRITG PROCESSES
Table 5.11



KEY

- | | | |
|----|---|---------------------------|
| 1 | = | Teacher comment |
| 2 | = | Errors in writing |
| 3 | = | Spelling errors |
| 4 | = | Rough copies |
| 5 | = | Planning |
| 6 | = | Essay marks |
| 7 | = | Timed writing |
| 8 | = | Discussion |
| 9 | = | Proof reading |
| 10 | = | Reading of work to pupils |
| 11 | = | Choice of topic |
| 12 | = | Corrections |

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