

**A CASE STUDY OF A SERIES OF PROCESS WRITING WORKSHOPS
FOR TEACHERS OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE**

THESIS

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ABSTRACT

The case study, which is described in this thesis, is concerned with two aspects of second language teaching and learning, namely process writing and 'teacher development'.

Ten Zulu speaking, English second language teachers in Durban, Natal, participated in a series of process writing workshops. Before the workshops, they were given opportunities to reflect, in interviews, upon their own past and present writing practices. After the workshops there were follow-up interviews to elicit their further understanding of what is involved in writing. The workshop materials were compiled and written by the researcher.

The aims of the research project were, in summary, the following:

- * to let the teachers, who are teachers of writing in their classrooms, become participating writers themselves
- * to make the process writing workshops be a reflective activity through which the participants would develop as teachers.

The entire case study is positioned within critical theory, as a philosophical framework, in which the teachers' reflections upon their writing experiences is seen as emancipatory practice. The research project was small scale and predominantly qualitative. A narrative, 'explanation-building' analysis of the entire findings forms the major part of the thesis.

The writing workshops gave the teachers in this study occasion to experience process writing; furthermore they were enabled to reflect in detail on their experiences. It is suggested that teacher training colleges and in-service courses incorporate the 'writing workshops for teachers' concept, as an activity for growth and development. Further research may take the form of long term action research into how teachers who have attended such workshops implement the insights they have gained in their classrooms.

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GLOSSARY

The following acronyms appear in the text:

CLA	Critical Language Awareness
CLT	Critical Language Teaching
COTE	Certificate for Overseas Teachers of English
DOTE	Diploma for Overseas Teachers of English
ELET	The English Language Education Trust
ESL	English (as a) Second Language
LTE	Language Teacher Education
READ	Read, Educate and Develop
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers' Union
SLAR	Second Language Acquisition Research
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States of America
UCLES	University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This research project grew out of a number of interests related to second language teaching and learning, and to language teacher education and development. The project is a case study of ten Zulu speaking English second language (ESL) teachers' understanding of what is involved in writing, before, during and after four process writing workshops, in which the teachers participated.

Although the focus may appear to be primarily skills related, the thesis is positioned within critical theory and 'teacher development', as defined by Freeman (1989a; 1992). These, I argue, relate to one another through the central perspective of the social shaping of experience. The social and historical context is given a central position. Teachers are acknowledged as autonomous people with their own insights and opinions. Rather than seeing the teachers as simply needing certain skills, (implying a lack of these) and therefore supplying these skills, the research project is particularly concerned with how the teachers perceived the process writing approach in relation to their own learning and teaching experiences.

My interest in process writing workshops grew out of a paper jointly presented with Hajira Vahed at a mini TESOL conference at Pittsburgh University in 1989, where we were attending a Summer Institute for South African language teachers. The title of the paper was Finding your own Voice: Writing for Empowerment. In the course of reading for this paper I came across a number of writings on process writing workshops for teachers, and an interest developed in this aspect of language teaching and in teachers as reflecting participants in activities, through which 'teacher development' may occur (Ellis, 1993). My part time teaching at a non-governmental organization in Durban provided me with an opportunity to conduct the research with a group of ten Zulu speaking women teachers, enrolled for the Diploma for Overseas Teachers of English (DOTE). With one exception these teachers are all employed by the Department of Education and Culture, that has its head office in Ulundi, Natal.

1.1 Description of Data Collection

The project is a qualitative case study: a questionnaire (for background information) was used and interviews were held with the teachers before and after the four process writing

workshops. They were also encouraged to use note-books, in which to record their own responses to the writing activities, and I too, as the participant researcher (both researcher and teacher) kept a log-book, in which comments were made, immediately after each workshop. For triangulation purposes half the group were interviewed by a nonparticipant observer, after the workshops had taken place.

1.2 Context of Research

Writing is considered an important part of language learning in English as a Second Language (ESL); it is seen as a means for learners to become aware of and express their ideas, thoughts, feelings and emotions, as well as an important tool in the learning of English across content-based subjects. The teaching of writing in the United Kingdom (UK), the United States of America (US) and elsewhere has moved away from a product-oriented method that sees writing as a "one off", linear effort, with an emphasis on accuracy, form and structure, towards a process-oriented approach to writing (Raimes, 1983; Zamel, 1983; Johns, 1990; Pratt, 1990). Good writers get to what they really want to say through a process of planning, writing, and revising in overlapping, recursive sequences, marked by pauses to re-read and think, while less skilled writers use few of these strategies (Polin, 1991). In the classroom the teaching of writing through the process approach includes pre-writing preparation, writing, re-writing and editing, where students focus on content and meaning before attending to surface structures. In South Africa the teaching of writing remains largely product-oriented. Black South African ESL teachers have a predominantly teacher training college background, where writing is taught in this manner.

In order to teach writing well it is important that teachers develop their own writing skills (Kail, 1986), but the majority of teachers, although they teach writing skills in the classroom, have few occasions for developing these skills, in the experience of the researcher, who is a teacher educator. A number of studies suggest that participating in process writing workshops helps teachers gain confidence in their own writing abilities, with a subsequently positive effect on their teaching of writing (Kail, 1986; Borstein, 1989; LaVerne Flythe, 1989; Winer, 1992). These studies were done in the UK and US and the writing workshops were for teachers of English as a first language. No literature appears to exist on similar workshops for ESL teachers in South Africa.

1.3 The Theoretical Framework of the Research Project

Apart from the above rationale for giving ESL teachers the opportunity to participate in process writing workshops such participation is also viewed as part of 'teacher development', as distinguished from teacher training. These distinctions are discussed in detail in 2.0 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND, using Freeman's framework (1989a; 1992) for teacher education (including in-service), as well as Ellis' outline (1993) for a new direction in this field. The participation in the writing workshops, and the interview discussions before and after these, gave the teachers opportunities to write, as well as opportunities to reflect upon writing and upon their own writing practices. The focus of the research is thus on the teachers' reflections around issues related to writing, rather than on their actual writings. The researcher sees a link between 'teacher development' a liberal oriented method within teacher education, and the paradigm of critical theory, in that the reflections focus on where certain habits and thoughts of the teachers stem from. According to Gibson (1986:vii) "critical theory enables teachers to place their own practice and experience at the centre of their studies", while 'teacher development' is said by Ellis (1993) to occur when teachers develop the skills of reflection and evaluation.

1.4 Goals of the Research Project

The research project has the following aims:

- * to write and compile the teaching materials for the four process writing workshops (see appendix 2)
- * to provide the teachers with opportunities to reflect upon their past and present experiences with writing
- * to record the participants' responses to a process-oriented approach to writing
- * to describe any changes in the teachers' understanding of the nature of writing, after the writing workshops.

The insights gained from the project may encourage others, who are engaged in teacher education, to provide teachers or teacher trainees with more frequent opportunities for writing. It is envisaged that further research may explore, through action research, how teachers may implement, in their own classrooms, a process approach to the teaching of writing, as an outcome of having attended a series of writing workshops.

1.5 Structure of Thesis

The content of the thesis has been organised in the following manner:

In 1.0 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND a detailed summary of critical theory outlines the philosophical framework and paradigm in which this research project was undertaken. The emphasis is on the central intention of critical theory, namely emancipation (Gibson, 1986). The small scale case study is viewed as a way of enabling the participating teachers to gain knowledge and insights which are grounded in both theory and practice (Ramani, 1987). Freeman's (1989a) definition and discussion of 'teacher development', as well as Ellis' (1993) suggestions for "awareness-raising in teacher development" underpin the reasons for making the process writing workshops the activity through which reflection occurs. The views of these and other linguists with an interest in teacher education are examined in detail. The chapter ends with a critical rationale for a process approach to writing.

The following two chapters are concerned with the research theory and methods that were used in the study. In 3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY I discuss qualitative case study research and methodology in theory, while in 4.0 THE RESEARCH PROJECT I describe in detail the aims of the research, how it was undertaken and how the data was collected.

Chapter five, 5.0 RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS, is an account and analysis of the entire data in relation to the goals and theoretical framework of the case study. It includes many excerpts from the interviews, log- and note-books in order to provide an account that is both authentic, and rich in detail. Finally, in 6.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS I evaluate the entire research project and posit a number of suggestions for further research.

2.0 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The research project is positioned in two fields of educational study, namely process writing and 'teacher development' (as defined by Freeman (1989a)). My concerns were with how teachers enrolled in the DOTE course at ELET (The English Language Education Trust) in Durban might develop a reflective approach to their own past and present experiences as learners and teachers of writing. Their participation in a series of process writing workshops provided them with opportunities to experience, as writers themselves, what is involved in process writing, as well as to reflect upon that experience. Before the review of literature related to process writing and 'teacher development' I wish to attempt to position these two fields of educational study within a larger theoretical framework, namely critical theory. In this way I am positioning myself, as the organizer and researcher of the writing workshops, within a philosophical framework, a worldview.

2.1 Critical Theory

Educational theory and research has over many decades undergone great changes. Carr and Kemmis (1986:10) summarise the following eight general traditions in the study of education:

Philosophical Studies of Education, Grand Theorizing, The Foundations Approach, Educational Theory, The Applied Science or Technical Perspective and the New Practicality, The Practical, Teachers as Researchers and Emerging Critical Tradition.

Each of these traditions involve different views of the relationships between educational theory and practice, and each views the teacher's role in the educational process differently too. The positivist view, for example, sees educational reform as technical while interpretive research sees it as predominantly practical. Each of these traditionally liberal approaches has been seen to contain short comings; a critical educational science has a view of educational reform that is "participatory and collaborative" (ibid:156). While recognizing that critical theory is only one of many other postpositivist "frames of reference" through which "it is possible to examine social reality" (Goodman, 1992:118), critical theory differs from previous perspectives in that it recognizes the central positions of politics and power in social research; it acknowledges that educational research must take into account the social, historical and political context.

Giroux in Sherman and Webb (1988) points out how traditional educational theory suppressed important questions with regard to knowledge, power and domination. On the other hand radical educational theory has often failed to move beyond the criticism of schools as agencies of domination, which trap teachers and leave them with no option but to perpetuate the current ideologies of the ruling groups. In this view the different prevailing discourses of educational institutions and the power relationships that find their expression in the language are so entrenched that, according to Giroux (ibid:193) "radical educators often provide an oversimplified version of domination that seems to suggest that the only political alternative to the current role that schools play in the wider society is to abandon them altogether". Rather than holding this pessimistic and hopeless view I prefer, with Giroux, a perspective that "takes seriously the need to educate students (teachers) in the discourse of critique, possibility and democracy" (ibid:191). This is particularly needed in countries of a suppressive political nature, like South Africa, where teachers have often felt a sense of powerlessness. I perceive the participation in the process writing workshops as a means to develop self and social empowerment. Further positioning myself with Giroux, teachers are viewed in this study as "individuals who operate under specific conditions of work, and who perform a particular social and political function" (1988:194).

According to Tollefson (1991) all research is ideologically positioned. He urges that this be recognized, particularly in educational research and advocates the historical-structural approach, part of a critical theory of society. Such an approach is particularly necessary in South Africa, where education policy has been for the past forty and more years part and parcel of the racial and political apartheid policy. The socio-historical context of the South African educational system has been documented by many educationalists, including Kallaway (1984). At the macro level there have been and are the ideologically determined constraints imposed by the Departments of Education. In the context of this specific research project the teachers (who are all, with one exception, employed by The Department of Education and Culture, Kwa Zulu) face other, but related, difficulties: classroom overcrowding; lack of facilities; lack of time; apathy amongst colleagues and parents. Furthermore there are the prevailing disruptions of transport, sometimes due to taxi feuds. Go slow boycotts and calls for chalk downs from teacher organizations such as SADTU (South African Democratic Teachers Union) make it difficult to plan ahead.

From the above it is clear that I share Carr's and Kemmis' belief that educational theory "must reject positivist notions of rationality, objectivity and truth" (1986:129). According to Carr and Kemmis there are certain features that an educational theory must have, namely it should accept the need to employ the interpretive categories of teachers and provide ways of distinguishing ideologically distorted interpretations from those that are not. It must also provide some view of how any distorted self-understanding is to be overcome; furthermore there is the need to recognize that educational theory is practical and its educational status will be determined by the ways in which it relates to practice. These features are all found in a view of theory called critical theory. Essential to an understanding of critical theory is how theory and practice may be integrated.

A leading contemporary theorist Jurgen Habermas has wrestled with the dilemmas faced by 20th century social scientists, namely how to develop a social science which would synthesise the classical practical philosophy (praxis) with the qualities and values inherent in human life. According to Habermas, human knowledge may be viewed in terms of three knowledge constitutive interests, namely the 'technical', the 'practical' and the 'emancipatory'. While acknowledging the value of the first kind of knowledge and its contribution to many modern inventions and technical advancements (Carr & Kemmis, 1986), and while recognising how a practical interest may generate knowledge in the form of interpretive understanding, the latter is too subjective, the former too exclusive. According to Habermas both kinds of knowledge ignore the social, cultural and political conditions which are sources of influence upon them. Habermas, through a synthesis of interpretive and causal elements tries to produce a critical social science that can demonstrate why individuals have a distorted self-understanding. Habermas has attempted to produce a unified theory of knowledge, justice, action and rationality. His categories of knowledge have, as mentioned by Luckett (1993), been criticised for compartmentalising, rather than acknowledging the mutual overlap. Further criticism has been raised, by amongst other, Gibson (1986) who points out the essential flaw in critical theory, namely its blaming capitalism for all ills. Lakomski (1988:58) points to further flaws:

It follows that we cannot even achieve what self-reflection and the emancipatory interest promised us: the liberation from dogmatic attitudes which is, in any case, only the formal precondition for practical, political action in Habermas' scheme of things. For his theory to work, we must assume as already given, what, on his own account, does not yet exist but is supposed to come into existence as the result of the theory: namely, a world in which power and control are equalized.

Ultimately, according to Habermas, the test of the theory is whether it goes beyond transforming consciousness (ways of viewing the world) into changing practice in the world.

Despite the above mentioned criticisms critical theory has enabled applied linguists to formulate a theory about the roles and functions of language. Critical Language Awareness or Theory (CLA or CLT) focuses on how power relationships in society find expression in a range of discourses, which are generally perceived as natural and commonsensical. In the views of Fairclough (1989) Norton Pierce (1989) and Janks & Ivanic (1992) it is essential to make CLA the core of language teaching. Only through a heightened awareness and knowledge of how language is used to maintain the political, economic and social status quo will it be possible to take action upon the world, in an emancipatory and empowering fashion. There is a danger in the overuse of these words to the point of them becoming meaningless cliches. Nevertheless there is the potential in critical theory (and its related CLA) to link theory to educational practice, as one of the social sciences.

Gibson (1986:171) points out that "the task of critical theory is that of emancipation" and that "the positive contribution of critical theory is to show how language can also be used to demystify, enlighten, protest and emancipate." In the following section (2.2 Teacher Development) I wish to turn to 'teacher development', and position it in relation to teacher training and teacher education. 'teacher development' will be defined and placed in its social, cultural and historical context, as suggested by Tollefson (1991) and the research project positioned within it.

2.2 Teacher Development

In a recent article Ellis (1993) discusses second language acquisition research (SLAR) and 'teacher development' and points out how research into SLAR has failed to come up with many answers for practising language teachers. He quotes Bolitho when he says that "researchers use a register that teachers cannot understand and there are few training materials that incorporate information from SLAR" (1993:3). He then proceeds in his paper to propose a way in which information provided by SLAR may be of considerable value to teacher developers. He concedes, though, that there are other approaches to

'teacher development', for example the ones put forward by Freeman (1989a & b) and Richards (1987). It is their views of 'teacher development' that will be examined below, providing further theoretical background to the research project. The term 'teacher development' is defined by Freeman (1989a:37) in the following way: "within the general process of language teacher education, a valid operational distinction can be made between two functions, training and development. Thus the term education is preserved as the superordinate, whereas teacher training and teacher development are used to describe the strategies by which teachers are educated".

Freeman (1989a; 1992) has drawn attention to the fact that there is a lack of an established theory of language teacher education (LTE). He identifies the following four processes or patterns of instruction that are used in language teaching today, without claiming these to be exhaustive:

1. explanation, or being told;
2. observation, or observing and imitating others;
3. guided reflection, or taking apart your experience;
4. self-directed reflection, or figuring it out on your own.

In relation to the process writing research project the third pattern was followed in which the teachers were asked "to identify, analyse and hypothesize from their experience" (1989a:32). In his 1989 article Freeman proceeds to frame a set of criteria for LTE, using game theory and instruction design to develop these criteria. Teaching is like games in three ways: it is competency-based, it is based on roles and finally it has both givens and variables. According to Freeman (ibid:36) "each of the three parallels gives rise to one or more criteria which will help determine what makes for effective teaching". Examining each parallel he elaborates on the criteria within it: competency-based teaching carries the notion that the activity be both personalized and generative. The second parallel, that teaching (and games) are based on roles, leads to the third criterion, namely that instruction that "contains a rich and varied selection of learner roles will tend to be more effective than that which contains less" (ibid:37). Freeman here elaborates in some detail on what he means by roles. This discussion has been omitted here. The final parallel, that teaching is a decision-making activity, implies risk-taking: each decision either controls or expands on the risk within the activity. Freeman then proceeds to looking at the four instructional patterns in terms of these criteria, with a view to establishing the benefits

and shortcomings of each pattern. I wish to focus here on what Freeman (1989:39) says about the third pattern of instruction (guided reflection):

This pattern has three steps. The trainees, with the guidance of the trainer, identify a particular aspect of their experience and then analyse it through a structure of questions or prompts which the latter provides. Finally, they articulate their findings in some way: through discussion, ... or through writing, as with structured journal-writing. The pattern is decidedly generative. The trainees are asked to examine their own experiences and derive their own conclusions from them; they do so by means of a structure provided by the trainer. Thus they learn both a process and the specific content which is derived through that process.

The process writing workshops of the research project were conducted in this manner, for the following reasons: guided reflection does not depend only on input from the trainer - the input emerges out of the individual's experience; it is both generative and personal. Participation in the process writing workshops provided the teachers with opportunities to critically reflect upon and evaluate their own writing skills and teaching of writing, as well as consider where their own knowledge stems from. Such insights were elicited through interviews. It is in this way that one sees a link between critical theory and 'teacher development' which demands that teachers reflect critically upon their own knowledge and its roots, be it "in habit, ritual, precedent, custom, opinion or mere impressions" (Carr and Kemmis, 1986:41).

Ellis mentions (1993:14) his earlier call for "awareness-raising in teacher development". It was suggested (1986) that this might take place through the completion of activities (consisting of data and tasks). The teacher developer decides which procedures to use for each activity. As mentioned above Ellis' own interest is in the role SLAR can play in 'teacher development'; he does suggest, though, that other kinds of research can provide "an important source of raw data that can be exploited in the construction of activities for teacher development". In my own research project I have used research into process writing, instead of SLAR. Ellis' model for the role of research in the teaching cycle is a useful one, and will be explained below. Ellis (1993:15), sees teaching as a cycle involving three general processes:

1. the evolution of an ideology regarding how teaching should take place;
2. the discovery and mastery of a set of techniques or procedures for performing acts of teaching;
3. the development of the skills of reflection and evaluation.

These three processes are cyclical, feeding into each other. A teacher's ideology (explicit or implicit) will shape the techniques and procedures she uses during actual teaching; these various techniques and procedures are the objects of reflection and evaluation, and through reflection and evaluation teachers come to revise their ideology. Ellis (1993) suggests that 'teacher development' addresses all three processes. This can be undertaken through activities devised to make teachers aware of their ideology, to help them identify and examine different techniques and procedures and to encourage them to engage in reflection and evaluation of their teaching practices. Ellis' cyclical model is a useful one for my own research project: the teachers, through participation in writing activities were enabled to reflect upon how they themselves teach writing skills and procedures in their own classrooms. They were also given opportunities to reflect upon the underlying reasons why they teach in the ways they do and to consider in what ways the writing workshops had led to a better understanding of what is involved in writing.

Both Richards (1987) and Freeman (1992) are concerned with how the education of second language teachers has generally been viewed. According to Freeman (ibid:1) it is believed that teaching has to do with "doing things in the classroom, and ...that teacher education involves shaping such activity to reflect some broadly held perceptions of effective classroom pedagogy." He suggests two alternatives to these premises, namely that "teaching involves both thinking and doing", and that language teacher education, rather than focussing on how to influence teachers' behaviour, should concern itself with "recasting how they think about what they do in classrooms".

Freeman (ibid:2) makes a shift from seeing teaching in behavioural terms to seeing it as "the integration of thought and action" - teaching is seen in cognitive terms, and teachers are seen as bringing to their formal training "a background of tacit knowledge and personal theories about classrooms and what goes on in them" (ibid:3). Teachers bring a great number of memories and perceptions of teaching to their own situation, based on their own past experiences, their present situation, their ideological perspective etc. Tollefson (1991), from a critical theory perspective, points out how the social-historical

context has to be included in any evaluation of what occurs in classrooms. The learners, too, have certain perceptions and assumptions about the nature of learning which are part of the context within which teachers move. Freeman (1992:15) argues that teacher education "must entail the construction of teacher-learners' conceptions of their practice". He ends his article with a four-pronged, fairly prescriptive (by his own admission) programme for teacher education and development. The following two (1 and 4) are of particular relevance to my own research project:

1. Instruction in the teacher education programme (TEP) should be built on experience and reflection. Teacher-learners should be taught as they are expected to teach. They should also be encouraged to examine how the instruction they are receiving embodies what they are learning about teaching. The value here lies not in the modelling of classroom teaching per se, but in the fact that the teacher-learners' understanding of the shared discourse develops through their experience with it.

4. The programme should focus on teacher-learners' constructing their own knowledge of teaching. As Kennedy (1992:2) writes in outlining the research agenda for learning-teaching
Teachers, like other learners, interpret new content through their existing understandings and modify and reinterpret new ideas on the basis of what they already know and believe.

Thus the aim of teacher education programmes should not be for teacher-learners to operate off received knowledge, but to develop their own understandings. Many have argued that models of teacher education which depend on knowledge transmission, or "input-output" models of teacher education (Stern, 1983), are essentially ineffective (Stern, 1983; Freeman, 1989; Wallace, 1991). In that such models depend on received knowledge to influence behavior, they do not acknowledge that - much less encourage - teacher-learners do construct their own versions of teaching.

The teachers who participated in the process writing research project described in this document were attending an international in-service programme, the Diploma for Overseas Teachers of English (DOTE). They were thus experienced teachers, and learners at the same time. Despite the fact that there were only four workshop sessions the interviews, writing activities and instructions meet Freeman's criteria, in that participation enabled the teachers to reflect upon their experiences and thus to come to an understanding of what they are engaged in.

In a recent paper Widdowson (1993:270) summarizes recent discussions about language 'teacher development' and mentions that there is now "a recognition of the importance of the teachers' own attitudes and cognitions, and how these interact with influences from outside". Such a view also leads to a view of teacher preparation as "more a matter of education by self-reflection than of training by direction and transmission of technique".

Ellis, Freeman and Widdowson write from a humanistic, liberal perspective and do not share the concerns of critical linguists such as Norton Pierce and Tollefson with the power relationships embedded in language, nor with how language users need to develop an awareness of these in order to take action upon the world. However, they all recognize the importance of the socio-cultural and educational context in which language teaching takes place, in Widdowson's words, "with classroom-located conditions and cognitions" (1993:270).

The above section has concerned itself with 'teacher development' in contrast to teacher training. A view has been expressed of the significance of teachers' own thinking and of what teachers bring to the teaching-learning situation by way of assumptions and beliefs. In the research project they were given an opportunity to reflect upon themselves in relation to writing. The process writing workshops were the activity through which this took place. The following section provides a rationale for the choice of process writing: the relationship between research and the teaching of writing is briefly outlined, a critical evaluation of process writing is given and new directions in research into writing are pointed to.

2.3 Process Writing

The paradigm of process writing emphasises the idea that it is only through the act of writing that writers realize what it is they want to write (Pett, 1987). Writing is in this paradigm seen as a messy, recursive and complex process rather than as a linear process in which writers know what they want to write from the start and progress through a series of stages (pre-writing, writing, re-writing) to the product. This traditional product model emphasised usage, correctness and style in a very prescriptive manner, and, according to Zamel (1980:89) ignored "the enormous complexity of writing". Writing is not just a means of expressing what we think, but also knowing what we think - a process through which we discover, shape, clarify and illuminate our thoughts. In short, it is a

process of discovering meaning (Zamel, 1982). Johns (1990) outlines two groups within the process protagonists, namely the expressivists and the cognitivists. This research project aligns itself with the second group, for whom the key words are thinking and process.

Over the years research into what good first language (L1) speakers do when they compose has informed research into L2 writing processes. Krashen's book Writing (1984) provides an overview of research in both L1 and L2.

Grammar instruction is not effective in helping students to write. Krashen's interpretation of studies by Elley et al (1976) and Bamberg (1978) is that grammar teaching has no effect on writing. Where grammar teaching was dropped and reading increased, writing improved. One notes how these findings reflect The Acquisition and Learning and other hypotheses of Krashen's own Monitor Theory.

Krashen next examines studies which have looked at what good writers do when they write and sums up their writing processes as planning, rescanning and revising: "good writers plan more than the poor writers" (1984:14). Studies by Emig (1975), Stallard (1974) and Pianko (1979) show that good writers plan their content and organization before writing, and take more time for thinking or taking notes before writing. As they write they may change their plans and add new ideas as these are generated in the process of writing. Less able writers do little of the above. They prefer "to begin by just beginning" (Wall & Petrovsky, 1981). Secondly, good writers also "pause more during writing and reread their texts more" (Krashen, 1984:14). The tendency to scan and reread what they have just written is evidence of the recursive nature of writing. In order to ensure that new ideas fit in with what has gone before, good writers will pause, rescan and reformulate, as they compose (Wall & Petrovsky, 1981; Beach, 1979; Pianko, 1979; Flower & Hayes, 1981). The third aspect of what good writers do is revision. They tend to do it in terms of content, while less experienced writers believe they have achieved what they wish to say in their first draft, and will revise mainly in terms of surface forms, such as vocabulary. Below average writers see revising as editing in terms of grammar, spelling and punctuation, and because they tend to edit prematurely "they lose track of their ideas" (Krashen, 1984:15).

By looking at what successful L1 writers tend to do we can learn a great deal about the writing process: many good writers use a recursive, non-linear approach where planning happens not only at the onset but sections are reformulated and recycled while writing the draft. The recursive nature of writing is what makes writing a messy process (Zamel, 1987a).

2.3.1 The Process Approach to the Teaching of Writing

Findings from research into L1 and L2 writing have informed the teaching of writing in the classroom and have led to what is termed a "process approach", with a new range of classroom tasks characterized by the use of journals, peer collaboration, revision, and attention to content before form (Raimes, 1991). The exploration of ideas is considered an important starting point and pupils are given opportunities to discuss and explore a topic before doing any writing. The organization of these ideas precede any focus on accuracy of language structures. Language is viewed as communication, and the emphasis is on the writer as language learner and creator of text. In Angelil-Carter & Eberhard Thesen's words "the process approach is concerned with what is unique to the writer, i.e. with psycholinguistic, cognitive and affective variables" (1990:586). It has been suggested (Pratt, 1990; Harran, 1993) that the process approach to writing has not been widely adopted in South African schools.

2.3.2 Criticism of Process Writing

In other parts of the world, and particularly in UK and US, the process approach was predominant in the 1980's, although even then it was criticised on a number of scores. Chief amongst its critics was Horowitz (1986:142), who interpreted the focus on the writer's making of personal meaning as an "almost total obsession". He and other theorists have claimed that the process approach is inappropriate for academic demands; nor is it of any use in the examination situation. However, one has the impression that many of the critical comments deliberately take an extreme line. Even Horowitz (ibid:142) writes that "it is claimed that emphasis on process leads to a better product, that process and product do not stand in opposition to each other."

2.3.3 New Directions in the Teaching of Writing

The teaching of writing has moved in new directions in recent years, based on research studies. A focus on content led to the "content-based approach" and simultaneously with this came another academically oriented approach, namely "English for academic purposes", with its focus on audience (Raimes, 1991: 412). As Raimes points out, however, there is a danger that once "the concept of a powerful reader has been established, it is a short step to realizing about the forms of writing that a reader will expect, and then an even shorter step to teaching those forms as prescriptive patterns".

Raimes' words point to yet another direction in the teaching of writing in recent years, namely the genre-based approach, which, according to Ledochowska (1993) is about to become the main philosophy underpinning the teaching of writing in Australian schools. Hyland (1992:15) provides the following definition of genre analysis: "it is the study of how language is used within a particular context. Genres differ in that each has a different goal and they are structured differently to achieve those goals". The knowledge and awareness of rhetorical features, and research into contrastive rhetoric are not new; what is claimed to be new is "that the organizational stages of these varieties can be characterised" (ibid:17). This information in turn can be used in the teaching of writing, where the students are provided with text models which are analysed in terms of purpose, topic, audience and channel of communications, thus assisting them in their own writing tasks. However, before a genre-based approach to the teaching of writing is taken on we need to take heed of Hyland's warning that this approach be seen as suggesting prescriptive, fixed form-function relationships (ibid:17). We are yet to see what role it will play in the teaching of writing in South Africa.

2.3.4 A Rationale for Process Writing Workshops for ESL Teachers

There were several reasons why the process writing workshops were chosen as the vehicle for the research project. It has been suggested that participating in writing workshops helps teachers gain confidence in their own writing abilities, with a subsequently positive effect on their teaching of writing in their classrooms (Kail, 1986; Borstein, 1989; LaVerne Flythe, 1989). These studies were done in the UK and US and the writing workshops were for teachers of English as a first language (L1), whereas Winer's study (1992) involved L1 and L2 ESL teachers. Black South African ESL

teachers have a school and teacher training college background of writing being taught as a product (often sentence-based and language focussed), and have had few experiences with other approaches to writing. The process writing workshops were also seen as a means to elicit from the participating teachers their understanding of such an approach and to give them an opportunity to reflect, in interviews and, to a limited extent, in their note-books, upon their own practices and the social, cultural and historical reasons for these.

In this chapter I have examined the theoretical postpositivist paradigm of critical theory in some detail. I have also focused upon process writing and on 'teacher development'. While 'teacher development' is a widely used, generic term, in this context it has specific significance (Freeman, 1989a; Ellis, 1993). In writing this thesis I am aware of the problems of integrating "our theoretical considerations of what it means to 'do social science' and the practices of collecting and analysing data " (Goodman, 1992:131). I am also aware that my own "observations, questions, analysis, and theorizing" (ibid:122) can never be neutral. As much as the participating teachers I am part of a particular social, political and historical context. Such a viewpoint is also expressed by Guba (1990:20) when he talks of the post-positivist 'critical realism' which recognizes that "one can never be sure that ultimate truth has been uncovered".

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the research paradigm that the research study follows, and describes the approach, methods and techniques that are relevant to this present study. In order to do this a number of experts in the field of qualitative research methodology were consulted (Burgess, 1984; Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Cohen & Manion, 1980/1989; Ely et al, 1991; Goetz & LeCompte, 1984; Sherman & Webb, 1988; Shipman, 1985; Strauss, 1987/1990; Woods, 1986; Yin, 1984/1987 and others). The chapter also considers the ethical considerations involved in qualitative research, as well as reliability and validity. Initially qualitative research will be contrasted with quantitative research, and the characteristics of the case study will be outlined.

3.1 Case Study Research and Methodology

The positivistic, empiricist view of research is based upon the 19th century successes of the physical sciences. It seeks rigor through forms of measurement and quantification amenable to mathematical and statistical analysis. Such a "scientific paradigm rests upon the creation of theoretical frameworks that can be tested by experimentation, replication and refinement" (Cohen & Manion 1989:124). In education (and other social sciences) this form of research tends to ignore its own interaction with the social world it is studying; the observer's version of events is assumed to be superior in reliability and validity to that of the subjects of study, and there is generally a lack of a sense of historical perspective (Shipman, 1985).

In contrast to the quantitative research approach the one used in this present study is closer in style to what is variously known as "interpretive", "holistic", "illuminative", "naturalistic", "responsive" or "case study" research, in other words it is positioned within the paradigm of qualitative research. There is room for collaboration between educational researchers, who may supplement and complement each others' findings, and both subjective and objective methods may be used to increase credibility. Sherman & Webb (1988), in their study of what leading qualitative researchers had to say about their work, isolated certain characteristics of qualitative research, summed up below by Ely et al (1991:4):

1. Events can be understood adequately only if they are seen in context.
2. The contexts of inquiry are not contrived; they are natural. Nothing is predefined or taken for granted.
3. Qualitative researchers want those who are studied to speak for themselves, to provide their perspectives in words and other actions. Therefore, qualitative research is an interactive process in which the persons teach the researcher about their lives.
4. Qualitative researchers attend to the experience as a whole, not as separate variables. The aim of qualitative research is to understand experience as unified.
5. Qualitative methods are appropriate to the above statements. There is no one general method.
6. For many qualitative researchers, the process entails appraisal about what was studied.

The first five characteristics were similar to all, the last to many of the studies that Sherman and Webb (1988) examined.

The above mentioned terms seek to describe a non-positivist view of research where the emphasis is on 'process' rather than 'product' outcomes. The term "case study" has been chosen in this study, which is descriptive, interpretive, qualitative and small scale. A definition of case study methodology is found in Shipman (1985:30):

In general, the techniques for collecting information for a case study are held in common with a wider tradition of sociological and anthropological fieldwork. Case study methodology is eclectic, although techniques and procedures in common use include observation (participant and non-participant), interviews (conducted with varying degrees of structure), audio-visual recording, field-note-taking, document collection, and the negotiations of products (for example discussing the accuracy of an account with those observed).

The nature and possibilities of case study research and its value to educational researchers are further defined by Cohen and Manion (1989:124-153). They point to the following possible advantages of case studies:

1. they are 'strong in reality', down-to-earth and attention holding, though difficult to organise.
2. they allow generalisations yet there is room for attention to the subtlety and complexity of the particular case.
3. They recognise the complexity and 'embeddedness' of social truths, and may reflect differences and alternative interpretations.
4. they are 'a step to action' and may be used for staff or individual self-development, for within-institutional feedback and in educational policy making.

5. they are usually more accessible than conventional research reports. They may therefore contribute towards the 'democratisation' of decision-making (and knowledge).

Yin (1984:23) claims that the case study has distinct features that sets it apart from other research approaches and defines the case study as a research strategy in the following manner:

a case study is an empirical inquiry that:

- * investigates a contemporary phenomenon with its real-life context; when
- * the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which
- * multiple sources of evidence are used.

It should further be noted that case studies sometimes lead to further, long term action research; one suggestion is made for this present study in 6.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS. Having outlined the characteristics of the case study it is necessary to mention the kinds of criticisms that are sometimes raised against case study research.

3.2 Critique of Case Study Research

Considerable criticism of case study research has been voiced. Atkinson and Delamont (in Shipman, 1985:27) air the view held by many that "it is hard to provide any hard-and-fast definition of 'case study' and related approaches to educational evaluation". Yin (1987) concedes that much criticism has been levelled at the case study as research methodology on the grounds of it being either considered the exploratory stage of some other type of research strategy or the term mistakenly used to describe what is in reality either ethnographic or participant-observer methods. Major problems related to participant-observation have to do with certain biases that may develop in the researcher. Elsewhere in his book Yin mentions and responds to further criticism of case study research namely that it lacks rigor, that case studies provide little basis for scientific generalization and finally that case studies are often too long, both to conduct and when written up. Despite the above criticisms, it is argued here that the case study is particularly well suited to educational research in a particular setting, where the researcher wishes to describe and interpret directly what the participants said or did. The collection of data is the first step in this process.

3.3 Collection of Data in Case Study Research

At the heart of every case study lies a method of observation (Cohen and Manion, 1989). A wide range of techniques are used in the collection and analysis of data, and these depend upon the style of observation and the particular setting. They generally include participant or non-participant observation and interviewing; probably, the collection of documentary evidence and descriptive statistics, and the administration of tests or questionnaires; and possibly, the use of photography, motion pictures, or videotape recording (Keeves, 1988). Of particular interest to the present study is interviewing, as interviews were chosen as the central data-gathering method.

3.3.1 Interviews

Interviews in educational research are used to elicit from the people we are studying the ways in which they perceive the world. Interviews may be conducted in a number of ways, from quite informal to formal ones, on a continuum. While the former open-ended ones may occur spontaneously, or with little pre-planning, in a number of different settings, the more formal interview is used when "fieldwork becomes more interview based and less observation based" (Keeves, 1988:51). They are often arranged by appointment, the setting is carefully planned for its quiet, its seating arrangements etc., and the questions are pre-planned and may be arranged in a certain sequence by the researcher, even when less formal, semi-structured interviews are conducted. In such a situation the researcher will wish to be flexible within her prepared framework, while keeping in mind her agenda. The ability to listen is essential. Furthermore, novice researchers ought to begin with simple and straightforward questions (Yin, 1984). Goetz & LeCompte (1984) suggest that "sequences begin with descriptive, present-oriented questions and build to more complex issues of emotion, belief and explanation." McCormack Steinmetz (in Ely et al, 1991:59) finds that "qualitative researchers consider ambiance, content, and flow". Tape recording interviews is preferable to note-taking, from the researcher's position, as "it provides a more accurate rendition of any interview than any other method" (Yin, 1984:85) despite certain drawbacks, such as it being seen as an intrusion. There is also the danger that the researcher, in her quest for insights, may use 'leading questions', defined by Goetz & LeCompte (1984:127) as "queries that are worded so as to reveal what the interviewer believes is a preferable answer". The

recorded interviews have to be transcribed in cases where they form the bulk of the research data and this is a time-consuming process, which the researcher must be prepared for.

3.3.2 Journals, Diaries or Note-Books

The use of journal writing in 'teacher development' has been advocated by several US and UK educationists over the years (Murray, 1982; Jarvis, 1992; Anderson, 1992/93). Such journals (or diaries or note-books) are believed to help students reflect on and become more aware of their learning; they are also a means of evaluating the participants' reactions to the courses they are attending. Lately a number of problems associated with such writing activities have been confronted by some of the advocates of journal writing. Anderson (1992/3:308), for example, claims that the journal has been overestimated as a learning tool and that "journal writing simply does not work for all students". Related to this point is how introspective writing of this kind may be viewed by participants from societies where the keeping of diaries is not a common phenomenon. White (1985:147) admits that his early experience with student journals failed because he did not recognise the importance of critical feedback, nor did he allocate a specific timeslot for journal writing. This topic is returned to in 4.6.4 Teachers' Note-books.

3.4 The Case Study Researcher

As in ethnographic research, which is characterised by observing human behaviour in a holistic cultural context, where anthropologists' main research tools are their own senses, sensitivities and ability to communicate with native informants (Sherman and Webb, 1988:78), educational researchers are also required to be perceptive observers, sensitive inquirers, and skilful participants. Observation can never be completely objective or judgement-free because of what we ourselves bring to the situation, but "an awareness of our own subjectivities will prevent our vision from being too skewed" (McCormick Steinmetz in Ely et al, 1991:53). Case study research is often interpretive and subjective; such a focus should, according to Cohen and Manion (1989:124) be seen "as complementing rather than competing with the experimental stance", where "experimental" refers to a scientific paradigm within educational research, based on "the creation of theoretical frameworks that can be tested by experimentation, replication and refinement". Ely et al (1991) make the point that doing qualitative research will affect the

researcher as well as the participants in heightening self-awareness and knowledge. Many researchers use case study methods because they are concerned with the understanding of educational action, or "because they wish to enrich the thinking and discourse of educators through the systematic and reflective documentation of experience" (Stenhouse in Keeves, 1988:50). First and foremost qualitative researchers need to be aware, honest and reflective and they have to be "trustworthy", a quality given much emphasis by Ely et al (1991). Many of the above mentioned concerns are closely linked to the next issues for discussion.

3.5 Ethical Considerations and Educational Case Study Research

A number of ethical concerns need to be considered by all qualitative researchers. Such concerns fall broadly into three categories, namely consideration for the integrity of the research itself, for the participants with whom one works and for some broader social implications of qualitative research. Ely (in Ely et al 1991:218) maintains that "qualitative research is an ethical endeavour", and that "ethical concerns are woven into every aspect of it". She goes on to say that:

striving to be faithful to another's viewpoint is striving to be ethical. Striving to maintain confidentiality is striving to be ethical. Striving to be trustworthy is striving to be ethical. It is impossible to confine ethical considerations to a chapter or a section. Actually, they are present from the beginning and are woven throughout every step of the methodology.

It follows that such concerns apply to the case study as well. No direct reference is made in Cohen and Manion (1989) to research ethics, whereas Stenhouse (in Keeves, 1988) sees problems of ethics in case study research arising because often people or institutions are portrayed and may be recognized. He furthermore recognises that there may be a dispute over who owns the collected data, the people themselves or the researchers. He suggests that "no data be used in such a way as to threaten disadvantage to the persons portrayed" (ibid:53). Keeping the participants or informants anonymous is a suggestion made by Yin (1984), although he concedes that it makes the composing of the case difficult. He also mentions the possibility of letting the informants review the draft report or thesis: they should agree about the actual facts of the case, but may well disagree about the conclusions and interpretations of the researcher. Such a step will not only deal with the ethical questions, mentioned above, but will also strengthen the reliability and validity of the study, the topic of the following section.

3.6 Validity and Reliability

In the preface to Case Study Research (Yin, 1984:8) Donald T. Campbell points to the importance of not giving up on the goal of validity in the social sciences:

our social science methodological armamentarium also needs a humanistic validity-seeking case study methodology that, while making no use of quantification or tests of significance, would still work on the same questions and share the same goals of knowledge.

It is, however, not possible to achieve the same degree of certainty or consensus as scientists do within the quantitative paradigm, mainly because case studies cannot easily be replicated; accusations are also made that "subjective judgements are used to collect data" (Yin, 1984:37). Triangulation is often recommended to increase the strength of observation by the researcher (Cohen & Manion, 1989; Ely et al, 1991; Keeves, 1988). Although not feasible in all case studies, particularly not in exploratory or descriptive ones, four tests are often mentioned by social scientists as relevant (Yin, 1984:37). They are the following: construct validity; internal validity; external validity; reliability. These terms have primarily been associated with quantitative, positivist research, but are frequently used by qualitative researchers, anxious to show that their research, too, can be reliable and valid. McCormack Steinmetz (in Ely et al, 1991:94) puts forward the view that "while issues about reliability and validity apply to both quantitative and qualitative work, they are conceived of and arrived at in different ways". That is her reason for suggesting the use of an entirely different glossary of terms, such as "trustworthiness and its components of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability" to remind us of how to conduct qualitative research "honestly and believably". There are detectable influences here from critical linguistics, and it is possible that these terms will gain in use and strength in the next decade.

3.7 Case Study Data Analysis

Data analysis consists of examining and categorizing. After the collection of fieldwork data, which may be in the form of written texts (such as log-books or diaries), observations and transcribed interviews, the case study researcher is in possession of a great deal of qualitative data, ready for analysis. Often, according to Keeves (1988:52),

"case studies are inclined to falter at this point", despite the fact that some reflection will already have occurred while the data was collected. Ely et al (1991:18) in their broadly based book on qualitative research talk of "ongoing data collection and analysis". Where this is not the case there are a number of problems that may be experienced at this point. The sheer bulk of data is often daunting, or the researcher may be in doubt as to which strategy of analysis to use in order to present a thesis that has systematically and logically examined the data. In the literature about case studies there is in general a dearth of information on analysis. Yin (1984) is one exception and puts forward a number of guidelines. The researcher needs a general analytic strategy, and Yin isolates and describes the following two: 1. relying on theoretical propositions and 2. developing a case description. The first strategy follows any theoretical propositions that shaped the study and the data collection for this study, while the second seeks to develop a descriptive framework for organizing the case study. Once a general strategy has been decided upon a number of specific analytical techniques may be used; Yin (ibid:103) recommends the use of one of the following three, namely pattern-matching, explanation-building and time series, as they are "effective ways of laying the groundwork for high-quality case studies", although he also warns that none of these are easy to use. The present study is a descriptive one, and the findings will be presented in terms of the responses elicited from the participating teachers to semi-structured interview questions, as well as entries made in log- and notebooks. A similar framework for 'explanation-building' was used by Winer (1992), although she worked with and analysed written responses by a group of teachers.

This chapter (3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY) has outlined the case study paradigm of research in a theoretical manner; it provides the rationale for the following (4.0 THE RESEARCH PROJECT), which will describe in detail the origins of the research project, and its aims and objectives; where the research took place; who the participants were and how the data was collected.

4.0 THE RESEARCH PROJECT

The chapter describes in detail the origins, aims and objectives of the project, the conditions under which the data were collected, who the participants were and the methods for data collection that were used. In doing so I have been influenced by the guidelines provided by Burgess in his introduction (1984:8).

4.1 The Origins of the Project

As lecturer in English at a distance teacher training college in Umlazi, Natal, I have been involved in the assessing of teachers' written assignments for the past seven years. Apart from two annual 'vacation schools', when lecturers and students meet in person, the only contact is through written assignments, which the students submit and the lecturers mark. This is the system followed by all the departments at the college. There are differences, however, between the English department and these other departments in their ways of assessing. Whereas the departmental lecturers in History, Mathematics and Science mark the submitted assignments on content only, in the English department assignments are assessed in terms of language and textual organization, as well as content. The rationale is clear: as the students are teachers of English we expect them to be able to write narrative and expository texts that are fluent and well-organized. Such expectations are often not met, and students display writing problems in the following areas: textual organization (no introductions or conclusions) and paragraph structuring (lack of cohesion and coherence). Language errors are often related to these two areas, and occur in the area of prepositions, tenses, etc.

In another teaching setting such general observations have been confirmed. As a part-time tutor at the English Language Education Trust (ELET) in Durban, Natal, I have been teaching teachers who are furthering their studies through the Certificate for Overseas Teachers of English (COTE) and/or the Diploma for Overseas Teachers of English (DOTE). This latter course is examined by UCLES (the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate), which has taken over the examination certification that was formerly done by the Royal Society of Arts (RSA). Neither COTE nor DOTE is accepted for certification or increment purposes by South African Departments of Education. I am at present teaching a group of ten DOTE students and it is with these students that I conducted the research project into teachers' responses to their participation in process

writing workshops, as a means of reflective practice. These students display the same problems in their written assignments, namely poor textual organization, cohesion and coherence which in turn are related to their use of prepositions and tenses, amongst other things. It is my contention that these problem areas arise because teachers write only rarely and have limited knowledge of a process approach to writing. This latter point is confirmed by Marcelle Harran (1993) in her study of the teaching of writing in Eastern Cape schools.

The idea of teachers of writing actively engaging in writing themselves developed in the US, particularly during the eighties. This is born out by the number of articles published on this subject (Kail, 1986; Martin, 1986; Borstein, 1989; LaVerne Flythe, 1989). Common to all these writers is the view that teachers, who are expected to teach English well, must develop their own writing skills: in order to teach writing one has to be a writer oneself. This concept has emerged from research findings about how competent writers develop: long term engagement in both reading and writing is necessary for such skills to develop, and in terms of writing a strong argument for a process approach has been advocated by, for example Raimes (1985; 1991a & b) and Zamel (1987a & b). In my discussion of process writing (2.0 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND) I have positioned myself in favour of such an approach to the teaching of writing, while acknowledging certain criticisms (Horowitz, 1986). Despite the possible future shift towards a genre approach to the teaching of writing I am persuaded by the research findings (Raimes, 1985; Zamel, 1987a & b) of what competent writers do when they write, and in my view seeing writing as a process, first and foremost, and secondly as a product, has validity. It underlies my research project. The above mentioned articles, advocating that teachers of writing write themselves, are aimed at teachers of English in the US, and focus on the process approach to a range of activities. In these articles there is no mention of writing as a tool for empowerment (2.0 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND) nor of it as an activity to promote reflection on one's own practices, and for example thinking about how one was taught oneself.

In South Africa no research has been published on process writing workshops for teachers of English (either L1 or L2). Qualified South African teachers have a predominantly teacher training background, where writing is taught in a product-oriented manner, i.e. the emphasis is on accuracy and correctness in terms of language, and few teachers have had any opportunities to develop confidence in their own writing skills. As

mentioned above, Marcelle Harran (1993) examined the teaching of writing in a great number of schools in the Eastern Cape and found that few teachers had any knowledge of a process approach to writing, and as a result tended to teach writing as a product.

Writing for empowerment was explored in an occasional paper, co-written with a colleague, while attending a TESOL summer institute at the University of Pittsburgh (Claude & Vahed, 1989), as mentioned in 2.0 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND. Further direction to the project came from two articles, namely Winer (1992) and Pennington & Cheung (1993). Both are long term studies, concerned with how teachers may benefit from engaging in and reflecting upon the process of writing as an activity in order to develop as writers and as teachers.

Having outlined the origins of the writing workshop concept I shall now present the aims and objectives of the research project.

4.2 Aims and Objectives of the Research Project

From the initial research proposal in 1992, with a focus on the teachers' reactions to participation in writing workshops there was a gradual shift in interest, and the aims have developed to the following:

1. to compile and/or design the writing workshop activities that students engaged in and to conduct four two hour long writing workshops with a group of ESL teachers
2. to ask teachers about their own past and present experiences with writing
3. to record the participants' reactions to a process-oriented approach to writing
4. to describe any changes in the teachers' understanding of the nature of writing, after the workshops.

The above aims reflect the two-pronged theoretical framework to the project, namely the process approach to the teaching of writing, and 'teacher development' through reflection upon own practice and engagement (2.0 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND). The following two sections, 4.3 The Conditions under which the Research was Conducted and 4.4 The Participants will describe the participants involved and the conditions under which the data was collected.

4.3 The Conditions under which the Research was Conducted

The four writing workshops were held on the premises of ELET in Central Durban. A large, well-equipped room is available for the twice weekly DOTE sessions, and this is where the process writing workshops took place during March, 1993. The semi-structured interviews were conducted on an individual basis with each teacher, and a much smaller, more comfortable room was used for this purpose. It is a room which is intended for conferencing by the director of the ELET centre and is airconditioned, carpeted, and furnished with a round table and upholstered chairs. Each teacher was interviewed twice, on audio-tape, once before and once after the workshops had taken place, and each interview lasted approximately thirty minutes. I always positioned myself next to the interviewee, as suggested by Stenhouse (in Keeves, 1988:51): "to sit side-by-side or obliquely facing one another is, as it were, to look out on the world together, a good position for a collaborative interview", and juice and biscuits were served before each interview. The recordings were transcribed partly by myself as the researcher, partly by a student assistant. All the transcriptions were checked for mistakes by the researcher, after the recordings had been made and prior to them being coded in terms of the structured interview questions.

4.4 The Participants

The ten participating teachers, who are all women, were part of the 1992-4 DOTE course intake. The 300 hour long course commenced in September 1992, and will end in June 1994, when the students write their final, external examinations, set by UCLES (University of Cambridge Local Exams Syndicate). Two hourly sessions are held twice a week, and the teaching is shared by two tutors, myself and DF, who also assisted me, for triangulation purposes, in the research data collection by interviewing five teachers after they had attended the writing workshops. There are two criteria for admitting the students into the course: they must either have completed a BA degree or they must have completed the COTE course. Background information about the students was obtained through the use of a questionnaire (see Appendix 1). This was the only part of the research data that was partly quantitative, and it was used for further triangulation purposes, to strengthen the findings. Eight of the ten participating students filled in the questionnaires. The information gathered in response to the first six questions provide a

general matrix of the participating teachers and has been included here. The responses to questions seven to ten, which are preliminary data, related to the teachers' past and present writing experiences, are found in 5.0 RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS.

4.4.1 Questionnaire Responses (A Summary of Questions 1 - 6)

The names (Appendix 1, question 1) used in the transcripts (see 5.0) are fictitious, to preserve the teachers' anonymity. In terms of age (question 2) three teachers were in the 20 - 29 age group, three in the 30 - 39 age group, and one in the 40 - 49 age group; one teacher ignored this question and did not indicate any age, but belonged to the latter. All DOTE students had matriculated (question 3). The two older students each had an STD and a COTE certificate. The other six had a teacher's diploma as well as a degree (one had a BA, five a B Paed degree). One student had taught for 25 years, one for ten years, two for five years, and the rest for four years or less (question 4). The levels that the teachers had taught in the past (question 5) ranged from Std 3 to Std 10, while the levels taught in 1993 ranged from Std 5 to teacher training for READ (Read, Educate and Develop).

4.5 The Process Writing Workshop Materials

The teaching materials used in the workshops were designed along similar lines to other materials written for the DOTE course: the aims of each session are stated; the rationale for and theoretical background to a certain approach are given; follow-up activities for the students to engage in are provided. The language used is accessible and reader-friendly. Five handouts were used (see Appendix 2), each partly drawing on what experts in the field have written about process writing and activities that promote it (Byrne, 1988; Hedge, 1988; Raimes, 1983, 1987; White & Arndt, 1991), partly on the researcher's own ideas. The writing workshops were intended to take the students through a range of writing experiences, which would start with a personal focus (workshop 1) and progress through a greater audience and purpose awareness (workshops 2-3) to a genre base approach to writing (workshop 4). This plan was adhered to and is illustrated in the workshop materials provided to the students (see Appendix 2). The theoretical rationale for the design of the workshop materials has been outlined in 2.3 Process Writing.

4.6 The Teachers' Workshop Writings

It was not the intention of the researcher to include the teachers' writings in the materials for analysis, as is clear from the goals of the research project (see 4.2 Aims and Objectives of the Research Project). These focus on the teachers as participants in process writing, and on the workshops as the reflective activity through which they would develop as teachers.

During the workshops I read many examples of what the teachers had written, and made suggestions when asked for advice. The teachers, too, had many discussions amongst themselves about what they had written. At the start of the project it was made clear to the teachers that their end products would not be evaluated or assessed, nor included in the research data. It is my belief that such an emphasis on the process relieved the tension that might otherwise have been experienced. However, in another, longer term action research project it might be one of the aims to monitor the teachers' writings in detail over time.

4.7 The Methods of Data Collection

The data for analysis were gathered in the following manner: pre- and post-writing workshop interviews were conducted and a questionnaire was used before the first writing workshop. The interview responses formed the bulk of the data. Although the interview questions were adhered to with the majority of the interviewees the interviews were semi-structured in that there were opportunities for the conversation to expand on areas that the particular teacher felt strongly about, and that was felt would lead to information of relevance to the research focus. The interview questions were deliberately kept straightforward and simple.

The researcher also made brief log-book entries after each of the four workshops and the teachers were asked to write down in note-books provided by the researcher any reactions to the particular workshops, and any thoughts they may have after them; a colleague and fellow tutor in the DOTE course elicited further responses to the workshops from five of the students, through interviews, and submitted a short report (see Appendix 3). The purpose of this report was to strengthen the entire research findings through triangulation, as explained in 3.6 Validity and Reliability. The report is discussed in 5.0 RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS.

4.7.1. The Pre-Process Writing Workshops Interview Questions

The pre-process writing workshop questions focussed on the teachers' own experiences as pupils at the primary and high school level, as well as on their own current practice with regard to the teaching of writing skills. The rationale for this focus has been outlined above (in 2.0 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND), and relates to what Richards (1987:222) calls "teacher preparation as education (his emphasis): a focus on clarifying and elucidating the concepts and thinking processes that guide the effective second language teacher". The questions also attempted to elicit responses related to the historical, social, and cultural context in which the teachers work.

The students were asked the questions listed below. As explained above these questions were semi-structured, i.e. they were closely if not identically phrased as below; the overall stance of the questions was maintained with each interviewee:

1. What do you remember about how your teachers taught you writing at the primary school level? Think of a particular teacher or lesson.
2. And in the high school? (what do you remember about how your teachers taught you writing?)
3. How do you teach writing yourself? Describe your last writing lesson.

4.7.2. The Post-Process Writing Workshops Interview Questions

Answers to the second set of interview questions were elicited after the four process writing workshops had taken place; they related to how the interviewees perceived the workshops, and how they might have gained new insights into the writing process.

1. After the writing workshops do you feel you have a better understanding of what people do when they write?/ do you feel you have gained in your understanding of what is involved in writing?
2. In what ways could you transfer any of the ideas from the workshops into your classroom?
3. While participating in the workshops did your experience any problems? If there were any, what were they? Did you get stuck at any point?

4. Now that you have experienced the writing workshops how would you explain process writing to a colleague?
5. Do you consider it important that teachers engage in writing activities themselves?

4.7.3. The Researcher's Log-Book

A log-book was kept by the researcher concerning the process writing workshops. As the researcher was not only a participant observer but also the tutor who had designed the procedure and material of the workshops there was a danger of bias. The teachers who participated and the tutor already knew each other fairly well, since the DOTE course had started in September 1992, and the research data was collected in March 1993. It has been acknowledged above (see 3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY) that post positivist, qualitative research is interactive, and that the researcher influences the outcome or findings. If this is acknowledged from the onset it need not be seen as a negative aspect (as the positivist approach to research would tend to do). Rather it is a matter to be open and honest about it, as mentioned by Ely et al.(1991). After each workshop observations and comments were written in the log-book, providing further data. These entries have been analysed in 5.4 Log-Book Entries.

4.7.4. Teachers' Note-Books

The teachers were each given a file in which to keep their workshop materials and own writings in response to the activities outlined in each workshop. Furthermore they were given a small note-book in which to write down their positive and negative responses to these activities, and the way in which the workshops were conducted. Such note-books share with 'journals' and diaries the purpose of providing the participants with opportunities for reflection, as already discussed in 3.3.2 Journals, diaries or note-books.

4.7.5. The Nonparticipant Observer's Report

The DOTE tutor, who interviewed five of the participants immediately after the entire project was completed, submitted a short report (Appendix 3) which served the purpose of strengthening the research in terms of validity and reliability. Such issues have been discussed above in 3.6 Validity and Reliability.

This section has outlined how the research project was undertaken. The following section, 5.0 RESEARCH FINDINGS, reports on the salient responses and comments made by the teachers in response to the questionnaire and the pre- and post-workshop interview questions; some of the notes made by both researcher and the teachers, as well as on the report that was done for triangulation purposes.

5.0 RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

This chapter is primarily an account and an analysis of the responses to the questionnaire and interview questions and to a lesser extent of the comments made by both the participating teachers and myself in our respective log- and note-books. The report submitted by a nonparticipant observer for triangulation purposes is also part of this chapter.

In this study the framework provided by Freeman (1989a) for discussing teacher education has been used (as already outlined in 2.0 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND). A distinction is made between teacher training and teacher development. According to Freeman (as summed up by Winer, 1992:58) teacher training is direct intervention by the collaborator (e.g. teacher trainer) to work on specific aspects of the teacher's teaching; it focuses on specific outcomes that can be achieved through a clear sequence of steps. Teacher development, on the other hand, is "a strategy of influence and indirect intervention that works on complex, integrated aspects of teaching" (Freeman, 1989:40). Although in this study the focus of activity (Ellis, 1993) that the teachers engage in is process writing, this should not be seen in terms of teacher training but of development, the results of which cannot be foreseen or expected within a designated time period. Rather it is part of the teaching cycle, as outlined by Ellis (1993) and discussed in 2.0 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND. The teachers' participation in the process writing workshops provided them with opportunities for experiencing what their pupils experience when writing, followed by opportunities for reflection upon these and other experiences related to writing. Widdowson (1993:262), who is concerned with the recognition of the relevance of mainstream educational thinking to language teacher education, argues

that effective pedagogy is necessarily a reflective and research-oriented activity, that the role of practitioner does not preclude that of theorist, and that the professional status of teachers as mediators depends on the justification of an appropriate expertise of their own.

As outlined in 2.1 Critical Theory another important theoretical strand was to create a link between critical theory and teacher development through the teachers reflecting critically upon their own knowledge and its roots. The interview questions were designed in such a way as to encourage teachers to reflect critically upon the ways in which they

were taught writing at school, and on what happens in their own teaching-of-writing lessons. Such reflections will, it was argued, get close to the social and cultural context in which the teachers work.

Bearing in mind that there were only four process writing workshops and that these took place over the limited period of two weeks it would be unrealistic to have any expectations of clear outcomes and manifestations as a result of the teachers' participation in them.

5.1 Responses to Pre-Writing Workshop Interview Questions

In the following section examples of the teachers' responses to the semi-structured pre- and post-process writing workshop interviews have been quoted and commented about. Not all responses were sufficiently pertinent to be included, nor did space allow for them all to be quoted. These responses have been rendered as they were uttered in the interviews; they are often repetitive, grammatically deviant, difficult to follow etc. The responses have been given sequential numbers for easy reference; in this I have followed Winer's study (1992). Where my own responses are of a phatic nature (i.e. serve the purpose of keeping the conversation going) in the form of 'yeah', 'hm', or simply a laugh, I have indicated this with two dots (i.e.: ..) for space saving purposes. Simultaneous talk by interviewee and interviewer has been indicated by a double bracket, in the following manner:

interviewee's comment

interviewer's comment

Further assistance in interpretation of the interview extracts is given typographically in the following manner: the interviewer's questions and comments have been printed in Times Roman 10 point bold font, **as in this example**, the teachers' in Times Roman 10 point italics font (*example*). As already mentioned (4.4.1 Questionnaire Responses) the names of the teachers are fictitious.

My own follow-up questions to what each teacher said vary a great deal in response to the particular teacher being interviewed: at times there is a great deal of redundancy. This occurs in particular when talking to the less fluent teachers. A replay of such interviews demonstrate 'foreigner talk', in the form of a slowing down in the rate of speech,

simplification and rephrasing the same question several times. According to Long (1983:126) such foreigner talk is often used when native speakers (NSs) address non-native speakers (NNSs) of the language of communication. Some features of foreigner talk are "shorter utterances, lower syntactic complexity, and avoidance of low frequency lexical items and idiomatic expressions". An example of this may be found in extract 31. The use of leading questions, as discussed in 3.3.1 Interviews, also occurred, as in extracts 6, 10, 31, 36 and 42.

The chapter is arranged in the following manner: each question is stated, then followed by a selection of pertinent responses from the teachers, as well as by the researcher's comments. At the end there is an overall analysis not only of the teachers' interview responses but also of my own and their written comments in our respective log- and notebooks and of the nonparticipant's short report for triangulation purposes. How the interviews were conducted is described in 4.0 THE RESEARCH PROJECT. The pre-process writing workshop interview questions have already been listed in 4.0; they are the following:

- 5.1.1. What do you remember about how your teachers taught you writing at the primary school level? It may be helpful to think of a particular teacher or lesson.
- 5.1.2 And in the high school?
- 5.1.3. How do you teach writing yourself? Describe your last writing lesson.

Question 5.1.1

What do you remember about how your teachers taught you writing at the primary school level? It may be helpful to think of a particular teacher or lesson.

For most of the teachers it was difficult to recall much from the lower primary school, easier from the higher. In the following conversation there is a sense of the pupils having been given little guidance:

1. *What I can remember at the lower primary in as far as writing is concerned is that we were told to write sentences, we were given a topic then and we had to write point by point [in] the lower primary school, and then what I can remember in the senior primary*

er ..is that we were just told that in an essay there should be an introduction, the body and a conclusion, but I don't remember a certain teacher telling me how to write an introduction, and the body and the conclusion .. the only thing I remember is that we were just given a topic and then we have to struggle on your own, writing about this, and then we, we .. they used to give us same topics, you know that you know at the primary "my school", and then when you come to the senior primary you also write about "my school" so you know from the past, the only thing now at the senior primary is that you are writing in a paragraph form, not in sentence form, as you did in the lower primary.

Silindile

Some teachers immediately associated their recollections of what went on at primary school level to a particular teacher:

2. *I remember when I was doing, when I was doing Std 4 I had a very good teacher, Mr Danga, he is now an inspector, who was actually very good in laying out and for a change he didn't give us a model, now, to say "this is how is an example of a good (one)", you know, and you read it and it's about something else and then you get another topic, you feel now you are actually lost*

so what would he do instead?

Well, he would like for instance he'd put the layout, give us a topic, and then we would, you know, discuss the topic, maybe like in pairs or with him .. what do we know about the topic.

Vai

This teacher had given his pupils a great deal of detailed information that they did not already know (e.g. about train journeys - this trivial topic was made interesting because the teacher would share his knowledge of vocabulary, his own uncomfortable experiences of travelling third class etc.). While discussing her recollections of another senior primary school teacher she was asked what made him a good teacher; she replied:

3. *He also, he would guide you, he had some guidelines, he would also write things, you know, on your exercise book, when you'd written a composition, and you know, then he would ask, ask you to reply again in English .. but again, he would put down the*

structure, and we would discuss the topic, and not for him to write it on the chalkboard and say, this is how it goes so that we try and copy what the teacher had written, but he'd actually .. by the time you sit down you would know, o.k. for my introduction, because of his guidance, and then you know, you actually knew, you were at ease, and you were confident, because the teacher had actually highlighted the important points for your introduction, and then for your body and then for your conclusion.

Vai

Another teacher was extremely critical of her teachers at the primary school level; the interview responses show her fear of being punished for mistakes:

4. *Our teachers were not educated, you see, our education was very poor, they used to sort of, they used to get teachers maybe passing, who were sort of std six, teaching us in sub A .. such people would tend to not understand the students, they are not very knowledgeable .. in as far as the young kids were concerned .. so in that case we used to (inaudible), my mother tried to, to help me, not to get a punishment.*

Mabongi

The focus in many of the recollected writing lessons was on the forms and structures of discrete items; there was also copying without understanding:

5. *In English, er, what I can remember in primary school, we used to do the tenses, o.k., when we did the tenses the teacher um come into the class and tell us "today we are doing the present tense", maybe, and we wouldn't know what that was.*

Thembi

6. *The teacher who was teaching us English was mainly interested in speaking rather than writing .. she sort of concentrated in oral, oral work .. rather than writing work .. you see, so, so, always, she usually carried a stick .. so whenever you came to class she used to ask us questions, tenses, past tense, present tense, how do you convert this word to past tense .. how would you change this to future tense, you see*

drilling away?

You see, she was drilling, she was using drilling method, using the stick, you see, she used to beat us at the back, you see, so it was hard.

Mabongi

7. *In writing she would give us, she would write sentences on the board, maybe put the verb in brackets and then ask us to give the correct form of the verb.*

Thembi

8. *There was a lot of cop yes, they were, they were giving us some notes to, to copy, a lot of notes .. to copy sometimes we understand, understood the notes, sometimes we did not*

understand}

didn't know what you were writing}.

Benzile

The overall impression that one gets from the above responses is that the teaching and learning of writing at the primary school level often occurred through 'byhearting' and through the use of formulaic language. Possibly enforcing the ways they had themselves been taught these teachers' teachers, with noticable exceptions (see 2 and 3), appear to have lacked background knowledge and strategies for teaching writing effectively; as a result their pupils were left to their own devices:

9. *Sometimes we were only given very little guidelines, yeah, sometimes we were only given the specimen so "this is how we'll write the composition", and then you are given the whole composition, you have to write down so when you wr.. you are writing on your own, you just refer to this paragraph and so on and so on, we were not guided exactly, as I see now that there should be that guidance, when you want the pupils to write because once you are given a topic you are just stuck, you just don't know where to start, that's the problem ..*

Silindile

10. *I would say at primary school we were never taught writing as such, if it (was) for instance an essay, a composition about a journey by train .. then the teacher would tell us, in fact we would use to have books that were written, (in) where the composition was*

written for us and then we would start that composition if it was start, if it was a question of starting and then the teacher would read that composition and we would read after him .. and then he explains these other words that are not familiar to us .. and then read after him, and then we would recite the poem (=text) to the point of learning it

by heart)

off by heart)

And we knew that, well, if such a composition comes up in the test then we just write it straight away, and we even memorized "how to make tea" .. write it down and then start memorizing it. We were told to go and memorize that at home, there was no other way of learning it

so that was how it was?

Yes, there was no creativity on our part

none of your own ideas, nothing

Nothing, nothing like that

so it was very restricted, very stifling

It was like that, and we knew that if "Journey by Train" or "How to make Tea", you could spot, there would be such questions

you would write them several times a year and each year?

Even at home they would know "Oh, there, she has an exciting subject, and she is expecting it to come in the exams". That is how it used to be.

Phindi

Question 5.1.2

And in the high school? (what do you remember about how your teachers taught you writing?)

The answers elicited show a strong emphasis on form and format, in a prescriptive manner, echoing the use of copying and learning off by heart at the primary school level, as evident in responses 5, 6, 7 and 8 above. This is contrary to what the cognitive school of process writing would suggest (Zamel, 1983; Raimes, 1985) is done by accomplished writers in both L1 and L2 (see 2.0).

11. *Even in high school there was a lot of writing in exercises .. because they used to give us a format, then we do the form of writing, the following day we will be writing ours, taking from the format .. so they were not provoking our thinking .. we were copying, even the style, even the word for word copying was also done in that time. We giving the really exact composition, we read it, reproduce it, even during the exam we use to produce it .. I can even recite the letter, because it was done by these formats and we were writing those they gave us .. it was not provoking our thinking.*

Benzile

12. *Yes, we had Mrs ?, I can't remember her name, she was from England, she was also good but she liked er the proverbs and the idioms, you know, this sort of thing, she was very good, you know, use them and you know in sentences in class you know in laying out the structure and guiding us.*

Vai

As in the responses to 5.1.1 in which some recollections were associated with certain teachers, at the high school level, too, certain teachers were recalled; as in responses 2, 3 and 12 they were remembered for having imparted certain insights. In the extract below the recall is in terms of what to do and what not to do, i.e. they are of a prescriptive nature:

13. *From std six the teacher who was teaching us, she was a lady, I remember she was fond of teaching us writing skills .. you see, she was mainly interested because if I can remember, well, she is the first one who made me become aware that when a person is*

writing a composition, I mean, writing a letter, oh, there were change there, there were already changes done by the department, whereby a student was supposed to, to write the er dr., I mean the address in a straight pattern: the salutation, the introduction, the content of the body, the content of the letter .. as well as the conclusion .. you see, so I became, so I became interested now, because then, because then I could see that she was sort of making me aware what I was doing at school .. she made me understand what was meant by the composition, she made me understand that when a person is writing a caption, the caption needs to be emphasised (this point is then further elaborated upon).... that is the emphasis, then when a person is introducing the composition, a person might sort of analyse the topic or sort of give us the underlying, the view, the overview of the topic before the person embarks on the body

who will do that?

The teacher, then that I became, I caught the method of writing the composition .. then the body, and she also taught us that when a person is, has embarked on the body, the person has er is sort of has to try to have the key sentences for each and every paragraph, the s-, the key sentence must be there, then the person must sort of try to elaborate from the key sentence .. that the person has given you, see that and that, when you've already given the key sentence and elaborated on the, on that sentence you need not, a person needs not to sort of repeat the very same content, the very same content of the paragraph, repeat it on, I mean the second paragraph, you see, on the following paragraph, then that gave me sort of the enlightenment .. in as far as the composition is concerned.

Mabongi

One teacher in particular expressed great confidence in her own writing ability: "since then (= my school days) I have never had a problem with writing a composition", and is in fact a professional writer of two novels, published in Xhosa. She is employed by READ to encourage extensive reading in primary and high schools in Natal and the READ materials provided also relate to and encourage writing activities:

14. *I do sometimes visit the schools and look at what children have written and because there in our (READ) packs then there is a guide on how teachers can do it because in fact sometimes the teachers do not have the confidence themselves, you know, to teach particular skills.*

Vai

Asked whether her problems at the primary school level (namely lack of guidance etc) carried on at high school level one teacher said:

15. *Yeah, I remember I had a problem in Afrikaans, the teacher would just come with a topic, I don't understand the topic .. I don't have the vocabulary, I don't know, but I had to write something .. and in English much the same thing, same thing ..*

Silindile

Her own experiences, and her COTE course experiences have given her insights for her own teaching:

16. *So now I've realised that what happened to me it mustn't happen to other pupils*

that's good, that's good

Because it is very difficult to write an essay, really, this cohesion and so on

this linking the paragraphs}

this linking the paragraphs}

And so on, and so on.

Silindile

The teaching of writing at high school level remained very prescriptive and predictive, particularly with regard to the setting of topics:

17. *Even at high school there wasn't much really, for the essays were waiting for us in the books, even at high school*

so no new topics would ever be given?

I don't think so because when we were in Form Five, there was a topic about, I think, "The Airways", something like that and we were just surprised "what are these

airways?", and most us didn't know anything about airways, so they would know that it would be something that the standards had been prepared for if I can put it like that

and in the exams would you find that these topics that you were familiar with would they come up?

Yes, even if the theme would be the same .. you know, for instance, we would know that something about a wedding would come up, even if they say, hm, the theme would be "The Most Enjoyable Day", something like that, then you can write about a wedding .. the theme, you know, you can write about a wedding; if it is something about "a journey" or "what I did during the holidays", then you write about a journey by train .. "I visited my mother, who stays so many miles away from home, then I took a train, this is what I did", and then you bring in the topic

so those are your memories from school days that were so very prescribed, in a way, and very dull?

Very dull and very boring, in fact I only started knowing about how to prepare students when I started attending the workshops, the English workshops (a reference to fieldwork done by ELET centre staff).

Phindi

Question 5.1.3

How do you teach writing yourself? Describe your last writing lesson.

The following teacher is aware of how one's own learning experiences may affect one's teaching procedures, as she draws comparisons with her own school experiences:

18. *So I see the difference now, and in as far as my teaching is concerned, at the beginning I used to do the same, when I wasn't exposed to this communicative approach, I used just to tell them.*

This teacher has attended several fieldwork courses run by ELET. She then described her most recent lesson in the following extracts:

19. *We have just started now with a paragraph and then I've told myself that we are going to do just one topic. we have talked about it in the class and now we have written the first paragraph so next time we will write the second one, trying to link it to the first one because .. Std six is very difficult, they don't understand most of things but they do have ideas .. because when you are talking to them, you are discussing, they come up with something, although some are shy, they don't want .. what I realized that you should be friendly with them, once you are friendly with them they come out with something.*

Her last utterance echoes Krashen's affective filter hypothesis, part of his Monitor Theory. The affective filter is a metaphor for "how much input is converted into intake" (Ellis, 1985:263). The lower the filter the better the chances for language acquisition to take place; if the filter is high (caused by a range of affective factors such as extreme anxiety, low self-esteem and poor motivation) little comprehensible input will get through to LAD (Language Acquisition Device) and convert into acquired competence.

The lesson was further described:

20. *So we have started with the paragraph but before we wrote a paragraph er .. we did a dialogue o.k. .. just told them o.k. you are in town, you are lost then now you are asking for a direction .. so they prepared that, they did it in class so o.k. now .. then next week I said o.k. last week we were doing the dialogue, we were lost in town, we ask for a direction, I want you (to) write that down now, so automatically we wrote a dialogue because they were using what they were saying the la., the previous week .. so we started with the dialogue, thereafter we started with the paragraph, at least it's promising ..*

Silindile

An indirect comparison is also made by the next teacher between her own high school experiences, when she was made aware of the use of an introduction, body and conclusion, and her own present teaching:

21. *I do teach one step at a time, I do teach but what I don't do thoroughly is marking because really I get piles and piles, then I give them work there, so what I do I just give*

the others, swop the exercise books, then they mark them, when I do get time I check and then put the signature on because I make them to do this record in the first page, they have the date page, then the marks that I'm going to put in and my signature that I've seen the work.

Thembi

The topic for this Std six composition was "My First Day at School", because as the teacher said "I thought it's something they've all experienced". She let the pupils explore the topic, using brainstorming techniques:

22. *I sort of (pause), what do they call it, a mind map or what I wrote the topic, then I said "close your eyes, and then imagine yourself the first day you were at a new school and then just say whatever comes into your mind", then they closed their eyes, then they told me so many things .. the building, the children, the teachers, how they feel on that day, what happened, so we wrote all these things down .. then I said: "o.k. which of the things that we have written on the board that we should start with?", so they told me and then we try and formed the first paragraph as an introduction.*

Her own school experiences have taught her that a great deal of preparation is necessary:

23. *Because the way I was taught writing I find it very difficult, then I didn't want to do the same to the pupils .. because they know it's something that is very difficult .. just to be given a topic, then you are asked to write, not knowing where to start.*

She uses group work:

24. *So the group decides o.k. what are we going to say in the next paragraph, so they write and write and then once they have written the end paragraph I exchange the papers, I take the papers from group one to group e .. I say "you read this paragraph .. and then you read it and tell me what's wrong with it .. how do you see it " .. and so on, and so on..then already I've just formed the groups, they know the challenge or whatever, so he reports .. "o.k. with him if they should have said this"; I was so surprised that Std six, if they are given a chance to do something they can do it, it's just that we assume that*

they can't cope}

English is not their language}

So they can't do this .. they do this, they do it very well.

When asked for further comments on the teaching of writing she believes fluency in speaking must precede writing:

25. *I found that we must talk a lot before we write .. in such a way that I was just thinking with other English teachers that if we can just let them talk all the time then the writing will come later .. because you can't just write if you can't speak .. so everything starts with speaking.*

That is another reason for her insisting that pupils speak English in the classroom:

26. *I developed this method of cards. When you speak Zulu you are given a card .. that's written 'Zulu speaker'.*

Silindile

In contrast to her own experiences of preparation for writing through learning off by heart or through very prescriptive formulae (as in 5, 6 and 7) at both primary and secondary school the following teacher prepares the pupils for their writing task through discussion, and the topic, although on the surface not much more exciting than the ones she herself wrote as a pupil, is seen as having real relevance to the pupils' own experiences:

27. *Well, for instance, let's say now at this time of the year, the first topic or what you do normally is write about what I did in the summer holidays, that is the topic that you normally give the pupils because it's something, they have all been on holiday ..*

what standard?

Six to eight, right, so then we discuss first of all what happened from the time the schools closed, you know, then we discuss (it turns out that the discussion focusses on the kinds of part-time jobs that boys in particular are able to find in shops and supermarkets; no mention of anything related to the girls!)

so they pool a lot of ideas together like that?

Alright, then we arrange now what would go into as an introduction and then the body and then the conclusion. Then we always tell them that in the conclusion a person must try to be creative, say to say or mention, well, "what I learnt from this" or "in future, I think this is how I am going to do this and this. This is what I have learnt".. this is how we do it normally.

so, after the discussion you let them do it at home?

We let them do it in class - now we encourage them to write their compositions in class, so that they get used to writing them in class during, what, (a) thirty minutes' period, so it's always make use of a double period. We use the first one now for pulling in ideas .. and planning the essay, then the following day make them write it in the classroom .. I think it's one way of checking that they do their own writing, and then getting them used to writing it within a given space of time, so that they get real practice for the examination (this point is further elaborated on in the interview). So that is how we usually do it but it does happen that sometimes we say "go and complete your work at home"

hm, and then you take them in, and then you mark, you mark it?

Yes, I mark it sometimes you say "now, o.k., let's sit together, you read the first paragraph, let's see how you've introduced your composition .. let's read yours, read yours then", and it just becomes a discussion, a class discussion, oh, it's a very good introduction, and then they get ideas from each other for their next lesson

so have you found that pupils seem to enjoy this?

They enjoy it and I too enjoy it, when I teach it like that

more than you did at school?

Yes, because I get ideas from them, so it's co-operation. They are giving me ideas too, and I enjoy listening to something new rather than always giving something to the children: "now, this is what you must do when you write your composition."

Phindi

Macro aspects are seen as playing an important part in the possibilities for language teaching, as noted by this teacher in a statement which seems to reveal a great deal about writing as a matter which has to be 'drilled', although it is more likely that she feels there is a lack of guidance in the syllabus itself. There is a sense that decision making processes happen at a higher level (Pretoria, Ulundi) and that the teacher has no influence or say:

28. *And then in my teaching experience I found that usually we seem to adopt to the old style of teaching, now that is caused by our types of syllabuses, the way the syllabuses are .. made, you know .. they don't give more time for, you know to, for drilling the compositions, they don't say you must teach the composition first before they write, they just give topics, you know.*

Elsewhere in the interview this teacher brought up the same point; in response to my comment that things have changed a great deal since her own school days she said:

29. *Very much, very much, and I want to influence other teachers too .. to use those methods because our syllabuses are not arranged well, I, I don't seem to like, they seem to, we have a very old syllabus, it hasn't changed since 1985 .. so it's a very old syllabus, which concentrated more on the teacher part, less on the pupil part*

on the learners, yes

So even the books, the language books that we have, they don't involve much of the pupil activity .. it's the teacher eighty percent .. and the pupils twenty percent, and most of the part for the pupil it's writing classwork, homework and composition.

Bongile

Rather than leaving it at that she has looked for help elsewhere and has found some books in the ELET resource centre which are relevant to the writing of compositions, and mentioned Write Well:

30. *So I've discovered some information there which I've used this year and I found it very useful*

like for example?

Like for example you, you give pupils the, you know, topic, you don't just give the topic as is, like, for instance I've given my pupils er a topic er My First Day at School .. but in the first instance I just ask them questions, what happened, can you think back on the first day that you came at school .. what happened ..

Benzile

One teacher confessed to feeling insecure about the teaching of writing. The same teacher had described her own primary school experiences as very prescriptive and coercive (see extract 4). Such an emphasis on accuracy and correctness inhibits the writer, and blocks ideas (Raimes, 1987; Zamel 1992):

31. *You see, I wasn't confident, so whatever I was doing I was just doing it*

were you drawing on how you'd been taught, do you think? did you use, did you use a lot of how you were taught, do you think you were relying?

Yeah, I was relying on that and I also sort of concentrated on the method, methods that were used by my teachers, you see, the methods that were used by my teachers.

Mabongi

5.2 Responses to the Questionnaire Questions 7 - 10.

The questionnaire (Appendix 1) was given to the teachers immediately before the first writing workshop. The responses to questions 1-6 are found in 4.4.1 Questionnaire Responses (A Summary of Questions 1 - 6). The following is a summary of the teachers' responses to questions 7 - 10:

7. What kinds of writing do you ever engage in at school, and at home? List these below and do not worry if certain activities appear twice:

Zulu	School	messages to other teachers letters to parents daily preparation
-------------	--------	---

These were the only three entries to this question.

	Home	letters menu minutes for women's organizations messages invitations notices plans for the future songs (copied from famous song stars) novels and short stories (in Xhosa)
--	------	--

The last entry is from the READ teacher, who has had her work published. Two students left this section blank.

English	School	letter writing language writing minutes of meetings charts for teaching aids reports, summaries and notes materials writing on the board in class comments in pupils' exercise books preparation work; schemes duty lists poems
----------------	--------	---

All the teachers, except one, filled in the following section.

Home informal letters to first language speakers of English
menu
shopping list
things to do the following day
study notes
budget
invitations
birthday wishes

All the students contributed to this section.

8. **Rank the following approaches to writing in order of importance:**

The students were asked to rank order approaches to writing in terms of a. accuracy, b. textual organization, c. purpose or d. fluency. Five of the students chose purpose and textual organization above any others in first and second positions, and fluency as the least important.

9. **What feelings do you have about writing?**

The questionnaire provided space for both positive and negative expressions about writing. The students wrote the following positive comments:

1. *I feel that learners should be given more of writing. So that they will develop the skill of accuracy, and obtain the way of learning the correct spelling.*
2. *There is always a chance of correcting one's mistakes.*
3. *I enjoy writing during leisure time. I always write things that I wish or things that have happened. I like writing poems and stories that are imaginary.*
4. *I enjoy writing letters, especially informal letters, and writing notes for my studies.*

5. *It is creative. I can write about my feelings, emotions etc. persuade and apologize.*
6. *Writing is such a good skill for e.g. you write your mind gives out ideas etc. When you get your results then you know how well you have written.*
7. *if I take down the message or write a message for somebody to read. I also enjoy letter writing.*
8. *One assesses one's knowledge through writing. Writing is the most relevant way of practicing formal language. Keeps the mind working i.e. one cannot write whilst one's mind is not functioning. Enhances thinking i.e. one has to think the logic way of writing what one wants to write.*

Students' negative comments about writing:

1. *Writing must not be a lot that will be copied as notes. Because they tend to be lazy to finish up those notes. It is boring to read a lot which is written on your own writing.*
2. *It can be time consuming. There is no chance of repeating one's self if people don't.*
3. *I don't enjoy writing assignments, scheme of work for the whole year because of the time it takes.*
4. *Writing assignments where you have to write long essays.*
5. *It is time consuming. It is better to phone where possible. I do not write neatly. I hate untidy work!.*
6. *When the instructions are not clearly defined and writing becomes a mess more than a pleasure. When the reader capitalizes on mistakes rather than on the message.*
7. *Writing formal letters. Writing something for evaluation.*
8. *It is time consuming. The committed mind can fail to concentrate on formal writing.*

The positive and negative comments have been rendered as they were written by the students; there are examples where clarity is obscured.

10. **Put an X where you place yourself as a writer**

The students were asked to position themselves 'as writers' on an open line that indicated 'poor', 'average' and 'excellent'. There were thus possibilities for in between positions; however, no one deviated from the three terms, and no one ticked "poor". Six students considered themselves 'average' writers; two 'excellent'. One of these was the READ teacher, who writes professionally.

The above pre-writing interview as well as the questionnaire questions 7-10 above, were intended to elicit from the teachers the insights and perceptions they had about writing, based on their own past and present experiences, prior to the process writing workshops. The responses to these questionnaire questions will be analysed below in detail (see 5.7 Overall Analysis of Findings).

5.3 Responses to Post-Process Writing Workshop Interview Questions

These questions have already been listed in 4.0. They are the following:

- 5.3.1. After the writing workshops do you feel you have a better understanding of what people do when they write? Do you feel you have gained in your understanding of what is involved in writing?
- 5.3.2. In what ways could you transfer any of the ideas from the workshops into your classroom?
- 5.3.3. While participating in the workshops did you experience any problems? If there were any, what were they? Did you get stuck at any point?
- 5.3.4. Now that you have experienced the writing workshops how would you explain process writing to a colleague?
- 5.3.5. Do you consider it important that teachers engage in writing activities themselves?

Question 5.3.1.

After the writing workshops do you feel you have a better understanding of what people do when they write? /Do you feel you have gained in your understanding of what is involved in writing?

The teacher who is already an experienced writer and has published several books in Xhosa found a number of her own past experiences as a writer confirmed, particularly related to the time factor in process writing:

32. *As a writer you've got to decide which is the best way, and in doing that then you sit for hours trying to put something on paper, and when you look at it you think, "no, this is not the way"; I would think people are going to sit hours and read out the things that they're doing again, see .. so and for me*

so time

Time, yes

is something

Yes

there's a lot of time

Yeah}

involved}

And it was very comforting for me as, as, as a writer to learn that after all what I thought, what I thought, I mean, I thought I was mad if I threw things away and I wrote something and said "no, no, no it's not this way" and redo it again, and this was confirmed but even in the case of experienced writers .. this is what they are doing, so I'm not mad, you see!

Vai

Participation in the writing workshops also heightened other teachers' awareness of the time that is involved in producing a good piece of writing and of the necessity for drafting, as expressed in the following extract in response to a specific question related to that:

33. *Yeah, redrafting as I've done, I've tried to show you, this drafting, drafting, redrafting helped me a lot because now I'm aware that you can never rely on the first draft.*

Zama

34. *what I've discovered is that the more you spend time on what you've written the more you want to make changes and...*

that's very perceptive, yes

Yes, cause if you look at your first draft, you really, maybe after two days, no, I should have added something here. or I should've taken it not in this way, the other way, so you just keep on changing, time and again.

Phindi

Others admitted that their own pupils are not given such opportunities to draft and re-draft and blame this on macro issues, related to the curriculum, the syllabus and the attitudes of both principals and inspectors:

35. *There is that pressure of the curriculum, you have to cover up the syllabus.*

Rose

36. *(The inspectors) and even the principal takes the work, and they want to see written work, more than anything else .. they don't believe in this development of*

of the writing skills?

.... of the writing skills. They just want to see something written down so there's a lot to be written.

Zama

Another teacher reflected on the importance of pre-writing activities that will activate appropriate schemata:

37. *The guidelines, you are helped in each stage, you know exactly what to do .. if I can just make an example, let's take that first workshop .. where you told us about your childhood, so that was very interesting, because, alright, I can say something about my childhood, some of the things I have forgotten .. so the time you told us about your childhood it's the time you reminded us of our childhood*

it triggers off ideas to do that?

Yeah, that was very interesting, in such a way that I even used that workshop in my class.

She also developed a sense of different registers serving different purposes:

38. *I have gained a lot, especially in workshops 3 and 4. I used to read the newspaper, I wasn't aware of different types of writing styles and so on, and so on, so through those workshops now when I read and so on, I have learnt so much, especially the third and fourth workshop .. I don't read papers so much, I just read those few things, so after these workshops*

you have gained an awareness of different texts?

In that sense, that's it, that's it

that they are structured differently?

And how should you write when you are writing to the editor and so on.

Silindile

Question 5.3.2

In what ways could you transfer any of the ideas from the workshops into your classroom?

One teacher, who was asked if participating in the writing workshops had given her further insights for classroom teaching, was clear about the usefulness of doing drafts and of using examples, certainly with older pupils, and when writing herself:

39. *Yes, for instance when we say that pupils should write we, we never think about the draft, doing perhaps the draft together with them .. we tell them the techniques of going about the writing the letter to the newspaper, and then we somehow, without showing, showing them samples, of the letters for the editors, we then tell to write and we sometimes brainstorm certain topics which they perhaps are not going to write about, especially with the (Std) ninths, this is what we usually do I think it helps to let them see the letter .. an example .. find(ing) texts that are related to the newspaper make it easier, it was even easier for me, rather than to think of how am I going to go about it.*

Zodwa

When asked if she thought it possible to let the students do peer checking by passing around their drafts she took onboard the idea but with a focus on discrete items:

40. *Yes, hopefully, and what I thought is helpful, let them, let the others check what they have written, sort of exchange and correct spelling here and there.*

In reflecting upon her own classroom situation another teacher expressed an awareness of the fact that cognitive skills may develop through writing activities (Johns, 1990):

41. *Er, we didn't know that er sometimes we give we don't give time er writing a lot of writing .. yes, we used, you know (inaudible) instead of the class to write*

you used to what?

.... they used to talk

instead of writing}

oh, right}

A lot of talking .. instead of writing .. but if they write they remember what they er they've written down .. the things stay longer in their minds when they have written ? down .. and if er and this writing, as far as I can see, it helps a child to think .. writing ma-, makes a child to think .. and it's because you have to think about what you are writing, you have to read what you are writing .. you have to understand what you are writing.

Benzile

Discussing a process approach to writing in more general terms one teacher was aware of inherent problems with regard to the implementation in the classroom. There is an awareness that a process approach to writing is very time consuming. This time factor is also referred to under Question 5.3.4. The references made to how her pupils have been taught in the primary school echo her own primary school experiences:

42. *The ideas is quite good, especially where you have large classes, you see, but one problem really is that it is very time consuming .. you know, when we speak to our students you just give a topic and then you try and explain when you give it to them now, say it's time for a discussion the type of pupils we have for instance this year, they are not the asking type they never ask questionsyou explain everything and they say "yes, yes"*

so you don't know

Where their problems lie}

where their problems lie}

.... I think they are afraid to talk

is it because it's early in the year, or?

No, I don't think, the the thing is it dates back from primary education, where they merely accept things and how teaching is really being done .. so they are given a specimen, copy this specimen as it is, take these notes at the end of it all, at the end of

the day they know questions will be asked from what they have been given .. so they don't contribute anything

yeah, yeah, so they are not used to being autonomous or independent learners

No, they are not at all autonomous, they are not independent learners, so that's the problem I have really.

There is a concern with what pupils (in this case Std 6) will be capable of handling in the classroom:

43. *I think it will also be easy for me to make my own students to link the writing they do in class and what will happen once they leave the classroom .. so for instance when we write to the newspaper .. we, we never think of the problems that they can want too write to I mean about the newspaper.*

Later in this conversation the same teacher remarked:

44. *And it became more realistic in the sense that, for instance, when we had to post the letters .. it's a bit interesting, I think, if the pupils have to think of their article (=letters?) being published*

yeah, so there is more authentic sense of ..

Besides that it has made their writing to be realistic it will also, it will also help them to buy the newspapers, and read through it, trying to find their own articles, and basically that was very interesting.

Phindi

The next teacher expressed her intentions to try brain storming activities with her pupils:

45. *Pooling ideas together, yes, that I can use as well, though I haven't tried it, but I I know how effective it really is, but I think of trying all these ideas on writing because writing is is one of the important skills that pupils should acquire.*

Bongile

Question 5.3.3

While participating in the workshops did you experience any problems? If there were any, what were they? Did you get stuck at any point?

The majority of the teachers denied having any problems. There may be several reasons for this: they had already indicated on the questionnaires their own views of themselves as writers (see 5.2). These were mostly favorable or positive and to concede to any problem might be considered a contradiction of that assessment. Furthermore their own views of themselves as teachers may not allow any real weaknesses to be revealed. There were exceptions to this:

46. *Yes, in fact when we were doing this writing, this newspaper writing .. I think it wasn't very easy. I think I I think it was caused first because, you know, now if you are writing to the newspaper, there will be so many people reading this article (=letter) and you want to make sure that what you write is something which can be understood and have the required effect .. you want to now make sure it reaches the effect you want to have on the reader .. so that it has the desired effect, so that when I had to write something that really made me think twice .. and try to write even a paragraph and make sure that the vocabulary is correct, am I still following am I still saying what I really want to say .. so I think that really*

that was the most demanding?

Yes that one was really quite hard for me, I think, if I hadn't but it helped me to know what was required from me as a writer.

Phindi

The same area of difficulty was mentioned by the experienced Xhosa writer; this is possibly because her expertise is in the area of fiction. In answer to a question about what she thought of the last workshop "when we looked at the newspaper in terms of different texts and different purposes", she replied:

47. *I too found that not very easy because hm it's er this, this is a, a kind of writing that people are trained for and it's got to be in a certain style and a certain format because of the target audience, you see so I found that really above my head completely, I thought that was for for professionals.*

Vai

Question 5.3.4

Now that you have experienced the writing workshops how would you explain process writing to a colleague?

The issues of time and of writing as a process that involve writing and re-writing are considered particularly important by the above teacher (see 47), who is involved in running READ workshops for other teachers, as well as by others. However, the responses did not emphasise the role that peer feedback may play.

48. *I think the key element, when you want to tackle writing, is to be very patient and know that you can't just at the snap of a finger produce something; writing is a slow process that can sometimes be stressful, so I would say here that all the people that are impatient must immediately leave the room, I want people who are not, do not want to get results .. straight away now .. you know, they are prepared to write and, and tell themselves that this is not good, and try it again, again and again and again .. until at least they've got something like absolute what percent, because I'm not sure that it can be hundred percent.*

Vai

49. *I would say process writing is a type of writing where you just don't go off, give a topic and start off, without having any prior discussion, so you first discuss the topic by giving an example, like you did when you with your first one with earliest childhood memories. First you give the topic, then give give the pupils, the students time to discuss and then they start writing, either in groups or individually .. and then later on, if there is time, then they also discuss what has been written, and see if it's really what is been required or expected from them, and then do the corrections together, and then add something now that was (inaudible) by the group.*

Phindi

Question 5.3.5

Do you consider it important that teachers engage in writing activities themselves?

There was general agreement that teachers will benefit from engaging in writing activities, thus experiencing at first hand some of the problems that their own pupils may have:

50. *It's very important, it's very important to a teacher*

why do you think that?

It widened, it er it has widened my own mind 'cause I've er seen different texts, I've seen different texts and how to write them, and I know now that I (have?) some different approaches.

51. *it is very useful for teachers to try to write for themselves. I look, I'm, I'm a living example: I would give teachers something to write about .. "I'm only giving you er twelve minutes to do this exercise", you see, but now when it was my turn to do it's only then I learnt so then I think teachers must go through the same process*

to understand?}

Right, to understand}

it because, really, sometimes people are doing bad things because they are not aware .. that this is not the way to do it or that this is not good, it's intimidating to the pupil, or whatever.

Vai (employed by READ)

52. *I think it is quite important because really, if you don't do it you don't really know what the problems are for the students .. once you start doing it yourself then you know, oh, I had this problem here, I think this is what I should point out to the pupils*

Phindi

53. *Just to introduce them to this creative writing ... because we only know that we have to read what is in the books, we don't have to write our own things, there is little effort(?) .. it develops creativity, you know, which much of it could be done, creativity could be different*

and do you think it would also help teachers understand what pupils' problems might be?

Yes, as they have gone through those experiences, those problems, they can understand them much better, the problems ... otherwise they are just theorizing the whole thing.

Rose

5.4 Log-Book Entries

The purpose of the researcher using a log-book for comments has been outlined in 4.7.3. These entries of observations were written after each workshop. They were brief and to the point, the focus for data collection being on the interviews. The entries made after writing workshops one and two are given here as examples.

5.4.1 Workshop One

Did questionnaire with the eight teachers present. Although I had told teachers that the workshops would start today several thought that D. would teach (as she usually does on Mondays) so absence more likely due to transport problems, i.e. dispute between taxi and bus drivers in the Durban area (Mid-March 1993), than to the writing workshops. File, paper and note-books handed out and explained and confidentiality promised. Assured them of my own poor memory (with regard to childhood memories); told three stories. P. thought handout was for homework. Sense of apprehension was in the air; I had to reassure them that it was for enjoyment (not evaluation). Despite handout (which outlines steps) most started writing straight away - we turned to handout after they had been writing for 20-30 minutes; very absorbed, lots of ideas. Their discussions focussed on content, on story. Laughter around the tables.

5.4.2 Workshop Two

Latecomers: possible reasons: taxi feud; SADTU action; down chalk. Necessary to include something on macro conditions of S.A. Working conditions for teachers (large classes; setting tests; marking etc) - great deal of travelling; pregnancies; fatigue in the afternoon.

Writers work at different paces - what to do? wait for each other or proceed? Teachers elaborated on their questions and used that as their plan, rather than jot a number of ideas

down. One group worked out elaborate questions and asked each other these. Some will use material with own students.

Opening up during sessions - laughing; intense listening. A great deal of talking about content.

Comment: "so that means that we should never just give a topic."

These log-book entries show a concern for both macro and micro issues, as do those from the last two workshops, e.g.:

problems occur all the time: today two teachers were pulled out of taxis, to participate in a march, a considerable crowd walking with placards. They were worried how they were going to get home.

In terms of writing the excerpts concerning the first workshop shows my awareness at this point of the teachers' unfamiliarity with writing as a process and their subsequent unease at having to write there and then in the presence of others. Later on in the workshops I have commented on their developing confidence; some of them seemed to prefer working in pairs or groups, and teamed up with the same people at each workshop.

5.5 Teachers' Note-Book Commentaries

As explained in 3.3.2 Journals, Diaries or Note-Books and 4.7.4 Teachers' Note-Books the writing in these provide participants with opportunities for reflection on their learning experiences, amongst other things. Although the teachers were from the outset (namely the first workshop) asked to make use of the note-books given to them, in addition to the files with the workshop materials and paper for their own writings, only half (five) of them made use of these. The other half avoided using the note-books, with excuses such as 'lack of time' and 'nothing to say'. They were all asked to make comments, related to each of the workshops and to any writing problems they personally experienced, as Winer (1992) asked the students to do in her study. The questions the DOTE teachers were verbally asked to reflect upon at home were the following:

- a. think about steps in the writing process - which did you follow? which were useful, or not?
- b. did you get stuck at any point? why?
- c. what did you like/dislike?
- d. were there any problem areas? what were they?
- e. what was interesting/helpful?

The following selected teachers' note-book entries have been arranged in their chronological order, as they were made after each workshop. This arrangement will reflect any changes that occurred in the teachers' understanding of what is involved in writing. Of those that did make entries in their note-books not all wrote after each workshop.

5.5.1 Workshop One

1. *I would rather prefer to be given that task as a homework to prepare first so as I could be able to write facts in a chronological order.*

Bongile

2. *This was very interesting, especially the pre-writing activities when the tutor told the participants what she remembers from her childhood. This helped the participants to remember their childhood. The handout also made it possible for the participants to write.*

Silindile

3. *This was useful. The teacher gave direct instruction. I easily understood what she wanted. It became easier to write my personal experiences - the information could flow easily - unlike when a person has to write something he or she imagines. I did not get stuck because the information could easily flow. Instead, I saw time very short because such activities require more time, i.e. when one explores one's world of experience. Such activities are interesting even when used with pupils at the secondary school level. The teacher can be advised to arrange special time for such activities, i.e. longer time than the one hour period we used.*

Benzile

4. *Childhood memories are not easy to remember, only memories about bad experiences seem to come to my mind. I find this task stressful, there is not enough time to think and put things together. A good exercise which may produce writers because even born writers need training and guidance. Memories about nice experiences don't seem as good for writing about as the bad ones. Why? I need to remember my good childhood memories too. Is it true that anything that does not destroy one makes one stronger? I think so.*

Vai

5.5.2 Workshop Two

5. *This was interesting and it was easy for the participants to write since there were guidelines in all the activities. Therefore the participants knew exactly what to do.*

Silindile

6. *This was a useful workshop. It required the organization of information from my mind, i.e. acquainting me with various ways of presenting an information. I became stuck at first when my teacher could not give clear instruction as to what we were supposed to do. This led me to writing using the chronological sequence of events, instead of focusing in various methods of writing e.g. flashback. But this was later corrected when we were re-instructed.*

Benzile

7. *This exercise is much better than the previous one, ideas are flowing easier to my mind. I need more time though because sometimes I get stuck in the middle of the process. I need to put myself in the shoes of the readers to check if what I've written will make sense to them.*

Vai

5.5.3 Workshop Three

8. *The workshop was interesting, mind-searching. Writing to the editor is something I hadn't thought of in the past. But now I think of venturing.*

Bongile

9. *I followed all of them (=steps in writing process) and they became useful and I realised how easy it (is) to make pupils write without asking them in an imposing manner. I liked the idea that writing to the editor, for example, should not be theoretical and pupils should really be made to post the letters. The lesson became so practical I could not believe it. It brought too my awareness how concise one needs to be when writing to the editor. The workshop however takes a short time and usually not enough for completion of activities.*

Zothile

10. *I encountered a problem when I could not clearly understand the method I was supposed to use when writing i.e. instructions were not very clear. They were not chronological, i.e. I was firstly told to write the letter and after having written, I was instructed to write a short letter - cut down some words. Though I firstly failed but the second instruction guided me well. I got it. I mastered the lesson.*

Benzile

11. *Writing about street beggars: who is my real target audience for this response? The beggars themselves or the regime? The regime is going to say the beggars do get their disability grants and the beggars are going to deny it because they want more money from us. Anyway, who is right? S. and myself put this letter together, and we found the exercise quite exciting.*

Vai

5.5.4 Workshop Four

12. *I liked the workshop on writing. I wonder how I would use it in a classroom situation. I think the problem areas were on the understanding the different texts. But once mastered it becomes easier. The area I found interesting or helpful is when now the analysis of the texts were made how writers display adverts, recipes, news report, cartoons etc.*

Bongile

13. *Newspapers and magazines, a special kind of writing. I am sure I know where to look for a particular article in a newspaper or my favorite magazines. One needs a special training and experience for this kind of writing. This workshop has actually made me more aware of newspapers and magazines and the work and effort involved. The steps in the process were very useful - the different styles and formats used.*

Vai

As mentioned above only half the teachers used the note-books, which were intended to be used in the way journals have been used in teacher education (Anderson, 1992/93). The reasons why so few note-book entries were made may be due to the following: inadequate checks were made by the researcher, as the teachers were, deliberately, left to

their own devices. They were asked to write at home, after each workshop, in the way diaries, in some societies and cultures, are frequently used to record inner thoughts and reflections. However, for diary journals to be successful, White (1985) and Jarvis (1992) advocate, amongst other things, that immediate feedback to entries be provided, and this did not occur in this research project. Furthermore it is possible that the kind of written introspection that Winer (1992) obtained from her student teachers, over a long period, is culturally specific to the North American environment, where children are reared to publically analyse and express opinions about their own strengths and weaknesses. In other societies and cultures (e.g. Denmark, the researcher's country of birth) this kind of focus on the self is frowned upon, except in strictly private diaries.

The note-book entries were envisaged as empowering outcomes of the teachers' participation in the writing workshops. As the above extracts show the note-books gave the teachers opportunities to reflect critically upon what is involved in writing. An analysis of these entries show that positive mention was made of the use of autobiographical material as starting points for writing (entries 2, 3, and 4). The workshops strengthened the teachers' awareness that writing is a time-consuming and recursive activity (entries 3, 7, 9) which requires consideration of audience (7, 9 and 11). It appears that for some of the teachers note-book writing helped clarify many of the characteristics of a process approach to writing. Certain negative points (1, 6 and 10) were more frankly expressed in the note-books than in the interviews themselves.

5.6 Nonparticipant Observer's Report

Five of the teachers were interviewed by a nonparticipant observer after the process writing workshops had taken place, and a short report was written (see Appendix 3) by the interviewer, who is the other tutor on the DOTE course. Thus she already knew the teachers although she did not see the workshop materials, prior to her interviews with the participants, nor did she attend the workshops. The unstructured interviews took place for triangulation purposes, as explained in (3.6 Validity and Reliability and 4.6.5 Triangulation Input). They were an opportunity for the teachers to further reflect upon what had taken place, and for them to say things about their participation in the writing workshops which they might not have wished to say directly to the researcher, particularly in terms of negative criticism. The entire report is included as Appendix 3; what follows here is a summary of its main points:

In terms of the aims of the research project, namely to provide the participating teachers with opportunities to experience process writing and to reflect upon their writing experiences the workshop activities appear to have brought about these aims, according to the report. It mentions that "the teachers all felt that they had gained a better understanding of the writing process" and that "there was a general awareness that the process is messy and stressful". Nevertheless the atmosphere was reportedly "relaxed", and the teachers "felt good" about the experience. Some of the teachers felt that "the method was time consuming" and were concerned about "the time-constraints", particularly with regard to their own classrooms. There was evidence that some of them had used ideas from the writing workshops in their own classrooms, although one teacher felt unable to do so because the materials were not "school-level oriented". The report makes the suggestion that "the researcher could assist teachers who find difficulty in adapting methods to suit the level at which they teach". In conclusion the report is a positive one and may be interpreted as encouraging of further process writing workshops for teachers.

5.7 Overall Analysis of Findings

5.7.1 Focus for Analysis

Yin warns that "the analysis of case study evidence is one of the least developed and most difficult aspects of doing case studies" (1984:99). As described above (in 3.7 Case Study Analysis) his guidelines have been followed, where appropriate. The following analysis of the entire body of research findings from their different sources (interviews, questionnaires, log-book, note-books and triangulation report) is an attempt at "explanation-building" (Yin,1984:107), using the narrative form. In order to strengthen this kind of analysis references have from time to time been made to the theoretical framework, outlined in 2.0 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND.

Because the overall framework for the research project was provided by the four process writing workshops the pre-workshops data have been analysed separately from the post-workshops data. As it would be impossible to comment on all that emerged from the total data only certain areas have been isolated for "explanation-building", and many other aspects of the teachers' reflections have had to be left out; these include, amongst others,

comments made about sometimes specific teachers (see extracts 2,3 12, 13, 14) and the usefulness of attending workshops and other in-service training courses (extracts 17, 18, 29). From the pre-workshops data the focus is on prescriptive practices at school, and how these relate to critical theory (see 2.0 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND). From the post-workshop data it is on matters related to the processes of writing and the teachers' reflections on the usefulness of drafts and of authentic tasks, on time factors, and on pair and group work that have been focused on in the analysis. Furthermore, there are indications of the teachers' interest in the beginnings of genre analysis and these are also discussed below. Where appropriate other data have been incorporated, in order to write a narrative summary of what the total data reflect about the teachers' reactions to a process approach to writing and their understanding of it, after the workshops (see 4.2 Aims and Objectives of the Research Project).

5.7.2 Overview of Pre-Process Writing Workshop Reflections

The overall impression of the experiences that the teachers had had at both primary and secondary school with regard to the learning and teaching of L2 writing is that it was generally very prescriptive. A great deal of drilling, of 'byhearting' and of mechanical, formulaic writing took place (see extracts 5, 6, 7, 10, 11), often without any understanding of what was required (purpose), or who the writing was for (audience), except for the teacher, who was often seen as someone to be feared, as errors were frowned upon (4, 6). The focus was on forms (accuracy), and terminology was used without the pupils understanding the meaning of such words as "introduction", "body" and "conclusion". The use of models occurred but without any (genre) analysis of how and why a text was composed the way it was, and this may be the reason why the teachers' recollections of the use of model texts were negative (1, 2, 9). Topics were always set by teachers, something which remains the norm in present day classrooms, as admitted in the interviews with the DOTE teachers and as found by Harran (1993). These topics were usually circulated year after year. The purpose of setting the same topics again and again was twofold: they could be conveyed into other similar topics in the exams and this would ensure acceptable results for the teacher and the school. As a result of pupils writing essays that had already been pre-rehearsed during the year the exam results would not genuinely reflect the pupils' L2 writing abilities but rather their ability to recall what they had learnt off by heart. This stifles the development of cognitive skills (Johns, 1990), and prevents learners' emancipation and empowerment. Such an approach

to writing will inevitably lead to boredom and a lack of ownership of the end product. It is also likely to lead to limited writing in adulthood, as certain questionnaire answers reflect (see 5.2 Responses to the Questionnaire Questions 7 - 10), with the exception of the teacher who is a professional Xhosa writer; she attributes her confidence as a writer to certain teachers and to a great deal of English input as a child. Despite their own ratings of themselves as average to excellent writers, as shown in the questionnaire responses in the writing workshops some participants experienced difficulties (see for example Question 5.3.4).

5.7.3 Overview of Post-Process Writing Workshop Reflections

While the above findings are fairly predictable in the South African context, where both macro and micro issues within the educational world have stifled teacher education at Colleges of Education, prevented teacher development (Kallaway, 1984) and led to outmoded methods of teaching being maintained, the section that follows shows that teachers may benefit from being given the opportunity to reflect, not only on past experiences, as above, but on insights as outcomes of an activity (Ellis, 1993) that they have actively taken part in.

As mentioned above it was necessary to limit the comments on the teachers' reflections to four areas only, namely the use of drafts and other time related factors, the setting of authentic tasks, pair and group work and finally the beginnings of a simple form of genre analysis.

There was some acknowledgement that it is important to draft and re-draft in order to achieve a competent piece of writing (extracts 32, 33, 39, 5.4.2), at the same time this was seen as very time consuming and possibly not feasible to do for each writing assignment. The teachers, by going through the writing process several times, realised that a great deal of time is needed to produce a good piece of writing (32, 33, 42, 48, 51; 5.5 one, 3; 5.5 two, 7), and there is a strong awareness that such generous time allocations will not be viewed favorably at their schools. Principals and inspectors were accused, by one teacher, of not knowing about a process approach to writing themselves, and therefore focussing on quantities of writing exercises rather than on developing writing abilities through admittedly time consuming drafts.

The writing activities that the teachers were asked to engage in prompted an awareness that by having one's own background knowledge activated before writing (22, 25, 27, 30, 37, 5.5 one, 2), and by carefully chosen topics (the domain of teachers) it is possible to get started, even where there is a sense of apprehension. In fact, it was clear from the pre-writing workshop data that many of the teachers already encourage pre-writing activities in their own classrooms, even when other writing instructions are only vaguely described (see 5.1 Responses to Pre-Process Writing Workshop Interview Questions). Authentic tasks are realised to be important to capture the interest of the writer (43, 44, 5.5 three, 8 & 9). Working in pairs and groups was not a new experience for these DOTE students; nevertheless, to collaborate on writing tasks such as the letter to the editor was experienced as helpful (40, 45, 5.5 three, 11).

The final focus of reflection by the teachers to be discussed is their interest in what was planned as the beginnings of a genre based approach to writing (see 2.3.3 New Directions in the Teaching of Writing and 4.5 The Process Writing Workshop Materials). The analysis of different texts, which formed part of the pre-writing exercises of workshop 4, was one activity that many of the teachers commented on as being difficult and challenging (38, 50, 5.5 four, 12 & 13). The kind of interest shown indicates one area that needs to be further explored in future process writing workshops for teachers.

5.7.4 Insights from Log- and Note-Book Entries and Nonparticipant Observer's Report

The log-book gave me an opportunity to express certain apprehensions and impressions experienced during the writing workshop period. I believe the log-book is an important tool in qualitative research of the above interactive kind in that the use of a log-book helps recall many details that may otherwise be lost. It was unavoidable that in March 1993 attention was paid to both macro and micro issues in all log-book entries, although only those made after workshops one and two have been included here.

The teachers' note-book entries and the report were mostly favorable and positive about the writing materials and experiences, and appear to confirm that teachers gain insights from the participation in an activity that may subsequently be reflected upon, as discussed in the opening paragraphs to this chapter.

This chapter has examined data from a wide range of sources (interview and questionnaire questions; log-and note-book entries; triangulation report), which have been discussed in some detail. The conclusions that may be drawn from the entire research project follow in 6.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this final chapter it is the intention to critically evaluate the entire research project and to put forward suggestions for future research directions. The findings have already been summarised (see 5.0) in terms of process writing and language 'teacher development', an aspect of teacher education (as defined by Freeman, 1989a), drawing together theoretical and practical insights gained by the researcher, and by the teachers as participants in the process writing workshops. The insights and the conclusions drawn from these may point to new directions for research within the fields of second language teaching and learning, and teacher education and development.

6.1 Critique of the Research Project

In terms of the aims of this qualitative case study (4.2 Aims and Objectives of the Research Project) it is my belief, as the participant researcher, that these were met relatively adequately; certainly they were constantly in my mind as the project proceeded. Being researcher and teacher at the same time had its advantages and disadvantages. Goetz & LeCompte (1984:97) mention, for example, that "involvement with participants creates a number of problems. Maintaining the capacity for objectivity is one of them." In the case of this project this problem was counteracted by asking a colleague to write a post-workshops non-participant report, and by attempting to be honest about and aware of my own subjectivities (3.4 The Case Study Researcher).

There are certain areas where questions may be raised with regard to the design and implementation of the workshop materials and the ways in which the workshops were organised. One of these may relate to the number of writing workshops. There were specific reasons why the number of workshops was restricted to four, and these included attendance problems. The teachers enrolled in the DOTE course all work in township or semi-rural schools and have considerable distances to travel, relying on taxi or bus transport, which are often affected by disputes and strikes. Such events, as well as SADTU marches, did occur at the time of the workshops (March 1993) and caused some teachers to arrive late; had there been more workshops, over several more weeks, absenteeism might have become a problem. Despite being a small scale piece of research a great deal of ground was nevertheless covered, as is evident in the writing workshop materials (see Appendix 2) and in 5.0 RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS.

Another area that may be criticised is the simplicity of the interview questions. Yin (1984:119) helps justify this when he recommends the novice researcher to begin with a simple and straightforward case study, "even if the research questions are not as sophisticated or innovative as might be expected." At all times the interviewees were kept in mind and the intention was to make the interview sessions as stressfree as possible. The 'leading questions' trap (see 3.3.1 Interviews) that often catch novice interviewers in their quest for responses, also caught me at times, as mentioned in 5.1 Responses to Pre-Writing Workshop Interview Questions. However, I do not believe it was an issue that distorted the overall findings. The discussion of what emerged from the gathered data has attempted to "identify and illustrate salient themes through selective quotation" (Burman, 1991-2:5). This data description is at the same time an 'explanation-building one" (see 3.7 Case Study Data Analysis).

The omission of the teachers' writings (i.e. what they accomplished during the process writing workshops), from the data that was analysed, has already been explained. The aim was always to see the writing activities as a means to encourage reflection and introspection about writing, rather than to examine the teachers' products at any point during this process.

Finally, the workshop materials (see Appendix 2) were generally positively viewed by the teachers, according to the interview and note-book data. Nevertheless, the participants were at times unhappy about a lack of clear directions (5.5 three,6; 5.5 three,6; 5.5 three,9), in the workshops, which may have been due to the researcher's oversight, or to the fact that they did not always follow the instructions given in the workshop handouts.

6.2 Summary of Findings

Certain questions need to be answered concerning the process writing workshops with regard to their dual purpose (see 4.2 Aims and Objectives of the Research Project):

1. to provide the teachers with opportunities for experiencing a process approach to the teaching of writing and
2. to be the activity through which teachers may reflect upon their own past and present practices and experiences of writing, as part of Ellis' cycle of 'teacher development' (2.2 Teacher Development).

One question relates to whether the aims of the case study were achieved. From the overall data collected, it appears that the teachers gained in insights with regard to writing, from participating in the workshops and from having opportunities to reflect upon these writing experiences. The interview responses and other data show an increased awareness of some of the characteristics of writing, namely that it is often messy, time consuming and initially incomplete. The researcher believes that the active participation in the process writing workshops and the opportunities to reflect upon these experiences enabled the teachers to understand that writing is a recursive and complex process. Such new or at times reinforced insights also meant personal growth and empowerment for the participants, in that they became aware of the links between their own learning experiences as school pupils and their present attitudes and approaches to writing.

Having acknowledged certain criticisms (in 6.1 above) and having summarised the most salient points that emerge from the research project here and in 5.0 RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS, I wish to speculate with regard to any future directions for research in the field of L2 teaching and L2 language 'teacher development'.

6.3 Future Directions for Research

In earlier parts of this case study (1.1 Context of Research; 2.3 Process Writing) I have argued that teachers of writing will benefit from participating in writing workshops, in that they gain an improved understanding of what is involved in the writing process and, in turn, are better able to help their own pupils. The data that has been analysed provides evidence that the teachers gained insights of this nature. It is hoped that these insights (e.g. with regard to the use of drafts, of group and pair work etc) will spill over into their own teaching, in the same way that many of them are already using pre-writing activities in their classrooms.

Furthermore it has been argued (1.2 Theoretical Position; 2.1 Critical Theory; 2.2 Teacher Development) that for teachers to become emancipated and empowered they need to be given opportunities for guided reflection (as occurred through the interviews, in particular); in this manner 'teacher development' may be said to take place. If in South Africa we wish to focus the attention within teacher education on 'teacher development',

as defined by Freeman (1989a; 1992), alongside teacher training (2.0 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND), it is suggested that at colleges of education, teacher trainees be given opportunities, not only to participate in process writing workshops, but also to reflect (in interviews, journals or note-books, or through discussion) upon their writing experiences. The catalyst for change will be the writing activities, although the follow up reflection upon and discussion of own practice is considered equally important. It is argued that similar in-service writing workshops for teachers, who are already teaching, will benefit teachers, as well as their pupils.

The present study may be considered a pilot study, and further long term action research may follow other teachers into their classrooms, after their writing workshop participation, in order to monitor how they implement their new insights and experiences, thus completing Ellis' teaching cycle, discussed in 2.2 Teacher Development. Other possibilities for research lie in exploring the development that occurs in teachers' own writings at different stages of process writing workshops.

Appendix 1

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Name: _____

2. Age:

(20 - 29) (30 - 39) (40 - 49) (50 +)

(tick appropriately)

3. Professional and Academic qualifications:

4. Number of years you have taught English:

5. Level(s) you have taught in the past:

6. Level(s) you are teaching in 1993:

7. What kinds of writing do you ever engage in at school, and at home? List these below and do not worry if certain activities appear twice:

	ZULU	ENGLISH
SCHOOL		
HOME		

8. Rank the following approaches to writing in order of importance:

a. Focus on accuracy

c. Focus on purpose

b. Focus on textual organization

d. Focus on fluency

1.

80

2.

3.

4.

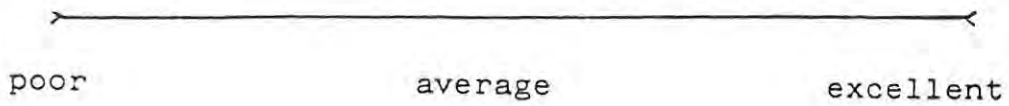
9. What feeling do you have about writing?

positive

negative



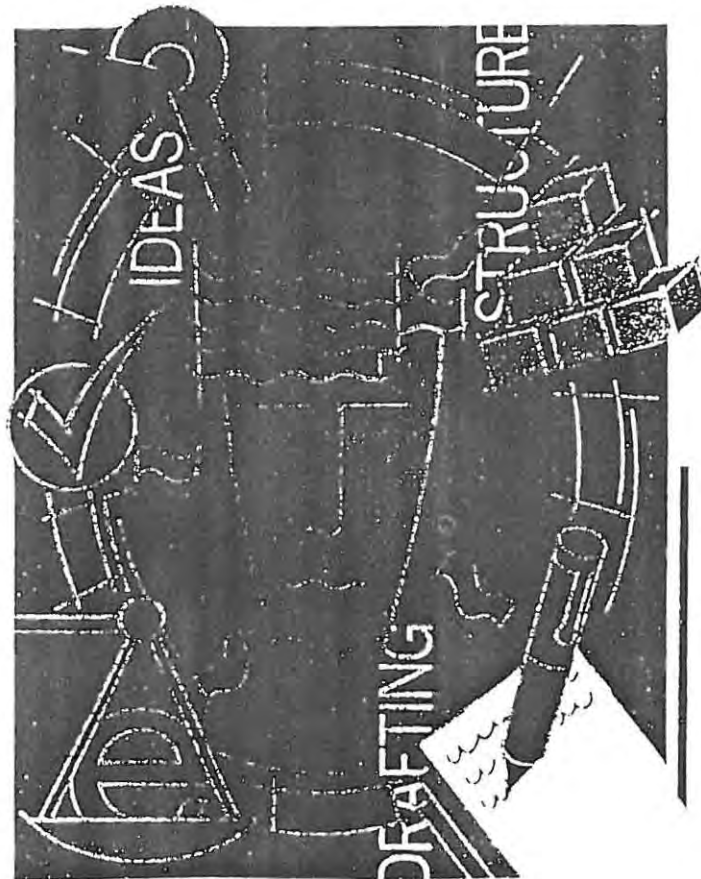
10. Put an X where you place yourself as a writer:



THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION!

Process Writing

Workshops



4.4.2 WRITING

PROCESS WRITING WORKSHOPS

aims: to provide opportunities for students to experience a process approach to writing through a range of writing experiences.



The teaching of writing skills has changed in recent years. Whereas before the ability to write well was seen as "God-given" - some people were simply gifted in that field - it has now been convincingly established that even good writers go through a process before reaching the finished written product. Experts in the field of writing have turned their attention to what competent writers do when they write, and have found that writing, rather than being a linear phenomenon (i.e. proceeding from START to FINISH in even steps) is a generative, recursive and messy activity, full of starts, stops and turns. Skilled writers do not sit down

and produce the finished text in one setting. Instead they start off by considering their audience; they think about what they want to say; they pool their ideas together (some of which may be discarded and other added later on); they plan, draft and re-draft; only at the very end do they pay attention to grammatical structures, punctuation and spelling. We also know that competent writers, both ESL and mother tongue speakers, go through the same stages when they write, and are reported to find that new ideas come to them as they write. This is another important finding, and shows the role writing may play in cognitive development.

There are three major activities involved in writing:

1. PRE-WRITING ACTIVITIES

These help the writer create and develop an awareness of purpose and audience, and to stimulate content ideas around the particular topic. Good writers at this point also consider the order in which their ideas should be put down on paper. The planning will vary according to the task. Tricia Hedge in WRITING illustrates this in the following manner:

Most pre-writing activities may be used over and over again while the writing of the text is taking place. A wide range of such activities exist. The purpose of them is to find what to write about, what to include and how to organize the ideas. The following list shows what a wide range of pre-writing activities has been used by writers as a "way in" -

some of these you will have an opportunity to experience:

brainstorming (listing; note taking)

mind mapping

freewriting

loopwriting

asking questions

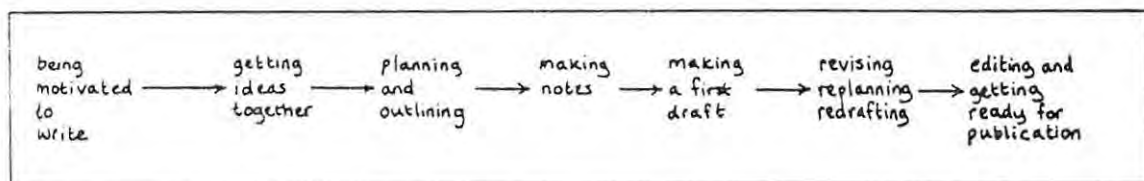
pictures or realia

sequence of pictures

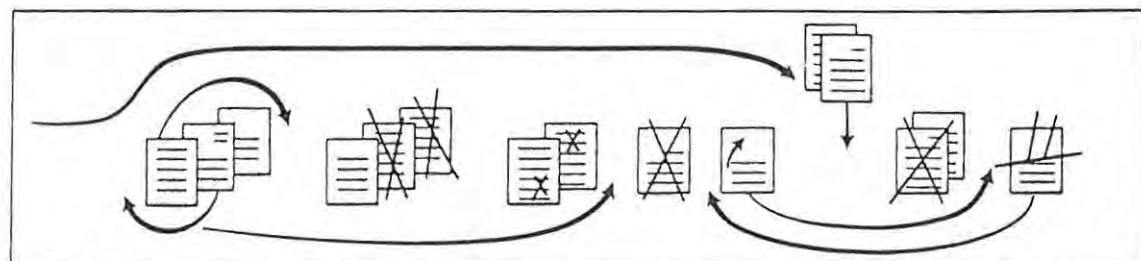
role play/simulation

2. WRITING and REWRITING

The writer now starts to write her first draft. This does not necessarily mean writing in a linear fashion: the writer will stop to read, re-read and review as she goes along; often new ideas will occur at this point in the process which may again reshape what has already been written or may lead to a new section. Writing has been found to be recursive, in that the writer will draft, review, replan and revise in a "backward circular way" which is rather messy! Although writing generally involves the following stages



it is in reality more like this:



The initial drafting and re-drafting stages are seen as generative (= creative) phases, where the emphasis is on content, ideas etc. rather than on language items, spelling and punctuation.

It is of course possible to redraft and rewrite on one's own. However, where it is possible to have others read what one has written, this often proves very helpful. In classrooms pupils may work in pairs and/or groups, often assisted by a list of questions that will guide their readings of each others' drafts; this relieves the teacher of a great deal of work, and gradually, as pupils become accustomed to the process approach they will develop a firmer sense of audience and do their own checking to questions such as

- Am I sharing my impressions clearly enough with my reader?
- Have I missed out any important points of information?
- Are there any points in the writing where my reader has to make a 'jump' because I've omitted a line of argument or I've forgotten to explain something?
- Does the vocabulary need to be made stronger at any point?
- Are there some sentences which don't say much or which are too repetitive and can be missed out?
- Can I rearrange any sets of sentences to make the writing clearer or more interesting?
- Do I need to rearrange any paragraphs?
- Are the links between sections clear? Do they guide my reader through the writing?

3. EDITING

Having checked the text in terms of linking words, cohesion and paragraphing (on her own or with the assistance of others) the writer has now reached the final stage of editing her writing. It is best to leave the checking for accuracy of grammar, punctuation etc. to the very end, or an over-concern with such matters may block the overall writing process and its larger concerns with content, textual organization etc.



PROCESS WRITING WORKSHOP 1

Topic: an exploration of memories from the past - an early childhood memory or experience.

1. Pre-writing Activities

- a. Listen to what your tutor remembers from her childhood!

- b. Brainstorm individually on paper - list or use a mindmap or spidergram (see appendix 1). Gather together as many ideas as possible, then consider where to start and which ideas to explore.

3. Writing

Think about various options before deciding how you want to arrange your ideas. The following questions may guide you (White and Arndt, 1991, p. 95):

- Will you use a chronological sequence?
- Will you start from the final point of the experience and work backwards?
- Will you start with the events and reveal the background later?
- Will you start with the background and lead into the events?
- Will you withhold certain information until the end to provide a surprise?

Draft one page, then exchange for comment with fellow students and tutor.

4. Reading

Now read what other writers (Magona, Mpahlehle, Markham) have written about their childhoods (appendix 1 & 2).

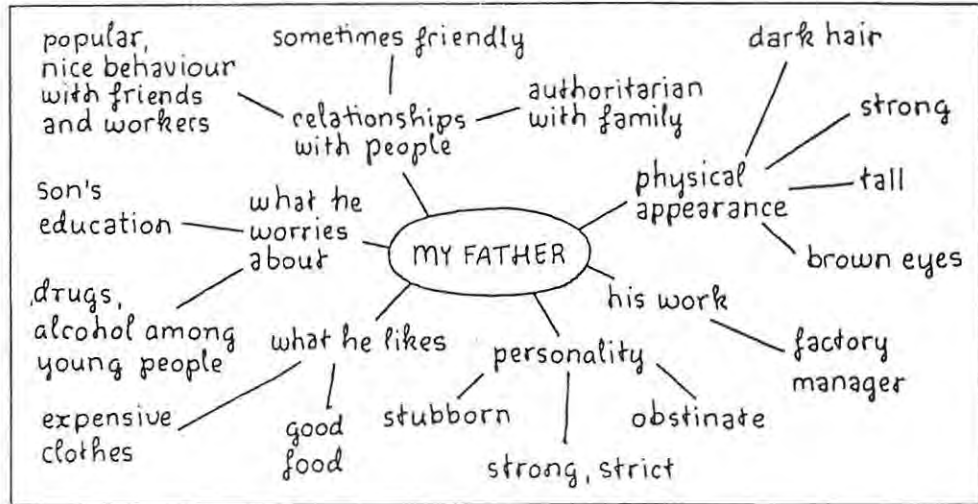
5. Re-draft, edit and proofread

Revise your text in response to your fellow students' suggestions, then edit and proofread for grammatical, spelling and punctuation errors. This you may do at home.

6. Follow up

Reflect on the activities: which did you find useful, helpful or otherwise? Please jot down a few notes or comments in your notebook about what took place in this workshop.

In this example, a Spanish student, writing a description of a person he admired, decided to arrange his notes in the form of a 'spidergram'.



I have never known why we—my brother, sister and I—were taken to the country when I was five. We went to live with our grandmother—paternal grandmother. My father and mother remained in Pretoria where they both worked, my father a shop messenger in an outfitters' firm; Mother as a domestic servant. That was in the autumn of 1924.

I remember feeling quite lost during the first weeks in that little village of Maupaneng, seventy-five miles out of Pietersburg town; a village of about 5,000 people. My grandmother sat there under a small lemon tree next to the hut, as big as fate, as forbidding as a mountain, stern as a mimosa tree.

She was not the smiling type. When she tried, she succeeded in leering muddily. But then she was not the crying type either: she gave her orders sharp and clear. Like the sound she made when she pounded on the millstone with a lump of iron to make it rough enough for grinding on. I do not remember ever being called gently by her. One of her two daughters was the spit of her; the other anaemic and fawning. But they seldom came home. They worked in Pretoria. When they were not working they had children without being able to secure a man they could really call a husband. I haven't seen them or my grandmother now for the last twenty years, although I know they are still alive.

Things stand out clearly in my mind from those years: my granny, the mountain on the foot of which the village clung like a leech, and the mountain darkness, so solid and dense. And my granny seemed to conspire with the mountain and the dark to frighten us.

My parents bought two goats. I was happy because the animals seemed to understand that we needed their company, my brother and I. Our sister was almost altogether blotted out of the picture. Even now I cannot remember her as she was those days.

We took the two goats out every day and gave them young juicy leaves. It was great fun to feel the tickling sensation in our hands as the creatures nibbled at the leaves; and it was a disappointment when they disdained our offer and ate off the bushes.

The first day I went to school was not a particularly pleasant one. I was bewildered most of the time. We had to walk seven miles to and back.

There we were, a mighty crowd in a large hall, and the old teacher in front of us; an elderly, tired-looking gendeman. I still wonder how he managed us, if he did at all. There we were, chanting away the multiplication tables and word spelling: M-A-T, indicating each letter by clapping of hands. The teacher bellowed out: 'F-O-X, fokos; B-O-X, bokos; F-I-X, fikis,' which we echoed while we marvelled at the look of the words on the board and the miraculous sound of them.

One of the families in the village kept their goat among ours. Their boy and I alternated in herding them and going to school. I began to detest the whole idea of school. I came to associate it with physical pain—with the rod, which the teachers applied liberally as a panacea for teaching and organizational ills. If I had any choice in the matter, I should rather have revelled in the sun, the music of the birds, a plunge into a cool stream than go to school.

Yes, I hated school, and swore to myself I would loathe it to the end of my life. The faces of those pedagogues seemed to tell a story of torture. And they seemed to want to work it off on us with a rod. So I rather enjoyed it whenever I went with my grandmother and paternal uncle to the fields beyond the school and spent a few days ploughing or hoeing or keeping the birds away or harvesting. I ceased to regard school as any place where a sensible person might spend a day. Indeed all other children attended school by fits and starts. And the teachers seemed to view it with nothing but boredom.

Ezikiel Mphahlele Down
Second Avenue.

WHEN I was a child, I spent all my days with the Nandi Murani, hunting barefooted, in the Rongai Valley, or in the cedar forests of the Mau Escarpment.

At first I was not permitted to carry a spear, but the Murani depended on nothing else.

You cannot hunt an animal with such a weapon unless you know the way of his life. You must know the things he loves, the things he fears, the paths he will follow. You must be sure of the quality of his speed and the measure of his courage. He will know as much about you, and at times make better use of it.

But my Murani friends were patient with me.

'Amin yut!' one would say, 'what but a dik-dik will run like that? Your eyes are filled with clouds today, Lakweit!'

That day my eyes were filled with clouds, but they were young enough eyes and they soon cleared. There were other days and other dik-dik. There were so many things.

There were dik-dik and leopard, kongoni and warthog, buffalo, lion, and the 'hare that jumps.' There were many thousands of the hare that jumps.

And there were wildebeest and antelope. There was the snake that crawls and the snake that climbs. There were birds, and young men like whips of leather, like rainshafts in the sun, like spears before a singiri.

'Amin yut!' the young men would say, 'that is no buffalo spoor, Lakweit. Here! Bend down and look. Bend down and look at this mark. See how this leaf is crushed. Feel the wetness of this dung. Bend down and look so that you may learn!'

And so, in time, I learned. But some things I learned alone.

Beryl Markham West With The Night
Virago Press, 1984.

The second of eight children, of whom seven survived to adulthood, I am the eldest of five daughters.

My recollections of myself, as a little girl of three or four, revolve around my great-grandmother, Nophuthukezi, my two grandmothers, my mother, and my maternal grandfather. My paternal grandfather is there, but in a rather shadowy way. I do not see him as often as I see the others.

My father, in these early mind-pictures, is even more of a shadow than his father. I remember him, even then, as a stern, unsmiling man with a low but resonant voice and a deliberate gait – as serious as a funeral. Even the droop on the left side of his upper lip failed to alleviate the severity of father's appearance. Overripe-berry-brown skin stretched over the face, way back, past where the hairline should have been. This, in my mind, set him apart as old and wise. (Father had married at twenty-eight, already bald.) Legend had it that baldness heralded wealth. I grew up therefore convinced of father's wisdom and our impending abundance.

Although he was not tall, he seemed so to me; tall, sturdy, and strong.

This sense of his being powerful would never leave me. Even when I saw him, a man of sixty-three, lying in a hospital bed, riddled with cancer; I looked at him, knowing he was going, but I still saw that enormous strength.

Sindiwe Magona To My Children's Children. David Philip, 1990

PROCESS WRITING WORKSHOP 2

Topic: Composition on A Decision I once made and the Reasons for that Decision.

1. Pre-Writing Activities:

Write your responses down to a range of questions a reader might wish to ask of you (What? Where? Who? When? Why? How?). A more elaborate approach using questions is suggested by White and Arndt in Process Writing :

- 1 Introduce the topic and ask students to suggest questions people might have about it.
- 2 Having established an idea of what is wanted, ask students individually to write down at least three questions. Allow a couple of minutes for this.
- 3 They join with a partner to compare questions and then, after a few minutes, form small groups to exchange ideas.
- 4 Finally, have each student read out one question. Collect the questions on the board as they do this. They now have a pool of questions to answer and use as the basis for a written text.

2. Discussion: ask each other questions about what you plan to write about. This will help you clarify your content and the order in which you wish to organize your ideas.

3. Draft a plan

Ask yourself " is it logical?", "does it make sense to others?" etc.

4. Write draft

After you have written your draft read it aloud to others, or pass to others who check, using prepared list of questions:

RESPONSE QUESTIONS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What main idea is the writer trying to express in this draft? 2. Does all the information in this draft relate directly to the main idea? If not, which parts do not? 3. Which part of the draft do you like best? Why? 4. Are there any places where you would like more explanations, examples, or details? 5. Did you at any point lose the thread of the writing or find any places where the writer seemed to jump too suddenly from one idea to another? 6. Did the introduction capture your attention and make you want to read on? Why or why not?

5. Re-write

Revise your text in response to others' comments.

6. Edit

Check your use of logical connectors and linking signals and adjust your text accordingly. Now consider your spelling and grammar, before writing your final version.

7. Follow up

Please do what you did after workshop 1!

PROCESS WRITING WORKSHOP 3

Topic: Letters to the Editor

1. Pre-Writing Activities

In pairs or groups discuss why people write such letters; jot down your ideas, then share and compare with your fellow students.

Look at examples of such letters (see appendix 1) and, on your own, fill in your responses on the chart below:

Letter	Writer's purpose?	Writer's attitude?	Special language devices?	How effective is the letter (very/moderately/not very effective)?
A				
B				
C				
D				

Rank the letters according to the degree of success you feel the writer has had in achieving his or her purpose. Discuss and compare your comments and rankings.

2. Writing of first draft

Draft a response to one of the current issues below:

- a. VIOLENCE ON T.V. AND ITS EFFECT ON CHILDREN
- b. THE RECENT CLASHES BETWEEN TAXI OPERATORS
- c. STREET BEGGARS

3. Writing of second draft

Find others, amongst your fellow students, who wrote a letter on the same topic, and read each others' responses. Compare similarities and differences, then jointly draft a letter that everyone is happy with. Check your draft in terms of the questions in your Process Writing Workshop notes, p. 4.

4. Editing and Posting

Do a final check of format, grammar and spelling and make the necessary adjustments. Write a neat version that may be posted off to The Editor of, using envelopes and stamps provided.

A

Nine years would mean more, not less, schooling

THE article in the Sunday Tribune (March 14), "Compulsory education should be cut by three years, says report", is misleading.

It claims that the National Education Policy Investigation has recommended that the period of compulsory education should be cut from 12 years to nine. I would like to make the following points:

□ The NEPI report does not make recommendations; it sets out policy options to be considered by policy makers.

□ While the NEPI report does appear to favour a nine-year period of compulsory schooling, that does not represent a decrease. At the moment, the period of compulsory schooling is not 12 years, even for the most privileged groups. For whites, for example, schooling is compulsory until standard eight or up to the age of 16 — a period of 10 years. For blacks, there is effectively no compulsory education and, in fact, there is no place for millions of African children of school-going age. Thus the institution of nine years represents a considerable increase in the period of schooling for the majority.

The National Education Co-ordinating Committee, which commissioned the NEPI report, was formed specifically to address the education crisis, and its goals include an improvement in the provision of both the quality and the quantity of education. It remains committed to these goals. The suggestion, on the basis of a factual distortion, that it would now seek to cut the years to which our children are entitled is, at best, ludicrous.

JOHN PAMPALLIS
Research Co-ordinator, Education Policy Unit,
University of Natal, Durban

B

Problem of shopping with babies

SIR — I am amazed at the lack of facilities for parents of babies at most shopping centres. Often one cannot easily get from one floor to another with a pram unless one ignores the "no prams on the escalator" signs.

For the most part, changing areas are not provided. Recently, at Musgrave Centre, I had to change a very dirty nappy with my baby lying in the car's boot in the parking lot.

When I asked where I could breast-feed her, I was told to sit on a toilet! As I do not choose to eat where other people excrete, why

should she? Fathers with babies are in an even worse position as there are never any suitable nappy changing areas in their toilets.

The only place I know of that has thought of providing well for us is the Pick 'n Pay Hypermarket and they will get my custom. Surely Sanlam could do likewise in an upmarket centre such as Musgrave, where its rentals must be more than enough to enable it to provide a small room for parents?

S. GOLDMAN (Mrs)
Morningside

■ THE convoluted logic of the author of "A house of lords in a new SA" (*Weekly Mail*, March 5 to 11 1993) is breathtaking and impels me to comment.

The institution of traditional leadership, fundamentally undemocratic (hereditary), sexist (exclusion of female participation), lacking in meritocracy (an illiterate moron by virtue of his birth alone becomes eligible to legislate!), cannot in my view be reconciled with inalienable, fundamental principles of democracy, let alone non-racialism nor non-sexism.

So what gibberish is Nkosi Holomisa trying to espouse? — Probably misguided indigenous female Cawe Mahlali, kwaBhaca, Transke!

Uniforms suggestion

SIR — On the question of school uniforms I would like to suggest that all the schools have a plain white dress for junior school with different school badges sewn on (like the Indian school uniforms, most of which are plain white dresses with two side pockets).

For high school we could have a plain skirt and a plain white shirt also with the different school badges sewn on the shirt pocket.

Going by the adverts in the newspapers plain white shirts are affordable and the skirts could be sewn by those of us that cannot afford to purchase them.

My daughter started at Glenwood/Umbilo School on January 19. Her first year at school should have been a great pleasure for us all but is

turning into a nightmare with all the costs involved.

Her school fees will be R1 200 for the year. Then there is still uniforms, stationery, swimming costume, the school's suitcase and many more items that have to be bought from the school. Other things are school shoes, takkies, shoes and short socks (and long socks for winter). The list still goes on.

If all parents stuck together and voted for plain white dresses we could put the money to better use.

Please, parents, let's stand together for cheaper school uniforms. The only people that can make that possible are parents like you and me.

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH
Umbilo

PROCESS WRITING WORKSHOP 4

Topic: Developing an Awareness of Different Types of
Texts - A Genre-Based Approach to Writing I

1. Pre-Writing Activities

Using the newspapers provided identify as many types of written texts as possible in your particular newspaper (e.g. advertisements; letters to the editor etc.) Pool these together on the blackboard, in the form of a spidergram.

Each group now selects three text types for analysis in terms of format, style and textual organization (as has been done for a postcard, as an example):

Text	Type of writing	Format	Style	Organisation
1	postcard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● address on right ● message on left 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● personal, informal ● abbreviations used ● ideas often in note form 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● date and place as heading ● no indication of addressee ● no paragraphs

2. Further Pre-Writing Activities

Another way of developing an awareness of different types of texts, is to explore a particular topic and then consider the texts that may be developed from it. For example, one group of students brainstormed the topic Prisons and came up with the following suggestions for texts to be developed:

- A personal letter from a prisoner
- An essay on the effectiveness of imprisonment as a form of punishment
- A description of a prison
- A poem/word picture
- A short story
- A newspaper editorial arguing for alternatives to imprisonment
- An interview with a prison officer about his job

In pairs, choose one of the following topics, then explore, as above, the kinds of texts that may be written in response to:

POLLUTION

OLD AGE

DIVORCE

MONEY

EDUCATION

then share your ideas with other pairs.

3. Writing of first draft

On your own select one of the above topics, and decide the kind of text you want to write in response. Using steps from previous writing workshops, draft a text that takes the form of the kind of text you have chosen. You need to carefully consider what content to

include, as well as textual organization, format and style.

4. Discussion and re-drafting

Join someone who wrote on the same topic as you, if possible, then discuss each other's drafts, and help each other with suggestions.

5. Final copy for publication, display or posting

Do a final editing, as in the other writing workshops, and write a neat copy that may be placed where others can read it, or send it off for publication.

PROCESS WRITING WORKSHOPS

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Appendix 3

NONPARTICIPANT OBSERVER'S REPORT

Five respondents, all L2 speakers and teachers of English as a second language were interviewed to ascertain their reactions to the process writing workshops. The interviewer was a nonparticipant and aimed at eliciting objective responses. The interview was unstructured in order

- * to create a suitable non-threatening environment
- * elicit the objectivity aimed at.

The following types of questions were asked:

1. Did the workshops help develop a better understanding/awareness of the writing process?
2. What are your perceptions now of the writing process?
3. What activities did you enjoy the most/least?
4. What were your experiences in your own writing in terms of how you assessed topics; gathered ideas; planned; revised; edited?
5. Have you used any of the methods in your own teaching?
6. Do you give your students topics and expect them to write without any pre-writing activity?
7. Do you find that pair/group work helps in developing writing skills?

The respondents were enthusiastic about the workshops and all felt that they had gained a better understanding of the writing process. There was a general awareness that the process is messy and stressful and that research is needed before writing can take place.

The first workshop on 'autobiography' and the writing of a letter to the editor elicited the most enthusiastic responses.

Positive responses were received about the tasks set. The respondents felt the atmosphere was relaxed and "felt good" about the experience. A few felt that the method was time consuming and were concerned about the time constraints of their own classroom situations.

All have used the method in their own teaching situation. It was found by most that their pupils were interested and "joined in the fun". The fact that writing was seen as "fun" and not stressful eliminated many of the problems often associated with writing at school level. The teachers found their pupils generated more ideas than usual by working in groups or pairs.

One respondent felt that she was unable to use the methods effectively in her own teaching. She would have felt more positive if the workshops had been more "school-level" oriented.

Perhaps with more time available the researcher could assist teachers who find difficulty in adapting the method to suit the level at which they teach.

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