

DOES DRAFTING BEAT "BLEEDING"?

AN ACTION RESEARCH INVESTIGATION
INTO THE INTRODUCTION
OF A COGNITIVIST PROCESS APPROACH
TO THE TEACHING OF WRITING
AT SENIOR SECONDARY LEVEL

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ABSTRACT

In this study an attempt is made to describe and illuminate the attitude of both pupils and teachers to the introduction of a cognitivist process approach to the teaching of written literacy in one standard in a multi-cultural Eastern Cape Model C secondary school.

Because the cognitivist process approach to the teaching of written literacy was to complement already existing strategies for the teaching of written literacy, the research took the form of collaborative action research in three standard nine English classrooms. Teacher- and pupil diaries were the main means of data collection. Two spirals of action research were conducted in an attempt to identify difficulties and improve practice.

Diaries and discussion revealed a positive response to the drafting, revision and editing processes which researchers had already identified as the processes which skilled writers use in creating text. Acknowledgement of the benefits to be derived from peer response as audience was also established.

Anomalies relating to the grouping of pupils for peer-editing were found to be a key issue in determining the relative success of the project. Difficulties were also found to exist in the ability of some of the pupils to engage effectively in peer-peer and teacher-peer negotiation of text. Possible reasons for these difficulties have been identified, and further research into the nature of the inherent power relationships which exist implicitly in a multi-cultural educational setting and impede negotiation would be necessary to appreciate fully the difficulties experienced.

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GLOSSARY:

- L1 - First Language
- L2 - Second Language
- ESL - English Second Language
- CED - Cape Education Department
- R - Researcher
- T - Teacher
- P - Any one of the many pupils

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1 Origins of the project

This project grew out of an interest in finding ways of improving the writing ability of the pupils in my classes in an Eastern Cape Model C school for girls. As I was educated in the 1960's, in the positivist tradition, my method of promoting written literacy, in line with that of many other educators of that time, was one of red pen error correction, along with an evaluation of the finished product. A review of the research literature on error correction in pupils' writing (McKellar, 1994) provided evidence that error correction of the finished product almost certainly does not lead to improved writing on the part of the pupils. This finding led to further reading and ultimately to this research, in an attempt to find an alternative method for promoting the written literacy of pupils who were failing to meet the English First Language Higher Grade standard required by the Cape Education Department in the Senior Certificate examination.

1.2 Historical overview of writing traditions

Historically, four traditions in the teaching of writing have been recognised (Raimes, 1991; Johns, 1990), each having a different focus: in the 1960's the focus was on the form (or grammatical accuracy and structures) of the language. The purpose of writing was to reinforce or test the accuracy of application of grammatical rules. Errors were seen as evidence of non-learning. Correction of errors was seen as negative reinforcement and it was thought that this would elicit more accurate writing. Teachers adopted

... a no-nonsense attitude about error. They rooted it out and beat it to death on the spot. It was a

kind of holy war these fanatics waged, and the standing orders they had were to shoot the infidels on sight.

(Miele, 1982:81 in Botha, 1994).

As a consequence, many writing tasks were returned to pupils so full of red pen error corrections that many pupils experienced the demotivation expressed by a pupil who commented to the teacher, "Oh, Ma'am, my book looks like it's bleeding to death" (Harlech-Jones, 1982:23).

As richer understandings of the nature of language and language learning emerged with the growth of applied linguistics, reaction against this view as being too authoritarian and mechanistic became widespread (Hendrickson, 1978, Krashen, 1982, 1983, in Chaudron, 1988; Cope and Kalantzis, 1993). Errors came to be viewed as useful evidence of the learner's response and active contribution to language learning (Brumfit, 1980). Attention shifted from concern with grammatical accuracy and patterns, to the processes involved in composing texts, with the focus on the writer. The learner was now seen as the creator of texts. This approach developed in two directions: expressivist and cognitivist. Proponents of the expressivist view, such as Elbow (1981), and Murray (1982), placed emphasis on personal creativity. Cognitivists such as Hayes and Flower (1981) proposed that invention, multiple drafts, editing and other processes of making meaning clear were the means by which written literacy would be acquired (in Johns, 1990; Van Zyl, 1993). These two strands, both focusing on the writer and the writing process, came to be known as the process approach to the teaching of writing.

Some teachers and theorists were alienated by those who adopted the process approach because of its "almost total obsession" (Horowitz, 1986c:788 in Raimes, 1991:410) with the writer's making of personal meaning. The radical changes called for by the process approach provoked a reaction which

was underpinned by emerging functional-notional theories. The reaction took the form of a return by many to the security of a known form-focused system, but with a change of focus. Attention was now centred on the instructor's determination of appropriate content - largely drawn from the subject matter of other fields - a "language across the curriculum" approach (Raimes, 1991). In this approach writing is connected to the study of specific academic subject matter, and is seen as a means of promoting understanding of this content (Shih, 1986:617). Emphasis was placed on the instructor's determination of the most appropriate academic content, and whole courses, or modules of reading and writing tasks were built around that content.

The fourth approach, currently gaining much support, is known as the genre approach. It aims to empower through explicit instruction. It focuses on the reader, and on the rhetorical forms or literary techniques conventionally required by particular genres of writing - such as narrative or descriptive writing, business letters or letters to the press - to achieve different purposes and expectations (Cope and Kalantzis, 1993).

Arguably, elements of all four approaches are present in different combinations and proportions, implicitly or explicitly, in every writing teacher's approach. Too rigid and exclusive an emphasis on any one approach may well distort the richness of possibilities involved. While the debates between the rival 'schools' are likely to continue, the complexities and dynamic nature of the writing context and the writing process are now recognised, and the need for a balance among the four elements of form, writer, content and reader is realised (Raimes, 1991).

1.3 Context of the research

In spite of these developments in theoretical understanding of writing, in the researcher's experience many teachers of English in South Africa still see correction of written errors in the final product as the sole means of promoting written literacy. In addition, such teachers tend to respond as evaluators rather than as facilitators, with comment by the teacher being regarded by both pupils and teachers as the end - rather than as a part - of the process.

Circular 53/94 of the Cape Education Department (September 1994) (Appendix A) provides new guidelines as a suggested means of achieving the literate written discourse, as defined by what was then the Cape Education Department English First Language Higher Grade syllabus. This syllabus has been accepted without change to date by the newly established Eastern Cape Department of Education.

Syllabus requirements accord written literacy (Paper 2) one-quarter of the marks for English at this level, but it often receives very little of the teaching time. The breakdown of marks for English is as follows:

Paper 1: Prescribed:	120
Paper 2: Composition:	100
Paper 3: Language:	130
Oral component:	<u>50</u>
Total:	<u>400</u>

The guidelines provided in Circular 53/94 (Appendix A) suggest methods for the teaching of writing, which would seem to draw on all the approaches. The correctness of technical aspects such as sentence structure and spelling receives attention; planning, drafting, self- and peer-editing, and self- and peer-assessment are all mentioned, along with the teacher as

facilitator of drafting rather than merely as final evaluator; the provision of models and attention to the development of sense of audience are also recognised, as well as the need for attention to purpose and appropriate tone.

The three form-focused approaches mentioned above - the form or grammatical structures of language, the form of the content, and the rhetorical forms of genres - were already in use in the English classes of the school in the study. It was decided for the purposes of this study to attempt to complement these with the experimental implementation of a *cognitive process approach* to the teaching of written literacy in the standard nine English classes of the school.

1.4 The sample

In the school where the research was conducted, there are three classes of standard nine pupils, totalling sixty-five in all, all of whom, irrespective of their home-language or ability, are studying English as a First Language on the Higher Grade. The criteria upon which the group is divided into its three sets is detailed in section 4.2. of Chapter 4. Of the 65 pupils involved, thirty-nine are first language speakers of English, and twenty-six English second language speakers. At no stage did this distinction form the focus of the study. The reasons for this decision are elaborated upon in section 2.4. of Chapter 2. The consent of the pupils and of their parents was obtained. The two teachers of the other two Standard nine English classes expressed their willingness to participate, along with the researcher, in the research.

1.5 Description of the research methods employed

The research took the form of participatory collaborative action research. Action research is deemed appropriate when "a

new approach is to be grafted on to an existing system" (Cohen and Manion, 1985:216). In undertaking action research teachers attempt to relate their ideas to empirical observations and subject themselves and their teaching to critical scrutiny (Stenhouse, 1975; Oja and Smulyan, 1989). Action research is thus qualitative in nature. Because this action research project aims to transform and reform the present, to produce a different future, it falls within the critical theory tradition of research (Carr and Kemmis, 1986:183). The teachers and pupils, through their active participation, attempt to improve the effectiveness and rationality of the educational practice (Kemmis, 1986; Hopkins, 1993) - in this instance, of the pupils' written literacy acquisition. The collaborative nature of action research is said to empower pupils in that teachers are expected to work alongside pupils, rather than imposing policies on them. This factor complements the principle underlying a process approach to literacy teaching in that the latter, through its promotion of critical thinking, inquiry and problem solving, aims at making pupils ultimately self-evaluatory and self-critical of their writing (Zamel, 1983a:138).

Action research involves a deliberate and systematic cycle of teaching, implementation, reflection, evaluation and modification. This was implemented in the three classes involved. Pupils practised editing and drafting techniques using common material. The user's model (Appendix G) designed by Pratt (1987, in Chick, 1990) was used to guide pupils through the stages of the writing process. In an attempt to achieve the same coverage of research focus across the three classes, a questionnaire was administered at the completion of the first action research spiral to elicit pupil responses. The pupils and teachers also kept individual research diaries in which their reactions to procedures were recorded. Diary entries used in this research are quoted without correction of the original spelling of the writer, and without the intrusive "[sic]" drawing attention to errors. Class discussions were

held within each class to evaluate progress and to modify or reformulate practice where necessary. The teachers involved met to compare findings and exchange ideas.

The cycle described above was conducted twice for the purposes of this study. Attitude and changes in attitude from the first cycle to the second were sought through the questionnaire, diaries and discussion, and suggestions were made for further development. Because of the limitations of the scope of a project at this level, the research was confined to two spirals of action research.

1.6 Goals of the research project

This study is intended to be of use in exploring teachers' and pupils' attitudes towards the implementation of a cognitivist process approach to the teaching of written literacy, and in examining the advantages of such an approach, as well as identifying problems and possible means of resolving these. A further outcome is the formulation of recommendations in section 4.5 of Chapter 4, towards a policy for the English Department of the school on the teaching of written literacy.

The goals of the research are thus:

- 1.6.1 to examine critically the implementation of a process approach to the teaching of written literacy at the standard nine level in an Eastern Cape multi-lingual school
- 1.6.2 to observe and describe teacher- and pupil attitudes - and changes in these attitudes - towards such an approach in the course of the research

1.6.3 to find means if possible of resolving problems which may arise in the course of the implementation.

1.7 Structure of the thesis

The content of this thesis is organised as follows:

The first chapter outlines the origins and context of this research, including a brief historical overview of the four traditions for teaching writing which have been recognised and employed by teachers of writing from the 1960's to the present time.

Chapter 2 examines the theory relating to composition, positions the cognitive process approach historically, and explains the processes found to be involved in the creation of text which are employed by both L1 and L2 writers. It then describes the strategies found to be used by skilled writers in creating text, as well as those used by unskilled writers, in order to identify implications for instruction. Peer editing as a means of introducing pupils to the concept of audience as an incentive for drafting and revising is discussed.

An explanation of the method employed in this research - that of collaborative action research within the critical theory tradition - is provided in Chapter 3. The historical development of action research as a research method is traced from its inception by Lewin in the 1940's to its present emancipatory stance within the critical theory tradition. The essential features of action research, its claims to validity and procedural models are discussed, along with the proposed research instruments. A critique of action research as a

methodology is followed by an acknowledgement of the ethics of procedure.

Chapter 4 describes procedure and the findings upon which further procedure was based, as implementation in action research is dependent upon ongoing evaluation and revision of practice accordingly. An outline of the pre-planning of the project is followed by a description of the procedures followed through two spirals of action research. Documents in support of procedure are included as appendices A to T.

A critique of the research is provided in the analysis undertaken in Chapter 5. Reflection on certain aspects of the action research method employed precedes an evaluation of the relative merits and difficulties relating to the use of a cognitive process approach to the teaching of writing. The chapter concludes with a recommendation for further research.

CHAPTER 2 - THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Composition theory

Before the literature relating to the process approach to teaching writing is reviewed, this study needs to be positioned within a larger theoretical framework, namely that of composition theory.

According to Hairston (1982), Emig (1982), Johns (1990) and Cumming (1994), theories of composition are grounded in ideologies, which are in turn influenced by the conditions of an historical period. Zebroski (1985:57) is quoted by Johns (in Kroll (ed.), 1990) as saying that "if we write and teach writing, we have a theory of writing by definition". Teachers need to be aware of the theory inherent in the way they teach writing, and the assumptions which in turn underlie their theory. Zebroski, in arguing for the importance of theory to the teacher, indicates how theory has benefited him as a teacher:

Theory has helped me to excavate and to uncover my own assumptions about writing. It has aided me in crafting a more coherent and unified course structure. It has encouraged me to try out some new methods of teaching writing. It has helped me to relinquish control and to emphasise classroom community.

(Zebroski, 1986:58 in Johns, 1990:33).

Berlin (1982, 1987, 1988, in Johns, 1990:24) suggests that any theory on the teaching of L1 composition must consider and include four essential elements: an understanding of the position of the writer, as well as that of the reader (or audience), views on truth and reality, and the sources of the language. In the cognitivist process paradigm which informs this research, the writer's mental processes are of central

importance, and therefore in its view of the writer, it focuses on thinking and the processes involved in writing. In focusing on audience, the cognitivist paradigm tends toward being interactional, as an understanding of how a sense of audience is developed in the writer's mind is of major concern. Reality and truth, the third component of Berlin's theory (in Johns, 1990:24 - 36), for the cognitivist process proponent would develop and reside in the writer's mind. The language and form of the writing, in the cognitivist view, would result from content, developing out of what the writer wants to say, and stemming from "prior experience and the creative urge" (Johns, 1990:32).

As is the case in L1, there is no single complete theory of ESL composition yet agreed upon, but Johns (1990:33) suggests that any ESL theory, to be viable, must be complete, and should thus include not only the four components recognised above, but also the other features necessitated by the nature of second language learning and use. Silva (1993:669) suggests that because of the unique nature of L2 writing resulting from social, cultural, linguistic and other factors, L2 writing specialists need to look beyond L1 writing theories, in order to develop theories which adequately explain the phenomenon of L2 writing. Similarities with and differences between L1 and L2 writing processes are discussed in more detail in 2.4.below.

2.2 Historical context of cognitive process theory

Cognitive process theory arose as a reaction to the traditional positivist/empirical paradigm which posited an unchanging reality independent of the writer. For positivists, the focus in writing was entirely form dominated, concentrating its attentions on the evaluation of the end product as the means of improving written literacy. This assumption was based on the theoretical perspective that truth

and reality are external to individuals, and are driven by fixed natural and universal laws which simply need to be discovered. It held that the composing process is linear, and that competent writers know what they are going to say before they start to write, thus neglecting the possibility for invention almost entirely (Hairston, 1982:78).

What contributes to the ability to write comprehensive, purposefully intention-directed, error-free text in both L1 and L2 has been the subject of extensive research over many years, not only in order to comprehend and explain it, but also in order to establish the instructional needs of learners. As a result of developing theories of mother-tongue language acquisition by such theorists as Chomsky (1957), and second language acquisition theory such as that of Krashen (1981), attitudes towards error changed. Errors in both speech and writing, which had hitherto been regarded negatively as evidence of non-learning and in need of eradication, were now seen positively by researchers (Lucas, 1975, Long, 1977, Hendrickson, 1978 in Chaudron, 1988) as evidence of active participation by the learner in the process of language or literacy acquisition.

Not only were attitudes towards error changing, but attention was also being focused on the processes involved in the *creation* of text rather than on the *end product*. Shaughnessy (1977) suggested that by achieving an understanding of the processes involved in creating text, insight would be gained into how to teach it:

We cannot teach students to write by looking only at what they have written. We must also understand how that product came into being, and why it assumed the form that it did. We have to try to understand what goes on during the act of writing ... if we want to affect its outcome. We have to do the hard thing, examine the intangible process, rather than the easy thing, evaluate the tangible product.

(Shaughnessy, 1977, in Hairston, 1982:84).

Flower (1985:370 in Johns, 1990:26) saw as the goal of the teacher the development of good writers who would not only have "a large repertoire of powerful strategies ... but sufficient self-awareness of their own process to draw on these alternative techniques as they need them".

2.3 The processes involved in creating text

Based on research into the processes involved in creating text, the cognitivist process writing theory came to recognise that it is through the act of writing itself that ideas are formulated: "writing is the process of exploring one's thoughts and learning from the act of writing itself what these thoughts are" (Zamel, 1982:197). Writing according to cognitivists is problem solving, a means whereby the writer "'discovers meaning' instead of merely finding appropriate structures in which to package already developed ideas" (Chaudron, 1987:673-4). Vygotsky described writing as the "deliberate structuring of the web of meaning" and saw writing as an expansion of our inner speech, while Luria described it as "a new and powerful instrument of thought" (both in Emig, 1977:125).

Smith (1982:33) described writing as:

... an extremely efficient way of gaining access to the knowledge that we cannot explore directly Writing does more than reflect underlying thought, it liberates and develops it.

(Smith, 1982:33).

Perhaps the most important realisation was the fact that writing involves a *continuing* attempt to discover what it is one wants to say. Rather than being the articulation of some preconceived and well-formulated idea, writing was now seen as the means by which the initial idea is extended and refined (Shaughnessy, 1977). As the process continues, new ideas which

suggest themselves are assimilated into the developing pattern of thought (Zamel, 1983). The writer is thus both agent and vehicle, and production of text may even be said, in a certain sense, to precede its conception (Sommers, 1980:384-385).

Research into the composing process in both first language (Emig, 1971; Pianko, 1979; Perl, 1980a, 1980b; Sommers, 1980) and second language (Zamel, 1982b, Jacobs, 1982, Jones, 1981, 1982 all in Zamel, 1983) investigated what writers actually do when they compose text. Composing was found to involve complex higher order thinking and extensive planning, and was found to be recursive rather than formulaic or linear in development (Johns, 1990:26). In these studies revising was found to be an integral part of composing, and this in turn led on to further writing. Planning, according to Johns (1990:26), includes "defining the rhetorical problem, placing it in a larger context, making it operational, exploring its parts, generating alternative solutions, and arriving at a well-supported conclusion".

2.4 First- and second-language similarities and differences

In case studies (Jones, 1982b, 1983, Lay, 1982, 1983, Zamel, 1982, 1983, Tretoe and Jones, 1983, all in Raimes, 1985), writing as a recursive and non-linear process of creating meaning was found to be common to proficient ESL writers as well as to proficient L1 writers. Although differences were recognised, Jones and Tretoe concluded that "second language composing is not a different animal from first language composing" (in Raimes, 1985:231). Zamel (1983) asserted that the challenges of composing transcend language factors for both proficient ESL and E1 writers. In a study of composing processes one proficient ESL student wrote:

If I have an idea, but I don't have the words,
I write it in Chinese so that I don't lose it.
Language is not the big problem. Most of the
difficulty is how to put the ideas together.

(Zamel, 1983:179).

But the need to be cautious of making sweeping statements and of generalisations based on limited case studies is recognised: such case studies are not generalisable. In a synthesis of the research conducted into the similarities and differences between L1 and L2 writing, Silva (1993:671) suggested that although L1 and L2 composing processes are similar in broad outline, they are different in small but significant ways.

L2 writing was found to be simpler and less effective than L1 writing. While the composing processes were found to be similar, L2 composing was clearly found to be more constrained, more difficult and less effective. L2 writers were also found to do less local and global planning, and to have more difficulty with setting their goals and with generating and organizing their material. Their production of written text was found to be more laborious and less fluent, perhaps as a consequence of lack of vocabulary. They were also found to review and reflect on their texts less, but to revise more and with greater difficulty (Silva, 1993:668).

Zamel in response to Silva (1988:521), when criticised for according little recognition to these differences inherent in the composing processes of L1 and L2 learners, nevertheless maintained that "on the basis of studies reported, what seems to promote writing development transcends the L1/L2 distinction".

2.5 Strategies used by skilled writers

Several strategies have been identified as strategies used by writers designated as "skilled" writers. While caution must be exercised in generalising about the composing processes employed by successful writers as there is not yet consensus on criteria for judging what is meant by "skilled" or "unskilled" writers (in Raimes, 1985:231 - 232) it is nevertheless worthwhile being aware of the strategies identified as those adopted by "skilled" writers, as compared with those designated as "unskilled", because of the implications available for instruction, and in order to know whether these are replicated in the present study.

In a survey by Raimes (1985) of research conducted into the strategies used by both L1 and L2 writers, those recognised as skilled were found to have several composing strategies in common: the most significant of these was their recognition of the need for flexibility, and their undertaking of major redrafting as sense of audience and purpose informed the ongoing process. Skilled writers were found to have an intuitive sense of audience which informs their writing. Although the focus of the writing is on creating text, it includes the need to move cognitively and transactionally from writer-based to reader-based prose (Johns in Kroll, 1990:30). This is referred to as "internal revision" by Murray (1978:91), and "revising to fit intentions" by Nold (1982:19, both in Shih, 1986:630). Skilled writers were also found to take more time over their writing (Pianko, 1979; Rose, 1980; in Zamel, 1983). In Zamel's (1983) study of the composing processes of advanced ESL writers, the more successful or skilled writers took more than three times as long (up to eighteen hours) as the unskilled (approximately four hours) to complete their writing.

Unskilled L1 writers, on the other hand, were found to be inflexible: their early decisions to proceed in a particular

direction tend to "lock writers into a premature solution before they have entered the problem" (Flower, 1980:63, in Zamel, 1983:167). Sommers' case study (1981, in Murray and Johanson 1990) of the composing processes of a skilled writer, showed it to be recursive and non-linear, with discoveries that sent the writer back to re-planning, while the unskilled writer was unable to do this. The revision of unskilled writers was found to focus on surface-level errors, termed "external revision" (Murray, 1978:91), or "revising to fit conventions" (Nold, 1982:18), rather than on content, and the reader was seldom considered. Once the ideas were written, they were seldom reworked (Perl, 1979 in Raimes, 1985). Unskilled writers were found to have the tendency to lose track of meaning because they became caught up in correcting grammatical details before they had fully developed what it was they wanted to say (Perl and Engendorf, 1979, in Raimes, 1985).

Research into the composing process of unskilled L2 writers (in Raimes, 1985) reveals a variety of contradictory results: in Zamel's (1983) study her unskilled writer was often distracted by surface problems, and rarely made changes that affected meaning. Likewise in Perl's (1978) study, editing intruded so often that it fractured ability to think and write cohesively. Yet in a study conducted by Raimes (1985) of unskilled L2 writers they were found not to be too preoccupied with surface errors at the expense of discovery of meaning. She concludes that for these students attention to process is necessary but not enough; that what they need is more of everything, including more time, more opportunity to talk, listen, read and write, more instruction and more practice, as well as more attention to editing.

2.6 Implications for instruction

These findings suggest that in place of concern for patterns, accuracy and product, more attention should be focused on the processes involved in the creation of text by the provision of pre-writing activities, as well as opportunity for drafting, revising, editing and feedback (Raimes, 1991:109).

The role of the teacher also needs to be re-examined: writing as a mode of intellectual inquiry as advocated by cognitive process proponents would require that teachers abandon their traditional role as "wielders of power" (Hartwell, 1985 in Zamel, 1987:710). This is, however, a paradoxical issue: as Reid (1994:289) points out, for teachers in their role as writing experts, responding to students' texts is central to teaching writing. She asserts that teacher response need not be one of appropriation of text, provided that meaning and revision come from a *negotiated dialogue* in which *the teacher is the respondent* to rather than the initiator of revisions. The issue of teacher response to pupil writing through negotiation of meaning forms a significant part of the analysis of this research, undertaken in Chapter 5.

Several studies of writing both in L1 and L2 indicate that teacher response for both L1 and L2 writers should be provided *during the writing process* rather than only when the writing is completed. This recommendation is based on findings (by Ferris, 1995:33) that: students pay more attention to teacher feedback provided on preliminary drafts (vs. final drafts) of their essays; they utilize a variety of strategies to respond to their teachers' comments; they appreciate receiving comments of encouragement; and they find their teachers' feedback useful in helping them to improve their writing. Ferris' research supports the claim by Zamel (1982:195) that revision should be a main component during instruction and that writing teachers should intervene throughout the process.

Through the study of how skilled writers compose, strategies such as the invention and discovery associated with the composing process, as well as consideration of audience, purpose and context, have been recognised, and it has been suggested that these can be taught to the less proficient (Connor, 1987:690).

Although the processes involved in creating text have been observed and recorded, few models for classroom procedure as suggested by Widdowson (1984, in Pratt 1990) for the practical implementation of a process approach appear to exist. One was devised by Pratt (1990:457) and adapted for classroom use (1990:459), and another by Murray and Johanson (1990:26). Pratt's model adapted for classroom use (1990:459), was used as the model for process writing in this research, and is included as Appendix G.

2.7 Peer editing

According to Berlin (1982, 1987, 1988 in Johns, 1990:34) one of the four essential elements in any theory of composition is consideration of the reader or audience. The concept of 'audience' in composition has a well-documented history of theory and analysis, and is the subject of much current literature (see Johns, 1993:75 - 80). As many students find it difficult to imagine a reader's response in advance, and to use such response as a guide when composing, peer comment on the student writing can provide the means by which the writer is conscientised to the idea of the presence of the reader or audience:

The essence of peer response is students' providing other students with feedback on their preliminary drafts so that the student writers may acquire a wider sense of audience and work toward improving their compositions.

(Nelson and Murphy, 1993:135).

Reader comments can open up new insights for the writer, and create the motive for revising. Sommers claims that without this input, students will revise in a "consistently narrow and predictable" way (1982:149). Elbow (1973) and Graves (1983) (in Urzua, 1987) both maintain that the peer editing response technique will help students not only to become questioning readers but also questioning writers because they become aware of their own writing as they reflect on someone else's.

Dixon (1986:4) suggests that students will need to be trained to become observant readers, and that their first response must be directed towards the writer's intended meaning rather than towards surface errors. He also observes that the fact that someone other than the teacher will be reading their work, often spurs writers on to re-read and revise their writing.

Studies conducted by Nystrand and Brandt (1989, in Nelson and Murphy 1993) provide persuasive argument for the use of writing groups in L1, but Nelson and Murphy (1993:136) suggested that the findings of L1 studies might not necessarily apply to L2 students. They hypothesised that this might either be because of mistrust of other learners' responses to their writing, or as a result of their perception that fellow students, because they are still in the process of learning the language, might not be knowledgeable enough to make worthwhile comments. One of the findings of their study indicated, however, that use of peer responses in revising was dependent on whether their interaction with their peers had been conducted with a co-operative or a defensive attitude.

This finding supported the ESL finding of Goldstein and Conrad (1990:443) that negotiation of meaning and/or of revisions was a key factor in successful teacher-student conferencing. Mere participation in the conferencing was not, in itself, enough to lead to the revision and consequent production of qualitatively better drafts. Leki and Carson (1994:98), as a

result of their study, confirmed the notion that students must "feel comfortable" with their teachers.

It would thus seem that in order to benefit from teacher or peer responses it is necessary for students not only to participate actively, and to clarify responses, but even more important is for them to feel in a position to control the interaction. Kenny (1993:217) calls this "learner autonomy", and supports the findings of Goldstein and Conrad (1990:443) and Leki and Carson (1994:98) that in peer-peer and teacher-peer conferencing concerning the editing of composition drafts, meaning and change must be initiated and negotiated by the learner in a position of control and authority if it is to have any value. Goldstein and Conrad (1990:458) suggest that student writers can be given instruction in the importance of conversation and the negotiation of meaning to encourage meaningful and constructive interaction within peer groups. Comment on the significance and validity of these assertions is made in Chapter 5.

The complexity of defining a successful peer-response group was also recognised by Nelson and Murphy (1993:140), as there are several alternative factors by which success can be measured. These include the tone of the interaction (such as whether this is co-operative/defensive/competitive), whether students are able to identify the strengths and weaknesses in peer drafts, whether peer suggestions are incorporated into drafts, and whether peer responses improve the final product. The possibility that the draft might be weakened by the inclusion of peer suggestions was also raised. The need for further study in these and related issues was recognised.

The aim of peer editing and teacher collaboration in the drafting stages is ultimately to make students self-critical and independent of its need. Collaboration with peers and teacher in learning supports the Vygotskian notion that "what a child can do in co-operation today [s]he can do alone

tomorrow" (Haworth, 1992:41). Cazden (1994) suggests that this is even more the case for South African black L2 writers of English. She suggests that because their culture is traditionally an oral one, they do not write as lucidly as they would like, and collaboration with peers provides the Vygotskian scaffolding - "temporary adjustable frameworks for construction in progress" (Cazden, 1994:174). This is discussed further in Chapter 5.

2.8 Critique of the cognitive process approach

Several valid criticisms of the cognitive process approach to the teaching of written literacy are worth recognition and mention. These have come in particular from proponents of the genre approach to the teaching of writing, which developed both as a reaction to, and as a development beyond the cognitivist process approach. Criticisms provided in this critique are addressed further in the analysis of the project in Chapter 5.

It has been argued that exclusive focus on the processes involved in composing ignores the value of teaching explicit language knowledge (Hyland, 1992:17), in other words, of providing models. As the cognitivist process approach employed in this research is complementing strategies already in place which include pre-writing activities to provide explicit language knowledge, this criticism can be discounted.

The emphasis placed on the composing process is criticised for its failure to take into account the many external forces beyond the writer's control which "define, shape and ultimately judge a piece of writing" (Horowitz, 1986b:446). He argues that writers do not write in a cultural vacuum, and that the constraints of the writing situation must also be considered. The process approach was also criticised by Norton Peirce (1993:2) for placing the responsibility for learning to

a large extent on the student, as well as for playing down linguistic accuracy and concentrating instead on invention, drafting and making meaning. How, it was argued, can the marginalised, the socially disadvantaged, the disempowered, take up options and make choices which they do not have? These criticisms were found to be valid, and are returned to in greater depth in section 5.3.3.4. of chapter 5.

Horowitz (1986a:142) was also critical of process writing because it is not known whether process writing prepares students for writing examinations, when time constraints preclude time for redrafting or revising to any large extent. He argued for a need for both process and product emphases. This criticism is challenged by Hamp-Lyons who argues

... if the purpose of the writer's processes is a product, then a better understanding of the processes can hardly have a negative effect on the product.

(Hamp-Lyons, 1986:793).

Moreover, because a process-based approach promotes critical thinking, inquiry and problem solving, it equips students with the skills needed to develop as independent writers in any area in which writing is employed (Zamel, 1982). Its ultimate aim is to make students self-critical and self-evaluatory of their writing.

Horowitz (1986b:446) also claimed that overuse of peer evaluation could result in pupils having an unrealistic view of their abilities, as well as stating that attempting to "make over bad writers in the image of good ones" may be of "questionable efficacy" because of the lack of cultural sensitivity this implies. Development of an unrealistic view of their writing ability became apparent in this research, as is mentioned in section 4.4.1.5. of Chapter 4.

Several recognised advantages of the cognitivist process approach to the teaching of writing have been listed by Hamp-Lyons (1986:790 - 796). It is more humanistic than traditional product-centred approaches. It informs and is informed by interlanguage studies. In addition it develops student involvement, student interaction and motivation. The treatment of error and approaches to feedback appeal to both teachers and learners "who have been swimming (or drowning) in a sea of red ink for years" (Hamp-Lyons, 1986:790). All of these advantages were found to be valid in this study.

2.9 Summary

This chapter has attempted to provide an outline of the theory and assumptions on which process writing is based, and the rationale for the theory. It has attempted to explain the processes found to occur in the creation of text and to identify the common ground and the differences which research into composition in both L1 and L2 has revealed.

Studies which have identified the processes employed by skilled writers (as compared with those designated as unskilled) provide ideas for teaching strategies which may prove to be successful in teaching composition to students.

The strengths and weaknesses of the approach have also been recognised, along with the findings of various case studies. Although findings in such case studies are not generalisable, some of the findings are replicated in the present study. The importance of the student being in control of negotiating meaning and revisions is recognised.

CHAPTER 3 - METHOD

3.1 Introduction

Emig (1982:64) maintains that in order to select evidence, gather data and evaluate or investigate this systematically, it is necessary to identify the enquiry paradigm or, what Kuhn (1970 in Emig 1982:64) calls the "explanatory matrix", in order that the data gathered may qualify as valid knowledge. Any investigative methodology is based on certain assumptions and theories which need to be made explicit. The methodology employed in this research is action research in the critical theory tradition. This chapter outlines its historical development and pertinent features.

3.2 Historical development of action research

Although there are earlier references (McTaggart, 1991:1; Cohen and Manion, 1994:188), the development of action research is attributed largely to social psychologist, Kurt Lewin, in about 1944 (McNiff, 1988:19; McTaggart, 1991:6) in response to the socio-political conditions prevailing at the end of the second world war. While his was a traditionally positivist/functionalist/empiricist view, to enable people to conduct their own systematic enquiries, it was seminal. He believed that the best way to improve understanding of social situations was to engage people in their own inquiries into their own lives. This led to a re-conceptualization of the relationship between theory and practice, the researcher and the researched. His ideas provided the basis for further refinements and development by later researchers through an interpretive perspective to the critical theory stance of researchers such as Kemmis, Elliott and Ebbutt. Carr and Kemmis are acknowledged (by McNiff, 1988:33) as having turned

the concept of action research into "an adequate and coherent educational science" of the critical theory tradition.

Lawrence Stenhouse as director of the British Schools' Council Humanities Curriculum Project from 1967 to 1972, promoted the case for action research as a means of creating a liberating atmosphere for pupils in classrooms. Building on the ideas of Lewin, he instigated the idea of teachers as researchers - as the best judges of their own practice - and anticipated improvement in educational practices as a natural corollary. He envisaged every classroom as a laboratory and every teacher as a member of the scientific community (McNiff, 1988:25; Cohen and Manion, 1994:186).

These views were strongly contested by, inter alia, Hodgkinson (1957) who argued that research was no place for the amateur, that teachers have no time for research, and that their research would not be rigorous. This view was refuted by researchers like Schaefer (1967, in McTaggart, 1991), and Oja and Smulyan (1989) who believed that teachers are in the *best* position to conduct research to find better ways of teaching, while simultaneously contributing to their own intellectual growth and professionalism:

The teacher has opportunities for research which, if seized, will not only powerfully and rapidly develop the technique of teaching but will also react to vitalize and dignify the work of the individual teacher.

(Buckingham, 1926, in McTaggart, 1991:1).

With the emergence of the interpretive tradition, the focus of some research underwent a shift in emphasis from methodology (in the positivist tradition) to the enquirer (of the interpretive tradition). This involved a recognition of a shift from the view of what counts as the more important knowledge - from the perspective of educational research - as

being objective, and measurable, and therefore quantifiable, towards its being subjective and qualitative.

The rationale underlying the interpretive paradigm as a research tradition is based upon certain assumptions about social reality, the nature of knowledge, and about human nature: the ontological assumption of social reality is the nominalist view that social reality is a product of individual consciousness and cognition, created by the mind and holding that

... objects of thought are merely words and that there is no independently accessible thing constituting the meaning of a word.

(Cohen and Manion, 1994:6).

Epistemological assumptions about the nature of knowledge are that knowledge is soft, subjective, spiritual and transcendental, based on experience and insight, and is uniquely and essentially personal in nature. The implications for the researcher involve a rejection of the ways of the positivist natural scientist, imposing on researchers an involvement with their subjects. Furthermore the interpretive paradigm in viewing the relationship between humans and their environment sees humans as creative and as initiators of their own actions, as having free will rather than as responding mechanically to their environment; the controller rather than the controlled, "the master rather than the marionette" (Cohen and Manion, 1994:7).

An emphasis on qualitative knowledge (Sherman and Webb 1988:7 in Ely, 1991:4-5) implies a direct concern with experience as it is lived, or felt or undergone, and qualitative research therefore has the aim of understanding experience as nearly as possible to the way its participants feel it and live it.

Action research later became more critical and emancipatory as a result of the influence of the German critical theorist,

Jurgen Habermas (1972, 1974), as well as Tax (1960), Fals Borda (1979), Hall (1979, 1982), and Freire (1982), and Carr and Kemmis (1983, 1986) (all in McTaggart, 1991:24). Critical theory goes beyond the interpretive paradigm in that it sees the interpretive tradition as concentrating only on expressions of the practitioner's ideas as guiding action, without giving acknowledgement to the external conditions which distort and constrain understanding, and ways of identifying and overcoming these. Truth, action and identity for the critical theorist are seen as socially constructed, historically embedded and interdependent. Knowledge is seen as dialectical, and never value-free. Realities are multiple and shifting: the known and the knower mutually shape each other. Events can be adequately understood only when seen in context (Ely, 1991:2-4). Habermas (in McTaggart, 1991:25) maintained that knowing could not be a disinterested act, and saw emancipation as one of the three possible cognitive interests, which drive and shape the way in which knowledge is constituted.

Carr and Kemmis (1986:208) maintain that neither positivist nor interpretive educational research is adequate as critical education research because both lack a coherent view of the relation between theory and practice in education, and that educational action research by its nature is involved with the question of the control of education - in this case by self-critical researchers, including teachers and pupils, who take collaborative responsibility for the development and reform of education. Action researchers of the critical perspective adopt an activist view of their role, and "aim to transform the present to produce a different future" (Carr and Kemmis, 1986:183). Critical theory aims to change those conditions which it describes; to be socially transformative. Its methods are dialogic and participatory involving action research as praxis.

Praxis, the idea of practice being informed through self-reflection, is an Aristotelian notion, described by Carr and Kemmis (1986:190) as "commitment of the practitioner to wise and prudent action in a practical, concrete, historical situation". Praxis is thus action which is "considered and consciously theorised ... which may reflexively inform and transform the theory which informed it" (Carr and Kemmis, 1986:190). Praxis thus denotes the idea of critically informed practice.

Because critical research acknowledges that any proposed application of analyses affects the lives of real people, the research becomes emancipatory and political (McNiff, 1988). As Gibson makes clear,

Critical theory attempts to reveal those factors which prevent groups and individuals taking control of, or even influencing, those decisions which crucially affect their lives... This characteristic marks out critical theory's true distinctiveness: its claim to be emancipatory.

(Gibson, 1986:5-6).

The objects of action research which are hoped to be improved are one's own educational practices which are not independent of the practitioner. The role of research in education according to Mouly (1978) is

...the process of arriving at dependable solutions to problems through the planned and systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of data. It is a most important tool for advancing knowledge, for promoting progress, and for enabling man to relate more effectively to his environment, to accomplish his purposes and to resolve his conflicts.

(Cohen and Manion, 1994:40).

Theorists like Lather (1991) and Popkewitz (1984, 1987) of the emerging reflexive post-modern discourses are critical of any

sort of realist inquiry such as this, arguing that the play of ideas should be free of authoritative paradigms. They are critical of the fact that all human knowledge is based on the assumptions, commitments and concepts of a paradigm itself. They see a need for the intellectual process to focus reflexively on the language itself, on the development of a mutual and dialogic production of a multi-voiced, multi-centred discourse, because the language of inquiry is always socially and culturally bound. The researcher needs therefore to be wary, and to acknowledge the fact that

... the human tendency is to reify existence and to create dogma under the canopy of inquiry. ... The argument here is to place these paradigms within broader social and institutional contexts and to recognise that our inquiries should be part of a general historical scepticism and social philosophical awareness.

(Popkewitz, 1984:195).

3.3 Features of action research

There are many definitions of action research available in the literature (Rapoport, 1970; Elliott, 1981; Ebbutt, 1983, all in Carr and Kemmis, 1986). Probably the most well known and the most widely accepted definition of action research is that of Kemmis:

Action research is simply a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants ...in social (including educational) situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of (a) their own social or educational practices, (b) their understanding of these practices, and (c) the situations (and institutions) in which the practices are carried out.

(Carr and Kemmis, 1986:162).

Action research involves action, both of the system (any human social order) under consideration, and of the people involved

in that system. It is participatory in that it involves the teacher in her own enquiry, as opposed to outsiders coming in and superimposing their views on the teacher, and it is collaborative, in that it involves other people as part of a shared enquiry. It is research 'with' rather than research 'on'. In a collaborative action research study, groups of practitioners jointly participate in studying their own individual praxis (Carr and Kemmis, 1986:192).

By involving its practitioners directly in theorising their own practice and revising their theories self-critically in the light of their practical consequences, action research is characterised by retrospective analysis and prospective action. Stenhouse (1979 in Cohen and Manion, 1994:186) asserts that by this means action research can contribute not only to practice, but also to a theory of education and teaching which is accessible to other teachers.

McTaggart (1991:24) saw as an aim of action research the deepening of the teacher's understanding of his/her problem. Mao Zedong is quoted in McTaggart (1991) as saying that it is only through personal participation that the essence of that thing can be uncovered and fully comprehended, while Boomer (1980:5 in McTaggart, 1991:31) lends further support to this argument by suggesting that action research is "personally owned learning".

Two essential features of action research, according to Carr and Kemmis (1986:165) are improvement and involvement. Its aim is improvement in the areas of practice, understanding of the practice, and understanding of the situation in which the practice occurs, and involvement of all in the phases of planning and action.

Action research aims to contribute both to the practical concerns of people in an immediate problematic situation and to the goals of

social science by joint collaboration within a mutually acceptable ethical framework.

(Rapoport, 1988:89).

Carr and Kemmis (1986:165) see three conditions as necessary: firstly, that the project has as its subject matter a social practice which appears to be in need of improvement; secondly, that the action proceeds through a spiral of cycles of planning, acting, observing and reflecting; and thirdly, that action research involves those responsible for the practice in each of the moments of the activity. The conditions of its success are seen to lie in the improvement of actual educational practices.

The purpose of action research is thus to bring about improvements both in practice and in understanding, based on a systematic, responsive and reflective enquiry, through cycles of construction and reconstruction, leading to a better developed rationale for that practice. The rationale is developed as it is being tested. The outcome is envisaged as transformation of the present to produce a different future.

3.4 Claims to validity

The questions as to whether the research really does the things it claims to do and whether the results are to be believed, need to be addressed, particularly as action research is subjective. This is a common challenge to action research. In this regard Lomax asserts that:

The validity of what we claim would seem to be the degree to which it was useful (relevant) in guiding practice for particular teachers and its power to inform and precipitate debate about improving practice in the wider professional community.

(Lomax, 1986, in McNiff 1988:131).

McNiff (1988) recognises three steps towards establishing the validity of a claim to knowledge in the field of the social sciences: self-validation, peer validation, and learner validation.

Self-validation can be described as acknowledgement of practice as a realisation of values: that a disciplined cycle of imagined solutions, implementation, observation, evaluation and replanning is established as a result of a desire to turn a negative state into a positive one. Furthermore, the fact that the practitioner intentionally reflects critically upon her practice rather than merely describing it, and the fact that the process is made public and shared for the benefit of others, adds to its validity. By making knowledge public, others are invited to share it. Should they do so, they are thereby agreeing that it is worthwhile and thus validating the claim to knowledge. This "making public" is what Polanyi (1958, in McNiff, 1988:133) termed "universal intent".

The dangers of solitary self-reflection were recognised by Habermas:

The self-reflection of a lone subject ... requires a quite paradoxical achievement: one part must be split off from the other part in such a manner that the subject can be in a position to render aid to itself.... (Furthermore), in the act of self-reflection the subject can deceive itself.

(Habermas, 1974:29 in
Carr and Kemmis, 1986:200).

Triangulation is recognised as a means of overcoming the dangers of solitary self-reflection. Based on the literal manner in which surveyors use several markers to pinpoint a particular spot, in the social sciences it serves as a check on validity, by attempting to explain the complexity of human behaviour more fully by studying it from more than one standpoint. According to Fetterman (1989:89 in Ely, 1991:98) triangulation is basic to ethnographic research. It is seen as

being "at the heart of ethnographic validity, testing one source against another to strip away alternative explanations and prove a hypothesis".

Several types of triangulation are recognised, one of them being investigator triangulation (Denzin, 1970 in Cohen and Manion, 1994:235-238) in which two or more observers independently rate the same classroom phenomena. Investigator triangulation has been incorporated into this study by having three teachers and three classes involved in the investigation.

Peer validation involves external validation by validation groups of between three and ten individuals able to provide reasoned critical assessment, in a supportive but challenging atmosphere. Their questions encourage the researcher to think critically by providing dialogue which engages those involved in shared discourse, providing "validation as a living form" (McNiff, 1988:135). In this study this was provided by fellow English Second Language M. Ed. students and lecturers, as well as by the two teachers who undertook the research along with the researcher.

Learner validation, that of the 'clients' themselves, provides the strongest support to researchers' claim to knowledge, via diaries, written statements, tape recordings or video recordings. The researcher must be aware of the difficulties associated with the Hawthorne effect as well as the possibility of researcher power influencing the attitude of the participants. The mere fact that the researcher is in a position of authority could influence the responses of the participants towards an anticipated expected response.

Thus a claim to valid knowledge can only be realised through interaction, through which as Habermas (1976, in McNiff, 1988:136) claims "it will be shown in time whether the other

side is "in truth or honestly" participating or is only pretending to engage in communicative action".

3.5 Procedure

Action research is, then, a dynamic process in which the four aspects of planning, action, observation and reflection are deliberately set in motion. These aspects are to be understood not as static steps complete in themselves, but as 'moments' in an action research spiral. This spiral is then repeated any number of times.

Several models of procedure exist, such as those of Kemmis and McTaggart (1988:14), Elliott (1991:71), McKernan (1991:29), (all in Hopkins, 1993:48-53), and Ebbutt (1983 in McNiff, 1988:32) and McNiff (1988:44-45). While each model is in some respect different from the next, all share the processes of planning, action, observation and reflection, and then the cyclical repetition of these. Kemmis and others, for example, are criticised by Hopkins (1993:55) for devising models which are prescriptive and inhibiting of independent action, and by McNiff (1988:28) for devising models which do not allow for contingency measures to cater for unforeseen difficulties: for assuming that real people have the flexibility and creativity to solve several problems and then return to the original. McNiff (1988:28) sees as a major weakness of earlier models the "supposition that life goes along only one track at a time, forgetting that related but dissimilar problems will arise and oust the main focus". McNiff devised a three dimensional model to resolve this difficulty. Comments on the Kemmis model used, and on McNiff's criticism of it, are made in section 5.2.6. of the analysis provided in Chapter 5.

3.6 Research instruments

As is pointed out by McCormack Steinmetz (in Ely 1991:103), because qualitative research cannot depend on the test, or on the statistics or the outside expert, it is dependent on the "researcher-as-instrument". This places a huge responsibility on the researcher: for example, decisions must be made as to what to log and what to omit without knowing which observations will ultimately prove important or relevant. It is acknowledged (McNiff, 1988:83) that keeping track of developments can be difficult, but that this is essential if the study is to stand up to public scrutiny.

Self-monitoring through the making of field notes and keeping a diary, and colleague monitoring and regular meetings, as well as pupil monitoring through the keeping of research diaries are all essential.

Pupils' diaries can provide direct feedback from pupils' perspective, and it is essential that they be encouraged to be open and honest in their responses, although that they will do so cannot be guaranteed (Ellis, 1992:13; McNiff, 1988:78). Ellis (1992:13) notes that diary studies are becoming increasingly popular, and provide interesting information about personal affective factors such as anxiety and competitiveness. Guidance can be provided by the teacher or researcher as to points for pupils to include in writing their diaries, but there should be as little constraint as possible as to what they should write (McNiff, 1988:78). Teacher field notes and pupil diaries can be used as resources to initiate classroom discussion. Knatz (in Ely, 1991:11) points out that gaining access - gaining the confidence of the participants - is an ongoing process, and that trust and co-operation, once established, need to be maintained.

Elliott (1988:197) reminds researchers that teacher field notes and diaries should be written up as soon as possible

after the event, and should, if possible, draw upon impressions jotted down during a lesson.

Tape recordings can also provide valuable data about one's own and student behaviour, as well as being useful sources of evidence against which to check retrospective accounts of lessons or procedure. In addition, Spradley points out that because tape recordings add the nuances of a person's voice to the words which print provides, audio-tapes, fully transcribed, represent "one of the most complete expanded accounts" (1979:75 in Ely, 1991:82-83).

Questionnaires can also be a useful means of gathering basic information and are particularly useful in surveys. Cohen and Manion (1994:96) stress that clear questions and simple design are essential. Question wording needs careful consideration to avoid the asking of too complex or leading questions. Questionnaires should ideally be tested by means of a pilot study, and adjusted wherever difficulties occur. From the potential variety of question types that exist, in this research only the most basic closed- and open-ended questions were used, in an administered questionnaire.

3.7 Critique

Action research is often charged with being biased as it involves the researcher analyzing her own practice, and it is therefore seen as unreliable. Lack of reliability could result from self-deception or ideological distortion of the facts. The need to take care that one enters upon a piece of action research with questions rather than with preconceived answers must be borne in mind. Ely (1991:47) points out that it is important for qualitative researchers to be as aware as possible of the "ripples caused by our own participation" in the research.

Carr and Kemmis (1986:192) refute this charge as an illusion resulting from the idea that it is in any way possible to have a value-free objective social science. They argue further that the purpose of a critical educational science is to expose and identify self-interests and ideological distortions through critical self-reflection, and see the practitioner as setting out

... deliberately to examine where his/her own practice is distorted by taken-for-granted assumptions, habits, custom, precedent, coercion or ideology.

(Carr and Kemmis, 1986:192).

While critical theory can be seen as a deliberate process for the emancipation of practitioners from the above distortions, it is recognised that these ideals can be achieved only in a very limited and partial way, and it is necessary to concede that "to imagine that it could be otherwise is to seek a scientific vantage point beyond the reach of history and human interests" (Carr and Kemmis, 1986:192).

As Cohen and Manion acknowledge (1994:192), action research is criticised by empiricist proponents of experimental research as being lacking in scientific rigour. This cannot be refuted: its objective is situational and specific, its sample is restricted and unrepresentative, it has little or no control over independent variables, and its findings are not generalisable. Carr and Kemmis nevertheless maintain that one of the things that makes action research "research" and gives it rigour is that it aims at the systematic development of knowledge in a self-critical community of practitioners (1991:188). Sanders and Pinhey (1974:12) likewise claim that it is the fact that the research involves the systematic collection and analysis of the data that makes it valid knowledge.

Action research also has recognised functional and implementational difficulties: Hopkins (1993:54-56)

acknowledges the inherent danger of getting trapped in and dependent on the cycle, which would then constrain and inhibit independent action. He also recognises that models have become so complicated that they may well confuse and mystify rather than clarify the process.

On the positive side, proponents of action research such as Carr and Kemmis (1988), Hopkins (1993), McTaggart (1991), and McNiff (1988) recognise valuable strengths. Action research can be undertaken to penetrate, illuminate and improve the process of education. Action research empowers practitioners to transform their practice through collaborative effort, rigorous critique and self-reflection. It generates practical educational knowledge and enables teachers to be selective and build on strengths. Action research can also improve the teacher-pupil relationship through seeking to find answers to common problems. It has the potential to democratise research in that it is collaborative and 'people-friendly': the teacher works *with* the pupils rather than *on* them. It makes teachers more professional in that they are taking control of, and responsibility for, classroom practice, rather than willingly submitting to bureaucratic control - evaluation is internal rather than superimposed. Action research makes teachers offer more progressive, creative, critical and dynamic learning opportunities. It is also eclectic: flexible and adaptable to whatever needs may arise (Irwin, 1991).

According to Sanford (in Carr and Kemmis, 1986:188) action research also has the advantage of being able to bridge the gap between research and practice by having the classroom practitioners themselves doing the research. Kemmis (1986) observes that while pressure from without may be essential in order to introduce change into schools, it is only with complementary commitment from within that change can actually be achieved.

Action research is very humanistic - it has as its philosophical base an awareness of and respect for the integrity of individuals.

3.8 Ethics in action research

A number of ethical concerns need to be considered by all qualitative researchers (Ely, 1991:39; Cohen and Manion, 1994:347-380; Kemmis and McTaggart, 1982:92-94; Sanders and Pinhey, 1974:390-407). The first ethic, according to Sanders and Pinhey (1974:392) is "simple honesty", even if the research indicates findings other than those which were predicted. The next is professional ethics, a code of ethics which states that professionals will tell the truth while at the same time not intentionally hurting anyone. Ethics in social research has been defined by Cavan as

a matter of principled sensitivity to the rights of others. Being ethical limits the choices we can make in the pursuit of truth. Ethics say that while truth is good, respect for human dignity is better, even if, in the extreme case the respect of human nature leaves one ignorant of human nature.

(Cavan, 1977:810 in Cohen
and Manion, 1994:359).

Researchers have a responsibility both to their profession, and to the subjects of their research. This creates several sources of tension: factors which must be taken into consideration when doing action research include researcher power and values; the need for informed consent, privacy, anonymity, confidentiality; and the manner in which research data are presented to the participants in the project.

The matter of informed consent, unless the participants are immature and psychologically incompetent, can be handled by explaining the intended procedure to the participants, and requesting their voluntary participation in the project. Any

questions arising from the explanation need to be publicly acknowledged and openly discussed and resolved to the satisfaction of the participants. The assurance of anonymity and of the fact that participants may withdraw from the research at a later date should they so wish needs to be given (Cohen and Manion, 1994:349-354). Participants also have the right to be informed of the findings of the research. While the dignity of the participants as human beings must be respected, the resolution of the ethical tension between protection of participants and making information public, according to Cohen and Manion (1994:360) should be regarded as being part of a continuum rather than dichotomously antithetical.

3.9 Conclusion

This, then, is action research. As Kemmis (1986) points out, it is by its very nature problematic to all but the most complacent practitioners. It has a critical relationship with the status quo in education and in educational research. It holds a view of the teacher

... as a critical curriculum developer and researcher in the context of the school, participating with others in the wider process of educational reform - engaged not only in changing his or her own practices, but also in reforming educational institutions.

(Kemmis, 1986:52).

CHAPTER 4 - PROCEDURE AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the planning and implementation of an action research investigation into the introduction of a process approach to the teaching of writing. Because implementation in action research is dependent on ongoing evaluation, reflection and revision of current practice - retrospective analysis leading to prospective action - procedure and findings are, to a certain extent, inter-dependent and cannot be presented as separate entities. A more detailed critical analysis of the research itself and of the findings, is to be found in Chapter 5.

4.2 Initiating the project

The Standard Nine class was chosen by the researcher for the research as she felt that of the classes she taught, the Standard Nines would be the most suitable in level of language development and maturity to cope with the demands of and to benefit from the programme. The Standard Nine class of 65 pupils is divided for English lessons into three sets in the following manner: after being ranked according to their English marks from the previous end of year examination, they are divided into one top set, and two equal ability second sets. All the sets included both first and second language speakers of English.

In November 1994, the school principal was approached for his consent to proceed with the research. Firstly the two teachers who, along with the researcher teach the Standard Nine English, and then the pupils to be involved in the research, were approached, introduced to the idea and their co-operation

sought. Opportunity for discussion and explanation was provided. Letters were sent out to inform the parents of the participating pupils requesting parental consent (see Appendix B). In February 1995 the four pupils new to the standard were approached for their consent, and amended letters sent to their parents (Appendix C). Everyone expressed willingness to be involved. The permission of the Governing Body of the school, as the 'gatekeepers' (Ely 1991:20) of the social unit being studied, was also sought (in November 1994) and granted (in January 1995).

4.3 Pre-planning

A proposed schedule of procedure (see Appendix D), devised by the researcher, was discussed, finalised and accepted by the teachers involved, at the first English Department meeting of the school year. Tentative dates for implementation (Appendix E) were then organised. The need for teachers to be flexible and to recognise that adaptations to the proposed schedule would occur within each class was emphasised: action research presupposes adaptability in response to suggestions and developments (Carr and Kemmis, 1986; Cohen and Manion, 1994; Hopkins, 1993; McNiff, 1988; McTaggart, 1991).

Discussion as to how pupils should be grouped for peer-editing purposes followed. There are several possible ways of grouping pupils, depending on the purpose of the grouping (Bassey, 1978; Yelon and Weinstein, 1977). Considerations included whether groups should be organised by the teachers or by the pupils themselves; whether groups should be heterogeneous or homogeneous in ability; and whether in a multi-lingual class groups should be mixed L1 and L2 pupils. Anticipated advantages and disadvantages of each type of grouping were sought. It was felt that pupils might feel more comfortable working in groups of their own choosing, and that groups needed to be homogeneous ability groups in order that peer

editing not be threatening to the less able, and of no help to the more able. A decision was made that for the first action research spiral, the pupils would form their own groups, and that grouping would be reconsidered for the second spiral, should this be found necessary.

The composing tasks which would form part of the research were also agreed upon amongst the teachers involved. This required making changes to what had formerly been laid down as the accepted practice for the term. The writing activities chosen for the purposes of this research were descriptive writing, for the first round, and a comparison between a business letter and a letter to the press, as the second round.

4.4 Procedure

The first phase of the collaborative action research began with an across-the-standard introductory explanation to the whole group by the researcher. In one lesson pupils were given a brief overview of the various methods by which written literacy is promoted (see Appendix F). An explanation of the concept of a process approach as a means of improving writing was provided, and a handout of the steps to be followed in using a process approach to writing (from Pratt, in Chick, 1990:459) (Appendix G). Pupils were also provided with copies of Dixon's suggestions for peer editing (in Meyer, 1989:43) (Appendix H). The researcher also explained the spiral of collaborative action research methodology to be implemented using Kemmis's model (Kemmis, 1988:1) (Appendix I).

The concept of individual research diaries as a research tool to record their feelings and responses to their experiences was also introduced. A small exercise book was issued to each pupil and there was sufficient time at the end of the explanations for the pupils to record their initial reactions to the proposed research. Diary responses which are quoted

anonymously are quoted as they were recorded. The researcher did not correct or draw attention to pupils' errors. Diaries were handed in on a daily basis to the researcher who summarised feelings expressed in them, and acknowledged having read each by signing each. Comments were only made in the pupils' diaries by the researcher when a pupil seemed to be recording a resumé of the lesson rather than her reactions to the lesson. In a few cases, the researcher set up a dialogue with a particular pupil which would elicit a response to a question asked.

Initial responses to the proposal of a process approach, recorded in diaries, was generally approving, particularly from those experiencing difficulty in meeting the required standard. They apparently saw the process approach as the long awaited solution to their writing problems. Unexpected positive comments included two expressing pleasure that the focus would be on the writing rather than on language study, that it would "make English more than just learning language". Several of the quieter, more timid pupils found the whole idea threatening. These responses ranged from "I am not very enthusiastic about doing this because I don't really enjoy writing and I am not very good at it", to "Right at this moment I can't stand this. Maybe its because I hate writing so much...". There was also some scepticism, particularly from the top set that the process approach might be "too long and boring", and that "too much rewriting may take the fun out of writing". The disconcerting notion that it might involve "a lot of extra work" was also expressed by a number of the less enthusiastic pupils.

4.4.1 The first action research spiral

4.4.1.1 Pre-writing activities

The introduction was continued thereafter in each classroom. The researcher and teachers involved devoted one lesson to the introduction of the concept of genres of writing. This was done because the researcher feels that knowledge of the purpose or intention of the writing is essential to the successful achievement of purpose and that an understanding of the concept of genre would facilitate self-editing and peer-editing. Examination of purpose and audience forms part of Dixon's (1986:4 - 5) peer-editing suggestions. The concept of genres was introduced by presenting the pupils with extracts from a range of genres of writing, and having the pupils identify each genre, not only from its content, but more particularly from its structure and language techniques (Appendix J). This was followed by eliciting from the pupils the aspects which must be borne in mind to achieve success when writing in a particular genre. When these had been collaboratively compiled they were used as headings (Appendix K), and, using a list of some of the literary techniques already known (Appendix L), the features of a number of different genres were compiled, to clarify and illustrate the concept of 'genre'.

Diarised reaction to the lesson was overwhelmingly positive, with comments from pupils such as "most enjoyable", "useful", as providing "plenty of inspiration", and, "I loved the lesson, it was very interesting and taught me a lot already". Comments from the respective teachers were that "the lesson went extremely well ... they are particularly enthusiastic and responsive", and "... very worthwhile as a starting point as it is such an important part of teaching writing".

The next lesson was spent on group practice of editing. It was felt that discussing and editing the work of a third party

would conscientise pupils to the advantages of shared responses, which would in turn prepare pupils for the peer-editing to come. A letter of application in need of improvement (from Murray and Johanson, 1990:136) was supplied (Appendix M). Pupils worked first individually, then in groups, using the peer-editing strategies provided and already mentioned, to produce improved group drafts on newsprint, which were then displayed and discussed.

Pupils generally responded very positively. Several expressed their enjoyment of working in a group, and the realisation that "group work had better results than individual efforts", and that it is "hard to edit ... but working in groups made it easier", was made in two of the classes. One pupil expressed her enthusiasm in her comment "I feel very motivated now and am willing to do anything that will improve my writing". Another learner found editing "very enjoyable, as we got a chance to (do) what teachers do!" A small number appeared to have missed the point of the exercise entirely: the comments "It helped me as I am about to make application letters" and "we need it when we apply for jobs" showed apparent misapprehension of the purpose of the lesson.

One lesson was then spent on revising aspects of descriptive writing (Appendix N). This lesson focused on several reminders:

1. Synonyms, especially the way in which connotations of synonyms may differ, and the way in which tone, attitude, and implied meaning can be conveyed through word choice;
2. Emotive language - that choosing the one "right" word lends more strength to the writing than a list of adjectives would;
3. Awareness of clichés, and the need to be original in expressing oneself;

4. What constitutes a sentence, with particular attention to the fact that a participle on its own is not a finite verb. In the researcher's experience, learners have erroneously tended to omit finite verbs when writing descriptively.

This lesson was not at all successful. In two of the sets, the researcher herself and one of the teachers described it as "rushed", "disjointed", and "too much teacher talk". In these classes the pupil responses were also guarded: while there were some who found it "useful", or "learnt something valuable", or are "looking forward to trying it out"/"excited to start writing", others - more honest, perhaps - found it "quite hard", "too much learning", or were "tired ... by the long lesson". The fact that it was the first lesson of the day, and a Monday morning, means that the failure of the lesson cannot be ascribed to either the February heat, or the fact that it was the end of the week or the last lesson of the day. The top set was equally disenchanted, including the teacher, who wrote, "The lesson did not go well at all ... terribly long, boring, drawn-out and repetitive." The majority of the top set ascribed their lack of enthusiasm to the fact that they were "getting bored with having essay every period". This lesson provided a timely reminder that learners learn by doing and enjoy doing, that too much teacher talk achieves very little.

There could be several possible reasons for the problem encountered here:

1. Criticisms of the lesson itself: although this should have been revision of concepts already known, the lesson content was definitely ambitious, very theoretical, and it did not include enough pupil activity. Also, in retrospect it became apparent that this first piece of writing for editing practice should not have been a letter at all: it should have been descriptive writing. This would have made the group editing

practice in the second action research spiral seem less like a repetition of the first.

2. Pupils were beginning to flag. The build-up towards the implementation of the process approach to writing was taking too long; pupils were becoming exasperated by their involvement in a project in which - after four lessons - they had yet to get to the point of the research. "I am getting bored with doing essay every day", was a typical comment.

4.4.1.2 Writing the first draft

Pupils created their first drafts of their own descriptive writing, and using the guide to editing provided, edited their own writing. The topic for the descriptive writing was "A picture in print" / "A photograph in words". Each pupil was asked to choose her own topic or setting, 'freeze' the picture in her mind, and then describe it in words. The length was stipulated at up to one A4 page. This was shorter than is usually required, but served our purpose of drafting and editing and re-drafting. The danger of redrafting being dispensed with, because it might be seen as too tedious, had to be considered.

Comments of particular interest on the drafting process included "... it is a good way ...it makes you think harder ... and not to rush your ideas to your final written work", and, "All the thinking I did ... was worth it ". While there were a few negative comments, the majority were pleased by their experience: "Thoroughly enjoyed it", and " ... pleased with my first draft. Needs lots of editing but I am enjoying it ...". The comment of one particularly able learner who wrote, "I am not very excited or enthusiastic about this because I always write my essays in this way", confirms the idea of process writing as good practice.

The researcher noticed two very weak pupils who, having completed their first drafts in record time, did no personal editing of their work at all. The findings of Pianko (1979), Rose (1980) and Zamel (1983), all in Zamel (1983) that skilled writers take more time to complete their writing was borne out in this research.

The teachers were available for consultation by the pupils, but very little use was made of this opportunity. Possible reasons for this lack of consultation are discussed in Chapter 5.

Pupils were asked to have their work ready for peer editing the following day. Several expressed anxiety at the prospect of having others criticise their work, and many were very conscious of the possibility of hurting others' feelings. This formed the basis for class discussions, and pupils were reminded that it was important to say something positive about the writing, in addition to giving constructive criticism. The possibility that advice given might introduce error where none previously existed was also discussed. Pupils were reminded that the teacher was also available for consultation, and that advice offered need not be taken.

4.4.1.3 Peer-editing

This was the first attempt at individual peer-editing. Peer-editing suggestions compiled from various sources by Dixon (1986:4) (Appendix H) were used as guidelines. Pupils were asked to write their comments on a separate sheet of paper - no corrections or comments were to be made on the original descriptive writing itself. After writing their comments, these should be discussed with the author.

Editors were advised to concentrate on:

3b Is it (the content) clear or are there parts you found confusing?

4 Audience

a Who is the audience the author has in mind?

b Has the author included all the information the audience needs to know? Or too much?

c Find any places where the audience might need more information.

The concept of 'audience' had to be explained to many for whom this was new.

5 Organisation

a Has the author organised the writing so you can follow the arguments clearly?

b Does the writing move smoothly from one point to another?

6 Style

a Is the writing interesting? If not, why not?

b Has the author chosen the right words?

c Are the sentences all the same length and type or has the author varied them?

Attention was drawn to the following:

1. that the grammatical correctness of language, spelling and punctuation was not the focus of the peer editing, but that it could be mentioned as a last point;

2. that peer comments should be regarded as a tool to help pupils improve their writing, but that the author could choose whether or not to heed advice given.

The researcher's class was asked to put their names on the peer-editing they had done and that these responses to the writing be attached to the writing which they had edited. In this manner the writing itself in all its draft stages, along with the comments made about it, as well as the diarised responses of both the giver and receiver of the advice were available for scrutiny.

4.4.1.4 Reactions to peer-editing

Diary responses revealed attitudes to the following three questions:

1. How easy/difficult is it to edit?
2. How does it feel to be giving advice?
3. How does it feel to be receiving advice?

Responses:

1. How easy/difficult is it to edit?

Pupils generally found this difficult, as is expressed by the learner who wrote, "It was a bit hard for me to do it. I mean in some of my group work I found nothing wrong although I knew there was but I couldn't put it the way I wanted to put it". Another pupil expressed a similar difficulty in her response: "It is very difficult to edit somebody else's work, because often you can read something and it doesn't sound correct but you don't know exactly what is wrong".

2. How does it feel to be giving advice?

Here responses ranged widely right across the spectrum from "don't like it", "quite scary and intimidating ... (I) might ... make their work worse", "not comfortable", and "I feel guilty criticising my friend's work", and "not my place", through "strange", "it feels like I'm taking over", to "not as

hard as I thought", and even "... difficult ... but it does feel nice to be giving advice to someone else". One expressed the viewpoint that "you learn how to become more open with the person, being subtle, but not nasty".

3. How does it feel to be receiving advice?

Here the responses, even of those who found it threatening, generally recognised the positive value to be had from receiving advice. Many found it "quite intimidating, but it does help". One pupil wrote that "Peer editing is good but I still felt bad when I got some criticism back". Another felt that "it helped although some people can be cruel at times". One commented, "When I received advice I agreed with her".

Several recognised that although they did not like giving the advice, they appreciated receiving it.

An unexpected advantage mentioned by one pupil was that knowing that peers were going to be editing her work made her more careful in her own drafting stages: "I read over my work about two times before writing it in neat". This bears out the observation made by Dixon (1986:4) in section 2.7 of Chapter 2, that the knowledge that someone other than the teacher will be reading their writing spurs writers on to reread and revise their writing.

A worthwhile observation was made by one skilled but rather diffident pupil who had not been looking forward to having her peers edit her work: "it encourages you and gives you confidence". She also realised that reading the work of others made her more critical of her own work: "From "marking" other essays, I'm also more critical of my own" - validating the observations of Elbow (1981) and Graves (1983) (in Urzua, 1987) that questioning reading leads on to more questioning writing, recorded in Chapter 2, section 2.7.

One particularly good writer, who has already achieved the ability to self-edit and self-evaluate found receiving advice "pointless - nothing in my work was changed". There was also one frank comment that the "exercise didn't work ... We definitely need our teachers to check it".

The latter opinion was also the reaction of the researcher to the work handed in for evaluation: on examination of the peer editing it became apparent that in spite of the positive diary comments made by the pupils, they were struggling with peer-editing. In the researcher's group there was very little that could possibly be regarded as constructive criticism given to improve work of a very low standard. There are several possible reasons for this: Dixon (1986:4) suggests that pupils will need training to become observant readers; Nelson and Murphy (1993:136) suggest mistrust of fellow pupils' ability to make worthwhile observations as a possible cause, as well as the attitude of the negotiators to each other. Further reasons for this could be either that the written literacy of the peer-editors was of an equally low standard, or that the editors were not being entirely honest in their comments. The need for much greater teacher involvement and consultation was also recognised. These findings are the subject of further comment and analysis in Chapter 5.

Another consideration centres on the time factor: even though groups for peer-editing were limited to a maximum of three, peer-editing is extremely time consuming and pupils were hard-pressed to provide significant input in the time available.

4.4.1.5 Questionnaire: Reaction to evaluation

The next lesson involved returning to the pupils their descriptive writing which had been evaluated, and completion of the questionnaire (Appendix O) by the pupils. After marking pupils' descriptive writing and analyzing the diarised

responses of all three groups to peer-editing, the researcher realised that the questionnaire which had already been drafted would be tedious to answer, as many of the questions asked in it had already been answered unsolicited in pupils' diaries. The questionnaire was then redrafted in the light of these realisations.

While the researcher is aware that one would normally proceed through a questionnaire systematically commenting on responses to each question, discussion of the analysis of this questionnaire has been restricted to those questions to which pupils' responses provided helpful insight into progress, attitudes and potential procedure. The questionnaire revealed that while one-third were pleased with their result, just less than one-third achieved a result to which they felt indifferent, and over one-third were disappointed. Many of the latter two groups - ie two-thirds of the group as a whole - felt that they had worked very hard, and that the new system had failed them. A typical response is articulated by the pupil who wrote, "I thought I would get more marks because I really tried and those who did mine for peer editing approved of the essay as being good". This comment validates the criticism voiced by Horowitz (1986b:446) that pupils might develop an unrealistic opinion of their writing ability as a result of positive peer evaluation.

In spite of this, the general feeling was still one of optimism, and that the process approach should be continued. Suggestions for improving the system were also sought in the questionnaire:

1. Eight suggested that "red pen" error correction was a satisfactory way of improving writing.
2. Seventeen felt that the new system was working well and should continue without any changes being made to it.

3. A need to improve the editing process was seen. "Something's wrong with the editing process - we can't correct each others work when we ourselves don't know any better."

4. Several suggested that the time factor for the editing process should be reconsidered: "more lessons/time could be spent on peer-editing. We need to have time to read through the copies quite a few times".

5. A number of pupils in the top set felt that the time spent on pre-writing activities could be cut down - that they included these techniques automatically - and that this time could better be spent on editing.

4.4.1.6 Changes to be implemented in next action research spiral

Class discussions centred around ways of improving the system and overcoming the problems recognised. These discussions resulted in alterations to the procedure for the second spiral of action research in order to accommodate suggestions.

The following decisions were made:

In the top set:

1. They would spend only half a lesson on pre-writing activities, none on group editing practice, and longer (one-and-a-half lessons for each) on drafting and self-editing, and on peer-editing respectively.

2. Furthermore, the teacher of the top set felt that in her set peer-editing might be improved if peer editors were matched according to ability, rather than randomly selected by the pupils themselves as had been the case for the first round.

In the two lower sets:

In the class of the researcher agreement was reached that one whole lesson should be spent on pre-writing activities, and one on practice of editing in groups. To make this possible without sacrificing lessons assigned to other aspects of English teaching, these pupils agreed to do their own initial drafting and self-editing for homework.

In the third class the pre-writing activities and practice of editing were to be combined into one lesson, with the other lesson being given over to individual drafting.

Because there seemed to be a need for more time on and practice of peer-editing, both classes opted for two lessons to be devoted to peer-editing in class.

Group discussion in the researcher's class also focused on ways in which peer-editing could be improved. The researcher asserted that she did not believe that the pupils were unable to see the problems, irregularities in logic and errors in the work they were editing, and suggested that they were perhaps not being honest in their comments about the work that they were editing, for fear of hurting the writer. Pupils agreed to trying again, and to making more constructive use of the teacher if they were in doubt about anything.

4.4.2 The second action research spiral

After a break of about two weeks, the second spiral of the action research was implemented. Dates were adjusted in each class individually, to cater for end of term tests, and to suit individual teachers' personal needs. Dates had to be further adjusted as a result of an unscheduled school holiday.

For this round learning was focused on the similarities and differences between two letter genres, the business letter, and the letter to the press..

4.4.2.1 Pre-writing activities

Using a comparative table (Appendix P), attention was drawn to the similarities and differences inherent in the business letter and the letter to the press. By doing so, it was anticipated that the purpose - and, as a result, the features - of each would become more readily apparent.

For a few this lesson was either boring - "I've done letters before" - or obscure - "difficult to distinguish the difference". For most, however, the lesson was definitely worthwhile: "the lesson was very short and interesting. It made me realise that the purpose of the letter is the most important part". And, "I did not know that a business letter and a letter to the press was very different. I felt good today because in the end I realised that I knew what the difference was". Other comments such as "valuable and refreshing" and "helpful and necessary" reinforced this perception. The researcher made the observation - which supports the 'whole language' approach to language acquisition - that a great many language concepts can purposefully and meaningfully be taught through the teaching of writing, as concepts are acquired in context rather than in isolation.

Reactions to the research into the process approach generally, unelicited but nevertheless interesting, were also made: the reluctance of one was apparent in her comment, "I don't really feel like doing another one of these experiments too soon, though". This was offset by the response of another who had previously been fairly unenamoured by the whole procedure: "I feel quite excited to continue this".

Group editing practice of a letter to the press (Appendix Q) formed part of the pre-writing activities in the two lower sets. For these classes diary entries indicate that this was a worthwhile activity for most. Valuable insights such as "Working as group made us aware of our different opinions", and "you see from different angles" were achieved in groups where learners were co-operative. This is significant as it should help pupils come to a realisation that they can be helped by peer-editing, that there are options and that these need to be rationally considered. It will also be helpful in developing in learners their sense of audience. Another positive comment was "draft after draft, the letter improved dramatically", and the realisation that working as a group made editing much easier. Not all groups were co-operative, however, as was the case in one instance: "This was okay, but it does not always work! The groups do not co-operate."

In retrospect, the researcher now realises that the first letter provided for group editing practice, the letter of application (Appendix M) should not have been a letter at all, in order to have provided for greater variation in editing practice.

4.4.2.2 Writing the first draft

This was undertaken for homework by the researcher's set and, inadvertently, not commented on in the diaries of her set. No significant comments were recorded by any members of the other two sets.

4.4.2.3 Peer-editing

The response to spending two lessons on peer-editing was overwhelmingly positive. Only one person (who did not take any advantage whatsoever of the opportunity to improve her writing as a result of peer-editing, nor did any redrafting of her own

work) suggested that two periods was "... a bit much. One-and-a-half hours would have been enough".

Pupils generally also felt more confident about being critical of their peers: "Everyone is finding it easier to criticise now", was one comment. "(It was) better than the first time - I edited in a realistic manner." "I could criticise people more this time than last." "(I was) not scared to give comment and honest in them." "It is getting easier ... but I still don't like (editing)." But several still found it very difficult and did not enjoy it, while a number found it "very boring".

It was interesting to note that several pupils intentionally made no use whatsoever of advice given to them by peers. They were not prepared to go to the trouble of rewriting their work, not even to correct glaring errors of structure which were pointed out to them by their peers. An attempt at dealing with this lack of response to peer editing is mentioned in the transcription provided as Appendix R, exchanges 18 to 29, but is never conclusively resolved. Lack of response to peer comment occurred in both rounds of the research. Pupils who deliberately chose this option were able to justify their decision to ignore peer suggestions by the fact that according to Dixon's suggestions (1986:5) (Appendix H), "... peer comments are only a tool to help (students) improve their writing ... they need not be followed".

One of those who had found it threatening to receive advice in the first round now commented that it was "better this time - not so intimidating to be corrected, and very helpful because they see mistakes (eg vagueness) that you would otherwise not pick up".

In addition, the reorganization of the peer-editing groups in the top set, also met with favourable reaction from all but one insecure and defensive pupil who would rather have chosen

her own peer-editing partners. Comments on the peer-editing process here included, "I really feel I have done something worthwhile today, I worked with people who are as comfortable criticising me as I am criticising them ... they make roughly the same errors as I do". Other responses here were particularly unexpected: "Being put with groups that we have not chosen made me work harder because I was not continually talking," was one comment; "Nice being paired off with strangers - they are harsher!" and, "It somehow forces you to be stricter and more attentive", were others. General comment was that it was easier to criticise people who were not close friends.

4.5 What of the future?

This question - what of the future? - was put to each class by its teacher, and tape recorded by the researcher as an aid to her field notes. Transcripts of two of the tape recordings are included as appendices R and S. In the third class, that of the researcher, the tape recorder malfunctioned - the tape is blank - and the researcher had to rely on her field notes made during the discussion.

The second questionnaire, mentioned in point 12 of Appendix D, the proposed schedule of procedure, was dispensed with, as diaries and discussion seemed adequate as sources of data. The responses, both in diaries, and, to a lesser extent in the discussions conducted, indicated that many pupils were in favour of continuing with the process, even though the research phase of it, for the purposes of this research, is over.

There was common agreement that the second round was better than the first amongst the top set and the researcher's set, and amongst some of the third set. Some of those whose writing does not yet seem to have benefited from the process expressed

the hope that the benefits might still be to come. Those who may have felt it was of no benefit, did not express this opinion, but there were definitely some pupils with reservations, particularly amongst the less skilled writers in the lower sets. There was also general agreement that they still needed more experience with editing.

In identifying the positive aspects of the experience, diarised responses included: "I am much more disciplined in my writing now"; "I would regard the peer editing to be very successful. There has been a marked improvement in my work and marks as compared to last year"; "... more thorough"; "... peers are effective as audience"; and simply, "I enjoyed the writing more than I normally would have".

The top set had originally been the most sceptical, expressing concern that too much drafting might take the fun out of writing. This group was now particularly enthusiastic. Their enthusiasm could result from the fact that they already have the "learner autonomy" identified by Kenny (1993:217), and as Goldstein and Conrad (1990:443), and Leki and Carson (1994:98) hold, were able to express their opinions and negotiate meaning in a position of control of the interaction in peer-peer and teacher-peer conferencing, being skilled writers already. They were more able to benefit from the exposure of the processes involved in the creation of text to their conscious experience. Their success is explored further in Chapter 5.

There was general agreement that the process approach should be introduced at a much earlier level (see Appendix R, Exchanges 40 - 52; Appendix S, Exchanges 65, 83 and 84), and should be implemented, in combination with the other approaches already in use, as school policy for teaching written literacy.

CHAPTER 5 - ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

"Qualitative research implies a direct concern with experience as it is 'lived' or 'felt' or 'undergone' Qualitative research, then, has the aim of understanding experience as nearly as possible as its participants feel it or live it."

(Sherman and Webb, 1988:7 in Ely, 1991:4 - 5).

Many researchers use qualitative research because they feel data gained in this manner are richer and more insightful than quantitative data, but qualitative data are difficult to analyze as realities are multiple and shifting. The known and the knower mutually shape each other, and all enquiry is seen as inevitably value bound. Knatz (in Ely, 1991:11) maintains that such naturalistic research endows the researcher with a type of dignity as a "unique repository of important information" which is validated by being made public. One of the challenges which faces the qualitative researcher, particularly one engaging in action research, is that it requires "courageous analysis" (McCormack Steinmetz, in Ely, 1991:41), because of the recognised difficulties associated with engagement in critical self-reflection.

This chapter is an attempt to engage, with the "simple honesty" mentioned by Sanders and Pinhey (1974:392) as a "unique repository of important information" in critical self-reflection and analysis, in order to understand and reflect on the experience as nearly as possible to the manner in which its participants felt it and lived it. The analysis deals firstly with assertions made and questions raised in response to the action research method employed in this project, and the critical theory stance described in Chapter 3, and then with the process approach to the teaching of written literacy

as a means of emancipation of the learner, as described in Chapter 2.

5.2 Comments on the action research method

5.2.1 Validity and triangulation

Since it is acknowledged that action research involves the researcher in analyzing her own practice and that there are dangers in such solitary self-reflection (Habermas, 1974 in Carr and Kemmis, 1986:200), see 3.3 above, it is necessary to establish some idea of the extent to which learner validation and triangulation were successful in this project. Spradley (in Ely, 1991:97) suggests that triangulation can be based on different reports about the same event by two or more researchers who are studying the same phenomenon. Conducting the research in three separate classes each with its own teacher, while heightening the number of subjective variables such as control of teacher input, provided for triangulation, as certain findings were found to be common to all three classes and this it was felt does verify the researcher's claim to validity.

Learner and teacher diaries were kept and are available for inspection. The problem of "researcher power" possibly influencing the attitude of participants must be acknowledged, as participants were certainly eager to get positive results and were not truly 'objective' in attitude. It can, however, be argued that social research cannot be conducted in a social vacuum, and events can be understood adequately only when seen in context (Ely, 1991:2). It is difficult to approach a research project of this nature with questions rather than preconceived answers. The fact that in spite of the participants approaching the project with a positively biased

attitude the findings are not all favourable provides a mediatory balance.

5.2.2 Involvement of practitioners

According to Carr and Kemmis (1986:192) one of the features of action research is its involvement of practitioners in their own praxis, or critically informed practice. Two questions that need to be addressed are those raised by Hodgkinson (1957 in McTaggart, 1991) as to whether teachers have time for research and secondly whether, as amateurs, they are capable of rigorous research.

There can be no doubt that a novice researcher has much to learn and makes mistakes. Through critical scrutiny of the research and public acknowledgement of these difficulties and short-comings the research can, however, be validated (McNiff, 1988:133). One difficulty experienced in conducting this research was that at times it was only once *in* a certain situation that a manner of handling the particular situation would come to mind; in these instances the idea for procedure could not be passed on to the other two teachers. Two examples from this research illustrate this point: the idea of getting peer-editors to attach their written response to another's work thus making it available to the researcher, and the idea of guiding the diary responses to the peer-editing lesson by providing questions, were procedures followed in the researcher's class only.

The teachers who agreed to participate in this project were, like most teachers, hard-pressed for time and limited in knowledge and experience of both action research and of the process approach to the acquisition of written literacy. In addition to this neither had previous personal experience in conducting research. As a result they tended to rely heavily on the researcher, herself a novice in this field, for

guidance and direction. No-one was operating from a position of strength. The project can be criticised as not being truly collaborative because both the planning of the project and the development of materials were almost entirely the work of the researcher, and were accepted - perhaps too uncritically - by the teachers involved. This could also be the consequence of one or both of two other factors: the fact that as it was the project of the researcher, the teachers involved were wanting to co-operate rather than complicate procedure, and/or the less likely possibility that the researcher, as the English Language Head of Department, is in a position of authority.

5.2.3 Democratization of research

The claim (by Carr and Kemmis, 1988; Hopkins, 1993; McTaggart, 1991) that action research democratises research needs to be assessed. The assertion that through action research the teacher works *with* pupils rather than *on* them is a relative one. While in theory this may be the ideal, and in fact the teacher-pupil relationship was to a certain extent relaxed and improved by the interaction, in practice in the traditional power relationship of teacher to pupil, it is difficult for all but the most confident pupils - those who have the "culture of power" (Delpit, 1988:283) - to negotiate on an equal footing with those in authority. While critical theorists aim to transform practice, transformation does not always occur because since these relationships are socially, historically and culturally embedded, they affect and inhibit the extent to which democratization can succeed. This paradox is developed further in this chapter in section 5.3.3.4.

5.2.4 Research instruments

5.2.4.1 Diaries

The use of pupil and teacher diaries as the main research instrument was generally successful, although there were some difficulties. On some occasions a teacher would be short of time in class to allow for diary entries to be made, and these might then have been written up at home after hours, perhaps too long after the event to capture a vivid and immediate response. Another disappointment was the superficiality of some of the diary responses, when pupils merely recounted the content of a lesson without probing to any extent their attitudes to their experiences. These disappointing responses were offset by the many insightful responses which made the research worthwhile.

One of the unforeseen advantages relating to the diaries was that because they were commenced right at the beginning of the project before the vital entries about process writing were made, pupils became accustomed to writing them, and by that stage felt less inhibited about recording their feelings on paper than was the case initially. Generally the diary was a successful research tool which provided valuable feedback on pupil attitudes to process writing.

5.2.4.2 Audio tape recordings

The clarity of the audio tape recordings which recorded the summing up referred to in section 4.5 of Chapter 4, was unfortunately disappointingly poor, with many of the important points made by both pupils and teachers being lost amidst the general mêlée of classroom conversation. While some valuable insights were gained from these transcriptions, included as appendices R and S, the significant number of inaudible comments are an indication that the audio tape was not an ideal instrument for capturing a general class discussion.

Moreover, the reluctance of pupils to provide comment, such as in Appendix R, exchanges 51, 54, 56, and many others, can perhaps to a degree be ascribed to the inhibitory intrusion of the tape recorder. Few pupils were prepared to speak up individually, which left the teacher and researcher in the difficult position of leading with questions and then attempting to provide the answers which would reflect the feelings of the class. This reluctance is particularly evident in the transcription provided as Appendix R. The differences between the two sets, which are apparent in the transcriptions, in pupils' readiness to discuss their feelings and findings, could, however, also be ascribed to differing abilities to negotiate meaning. A second difficulty was the failure in the recording process in the researcher's class, as was mentioned in Chapter 4.

5.2.5 Improving practice

Another of the questions which must be reflected upon is whether, as Carr and Kemmis (1986:165) maintain, the action research inquiry "improved practice, understanding of that practice and/or understanding of the situation in which the practice occurs". It is possible to assert unequivocally that this research does qualify as "personally owned learning" (Boomer, 1980:5 in McTaggart, 1991:31) in that it has deepened the researcher's understanding of the problem, and of the situation in which the practice occurs. Whether it improved the practice itself is arguable, and the answer to this question will depend on the criteria by which this is being judged. Qualitatively it has improved practice by making all the participants more aware of their practice by conscientizing all concerned to the processes involved in the creation of text, as well as by laying tentative foundations for the negotiation of meaning: but quantitative measurement of improvement in results may not show the same measure of success, since in the course of two spirals of action research

it did not resolve the composing difficulties of all participants. This point is discussed further in section 5.3.3.2. It certainly has contributed, through critical self-reflection, to the intellectual growth and professionalism of the researcher (Oja and Smuljan, 1989), whose practice and understanding of that practice have been penetrated and illuminated by this experience.

5.2.6 The Kemmis action research model

As stated in Chapter 3, McNiff (1988) was critical of the Kemmis model for action research employed in this project, as being too prescriptive, and not having the flexibility to allow for unexpected developments. In the researcher's opinion, the novice researcher needs this prescription for the security it provides. More competent and/or experienced researchers may, however, agree with McNiff, and may recognise and feel equipped to take on the challenge of resolving divergent developments and then returning to the main focus. In retrospect, it is possible to see an opportunity where just such a divergence from the Kemmis model could successfully have been employed to resolve the lack of use made by some pupils of peer editing suggestions, as noted in section 4.4.2.3 of Chapter 4, but this was not apparent to the researcher at that time, and the opportunity was lost.

5.3 Comments on the process approach

5.3.1 The time factor

As has been found to be the case in many Eastern Cape schools (Harran, 1993; Appendix S, exchange 88) the teaching of writing has traditionally been neglected, and has been relegated to two or three lessons per term devoted to the

actual writing of a text during the lesson, with perhaps a follow-up lesson for corrections. By comparison the process approach seemed to be extremely time consuming. Yet an analysis of the data, tabled as Appendix E, proves to be interesting: of the forty-one one-hour English lessons for the term, ten lessons (discounting the introduction) were devoted to process writing - in other words one-quarter of the lesson time - for a section of the work which comprises one-quarter of the marks. This would then proportionally be the correct amount of time to be devoted to this section of the work. Although it is not yet possible to see a widespread improvement of results to warrant the amount of time spent on it, with refinement and development of techniques, the teaching of writing by this means may result in its improvement in the future.

5.3.2 L1 and ESL differences in approach

At no stage did this project aim to examine differences in approach by the L1 and ESL participants. Apart from being required to note for the record in the questionnaire whether they were first- or second-language speakers of English, this was not the focus of this project. Had differences become apparent, however, they would have been noted. Of interest to note was that no ESL participant at any stage commented on the fact that she was an ESL pupil in what is still basically an L1 classroom situation. The top English language scholar in the group is, in fact, an ESL speaker of English, and was the one who commented in section 4.4.1.2 that "... I always write my essays in this way". This research thus would seem to bear out the assertion by Zamel (1983:179; and 1988:521) recorded in Chapter 2, that the challenges of composing transcend the L1/L2 distinction.

Winer (1992) suggests that teacher attitudes towards the teaching of writing can be changed from "spinach to

chocolate". Silva (1993:670) maintains that teachers of L2 writing classes should have special theoretical and practical preparation to make them cognisant of and sensitive to the sociocultural and linguistic differences of their L2 students from their L1 counterparts, and that teachers need in-service courses to bring them up to date with trends and findings of composition research. The issue of the differential abilities of ESL pupils to negotiate meaning as a consequence of being part or not part of the cultural power group is addressed later in section 5.3.3.4 of this chapter.

5.3.3 Editing

5.3.3.1 Introduction

Sommers (1982:149) observes that "comments create the motive for doing something different; thoughtful comments create the motive for revision", but many pupils expressed concern with the fact that they had difficulty with giving advice: "being in the same standard ... I don't really know more than her"; "the exercise didn't work ... we definitely need our teachers to check it" were two of the comments, which expressed the views of many on their lack of ability to peer-edit. As this was also the opinion of the researcher, a question which needs to be addressed is how peer-editing can be improved, and whether - and if so, how - this ability can be developed.

5.3.3.2 Practice as a solution

The answer, according to the limited research into the effectiveness of such a process approach (Odell, 1974; Hilgers, 1980, both in Raimes, 1985), would seem to lie with more opportunity for practice and more exposure to the process. Resources for the development of the skills involved in the creation of text, such as that of White and Arndt (1991), are available. Many pupils commented that the

guidelines compiled by Dixon were a valuable aid. Most pupils participating in this project expressed the view that peer-editing was easier in the second spiral. These findings suggest that with further experience there could be further improvement. This was certainly overwhelmingly the opinion of the pupils who participated in the project. But this could prove to be a superficial judgment, as will be expanded upon in the section on negotiation of meaning in section 5.3.3.4 of this chapter.

5.3.3.3 Grouping pupils for peer-editing

The complexities listed by Nelson and Murphy (1993:135) associated with grouping for peer-editing, as recorded in Chapter 2, also need consideration. Matched ability groups were found to leave the unskilled grouped with unskilled others who are not able to help them. There is also the inherent danger of editing becoming boringly pointless amongst the unskilled who do not see any need for redrafting based on peer suggestions, as was the case in this project (see Chapter 4, section 4.4.2.3). The argument voiced by Norton Peirce (1993:2) in Chapter 2 that the "marginalised, the socially disadvantaged and the disempowered are not able to take up options which they do not have", is a valid one. Homogeneous grouping as a procedural strategy is criticised in education generally, and not just for peer-editing:

Homogeneous grouping, usually grouping on the basis of cognitive ability, has received a great deal of criticism recently. Although it may help very bright children to achieve slightly more, it does not succeed with either average- or low-ability children. And it tends to segregate students along ethnic and socio-economic lines as well as by ability.

(Yelon and Weinstein, 1977: 365).

Mixed ability grouping, on the other hand, also has disadvantages. One of these disadvantages is that it results in the experience being of less value for the more skilled writer, who needs the critical skills of someone equally or more skilled in order to improve. This was found to be the case in the first spiral. There is a real danger that peer-editing would quickly lose its appeal amongst the skilled writers if they themselves were to gain little or nothing from the practice. Moreover mixed ability grouping was found to be threatening for the less skilled in the group: several pupils found the idea of peer-editing threatening. Some were concerned, as one pupil expressed it, that "my advice might lead to someone else's downfall".

The anomalies associated with grouping are difficult to resolve. The skilled writers in the project appear to have benefited the most from the experience, through the insights they have gained into the composing processes, and as a result of being grouped with other skilled writers. Mixed ability grouping would deny the skilled this opportunity. One could argue for mixed ability grouping on the grounds that the skilled writers already have the editing ability required, and that if the aim of the activity is ability to attain the ideal of self-criticism and self-evaluation (Zamel, 1983:138), which the skilled writers in the group have to a large extent already achieved, then mixed ability grouping is the solution, but this would be at the expense of the skilled, for the benefit of those who have not yet achieved these skills.

Exposure to the processes on a longer term is needed to determine whether benefits to unskilled writers will become apparent.

There are, however, other subtleties involved, which complicate the issue further, as will become apparent in Section 5.3.3.4 below.

5.3.3.4 Negotiation of editing

The whole notion of negotiation of editing needs to be critically examined, as it would seem that the ability to negotiate lies at the heart of successful peer-peer and teacher-pupil conferencing. As noted in Chapter 2, studies (by Goldstein and Conrad, 1990; Kenny, 1993; Nelson and Murphy, 1993; Leki and Carson, 1994;) provide evidence that in peer-peer and teacher-peer conferencing, initiation and control of meaning and change to drafts by the learner *in a position of authority* are crucial to the success of conferencing. But initiating and controlling conferencing is affected by power relationships, not only that of the teacher who is in a position of authority, but also other more subtle power relationships inherent in any multi-cultural, multi-social setting. These power relationships are suggested by the researcher as a possible reason for the difficulties encountered by some of the participants in negotiating meaning in the drafting and editing of their work.

Recognition must be given to the notion that reality is socially constructed, and that power relationships are involved in all social interactions which will, in turn, aid or constrain ability to negotiate: all relationships are socially, culturally and historically embedded, including those between peers in a peer-editing situation.

In studies into the reasons for the lack of achievement among the disadvantaged, Bourdieu (1977a in Giroux, 1983:224) and Bernstein (1976) were instrumental in recognising and defining the existence of multiple literacies in society, and of asserting that the literacies of the disempowered are different from, rather than deficient to, those which are the literacies of power.

In a clear explanation of the issues of power in a classroom situation, Delpit (1988:280 - 298) illustrates how cultural diversity leads to the development of a "silenced dialogue". In our complex societies it is now recognised that there are as many different literacies as there are distinctive groups of people; there is an acceptance of a relativistic theory of cultural and linguistic pluralism. Rather than fixed language facts, variations relative to different cultural needs and interests are recognised. But each distinctive literacy is recognised as having a particular degree of social power (Cazden, 1992:ix).

Children from middle-class homes tend to do better in school than those from non-middle-class homes because the culture of the school is based on the culture of the upper and middle classes of those in power. ... Children from other kinds of families operate within perfectly wonderful and viable cultures but not cultures that carry the codes or rules of power.

(Delpit, 1988:283).

In the researcher's opinion it is these inequalities in power which inhibited not only the teacher-pupil relationship but also peer-peer relationships, each of which will be discussed in turn.

According to Hartwell (1985, in Zamel 1987:710) "writing teachers should intervene throughout the process" for the best outcome: negotiation of meaning, however, must be initiated and controlled by the learner in a position of authority. It follows that the teacher, therefore, should not intervene unless invited by the pupil to do so. In keeping with the notion that negotiation must be initiated by the pupil in order for it to be pupil-controlled, pupils were invited to consult their teachers, but very few took advantage of the opportunity. A possible reason for this is that, in the teacher-pupil conferencing relationship, the teacher, in three respects, is in a position of power in relation to the pupil: firstly as the writing expert, secondly by virtue of her

position of authority in relation to the pupil, and thirdly as a member of the upper and middle classes - the culture which holds the power. Perhaps teachers tended not to be invited because of these power differentials and the inability of many pupils outside of "the culture of power" to transcend this relationship. In each classroom there is also a classroom culture and practice: the fact that consulting the teacher may have been seen by the pupils as unfamiliar classroom practice may also have been inhibitory.

The ability of pupils to edit the work of peers is affected not only by their cognitive ability and language competence, but is complicated further by their perception of their own power in relation to that of the rest of the peer-editing group in which they are working. This may be coloured by their social circumstances as members of the upper, middle or lower socio-economic group, whether they are L1 or L2 speakers of English, and whether they are a part of the power discourse group - all in relation to the others in their group. As Aronowitz and Giroux point out (in Cope and Kalantzis 1993:62), differences in culture, dialects and voices are never "innocently pluralistic" but involve relationships of power.

Delpit (1988:283 - 285) reminds us that there are codes and rules that constitute this "culture of power" in a school, such as linguistic forms, communicative strategies, and ways of talking, writing and interacting. The culture of power in the present project can be identified as the culture of upper and middle class English First Language South Africans. Those who feel part of that culture of power, either by birth, or by attainment through cognitive ability, are more successful at negotiating meaning than those who do not. Success is predicated on acquisition of this power, or the "cultural capital" of Bourdieu (Robbins, 1991). It seems ironic and paradoxical that attainment of the goal, in this case, ability

negotiate, is dependent on already having it, for as Foley points out:

... the ability to produce discourse that is appropriate in field, mode and tenor is essential for entry into society.

(Foley, 1991:29).

Delpit (1988:296) further contends that in attempting to de-emphasise this power, those who have it tend to become indirect in their questions and comments in a vain attempt to lessen the power differential and their own discomfort. This constraint became apparent in this research.

Norton Peirce (1993:2) insists that without the help of the teacher those who are marginalised, disempowered or socially disadvantaged by not being members of the culture of power are not able to take up options which they do not have. According to Delpit (1988:283) those who have the culture of power are often the least aware of, or the least willing to acknowledge, the power of its existence, while those with less power are often the most aware of its existence.

Fairclough (1989) advocates a concept of 'critical language awareness' in which he advises that teachers must teach pupils the explicit and implicit rules of power as a first step towards emancipation of the disempowered. Proponents of critical language awareness maintain not only that pupils must be assisted in learning the culture of power, they must also be made aware of the arbitrariness of those codes and of the power relationships which they represent (Delpit, 1988:296).

5.4 Conclusion

Attaining a fuller understanding of these power relationships, which could then be made available to pupils, would be worthy of further research. This demystification could perhaps be

achieved by conducting a close analysis of the discourses involved in peer-peer or teacher-pupil conferencing dialogue and procedure. These, coupled with dialogues with individual respondents might reveal valuable insights into the tensions relating to peer-peer and teacher-peer conferencing. Such an analysis of the discourses involved in the negotiation of meaning in the social and cultural and historic context in which these are occurring would illuminate more fully the complexities, possibilities and limitations associated with collaborative process approach composing in this multi-cultural setting. Deconstruction of such texts might contribute towards providing for all involved a deeper understanding of the subtleties of power which tended to inhibit successful negotiation. As has been recognised,

"it is power, authority, influence and consent that are the paramount factors in the teaching/learning transaction".

(Richardson, 1994:132).

Whether this can be achieved in reality in the context of a traditional Model C Eastern Cape school, or any school, for that matter, remains to be seen. Giroux and Penna (1979:33 - 34) recognise the power of the traditional hidden curriculum in which teachers tend to be agents for social control and to transmit the values of the larger social order to which they belong. Schools, they recognise, are conservative forces which socialize students to conform to the status quo, rather than providing the skills which will allow pupils to reflect critically upon and intervene in the world in order to change it. Ellsworth (1989:297) argues, along with other post-modernists such as Popkewitz (1984) and Lather (1991), that the discourse of critical theory is based on rationalist assumptions which give rise to repressive myths, and that as long as the issues of who produces valid knowledge remain untheorised, teachers of the critical theorist stance will

continue to perpetuate relations of domination in their classrooms. Postmodernism is described by Lather (1991:34) as

... the code name for the crisis of confidence in Western conceptual systems. It is a produce of the uprising of the marginalised, the revolution in communication technology, the fissures of a global multinational hyper-capitalism, and our sense of the limits of Enlightenment rationality, all creating a conjunction that shifts our sense of who we are and what is possible.

(Lather, 1991:34).

In a country dedicated to righting the imbalances of the past, empowerment of the marginalized and the disempowered, through emancipatory means, is being undertaken on a national level. The future of Model C schools is uncertain, and along with them, therefore, the question as to which of the multiple literacies will be the discourse of power. This research has nevertheless been meaningful. It has exposed some of the strengths and limitations of an action research model for conducting educational research within this particular context. It has also revealed the extent to which the introduction of a cognitivist process approach to the teaching of writing was successful in an English medium Eastern Cape Model C school, and the limitations which were found to impede the approach in this multi-cultural setting.

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30 June 1994

TO

ALL PRINCIPALS OF SCHOOLS ENTERING
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OF THE TEACHERS' CENTRES

STUDY GUIDES FOR ENGLISH (SECONDARY)

1. The following Study Guides for English (Secondary) are forwarded to schools for the attention of the teachers of English:
 - (a) SUGGESTIONS ON AN APPROACH TO SECTION B OF PAPER 2
 - (b) A WORKSHOP APPROACH TO THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH WRITING
2. Teachers should note that the examination for English Second Language HG (Paper 2) for the 1994 Senior Certificate Examination will follow the same style and format as the 1993 paper. A special answer book will be provided.



p. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: EDUCATION

THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH: A STUDY GUIDE

Suggestions on an approach to Section B of Paper 2

Outline of the guide.

1. The purpose of the guide
2. The scope of the guide
3. The planning and preparation of transactional writing
4. The correct use of form
5. Suggestions for teaching
6. Checklist for editing and refining a written piece
7. Bibliography

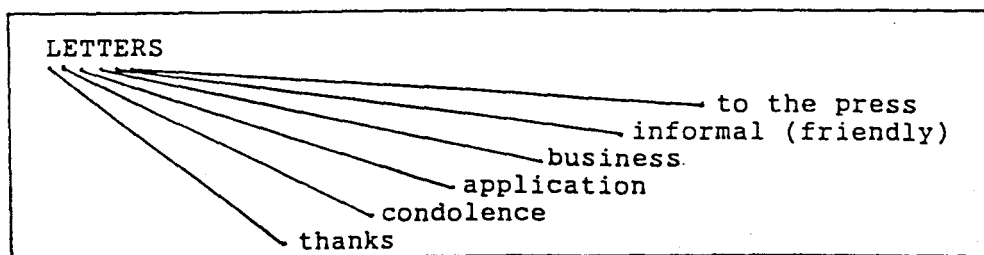
1. THE PURPOSE OF THE GUIDE

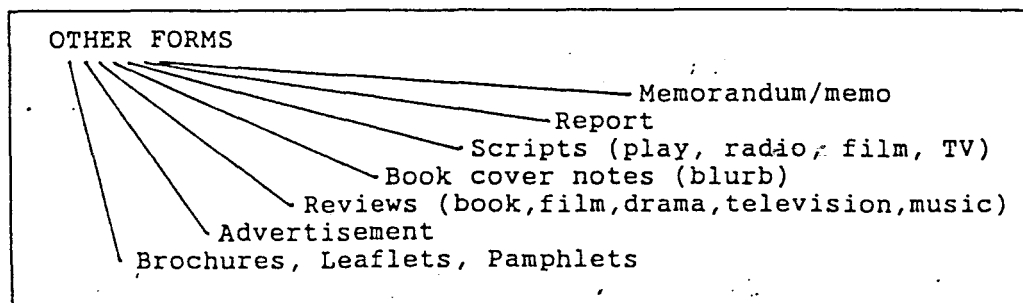
The guide aims to give guidance on current trends of thought and practice in transactional writing, and to make suggestions on teaching methods that can be used. Transactional writing is used for want of a better term. It denotes the many forms of writing that are examined under section B of First Language paper 2 and unless otherwise stated, in Second Language. It does not exclude creativity; indeed, many types of transactional writing require a high degree of creativity.

The guide does not claim to be comprehensive, nor does it offer model answers. There are many textbooks that do this, some of which are mentioned in the Bibliography (Section 7 of this guide), which can be referred to by both teachers and pupils.

2. THE SCOPE OF THE GUIDE

This guide is intended for use in Standards Six to Ten, but will concentrate on the type of material required for the Senior Certificate course.





(These lists are not exhaustive.)

3. THE PLANNING AND PREPARATION OF TRANSACTIONAL WRITING

The most important decision to make in preparing transactional writing is about the purpose of the writing. The purpose will dictate the form, the tone, the style and the register of the writing. The writer should also clearly understand who or what the audience of the writing is.

The following steps should be followed.

- 3.1 *Explain the purpose of the document.*
- 3.2 *Ascertain the audience.* Is it one person (the Personnel Manager of a business); is it an individual within a group (as in a leaflet or a pamphlet); is it a select group (the parent body of a school); or is it the community at large (as in a letter to the Press)?
- 3.3 *Select the most appropriate form.* Certain forms are fairly conventional (i.e. the letter to the press, or a formal business letter); others are less formalised, and pupils should not baulk at using less conventional forms for fear of being penalised. Inventive pupils may show their abilities to greater advantage in using the form creatively, in guides, brochures or advertisements. Above all, the form should be appropriate and consistent with the purpose as outlined at the start.
- 3.4 *Decide on the most effective tone.* Many businesses today favour what they call a friendly tone. It should be sincere and courteous, and even when a complaint is made, firmness rather than rudeness is called for. For an application, the tone should be confident, open and helpful rather than obsequious and servile. A report should be neutral and objective while a memorandum could in certain circumstances include subjective opinion.

Pupils must be shown the difference between friendly and colloquial writing. Sarcasm should be avoided, and especially in letters to the Press, an abusive tone is frequently counterproductive.

3.5 *Choose the most effective style and register.*

Transactional writing must not be seen as 'formal' writing. Style should be kept simple, direct and clear. Where formal style is appropriate to the purpose, then formal language should be used, but the writer should be aware of the need to avoid stilted, ambiguous or over-elaborate diction and syntax.

Pupils often seem to have difficulty choosing the correct register, and this problem seems to stem more from ignorance than anything else. Pupils need extensive help in learning to recognise the difference between formal and informal writing, between slang and colloquial writing, and to recognise the various registers they encounter in daily life.

4. THE CORRECT USE OF FORM.

Choosing the most suitable form is important. The best form is the one that will achieve the desired response from the reader.

What follows are some notes on the various forms:

4.1 *Letter*

The business letter (including the letter of application) needs a conventional format to allow for easy access to information; specifically the addresses, telephone numbers and (possibly) the fax numbers. The letter to the press can now quite acceptably follow the same format as the business letter. The form of letters is available in the CED document *The Form of the Letter*, 1985. Please note that in this document the signatures at the end of the letters have been omitted. All letters should be signed and then should have the sender's name written or printed clearly underneath the signature.

4.2 *Memorandum*

The convention is that memos should be dated and signed. Memos are usually sent to, or required by persons within an organisation. They are usually brief and concise; they have a stated aim that is expressed in the heading or subject line. They can range in tone from factual and objective to personal and reflective. The writer must be aware of audience and purpose. Very often, memo pads are available, or computer word processing programmes have predesigned memo formats.

4.3 *Report*

A report can be addressed to a person or to a group. It states its aim and parameters specifically. It presents its observations in an orderly sequence, usually in numbered paragraphs, going from observations to recommendations, possibly reaching a conclusion. It should be signed and dated.

4.4 *Scripts (Not for Second Language)*

Pupils should practise preparing scripts. While professional standards are not required, pupils should know the basic format and terminology of scripts for a play, a radio play, and a film or television script. Pupils should be taught to understand the distinctions between the different types of scripts. A stage play needs dialogue and stage directions. A radio script needs dialogue and sound effects. A film or TV script needs a two-column layout; one column being dialogue and sound effects, the other being matching camera directions. Dialogue should be clearly, logically and consistently indicated. Teachers should as far as possible prepare pupils to use the correct terminology of scriptwriting. The correct use of terms such as "stage centre", "voice over", "close-up" will add to the impact of such writing.

4.5 *Book cover notes (blurbs) and Reviews*

The purpose of book cover notes is to attract readers by providing some information that will persuade the person to want to read or acquire the book. Reviews on the other hand aim to provide an opinion on a work against which people can form their own opinions. Both these have less formal consistency than the other forms, but what characterises them is that they must express opinion, either in support of a book (book cover notes), or measured critical opinion of any art work (review). While unsubstantiated opinion is acceptable in blurbs, the better review will be able to present reasoning and substantiation for the views expressed, either in favour of or opposed to the work under review.

4.6 *Advertisements*

The purpose of advertisements is to persuade consumers to buy a product or use a service. There is no fixed format, but there is a fairly specific register for advertising, of which pupils should be made aware. Features of this register would include, among others, repetition, a preponderance of emotive and persuasive rather than factual language, a concise style.

4.7 *Brochures and Leaflets*

The purpose of brochures and leaflets is to provide information. Sometimes the information will be factual; other times it will be opinion. There is a wide range of possible formats, depending on the particular intention of the document. The tone, register and layout can vary significantly.

5. SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHING

- 5.1 Teach pupils how to plan. One suggestion is the mnemonic PASFAR - Purpose, Audience, Style, Form, and Register. A plan is not a rough draft - a draft is derived from the jottings that form a plan. Once a pupil has a plan, he or she can produce a logically sequenced piece of work. Brainstorming is another way of organising material, as is the procedure called Mind Mapping.
- 5.2 Requiring pupils to practise this kind of writing (transactional, or formal, or whatever it has been called) from previous examination papers has limited value. Giving the pupils tasks that are directly about their own real life experience is the most useful practice the pupils can get. However, teachers should not avoid tasks their pupils might only need later in life, as these tasks can be seen as training in life-skills.
- 5.3 Teachers are advised to let their pupils see the grids by which their writing is assessed, and fairly regularly to require the pupils to assess their own, and their fellows' work. This can occur in individual cases, or as group work, in which a group of four or five pupils will jointly assess their own work. In certain situations, the writing can actually be used for the purpose required, e.g. a letter to the press can actually be sent to the editor of the local newspaper.
- 5.4 When assessment takes place as a part of instruction rather than examination, teachers should remember that sincere praise, which focuses on the strengths of the writing, is far more likely to lead to increased motivation to improve than any negative focus on weaknesses.
- 5.5 One of the most important things to get right in this writing is tone. Teachers must realise that tone needs to be taught. Exercises requiring the recognition of tone and its variations are essential for developing sensitivity to tone. When pupils spend time practising reproducing various tones, it will always be time well spent. Teachers should make their pupils aware of the importance that the connotations of words have in establishing tone.
- 5.6 Requiring pupils to set examination papers can be a useful exercise for the more able pupils. The necessary skills for producing clarity, unambiguous instruction and fine distinctions are of a high order, but are very useful.
- 5.7 In the end, however, the best way for pupils to learn how to cope with transactional writing is for them to write it themselves. There is no substitute for practice followed by informed, constructive criticism.

6. CHECKLIST FOR EDITING AND REFINING A WRITTEN PIECE

(The following checklist is offered as a teaching aid so that pupils can follow a systematic process when they edit their own work, or when they assess other people's work.)

1. Do you understand the purpose of the task that has been set?
2. Does the writing show evidence of planning, organisation and structure?
3. Have you adopted the appropriate tone?
4. Will this piece of writing secure the desired response from the audience?
5. Is the form used the most appropriate one?
6. Is all the essential information there? If not, what has been left out?
7. Is the register appropriate for the task, the audience and the purpose?
8. Are the technical aspects such as spelling, punctuation, sentence construction, paragraphing, paragraph numbering correct and appropriate?

7. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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GUIDELINES: A WORKSHOP APPROACH TO THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH WRITING

As a general rule communicators should try to get to the point as succinctly, elegantly and memorably as possible unless they want their readers to stop reading, listeners to nod off, viewers to switch TV channels, or audiences to thin out.

Three approaches that teachers might adopt to prepare pupils to become good communicators are offered. These approaches can be used singly or combined, depending upon the type of question. More prominence has, however, been given to the third approach, because it is probably less familiar to teachers.

Approach 1: "What do I want to say?"

The bottom line for any writer is, "What do I want to say?" The answer to that question should be jotted in note form on a rough-work page and then converted into a creative answer.

Approach 2: Tony Buzan's Mind-Mapping Technique

A second approach is the now-familiar mind-mapping technique championed by Tony Buzan. In order to create a mind-map, the writer should jot down random thoughts on the set topic. As more ideas are added, a pattern will start to present itself. These ideas can then be linked creatively and rearranged into a sequence which will address the question. Finally, the polished product can be written.

The strength of the first two approaches is that they are open-ended; their limitation is their lack of specificity. A third approach has been developed by Business Communications Consultant, Milo O. Frank (1986): How to Get Your Point Across in 30 Seconds - or Less. Singapore, Corgi.

Approach 3: Milo Frank's 7-point Plan

Basing his thesis on the theory that 'The hour of years ago is the 30 seconds of today' (*ibid.* 14), Frank devised a useful 7-point plan that could serve as the basis for planning an anecdote to be shared among friends; a point to be made at a formal meeting; or a paragraph forming part of a 1000-page novel.

If a pupil decides to adopt this approach, s/he would need to list and answer each of the following questions in her/his rough-work page before converting them into the final draft.

1. The objective

The writer needs to write down the main purpose or objective of the piece s/he intends writing (refer to the worked-out example below).

2. Who's listening?

The next step is to describe the audience and her/his/their needs.

3. The right approach:

The next element to consider is the most effective way to achieve the set objective. For example, question 2.2 in the 1993 English Second Language examination asked candidates to relate a telephone conversation between themselves and a parent. If the call was to negotiate more spending money, the caller would need to have thought through an appropriate strategy to achieve her/his aim before actually dialling the number. Once an appropriate approach has been decided on, the writer should try to describe it in a single sentence.

4. The hook:

If Frank is correct that the 3 K's of communication are: "Katch 'em, Keep 'em, Konvince 'em" (ibid 46), then it is the hook that "Katches 'em": the hook being the statement, question, anecdote, personal experience that ensures the reader's attention. To find the best hook, the writer should ask her/himself what is the most unusual/exciting/humorous/dramatic/pregnant/atmospheric, etc. part of the subject. S/he should then reduce this to one sentence. The hook is important because it becomes the first sentence of the final draft. S/he should, however, bear in mind that if the hook is a question, it will need to be answered in the body.

5. The subject:

The hook caught the reader's attention; the subject is what "Keeps and Konvinces 'em". The subject, therefore, explains, reinforces or proves the point the writer wishes to make.

6. Ask for it:

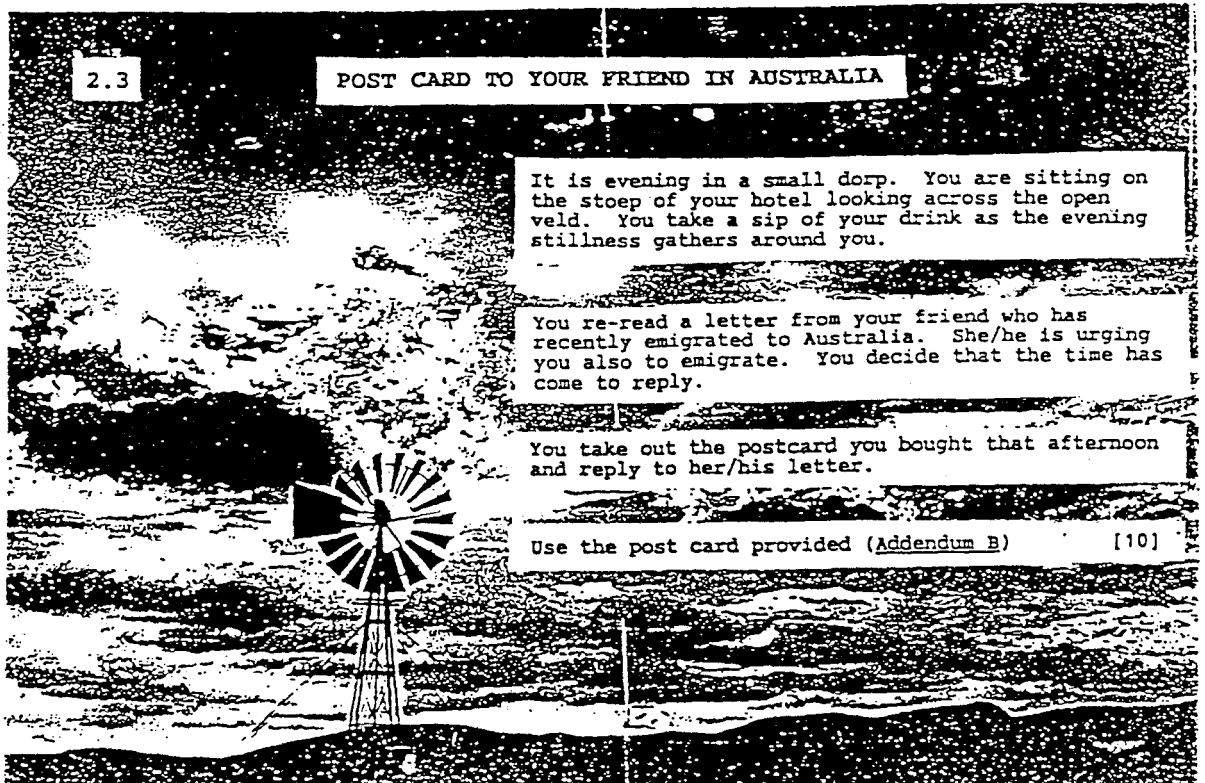
Because paragraphs, statements, comments should not trail into nothingness, the writer should carefully consider what thought, question or idea s/he is going to leave with the audience. This thought/question/idea should be crafted into a final sentence.

7. Paint a picture:

The writer would want the piece to be memorable. S/he should therefore try to touch the reader's heart or mind by finding a personal incident that could bring the piece to life; or a vivid image (word-picture) around which it could be developed. The actual words used should be appropriate to the context and the audience's level of understanding.

Applying the 7-point plan

The application of the 7-point approach will be demonstrated using question 2.3 of the 1993 Senior Certificate English Second Language HG (Paper Two) Examination:



2.3

POST CARD TO YOUR FRIEND IN AUSTRALIA

It is evening in a small dorp. You are sitting on the stoep of your hotel looking across the open veld. You take a sip of your drink as the evening stillness gathers around you.

You re-read a letter from your friend who has recently emigrated to Australia. She/he is urging you also to emigrate. You decide that the time has come to reply.

You take out the postcard you bought that afternoon and reply to her/his letter.

Use the post card provided (Addendum B) [10]

First step:

The writer should carefully read the question in order to understand what is being asked.

Second step:

S/he should list the seven points on a rough-work page:

The objective
Who's listening?
The right approach
The hook
The subject
Ask for it
Paint a picture

Third step:

S/he should write the answer to each question, for example:

Objective:	To tell Sally that I shan't be emigrating.
Who's listening?	(Description) Sally, my home-sick friend, (Her need): longing for my company.
Right approach:	I cannot leave so beautiful a country.
The hook:	It's evening, and the dirt road running past the Royal Hotel in Calitzdorp is deserted.
The subject:	I have been discovering a South Africa I did not know existed. Have met many interesting people (old, hard-working, wise, proud). They are my people. I love them. I cannot leave.
Ask for/say it:	You urge me to emigrate. I cannot. Instead I plead with you to return. South Africa needs you. I need you. Please come back.
Paint a picture:	(Note that this final step would probably be <u>thought through</u> rather than written down.) I must try to bring South Africa to life. Although I haven't travelled much, I could make use of the illustration provided in the exam paper and use one or two of the characters who daily pass our front door. Hopefully if I merge a description of the evening with the people, I could convince Sally to return to SA.

Fourth step:

The writer either highlights or underlines the words that s/he intends using in her/his final piece

The hook: It's evening, and the dirt road running past the Royal Hotel in Calitzdorp is deserted.

The subject: I have been discovering a South Africa I did not know existed. Have met many interesting people (old, hard-working, wise, proud). They are my people. I love them. I cannot leave.

Ask for/say it: You urge me to emigrate. I cannot. Instead I plead with you to return. South Africa needs you. I need you. Please come back.

Penultimate step:

The writer edits the rough draft

The hook: It's evening, and the dirt road running past the Royal Hotel in Calitzdorp is deserted. Sally, I have been touring SA and

The subject: ~~I have been discovering a South Africa I did not know existed. Have met many interesting people (old, hard-working, wise, proud). They are my people. I love them. I cannot leave.~~ The people are of the earth

Ask for/say it: You urge me to emigrate. I cannot. Instead I plead with you to return. South Africa needs you. I need you. Please come back.

Final step:

The writer pens the final neat draft. It might need to be edited for length in order to fit the space provided on the postcard:

It's evening, and the dirt road running past the Royal Hotel, Calitzdorp is deserted. Sally, I have been touring South Africa and have discovered a country I did not know existed. The people are of the earth: old, hard-working, wise, proud. You urge me to emigrate. I cannot. Instead I plead with you to return. South Africa needs you. I need you. Please come back. (67 words)

It should be noted that because all effective communication is based upon the aforementioned principles (What I want to say; who my audience is, etc.), the proposed 7-point approach could be used both for the overall planning of a longer composition, as well as the detailed planning of each paragraph of that composition. It is also relevant when formal writing is required.

LETTER TO INFORM PARENTS OF RESEARCH
DECEMBER 1994.

APPENDIX B

School's address.

4 December 1994.

Dear Parents of Std 8 pupils,

While I am Head of Department of English at xxx., I am also currently enrolled as a part-time Master of Education student in English at Rhodes University. In partial fulfilment of this degree I must conduct a small piece of original research in 1995.

As an English teacher I have been searching for ways to help pupils improve their written work. I am interested in describing the responses of the Std 9 English teachers and the 1995 Std 9 pupils at xxx to the introduction of a process of drafting and editing to pupils' writing in English classes during the first term of next year.

This research has been approved both by the Higher Degrees Committee of the University and by the Governing Body of the school. The teachers concerned and the girls themselves have also expressed their willingness to participate. It will require them to note their responses to the introduction of this process approach to writing in individual diaries and to answer questionnaires where appropriate. Their responses will be used to make adjustments to the teaching programme. The information gained from this study will form part of a Masters of Education thesis. Any responses quoted will be done so anonymously.

If you have any objection to your daughter's participation in this research, would you please make this in writing, for my attention. Should you have any questions or queries I would be happy to answer them.

Yours faithfully,

(Mrs) E. J. K. McKellar

Head of English.

LETTER TO INFORM PARENTS OF RESEARCH
FEBRUARY 1995

APPENDIX C

School's address.

6 February 1995.

Dear Parents of Std 9 pupils,

While I am Head of Department of English at V.G., I am also currently enrolled as a part-time Master of Education student in English at Rhodes University. In partial fulfilment of this degree I must conduct a small piece of original research in 1995.

As an English teacher I have been searching for ways to help pupils improve their written work. I am interested in describing the responses of the Std 9 English teachers and the 1995 Std 9 pupils at V.G. to the introduction of a process of drafting and editing to pupils' writing in English classes during the first term of this year.

This research has been approved both by the Higher Degrees Committee of the University and by the Governing Body of the school. The teachers concerned and the girls themselves have also expressed their willingness to participate. It will require them to note their responses to the introduction of this process approach to writing in individual diaries and to answer questionnaires where appropriate. Their responses will be used to make adjustments to the teaching programme. The information gained from this study will form part of a Masters of Education thesis. Any responses quoted will be done so anonymously.

If you have any objection to your daughter's participation in this research, would you please make this in writing, for my attention. Should you have any questions or queries I would be happy to answer them.

Yours faithfully,

(Mrs) E. J. K. McKellar

Head of English.

PROPOSED SCHEDULE OF PROCEDURE

APPENDIX D

For attention X, Y, (and Z - if you would care to comment I would appreciate it).

IDEAS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STD 9 PROCESS APPROACH RESEARCH - TERM 1 1995.

Note 1: This is a draft for discussion and suggested improvements to it will be welcomed.

Note 2: Numbers below are purposely disordered to allow us to decide as a group how we ought to proceed.

Plan of action

2. MK to explain to whole group how action research is carried out. Show spiral (ohp) of planning, implementing, diaries, questionnaires, discussing, altering etc, then repeating the action, and talk about how this will be done by the various classes during the first term. (New girls' parents still to be sent letters for their approval.)

Tentative date :

3. MK to talk to whole group about the cognitive process approach to literacy acquisition. How it fits in historically, what it involves, what we are going to do in class, and why.

Tentative date: (Both of the above two could be done in one lesson.)

1. MK, X, Y. Talk about different genres of writing: eg poetry is different from a recipe, from a play, from a business letter, from an advertisement etc. Elicit possible differences from the pupils eg layout, word choices, register, intention/purpose, etc. To write the genre successfully you need to know what to include to achieve your purpose.

Tentative date:.....

4. Teach pupils how to edit. Show drafts of Poetry in the making (eg Wilfred Owen - Anthem for doomed youth) (provided) or other drafts// (what is available?) to illustrate that every one needs to draft several times before being more or less satisfied with the result. Use model (of bad letter of application) (provided) as a first draft and ask them to improve it. Let the pupils work in groups. Each group to produce their improved draft on either newsprint or ohp sheets so that final drafts can be compared and discussed. (Newsprint would be better because then all can be displayed at once, unlike on ohp where this cannot be done.) One member of each group to do the report back.

Tentative date:

Note: We need to talk about grouping. Mixed ability groups or they choose their own groups???

Pros and cons of each:

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Decision:

5. MK, X, Y.

Each pupil to do a small piece of writing. Need to decide what, and then to teach that particular genre. Then pupils do their own. In class or for homework??? (I'm concerned about how much time this is taking, or is it worth the time?)

Phase 1 says "narrative" then "comparison between a business letter technique and a letter to the press technique", but I don't think these are suitable for this purpose, narrative because it is too long, and the other because they need to be done together to make the differences between them in tone, technique etc clear. Or is this a possibility?

Or what about a descriptive piece for the first round, and then the letters as the second round. The descriptive piece could be something like:

"A photograph in words" or "A picture in print" idea. Each to choose own topic. Or Describe a feeling or emotion which you have personally experienced very recently.

Other suggestions welcome...

.....
.....
.....

Tentative date:

6. Proceed through the steps in process approach to writing. First brainstorming it, then first draft, then editing, revising, etc then take it to your group for comment, then final version. Must teach groups that providing peer feedback is not merely looking for spelling and language errors but for its sense of audience ie is it clear to the reader? Will it achieve its purpose? Is the tone right? etc Spelling and grammar of minor importance and come last on the list of

priorities in this process approach. Must follow the steps in order (provided).

Tentative date:

7. At every stage a diary must be kept by all the individual pupils and teachers involved for comment on reactions to and thoughts about what is being done. These will be taken in and used to assess attitudes, progress, problems etc. by MK, X and Y individually who will then meet to pool ideas, discuss developments, (this will necessitate extra meetings for us over and above the normal once per cycle English Departmental meetings. I suggest that once dates and deadlines are set we make a commitment to meeting these.) and in each class separately to develop new strategies for that class. What may evolve in one class may be quite different from what may evolve in another. Diaries will be issued by MK and once classes are settled a number code will be allocated to each girl for anonymity in the final thesis, and also for the two teachers involved. The researcher remains simply "the researcher".
8. At the end of each phase of the action research questionnaires will also be used to try to give equal coverage to all concerned, and so that comparisons can be made. The emphasis will be on a qualitative study of feelings and attitudes rather than on trying to prove anything.
9. The process will be repeated later in the term: ie another genre of writing will be taught.
Tentative date:
10. Practice will again be given on the new genre in groups, with newsprint - as before.
Tentative date:
11. Then pupils will write individually etc.
Tentative date:
12. Questionnaires will again be used and changes in attitude to the process approach will be sought at this stage. eg whether someone who found it very threatening the first time found it more or less so the second; whether those who were enthusiastic the first time are as enthusiastic the second, etc. Also how they respond to work not being corrected as such, but simply commented on.
13. Suggestions for the future will also be sought as this will be the end of the formal analysis as far as the thesis is concerned.

**TENTATIVE DATES FOR IMPLEMENTATION
OF PROCESS WRITING**

APPENDIX E

Date	Weekday	Day	English	Activity
Jan 25	Wed	1	Yes	
26	Thurs	2	Yes	
27	Fri	3	Yes	
30	Mon	4	Yes	
31	Tues	5	No	---
Feb 01	Wed	6	Yes	
02	Thurs	7	Yes	
03	Fri	8	Yes	
06	Mon	9	No	---
07	Tues	1	Yes	
08	Wed	2	Yes	
09	Thurs	3	Yes	
10	Fri	4	Yes	
13	Mon	5	No	---
14	Tues	6	Yes	Introduction to project
15	Wed	7	Yes	Concept of genre
16	Thurs	8	Yes	Editing practice in groups
17	Fri	9	No	---
20	Mon	1	Yes	Pre-writing activities
21	Tues	2	Yes	Writing and personal editing of first draft
22	Wed	3	Yes	Peer editing

23	Thurs	4	Yes	Hand in for evaluation
24	Fri	5	No	---
27	Mon	6	Yes	
28	Tues	7	Yes	
Mar 01	Wed	8	Yes	Return marked work and complete questionnaire
02	Thurs	9	No	---
03	Fri	1	Yes	
06	Mon	2	Yes	
07	Tues	3	Yes	
08	Wed	4	Yes	
09	Thurs	5	No	---
10	Fri	6	Yes	
13	Mon	7	Yes	
14	Tues	8	Yes	
15	Wed	9	No	---
16	Thurs	1	Yes	
17	Fri	2	Yes	Pre-writing activities
20	Mon	3	Yes	Editing practice in groups
21	Tues	4	Yes	Writing and personal editing of first draft
22	Wed	5	No	---
23	Thurs	6	Yes	Peer-editing
24	Fri	7	Yes	Hand in work for evaluation
27	Mon	8	Yes	

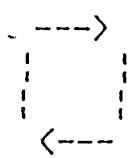
28	Tues	9	No	---
29	Wed	1	Yes	
30	Thurs	2	Yes	
31	Fri	3	Yes	
Apr 03	Mon	4	Yes	Work returned and final discussion
04	Tues	5	No	---
05	Wed	6	Yes	
06	Thurs	7	Yes	
07	Fri	-	No	End of term

APPENDIX F

- 101

STEPS TO GOOD WRITING

APPENDIX G

- 
- 1 COLLECT YOUR THOUGHTS - WHY are you writing?
WHO is it for?
WHAT do you need to know?
 - 2 CREATE - Make a plan, jot down ideas,
write larger pieces,
get it all down.
 - 3 CHOP 'N CHANGE - Re-read it - does it come across
to the reader? Explain, add
bits, cross out (go back to
stage 2 if necessary).
 - 4 CHECK - Check for correctness (spelling,
grammar, style), check layout,
neatness. Rewrite if necessary.
 - 5 CRITICISE - Is it okay? Does it do what it
was supposed to do? (see WHY? &
WHO? in 1.)

(NOTE: The recursive factor was explained verbally)

(Pratt, in Chick, 1990:459).

Peer-editing

Peer editing will probably fail if it is just expected to happen. In order for it to be done successfully students require training. Dixon (1986: 5) notes the following suggestions from Crowhurst (1981: 58) which provide some guidelines for peer-editing in small groups:

- 1 . . . all comments (should be) written on a sheet of paper separate from that on which the composition is written.
- 2 . . . peer comments are only a tool to help (students) improve their writing . . . they need not be followed.
- 3 No student but the author should make any changes on the draft the students are reading.
- 4 Initially all the comments should be written out, but as the groups become more comfortable with one another, oral discussion of compositions is possible.
- 5 The teacher should move around the class in a consultative role.
- 6 Choose examples of helpful and irrelevant comments in order to help the students make useful responses to their peers' work.

What to look for in peer-editing

Dixon (1986: 4-5) makes the following suggestions about peer-editing:

- The first response must always be a reader's response i.e. directed towards the writer's intended meaning and not toward the surface errors.
- Always begin on a positive note by answering a question such as: 'What do you like best about this composition?'
- Then move on to consider the following questions about the value, purpose, content, audience and organization of the composition. Note, however, that not all these questions will be relevant to every piece of writing:

1 *Value*

- a Is this writing worth revising?
- b Is it interesting for me? For others?

2 *Purpose*

- a What is the author's purpose? To describe? To entertain? To narrate? Write down what you feel the purpose is.
- b Write down the sentence that best tells you what the writer's purpose is.
- c Does the writer follow his or her purpose through the whole composition?
- d Find any sentences that do not suit the writer's purpose.

3. *Content*

- a Can you summarize this piece in a sentence?
- b Is it clear or are there parts you found confusing?
- c Does the writing contain new and interesting information?

4. *Audience*

- a Who is the audience the author has in mind?
- b Has the author included all the information the audience needs to know?
Or too much?
- c Find any places where the audience might need more information.

5. *Organization*

- a Has the author organized the writing so you can follow the arguments clearly?
 - b Does the writing move smoothly from one point to another?
- (Dixon 1986: 4)

Dixon (1986) recommends that the style and language mechanics of compositions should not be examined until the above questions have been fully answered.

6. *Style*

- a Is the writing interesting? If not, why not?
- b Has the author chosen the right words?
- c Are all the sentences of the same length and type or has the author varied them?

7. *Language and Mechanics*

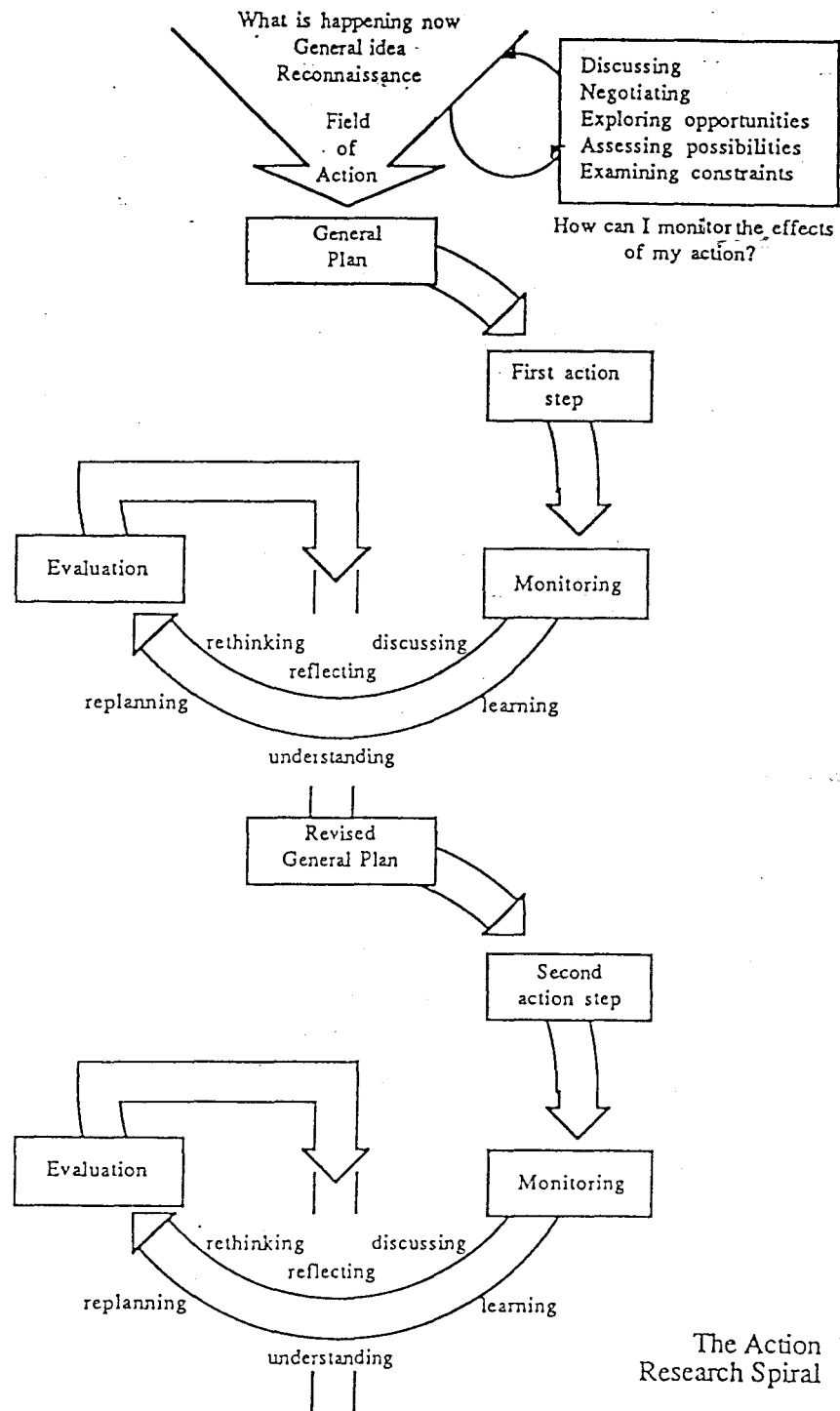
- a Are the sentences grammatically correct?
- b Is the spelling and punctuation correct?

(Dixon 1986: 4)

Writer edits

The author of the composition responds to the remarks made by his/her peers and makes the changes s/he believes are necessary.

(Dixon, 1986:4 in Meyer, 1989:43).



(Kemmis, in Ebbutt, in Burgess, 1985:163).

GENRE IDENTIFICATION

APPENDIX J

Below are some short extracts taken from various contexts.

For each state:

- a. Its most probable context
 - b. the features of language and style (not content) which support your choice of context.
-
1. Ex-miner now tycoon in Transkei
 2. We acknowledge receipt of your letter of 21 October. We shall deal at our earliest convenience with your complaint concerning your order of 55 yo-yos.
 3. I am that man with helmet made of thorn
Who wandered naked in the desert place
Wept, with the sweating sky, that I was born
And wore disaster on my winter face.
 4. Enjoy a sundowner, overlooking a golden beach....

(English First Language HG Cape Education Department
Senior Certificate Examination paper, March 1981:8).

FACTORS FOR CONSIDERATION WHEN WRITING

APPENDIX K

- 1 PURPOSE OR INTENTION OF THE WRITING
- 2 PHYSICAL LAYOUT
- 3 THE TONE OF THE WRITING
- 4 REGISTER
- 5 LOGIC AND ORDER
- 6 SUITABLE LITERARY TECHNIQUES

LITERARY TECHNIQUES

APPENDIX L

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. FOREGROUNDING | 2. PARALLEL SENTENCE STRUCTURE |
| 3. TOPIC SENTENCE | 4. SIMPLE / COMPOUND / COMPLEX |
| 5. LOOSE SENTENCES | 6. PERIODIC SENTENCES |
| 7. FIGURES OF SPEECH | 8. PHONIC DEVICES |
| 9. RHYME | 10. IMPERATIVE MOOD |
| 11. METRE | 12. RHETORICAL QUESTIONS |
| 13. IDIOMS | 14. NEOLOGISMS / ARCHAISMS |
| 15. CLICHÉS | 16. EMOTIVE LANGUAGE |
| 17. PUNS | 18. REVITALIZED CLICHÉS |
| 19. DIALECT | 20. OXYMORON / ANTITHESIS / PARADOX |
| 21. SLOGANS | 22. JARGON |
| 23. CONNOTATION | 24. LITERAL / FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE |
| 25. | 26. |
| 27. | 28. |

LETTER OF APPLICATION - FOR GROUP EDITING PRACTICE

P.O. Box 76923
Hillbrow
2038

S.A. Breweries
Beer Division
N. Transvaal Region
Pretoria

Dear Sir

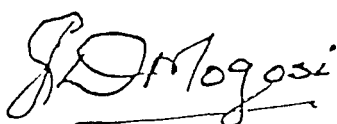
I was reading a newspaper when my eyes were attracted to this interesting advertisement in which you invited applications from young graduates wishing to build a career in marketing and sales. I am hereby applying for the job.

I think that I do qualify because of my Business Commerce Degree. Right now, I am working in First National Bank in Hillbrow. I also think that I have the energy to do whatever job is given to me.

Please reply as soon as possible. You can interview me on Wednesday afternoon which is my afternoon off.

I hope my application will receive your favourable consideration.

Your obedient servant



J. D. Mogosi

(Murray and Johanson, 1990:136).

PRE-WRITING ACTIVITIES FOR DESCRIPTIVE WRITING PRACTICE

Descriptive writing

The account of an experience of a scene, how something looked, tasted, smelt, sounded, felt or acted, is known as descriptive writing. It informs us or gives further information about people, objects, places, scenes, animals, insects, moods or impressions as experienced by an onlooker.

In this kind of writing, because everything cannot be described, most writers focus on the most important or single strongest impression to give a picture in words or a sense impression.

In order to describe a scene you have to rely largely on your senses. Look at the photograph of the boardsailor opposite and use the Five Senses Plan (below) to make it come alive for someone who cannot see it. Bear in mind that a description which relies on more than just the sense of sight is more effective. (See the *Titanic* passage below)

Start by listing a singular noun that corresponds with each of the five senses:

SENSE	NOUN
sight	-----
sound	-----
smell	-----
taste	-----
touch	-----

John Thayer's description of the last moments of the *Titanic*, which struck an iceberg and sank off Newfoundland in 1912.

Occasionally there had been a muffled thud or deadened explosion within the ship. Now, without warning, she seemed to start forward, moving forward and into the water at an angle of about fifteen degrees. This movement, with the water rising up toward us, was accompanied by a rumbling roar, mixed with more muffled explosions. It was like standing under a steel railway bridge while an express train passes overhead, mingled with the noise of a pressed steel factory and wholesale breakage of china.

When you have listed these nouns add a suitable adjective to each noun, like this:

SENSE	ADJECTIVE	NOUN
sight	-----	+ -----
sound	-----	+ -----
smell	-----	+ -----
taste	-----	+ -----
touch	-----	+ -----

You now have a number of words and phrases that could be used as a starting point for a descriptive essay.



To make your own text livelier and more vivid still, you might find these additional bits of advice useful.

- (a) Place your description in a time and setting
- (b) Avoid the familiar phrases that come easily to mind and try a fresh (unhackneyed) approach to ensure your readers' interest.

(Rumboll, F. C. H., et al, 1987:135).

Now read Text 9 on page 129 of Rumboll et al (Standard 9) to see this done effectively.

Activity: In pairs:

One person must describe a beach to the other, without using any adjectives or emotive language.

The other person describes the beach using as many clichéd expressions as possible.

Both write a short description using new and original expressions.

Read your descriptions to another pair.

PROCESS APPROACH QUESTIONNAIRE

NAME: _____

- † Show your responses to the following questions by marking the number of the answer of your choice clearly with a cross.
- † Please remember that your honesty in responding to these questions is vitally important.

1. Your home-language / mother-tongue is:

1. English	2. Afrikaans	3. Xhosa	4. Another African language	5. Other
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2. Your symbol for the descriptive writing was:

1. A	2. B	3. C	4. D	5. E	6. F	7. FF	8. G
24+	21-23	18-20	15-17	12-14	10-11	9	7-8

3. How do you feel about your result for your descriptive writing?

1. very pleased	2. pleased	3. indifferent	4. disappointed	5. very disappointed
-----------------	------------	----------------	-----------------	----------------------

4. Give the reason for your answer to question 3:

.....

.....

.....

.....

5. How do you feel about the teacher's comment on your work?

1. very pleased	2. pleased	3. indifferent	4. disappointed	5. very disappointed
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6. Give the reason for your answer to question 5:

.....

.....

.....

.....

7. Given the fact that it has been shown that "red pen" error correction does not improve writing ability, suggest a way in which you think your writing ability could be improved:

.....
.....
.....
.....

8. Read through your diary entries - a record of your feelings about this project as it developed. Concentrate on the last four entries, learning to edit, learning the genre, drafting, and peer editing. These are the four lessons which will be repeated next time, but with a different genre. ie There will be one lesson to learn the genre, one to practise editing the genre, one to draft, and one to edit.

Suggest ways in which the present system could be improved for next time:

1.....
.....
.....
2.....
.....
.....
3.....
.....
.....

THANK YOU FOR THE TIME AND TROUBLE YOU HAVE PUT INTO THIS PROJECT

E. J. K. McKellar

27-02-95.

A COMPARISON OF TWO LETTER GENRES

APPENDIX P

<u>BUSINESS LETTER</u>	<u>LETTER TO THE PRESS</u>
<u>INTENTION</u>	<u>INTENTION</u>
<u>PHYSICAL LAYOUT</u>	<u>PHYSICAL LAYOUT</u>
<u>TONE</u>	<u>TONE</u>
<u>REGISTER</u>	<u>REGISTER</u>
<u>LITERARY TECHNIQUES</u>	<u>LITERARY TECHNIQUES</u>

APPENDIX Q

LETTER TO THE PRESS - FOR GROUP EDITING PRACTICE

16 Charles Street
Grahamstown
6140

4 March 1995

The manager
Grocotts Mail
Grahamstown
6140

Dear Sir/Madam,

When will the young people of our nation learn that it is a good idea to control themselves?

I was so cross to see on the TV news last night the way the school students that were on a march to give over a petition demanding for better school facilities. They very soon became uncontrolled and broke through those people trying to control them and they looted the stalls of the vegetable hawkers on the roadsides and pinched the vegetables and fruit and knocked over the crates, they left nothing behind except a mess.

I am a student myself so I am very sympathetic to the problems which students are experiencing and everybody has the democratic right to education. At last every child is to be given education and this is very good news. Everybody is very happy with this good news. But if the students could be more or better disciplined and better or more orderly they are more likely to get favourable consideration of their problems. As I said earlier it is dissappointing to see them behaving badly like this.

What can you do about it?

Your's sincerley

Very cross student

S Magazani

Sandrea Magazani

APPENDIX R

AUDIO TAPE RECORDING TRANSCRIPTION OF THE COMMENTS MADE AND CONCLUSIONS REACHED BY A SECOND SET.

Note: 'T' refers to the teacher of that class, 'R' to the researcher, and 'P' to any one of the many pupils in the class.

- 1 T: What do you feel about ...
- 2 R: Can I... can I interrupt for a minute?
- 3 T: Yes.
- 4 R: I'm recording this... um, not to identify anybody
 or incriminate anybody or anything like that, its
 simply to make it easy... easier for me, to
 remember what is said. I am going to try and make
 notes, but I can't write as fast as you will speak
 and this will just help me get my facts
 straight....
- 5 General buzz of comment from the class.
- 6 T: Alright. Any general comments? What did you feel
 about the whole thing. Did it help you, did it not
 help you? ... (silence)... Anything?
- 7 Class mumbles in the background.
- 8 T: Come closer... Okay, J?
- 9 P: No, well, okay, with my essays it would better have
 helped me a lot because last year I used to fail my
 essays... (unclear). This year I have actually
 improved a lot.

- 10 T: Okay. Anyone else?
- 11 P: You know what we liked? ... because we could distinguish the difference between (unclear)... and the letter to the press and that is what I did not really know.
- 12 T: Okay so your saying that the whole process before that of the... the teaching, and ...
- 13 P: Ya...
- 14 T: ... the editing... or (quickly into the next sentence) What, what did you find most useful about the whole exercise? The different, what different stages came ahead?
- 15 P: The editing.
- 16 T: With the editing of the... (pause), um... (class mumble)... the way I gave you something to edit or when you edited each others'?
- 17 P: Each others', because you look not only at yours. You think that... (unclear).
- 18 T: Alright. Now we come to our problem yesterday: that some people did this properly and others didn't. Do you think... 'cause we've got to decide now whether this kind of thing should be... we should carry on with it? Whether it should be done only in standard nine and phase 1? Or whether every essay that you do, we should go through this process? Do you think you will get sick of it? Do you think we should do it? What do you... What do you think? Do you think we should keep doing it?

- 19 P: We would get sick of it, but it would benefit us in the end.
- 20 T: So do you think we should do it for every essay?
- 21 Class: Yes. (Class quietly voices agreement).
- 22 P: ... Just revise. Just... like, revise... um, I mean, if we do it like... in place of the first time - teach it properly the first time - and then whenever you do your essay you just have to go over it and then that... the class *should* remember what's going on in the end.
- 23 T: Alright so you say we should have an editing lesson before you hand ... after you write the first draft.
- 24 Class gives general assent.
- 25 T: Okay, anyone have their hand up? But do you think...? Alright, the first time, for me..., I think the first time round you actually did better than second time round, because the second time round you did have people messing around. Now was that because you were bored or ... (pause) ... you just got sick of it? Why? Any... any ideas?
- 26 P: I think most people just wrote it..., just wrote their essays, just to get..., just to have something in their books... (class mumbles agreement)... to hand it in to get a mark, not actually doing anything to it.
- 27 T: Mmm.... So the process then didn't work the second time.

- 28 Mumbles from the class, some agreeing and others disagreeing.
- 29 P: Yes, some did, some didn't.
- 30 R: Was it,... um,... did the fact that you had to write diaries sort of make it, a worse kind of thing for you?... um... I mean if you weren't writing diaries - analysing how you felt all the time, would that actually help?... Um ...(short pause) You know I needed the diaries 'cause that was the only way I could get feedback of how you were actually feeling about it, but perhaps that was inhibiting for you? Or perhaps that was, that was tiresome or tedious..., um..., and and you won't have diaries now, after this. The diaries are finished now. So, um, but the actual *process* of going through the editing, and so on, um, I think, you know, if that's going to continue, maybe the fact that you haven't got to do diaries and, um, do it in such detail anymore, might... might make a difference?
- 31 Pause... No response from the class.
- 32 T: What did you feel about the diaries? ... About filling them in?
- 33 Pause...
- 34 P: I felt that..., um..., when you wrote you always had to think of something to say, 'cause if you just had to think of how we would write, not just do it, ... ja.

- 35 T: So maybe it's actually good to focus in on what you are thinking, so you actually forced to do that? ... (Soft mumble from class) ... Or not?
- 36 Soft murmur from class.
- 37 P: There was not a lot ... (unclear) of things to get out of it for so much effort, because, I mean, then first you do everything and then you feel it, then when you're doing it and later on you have to bring the diaries and you have to write in them and talk about what you felt or how you felt and then all of a sudden its not exactly... - you don't write down what you... what you actually went through then, cause I did not write down ... (interrupted).
- 38 T: Okay, but you knew every time that you were going to be writing a diary so, ... (pause)... you, ... it's not like you suddenly had to look back on your feelings. It wasn't a surprise that you had to write it.
- 39 P: Ja, um, (mumble).
- 40 T: Okay. Do you think this is the right age group for you to do this kind of process...? (pause) ... Or do you think it should be earlier or later, or when? In Standard 9 you write this.
- 41 The class mumbles: Earlier. Earlier. It should be earlier.
- 42 T: Okay. Why do you say earlier?
- 43 P: I think you just have to get used to editing... and so, okay, when you get used to editing other people's work you actually look at your own work

and edit your own work first before you give it to someone else, and if you get used to that, by the time you need to give it to someone else, there will probably won't be anything left for them to do. You must just get used to the approach.

44 T: So, would you say that if we did this in Standard 8 it would be better? Or do you think we should stick to this age?

45 Class: Stick to this age.

46 P: I think just by helping and communicating - (class mumbles in the background) - it can be done at a different age group.

47 Class mumbles agreement with *this* answer.

48 P: Miss X (pupil mentions the teacher's name), because, um, like, J (mentions the name of a pupil in the class), you know... Someone said that their essay mark has improved. If you start in std 8 then their... their marks will also improve, and its better to ... (interrupted)...

49 T: Alright, ... do it earlier on.

50 P: And also in Standard 8..., okay..., um..., if they get used to the process essays and if they can do well in their essays in Standard 8, it will benefit them in Standard 9 when their exam mark actually their essay mark counts for exams.

51 Silence.

52 T: (Teacher mumbles)... They do it in Standard 8.

- 53 R: Can I just get a show of hands? How many of you feel positive about, um, peer editing and the process approach? How many of you think it's a good thing?
- 54 Silence.
- 55 R: Okay, let me try it a different way. (Some hands go up.) Thank you. Is there anybody who doesn't feel that it's... um... a good thing to do?
- 56 Silence. (No hands go up.)
- 57 R: Alright. Thanks.
- 58 T: Um, can I just say... did... did you find the editing of the letter that you were given..., when you were given something like... like I gave you a letter to correct - was that worthwhile... or not?
- 59 P: It did help me a bit, but you saw, you saw what we had to edit. Um, I mean if we had to just go straight into editing our friends', we'd probably just ... pitch out (unclear).
- 60 T: Okay. So only in the beginning you'd need that. So, so say in your next essay you wouldn't need that. Is that what you're saying?
- 61 Class mumbles: Ja.
- 62 P: If we knew what we were doing.... If we were doing anything - not a letter, another type of
- 63 R: A different genre, in other words?
- 64 P: Ja.

- 65 R: If you're learning a new genre you want a chance to try first?
- 66 T: So basically there's nothing you can leave out of the process.
- 67 R: No... (short pause)... and I don't think you can separate process from genre... (pause) myself. I don't know how they ever did.
- 68 T: Ja.
- 69 R: ... because the process approach started long ago, in the sixties, and genre is something from the late eighties and nineties, so I don't know how they ever did it without that.
- 70 T: They were probably doing it anyway - it just didn't have a name.
- 71 R: Murmurs her agreement... (Pause)... Okay, thank you!

AUDIO TAPE RECORDING TRANSCRIPTION OF THE COMMENTS MADE
AND CONCLUSIONS REACHED BY THE TOP ENGLISH SET.

Note: 'T' refers to the teacher of that class, 'R' to the researcher, and 'P' to any one of the many pupils in the class.

- 1 T: Okay, we're going to be talking about (not clear) ... We want to discuss the process approach as a whole - whether or not you feel it's been effective. What you think has worked, what you think has not worked. I'll hand you back these to you (indicating pupil diaries), so you can look back and see the comments that you've made. We've had suggestions that were contradictory - some people said you needed more time for peer-editing, some people said you needed less time; some people wanted more time for writing, some people ... (not clear) ... less time. Can we have some suggestions?
- 2 R: Can I just interrupt for a minute? I've got a tape recorder going here. That's just to help me, because I'm going to try and make notes while you talk, but I'll never be able to get it all down ... because it's not to incriminate anybody or anything like that...
- 3 A pupil makes an amusing remark while the researcher is talking and the whole class laughs.
- 4 R: But that's why it's here. Okay? It's just to help me get my notes straight. So don't worry about it at all... Thanks.

- 5 T: Any comments? What did you feel? Did you feel it was effective as a whole?
- 6 P: Yes.
- 7 P: I don't.
- 8 T: You don't. Tell me why...?
- 9 P: ... because it took so much longer time ...(not clear). We're still getting the same marks as before, so why waste any time. It's not improving my marks (not clear).... Most of us, well, we're ... (not clear).
- 10 T: As a process do you not feel that with constant practice it might improve your mark ... slowly? Do you know what I'm saying?
- 11 Much comment but it is not clear, as many speak at once.
- 12 T: The second time, or maybe the third time.
- 13 P: Third time lucky. The class laughs.
- 14 P: (First part not clear)... if you put us in groups ... a lot faster ... more practice ... (the rest is not clear)...
- 15 P: I found the first time, teaching of the genre, it was ... (not clear).
- 16 T: And the second time?

- 17 P: The second time was fine, because we didn't have to learn all the figures of speech, and, you know, all that sort of stuff.
- 18 T: That was really a (not clear). That you will not be repeating again.... And the second time it worked better?
- 19 P: Yes.
- 20 T: Okay. Well, you...
- 21 R: So is there a kind of common agreement that the second time worked better?
- 22 Whole class: Yes!
- 23 R: And did everybody feel that? And the third time might be better than the second?
- 24 P: And also what was good ... (pause)...was, when you put us with other people..., because they were stranger and they were very harsh. (Much laughter).
- 25 P: *Very* harsh!
- 26 P: But that improved it.
- 27 P: Yeh, it did.
- 28 T: Did that help?
- 29 P: Yes, it did. It was ... like ... the first time - nobody said anything.
- 30 P: They were too scared ..., too quiet..., afraid to say.

- 31 T: Do you feel that maybe you need more experience with editing? Actually *editing*? It does take a while to mark, though...
- 32 P: Yes, that's what I think.
- 33 T: I thought that you might feel that way because even with marking, it takes you a few *separate* essays when you first begin to actually get into it... (not clear)....
- 34 P: What about if you have - pause - every time you do peer editing, you have the same faults and then you can build up confidence in them and... later ... (not clear).
- 35 T: That's an idea...
- 36 P: (Remark is not clear).
- 37 T: Did any of you find it threatening?
- 38 P: Yes.
- 39 T: Having people chosen for you?
- 40 P: No...
- 41 T: I think there were two... one or two comments that it was quite threatening....
- 42 P: I was thinking the same way (not clear). In English I didn't know what to do, because I didn't know whether their corrections were right. Maybe I wasn't big enough to know what was right or wrong.
- 43 T: Did you discuss it?

- 44 P: No.
- 45 T: No? Okay, that's probably where you fell down. You actually need to discuss it. But I still had mistakes coming up like "there" and "their" that were spelt incorrectly. Surely at this level... (not clear).
- 46 Class giggles, because of something said, but it is not clear.
- 47 T: Okay, what other comments? Have a look in your books and if there's anything that you have ... pause ... to say that you felt particularly strongly about.
- 48 Class look in their diaries.
- 50 T: Oh, the bit about writing ... some people said that they wanted more time to write.
- 51 R: They did have more time the second chance.... (Exchange not clear)....
- 52 T: But we have actually arranged more time... to write. Do you still feel you would perhaps need even a little more...?
- 53 P: No.
- 54 T: And if it was a full essay?... you were writing letters... which are - shorter.
- 55 P: Yes, you would need more time. ... the peer-editing would need more time... (unclear)...

- 56 P: I think that the reason why some people get turned off, well, the reason why I got turned off in the beginning, is, well, I'm lazy, and it's a lot more work - than just writing an essay down. The whole process is much better than we usually do, but it's just a whole lot more work, and I think that if you can make it so that we don't have so much homework, for it, people will have a better attitude to it.
- 57 P: I don't think we had so much homework for it.... We did most of it in class anyway, and usually for an essay you just get a title for it and they say: "Right, finish that for tomorrow, or in two days time".
- 58 P: (Pupil is trying to say something)...Rewrite it *again*..., (but somebody else also talks, therefore it is not clear).
- 59 P: You have to do something, usually you do that by yourself - you usually write the essay and edit it yourself, do it again, and then the neat draft after that, instead of having at least another person peer-editing your work.
- 60 P: Ja, I suppose so.
- 61 T: Can anyone tell me - it seems to me, as J said (the teacher names a pupil), it has been a good thing.... Can anyone tell me why? ... What do you feel it does that makes it a better approach? J?
- 62 P: It is more thorough. And also it makes the writer more conscious of looking at it from another person's point of view... (not clear)....

- 63 P: You also learn from your mistakes (clears throat). When you're actually reading somebody else's, you realise that you make those mistakes yourself ... (not clear).
- 64 P: When you read your own work, you can edit it yourself. You make the same mistakes again and again, but when somebody else shows you....
- 65 P: I think that peer editing is effective, because often if you write *you* know what you mean. You know, by the statement that you make, and if somebody else reads it, often you don't see it in the same way. And they think... and from that point of view, I've noticed in my work, especially, once or twice I've done that. And it's actually very effective to have someone else look at your work. And if we did back from Standard 6 when you started school, if it became a natural thing that every time you wrote an essay or a letter or whatever, you at least had one person reading over your work... and correcting. Ja. You wouldn't feel so intimidated by other people reading your work. If you'd done it all the time.
- 66 P: At the beginning - you know that descriptive essay that we had to write - you see something and you have a feeling inside you, and you've got to put it over, and usually you get so frustrated because people don't understand what you're trying to say, but because they have peer-edited you have learnt how to write it in such a way that people can actually understand it.
- 67 P: I really like the idea of rough creative essays... (rest not clear).

- 68 T: That came up the last time.
- 69 P: I found that distracting. Personally, I found it distracting to have music playing.
- 70 P: I think that it's distracting...(not clear).
- 71 T: What about, when you talk about peer editing, what has it done for self-editing, because when you're actually writing an essay in an exam that's really what you have to do. Does it do anything for your ability to edit your own work?
- 72 P: It trains you to look at it from another perspective, that's not your own. You first write it the way you see it, then you can read through it with another person's eyes... (unclear).
- 73 P: You're very narrow-minded and you don't think about how other people feel about what you've written. And then having someone else reading it then you become more ... (unclear). You realise... (She says something funny, but it is not clear).
- 74 Class laughs.
- 75 T: Okay. Any other comments?
- 76 P: I think it would be very effective if you weren't lazy.
- 77 Class laughs.
- 78 R: Generally speaking, do you think we must carry on doing this?
- 79 Class: Yes. Yes.

- 80 R: Does everybody feel that way?
- 81 Some say: Yes.
- 82 T: If you don't, put your hand up. It is no disgrace to disagree.
- 83 P: ... (unclear) ... good approach but it's no good starting in Standard 9.
- 84 P: It must start earlier.
- 85 T: So it must become a part of the ... (unclear).
- 86 P: I don't think it so bad, because when we started the process I actually noticed that I've actually been doing that all along, that I rewrite all the time....
- 87 R: You know... when you think that out of your 400 marks - oral equals fifty marks... it counts quite a lot, and I don't think that you've spent the same amount of proportionate time on it as you've spent on setwork and language. Think of how much time we spend on teaching you setwork and language and how little time we've spent on this.
- 88 P: Practically none - maybe 5 minutes to give us the topic.
- 89 P: And it's not like essay isn't important in English.
- 90 R: You need to be able to write...
- 91 T: In any job you do, you end up writing either reports, or some kind of written form. So you have to be able to do that. And it's generally quite a

professional standard that is demanded at a work level. So you actually need to have the skill. Don't you think it also rebounds on the network, because at the end you have to be able to put your ideas across? You have to be able to put your ideas about the network into an essay and be able to answer contextual questions. And in your language paper you answer comprehension in which you have to express yourself.

92 P: And you have to understand how they express *themselves* and what they use to express themselves.

93 P: When you get a topic ... (unclear)... - I don't see how that's going to help.

94 T: The ability to put it down firstly in grammatical sentences that make sense, and that relate to the topic and relate to the question correctly and express yourself.

95 R: Okay.... Thank you very much.

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