

**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROCESS APPROACH  
TO THE WRITING OF ENGLISH ESSAYS IN RURAL  
GRADE 12 CLASSES IN THE  
MOROKE CIRCUIT**

by

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MINI-DISSERTATION  
Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

**Master of Arts**

in

**English**

in the

**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES  
(School of Languages and Communication Studies)**

at the

**UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO**

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2011

## **Declaration**

**I declare that the mini-dissertation hereby submitted to the University of Limpopo for the degree of Master of Arts in English has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university; that it is my work in design and in execution, and that all material contained herein has been duly acknowledged.**

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**Dikgari, N.M (Ms)**  


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**Date**

## **Dedication**

This degree is dedicated to my late mother, Matlakala Christina (Grace) Dikgari. My mother valued education and she really loved to see me graduating. On the day I got accepted to do the Masters degree, I excitedly informed her to be ready to accompany me for the third time, to the university graduation ceremony. She expressed her happiness on the success of my application but calmly remarked and accurately predicted that by the time I graduated, she would have departed from this world.

Rest in peace Mommy!

## Acknowledgements

My heartfelt gratitude is directed to the following

1. My helper at home, Mrs. Mologadi Matloha for being the second mother to my children throughout my studies. I truly believe that behind every academically successful woman, there is a great helper. Thank you Sesi.
2. Dikeledi, my eldest daughter for being there for me in times of need especially when my computer challenged my technological skills. Thank you “McGyver.”
3. Dinaledi, my youngest daughter for keeping me company at odd times. I’ll never forget the day you struggled to turn my face away from the computer screen so I could watch your newly acquired dancing moves but there was this idea that I wanted to capture there and then lest I forgot it. I still feel guilty about treating my then three year old baby so unbecomingly.
4. My three sisters, family members, friends, especially Eugene and Mara, and colleagues whose positive comments and encouragement strengthened me.
5. My manager and professional mentor, Mr. Nkosi I.M, your unwavering support throughout my studies did not go unnoticed. I hope this achievement will assist the circuit in a positive way. Thank you Sir.
6. The teachers who agreed to serve as participants in this research study and learners whose portfolios I used to complete this project. I’m humbled by your co-operation.
7. All my lecturers in the Department of English for the valuable contributions to my academic path. You were all great in shaping my life as a scholar. Thank you.

8. Dr. McCabe for the warm academic relationship we have shared. The constructive criticism you provided helped me to stay focused. This degree is ours. Thank you Ma'am.
  
9. NRF, for the financial assistance through Professor Leketi Makalela. Thank you.
  
10. God, the Almighty, for perseverance during some moments of weakness when I seriously considered quitting my studies half way and for keeping me healthy too. Thank you Lord.

## **Abstract**

In 2008, the National Department of Education in South Africa introduced a new curriculum known as the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) in the Grade 12 classes. Prior to the introduction of this new curriculum, the writing of essays in Grade 12 classes was treated as a once-off activity. The focus on essay activities was mainly on the product and after the assessment of such product-driven essays, teachers had no further interest in them except for recording marks when necessary. The paucity of interaction between teachers and learners may have contributed to the majority of learners writing incoherent essays and achieving low marks.

This research study investigates whether teachers in the Moroke Circuit understand and implement the process approach in the writing of English essays in rural Grade 12 classes as prescribed by the NCS. The NCS advocates the use of the process writing approach in essay writing. The process writing approach encourages a partnership between teachers and learners. Teachers are expected to treat learners' essays as improvable objects through pre-writing activities, self and peer assessment which Kasanga (2004:64) refers to as "multiple-draft multiple-reader writing instruction".

To achieve the aim of the study, learners' essays were checked against the process writing checklist and the teachers' responses in the questionnaire they were requested to complete as part of the study. The findings revealed that teachers in the Moroke Circuit do not fully understand the process writing approach and thus they do not fully implement it as advocated. There are various factors which may contribute to the learners' poor writing skills, the main of which appear to be the teachers' inadequate training and poor understanding of the process writing approach. Some teachers attended short training courses on NCS and others did not attend any. Based on the findings, it is recommended that teachers should receive adequate training in the process writing approach for it to be implemented as effectively as the NCS prescribes.

## **Glossary of acronyms**

|      |                                   |
|------|-----------------------------------|
| ASs  | Assessment Standards              |
| CAs  | Curriculum Advisers               |
| DoE  | Department of Education           |
| ESL  | English Second Language           |
| FAL  | First Additional Language         |
| HL   | Home Language                     |
| L1   | First Language                    |
| L2   | Second Language                   |
| LoLT | Language of Learning and Teaching |
| LOs  | Learning Outcomes                 |
| LPG  | Learning Programme Guidelines     |
| NCS  | National Curriculum Statement     |
| NSC  | National Senior Certificate       |
| OBE  | Outcomes-based Education          |
| SAG  | Subject Assessment Guidelines     |

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Orientation of the study**

#### **1.1. Introduction**

Writing is considered one of the critical communication tools to learn and develop continuously. Murray (2004:8) outlines the following as reasons to write: to learn, to describe and therefore see, to speak and therefore hear, to entertain, to inform, to persuade, to celebrate, to attack, to call attention to, to think, to make money, to promote, to advocate, to connect, to relate, to make and to share. These reasons show writing to be a much needed skill. Therefore the ability to write coherent texts is vital for the overall development of any society.

Undoubtedly, writing forms an integral part of teaching and learning in the classroom. Bello (1997:1) states that it enhances language acquisition as learners experiment with words, sentences and larger chunks of writing to communicate their ideas effectively and to reinforce the grammar and vocabulary they are learning in class. Whilst a large number of learners and some teachers view writing as a daunting activity, it is one of the mandatory tools used for effective communication in the academic environment.

According to Leki (2004:170), writing was the most ignored of the language skills in the recent past but many changes in attitude have occurred about teaching writing. She further states that writing is no longer the last skill taught; it has now become much more important especially in the second-language curriculum. In the South African school context, the second-language curriculum refers primarily to the use of English as First Additional Language (FAL) and/or Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT).

First Additional Language (FAL) refers to any language(s) other than the learner's Home Language (HL). In South Africa, many people speak a number of languages besides their Home Language and English is one of these. For pragmatic reasons, it is called FAL. In some countries an additional language is still referred to as a second language. The LoLT refers to the language or languages used for both learning and teaching across the curriculum and gives equal importance to both learning and teaching (Granville et al. 1998:252-272). Home Language refers to "the language most often spoken at home, which is not necessarily the person's mother tongue" (Statistics South Africa: 2003: vii). It is a language learners understand and speak when they first come to school.

The majority of Black South African learners come from different ethnic backgrounds but they use English both as FAL and LoLT. All other subjects except their Home Languages are offered in English. While learning to write in English is both compulsory and fundamental to their academic paths, the success of teaching and learning in other subjects depends largely on the mastery of English as LoLT. Setati et al. (2002:72-93) state that although English is taught as second language in most South African schools, it is in fact a foreign language in most rural areas.

The expectation to master the skill of writing in the target language has become an enormous challenge particularly to the rural learners whose main source is usually their English teacher. The inability to master English often causes learners to write incoherent and sometimes irrelevant texts. In the context of this study, coherence refers to the logic or sense made by learners when they write essays. Irrelevance means the learners' inability to comprehend what they are requested to write about and writing on issues that are completely unrelated to the topic as seen in the attached essays. (See appendix D for examples of incoherent and irrelevant essays.)

The rural schools are under-resourced in terms of functional libraries and this limits the learners' chances to explore the basic rules of the target language. The writing of coherent English essays depends on learners' understanding of the rules of their FAL.

An article published by Education Specialist Bloch (City Press, 2010) revealed that 93% of disadvantaged schools are without libraries. On the other hand, Limpopo Province is recorded to have the lowest ratio of school libraries countrywide (Northern/ Noordelike Review, 2010). The lack of resources such as books could have resulted in many rural Grade 12 learners' inability to write coherent texts in English. In some cases it is the lack of suitably trained teachers that exacerbates the problem.

## **1.2. Background of the study**

South Africa is currently implementing a curriculum called the National Curriculum Statement (NCS). All teachers of Grades R to 12 are expected by the Department of Education (DoE) to implement this curriculum because it is a national policy. The NCS requires extensive reading and extended writing in all subjects. This curriculum requires that learners think carefully about what they learn, that they have strong conceptual knowledge and are able to apply this in a variety of situations (South African Government Information: 2005:1). The NCS compliant lessons are purportedly designed according to specific Learning Outcomes (LOs) and Assessment Standards (ASs) relevant to phases and grades, respectively.

A Learning Outcome is a statement of intended result of learning and teaching and it describes what the learner must know, do and value. Each of the learning outcomes is coupled with assessment standards. Assessment Standards are a set of criteria that collectively describe what a learner should know and be able to demonstrate in a specific grade (Department of Education 2003:7). English FAL in the Grades 10-12 classes comprises the following four LOs:

1. Listening and speaking (LO1)
2. Reading and viewing (LO2)
3. Writing and presenting (LO3)
4. Language (LO4)

This study is based on LO3 i.e. writing and presenting in Grade 12 English classes. In particular, the study focuses on the teaching of English essays using the process writing approach. An important aspect of this LO3 is the presentation of written work which involves sharing it with peers, teachers, the school as a whole, parents or a wider range of stakeholders (Department of Education 2008:19). The NCS advocates the process writing approach because the emphasis is on writing as a process as opposed to the written product.

LO3 focuses on writing in general because learners are expected to be able to write and present for a wide range of purposes and audiences using conventions and formats appropriate to diverse contexts (Department of Education 2003:13). The mastery of LO3 in Grade 12 can be attained through the achievement of certain Assessment Standards as outlined in the NCS Subject Statement policy document Grades 10-12 (General) for English First Additional Language. According to this document, a Grade 12 learner of English should at the end of the grade be able to

- demonstrate planning skills for writing for a specific purpose, audience and context (Department of Education 2003:33).
- demonstrate the use of writing strategies and techniques for first drafts (Department of Education 2003:35).
- reflect on, analyse and evaluate own work considering the opinions of others and a present final draft (Department of Education 2003:37).

A simplified version of process writing was documented in the Subject Assessment Guidelines (SAG) by the Department of Education in 2007. The SAG outlines the following guided stages for process writing in an English FAL classroom setting:

1. Brainstorming exercise.
2. Research (if appropriate).

3. Write first draft.
4. Review and editing by self and peer.
5. Write second draft, editing again.
6. Deliver final product (Department of Education 2007:41)

### **1.3. Problem Statement**

Prior to the inception of the NCS, the focus on essay writing was on the written product. When focus is placed on the written product the approach is said to be traditional. The traditional approach means that essay writing is treated as a once-off activity that focuses on the product to be evaluated.

Before the NCS was introduced, there was minimal interaction between the teacher and the learner during essay writing activities that often resulted in poor performance among the English learners especially in rural schools – such as essays of the participants in the current study. Teachers of English would assign essay topics to learners and instruct them to write essays to be submitted on a date set by the teacher. Learners would be compelled to face the given topic(s) on their own in a language most of them hardly understood. After submission the teacher would read the essays, allocate marks and give them back to the learners. Essays were written specifically for the teacher since he/she alone would uncover language errors made by the learners. This is confirmed by Kasanga (2004:65) when he states that feedback to student writing in South Africa can be said to be overwhelmingly in the form of teacher commentary, corrections and red-pen marking.

A large number of learners attending rural secondary schools in the Moroke Circuit speak Sepedi as their Home Language. Many of them have limited exposure to English outside the classroom and rely on the English teacher's expertise to teach them writing skills. The writing of essays in English seems to be a wearisome activity as indicated by some learners' perpetual poor performance. Essay writing in English seems to terrify

these learners because many of them have significantly low competence in English as shown by the examples of essays in Appendix D.

Personal observation by the researcher, currently an English Curriculum Adviser in the Moroke Circuit, revealed that in general, teachers in this circuit continued to use the traditional approach to teach essay writing despite the policy expectations that the process writing approach should be implemented. Before undertaking this study, the researcher observed that the majority of learners in the Moroke Circuit were writing and submitting only one essay to the teachers. There was little or no indication of the application of the stages of the writing process. If teachers missed these important stages, it was an indication that they were either ignorant of the stages or they did not know how to teach process writing. It seemed teachers assumed roles of editors instead of facilitators. This study investigates this wrong practice.

One of the key responsibilities of a Curriculum Adviser is to moderate teachers and learners' work on a regular basis. Assuming that the Department of Education has provided teachers with relevant NCS documents that clearly outline proper implementation of essay writing processes, the researcher was not certain whether teachers understood and implemented the process writing approach as expected by the new curriculum, hence answers to the following research questions were sought:

- Do teachers successfully implement process writing as advocated in the NCS?
- If teachers are in possession of the NCS documents and assuming that they have received adequate training, what are the causes of perpetual failure to write coherent essays in English among Grade 12 rural learners?

#### **1.4. Research Aim**

The aim of this research was to assess the implementation of process writing practice in essay writing instruction as advocated by the NCS for rural Grade 12 learners in the Moroke Circuit schools in Limpopo Province.

### **1.5. Objectives of the study**

The objectives of the study were to

- establish whether the process writing approach was being implemented in the writing of English essays as prescribed by the NCS in Grade 12 classes, (Moroke Circuit).
- assess teachers' understanding of the NCS expectations regarding the writing of English essays using the process writing approach.

### **1.6. Rationale for the study**

This study was prompted by the researcher's observation that despite the NCS expectations that process writing should be implemented, some teachers in the Moroke Circuit still focused on the written product and learners in Grade 12 classes continued to write incoherent essays. The rationale for this study is to find out whether teachers actually understand and implement process writing as envisaged by the NCS, and if not, to make recommendations that would assist to curb the problem.

### **1.7. Significance of the study**

The findings could help to assist teachers in the Moroke Circuit to understand and effectively implement the process writing approach in the writing of essays. Furthermore, these findings could help identify challenges faced by teachers in executing the new curriculum expectations with particular emphasis on essay writing skills. To some extent, the findings could assist the researcher and fellow curriculum advisers to plan relevant content-based workshops to train teachers to apply process writing in their teaching of essays. The findings could also be exploited by policy makers in terms of the relevance of the effectiveness of the process writing approach in an additional language in rural schools.



## **Chapter Outline**

**Chapter 1** gives background information to the study, the problem statement, objectives and aim of the study.

**Chapter 2** presents a selective review of the literature.

**Chapter 3** provides the research methods used in the study for the collection of data.

**Chapter 4** presents the analysis of data and interpretation of the data collected in chapter 3.

**Chapter 5** concludes the study by spelling out the findings of the study and recommendations and suggestions are made for further research.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

#### **2.1. Introduction**

The writing of any text in a language other than one's home language is a complex activity to many second language learners in most countries. South African learners in both primary and secondary schools are no exception. The majority of these learners use English both as their First Additional Language (FAL) and as a language of teaching and learning (LoLT). These learners are often expected, as part of the curriculum, to express their ideas in the writing of essays using English and this poses a challenge to many of them. Learners in rural secondary schools whose exposure to English is limited find it particularly challenging to express themselves in the language both inside and outside the classroom.

Schlebusch (2000:38) states that the high failure rate is caused by, among other factors, a lack in English proficiency of learners before entering the Senior Phase (Grades 7-9). This implies that because learners normally fail to understand the target language in the lower grades, they are unlikely to master that language at secondary and university levels. Teachers may therefore need specific skills to help learners with poor English proficiency to perform better in writing.

The literature reviewed in this chapter aims to highlight issues in the implementation of the process writing approach. The discussion attempts to draw attention to process writing and different views regarding its history and implementation with particular reference to teaching essay writing. It examines what the process writing approach is and the degree of its implementation during essay writing activities in the rural secondary schools. Most importantly, it clarifies the ways that the process writing approach can be used to enhance essay writing skills among the rural Grade 12 English learners as prescribed by the NCS.

The following aspects will be discussed in this chapter:

2.2. Writing as a process

2.3. Process writing as advocated by the National Curriculum Statement

2.4. Teachers' role as facilitators of writing as a process in rural English classes

2.5. Strategies to encourage learners of English FAL to use the process writing approach

2.6. Conclusion

## **2.2. Writing as a process**

Writing is a process and not an event hence, high quality writing takes time and it is often difficult. Murray (2004:9) acknowledges this when he states that the importance of writing lies in the fact that it is not easy and it should not be. This is confirmed by Caudrey (1995:1) when he maintains that researchers and teachers of writing have discovered that writing is a highly complex process. Myles (2002:1) concurs by stating that the ability to write well is not a naturally acquired skill; it is usually learned or culturally transmitted as a set of practices in formal instruction settings or other environments.

Learners in both secondary schools and institutions of higher learning need a set of writing practices to be able to write well. They need good teachers to teach them the skills of writing and presenting well written texts. For example, it is often difficult for learners to produce a well written essay in their Home Language at the first attempt but it is almost impossible for the same learners, to produce good essays in an additional language if the teacher is the sole source of information as in the case with participants of the current study.

Before 1994, the teaching of essays in the South African secondary schools was mainly product based. Teachers would give essay topics to the learners in the class and mark those essays without providing any constructive guidance to the learners. The use of a red pen was used to write comments that were mostly understood only by the teacher. The use of a red pen separated learners further from the teacher because they usually highlighted form-related errors instead of learners' failure to create meaning. It depicted the teacher as the sole authority on the learner's writing and amounted to negative feedback which could have a tormenting effect on the learner. The excessive use of a red pen made the learners' scripts resemble battlefields and rendered many learners reluctant to improve on their writing. Little support in terms of oral feedback was given to the learners.

Nelson and Carson (1998:113-131) confirm that in the traditional product-oriented class the teacher had the sole prerogative to evaluate student writing and provide feedback in the form of commentary. Thus learners are never given a chance to improve on their writing; hence Zemelman and Daniels (1988:19) view the product based essay writing approach as a silent and solitary activity for the learner. Wright (2006:90) states that when students are required to write one draft, they surely learn that writing is a once-off endeavour, with no chance to improve if they have made errors of any kind. They may fail to appreciate the messiness of constructing knowledge or the work involved in writing.

The use of process writing was introduced in the Grade 12 classes as a result of the introduction of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) by the national DoE. The NCS provides a new direction in the teaching of essay writing and other written texts. NCS is a learner-centred and an activity-based curriculum that positions a learner in the centre of teaching and learning. It advocates a shift from the traditional approach to the application of process writing in teaching essay writing. It encourages collaboration between teachers and learners since it positions the latter in the centre of the writing activities.

According to Leki (2004:174), the process writing approach focuses less on the product and more on the wandering path the student uses to get to the product. Process writing, like any good writing, is thus “complex”, “messy” and comprises “many different activities that result in [a] product” (Nightingale 2000:135).

The use of the process writing approach is said to be an idea that began to flourish over three decades (30 years) as a result of extensive research on first language writing (Montague 1995:1). Montague describes the approach as a teaching approach that focuses on the process a writer engages in when constructing meaning. It gives learners sufficient chance to brainstorm, plan, write a series of drafts, edit and proof-read their written text before final assessment takes place.

The process writing approach occurs in stages and the success of its implementation lies in the multiple drafts that learners produce before the final product. Phathey-Chaves, Matsumura and Valdes (2004:1) state that the process approach to writing instruction emphasises a cycle of revision during which students draft, edit, revise and redraft their work, and receive feedback from peers which gives them the opportunity to revise written work.

Goldstein and Carr (1996:1) define process writing as a broad range of strategies that include prewriting activities such as defining the audience, using a variety of resources, planning the writing as well as drafting, editing and revising. These activities are collectively referred to as “process-oriented instruction approach.” Kasanga (2004:64) sums up the process writing approach as “multiple-draft multiple-reader writing instruction”.

According to Caudrey (1995:1), the process writing approach was originally developed in and for the first language (L1) classroom and has been adapted for second language (L2) teaching. In South Africa the use of process writing was introduced in Grade 12 classes in 2008 as a result of the national curriculum changes. It is a new technique of teaching and assessing learners’ essays in Grade 12 and other lower grades. Its

application could be seen as a transparent strategy that aims at developing learners into better essay writers. They are continually involved with the development of essays while the teacher provides guidance throughout. In the context of this study, a writer refers to a learner of English as first additional language in a rural Grade 12 class. This learner has to learn to apply process writing in essay writing to achieve good grades and hopefully become a life-long writer.

The researcher, in her capacity as an English Curriculum Adviser, assumed that teachers in Grades 10 and 11 classes were already using the process writing approach because the NCS was introduced in these classes in 2006 and 2007, respectively. However, the researcher observed in 2008 that some Grade 12 teachers of English in the Moroke Circuit still taught essay writing as a once-off activity because marks were awarded for the first and only draft that learners submitted.

The researcher's observation prompted her to investigate whether teachers in the circuit understood the process writing approach. If they did, was it implemented as prescribed by the NCS? If they did not, they should receive training to teach the technique. The results of the study revealed whether or not writing as a process was understood and effectively implemented in the rural Grade 12 English classes in the Moroke Circuit.

The application of process writing in essays is mandatory and teachers have to adhere to the new curriculum as a matter of policy. Teachers are expected by the Department of Education (DoE) to ensure that learners are equipped with the necessary skills to write essays using the process writing approach. For example, learners should, after they have been taught writing as a process, be able to demonstrate planning skills, the use of writing strategies and to reflect, evaluate and analyse their own work and that of others (Department of Education 2003: 33-37). The approach of writing as a process might assist teachers in the Moroke Circuit to identify challenges experienced by individual learners during essay writing activities. Learners may become aware of the stages they need to follow during process writing.

One of Wright's (2006) findings was the report by students that by using process writing, they were able to notice "improved language proficiency". If teachers are aware of the departmental expectations and are willing to commit themselves to effect curriculum changes they should then be equipped with skills relevant to what they have to teach. If they understand and implement process writing as advocated by the NCS, learners may eventually improve by writing coherent texts and perhaps achieve quality results.

Adeyemi (2004) conducted a study on 41 learners at a junior secondary school in Botswana. She had realised that composition writing for most students had become an arduous and torturous activity. Her findings revealed that cooperative strategy (mutual or shared effort) is better than individualised strategy (one person effort) because it increases students' academic achievement and interaction. Her study confirms what the researcher feels is still a huge problem in teaching of essay writing in Grade 12 English FAL classrooms in the Mrooke Circuit, that is, there is little interaction among teachers and learners and that results in low achievements in terms of marks or grades.

The situation of learners in Grade 12 writing incoherent essays is a thorny issue in the circuit because English is a medium of instruction in tertiary institutions where these learners are expected to further their studies. It is often hard for rural learners in under resourced schools to write and present coherent texts in their first attempt, especially if their proficiency in the target language is minimal. In the case of this study, if learners are left to their own devices (individual effort) to write essays in an additional language which they do not comprehend in addition to attending rural schools with few resources, they are likely to continue to write incoherent and irrelevant essays.

Essay writing is an important component in language teaching and one would expect teachers to assist learners in essay writing activities. It is essential therefore, that teachers in the circuit be made aware of the departmental expectations and where possible, be trained to teach new methods effectively as this would assist them in improving learners results.

### **2.3. Process writing as advocated by the NCS**

The core objective of the Department of Education is to provide quality education for learners as prescribed by the national policies and guidelines. All the Grade 12 English language teachers are expected to be in possession of the relevant documents that will assist them in the effective implementation of the curriculum. Curriculum documents include some sections dealing specifically with process writing and its application. Teachers of English FAL are expected to have the following NCS documents to assist and guide them to plan their lessons on the effective implementation of the process writing approach:

#### **The Subject Statement policy (General): 2003**

This is a policy document that lays the foundation by stipulating all the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards in Grades 10, 11 and 12 classes respectively. It spells out the key principles and the values that underpin the curriculum (Department of Education: 2003). LOs are coupled with relevant ASs that learners should know and be able to demonstrate after each lesson. This document covers all aspects regarding writing. (It also includes listening, speaking, reading and language use.)

#### **Learning Programme Guidelines (LPG): 2008**

The LPG is a guiding plan that ensures learners achieve the LOs as prescribed for a particular grade. It assists teachers to plan and design quality learning, teaching and assessment programmes (Department of Education: 2008). This document states that learners should write every day and be given the opportunity to write freely without an assessment requirement (Department of Education 2008:19).



## **Subject Assessment Guidelines (SAG): 2008**

The Subject Assessment Guidelines provides guidelines for assessment in the NCS Grades 10-12. It sets out the internal or school-based assessment requirements for each subject and the external assessment requirements (Department of Education, 2008). Through this document the DoE encourages teachers to use guidelines provided to plan their assessment tasks and allocation of marks.

## **Subject Assessment Guidelines: 2007**

This document was developed in 2007 in an attempt to clarify and simplify the LOs in the Subject Statement of 2003. Teachers of English are guided on the teaching of written texts using the process writing approach in class. It states that writing and designing texts is a process and learners need the opportunity to put this process into practice. Learners should, upon deciding on the purpose and audience of the text to be written, follow the (guided) stages below:

### **Stage 1: Initial brainstorming exercise**

Brainstorming is a collaborative class exercise done by the teacher and the learners. The teacher writes random ideas as called out by learners in a mind map form. This exercise helps learners expand and develop their vocabulary. Learners use the ideas and formulate a few paragraphs by putting similar ideas together on their own mind map (Department of Education 2007:41). During this stage, correctness and relevance of the words and phrases are insignificant. It is a stage during which Murray (2004:41) encourages the writer to just write, fast, make mistakes, lose control and sees what happens.

### **Stage 2: Research (If appropriate)**

Learners do guided research with the help of their teacher. They conduct interviews with members in the community or find information in the library (if available), newspapers or

magazines or by observation (whichever is appropriate). The acquired material is placed in the mind map or a new plan is developed to include relevant information (Department of Education 2007:41). Learners collect details and information relevant to the topic, for example, photos, magazine pictures, CDs and other useful materials that seem to go with writing.

### **Stage 3: Writing of the first draft**

Learners write their first draft. They should be guided as to how to write essays using the information they have collected from the research conducted (Department of Education 2007:41).

### **Stage 4: Review of the first draft**

The first draft can be reviewed by a peer but the teacher should provide guidance. This could be done in pairs, groups and/or with the help of the teacher (Department of Education 2007:41).

According to Kasanga (2004:66), this stage goes under many names in the literature such as peer assessment, peer commentary, peer conference, peer correction, peer criticism, peer critiquing, peer editing, peer evaluation, peer marking, peer review and peer revision. However, Kasanga prefers terms with a focus on feedback for revision, for example, “peer feedback”, “peer response”, “peer commentary” and “peer reviewing” because they suggest sole focus on the purpose of helping revision rather than the awarding of a grade. The researcher concurs with him because the terms have a more positive connotation than the others like peer marking, peer correction and peer criticism.

Feedback from peers or classmates is an integral part of the writing process approach and it is one of the three main types of responses usually used in process writing, namely: self, peer and teacher feedback. Teachers and learners’ roles in reviewing

other learners' work are complementary. Feedback from teachers or peers and the opportunity to revise written work based on this feedback are considered to be keys to students' development as writers, and the role of instructions in novice learning and appropriation of writing has become a focal concern (Phatthey-Chavez, Matsumura and Valdes 2004:1). They further state that effective implementation of writing process pedagogies may require more staff development stressing appropriate teacher intervention and feedback.

A question regarding reviewing that could be raised is how learners in the Moroke Circuit could possibly give authentic feedback when the majority of them can hardly write coherent essays. Perhaps teachers can design simple checklists for the learners because process writing is incomplete without peer feedback. This type of feedback is important as it allows learners to learn from and reflect on their own performance.

### **Stage 5: Writing of the second draft (editing again)**

Once step 4 has been completed, learners can write the second draft. Both the teacher and the learner carry out this step by undertaking the finer and final points of editing and refining. Learners may consult with the teacher to understand the rationale behind the particular type of editing that takes place. Specific language issues are looked at, including the use of conjunctions, pronouns and adverbs to improve cohesion and fluency. Spelling errors are also checked (Department of Education 2007: 41).

### **Stage 6: Final draft**

Learners write a final draft. The teacher gives the final assessment according to the National Curriculum Statement rubrics as stated in the assessment document (Department of Education 2007:41). A rubric is a scoring guide and a final assessment strategy that seeks to evaluate learner performance. It describes a continuum of performance quality based on the sum of a range of criteria rather than a single numerical score (Learning Curve 2005:1).

Rubrics are analytical rather than quantitative, because the focus is on the analysis of the performance rather than giving a mark (Department of Education 2008:53). The researcher feels that the use of a rubric would encourage teachers to evaluate learners' performance in an objective manner and that would assist learners to improve on their essay writing activities. In the past, feedback on written essays was mostly subjective as focus was more on the teacher's written comments comprising mainly corrective comments rather than oral feedback. In conversation with teachers in the Moroke Circuit, some expressed their frustration on use the rubric because they think it is complicated and time consuming instead they continue use the traditional method which is mostly subjective.

While it is generally assumed that most learners are more at ease when they communicate with fellow students than their teachers, Kasanga (2004:64) discovered that learners still prefer teacher feedback to that of their peers. He conducted a research study on students' responses to peer feedback, from which he concluded that students were more willing to conduct peer assessment as reviewers and not the recipients of feedback. The study took place in normal classroom writing activities with 52 first year students from two tutorial groups taking an academic writing course at the University of the North (now Limpopo) following a survey of more than 250 students. His study confirms the preference of teacher feedback over feedback by peer. It could be that students trust their teachers' feedback more than that of their peers.

The process writing approach advocates the use of self, peer and teacher assessment. Effective implementation of the writing process requires occasional teacher feedback since it is the most critical element in the process. Teachers need development programmes to improve the quality of their feedback on students writing. Teachers in the Moroke Circuit should benefit from such developmental programmes. Learners will also benefit by understanding the importance of assessment.

## **2.4. Teachers' role as facilitators of writing as a process in rural English classes**

Writing as a process requires teachers and learners to form partnerships during essay writing activities as this would promote effective teaching and learning. This can only happen if teachers recognise their role as facilitators of process writing. For any language teacher to become a good facilitator in the writing process, he/she should clearly understand the policy expectations and ways to assist learners to write well. Patthey-Chavez, Matsumura and Valdes (2004:15) state that teachers need support for providing meaningful feedback that supports revision across drafts, and not just a more standardised execution.

Many language teachers using the traditional approach often rush to find fault with learners' essays but still come across a situation where a learner repeats the same language mistake in the entire essay that he/she has written throughout the year.

An early detection of errors should perhaps occur during the first draft stage of the process to curb this weakness although there are no rules regarding this because learners are different. However, Dixon (1986:4) seems to discourage teachers from allocating marks to the learners' essays too fast as he likens the writing process to the making of a clay pot. He asserts that

In many ways writing a composition is similar to shaping a clay pot. We don't start by putting the glaze on a lump of clay and firing it: We start with a foggy notion of what we wish to create and continuously reassess our initial vision in terms of what comes out. Sometimes we may destroy what we have started and begin anew, but it is not until we have a shape with which we are happy that we glaze and fire. We should not work on the finishing editorial touches until we have a form that says what we mean and holds the contents we desire.

If teachers hope to successfully implement process writing they should exercise patience with learners by collaborating with them during essay activities. Thus, they should only allocate marks once they are satisfied that learners have reached their maximum writing potential. But, teachers can only assist the learners to excel in essay writing if they have received adequate training on the effective implementation of the process writing approach. Teachers play a significant role in the successful implementation of the process writing approach as borne out by Wright's (2006:88) research study.

Wright conducted a research study aimed at establishing whether process writing can improve under-prepared Black students' scientific writing at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology. Although her research was conducted at an institution of higher learning, its similarity with this study is that they both involve Black South African English learners from disadvantaged and under- resourced secondary schools similar to those in the Moroke Circuit.

The findings of her research confirm that process writing can be of assistance to learners from disadvantaged schools. After collaboration with two of her colleagues, it was revealed that students whose initial marks were very low showed a greater improvement in both the content and language marks in their essays. Wright contends that undertaking process writing is a worthwhile cause as part of a deeper learning because it requires careful planning and constant coordination. She further indicates that the quality and quantity of students' writing requires commitment and active collaboration by those involved at all levels of study. This can only be achieved with sustained, explicit and appropriate guidance.

Her study confirms that process writing can be of assistance to learners from disadvantaged schools. The findings support what the researcher wants to achieve with this study i.e. to encourage teacher and learner collaboration through the use of process writing as prescribed by the NCS. It seems productive collaboration among teachers themselves is the key to a successful implementation of process writing.

The sustainability of the implementation of process writing in the Moroke Circuit depends on the teachers' understanding of the process and commitment to improve results. Teachers should understand that process writing is a collaborative effort aimed at helping learners to become lifelong writers and not only to obtain marks. While writing for promotional purposes is important, it is more important for Grade 12 learners to acquire skills that will assist them to write coherent texts at college and university where writing still forms an integral part of every assessment. The inability to excel in essay writing at secondary level may lead to these learners producing mediocre written texts.

Learners who have not yet acquired the writing skills at high schools are likely to experience problems in higher education institutions if the root cause for their failure is not established and dealt with. Kasanga (1999:125-130) explains that high school graduates bring to university their inexperience in essay writing that may develop into some sort of "writing anxiety" which accounts, at least partially, for the high failure rate among university entrants, writing being their main form of assessment at university. Kasanga further states that learners cannot excel in essay writing at any university level if they are unable to achieve good marks in Grade 12. With proper guidance these learners should be able to write coherent texts like their counterparts in the urban schools.

Leki (2004:174) emphasises that the success of the application of the process writing approach lies in the wandering paths that learners use to get to the product. Therefore emphasis should be placed on the process and not the product. The implementation of the process writing approach can only become effective if teachers have the knowledge and skills needed to make a significant improvement in the quality of the learning environment they create for students (Patthey-Chavez, Maturuma & Valdes: 2004:1). The nature of written instructor responses to student writings and relationships of these responses to the quality of subsequent student work was investigated in five middle school classrooms from 64 Grade 7 students over a period of two years in California. The results confirmed that effective implementation of the writing process pedagogies

may require more staff development, stressing appropriate teacher intervention and feedback.

Some teachers in the Moroke Circuit may still be using the traditional approach because they do not understand the significance of process writing and the researcher hopes that this study may close the existing gap. If teachers are in possession of the relevant National Curriculum Statement documents but have not received adequate training, chances are that the implementation of the process approach to the writing of essays will not yield the desired outcomes. Teachers may find it difficult to implement and learners will, as a result, continue to perform poorly. The researcher as a former teacher acknowledges that teachers in the Moroke Circuit may be facing challenges such as the large classes they are expected to teach, but strategies to improve learner performance can be developed. This may be a worthwhile exercise as it will assist both teachers and learners to understand and implement the new curriculum expectations.

A research study conducted by Mankga (2004:2) reveals that teachers are still very much controlled by the old curriculum and this may be due to the fear of the unknown and reluctance to change. His study was based on language use in an Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) area in one of the poorly resourced rural schools in the Limpopo Province. Mankga states that teachers are reluctant to unlearn what they know and relearn new ways of teaching and assessing. Many of these teachers have service histories and have internalised specific ways of teaching their subjects and are suspicious about the new curriculum. If Mankga's (2004) findings are valid, it would mean that teachers may be failing to engage wholly in the new curriculum. Resistance by educators to change their teaching methodology may impact negatively on the learners' understanding in the classroom.

The views by the researchers mentioned in this study indicate that the success of the implementation of the process writing approach in the Moroke schools will depend on the amount of training that teachers receive, their positive mind-set towards change and the commitment to effect that change.



According to Patthey-Chavez et al. (2004), the appropriateness of the teacher's guidance will depend on the level of training they have received. Teacher development on process writing is vital to both rural and urban teachers locally and abroad because there seems to be a gap in common understanding of the technique. For example, Caudrey (2005:1) conducted a survey aimed at discovering whether ESL teachers have a similar understanding of the concepts of the "process approach" to writing or whether the concept has evolved in different ways in different places. The results of the survey show that teachers have strongly differing ideas as to what process writing is. Unlike teachers in Caudrey's situation, it is expected that teachers in the Moroke Circuit should have common understanding of the process writing approach since they are in possession of the same documents provided by the same department.

This study will attempt to uncover whether the teachers, as facilitators, understand how to give the appropriate support. Murray (2004:241) contends all students can benefit from such support, namely, the experience of an instructor skilled in the teaching of writing.

## **2.5. Strategies to encourage learners of English FAL to use the process writing approach in the writing of essays.**

Writing can appear a very isolated human activity in which one person, the learner, independently produces a text, fed by information from one source, the teacher (Davison & Dowson 1998:130). It often happens that learners are given tasks to write mainly for promotion purposes. However, teachers can develop strategies to uplift learner competence.

Studies by Tshotsho (2006) and Adeyemi (2004) reveal that essay writing is a huge challenge to learners in South Africa and neighbouring countries, irrespective of the grade. Both these researchers share a common belief that the implementation of the process writing approach can improve learners' proficiency in the writing of essays at secondary schools and universities.

Tshotsho (2006:1) investigated English Second Language (ESL) academic writing strategies for Black students focusing on process writing. Her research was prompted by the growing concern about the falling standards of academic writing among students in South Africa's tertiary institutions. It was observed that Black students in the Eastern Cape Technikon have not yet reached adequate proficiency levels that would enable them to cope with written English as used in academic discourse. Findings revealed that process writing improved proficiency in the students' written texts. Black Grade 12 learners in the Moroke Circuit cherish high expectations to proceed to institutions of higher education after passing Grade 12. The vicious cycle of falling standards will continue if the Grade 12 teachers do not have the skills to support learners in writing good essays. With adequate teacher support, process writing can improve these learners' proficiency in written essays that in turn may reduce the failure gap in this circuit.

Adeyemi (2004), for example, asserts that cooperative strategy is better than individualised study. Co-operative strategy is a two way effort between teachers and learners during process writing. Adeyemi realises that learners of English in Botswana find writing an arduous, torturous activity. The findings of Adeyemi are relevant to this study because many learners in the Moroke Circuit find essay writing a wearisome activity and this may be due to lack of proper guidance by teachers. Teachers still use the traditional approach and it does not encourage interaction. Essay writing in the Moroke Circuit is a solitary endeavour learners have to face as they write their essays. The difference between this research study and that of Adeyemi's is that they involve Grade 8 learners and Grade 12 learners respectively but the objectives are almost the same.

As another strategy to improve learners essay writing, teachers should give appropriate topics that learners understand. According to Bello (1997:1), teachers need to provide learners with opportunities to write about topics that are relevant to their lives, to participate in various writing activities and to feel that their writing has value. Ideally, these strategies may be relevant and important to enhance the learners writing skills.

Unfortunately the strategies may not apply to the situation in the Moroke Circuit where learners struggle to understand the basic rules in the target language and still rely on their teachers for support.

Wessels and van den Berg (1998:286) state that for learners to write well, they must be given opportunity upon opportunity to practise writing and also be motivated to write. Learners in the Moroke Circuit still struggle with the use of the target language and if teachers do not have the necessary skills to teach or assess the work of the learners as per NCS expectations, the latter will continue to write incoherent texts. Learners in this circuit should be given relevant writing activities on a regular basis to improve on the drafts until the finished product. Gebhard (2006:212) confirms that we do not necessarily write a perfect letter, memo, essay, or proposal in a single draft. Several drafts are needed before the final one is produced.

The process writing approach encourages teachers to identify each learner's individual weaknesses in a non threatening way and probably by this study, the researcher will find out from the teachers how best to give learners writing practice before assessing the final product. The Learning Programme Guidelines Document (Department of Education 2008:19) states that learners should write every day and should be given the opportunity to write freely without an assessment requirement. Peregoy and Boyle (1993:101) state that the best kind of assessment in any classroom comes from day-to-day informal observations of students as they interact in their writing groups.

Constant interaction with learners might help alleviate the learners' fear of writing as there will be constant feedback between learners and teachers. Myles (2002:15) points out that feedback is of the utmost importance to the writing process. She adds that without individual attention and sufficient feedback on errors, improvement will not take place. Myles further argues that if this feedback is not part of the instructional process, then students will be disadvantaged in improving both writing and language skills.

Learners' essays in the Moroke Circuit showed that they wrote only one draft and teachers marked that only draft. They were not given a second or third chance to improve on their written text and that practice often lead to poor performance. Murray (2004:17), for example, states that inexperienced writers often write too soon. In other words, these writers take the first draft as the final one. The Grade 12 learners in the Moroke Circuit can be categorised as inexperienced writers, particularly in their writing of English essays; thus they need maximum assistance from teachers because English is not their Home Language. They lack the skills to write coherent essays in the FAL. Kasanga (2004:65) states that schools where writing is taught seldom use a multiple-draft process writing approach and teacher feedback is still at best, the predominant, at worst, the sole response to student writing.

The Grade 12 teachers are expected by the NCS to complete 14 tasks before learners sit for their final examination. As a result of that expectation most of them rush through the syllabus and learners are placed at a disadvantage. The researcher is not certain about the degree of implementation of the process writing approach if teachers are compelled to finish the syllabus on time as directed by the annual programme of assessment. Learners need versatile teachers who are equipped with writing skills to help them achieve LO3. For this reason it is crucial to investigate the knowledge and level of the understanding of the teachers in the Moroke Circuit regarding the process writing approach.

It is worth noting is that not all researchers embrace the process writing approach as an optimum way to increase the learners' essay writing competence. Horowitz (1986:141), for instance, perceives theoretical and practical problems and omissions of the approach. Horowitz states that the focus on English Second Language (ESL) composition should be shifted from the writer to the reader, that is, the academic discourse community. He criticises the approach for lacking purpose because it leaves a lot to chance in the classroom. The following are his objections on the use of the process writing approach

- It fails to prepare students for at least one essential type of academic writing as it creates a classroom atmosphere which bears little resemblance to the situation in which students' real writing is undertaken.
- It gives a false impression on how academic writing is evaluated.
- For students preparing for language examinations there is an obvious conflict between the extended composing processes encouraged by the process approach and the single draft usually necessary in an examination.

Although Horowitz's criticism of the process writing approach is reasonable, it is more important to understand that learners in the Moroke Circuits lack basic writing skills. It is therefore important to develop them first as good writers before they can write for academic purposes. Critical thinking may be another necessary skill which is missing and can be developed by process writing. His views do not offer alternative measures to hone the writing skills of rural learners of English FAL.

## **2.6. Conclusion**

While many researchers have studied the process writing approach in the context of English as a Home Language, this study is based on the approach as it occurs in the rural second language classrooms. The researcher acknowledges that the introduction of the process writing approach is still new in the South African schools but strongly believes that it is worth implementing. Teachers and learners have the potential to learn new methods of teaching and learning. Collaborative effort by both teachers and learners is crucial to the success of the implementation of the process writing approach. Finally, the researcher views process writing as an important skill to learn and adopt for learners to be able to sustain the ability to write coherently even beyond school.

Teachers, particularly in the Moroke Circuit may need regular in-depth development programmes to help them implement the process writing approach as prescribed by the new curriculum because learners' perpetual failure to write coherent essays is problematic for the circuit. Teacher development should be a priority in achieving the departmental objectives. Although English is not the Home Language for the majority of learners and teachers in the Moroke Circuit, constant writing practice in the first additional language will increase their writing competence. Kasanga (2004: 64) believes that "negotiated" classroom practice may become "accepted" practice, in spite of presumably unfavourable socio-cultural and educational traditions. With adequate training, what seems difficult to the teachers to implement at present may become a routine in future that can benefit both teachers and learners in the Moroke Circuit despite unfavourable conditions.

The next chapter will present the methodology used to answer the research questions for the study. The research design, population, sampling techniques and data collection methods will form part of chapter 3.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Research Methodology**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

The previous chapter dealt with a review of the literature relating to what the process writing approach is and its application in the second language setting with special reference to Grade 12 English First Additional Language (FAL). The aim of the study is to assess the implementation of the process writing practice in essay writing instruction as advocated by the NCS. This chapter presents the methodology used to answer the research question on the implementation of process writing in rural secondary schools in the Moroke Circuit. A comprehensive discussion of the following aspects is provided:

3.2. Research design

3.3. Population

3.4. Sampling

3.5. Data collection methods

3.6. Limitation of the study

3.7. Ethical Consideration

3.8. Conclusion

### 3.2. Research Design

This research study is a cross-sectional once-off survey of what is happening in rural classrooms in terms of the teaching of process writing. It is based mainly on a qualitative design for the collected data although some aspects of quantitative research methodology for the data analysis will be included.

Schumacher and McMillan (1993:15) describe qualitative methodology as a field focused on attempts to unveil the real world situation that exists within the classroom and which stands in contrast to theoretical deductions. It is a way of knowing and learning about different experiences from the perspective of the individual. The researcher hopes to uncover the real situation regarding the effective implementation of the process writing approach in the Moroke Circuit. A quantitative analysis will be done of some of the close-ended questions as they appear on the questionnaire to be completed by the teachers. A checklist comprising six stages namely; brainstorming, research, writing of the first draft, first draft review, second draft and final version will be used to verify whether learners have followed the stages as prescribed by the NCS.

The qualitative and quantitative methodologies as well as personal observation will be triangulated to cover the depth and the width of the scope. This multi dimensional methodology is known as triangulation. The concept of triangulation is said to have been coined by Denzin (1978) and it refers mainly to the use of multiple methods of data collection with a view to increase the reliability of observation and not specifically to the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches.

Padgett (1998:32) describes triangulation techniques in qualitative research as the convergence of multiple perspectives that can provide greater confidence in what was being targeted as being accurately captured. Thus the concept of triangulation is sometimes used to designate a conscious combination of qualitative and quantitative methodology.



The concept of triangulation is based on the assumption that any bias inherent in a particular data source, investigators and methods would be neutralised when used with other data sources, investigators and methods (Creswell 1994:174). Interpretation of the results from the research should not be biased and it is for this reason that the researcher selected varied methodologies as suitable for this research study.

In answering some of the research questions the researcher was a participant in the research because of her observations during field work. According to Rossman and Rallis (2003:337), no qualitative report can exclude the researcher's own perspective, and considerations should be given to how that might have shaped events and interpretations.

### **3.3. Population**

The research study took place in the rural Moroke Circuit, one of the 33 Circuits in the Greater Sekhukhune District, Limpopo Province. This circuit is situated in the area surrounding Moroke village, about 105 kilometres south of the city of Polokwane.

Moroke Circuit comprises 14 sparsely distributed secondary schools located in different villages. The target population for this study was all the Grade 12 English FAL teachers and all the 2008 Grade 12 learners in the Moroke Circuit. The learners were part of the population only as far as their English essays were used as evidence of whether process writing was being implemented. Their essays served as evidence of the effective implementation of the process writing approach.

The majority of these learners lack basic writing skills because they have not yet mastered simple language structures like the correct use of verbs and nouns, capital letters and spelling because they write incoherent and sometimes irrelevant texts. The focus of the study is however primarily on the teachers' understanding and subsequent implementation of the writing process approach in Grade 12 English classes as

prescribed by the National Curriculum Statement. The language deficiencies on the part of the learners should be addressed by another study.

### **3.4. Sampling**

A total of 14 teachers in 14 secondary schools in the Moroke Circuit were asked to take part in this study. Each school usually has one teacher responsible for teaching English in Grade 12 classes hence the sample size is 14. The sample is assumed to accurately represent the Moroke population since all the teachers of English were asked to participate in the study.

A total of 608 learners were registered for English FAL at the beginning of 2008 but by the time of the data collection the actual number was 531. For sampling purposes 4 learner portfolios per school were selected, which amounted to a total of 56 Grade 12 learner portfolios. Examining the portfolios for the whole population was not practicable due to time constraints.

The learners formed part of the population indirectly because their only English portfolios were used. A sample of 56 essays was enough to reflect what was happening in the circuit. The learners' portfolios usually contain all the completed tasks in the subject but for the purpose of this study, only essays were extracted, (including rough drafts) per learner per school.

### **3.5. Data Collection Methods**

#### **3.5.1. Instrument 1: Questionnaire**

One of the research objectives was to establish whether English teachers in the Grade 12 classes were successfully implementing the process writing approach in the writing of essays as prescribed by the NCS in the Grade 12 classes. A questionnaire was selected as an instrument in preference to an interview, as it would give teachers a

chance to reflect on their responses. It was also felt that teachers would respond more openly in a questionnaire than in an interview, which would require them to face the researcher known to them as the Curriculum Adviser. Teachers usually regard a Curriculum Adviser as a senior departmental official on a fault-finding mission so they are seldom comfortable in the latter's presence.

A questionnaire comprising three sections with open and closed ended questions was designed for the Grade 12 teachers of English to complete. The questionnaire did not restrict itself to the teachers' understanding of the writing process approach, as other general questions such as the educational background of the teacher, teaching experience, number of learners taught as well as other additional subjects taught by the same teacher were included to assist the researcher in understanding the teachers' level of competence in English and other factors that can impact on the effective implementation of process writing.

Moroke Circuit is one of the five circuits that form a cluster called Magakala. The questionnaire was first piloted with two Grade 12 teachers of English from two other circuits within the cluster because the pilot study is a prerequisite for the successful execution and completion of a research project (De Vos et al. 2005:205).

**Section A** dealt with the general background questions about the participants

**Sections B** comprised questions on the understanding and implementation of the process writing approach by the teachers of English in Grade 12.

**Section C** was about opinions, feelings and attitudes of the participants regarding the process writing approach. This section was included to assist the researcher to understand and assess opinions, feelings and attitudes of teachers towards teaching process writing.

### **3.5.2. Instrument 2: Checklist**

The checklist was used as an instrument with which to assess the learners' essays for evidence of process writing as stipulated in the Subject Assessment Guidelines for Languages (Department of Education 2007:41). The checklist shows stages that need to be followed in process writing i.e. brainstorming, research, the writing of first draft, first draft review, second draft and the final product. Each learner is expected by the NCS to have a portfolio for every subject. The said portfolio contains the formal tasks done that constitute part of the continuous assessment. For this study, the 2008 learner portfolios were used because the NCS was implemented for the first time in the Grade 12 classes in the same year. The researcher wanted to establish whether teachers understood the process writing approach and confirm if they were able to implement it effectively in their classrooms, hence the use of a checklist.

### **3.5.3. Procedure**

Permission to conduct this research project was obtained from the Circuit Manager of Moroke Circuit on the 19th September 2008. A covering letter of request, which explained the purpose of the research study, was issued to 14 Grade 12 teachers of English in September 2008, asking them to participate in the project. Teachers were also requested to submit the portfolios of the Grade 12 learners, which included all the English essay drafts before the end of October 2008 (marked or unmarked). The researcher made copies of the submitted essays and returned them to the teachers. Furthermore, a questionnaire was issued to the teachers for them to complete and return to the researcher together with the essays. The researcher needed to establish whether the teachers were implementing the process writing approach as prescribed. Teachers' responses were analysed and learners' portfolios were checked to substantiate teachers' responses. The checklist assisted in checking if the stages of process writing were followed as prescribed by the NCS.

### **3.6. Limitation of the study**

Moroke Circuit comprises 14 sparsely situated secondary schools, and teachers usually leave school at three o' clock in the afternoon. It was difficult to visit schools during working hours despite the permission granted because the DoE's policy on contact time between teachers and teachers is rigid and thus could not be compromised.

### **3.7. Ethical consideration**

In line with ethical requirements, the participants were guaranteed anonymity.

### **3.8. Conclusion**

This study relied both on the completed questionnaires from the teachers and essays written by the Grade 12 learners in 2008 as evidence of implementation of the process writing approach. Teachers' responses to the questionnaire indicated whether they understood process writing and what their views were about the approach. The rationale behind using the 2008 learners' essays for evidence was that they were the first group to sit for NCS examination and to receive the National Senior Certificate (NSC).

The NSC is awarded for the achievement of the exit level learning outcomes stipulated in the NCS policy document (Department of Education 2005:1). The timing was important because it allowed the researcher to gauge whether or not the teachers had taught process writing in such a way that learners were prepared to face the NCS examination.

The next chapter will record the analysis and interpretation of results.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Data analysis and interpretation of the results**

#### **4.1. Introduction**

The previous chapter presented the methodology used to answer the research question on whether the process writing approach is understood and implemented as per NCS prescription in the Grade 12 English classes in the rural Moroke Circuit. This chapter provides the recording of data analysis and interpretation of the results.

#### **4.2. Results and interpretations**

The results are presented in the order of the questions in the questionnaire issued to the 14 English teachers in the Moroke Circuit. All teachers responded to and returned the questionnaire to the researcher as per agreement. All questionnaires, but one, came with the Grade 12 learners' English portfolios as requested. That one questionnaire could not be used as there were no portfolios to serve as evidence of the actual implementation of the process writing approach in that classroom. Thirteen (13) of the total of fourteen (14) schools were examined by the researcher. These schools were arranged numerically and allocated numbers 1-13 instead of their names to protect their identity and that of the participating teachers for ethical reasons. Teachers' responses are transcribed verbatim; but in cases of vagueness and ambiguity interpretations were made from the context.

The questionnaire comprises three sections with a total of 19 closed and open ended questions.

**Section A** comprises 8 questions focusing on the general background information of the participants.

**Section B** comprises 5 questions dealing with the implementation of the process writing approach.

**Section C** consists of 6 questions that deal with the opinions, feelings and attitudes of the teachers regarding the process writing approach.

#### **4.2.1. Section A: General background questions**

##### **4.2.1.1. Gender**

Table 1

| <b>Gender</b> | <b>Frequency (f)</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|---------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Male          | 11                   | 84.6           |
| Female        | 2                    | 15.4           |
| Total         | 13                   | 100            |

Table 1 indicates that the Moroke Circuit is dominated by male teachers in Grade 12 English classrooms, i.e. 84.6% male teachers as opposed to 15.4% female teachers. This difference should have little or no impact on the results since each teacher is responsible for handling his/her own class and for teaching process writing according to the same NCS principles.

#### 4.2.1.2. Highest Educational Qualification

Table 2

| <b>Qualification</b>              | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Advanced Certificate in Education | 1                | 8              |
| Primary Teachers Diploma          | 2                | 15             |
| Secondary Teachers Diploma        | 2                | 15             |
| First Degree                      | 4                | 31             |
| Second Degree                     | 3                | 23             |
| Masters                           | 1                | 8              |
| Total                             | 13               | 100            |

As indicated by Table 2, all (100 %) teachers of English FAL in Grade 12 hold post matriculation qualifications. This information serves to assist the researcher to presuppose that all the Grade 12 teachers in the Moroke Circuit can read, understand and interpret NCS documents and thus are able to apply knowledge acquired with minimal difficulty. It should be noted that 15% of these teachers are qualified to teach only at primary level yet they have been given learners in Grade 12 to teach. Only one teacher studied English up to a third year level at university.

The appointment of teachers at a level higher than their qualifications could be as a result of general shortage of teachers countrywide. By assigning Grade 12 classes to teachers with lower qualifications is an added responsibility that might have a negative impact on teaching writing because these teachers were trained to handle the teaching of writing in lower classes. The lack of suitably qualified teachers in Grade 12 classes could further disadvantage learners as the teaching standard will be compromised unless these teachers receive relevant training in writing.



#### 4.2.1.3. Teaching experience in Grade 12 English FAL class

Table 3

| No of years        | Frequency | Percent |
|--------------------|-----------|---------|
| 0-5 years          | 2         | 15.4    |
| 5-10 years         | 0         | 0       |
| 10-15 years        | 4         | 30.8    |
| 15 years and above | 7         | 53.8    |
| Total              | 13        | 100     |

Table 3 shows that 53.8 % of teachers have been teaching English in Grade 12 for over 15 years. It is assumed that an experienced teacher is able to understand and implement new teaching methods much easier than a novice teacher. Veteran teachers are expected to produce better results than novices. However, this is not always the case as Mankga (2004:2) reports in his research study that the majority of experienced teachers are not willing to unlearn old teaching methods to accommodate new ones. The findings of this study may support or differ with Mankga's.

#### 4.2.1.4. How many learners do you teach in your Grade 12 English FAL class?

Table 4

| School | No of learners | Percent |
|--------|----------------|---------|
| 1      | 25             | 5       |
| 2      | 21             | 4       |
| 3      | 27             | 5       |
| 4      | 81             | 15      |
| 5      | 22             | 4       |
| 6      | 50             | 9       |

|       |     |     |
|-------|-----|-----|
| 7     | 21  | 3   |
| 8     | 40  | 8   |
| 9     | 48  | 9   |
| 10    | 11  | 2   |
| 11    | 61  | 12  |
| 12    | 72  | 14  |
| 13    | 52  | 10  |
| Total | 531 | 100 |

Table 4 shows that the total number of learners in Grade 12 in all the 13 schools is 531 with class sizes ranging between 11 and 81. It should be noted that the number of Grade 12 learners in school number four is 81 while school number 10 comprises a class of 11 learners. In comparing learner statistics of the two schools it becomes apparent that the size of the class in the former is far from ideal while the latter's size is fairly reasonable. The disparity shows an uneven teacher workload between the two schools in terms of class sizes. The teacher at school number 4 teaches an overcrowded class which would impact negatively on the teaching and learning of the process writing approach.

Table 4 further shows that teachers at schools 4, 11, 12 and 13 teach over 50 learners. The majority of learners in the Mroke Circuit exhibit a low level of proficiency in English; hence the writing of incoherent texts (See Appendix D for examples of incoherent texts). It is possible that the issue of overcrowding could have resulted in these learners continuing to write incoherent texts over the years because of lack of individual attention which is vital for the success of any lesson. Large class sizes and a heavy workload have a negative impact on teaching and learning because teachers often concentrate on gifted learners and ignore the slow ones.

The researcher's personal experience as a former Grade 12 teacher has shown that it does not matter how skilled the teacher is: the larger the class, the more difficult it becomes to teach effectively. An overcrowded class often impact negatively on the

teaching and learning of the process writing approach - and more so if the language of instruction is foreign to the learners.

Most rural schools do not have functional libraries as observed by Bloch (City Press, 2010). Schools in the Moroke Circuit are no exception and teachers usually serve as the learners' main resource for English. These teachers are expected to apply process writing in teaching essays. The process writing approach comprises six stages, and its mastery depends largely on the contact time available between the teacher and the learner. It is a collaborative effort and for a teacher to form a partnership with each learner in a class of over 50 learners requires a high level of commitment.

The DoE's Regulation 1451 of 2002 [1] on the post provisioning needs of schools and learners states that a lower period load implies a more favourable overall learner-educator ratio, but it is silent on the exact teacher-learner ratio that schools should accommodate. The document appears to suggest 40 learners as the highest ideal maximum class size in Grades 1-9, but for Grades 10-12, it states that each learner is weighted separately in terms of his or her maximum curriculum needs.

In comparing schools in Gauteng and in New Zealand, Brand (1998:14-17) states that the average South African teacher pupil ratio in Gauteng is reported at 1:35. Some teachers in the Moroke Circuit have to teach double the number suggested by Brand. Some teachers (Moroke: 2008) indicated that a maximum of 40 learners would be an ideal class size to teach. There is also a great deal of pressure put upon the Grade 12 teachers to produce good results regardless of the unfavourable teaching conditions they find themselves in. Teachers of large classes are expected to produce good results as well as those of classes with fewer learners.

**4.2.1.5. What other subjects/learning areas are you responsible for in your school?**

Table 5

| School | Core subject     | Number of learners | Additional subjects                           |
|--------|------------------|--------------------|---|
| 1      | English Grade 12 | 25                 | Sepedi<br>Life Orientation                    |
| 2      | English Grade 12 | 21                 | Geography<br>Social Sciences                  |
| 3      | English Grade 12 | 27                 | Sepedi<br>Technology                          |
| 4      | English Grade 12 | 81                 | Maths<br>Arts and Culture                     |
| 5      | English Grade 12 | 22                 | Life Orientation<br>Business Studies          |
| 6      | English Grade 12 | 50                 | Life Orientation<br>Life Sciences             |
| 7      | English Grade 12 | 21                 | English Grade 10                              |
| 8      | English Grade 12 | 40                 | Agricultural Sciences<br>Human Social Science |
| 9      | English Grade 12 | 48                 | Agricultural Sciences                         |
| 10     | English Grade 12 | 11                 | Arts and Culture<br>Agricultural Science      |
| 11     | English Grade 12 | 61                 | Business Studies                              |
| 12     | English Grade 12 | 72                 | Life Orientation                              |
| 13     | English Grade 12 | 52                 | English Grades 8 and 9<br>Arts and Culture    |

Table 5 above shows that apart from teaching English in the Grade 12 classes, all teachers but one, have to teach other subjects as well. It should be noted that only the number of learners taught in Grade 12, and not in other classes, is mentioned. The statistics provided indicate that apart from teaching 81 learners in Grade 12, the teacher at school number 4, for example, teaches Mathematics and Arts and Culture as additional subjects in other grades. The number of learners taught by all the Grade 12 English teachers in the Moroke Circuit is therefore more than what is recorded above.

The criterion used for the allocation of additional subjects could not be established but it is evident that some teachers teach subjects that are completely unrelated to their core subject in terms of content. The English teacher at school number 4 teaches up to 81 learners and is also responsible for teaching Mathematics in other grades with all the responsibilities that it entails. This contrasts with the teacher at school number 7 teaches English to 21 learners and teaches the same subject in Grade 10; although the difference is on the level of complexity of the same subject while his/her counterparts are faced with the planning of other different and unrelated subjects.

**4.2.1.6. Did you receive NCS training?**

**4.2.1.7. If the answer is yes, how long did the training take?**

Table 6

The table below reflects the answers to questions 6 and 7 in the questionnaire

| School Number | NCS Training Received |    | Duration |
|---------------|-----------------------|----|----------|
|               | Yes                   | No |          |
| 1             | Yes                   |    | 1 day    |
| 2             | Yes                   |    | 6 hours  |
| 3             | Yes                   |    | 3 days   |
| 4             | Yes                   |    | 5 days   |
| 5             | Yes                   |    | 7 days   |

|    |     |    |                     |
|----|-----|----|---------------------|
| 6  |     | No |                     |
| 7  | Yes |    | 2 days              |
| 8  | Yes |    | Irregular workshops |
| 9  |     | No |                     |
| 10 | Yes |    | 2 days              |
| 11 | Yes |    | 2 days              |
| 12 | Yes |    | 2 days              |
| 13 | Yes |    | 10 days             |

Table 6 indicates that 84.6 % of the teachers in the Moroke Circuit have received training in NCS ranging between 6 hours and 10 days. Practically, a teacher who receives training for 10 days stands a better chance of understanding the latest educational changes than the one who receives a two day workshop. Inequality in training may lead to the teachers' inability to understand process writing in the same way.

The researcher understands that some teachers attended English workshops but is uncertain if these workshops focused specifically on the process writing approach. For example, the teacher at school number 8 stated that he/she received irregular workshops. The response could mean different things because of its vagueness and cannot be clearly interpreted or explained satisfactorily. The researcher concludes that irregular workshops could mean a series of short training workshops that focused on the whole content and not specifically on process writing.

This research study will reveal whether the 84.6 % of the teachers that attended the NCS workshops are able to understand and implement process writing satisfactorily as compared to the 15.4% that did not attend the workshops. Evidence in the learners' portfolio will reveal whether there is a difference in implementation between teachers who attended the language workshop and those who did not.

#### 4.2.1.8. Do you have the following NCS Documents? (Please indicate by a tick)

Table 7

| Documents Availability                | School(s) | Frequency |     | Frequency |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----|-----------|
|                                       |           | Yes       | No  |           |
| 1.Subject Assessment Guidelines: 2007 | 1-13      | Nil       | 13  | 100       |
| 2.Subject Statement: 2008             | 1-13      | 13        | Nil | 100       |
| 3.Learning Programme Guidelines: 2008 | 1-13      | 13        | Nil | 100       |
| 4.Subject Assessment Guidelines: 2008 | 1-13      | 13        | Nil | 100       |

One of the duties of Curriculum Advisers (CAs) is to ensure that documents for their specific subjects are readily available to the teachers for effective curriculum implementation. Most schools are situated in isolated rural areas and dissemination of information and distribution of relevant documents is usually very poor. A dire shortage of CAs in the rural areas has led to teachers not receiving relevant materials on time.

In a discussion held with some of the teachers of English in the Moroke Circuit in February 2008, it emerged that teachers did not have all the necessary documents to assist them to implement process writing effectively, hence the importance of a documents audit in table 7. For example, the Subject Assessment Guidelines document of 2007 outlines the process writing approach explicitly but not one of the teachers (100%) in this circuit had it. The Subject Statement is a subject policy that governs the teaching of English as a subject. All other guidelines documents are based on the policy document so it serves as a manual. The Learning Programme Guidelines contains a section that guides teachers on the implementation of process writing though not as detailed as document number 1. All documents are important but for the purpose of the current research study emphasis is placed on documents number 1, 2 and 3.

#### 4.2.2. Section B: The process writing approach implementation

The results of the process writing approach implementation in the Grade 12 classes are shown in Tables 8 to 21. The thirteen schools in the Moroke Circuit were arranged numerically to protect the identity of the teachers. Teachers' responses to the questions that follow below were recorded verbatim. Four learners' portfolios from each of the 13 schools were sampled and used as evidence to substantiate the teachers' responses.

##### 4.2.2.1. Explain what you understand about the process writing approach

Table 8

| School No | Teacher's response   | Checklist for the writing process (Stages to be followed) | Learners' Portfolios (Evidence compared with the teacher's response) |           |           |           |
|-----------|--|---|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|
|           |  |   | Learner 1  | Learner 2 | Learner 3 | Learner 4 |
| 1         | The writing is done in steps: planning, drafting and writing | 1. Brainstorming  | √  | √         | √         | √         |
|           |  | 2. Research   | ×  | ×         | ×         | ×         |
|           |  | 3. First draft  | √  | ×         | √         | √         |
|           |  | 4. First draft review                                     | ×  | ×         | ×         | ×         |
|           |  | 5. Second draft   | ×  | ×         | ×         | ×         |
|           |  | 6. Final product  | √  | √         | √         | √         |

The teacher at school number 1 attended a day's workshop on NCS. He/she mentions that the process writing approach is done in steps/stages. As shown by Table 8, 75 % of the learners at this school had submitted copies of the first draft. Only one of the four learners did not submit the first draft, which suggests that the teacher might have taught them the brainstorming stage and perhaps advised them to include it in their work. However, there is no evidence of the research, the first draft review or of the second



draft stages in the learners' portfolios. The process writing approach had thus not been fully implemented at this school.

Table 9

| School No | Teacher's response   | Checklist            | Learner 1 | Learner 2 | Learner 3 | Learner 4 |
|-----------|--|----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 2         | Brainstorm topic<br>Learners to research<br>Mind mapping<br>Writing first draft<br>Final product | 1.Brainstorming      | ×         | ×         | √         | ×         |
|           |  | 2.Research           | ×         | ×         | ×         | ×         |
|           |  | 3.First draft        | √         | √         | √         | √         |
|           |  | 4.First draft review | ×         | ×         | ×         | ×         |
|           |  | 5.Second draft       | ×         | ×         | ×         | ×         |
|           |  | 6.Final product      | √         | √         | √         | √         |

The teacher at school number 2 attended a six hour workshop on NCS. He/she seems to understand of the process writing stages although he/she regards brainstorming and mind mapping as separate stages. Two stages: first draft review and second draft are not mentioned. The portfolios of the learners reveal little about the brainstorming exercise since only 25% of the learners' portfolios included a mind map. There is no evidence of the teacher having taught the other missing stages i.e. research, first draft review, and second draft - an indication that the school did not fully implement the process writing approach.

Table 10

| School No | Teacher's response  | Checklist            | Learner 1 | Learner 2 | Learner 3 | Learner 4 |
|-----------|---|----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 3         | It is learner centred. It activates them to participate in mind mapping | 1.Brainstorming      | x         | x         | x         | x         |
|           |   | 2.Research           | x         | x         | x         | x         |
|           |   | 3.First draft        | x         | x         | x         | x         |
|           |   | 4.First draft review | x         | x         | x         | x         |
|           |   | 5.Second draft       | x         | x         | x         | x         |
|           |   | 6.Final product      | √         | √         | √         | √         |

The response provided by the teacher at school number 3 is scanty as he/she mentions the mind mapping stage only. This is a teacher who attended a three day workshop on NCS. The response could mean that the training attended by this teacher was inadequate hence no mention is made of the other five stages of the process writing approach. The learners' portfolios reveal that only the final product was submitted to the teacher. The school still uses the traditional method - an indication that process writing is not yet implemented.

Table 11

| School No | Teacher's response  | Checklist            | Learner 1 | Learner 2 | Learner 3 | Learner 4 |
|-----------|---|----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 4         | It is collaboration between the teacher and the learners. | 1.Brainstorming      | √         | √         | √         | √         |
|           |   | 2.Research           | ×         | ×         | ×         | ×         |
|           |   | 3.First draft        | √         | √         | √         | √         |
|           |   | 4.First draft review | ×         | ×         | ×         | ×         |
|           |   | 5.Second draft       | ×         | ×         | ×         | ×         |
|           |   | 6.Final product      | √         | √         | √         | √         |

The response in table 11 is vague and as a result it is difficult to gauge the teacher's understanding of the process writing approach. The teacher mentions collaboration between the learners and the teacher but does not mention any of the stages of the writing process. The evidence in the learners' portfolios indicates that at least three stages were followed. It is therefore difficult to conclude whether the teacher knows all the stages to follow during process writing based on the response to the questionnaire. Evidence provided reveals that the process writing approach was not fully implemented at this school either even though the teacher has attended a five day training workshop on NCS. Only three stages of the process writing are shown as evidence by the learners.

Table 12

| School No | Teacher's response   | Checklist             | Learner 1 | Learner 2 | Learner 3 | Learner 4 |
|-----------|--|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 5         | Learners need to plan before submitting the final product to the teacher | 1. Brainstorming      | x         | x         | x         | x         |
|           |  | 2. Research           | x         | x         | x         | x         |
|           |  | 3. First draft        | √         | √         | √         | √         |
|           |  | 4. First draft review | x         | x         | x         | x         |
|           |  | 5. Second draft       | x         | x         | x         | x         |
|           |  | 6. Final product      | √         | √         | √         | √         |

The teacher at school 5 attended a seven day workshop on NCS but the response provided is inadequate. He/she does not mention other stages of process writing except planning. Ironically, the learners' portfolios do not show evidence of planning even though the teacher has mentioned it. The information provided could mean that the training that the teacher attended was either insufficient or he/she neglected to teach the learners all the stages of the process writing approach. At this school, process writing was not fully implemented either.

Table 13

| School No | Teacher's response  | Checklist            | Learner 1 | Learner 2 | Learner 3 | Learner 4 |
|-----------|---|----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 6         | It is the writing of an essay where the teacher and the learners are involved in the writing of the topic | 1.Brainstorming      | x         | x         | x         | x         |
|           |   | 2.Research           | x         | x         | x         | x         |
|           |   | 3.First draft        | x         | x         | x         | x         |
|           |   | 4.First draft review | x         | x         | x         | x         |
|           |   | 5.Second draft       | x         | x         | x         | x         |
|           |   | 6. Final product     | √         | √         | √         | √         |

The response in Table 13 reveals little understanding of the process writing approach by the teacher. It is difficult to assume ways that the teacher and the learners can be involved in the writing of the topic. Learners' evidence shows that process writing was not fully implemented because only the final product was found in the learners' portfolios. Other stages such as the brainstorming, research, the first draft, the first draft review, and second draft were left out. Worth considering is that the teacher in school number 6 did not attend any NCS workshop. It is possible that learners at this school still use the traditional approach in the writing of essays.

Table 14

| School No | Teacher's response   | Checklist             | Learner 1 | Learner 2 | Learner 3 | Learner 4 |
|-----------|--|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 7         | Learners are guided to write first draft to be reviewed by peers write the second draft and, through guidance produce the final product. | 1. Brainstorming      | √         | √         | √         | √         |
|           |  | 2. Research           | ×         | ×         | ×         | ×         |
|           |  | 3. First draft        | √         | √         | √         | √         |
|           |  | 4. First draft review | √         | √         | √         | √         |
|           |  | 5. Second draft       | ×         | ×         | ×         | ×         |
|           |  | 6. Final product      | √         | √         | √         | √         |

The teacher at school number 7 attended a two day workshop on NCS. In comparison with other teachers in other participating schools, this teacher seems to understand what the process writing approach is. The response given is incomplete but satisfactory and it correlates with learners' evidence. The teacher seems to understand and also attempts to implement stages of process writing although there is no evidence of two stages in learners' essays, i.e. research and second draft stages were not included. The implementation of process writing at this school showed some effort by both the teacher and the learners, yet the process writing approach was still not fully implemented. The researcher has noticed that learners in other participating schools did not have the research stage in their essays. This could be the result of the nature of the essay title: *I remember*.

Table 15

| School No | Teacher's response   | Checklist             | Learner 1 | Learner 2 | Learner 3 | Learner 4 |
|-----------|--|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 8         | Brainstorming planning, drafting and writing the final copy for final evaluation | 1. Brainstorming      | √         | √         | √         | √         |
|           |  | 2. Research           | ×         | ×         | ×         | ×         |
|           |  | 3. First draft        | ×         | ×         | ×         | ×         |
|           |  | 4. First draft review | ×         | ×         | ×         | ×         |
|           |  | 5. Second draft       | ×         | ×         | ×         | ×         |
|           |  | 6. Final product      | √         | √         | √         | √         |

At the above school, two stages: brainstorming and the final product are reflected but other stages, i.e. the research, first draft, review by peers and the second drafts are not included. The teacher's response shows some understanding of process writing. It is however, not good enough for the teacher to provide only the correct definition of process writing since learner's essays are used as a yardstick to measure his or her understanding and subsequent implementation of the process writing approach. The response must correlate with the evidence in the learners' essays. This school did not fully implement the process writing approach.

Table 16

| School No | Teacher's response  | Checklist            | Learner 1 | Learner 2 | Learner 3 | Learner 4 |
|-----------|---|----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 9         | Brainstorming of the topic<br>Drawing a mind map<br>Learners writing an essay by the mind map (taking an angle)<br>Final draft by the learners<br>Teacher assessing the final draft | 1.Brainstorming      | x         | x         | x         | x         |
|           |   | 2.Research           | x         | x         | x         | x         |
|           |   | 3.First draft        | x         | x         | x         | x         |
|           |   | 4.First draft review | x         | x         | x         | x         |
|           |   | 5.Second draft       | x         | x         | x         | x         |
|           |   | 6. Final product     | √         | √         | √         | √         |

The response of the teacher at school number 9 is reasonable because he/she managed to outline three of the six stages of process writing. There is no mention of the research, the first draft review and the second draft stages. The researcher acknowledges that the question in the questionnaire did not require the respondents to enunciate the stages of process writing but knowledge of the stages serves as evidence that teachers understand the technique. Evidence in the learners' portfolios at this school reveals the availability of the final product only and this is indicative of process writing not being fully implemented at this school as well. Worth noting is that this teacher did not attend any workshop on the NCS, yet was able to mention a few relevant stages even though learners' portfolios reveal the submission of the final product only.



Table 17

| School No | Teacher's response   | Checklist            | Learner 1 | Learner 2 | Learner 3 | Learner 4 |
|-----------|--|----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 10        | It's a progressive way of teaching learners writing and learning skills. | 1.Brainstorming      | √         | √         | √         | √         |
|           |  | 2.Research           | ×         | ×         | ×         | ×         |
|           |  | 3.First draft        | ×         | ×         | ×         | ×         |
|           |  | 4.First draft review | ×         | ×         | ×         | ×         |
|           |  | 5.Second draft       | ×         | ×         | ×         | ×         |
|           |  | 6. Final product     | √         | √         | √         | √         |

The response by the teacher at school number 10 is condensed but relevant. Evidence in the learners' portfolios reveals the availability of two instead of six stages, i.e. the brainstorming exercise and the final product. The learners have skipped the four stages and that might have negative implications for the learners such as an inability to write coherently. Learners are also denied a chance to improve on their essays. It could be that training was not adequate because the teacher attended a two day workshop. Process writing is not yet implemented at this school either.

Table 18

| School No | Teacher's response                         | Checklist            | Learner 1 | Learner 2 | Learner 3 | Learner 4 |
|-----------|--|----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 11        | It helps learners with the writing skills. | 1.Brainstorming      | √         | √         | √         | √         |
|           |  | 2.Research           | ×         | ×         | ×         | ×         |
|           |  | 3.First draft        | ×         | ×         | ×         | ×         |
|           |  | 4.First draft review | ×         | ×         | ×         | ×         |
|           |  | 5.Second draft       | ×         | ×         | ×         | ×         |
|           |  | 6. Final product     | √         | √         | √         | √         |

The response in the above table does not indicate whether or not the teacher understands the process writing approach, but the learners' portfolios indicate brainstorming and the final product stages. The teacher at school number 11 attended a two day workshop but the response is not very clear and there is little evidence in the learner's portfolio to support his/her understanding of the process writing approach.

Table 19

| School No | Teacher's response   | Checklist            | Learner 1 | Learner 2 | Learner 3 | Learner 4 |
|-----------|--|----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 12        | Learners are exposed to writing essays. One essay builds on another. | 1.Brainstorming      | √         | √         | √         | √         |
|           |  | 2.Research           | ×         | ×         | ×         | ×         |
|           |  | 3.First draft        | √         | √         | √         | √         |
|           |  | 4.First draft review | ×         | ×         | ×         | ×         |
|           |  | 5.Second draft       | ×         | ×         | ×         | ×         |
|           |  | 6.Final product      | √         | √         | √         | √         |

The teacher's response "One essay builds on another" could mean different things. He/she probably means that each version of the same essay builds on the previous one. Nevertheless, it is safe to assume that the teacher at school number 12 understands the process writing approach because the learners were able to submit three of the six stages. The process writing approach was not fully implemented at this school.

Table 20

| School No | Teacher's response   | Checklist             | Learner 1 | Learner 2 | Learner 3 | Learner 4 |
|-----------|--|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 13        | Planning is essential before any piece of writing is done. Learners should plan roughly, proofread and edit before writing the final product | 1. Brainstorming      | √         | √         | √         | √         |
|           |  | 2. Research           | ×         | ×         | ×         | ×         |
|           |  | 3. First draft        | √         | √         | √         | √         |
|           |  | 4. First draft review | ×         | ×         | ×         | ×         |
|           |  | 5. Second draft       | ×         | ×         | ×         | ×         |
|           |  | 6. Final product      | √         | √         | √         | √         |

The teacher at school number 13 attended a ten day workshop on NCS. It is expected that learners at this school should perform better than other schools because of the duration of the training the teacher has received. The response provided in Table 20 reveals that the teacher school understands the process writing approach but does not implement it in class. This teacher could be one of those who are still unwilling to implement changes as observed by Mankga (2004:2). The learners' portfolios show that only three stages were implemented. Sometimes learners' unwillingness or inability to conduct research and refusal to write more than one draft can impact negatively on the implementation of process writing.

All in all, the assumption made by the researcher that experienced and appropriately qualified teachers can easily interpret documents and implement the process writing approach may not be accurate. The results show that none of the 13 teachers in all the 13 schools fully implements process writing as expected by the DoE. In their responses

some teachers gave the impression that they practised the writing process approach but evidence in the learners' portfolios revealed that some stages were skipped.

The researcher understands that while it is sometimes possible to omit the research stage because of the nature of the essay topic, other stages have to be implemented in order for a piece of work to be classified under the process writing approach. The essay heading: *I remember*, needed minimal or no research at all because it is narrative and that could have contributed to the absence of stage 2 in all the essays.

Table 21

| <b>Results</b>             | <b>No of schools</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|----------------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Good; (Six stages)         | nil                  | nil            |
| Fair: (Three stages)       | 6                    | 46             |
| Poor: (Two or less stages) | 7                    | 54             |
| Total                      | 13                   | 100            |

Table 21 attempts to give an overall representation of the degree of implementation of the process writing approach. Schools are categorised as good, fair and poor. As indicated above, none of the schools in the Moroke Circuit fully implements the process writing approach although in some schools evidence shows a fair attempt in implementation. Over 50% of the teachers performed poorly because they only covered two or fewer stages of the process writing approach. This confirms that the majorities of teachers still apply the traditional method in teaching essays and thus do not teach essays as outlined in the NCS documents in their possession. Learners are denied the opportunity to learn new ways of writing essays which will eventually put them at a disadvantage if they decide to pursue their studies in English at universities. The use of process writing may assist them to improve their writing of essays and other texts only if teachers are trained to apply the process correctly.

Learners in the Moroke Circuit are deprived of the opportunity to learn and grow academically from their own mistakes, to learn to think critically and work collaboratively with their peers and teachers.

Tshotsho's (2006) findings reveal the difficulty of teaching first year students at university level due to low language writing proficiency which could be the result of product based essays at high schools such as the ones in the Moroke Circuit.

#### 4.2.2.2. Do you apply process writing in your class? Please elaborate

Table 22

| School No | Yes | No | Elaboration by the teachers   |
|-----------|-----|----|---|
| 1         |     | No | Process writing was disclosed to me in August 2008. All this time it was not known to me.                           |
| 2         |     | No | Clarity on the process writing approach was recently given and explained to me in 2008.                             |
| 3         | Yes |    | I found it stimulating. Our learners today know how to approach any topic.  |
| 4         |     | No | During training, I didn't fully understand.   |
| 5         |     | No | It is difficult.  |
| 6         | Yes |    | When writing an essay, learners follow stages i.e. planning and editing until they write a final product.           |
| 7         | Yes |    | Learners follow the three stages of writing and I assess the final stage.   |
| 8         | Yes |    | We need to have an interesting topic. Think on it. Gather more information on it/research. Teacher guidance needed. |
| 9         | Yes |    | I try to follow the steps but sometimes I find it difficult to follow the steps because of time constraints.        |
| 10        | Yes |    | The English subject adviser gave us direction and we now understand how to approach it.                             |
| 11        | Yes |    | Try to empower learners writing skills relating to essays, reporting etc.   |

|    |     |    |  |
|----|-----|----|--|
| 12 |     | No | Due to large class size, it is difficult to apply the process writing approach.  |
| 13 | Yes |    | I give learners a variety of essays for them to choose the one they are comfortable with. They brainstorm and create mind maps; they write rough drafts, proof read and edit before writing the final draft. |

As shown in Table 22 above, 61.5% of the respondents state that they apply process writing as opposed to the 38.5% of the group. Teachers at schools 3 and 11 maintain that they apply the process writing approach in their Grade 12 classes but learners' portfolios reveal that only the final product was submitted. There is no evidence of the implementation of the 5 stages of process writing, namely, brainstorming, research, first draft, review of first draft and second draft. The teacher at school number 3 states that he/she finds the use of process writing stimulating but his/her learners' portfolios contradict his/her statement. This suggests that the teacher may not understand and implement the process writing approach in the classroom as prescribed. Furthermore, the teacher attended a three day workshop; perhaps the training was not informative enough to assist him/her to master process writing. The Grade 12 learners at this school are deprived of an opportunity to learn and apply process writing; unfortunately they may not have another chance to learn this technique since this is their final year at high school.

The teacher at school number 11 attended a two day workshop but the explanation given implies that he/she does not understand the process writing approach although he/she claims to apply it in class. It could be that he/she does not understand the concept. Teachers at schools 1, 2, 4 and 5 do not apply the process writing approach in their classes because they mention among other things, lack of understanding and insufficient training. This confirms that teachers' experience and their academic achievements do not guarantee the effective use of new methods of teaching. Teacher at school number 12 cites the size of the class as a hindrance to the successful implementation of process writing. Applying a new teaching method in addition to

explaining it in English, the language the learners have not mastered may prove difficult to the teachers. This could be another reason for non-implementation.

For the remaining number of teachers, there is no evidence of effective implementation as they have not proven through their learners' portfolios that they understand and implement process writing.

#### 4.2.2.3. When was the first time you were exposed to the process writing approach?

Table 23

| School No | Teachers' responses  |
|-----------|--|
| 1         | August 2008.   |
| 2         | August 2008.   |
| 3         | In earnest, this year in 2008 during NCS English FAL Workshop.   |
| 4         | 2006 during training.  |
| 5         | July 2008.   |
| 6         | When I read the NCS material and interacted with our subject adviser in 2008.  |
| 7         | February 2008  |
| 8         | From a long time back though in a different form compared to now.  |
| 9         | At the workshop that was held somewhere on the 31 July 2008.   |
| 10        | This year 2008.  |
| 11        | 2007.  |
| 12        | No exposure.   |
| 13        | Consciously so, on the 31 July 2008 but it has always been our modus operandi though before this training we didn't give it as much attention. |

Table 23 indicates that 69% of the teachers in the Moroke Circuit were exposed to the process writing approach for the first time in 2008. This may suggest that they do not



understand the process well yet, hence the poor application in the classroom. They probably need to be exposed to the method more than once for them to understand it. For instance, if some teachers were first exposed to the process writing approach in August 2008, chances are high that learners were still using the traditional method to write essays. The challenge is that learners had only a single opportunity to learn the skill of writing essays using the process writing approach, since Grade 12 is the exit grade at high school.

It is perhaps unrealistic to expect teachers to master the process writing approach when the majority of them have received inadequate training. If teachers fail to master or understand process writing themselves, it would be unrealistic to expect successful implementation in class.

**4.2.2.4. When was the first time you actually implemented this approach in your English class?**

Table 24

| <b>School No</b> | <b>Teachers' responses</b>                                     |
|------------------|--|
| 1                | In October 2008.   |
| 2                | In August for preparatory examination.                         |
| 3                | I implemented it after attending English FAL workshop.         |
| 4                | This year (2008) around September.                             |
| 5                | July 2008.   |
| 6                | I started this when I was acquainted with the approach.        |
| 7                | February 2008.   |
| 8                | As per the current expectation. From the 2 <sup>nd</sup> term. |
| 9                | Immediately after the workshop.                                |
| 10               | This year 2008.  |
| 11               | 2008.  |

|    |                           |
|----|---------------------------|
| 12 | This year, 2008 in March. |
| 13 | In August 2008.           |

Table 24 reveals that 92% of the teachers started implementing the process writing approach in their classrooms in 2008. The impression created was that the majority of these teachers did not receive adequate training and yet they are expected to produce good results. If that is the case then it may be unfair to expect teachers to implement the process writing approach successfully after one training session, so their progress may need to be evaluated regularly to ensure understanding. It is also possible that some teachers could not have understood what they were being taught in spite of the good quality of the presentations and repetition of the workshops because of their low competence in English.

**4.2.2.5. How many essays have you managed to deal with using the process writing approach? What were the topics and how long did each take to complete?**

Table 25

| School No | Number of essays given by the teacher | Topics  | Duration    |
|-----------|---------------------------------------|---|-------------|
| 1         | 1                                     | I remember  | No Response |
| 2         | 1                                     | I remember  | No response |
| 3         | 1                                     | I remember  | No response |
| 4         | 1                                     | Lessons I have learnt from my grandmother<br>I remember                                 | No response |
| 5         | 1                                     | I remember  | No response |
| 6         | 4                                     | Things I would like to change in my life<br>Today's youth expect the future to be given | 2 days      |

|    |   |   |  |
|----|---|---|--|
|    |   | to them, They do not want to make an effort to earn it<br>How who you are can help you choose a future path that will be the most rewarding<br>I remember | 2 and a half days<br>3 and a half days<br>2 days |
| 7  | 4 | Picture Strip<br>If I were the president of the RSA ...<br>I remember   | No response                                      |
| 8  | 1 | I remember  | No response                                      |
| 9  | 2 | HIV/AIDS is a killer<br>I remember  | No response                                      |
| 10 | 2 | Drug Abuse and its impact<br>I remember   | 4 months   |
| 11 | 2 | I missed a good opportunity<br>I remember   | No response                                      |
| 12 | 4 | Make hay while the sun shines<br>I remember   | No response                                      |
| 13 | 4 | My idea of a good life<br>Conflict should be resolved through violence<br>Corporal punishment should be brought back<br>I remember                        | No response                                      |

Different essay titles including “I remember” were given to learners in different schools but “*I remember*” was written by all learners. The researcher opted for this essay because it was given as a common essay in all schools and to avoid bias. The essay is a narrative essay type that all learners could understand and relate to. The teacher at school number 11 claims it took him/her 4 months to complete each essay. He/she teaches a manageable class size of 11 learners or perhaps she/he did not understand

the process writing approach. The teacher with 81 learners at school number 4 avoided giving a response to the part of the question on duration. The majority of teachers (69%) did not respond to the last part of the question. Perhaps they did not understand what “duration” means. The researcher acknowledges that perhaps there was a weakness in the question or the question was not clearly worded.

### Section C: Feelings, opinions and attitudes

#### 4.2.3.1. Do you feel confident to apply the process writing approach as prescribed by the National Curriculum Statement? Please elaborate

Table 26

| School | Teacher’s response |   |
|--------|--------------------|---|
| 1      | Yes                | I like the NCS because the active person is the learner.  |
| 2      | Yes                | Learners are obliged to be perpetually engaged.   |
| 3      | Yes                | With the help of the workshop our curriculum advisors organised I am confident.                           |
| 4      | No                 | I am not sure about it.   |
| 5      | No                 | I think as time goes on, I will feel confident.   |
| 6      | Yes                | I found it to be interesting and encouraging.   |
| 7      | Yes                | Learners are seen as thinking beings than tabula rasas.   |
| 8      | Yes                | Well informed about the importance of adhering the NCS documents (guides).                                |
| 9      | No                 | I’m still learning and I encounter some problems.   |
| 10     | Yes                | The approach is an eye-opener that requires proof for every item dealt with.                              |
| 11     | Yes                | It is a way of effectively involving learners in the lessons.   |
| 12     | No                 | Due to inadequate training, overcrowded classrooms, lack of resources, it proves cumbersome to apply NCS. |

|    |     |   |
|----|-----|---|
| 13 | Yes | I am positive that with constant support and motivation, I should be able to implement NCS in all my classes. |
|----|-----|---|

The above table indicates that 69 % of the participants are confident that they can teach the process writing approach in class but evidence in the learners' portfolios reveals the opposite. The information in table 26 gives the impression that the majority of teachers are in favour of the process writing approach although they may need more training because they are still unsure of its application. The other four teachers (31%) admit that they are not confident yet. The teacher at school number 12 cites inadequate training, overcrowded classrooms and lack of resources as major challenges.

**4.2.3.2. Do you as a teacher find it easy or difficult to implement the process writing approach? Please Elaborate**

Table 27

| School No | Teachers' response |   |
|-----------|--------------------|---|
| 1         | Difficult          | Poor vocabulary by learners - they find it difficult to check their fellow learners' work.  |
| 2         | Difficult          | It becomes easier with practice.  |
| 3         | Easy               | It makes essay writing so easy even to the learners.  |
| 4         | Difficult          | Explaining to the learners who do not have that knowledge or idea about NCS and the teacher also is not sure about what he/she is teaching. |
| 5         | Difficult          | Due to geographical position of our school in the rural area with lack of resources.  |
| 6         | Easy               | Learners can evaluate their own writing. It encourages team work between both learners and their educator.                                  |
| 7         | Easy               | It is fantastic, good and exposes learners to a real situation through involvement with peers.  |

|    |           |   |
|----|-----------|---|
| 8  | Easy      | Only if not planned for but with a clear assessment programme. It is very easy.   |
| 9  | Difficult | The steps are easy to follow but because of the number of learners I am teaching, I find it difficult to apply these steps. |
| 10 | Easy      | It is easy after it has been explained by the facilitator.  |
| 11 | Easy      | Initial steps, if mastered, will enable one to deal with any given topic effectively.                                       |
| 12 | Difficult | Because one needs a lot of time and resources. It calls for individual attention, which is difficult in big classes.        |
| 13 | Easy      | It is easy but requires commitment and constant effort by both the learners and the teacher.                                |

Table 27 shows that 46% of the teachers in the Moroke Circuit find it difficult to apply process writing. The reasons cited are inter alia: overcrowding in the classroom, lack of resources, time, and learners' poor vocabulary. These challenges are valid but the policy requires that essays should be taught the NCS way. It is important that the DoE trains teachers sufficiently before they are expected to implement curriculum changes. Again, learners need sufficient preparation to assist them to understand their learning processes.

#### 4.2.3.3. Do you think the process writing approach improves writing?

Table 28

| Schools | Response | No. of respondents | Percentage |
|---------|----------|--------------------|------------|
| 1-13    | Yes      | 13                 | 100        |
| 1-13    | No       | 0                  | 0          |
| Total   |          | 13                 | 100        |

All 13 teachers agree that the process writing approach improves writing. Worth noting is the fact that teachers who have not attended any workshop and those whose learner portfolios have not shown evidence of process writing, agree that the approach improves writing. It is hard to ascertain if opinions expressed by teachers are genuine or that their response is out of fear of exposure or they respond positively in order to save face. Only the learners' portfolios can reveal the reality of the situation in the Grade 12 classes.

#### 4.2.3.4. Do you think this technique will assist learners to write coherent texts?

**Explain briefly**

Table 29

| School No | Teachers' responses |  |
|-----------|---------------------|--|
| 1         | Yes                 | The proof reading process helps to minimize mistakes committed.  |
| 2         | Yes                 | Learners tend to receive prepared work from learners.  |
| 3         | Yes                 | Mind mapping makes it easier for our learners to write coherently.   |
| 4         | Yes                 | They will enjoy writing because they will be using this simple method.   |
| 5         | Yes                 | It is a good approach but needs a lot of practice.   |
| 6         | Yes                 | Learners can easily identify their mistakes and correct them.  |
| 7         | Yes                 | Peer involvement has an effect if well directed.   |
| 8         | Yes                 | Writing as a process becomes very easy and interesting if planned first.   |
| 9         | Yes                 | Because learners are guided throughout the writing of the essay. They learn from their mistakes and rectify them before they submit their final draft. |
| 10        | Yes                 | Learners understand what they are writing about and have a wide choice of different topics.  |

|    |     |   |
|----|-----|---|
| 11 | Yes | Learners begin to realize the importance of planning synthesising and analysing.  |
| 12 | Yes | Building topics on ideas on one another as a continuum helps learners to be conscious of the need for coherence in their thinking and everyday lives. |
| 13 | Yes | I believe that with regular exercises in process writing learners should be able to achieve basic knowledge of essay writing.                         |

Only one teacher in school 12 appear to understand what is meant by “coherence” but it is encouraging to note that 100% of the respondents think that the process writing approach will assist learners to master the art of writing coherent essays. If teachers display some enthusiasm and commit themselves to teaching process writing, they might welcome extra training as this will benefit learners.

#### 4.2.3.5. What are the challenges you have experienced in teaching essays to rural Grade 12 learners?

Table 30

| School No | Teachers' responses  |
|-----------|--|
| 1         | Lack of vocabulary, inferiority complex for expressing themselves in English, poor background from primary.          |
| 2         | Little command of the language and exposure.   |
| 3         | The challenge is that some find essays difficult because some require exposure.                                      |
| 4         | Learners come to secondary not knowing how to make English sentences.  |
| 5         | Lack of exposure in English.   |
| 6         | Learners do not have enough exposure to reading materials. Sometimes learners lack vocabulary to express themselves. |



|    |   |
|----|---|
| 7  | Lack of motivation, scope of knowledge due to lack of resources. Lack of time due to household chores e.g. collecting wood and water.   |
| 8  | Learners write easy if the heading interests them.  |
| 9  | They are from disadvantaged areas. They do not have resources such as newspapers or TV. They lack vocabulary.   |
| 10 | Learners are still behind with city life e.g. some do not know what a train is.   |
| 11 | Second language proficiency presents a major challenge to them.   |
| 12 | Learners have little exposure to what the topics demand. Lack of experiential knowledge retard learners in their writing, big class sizes, little access to information e.g. newspapers, internet, libraries. |
| 13 | Due to learners encountering English only in class, they struggle with structure (English) e.g. concord, tense, speech, voices etc.   |

Table 30 indicates that 100% of teachers cite low language proficiency in English as one of the main challenges to the learners. This challenge will make it difficult for learners to review first drafts on their own. The researcher is uncertain about the authenticity of the response given by the teacher at school 10. It is not easy to believe that in this era of technological advancement any child still does not know what a train looks like. If the response is true then learners in the rural schools without libraries are at a disadvantage.

#### 4.2.3.6. Do you have any suggestions that can help/encourage learners to write more?

Table 31

| School No | Teachers' responses   |
|-----------|---|
| 1         | Encourage them to communicate in English. Arrange debates – to give incentive. Join competitions mostly arranged with other schools so that |

|    |  |
|----|--|
|    | they can express themselves in front of strangers.   |
| 2  | Coerced to read a quota of literature per year, any genre.   |
| 3  | They are to read newspapers, magazines and listen to news, especially headline news.   |
| 4  | Encourage the primary teachers to teach learners this English language and we secondary teachers have more time to be trained on this NCS.   |
| 5  | Learners need a supportive teacher.  |
| 6  | After brainstorming, let learners organize their ideas into paragraphs, mind mapping during brainstorming is helpful.  |
| 7  | I think it will be advisable to open a room for learners to write topics of their own choice. Group products can also have a positive impact.  |
| 8  | They must be made to write on something that challenges them and the topics should suit their age interest.  |
| 9  | They must read a lot and try to write everything they come across.   |
| 10 | Learners must be given more written work every day if possible.  |
| 11 | Learners should be given tasks to summarise and present such quarterly.  |
| 12 | Learners are exposed to established writers.<br>Learners and teachers form reading and writing clubs.<br>Teachers partner with learners in writing manuscripts for possible publication. |
| 13 | Learners should be encouraged to express themselves more by doing topics on their daily life experiences.  |

Responses by the teachers at schools 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 11 and 12 do not relate to writing specifically but this could be relevant to research. One would expect teachers to suggest more writing practice in the form of letters and summaries in their responses. Instead, they overemphasise the reading mode and ignore the benefit of writing practice. Nevertheless, if learners do more background reading, they will have more ideas to express themselves in writing.

The researcher has noted that although the teachers' responses are positive, only one teacher at school number 12 attempts to answer the question directly. He/she explains that teachers should partner with learners during the process of writing. The possible publication of manuscripts seems a bit ambitious considering the level of learners' competence in English. Other teachers still expect learners to do the bulk of the work less guidance. Not much is said about how teacher involvement can improve the process writing implementation in the classroom. This suggests that the majority of teachers need guidance to assist them to understand that process writing is a collaborative effort.

### **4.3. Conclusion**

The majority of teacher responses do not correlate with the actual implementation of process writing and many schools have left out the research stage for reasons outlined earlier. Learners need not conduct in-depth research if the topic is personal because the information they need may be part of their knowledge.

Teachers of English in the Moroke Circuit are in possession of relevant documents on process writing but they still do not follow the six stages of process writing as prescribed. According to Haneda and Wells (2000), teachers should treat learners' texts as improvable objects and the best way to do so is to follow the stages of the process writing approach. If teachers in the Moroke Circuit maintain that they apply the process writing approach during essay writing activities yet omit some of the stages, can they claim to have effectively implemented the process writing approach?

From the study the researcher concludes that there are three fundamental reasons that could have resulted in the non-implementation of the process writing approach in Grade 12 classes.

#### **4.3.1. Inadequate training workshops for teachers**

During a Curriculum Management workshop organised for Curriculum Advisers by the DoE in partnership with Khanyisa School Transformation programme in 2008, Gibbons, an Education Consultant, pointed out that research and experience have shown that adults learn better when they are involved in activities (experiential). He further stated that their engagement in learning activities is more powerful in leading to changes in behaviour and practice than lectures, talks and presentations. The researcher believes that teachers, like adults, should be adequately trained to implement the process writing approach by first practising it during training workshops before actual implementation in class. The availability of relevant materials seldom guarantees understanding and effective implementation of the contents.

Some teachers have attended a five day workshop but evidence in learners' portfolios was not satisfactory - another indication that a five day workshop does not guarantee better understanding. Perhaps a course over a few weeks may yield the desired results of teachers implementing what they have learnt.

#### **4.3.2. Lack of understanding of the content**

The results of this research study shows that teachers omit some stages of the approach which are important in process writing. According to Caudrey (1995), teachers have strongly differing ideas on what process writing is. While this could be true in other countries, it may not be true for teachers in South Africa because it is assumed that they are in possession of the necessary documents to guide them. One would therefore expect the teachers in the Moroke Circuit to apply process writing in their English classes successfully because they are equipped with the necessary documents.

### **4.3.3. Work load**

Teaching a large class is exhausting but having to deal with individual learners in a class of 81 learners is a bigger challenge. While many teachers may embrace the new curriculum, they may be discouraged by the overcrowded classes.

Stoffels (2006:14) points out that one of the teachers he interviewed complained that apart from being overworked, they “are sitting with plus or minus 40 learners, and to reflect on each and every one in that way, I can say it is almost impossible”. This teacher complained about teaching approximately 40 learners but in the Muroke Circuit there are teachers who face up to 81 learners to teach. This disparity in class sizes needs to be addressed by the DoE for the effective implementation of curriculum.

English teachers in rural schools need more help than their urban counterparts especially if they have to teach other subjects and classes as well. Low proficiency in English and learners’ under-preparedness exacerbate the problem of teaching the process writing approach in the rural schools. The results of hurried implementation and/or poor training provisions can impact negatively on the effective application of process writing.

This chapter confirms that English teachers in Grade 12 in the Muroke Circuit do not understand the process writing approach hence it is not fully implemented in all the schools. It also confirms that teachers in the Muroke Circuit do not understand the process writing approach and they do not implement it as envisaged by the NCS.

The next chapter will conclude the study by establishing whether objectives have been reached and conclusions will be drawn followed by recommendations.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Summary of the study, conclusions and recommendations**

#### **5.1. Introduction**

The previous chapter dealt with the analysis and interpretation of the data collected. This chapter concludes the study by summarising the investigation and establishing whether the objectives have been met. Conclusions regarding the findings are drawn and recommendations are made.

#### **5.2. Summary of the study**

The study investigates whether the process writing approach is being implemented in the writing of English essays as prescribed by the NCS. The single essay draft (product based) submission and the perpetual low performance in English essays writing by the Grade 12 learners in the Moroke Circuit prompted this study. Evidence of incoherent and sometimes irrelevant essays which learners continued to write in Grade 12 even after curriculum changes, led to this investigation. Therefore the causes for learners' failure to apply process writing and to write coherent essays needed to be established. It was imperative to establish whether this failure was the result of teachers not applying the correct teaching method as prescribed or learners' incompetence in the foreign language. Most importantly it was necessary to verify teachers' understanding of the new curriculum before conclusions could be drawn.

The aim of this study was to assess the implementation of the process writing practice in essay writing instruction as advocated by the NCS for the rural Grade 12 learners in the Moroke Circuit schools in Limpopo Province.

The process writing approach is a writing strategy comprising multiple drafts such as self assessment, peer assessment and teacher feedback. It is a six stage writing activity that encourages collaboration between teachers and learners before the assessment of the final product. According to the NCS, teachers are expected to implement the process writing approach in teaching written texts but this study focuses on essay writing.

The following research questions were formulated:

- Is the implementation of the process writing approach practised in the writing of English essays as prescribed by the NCS in the Grade 12 classes?
- Do teachers understand the NCS expectations regarding the writing of English essays using the process writing approach?

The study reviewed literature on writing as a process in general and in particular process writing as prescribed by the NCS. It should be noted that the process writing approach is a relatively new phenomenon in the South African language classrooms including English FAL. In spite of the newness of the curriculum, teachers are expected to implement process writing as a matter of policy.

The literature review also focused on the role of teachers as facilitators of writing as a process in rural Grade 12 English classes. The NCS envisages a dynamic teacher who can successfully treat an essay as an object that can be improved. This practice could assist the learner to achieve optimum results in the classroom and beyond. The greatest challenge faced by the teacher of English in rural classes is lack of learner exposure to the language outside the classroom. Teachers need to teach learners to use English as well as to ensure that these learners acquire the appropriate process writing skills. To fulfil the role of good facilitators in rural setting teachers need adequate training on process writing and relevant skills to deal with under-privileged rural learners in terms of target language exposure.

DoE Curriculum Advisers should ensure that teachers receive continuous in- depth training on process writing. The success of the training workshops will be judged by improved learner performance in essay writing. Learners would probably write coherent English essays and the overall circuit results would improve.

Finally, strategies to encourage learners of English to use the process writing in the writing of essays were outlined. One of them is to encourage learners to write every day but not all the tasks they write should be assessed by the teacher. Writing every day for academic purposes could alleviate learners' fear of writing in the target language.

Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies formed part of the research design. The researcher's voice is included in the research process thus contributing to the 'reality' of process writing in the English FAL classroom. Instruments for data collection included a three section questionnaire that was completed by the Grade 12 English teachers. One essay was extracted from each of the participating learner portfolios and was used to substantiate teachers' responses to the questionnaire.

### **5.2.1. Implementation of the process writing approach**

While it is important that teachers implement process writing in their classrooms, it is equally important that they understand ways and methods of doing so. It was thus imperative that their understanding of the process writing approach be assessed.

Findings revealed that of the 13 teachers who participated in the research project, none fully implemented process writing as prescribed by the NCS. Learners' essays did not show evidence thereof. Although 61.5% of these teachers claimed that they applied the process approach in their classrooms, the checklist used showed that process writing was implemented in many different ways although not fully so, because in some cases, certain stages were left out.



### **5.2.2. Is process writing understood by teachers?**

Teachers of English in the Moroke Circuit who participated in the current study do not understand the process writing approach, because evidence provided indicated that none of these teachers was able wholly implement this practice. Some teachers acknowledged that they did not understand the process writing approach in spite of the short training workshops they have attended.

### **5.3. Conclusion**

All the 13 schools left out the research stage of the writing process approach. Five schools did not make use of mind maps and this could be evidence that there is very little preparation before the writing of essays. Although some schools seem to perform better than others, the researcher concludes that many teachers of English in the Moroke Circuit do not understand the process writing approach as envisaged by the NCS because they do not implement it as prescribed. Thus, the objectives of the study have been met.

Each learner needs individual attention in the application of the process writing approach as Myles (2002:15) points out that without individual attention and sufficient feedback on errors, improvement will not take place. If learners in the Moroke Circuit are deprived an opportunity to learn to write essays using process writing, they may fail to learn to work collaboratively with other stakeholders.

Lack of any indication that process writing is practised in the Moroke Circuit schools implies that learners are deprived opportunities to write well and perhaps teachers are not certain of the NCS expectations. Teachers need to be adequately trained otherwise learners are likely to continue writing incoherent texts beyond Grade 12 because they were not given the chance to improve their writing.

#### 5.4. Recommendations

The recommendations or suggestions below are directed to the stakeholders in the Department of Education especially the curriculum directorate. They are based on the findings of this study, and might be of assistance in the Moroke Circuit and other circuits as well.

- Teachers of English in Grade 12 classes in the Moroke Circuit should be made to understand that writing is a process. Adequate training will assist them to understand the NCS expectations before it is implemented. In particular, the teachers need extended training sessions for its sustainable implementation. Hasty implementation of curriculum changes often hinders the successful execution of good curriculum plans.
- The National Curriculum Statement advocates process writing in the writing of essays. It is imperative that teachers be trained to implement the stages of process writing in order to have a common understanding of the procedure so that they impart the same knowledge to the Grade 12 learners of English.
- Teachers should upon training be assisted to design simple checklists for the learners to be used by their peers to encourage peer feedback. Although peer feedback is important, it should never replace teacher feedback.
- Teachers' role as facilitators of the process writing approach can only be successful if policy planners could organise a series of content-based training workshops before actual implementation in the classrooms.
- Curriculum Advisers should conduct content-based workshops to assist teachers to understand the process writing approach. Providing teachers with documents and expecting them to read the documents after hours may not yield the expected results because some teachers commute long distances daily.

- Schools should, with the help of CAs, organise open days for exhibition of essay writing by learners and teachers. This could be done at school, circuit, district, provincial and national levels.
- Essay writing competitions that encourage process writing should be organised by all stakeholders and incentives such as books should be awarded to learners for excellence in writing
- There is a need for teachers of English to form a partnership with learners in the rural schools through joint writing projects. Learners can start by writing journal entries on a daily basis until they internalise writing.
- The DoE should, on a regular basis review the implementation of the new curriculum. Ongoing training programmes for the teachers, especially those teaching the rural learners whose command of and exposure to the English language is limited, should be a priority.
- The DoE should provide functional libraries to all schools, to encourage the rural learner to read books as a strategy to expose learners to the target language. This might assist learners to write coherent essays in the target language.
- There is a need for further research regarding the relevance of process writing and its implementation in rural schools in other circuits as well as the Limpopo Province as a whole.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Letter to the Circuit Manager

P O Box 1071  
Polokwane  
0700  
10 September 2008

The Circuit Manager  
Moroke Circuit  
Private Bag X1305  
Atok  
0749

Dear Sir

#### **APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH PROJECT IN THE MOROKE CIRCUIT**

I am writing to request permission to conduct a research project with the Grade 12 English teachers on the following topic

#### **THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROCESS APPROACH TO THE WRITING OF ENGLISH ESSAYS IN RURAL GRADE 12 CLASSES IN THE MOROKE CIRCUIT**

The research study seeks to assess whether teachers understand and implement the process writing approach as prescribed by the National curriculum Statement (NCS).

It is hoped that the results will be of practical help to the Moroke Circuit.

Yours faithfully

.....  
Dikgari N.M



**Appendix B: Letter to the teachers**

P O Box 1071  
Polokwane  
0700  
22 September 2008

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

Dear Sir/Madam

**REQUEST FOR VOLUNTARY INVOLVEMENT IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT:  
MOROKE CIRCUIT**

I would like to invite you to voluntarily participate in the research project I intend to conduct in the Moroke Circuit. The purpose of this study is to establish whether the process writing approach to the writing of English essays is being effectively implemented in the rural Grade 12 classes in the Moroke Circuit.

Kindly complete the enclosed questionnaire regarding the implementation of the process writing approach and return it, together with the portfolios not later than the 30 October 2008. Please note that the Grade12 learners' English portfolios form part of the project and they should be submitted together with a completed questionnaire.

Anonymity and confidentiality are guaranteed.

Yours faithfully

.....  
Dikgari N.M

## Appendix C: Questionnaire

I am Ngokoana Dikgari, Curriculum Adviser for English in the Moroke Circuit. I am a Masters student at the University of Limpopo. You are kindly requested to complete the questionnaire below for my research study.

- The questionnaire has been designed to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of the writing process approach as prescribed by the National Curriculum Statement (NCS).
- As an English teacher, you are requested to complete the questionnaire as honestly as possible. Your feedback is important as it might be beneficial to the Moroke Circuit.
- Please tick, circle or write where applicable.

Please be assured that all information provided will be treated in the strictest confidence.

**SECTION A: General Background Questions**

1. Gender

- a) Female
- b) Male

2. Highest Educational Qualification

.....

3. Teaching Experience in Grade 12 English FAL class

- 0-5 years
- 5-10 years
- 10-15 years
- 15 years and beyond

4. How many learners do you teach in your Grade12 English FAL class?

.....

5. What other subject/learning areas are you responsible for in your school?

.....

.....

6. Did you receive the NCS training?

- a) Yes
- b) No

7. If the answer is yes, how long did the training take?

.....

8. Do you have the following NCS documents? (Please indicate by a tick)

| NCS Document                        | Yes | No |
|-------------------------------------|-----|----|
| Subject Statement: 2003             |     |    |
| Subject Assessment Guidelines: 2007 |     |    |
| Subject Assessment Guidelines: 2008 |     |    |
| Learning Programme Guidelines: 2008 |     |    |

**SECTION B:**

**Learning Outcome 3: Writing and Presenting: The Process Writing Approach:**  
**The NCS expects language teachers to apply process writing approach in their teaching of essays and other written texts.**

1. Explain what you understand about the process writing approach

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

2. Do you apply process writing in your English class?

a) Yes

b) No

Please elaborate

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

3. When was the first time you were exposed to the process writing approach?

.....

4. When was the first time you actually implemented this approach in your English class?

.....

5. How many essays have you managed to deal with using the process approach? What were the topics and how long did each take to complete?

| Topic | Duration |
|-------|----------|
|       |          |
|       |          |
|       |          |
|       |          |
|       |          |

**SECTION C: Feelings, opinions and attitude**

1. Do you feel confident to apply the process writing approach as prescribed by the National Curriculum Statement?

- a) Yes
- b) No

Please elaborate.....

2. Do you as an English teacher find it easy or difficult to implement the process writing approach?

- a) Easy
- b) Difficult

Please elaborate

.....  
.....

3. Do you think the process approach improves learners' writing?

- a) Yes
- b) No

4. Do you think this technique will assist learners to write coherent texts?

- a) Yes
- b) No

Please explain briefly

.....  
.....

5. What are the challenges you have experienced in teaching essays to rural Grade 12 learners?

.....  
.....

6. Do you have any suggestions that can help to encourage learners to write more?

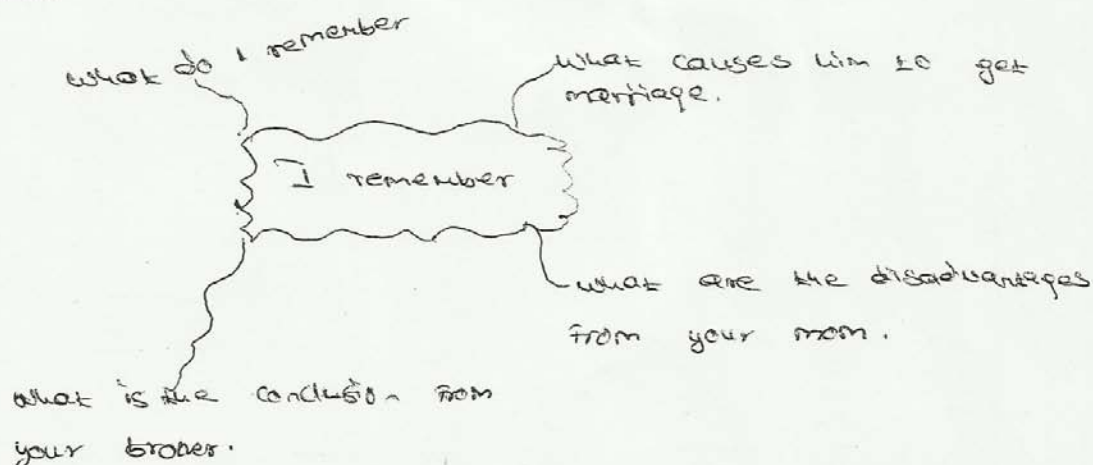
.....  
.....

**Thank you for your time and effort.**

## Appendix D: Five examples of incoherent and (sometimes) irrelevant essays

Grade 12<sup>th</sup>

English:



I remember in the year 2003, when my brother call mom on the telephone. He was telling her that he getting marry. So I could hear a voice from the other side of the telephone, when she was smiling. Mom asked him a surprising puzzles. She said, "did you take time to know her, she was the best?"

My brother start to show her some causes. He said, "According to our traditional rules, marriage is important. Marrying is the graduation of manhood, man gets much respect from many people". So my brother felt worry with the question which she asked him. He was expecting much respect and honour from all the people. Bachelor is no longer respectable.

My mom try to show him some disadvantages, she said, "man can marry today and tomorrow, woman give puzzles more than how ever she gave before. Also marriage is too expensive, again she said woman can hate family members, woman can spread poor

behaviour to the children by undermining the man, women  
can reprimand men to until men get when stressed.

My brother in his conclusion said, "According to Christianity,  
a man have to marry a woman, because the bible  
says that God created a man and when time goes  
on, God saw the man feel monotony, then God lay  
the man down and take out a rib from man to create  
him a wife. Woman is the piece of the man and a man  
will always be the head, so I will do what is in my  
heart

---



## English Essay

### I remember.

I remember when I tourism at Durban during the holidays. When I Swimming in their river with my Girls friend. And she eating a healthy food. My parents give me enough money to enjoy trip very nice and to enjoy the music at the shop to relax.

And one of my friends she like to swim very well so they want to get inside the river before other people. And unfortunately one day she was swimming a long times and after swimming they die. they don't see them where they are in the river.

After swimming they go to the shop to enjoy with my friend by eating a healthy foods which like a fruits, different drink and chocolades. And they are going there with a beautiful car of my girl friend and they are enjoying with a music.

My parents gives me enough money of R1000 to buy a clothes and shoes to enjoy my holidays. One of my friend they did not have a money so that I am trying to give her some money to buy something they liked.

---

English  
Essay

I remember

I remember one day at Tarven when i drink beer. Someone told me about why i drink too much. She worry about the way i drink so much. She confuse me because she shouted me like she call a young child.

I ignore her. then i get out in the mphaka's Tarven. she follow me at outside of Tarven and she repeat her words again but no word i told her. i walk at the road, on the road taxi appear at the road.

I left some taxi and the carefully i get in the taxi. most of people look at me carefully but no one talk. I talk for them. why you looking me like this. i gossip them even the taxi driver. A driver call me shet, he drive when he look me at the back of the sitty.

At the front of the taxi have got Lori. The Lori clash the taxi. unfortunately its only me have got injury because of car accident. I'm worry about this car accident. I shall never forget that day.

---

Grade 12

ESSAY NO'S  
English

I Remember

1, ACCIDENT

The day I shall never forget, I remember when I accident on 25 December 2006. On 15:00 I'm going to the tournament to watch my soccer match. When I arrive at home the car is coming skyline. That car crash me. And after that the man takes me and my friends to the hospital.

The next day the policeman come to my home and he want a statement. That man ask me a question "Do you drink ~~alcho~~ alcohol I take few minutes to ask him. I can't say yes I'm say no I can't drink that. That man ask me parents you son is drink alcohol, my parents say yes.

On the third day I'm going to hospital and the doctor check my bone, and my bones was not broken. After that man check my bone that previous day. I feel painful, but I can't go to the hospital again. because my parent leave me alone.

## English

I remember

10 became a leading and viable rural Municipality.

Fetakgomo municipality, commit ourselves to provide affordable, integrated integrated, effective, ~~effective~~, efficient.

Sustainable municipal services to all residents in the foreseeable future, thereby create an enabling, safe environment for local economic development in the spirit of co-operative government.

Department of health and social development building. The Fetakgomo municipal can provide the sanitation, water and road. Everning some the RTP and the cell phone network. The types of network Vodacom and MTN.

They are municipal response to building the RTP and VIP at the rural area. Municipal must check all the people are the right place to live enough house, water, electricity and road. Must check or the weather is allowed to live the people or what. Another things is building the home Affairs and clinics at the rural area.