A COMPARISON OF TEACHERS' AND LEARNERS' VIEWS ON FEEDBACK STRATEGIES USED IN THE WRITING PROCESS

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SUMMARY

Keywords: Writing; Process approach; Marking; Feedback; Strategies; English; Second Language

The process of writing is defined, by various researchers, as a slow, dynamic and recursive process which is continuous (Gay, 1992; Perl, 1994). The process consists of a cycle of re-seeing, re-creating and re-formulating one's writing task in order to clarify and structure one's thinking. This process requires, thus, a view which defines writing as an ongoing process, a text that may be improved on at every point of contact.

Although researchers do not agree on the value and effect of feedback on learners' writing, teachers and learners alike believe that feedback on learners' writing will help them (learners) to improve their writing. Various feedback strategies are used by teachers with the intention of giving learners guidance and cues on how to improve their writing. This view is also held by a number of researchers who agree that feedback is central to the process of teaching and learning to write (Dheram, 1995; Tchudi, 1997; Hyland, 1990; Muncie, 2000). A number of studies, including this study, are conducted in order to find effective feedback strategies which will help learners to improve their writing.

The purpose of this study was to:

- determine what feedback strategies teachers currently use to evaluate student writing (e.g. narrative and argumentative essays).
- determine when feedback is given to the student writer.
- determine how feedback is given on the student's writing.

- determine what the teachers' perspectives are on the value of feedback on student writing.
- determine what the learners' perspectives are on the value of feedback on student writing.
- Give suggestions for the development of effective feedback strategy practices.

The results indicate that:

- Teachers still use feedback strategies which are product-oriented despite the change in focus to the process approach to writing.
- Teachers still dominate the writing process as sole readers and "judges". Learners are not given a chance to participate in the assessment of their writing, or the writing of their peers.
- Teachers still assess the product rather than the process.
- A discrepancy exists between the teachers' feedback practice and that recommended by research.
- A discrepancy exists between teachers' and learners' perspectives on the value of feedback.

The results suggest a need for:

- Increased learners' participation in the assessment of their writing.
- An agreement between teachers and learners on feedback strategies to be used.
- Contextualised feedback comments followed by subsequent revision.
- Teachers' and learners' collaboration in producing a written text.
- Continuous feedback dialogue between teachers and learners.
- Emphasising the process rather than the product.

OPSOMMING

Sleutelwoorde: Skryfkuns, Prosedurebenadering, Merk, Terugvoering, Strategieë, Engels, Tweede Taal

Die skryfproses word deur verskeie navorsers beskryf as 'n stadige, dinamiese en herhalende proses wat deurlopend is (Gay, 1992; Perl, 1994). Ten einde die dinkproses te struktureer en duidelik te maak, bestaan die proses uit 'n kringloop van hersiening, herskepping en herformulering van die geskrewe taak. Hierdie proses vereis dus 'n siening wat die skryfkuns omskryf as 'n aaneenlopende proses, 'n teks wat mag verbeter met elke kontak.

Alhoewel navorsers nie saamstem oor die waarde en effek wat terugvoering van leerders se skryfwerk het nie, glo onderwysers en leerders dat terugvoering van leerders se skryfwerk hulle (leerders) sal help om hul skryftalent te verbeter. Verskeie terugvoerstrategieë word deur onderwysers gebruik met die doel om aan leerders leiding en riglyne te bied oor hoe om hul skryfwerk te verbeter. Hierdie siening word ook deur verskeie navorsers gehuldig wat saamstem dat terugvoering sentraal is tot die proses van onderrig en leer om te skryf (Dheram, 1995; Tchudi, 1997; Hyland, 1990; Muncie, 2000). Verskeie studies, insluitende hierdie studie, is onderneem met die doel om effektiewe terugvoer-strategieë te vind wat die leerlinge sal help om hul skryfvermoëns te verbeter.

Die doel van hierdie studie was om:

- vas te stel watter terugvoer strategieë die onderwysers huidiglik gebruik om 'n student se skryfvermoë te evalueer (byvoorbeeld, verhalende en redenerende opstelle).

- vas te stel wanneer terugvoering aan die student gegee word.

- vas te stel hoe terugvoering van die student se skryfwerk deurgegee word.

- vas te stel wat die onderwysers se perspektiewe is op die waarde van die terugvoering van 'n student se skryfwerk.

- vas te stel wat die leerlinge se perspektiewe is op die waarde van die terugvoering van 'n student se skryfwerk.

- voorstelle te gee vir die ontwikkeling van effektiewe terugvoer-strategie praktyke.

Die resultate dui daarop dat:

- Onderwysers steeds die terugvoer-strategieë gebruik wat produk-georiënteerd is ten spyte van die veranderings in fokus van die prosesbenadring tot skrywe.
- Onderwysers steeds die skryfproses oorheers as enigste lesers en "beoordelaars". Leerders word nie die kans gegee om deel te neem in die evaluering van hul skryfwerk of dié van hul eweknieë nie.
- Onderwysers steeds die produk eerder as die proses evalueer.
- 'n Teenstrydigheid bestaan tussen die onderwysers se terugvoerpraktyke en die wat deur navorsing aanbeveel word.
- 'n Teenstrydigheid bestaan tussen die onderwysers en leerders se perspektiewe op die waarde van terugvoering.

Die resultate suggereer 'n behoefte aan:

- 'n Verhoogde deelname van leerders in die evaluering van hul geskrifte.

- 'n Ooreenkoms tussen onderwysers en leerlinge oor die terugvoerstrategieë wat gebruik behoort te word.
- Saamgestelde terugvoerende kommentaar gevolg deur daaropgvolgende hersiening.
- Onderwysers en leerders se samewerking in die voortbringing van 'n geskryfde teks.
- Deurlopende terugvoerende dialoog tussen onderwysers en leerders.
- Beklemtoning van die proses, eerder as die produk.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Ketter and Hunter (1997: 104) define assessment as feedback intended to shape a student's performance to meet clearly defined and expressed criteria. Various researchers (e.g. Lipp & Davis-Ockey, 1997; Paxton, 1995) view assessment as communication intended to help students improve their writing.

Tchudi (1997: xiv) believes that "response to writing is... at the heart of the writing process..." and should be turned into "an increasingly productive part of the writing process". This response to writing should help learners to be productive, highly motivated and highly skilled writers. According to various researchers (Dheram,1995; Tchudi, 1997; Hyland, 1990; Muncie, 2000), feedback is central to the process of teaching and learning to write. Dheram (1995: 161) notes that it is important to develop awareness of the nature and function of feedback so that teachers and learners can perform their roles effectively in the writing classroom.

A variety of feedback strategies are used in South African secondary schools, which very often results in both teachers and learners having different views with regard to the value and effect of feedback on learner-writing (Dheram, 1995: 160-161). Teachers may see the feedback strategies they use as helpful to the learner-writer, while the learner-writers may not even understand what they mean (O'Hagan, 1997; Bauman, 1997). These strategies do not mean the same to both, and their intended value is thus lost.

A common practice in the teaching and learning of writing, in many of the secondary schools in South Africa, is that teachers assess or evaluate only the final product. The process mainly involves the teachers' underlining and circling errors committed by learners (Raimes, 1983). This process, which takes hours, is intended to make learners aware of their mistakes. It is a form of feedback teachers give to learners' attempts, which hopefully, will help learners to become efficient writers. This feedback, it is assumed, will help learners to understand and eliminate common errors, and thus improve the quality of writing. Furthermore, this will develop learners' faculty of self-criticism which will help learners to move from dependence on teachers' feedback to self-sufficience in correcting and evaluating their written work (Murray & Johanson, 1989).

In the practice referred to above, learners are given scores, marks or grades, which, it is assumed, motivate learners to try to improve their writing (Bauman, 1997). According to Bauman (1997), marking is a chief mechanism through which learners get feedback about their writing, as well as a means through which they learn how successfully they write compared to their classmates. Should this be taken away, learners, it is assumed, would have lost their sense of accomplishment and reward, the only lens through which they are accustomed to viewing themselves (Bauman, 1997).

Although Bauman (1997) acknowledges that grades/marks motivate some learners, she notes and supports studies which suggest that grades provide learners with extrinsic rewards, which work at cross-purposes with intrinsic motivation. Once the extrinsic reward is removed, she argues, learners do not generally continue to engage in the behaviour for which they were rewarded. The impact of grading is thus short-lived and loses sight of feedback as an intervention strategy. The latter is the view held by researchers who see writing

as a process through which one goes to arrive at the final product (Olivier-Shaw, 1995).

According to Olivier-Shaw (1995: 47), writing is not simply the act of putting down on paper what is already known in the mind, and that problems which learners experience in writing are not simply the result of poor surface-language skills. Theorists (Perl, 1980; Zamel, 1982; Van Zyl, 1992) argue against placing such emphasis on the final product. They advocate for writing to be seen as an ongoing process to discover what one's thoughts are. Flower and Hayes (quoted in Boughey, 1994:6) argue that successful writers do not view writing as a linear process which begins with planning and finishes with writing, but moves back and forth among the writing-related activities of generating ideas, planning, transcribing, editing and revising (Hedge, 1988: 149).

O'Hagan (1997) asserts that grades are unscientific and they do not provide a student with useful information. He cites a survey conducted in 1995 with Robert Lerner and Marsha Urban on attitudes to grading. Students who participated in this survey indicated, according to O'Hagan (1997: 7), that they did not understand what the grades on their papers meant. O'Hagan (1997) further cites John Presley, a participant in the survey, who held conferences (Muncie, 2000; Hedge, 1988; Freedman, 1987; Keh, 1990) with his learners. After marking the learners' writing, Presley would call his learners and discuss his comments with them. He could thus make valuable inputs that reportedly made learners understand comments and help them to improve their writing. This yielded better results than in the situation where learners would just look at the grades and red marks and, because they do not understand how the red marks are going to help them write better, toss the script away (Raimes, 1983; Bauman, 1997).

The view of grading as an ineffective feedback mechanism is shared by various researchers (Bauman, 1997; Holaday, 1997; Massa, 1997). According to Bauman (1997), grading does not help people to learn to write effectively, or how to become competent writers. According to Holaday (1997), there is no need for an overall hierarchy of excellence denoted by grades. Students should be helped to know when they do well and what they do well in (Swart, 1988; Hedge, 1988). As long as the teacher is the one grading tasks, students will only strive to satisfy him/her, and not concentrate on improving their writing.

The following questions need to be addressed:

- What feedback strategies do teachers currently use to evaluate student writing?
- When is feedback given to the student writer?
- How is feedback on the student's writing given?
- What are the teachers' perspectives on the value of feedback on student writing?
- What are the learners' perspectives on the value of feedback on student writing?

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to:

- determine what feedback strategies teachers currently use to evaluate student writing (e.g. narrative and argumentative essays)
- determine when feedback is given to the student writer.

- determine how feedback is given on the student's writing.

- determine what the teachers' perspectives are on the value of feedback on student writing.
- determine what the learners' perspectives are on the value of feedback on student writing.
- Give suggestions for the development of effective feedback strategy practices.

1.3 CENTRAL THEORETICAL STATEMENT

The following central theoretical statements are applicable to this study:

- There is a discrepancy in the type of feedback strategies used by teachers as well as when and how feedback strategies should be incorporated in facilitating the writing process, and that recommended by literature.

- There is a discrepancy between teachers' and learners' perspectives on the value of feedback strategies.

1.4 METHOD OF RESEARCH

A one-shot cross-sectional survey was used. The accessible target population included twenty randomly selected English teachers from schools in the Lejweleputswa education district. All the learners in the Grade 12 classes taught by the randomly selected teachers also participated in this study. Data triangulation (questionnaires, interview and book observation) was used in order to gain an accurate picture of the feedback strategies currently in use as well as teachers' and learners' perspectives concerning the value of current feedback strategies. The data was analysed quantitatively as well as qualitatively.

1.5 CHAPTER DIVISION

In **Chapter 2** a discussion of the process approach to writing is presented.

Chapter 3 gives an outline of the types of feedback strategies that can be used for assessing learner writing.

In **Chapter 4** the method of research is presented and discussed.

In **Chapter 5** the data is presented and the results are discussed.

Chapter 6 contains the conclusion, suggestions for the development of effective feedback strategy practices, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2

THE PROCESS APPROACH TO WRITING

2.1 INTRODUCTION

According to Gay (1992:43), the process of writing is "the slowest, most deliberate, most accessible, most conveniently manipulable, and most permanent means of composing one's world...The writing process is dynamic and recursive, consisting of a cycle of seeing and re-seeing, viewing and re-viewing, creating and re-creating, writing and re-writing." Flowers and Hayes (1980) argue that writing is not a linear process which begins with planning and finishes with writing, but a process which moves back and forth among the writing-related activities of generating ideas, planning, transcribing, editing and revising.

A similar point of view is expressed in the current ESL Interim Core Syllabus (1995: 7), and Guidelines for the Assessment and Moderation of Orals and CASS Portfolios for Official Primary and Additional Languages (National Department of Education, 2001). Writing is expressed as an activity which enables learners to "clarify and structure their own thinking..." Writing, is, as a result, regarded "not only as a product, but also as a process."

The purpose of this chapter is to give an outline of the process approach to writing, as well as to review the teacher's role in facilitating this process approach to writing.

2.2 DEFINING THE PROCESS APPROACH TO WRITING

Various researchers (Gay, 1992; Perl, 1994) define the process approach to writing as an ongoing process that is aimed at producing

the best product. The process's "ongoing" nature makes progress towards the product slow as learners are helped to say and write what they want to as best they can.

According to Hedge (1988) and Van Zyl (1992), one should always keep in mind that writing is not a sequential process. It is not a mere act of putting down on paper what is already known in the mind, but an ongoing process to discover what one's thoughts are (Perl, 1980; Zamel, 1982; Van Zyl, 1992; White & Arndt, 1991).

The writing process is, therefore, an ongoing activity. The writing process includes looking and re-looking at one's work, with the writer re-writing and re-phrasing the work to say what he/she intends to say best. It is not a once-off activity, whose end is achieved during its first submission. Instead, it is, as indicated, continuous and can be improved on every time the reader/audience's opinion has been expressed with regard to its success in communicating the writer's message.

White and Arndt (1991: 3) go further to refer to writing as a form of problem-solving which involves - in addition to generating ideas, planning, transcribing, editing and revising - such processes as discovering a voice with which to write, goal setting, monitoring and evaluating what is going to be written as well as what has been written, and searching for language with which to express the exact meaning. This suggests that what the writer starts with is often just the beginning of a process which cannot be completed without being re-looked and re-adjusted. The writer strives to find the appropriate voice and expression which will best convey what he/she wants to communicate. This is clearly not an act that any writer can achieve with one draft. This is a quest that may be achieved after several drafts, which will include processes like revising and rewriting the text.

According to White and Arndt (1991), process-focused activities are meant to help students to develop in ways appropriate to and fulfilling for their levels of proficiency – that is, successful communication of the text, amongst others. It helps to nurture the skills with which writers work out their own solutions – e.g. choosing the correct voice and expression - to the problems they set themselves, with which they shape their raw material – e.g. first ideas that come during brainstorming the text - into a coherent message, and with which they work towards an acceptable and appropriate form for expressing it. The ultimate aim is to arrive at the best product that a writer is capable of by focusing on the process involved in reaching this objective.

Sommers (1994: 158) states that we are not locked in our original statements, that we might start and stop, erase, use the delete key in life, and be saved from the roughness of our drafts. This further confirms the ongoing nature of writing, which opens every attempt to further development and improvement. The process approach to writing suggests that no one act of writing is complete on its own. Instead, what one starts with forms the basis for further development - the ideas which the writer may improve and develop. The process nature of writing thus makes writing a continuous act that can be improved on with every other draft.

According to Berthoff (1981), composing (the continuous act referred to above) is " a dialectical process that starts and stops and starts again, proceeds in circles and is tentative, hypothetical and recapitulative." This expression confirms a point made earlier that any act of writing cannot be effectively communicated in one draft. Instead, the first draft is what may be referred to as a base from which the best product will eventually be sprung.

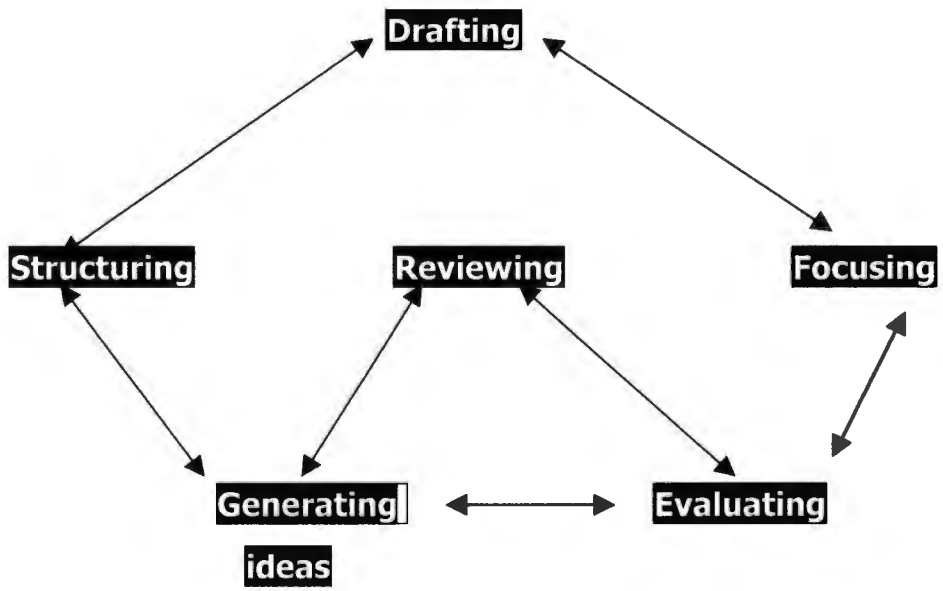
Brookes and Grundy (1990: 22) differentiate between a product and a process approach to writing. They see a product as the result of one's labours that has an air of finality and completeness, while a process is the means by which one reaches such a product. Drafting, revising and/or editing, they argue, are integral parts of the writing process. The integral parts indicated above suggest the continuous nature that mainly characterizes the process approach to writing. While the product approach suggests a 'once-off' act, the process approach advocates for a prolonged, continuous act which will produce the writer's best text. The process approach also views all writing, even the most mundane and routine, as creative and thus able to be improved on.

The stages in the process approach to writing are discussed in the next section.

2.3 STAGES IN THE PROCESS APPROACH TO WRITING

The ESL Interim Core Syllabus (1995) defines the process approach to writing as one "which includes **planning, developing, reviewing, editing and presenting.**" The stages indicated link up with those suggested by White and Arndt (1991: 4), namely, **generating, focusing, structuring, drafting, evaluating and reviewing** (cf. Figure 1).

FIGURE 1: The Process Approach to Writing



(White & Arndt, 1991: 4).

Swanepoel (1998: 39) condenses the stages and renames them as follows: **pre-writing, writing the first draft, revising and editing, and presenting the final draft**. The outline proposed by Swanepoel (1998) is adopted for this mini-dissertation because of its familiar terminology for teachers/educators. However, the discussion also includes contributions from other models.

2.3.1 Pre-writing stage

Before starting to write, students need to be sensitised to information that could prove useful in producing the required piece of writing. This is a stage which McRoberts (1981: 43) refers to as "incubation of ideas", a stage in which the "amorphous mass" of ideas, information and associations is bred for coherent organization later on (White & Arndt, 1991).

White and Arndt (1991: 17) refer to this stage as an idea-generating one, the most difficult and inhibiting stage in writing, but that is particularly important as an initiating process. It is a stage in which the writer has to formulate a base for what is going to be a continuous activity. As may be inferred, this is not an easy task as some learners may not be good at formulating ideas. As a result, White and Arndt (1991) suggest activities like brainstorming and asking questions, amongst others, as means through which ideas may be shared and stimulated.

Clouse (1996) argues that although this appears to be a writer-based activity – because the focus is on discovering what the writer wants to say – the writer must also consider who the reader will be and determine his or her needs, the area that may be challenging to the writer. It is at this stage that peers, as readers/audience, will help guide the writer. The nature of the audience, Clouse (1996: 65) concludes, significantly influences idea generation. The idea of a wider audience base would thus be helpful to the learner.

Roberts (1988: 1) divides this stage into two parts:

- Stimulus material
- Stimulus activities

A. Stimulus material

This part aims at motivating the students to get excited about the writing task at hand. The teacher needs to initiate interest by providing extra, topic-related reading material such as extracts from novels, short stories, magazine articles, newspaper articles, comic strips, poems, plays, etc. (Main, 1984; Roberts, 1988).

White and Arndt (1991), Byrne (1988) and Main (1984) all agree that visual and audio-visual material can also be used to generate ideas, while pictures and films will make certain topics more realistic for learners.

B. Stimulus activities

Although this is an area in which the learner's inexperience is going to be supplemented, Holt (1989) warns that learners' prior knowledge should always be considered if those activities are to make sense to them. Learners should be made to feel that they are part of the activities, as well as part of the formulation of those activities. They should be made to feel that their prior knowledge, albeit limited, is worthwhile and can be used in their learning. Activities such as group discussions, brainstorming, research, vocabulary enrichment, journal writing, acting, miming, outlining, and role play can be used effectively for pre-writing (cf. Swanepoel, 1998; Clouse, 1996; White & Arndt, 1991).

Roberts (1988) suggests that when writing, students should use the information and ideas that group members come up with during these activities to gain and trigger ideas to include in their own writing. This suggestion will further enhance learners' confidence as they realize that their ideas can be used by others. Learners are, thus, helped to see themselves as able contributors as well.

2.3.2 Writing the first draft

Having gone through some of the activities mentioned above, this is the stage in which learners try to put ideas on paper. Olson (1984), Meyer (1989), and Keh (1990) suggest that this is a stage in which students should not be paying attention to grammar, punctuation, neatness or vocabulary. The first draft is the learner's working document, a document

that will be re-worked, re-arranged and revised. Throughout this whole process of writing the first draft, the learner has to check that his/her arguments are still in line with the central argument. The constant 'checking' will thus lead to re-working, re-arranging and revising. Mayfield (1994) suggests that one should modify the central argument if necessary, and then go back and revise the rest of one's work accordingly. This is further confirmation that this is the beginning of a continuous process that will involve a number of rewrites and reformulations.

According to White and Arndt (1991), this is a stage in which writers are making the transition from the writer-based to reader-based writing which will constitute the final product. The concerns of the reader start, at this stage, to assume more significance. The writer has the task of considering how best the information can be organized to attract the attention of readers, to continue appealing to them, and leading them through the text to the conclusion of the text. Participation of the audience at this stage would be helpful to the writer. It would guide the writer to assess as to how far he/she has gone in terms of addressing the needs of the reader.

Clouse (1996) and Keh (1990) state that a first draft, commonly known as a rough draft, is an early effort to transform the pre-writing ideas and outline into an essay, without worrying about grammar, usage or spelling. Clouse (1996) sees this as an early effort that is tentative and subject to changes of every kind. It can be loaded with errors and rough spots, but it forms a base, material to shape and alter, until the desired product is reached.

According to Olson (1984), writing the first draft is an act of discovery, an act that is often interrupted by stopping, reading over and reviewing to get an idea of how the text is developing; revising plans and bringing in

new ideas or re-arranging those already expressed. This view also confirms the suggestion of continuity that has been made earlier. This is a stage in which that "amorphous mass" of ideas has to be worked on to make sense. The writer has to sift the ideas and arrange them logically so that they make sense. Olson (1984) also supports the argument that fluency, not refinement of ideas or expression, should be the immediate goal at this stage.

Teachers should, at this stage, be analysing the thinking process of learners/students in order to identify the problems they might be encountering, and making suggestions that would help them. The teachers' intervention, by providing feedback, would thus be helping to steer the task in the right direction (Swanepoel, 1998). The role of peers should be considered as well at this stage.

2.3.3 Revision and editing

The purpose of revising and editing is to assess the accuracy and effectiveness of one's work and to reformulate it if necessary (Brookes & Grundy, 1990). This is a stage in which the document is re-looked and re-worked so that some form of coherence can be arrived at (Clouse, 1996). The writer sifts the information and content for ambiguity, sloppiness and lack of focus, and re-arranges it to have the intended effect on the reader. Feedback from 'genuine' readers/audience would help the learner to achieve the objective above, that is, effective communication.

Scott (1991) suggests that revising and editing should first be done individually and then co-operatively with the peer group audience as a sounding board in order to obtain maximum input before writing the final draft. The role of peers in this case, the reader, will help the learner-writer to realise the effectiveness of his/her writing. Peers will be able to point

out possible areas of confusion, as well as those areas that are not well addressed.

2.3.3.1 Revising

According to Lewitt (1990), and Clouse (1996), revision is a process in which students think, see and see again and again, until they reach the final product. Van Zyl (1992: 42) sees revision as re-conceptualizing, re-visualization and cognitive re-organization. The concepts mentioned above suggest that the writer will always attempt to improve on the original text. He/she will always look at the draft as a work that can be improved by responding to the reader/audience's feedback. However, Sommers (1979) and Van Zyl (1992) warn against seeing revising as merely rewording a piece of writing because that "makes it about as exciting as an autopsy" (Sommers, 1994: 157). Revising must be a genuine attempt to make the final text – the product – the best. As a result, the writer is expected to find the best possible expressions every time he/she is given a chance to work at the text.

Sommers (1994: 157-158) - whose study of revision was informed by that deeply satisfying belief that we are not locked into our original statements, that we might start and stop, erase, use the delete key in life, and be saved from the roughness of our early drafts - supports a number of assertions made above, namely, the continuity referred to above. The "start, stop, erase..." explains that what is started can be changed at all points of contact. That "we are not locked into original statements..." also confirms that the writer may change or modify the original arguments where necessary, to suit his/her audience/external reader (Berkenkotter, 1983). According to Olson (1984), this may be attained when the writer gets feedback from peers. Olson (1984) presents further that sharing enables students to discover how their

words affect other readers. The readers' responses assist them in establishing whether the piece of work conveys the meaning that it was intended to convey (Olson, 1984; Stevenson, 1992).

According to Swanepoel (1998), once the writer has generated a draft and received feedback, the writer should seriously rethink, re-see and reshape words and ideas. The focus should be on how to say what one wants to say most effectively (Hedge, 1988; Bartlett, 1982), and not merely on spelling and punctuation. Special assistance and guidance by the teacher should be given in this area (MacPherson, 1992). MacPherson (1992) also believes that students and teachers should share in a spirit of co-operation in the interest of achieving a good piece of writing.

A draft should, therefore, not be seen as binding. Writers must see the drafts as bases for development and continue redrafting until all rhetorical, formal and stylistic concerns have been resolved, or until the writer decides to let go of the text (Berkenkotter, 1983). Before the writer may decide to let go of the text, he/she shall have checked that the content is satisfactory and that the purpose is clear, the activity which Scott (1991: 95) calls "tidying up".

2.3.3.2 Editing

According to Stevenson (1992), after revising their writing for content, writers often edit their writing for errors. Adams (1989), and Clouse (1996) also, suggests that this is a stage at which writing should also focus on mechanics such as grammar, capitalization, spelling and punctuation. The purpose is to make the text maximally accessible to the reader (Clouse, 1996; Swanepoel, 1998;Hedge, 1988).

Olson (1984: 34) states that for many writers, editing is a process that occurs automatically as they compose. For these writers, editing is simply proofreading for minor errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, etc. However, for students who have not yet acquired the conventions of written English, editing requires a more conscious attention to correctness.

Scott (1991: 96) suggests that focus should be on the following:

- **Structure:** The text should be well-structured, and therefore, the student should focus on a good or captivating introduction, a logical order of paragraphs, the correct development of paragraphs and a good conclusion.
- **Expression:** Interesting, varied, complete sentences should be used. Sentences should also make sense on their own. Writing students should watch out for awkward, clumsy expression, and check whether the choice of words was done sensitively.
- **Spelling and punctuation:** The piece of writing should be read once more, focussing on correct spelling and correct use of punctuation.

MacPherson (1992) suggests that the final editing and revision is often more successful after a time-lapse of a day or so. It is as if students then have a "fresher"/ new look at their writing.

In order to coach groups and large classes more effectively, some researchers (White & Arndt, 1991; Roberts, 1988; Muncie, 2000; O'Hagan, 1997) suggest conferencing. This is a kind of a workshop in which the teacher and students come to a common understanding of what is required. According to Hedge (1988), the teacher helps to extend students' thinking about the topic during conferencing. Hedge (1988) further argues that conferencing encourages students to think

about writing as something that can be organised and improved, and gives them an opportunity to talk about their writing and reflect on the process. It also gives teachers a chance to listen, learn, and diagnose.

2.3.4 Writing the final draft/copy

After altering, deleting, changing, correcting and other deliberations with writing partners, the final copy can be written (White & Arndt, 1991; MacPherson, 1992; Scott, 1991). The final copy should be presented in the form that shows the learner's pride in his/her work (Mayfield, 1994). The copy should thus be cleared of ambiguities, be coherent and logically arranged. According to MacPherson (1992), this is a stage at which teachers should be generous with positive feedback and encouragement. This will make editing less tedious, and will thus improve students' feelings about writing, thus accelerating future progress. Positive feedback will also make students feel that all the effort was worth their while, and thus make them look forward to doing more.

2.4 THE TEACHER'S ROLE IN THE PROCESS APPROACH TO WRITING

Horvath (1994: 212) sees the role of the teacher in the writing process as important and indispensable. The teacher is a guide, a motivator. When playing the role of motivator, the teacher speaks to the student as a sincere person, applauding his/her successes, empathizing with his/her difficulties, urging him/her to investigate the effect certain remedial work will have on his/her writing, setting goals to strive towards, encouraging risk-taking, and fostering the desire to write more and write better (Horvath, 1994). This is a supportive role that, if carried out well, may build a student-writer's attitude towards writing, as well as to wet his/her appetite to write more.

According to Terblanche (1993), unskilled writers tend to see writing as an unpleasant chore which has to be dealt with soon, for a mark. This view is emphasised by the writer's having to submit, hurriedly so, the product for which the grade/mark is allocated. Terblanche (1993) continues that teachers often reinforce this notion by assigning writing tasks without providing enough time for students to go through all the stages. This ends up being an unpleasant experience that the learner does not look forward to doing again.

This unpleasant experience can be addressed if teachers can heed Glatthorn's (1981) assertion that the writing process' complexities can be dealt with by emphasizing the different stages of writing separately and assisting students to deal with each stage. These stages should also be modeled to the students so that they may see them in practice.

White and Arndt (1991: 5) state that teachers should engage their students in the creative process; to excite them about how their texts are coming into being; to give them insights into how they operate as they create their work; and, to alter their concepts of what writing involves – which to many of them is seen as a boring chore to be got through for a mark.

Providing this type of feedback during the writing process involves the teacher in assuming different roles - such as 'audience', 'assistant' (Tribble, 1996:119), 'consultant' (Dheram, 1995:160), or 'reader' (Keh, 1990: 301). There are, however, problems associated with these multiple teacher roles. These include:

- For a teacher to adopt some or all of these roles will necessitate a considerable change in the manner in which the teacher teaches.
- Changes of this type are frequently restricted by a variety of factors such as institutional requirements, the wider educational culture, and

the teacher's own personal beliefs (Clarke, 1994). These factors will often combine to produce a situation where, even if a teacher is able to fulfil the roles of reader, collaborator, assistant, etc., he/she is also forced into the role of the ultimate evaluator. This inescapable role as an evaluator, in addition to the teacher's status as the 'expert', adds an authoritarian dimension to the teacher's attempts at collaboration, which leaves the learner with a fundamental lack of choice when it comes to revising his/her work based on the teacher's comments.

Sensitive teachers, in their role as collaborators, should try not to couch their feedback in overtly authoritative or threatening ways (cf. White & Arndt, 1991: 125). Teachers should respond as genuine and interested readers rather than as judges and evaluators.

Since teachers have to assist students every step of the way, the teacher's role in each stage is discussed below.

2.4.1 Pre-writing stage

Teachers should stimulate ideas and assist with the logical arrangement thereof at this stage. According to Peacock (1986), even the most able classes find it difficult to begin a writing task without some guidance. The teacher should provide examples of how to plan the given writing task; create opportunities for interaction with material and have discussions on students' own ideas on the given topic (Kilfoil & Van der Walt, 1989; Swanepoel, 1998).

According to Brookes and Grundy (1990), the teacher should negotiate a writing programme that will motivate students to write. The success of an assignment, according to Terblanche (1993: 24), depends largely on the

teacher's ability to encourage students to be interested in, and motivated for a specific writing assignment.

2.4.2 The first draft

According to Holt (1989) and Kilfoil and Van der Walt (1989), students find it extremely difficult to organize their ideas into a logical order. Teachers need to instruct students on how to sequence ideas and to distinguish, for example, between main sentences and supporting detail in a paragraph.

Teachers should warn their students against what Keh (1990: 10) calls "once-written-can't-be-changed" syndrome, i.e. wanting to acquire perfection at once. The teacher should assure students that only content is of crucial importance at this stage, and that there is room for improvement. Assistance from the teacher is of utmost importance at this stage.

2.4.3 Revising and editing

At this stage, the teacher should teach the students how to revise and edit, for example, by showing how to read for purpose, to reach your audience, and avoid mechanical errors respectively (Kilfoil & Van der Walt, 1989; Lewitt, 1990).

2.4.4 The final draft

The teacher should assure the students that any effort that results from the stages above is worthwhile. The final draft, the product, should be seen as the version come to as the result of the process. As indicated by White and Arndt (1991), the final draft, through the processes of re-vision

and re-writing, should be the best product possible, with as many a divergent points and different outcomes as there are writers.

In submitting the final draft, the learners' fear of their text being subjected to a mere error-checking exercise should be addressed. The teacher should make learners aware that they are also responsible for the last stage, namely, that of evaluation. Learners should be taught that evaluation is not only the task of the teacher, but theirs as well (White & Arndt, 1991).

2.5 Principles for good writing classroom management

Brookes and Grundy (1990: 41-50) suggest the following principles for good writing classroom management as underlying the supporting role of the teacher in encouraging a process approach to writing:

A. Student writing profile

The writing teacher should draw up a profile of his/her students' abilities and needs by assessing each student's writing needs from a checklist which includes areas such as organizing ideas, taking the reader into account and accurate writing. Another checklist requires the students to analyze their ability in a range of writing skills. These checklists should be drawn up keeping the student's acquired interest, knowledge, language and skills in mind (cf. Table 1).

TABLE 1: GENERAL CRITERIA FOR MARKING STUDENTS' WRITING

GOOD WRITING SKILLS

Authoring	**Drafting**
A1. Sense of purpose	D1. Organizing the content clearly and in a logical manner
A2. Sense of audience	D2. Manipulating the script
A3. Sense of direction	D3. Using the conventions, e.g. spelling, layout
	D4. Correcting grammar
	D5. Developing Sentence Structure
	D6. Linking ideas in a variety of ways
	D7. Having a range of Vocabulary

CRITERIA FOR MARKING	**SPECIFIC WRITING SKILL EVALUATED**
Content	A1
Length	A1
Style	A2
Organization	A3, D1
Handwriting	D2
Accuracy	D3, D4
Complexity	D4, D5, D6
Range	D6, D7

(Adapted from: Hedge, 1988: 146).

Swanepoel (1998) suggests that a scheme such as the one used by the Royal Society of Arts (RSA) on Communicative Texts (cf. Table 2) should be used to explain to students what is expected at each criterion.

TABLE 2: ROYAL SOCIETY 0F ARTS (RSA): COMMUNICATIVE TEXTS

	Basic Level	Intermediate	Advanced
Accuracy	No confusing errors of lexis and punctuation. Grammar may be shaky but what the candidate writes is intelligible and unambiguous. Orthography may be uncertain.	Grammatical, lexical and orthographical accuracy is generally high, though some errors which do not destroy communication are acceptable. Handwriting is legible without undue effort.	Standards of orthography, punctuation, lexis and grammar are extremely high. Handwriting is easily legible.
Appropriate	Use of language is broadly appropriate to function, though no subtlety should be expected. The intention of the writer can be perceived without excessive effort. Layout is generally appropriate	Use of language is appropriate to function. Some adaptation of style to the particular context is demonstrated. The overall intention of the writer is always clear. Layout appropriate.	Use of language entirely appropriate to context, function and intention. Layout consistent and appropriate.
Range	Severely limited range of expression. The candidate may have laboured to fit what he wanted to say to what he was able to say.	A fair range of language is available to the candidate. He is able to express himself clearly without distortion.	Few limitations on the range of language available to the candidate. No obvious use of avoidance strategies.
Complexity	Texts may be simple, showing little development. Simple sentences	Texts will display simple organisation with themes and points linked and	The candidate demonstrates the ability to produce organised, coherent

	with little attempt at cohesion are acceptable.	related.	and cohesive discourse.

(Cited in Hedge, 1988: 147).

Swanepoel (1998: 60) advises further that positive feedback at each level of proficiency will motivate students and encourage them to keep on trying to write more complex, advanced texts. Weaknesses will also be indicated in the manner that encourages the writer to work on them.

B. Targeting skills

Brookes and Grundy (1990) state that the teacher should decide between targeting skills as a holistic approach and targeting skills as separate specific exercises to improve students' writing. Although writing practice improves writing itself, it may become repetitive. Therefore, Brookes and Grundy (1990: 42-43) suggest working with specific exercises because of the following reasons:

- Practicality:
  In the limited lesson time available, real progress is more likely with shorter sub-skill examples.
- Face validity:
  In response to the student's writing needs, intensive treatment of a requested skill-area is a more workable answer.
- Applicable to real world contexts:
  Whatever the writing student acquires in the writing classroom must serve his/her "real world needs".

C. Using the interests and feelings of the class

According to Brookes and Grundy (1990: 45), many writing teachers tap the main academic work of their students in order to allocate an interest area on which to set written work. However, writing teachers have not yet realized the untapped potential of strong human characteristics: that of interest in other people and the desire to respond to the interest of others and in oneself. Use of this resource may yield interesting writing as learners are themselves interested in what they are doing.

Engagement of emotions is also an insurance for involvement in writing, and even appears to motivate students to write above their expected capability. If they are writing about a topic close to their hearts, or that refers to their personal experiences, one may expect 'true writing', that is, real communication from the learner's heart.

Brookes and Grundy (1990) suggest further that teachers should first engage the interest and personal involvement of the student by building learner input, whether it is connected to past experiences, present knowledge, interests, ideas and personal characteristics, plans or predictions. All of these ensure motivation for writing, as well as the personal stimulus to take the writing through a number of writing barriers.

D. Learner input

Brookes and Grundy (1990: 46) urge that more personalized examples be used as they make for easier writing motivation. They suggest that a more person-related input helps the learner-writer to realize that some outcomes are predictable and some are surprising.

Brookes and Grundy (1990: 47) further advise against the use of a specialized academic text as a pre-writing activity. In their view, the

academic text does not necessarily ensure a high quality of writing, since they – the texts – are "opaque, even to experts". They suggest that if one chooses text activities, it should rather be as follow-up activities to writing examples. It is also a good idea, they add, to let students select texts and bring them along to class, because then the text is read with a specific purpose in mind.

E. Establishing the best learning environment in the classroom

According to Brookes and Grundy (1990: 47), the "culture" of an institution, and of the country in which it is situated, influences the classroom environment. Teachers have a choice whether they want to conform to these pressures or whether they want to create a more open, learner-centred atmosphere. Students should clearly be able to convey trust in both their teacher and each other in that they will be prepared to let all observe their work-in-progress. The atmosphere at all times should be one of openness and trust.

F. Preparing ahead

The teacher should consult the students' profiles and draw up a checklist which will be consulted first before deciding WHAT writing activity/task to teach next, and HOW to do so.

After the activity/task has been selected, students' preparatory activities include finding and bringing material that can prove useful in the writing lesson. However, Brookes and Grundy (1990) observe that most writing classes will rather call for follow-up activities than preparations.

The teacher's preparatory activities include focussing (not too overtly) on the linguistic outcomes of a specific writing task. The teacher is also expected to bring certain materials to class – even a piece of writing.

The other important role that the teacher has to play is that of evaluating/assessing learners' writing and responding to it – give feedback. This, along with feedback strategies, is discussed in the next chapter.

2.6 CONCLUSION

Writing is made accessible by the process approach to writing. Both teachers and students find the various stages in process writing to serve a facilitating purpose. Students find the writing task in the process approach less demanding because of the support they receive from their peers and teachers throughout. According to Olson (1984), the process approach to writing provides us with a tool for talking about thinking and writing processes, and enables students to perceive writing as something that can be crafted.

Terblanche (1993) observes that since the teacher is involved from the beginning to the end of the writing process, he/she can identify problem areas more easily and thus assist students in a more productive way. The revision and editing stages also simplify the burden of marking as many errors are eliminated before the last draft reaches the teacher.

Swanepoel (1998) notes though that the notion of evaluating the "final draft" as a draft in progress is a new concept that will take getting used to – even though process writing is at this stage already part of the ESL Interim Core Syllabus (1995).

In the next chapter, the focus is on the **feedback strategies** used in the assessment of learners' writing.

CHAPTER 3

FEEDBACK STRATEGIES

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Researchers such as Dheram (1995), Tchudi (1997), Hyland (1990), and Muncie (2000) state that feedback is central to the process of teaching and learning to write. Research, however, yields contradictory findings as to the effect that feedback strategies have on learners' writing as well as the types of feedback strategies regarded as being the most effective for assisting learners with their writing efforts (cf. Ferris, 1995; Leki, 1990; Hyland, 1990). For example, various researchers (Leki, 1990; Knoblaugh & Brannon, 1981; Hillocks, 1986) found that teacher feedback to writing has little or no impact at all on student writing. Ferris (1995: 34) notes, on the contrary, that several researchers have noted that comments (feedback) on intermediate and preliminary drafts which are subsequently revised are useful in facilitating student improvement (cf. Freedman, 1987; Fathman & Whaley, 1990; Chaudron, 1983).

The contradiction in research findings indicates that the quest to find feedback strategies that will help learners to improve their writing will continue. A form of response to the learner's writing is expected, just as every writer expects some form of response from his/her audience. Feedback to learner writing, despite its successes or failures, is seen as the voice of the "audience". The area that needs to be broadened, as the discussion below will indicate, is that of the audience, which in many occasions is still dominated by teachers.

The purpose of this chapter is, therefore, to critically discuss the various types of feedback strategies that can be used by teachers when focussing

on their learners' writing, as well as the effect that these strategies can have on their learners' writing.

3.2 TYPES OF FEEDBACK STRATEGIES AND THEIR EFFECT ON LEARNER WRITING

In order to draw maximal results from any of the feedback strategies employed, it is important for all role-players to understand their roles (Dheram, 1995). Hedge (1988) suggests that the activities will be most effectively exploited when both teachers and learners understand the criteria and procedures for marking, revising and editing. This shared understanding of the strategies/activities, as well as the set criteria, will help to avoid the mismatch noted by Cohen and Cavalcanti (1990), namely that teachers and learners think differently about the areas to be emphasised.

A review of the literature (Hedge, 1988; Chimombo, 1996; Makino, 1993; Barass, 1995; Hammond, 1983; Bauman, 1997) indicates the following types of feedback strategies:

3.2.1 LEARNER SELF-CORRECTION

According to Hedge (1988: 157), students are able to find a number of mistakes in their work, or ways of improving it. In this feedback strategy, learners are given a chance to assess their own writing. They are made to participate in the process of evaluation, re-reading their work, and trying to correct the errors themselves (Chimombo, 1996). Participation in evaluation helps not to see it as the teacher's domain only. Hedge (1988) states that many teachers report that students build up a capacity to identify problems in their writing and benefit from this process, and should thus be encouraged. Makino (1993) concludes that self-correction enables

learners to be active participants in written compositions rather than passive recipients of feedback.

Swanepoel (1998) also suggests that students should be encouraged to evaluate and even grade themselves. This, however, should only be done after the students have been well instructed on how the specific writing task should be evaluated. This view is also shared by Hedge (1988), who suggests that students must be given advice about what to look for in their own writing, and must also be shown an example of a revised script. Students must not be left on their own without proper guidance on what to look for. According to MacPherson (1992), students improve rapidly if they feel responsible for their own achievements.

Makino's (1993) investigation into what degree the teacher's cues or hints help students to correct their own errors in EFL compositions yielded the finding that the more detailed the cues to the errors, the higher the ratio of learner self-correction achieved. Learners demonstrated that they could activate their linguistic competence to some extent in order to correct their own errors in written English compositions.

According to Makino (1993), most students expect and want their teachers to help them to correct their own errors so that the chance of recurrence is reduced. Students, one may infer, need to be guided to what is wrong, and through the cues given, how to correct or improve on weaknesses pointed out. It is, thus, important that teachers should go on helping and guiding students by providing them with cues.

In the process of language learning, learners sometimes notice some of their errors by themselves, through the strategy of monitoring, and they can also correct some of the errors when other people, such as teachers or peers, give them cues or hints about them. The teacher can thus

provide the learner with the opportunity to try to self-correct without further help.

Makino's (1993) study also indicates that learners have the ability to correct their own errors: that is, they can activate their linguistic competence to do so, even without cues.

If introduced properly, self-correction may be a very successful feedback strategy.

3.2.2 PEER ASSESSMENT

Barass (1995) suggests peer assessment as a feedback strategy in which students look at each other's work and give a comment thereon. This helps students to get help from each other in planning and drafting. It also helps them to obtain experience in identifying problems in writing. According to Hedge (1988), discussion by several people (students) means that more ideas and improvements are applied to each piece of writing, and the discussion itself can constitute natural fluency practice.

According to Barass (1995: 43), students should discuss their written work with other students. The power of rightly chosen words, Barass (1995: 43) continues, is great but there is no short cut to better writing. Students are advised to help themselves by noting the kinds of mistakes that most beginners make. Finding faults in the writing of others can help students recognize their own mistakes and, therefore, improve their own work.

Reading an essay to other students, it is suggested, can help provide a basis for discussion. Considering ideas on presentation, or topics for paragraphs, or points of detail may help all members of the group; they may learn more about their subject and about the art of the composition.

Reference has been made, in the discussion above, to an audience or readers. Peers provide a true base for such. They represent the real reader-base, unlike the teacher whom learners are made to believe is a real reader, but later ends up being an evaluator. In a peer assessment situation, the writer may try to defend his/her point, whereas in the case of the teacher, the writer, knowing the subsequent role the teacher is going to play, takes the teacher's correction without any question as the teacher has the final say on the mark to be given (Leki, 1990).

Muncie (2000) also agrees that feedback is better when provided by the writer's peers than by the teacher. When feedback is received this way, it is perceived as coming from people who are genuine collaborators and interested readers of the writer's work, roles which are unaffected by any overshadowing role of evaluator. In this case, the writer has complete choice over which comments to utilize, and to what extent, as well as being faced with the problem of how to utilize them.

The argument that the feedback received from peers is not the same as that received from teachers is addressed by the argument that the peers' feedback is 'honestly' that of 'genuine readers', and not that of a reader who later turns out to be the evaluator.

3.2.3 MARKING

According to Hammond (1983), marks are useful in that they help students see how much assessors value the work that they produce. This view is shared by Bauman (1997), who states that marks motivate many students. Although Bauman (1997) acknowledges that giving a mark (grading) is a poor feedback mechanism, she sees it as a crude substitute for many of the mechanisms that provide feedback in naturally occurring language learning. Bauman (1997) sees giving a mark (grading) as the traditional means whereby students are motivated to work hard, a lens

through which teachers are accustomed to viewing students, themselves, and everyone's respective roles in the classroom.

These proponents of marking, however, also note a number of shortcomings associated with marking. One point Bauman (1997) makes is that even if it is accompanied by positive comments, students tend to concentrate on the mark rather than on the comments. In a survey of native speakers, Burkland and Grimm (1986) report that if there is a mark on a paper, the students read the mark and simply discard the paper, often in disgust at the injustice of receiving a low mark for an essay they had worked hard on. Learners also lose out on the communicative nature of writing, for they only write in order to obtain a good mark rather than communicate.

According to Spingies (1990: 19), many applied linguists have questioned whether this "meticulous and painstaking correction of all errors ... probably in red ink" serves any purpose at all. They state that recent research findings indicate that error correction is usually ineffective in changing language behaviour. They agree with Creber's (1965: 221) view that the process of negative marking ('negative' referring to the habits of teachers of marking only what they regard as unacceptable) is a "largely destructive activity and its effects as almost entirely depressive".

Hammond (1983) also notes that grading is time-consuming and judgemental. He notes further that grades are subjective, and may depend on the mood of the teacher and may thus not be what the student's effort is worth.

Hyland (1990) states that teacher-response is an essential step in the writing process. They state that marking provides students with an idea of the criteria by which their work is judged, and should offer useful information that will help them avoid similar errors. One of the ways to

achieve this, they suggest, is to reduce the negative effects of indicating errors without reducing the benefit of conscientious marking.

Stratta (1969: 40 - 60) points out that "selective marking" can sometimes be more useful than "comprehensive marking". In work marred by a great many surface errors "one could have the teacher writing as much as the pupil", and this would be ineffective: first of all, there would be many more corrections than the pupil cold possibly take in, and in the second place, he/she would "almost certainly be demoralized". Teachers need to be aware of how they correct student errors and also how much they correct (Hyland, 1990).

The results of a study conducted by Van der Walt et al. (1994) substantiate the findings of Stratta (1969), Chater (1984), Hyland (1990) and Spingies (1990), namely that extensive correction is not a practically significant option for language teachers. Teachers should not correct all the errors that are made by students without giving them a chance to appraise their own performance. The results indicate that 'moderate' or 'selective' or 'minimal' marking will help improve grammatical competence of ESL students, although only in limited grammatical categories. The results also indicate that there is not a statistically or practically significant difference between moderate correction and no correction.

3.2.4 PRE-TEXT FEEDBACK

According to Frankenberg-Garcia (1999: 100), this is a feedback strategy that addresses the learner's problems before the act of writing starts. Learners, Frankenberg-Garcia (1999: 101) continues, may be confronted with writing difficulties they are unable to deal with themselves. Learners would then resort to reduction or avoidance strategies in which the problem area is scantily addressed or avoided totally. Pre-text feedback is a strategy that deals with the problem that arises even before the first

draft is written (102). Feedback is given on the questions that emerge when learners are still struggling to put their ideas down on paper rather than on the first or second draft.

Frankenberg-Garcia (1999: 100) states that while there is proof that various forms of feedback on a written composition help students to improve successive drafts, there is little indication that this kind of text-based feedback has a lasting effect on their writing skills. Nonetheless, EFL student writers generally expect to be given feedback on their written texts (Cohen & Cavalcanti, 1990), and it is difficult for teachers to abandon a technique which scores so high in terms of face validity.

Most limitations of text-based feedback, however, stem from the assumption that providing feedback on a written text is equivalent to intervening in the writing process (Knoblauch & Brannon, 1981). According to Frankenberg-Garcia (1999: 100), this is not very effective as the original problem, the problem that might have made the learner abandon some ideas because he/she did not know how to phrase them, is not addressed. As a result, responding to the first draft does not address the learner's writing problems, but addresses the draft that could already be the learner's second or third.

Frankenberg-Garcia (1999) acknowledges though that the one undeniable fact about text-based feedback is that it helps students to become aware of errors and other writing problems which they failed to notice or to do anything about when they handed in their drafts. However, she argues that knowing what was wrong with one text written in the past may not help a writer overcome problems encountered while writing a new one. Feedback provided in the previous text is thus not transferable for use in the subsequent texts. If, however, an attempt can be made to identify the problems that the writer encountered before the first or final draft is

completed, and feedback provided on such, it may have a more lasting impression on the writer than if given later.

This feedback strategy is spontaneous and addresses the individual student's problem immediately. It does not interfere with the student's train of thought, but helps the student to get there as swiftly as possible. The student's writing problems are addressed when they are still fresh, when the problem still needs to be solved. The student gets feedback in every problem that he/she encounters, unlike a situation in which the student would rather cross out the sentence because its syntax is causing too much trouble, or receives feedback when a way around the problem had already been found, e.g. avoidance of a problematic structure.

3.2.5 MULTIPLE-DRAFT FEEDBACK

This is a strategy that attempts to call the learner's attention to his weaknesses. This strategy is continuous and keeps the learner going back to the text. The learner is helped to see each draft as a working document that may be improved on. Every draft that is submitted is dealt with as a continued attempt to produce the best product. Feedback may be provided by both the teacher and peers (Barass, 1995; Hedge, 1988).

The teacher knows that he/she must clearly delineate and communicate the form of rating (be it letter grade, holistic score or analytic comment) early in the writing process (Olson, 1984), since this influences the focus of the writing task. Students must be helped to read and understand the rating form and respond appropriately. Students need to know what the teacher will focus on when he/she ultimately evaluates their drafts. Discussions on evaluation grids always help to motivate and focus students on what is expected of them.

Frankenberg-Garcia (1999) also advises that positive feedback at each proficiency level – learners' levels of improvement, their 'improving' drafts - will motivate students and encourage them to keep on trying to write more complex, advanced texts. Weaknesses are also clearly indicated, but in such a fashion that the writer will feel like working on them. This, one may infer, will help students to make effective use of feedback while it is still fresh. Having learnt of his/her strong points, the student has also learnt that there is something positive that has come of his/her toil, something appreciated by the teacher. This 'achievement', one may suggest, may spur the student to try to improve on the weaknesses pointed out. The success of improving the text may only be maximised if students go back to the draft with the intention of improving it. It is, thus, worthwhile to note that 'increasing numbers of teachers feel that correction "after the event" is a useless exercise.' (Hedge, 1988: 149). The alternative is thus giving feedback during the act, between drafts.

According to Freedman (1987), the results of an NCTE National Writing Survey (1987) indicate that teachers, considered to be successful, agree that intervening during the writing process helps student writers to improve. This suggests that multiple drafts with comments on each may be a better solution. It is a strategy which immediately addresses a misconception that each draft is an end by itself. Revisiting the task by the learner/student after the teacher's comments enables learners to develop the task further, improving the content and argument in the best possible way.

Leki (1991) suggests that sequenced tasks, in which each task in a term is related to an on-going project, may have a maximal effect on learner writing. The continuous flow enables learners to deal with "problems" that might have been highlighted during the previous tasks. Learners are thus able to "practice dealing with those problem areas" while the corrections on them are still "fresh" in their minds. Teachers' comments on the

individual segments of such a writing project become meaningful and significant because they become incorporated into the next writing task, not just into a revision of one paper.

Hedge (1988) explains that the answer to the question of how students can be helped to see that their writing is developing and can be improved lies in the degree to which redrafting, editing, and marking are linked activities. Hedge argues (1988) further that it depends on the respective roles of teachers and students in the process of revision. Students need to be sure that the 'global' structure of their writing is well organized before turning their attention to minor 'surface' features of word order, spelling, and so on. The concept and practice of revision should be very closely linked with the concept and practice of planning.

One issue which often emerges from the body of research and advice on this matter, however, concerns the aim of feedback in the writing process – which seems to be a fairly short-term one of helping learners to improve their drafts in order to end up with a final piece of work which is better than those first attempts (cf. Leki, 1990).

3.2.6 CONFERENCING

According to Freedman (1987), Silver (1989), and Keh (1990), the one-on-one conference is very popular with students. This method enables the teacher to discuss with individuals the work that they have already completed up to a certain stage. As students work on their writing in the classroom, the teacher can sit beside one and talk about writing in process, give support with the organization of ideas, assist with the language, and extend the student's thinking about the topic, where this is relevant, or with specialized content (Hedge, 1988: 154). This makes students feel that their primary writing needs are addressed. Students want to feel that the teacher is an ever-present supporting system, and

notion that teachers should concentrate on what students have achieved, and not on what they have failed to do.

According to Hedge (1988), conferencing also encourages students to think about writing as something that can be organized and improved and gives them an opportunity to talk about their writing and reflect on the process. It gives teachers a chance to listen, learn, and diagnose. The writer is given a chance to present his original intention to the reader/teacher, and is thus given a chance to interact with the reader/teacher. This strategy immediately addresses the problem of 'aping' the teacher. The teacher gives guidance based on the student/writer's original ideas and thus helps to improve on how presentation can be improved. This differs from the multiple-draft situation in which the teacher gives guidance without exposure to the original idea. The teacher in the multiple-draft situation may misappropriate his/her guidance, thus changing the intended presentation because he does not know what the learner intended to communicate. In conferencing, the teacher and the learner come to exchange ideas on how to improve the original text. However, the two strategies may be used to supplement each other.

3.3.7 AUDIO-TAPED FEEDBACK (ATF)

According to Boswood and Dwyer (1996: 20), the medium that teachers use for giving students feedback has far-reaching effects on the impact of their comments. Among other variables, they continue, it influences how much information teachers can convey, the balance between comments on form and content, and the potential for affective expression.

Audio-taped feedback (ATF) has been explored by educators looking for an alternative to written marking and conferencing. McAlpine (1989) found that ATF encourages reader-based response rather than an editorial or proofreader stance. Hyland (1990) advocates both minimal marking and taped comments to make feedback more effective, particularly during the draft stage. Kirshner (1991) also found ATF more productive than written marking, noting minimal difference between recording time and written marking time. Clark (1981) identifies teacher comments through ATF as being more complete and clear. Similarly, Hunt (1989) found taped comments effective, simple and fast. ATF has thus been able to make up where written commentary could not reach. As indicated above, it saves time as comments are recorded instead of being written.

According to Boswood and Dwyer (1996: 22), students participating in the ATF project were overwhelmingly positive about ATF. They found it a stimulating, personal, and refreshing departure from traditional methods of receiving feedback on their writing. One comment from a student, they report, was " in the past, I seldom read the written the written comments from my teacher. However, I found that I was interested to hear about the comments made about my work this time" (p22). Students, it is reported, appreciated the empathy that the medium was able to convey, and the amount of information that could be communicated to them.
A number of students mentioned the potential of ATF to improve their listening skills. ATF, Boswood and Dwyer (1996) argue, also puts the act of listening under student control, allowing for listening at the student's own rate, and for repeated listening. Though listening to ATF was time-consuming, students' curiosity about what the teachers said on the tapes appeared to have been a major motivating force. The possibility of multiple plays also helped those students who had problems in comprehending the comments at first.

Boswood and Dwyer (1996: 22) further report that teachers working on the project were also positive about the process when they compared it to giving written feedback. They reportedly found it more stimulating as it encouraged an intense engagement with students through their writing in a way that is hard to achieve with written comments.

Giving feedback on tape is, however, an intense process which demands intensity in reading and corresponding intensity in expression, in order to project an individual personality and to respond authentically. Teachers also found that their ability to verbalize complex responses to texts improved during the project.

Teachers, however, also had some reservations. Compared to conferencing, they found ATF to be one-sided, thus not allowing writers to explain their text to the reader. This weakness is countered by ATF's ability to accord learners individual attention as well as individualized feedback. Both students and teachers alike agreed that taped feedback allows the teacher to offer more detailed comments than would be feasible in written feedback. However, the two parties also agree that it should not be used to the exclusion of other feedback strategies.

3.3 CONCLUSION

Researchers (Dheram, 1995; Tchudi, 1997; Hyland, 1990; Muncie, 2000) agree that feedback is central to writing. They believe that feedback does help learners to note their weaknesses and, with the guidance given by the teacher, attempt to improve those mistakes. Although researchers like Leki (1991) express their doubts concerning the impact feedback has on writing, they also concur that every teacher's first concern is finding an effective way of providing feedback to learners, thus making those comments they write on the students' tasks more effective.

The discussion in this chapter indicates that attempts at finding successful and effective feedback strategies will always be continued. One of the concerns communicated by researchers like Cohen and Cavalcanti (1990) is that there is often a mismatch between what students expect to receive as feedback and what teachers give to learners. This may lead to such hostilities as observed by Leki (1991) in which learners feel that teachers did not grade their attempts fairly as they (the teachers) did not understand what they (the learners) had written. It explains thus, that the success of any feedback strategy should be grounded in both the teachers' and the students' understanding of what feedback means, what it is aimed at, and how it will be done.

The next chapter focuses on the method of research employed in this study.

CHAPTER 4

METHOD OF RESEARCH

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The methodology employed in this study is discussed under five main headings:

- Design
- Participants
- Instrumentation
- Data collection procedure
- Data analysis

4.2 EMPIRICAL STUDY

4.2.1 DESIGN

A one shot cross-sectional survey design was used in this study.

4.2.2 PARTICIPANTS

Twenty English teachers were randomly selected from schools in the Lejweleputswa Education district. Teachers from both former Model C schools and the former Department of Education and Training schools were included to accommodate practices from the former Departments of Education in the Free State province. All the learners in the Grade 12 classes taught by the randomly selected teachers participated in this study.

4.2.3 INSTRUMENTATION

Three instruments were used, the purpose being to triangulate the collected data, thus ensuring more valid data.

- Learners' writing books were analysed and feedback strategies used by teachers when assessing learners' writing (e.g. mark only; mark plus grammar correction, etc.) were noted by means of a checklist listing specified feedback strategies.

- Interviews were conducted with both learners and teachers in order to give teachers the opportunity to personally comment on their feedback practices and how they perceive the value of feedback they provide, and to give learners the opportunity to comment on how they perceive the value of their teachers' feedback strategies.

- A questionnaire was also drawn up for both learners and teachers in order to determine learners' perceptions and opinions of feedback strategies, as well as to determine the teachers' use of the feedback strategies and their opinions on the value or effectiveness of providing feedback when assessing the learners' writing.

4.2.4 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

Data was collected as follows:

- The researcher visited the schools at which the participants attended and analysed the learners' writing books in order to observe the feedback strategies used by teachers when assessing the learners' writing.
- The researcher also conducted interviews with the participants at the time most suitable to them (i.e. without causing disruption to

scheduled classes). The researcher noted the participants' responses and used them when analysing the data.

- The researcher personally delivered the questionnaires to the schools, and then went back to fetch the completed questionnaires. This ensured a 100% return rate.

4.2.5 ANALYSIS OF DATA

Descriptive statistics (e.g. means, frequency counts,), as well as qualitative analysis (e.g. narrative reporting) were used to analyse the data.

4.3 CONCLUSION

According to researchers (cf. Bachman, 1990) the methodology of a study is very important, because many studies have 'failed' as a result of methodological failure. In this chapter an outline of the steps involved in the study was given in order to enable future researchers to replicate similar studies.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is devoted to the presentation and discussion of the analysed data. The aim of this chapter is to attempt to answer the research questions posed in Chapter 1:

- What feedback strategies do teachers currently use to evaluate student writing (e.g. narrative and argumentative essays)?
- When is feedback given to the student writer?
- How is feedback on the student's writing given?
- What are the teachers' perspectives on the value of feedback on student writing?
- What are the learners' perspectives on the value of feedback on student writing?

In order to facilitate the discussion of the results, the data for the teachers and learners are presented and discussed separately.

5.2 TEACHERS' AND LEARNERS' RESPONSES

5.2.1 TEACHERS' RESPONSES

The teachers' responses are discussed under the following headings:

- Questionnaire
- Interviews
- Book observation

5.2.1.1 Questionnaire

Despite the shift in focus from a product approach to writing to a process approach (Interim Core Syllabus, 1995; National Department of Education, 2001; Dheram, 1995), the majority of teachers still seem to use feedback strategies which are associated with the product approach to writing. Of the twenty teachers who responded to the questionnaire, nine teachers (forty-five percent) mark in detail, underline, circle all errors and give a mark, while the other nine (forty-five percent) give a mark and give comments on errors like spelling and punctuation. Only two out of the twenty (ten percent) use conferencing as a feedback strategy; giving them an opportunity to talk to their learners about what was good or bad in their writing. The majority, as indicated, prefer to play 'the judge', marking every error, an act that Murray (1968) sees as filling the student with misery rather than helping him/her to improve his/her writing. This also confirms Byrne's (1979) statement that there is always a great temptation, a natural inclination perhaps, to concentrate on what is wrong in a piece of writing. Byrne's (1979) statement is confirmed by an overwhelming hundred percent response to marking grammar, content and structure in the same text. It is, thus, not amazing that every word in a sentence is either underlined or circled as the three aspects are marked at the same time.

Nineteen out of twenty teachers (ninety-five percent) give feedback at the end of the writing process. Only four teachers (twenty percent) give feedback during the planning stage, while their feedback can still be used by the learner to improve his/her writing. The majority, as indicated (ninety-five percent), prefer to respond to the product instead of providing guidance and cues in the process of producing the product. The link with the previous question indicates that teachers would then get what they want - errors and more errors – as they would not have intervened during the process of writing. It is, thus, clear that they would have successfully

'trapped' students into making errors, to which the 'natural inclination' to slash, underline and circle will take over (Byrne, 1979).

The majority of teachers still underline, slash, circle and make marks on learners' writing. Teachers report marking content, structure, and grammar in every piece of writing they mark. This takes place at the end of writing.

In response to the question: 'In your opinion, when would feedback be effective?', nine teachers (forty-five percent) respond that this would be during the draft, three teachers (fifteen percent) claim that this would be during planning, while eight teachers (forty percent) maintain that this would be at the end of writing – the product. Although this contrasts to the data presented above – where the majority prefer, and still mark/provide feedback at the end of writing, these nine respondents could be part of the increasing numbers of writing teachers who feel that correction "after the event" is a useless exercise, as pointed out by Hedge (1988), and thus feel that feedback can be better utilized during the process, and not at the end.

In response to the question 'Who marks your learners' writing tasks?', ten teachers (fifty percent) report marking the tasks themselves, while two teachers (ten percent) indicate that learners do, and eight claim that marking is done by both the learners and the teacher. These responses were addressed during the interview session.

In response to whether teachers think learners understand their feedback, eight teachers (forty percent) maintain that learners always do. Learners, they state, are encouraged to enquire if they do not understand. Furthermore, the teachers state that they discuss learners' errors together in class; that is, a general discussion of errors committed by learners.

They also maintain that learners know what the feedback symbols mean, for example, **sp.** for spelling, **w.o.** for word order, etc.

Twelve of the teachers (sixty percent) stated that their learners only sometimes understand their feedback. They state that the same mistakes recur in subsequent tasks. These results seem to support Leki 's (1991) apprehension regarding the sustainability of feedback. With the majority of the teachers marking the product, it is clear that the feedback provided does not reach learners as it was intended. Although some teachers claim that learners always understand their feedback, the question is whether they are able to react to the feedback particularly as feedback is given at the end of writing.

In reply to the question whether learners 'learn' from the comments given, eight teachers (forty percent) stated that they do, two teachers (ten percent) state that they do not, while ten teachers (fifty percent) claim that it is not always that they do. The claim made by forty percent of the teachers that their learners learn from their comments was followed up during the interview and book observation sessions. The interesting response is that the majority of the teachers (eighty-five percent) commented on the importance of writing comments when marking.

If comments are written on every aspect – teachers mark everything in detail – it is clear that learners' books will be full of red marks when they receive them. The statement of learners understanding the teacher's feedback immediately becomes questionable. One of the reasons provided for writing comments is that learners do not look at their errors if they are not marked in red, a statement that is far from the truth. As indicated in the discussion of various feedback strategies, there are some of those strategies, for example ATF, which effectively help learners to identify their weaknesses, and give guidance on how those weaknesses can be improved.

Despite the comments made, fourteen teachers (seventy percent) feel that their marking is effective, while six teachers (thirty percent) feel that it is not always effective. It is clear that the same mistakes are still committed as learners do not understand some of those symbols referred to above.

Eight teachers (forty percent) feel that marking everything in detail is effective, two teachers (ten percent) feel that it is not, and ten teachers (fifty percent) feel that it is only sometimes effective.

In response to the question whether teachers follow up their feedback to writing, that is, making sure that learners revise/correct mistakes/reformulate texts, sixteen teachers (eighty percent) state that they do, two teachers (ten percent) do not, while two teachers (ten percent) do it sometimes. This will be verified in learners' books.

5.2.1.2 Interviews

Although most teachers are aware – albeit vaguely so - of the process approach to writing, only a few give feedback between drafts, and only occasionally so. As suggested by responses to the questionnaire, many teachers still use and prefer to mark the product. The teachers explain that they are expected to have done an x-amount of work by a given date and thus just concentrate on the product. These comments support those found in a study conducted by Swanepoel (1998).

As indicated in the responses to the questionnaire, many teachers (ninety percent) still prefer to mark content/structure/grammar, in the words of one respondent, 'mark everything'. Teachers acknowledge underlining, circling and making comments, many of which are done in one sentence. Upon investigating the effect this may have on learners,

teachers agreed that learners are bound to be discouraged. This observation immediately cast doubt on the effectiveness of feedback, as well as it being user-friendly or being understood by learners (cf. Cohen, 1987; McCurdy, 1992).

When asked whether they comment on learners' strong points, many teachers (eighty-five percent) confess that they rarely give a comment on what learners have done well, except for an occasional 'Good' or 'Well done'.

Fifteen percent of the teachers, however, do give a positive comment when learners have done well. In giving feedback on the learner's essay, one teacher reports stating the following: 'You presented your argument well. You have quite a character in Johnny, but, isn't Jerry's character down-played a little?' The teacher reports that the student was happy with this little praise and went on to rewrite the essay with a stronger Jerry. Teachers eventually agreed that feedback between drafts could make better sense to learners than grades/marks given at the end of writing (Hedge, 1988; Chaudron, 1983). They also acknowledge that vague comments – like 'Poor, Fair,' etc. do not help.

Although many teachers claim to encourage learners to use feedback, it became clear during the interview that there is not much that the 'underline, circle, t (tense), sp. (spelling), w.o. (word order)', etc. in one sentence communicates to the learner, but misery (cf. Byrne, 1979).

In the questionnaire, most teachers indicated that they follow up their feedback. However, the interview revealed that this is not necessarily so. Teachers explained that learners do not follow instructions to rewrite.

As may be seen in the analysis above, some of the responses made in the questionnaire deviate from those given during the interview. This variation was also noted in the learners' books.

5.2.1.3 Book observation

The following observations were made:

- Teachers mark content/structure/grammar in every piece of writing. The marking, as indicated through responses to both the questionnaire and the interview, comprises of circling, underlining, writing question marks and giving a mark. Although many teachers reported that learners understand their feedback, the practice, observed in learners' books, is that most, or all, aspects are underlined in one sentence. A twelve-word sentence may end up with each of the words underlined for spelling, tense, word order, and the sentence punctuated with a red question mark. This act, clearly, as observed by Hairston (1986), takes a great deal of the teacher's time. The concern is whether learners, to whom the feedback is intended, understand that (Cohen, 1987). The other observation made is that many language aspects are also marked in the same manner – they are all underlined. In Addendum A, the following words are underlined: 'don't'; 'read' (changed to 'study'); 'warm'; 'suppost'; and, 'tell'. It is clear though, that the underlined words refer to different aspects, ranging from Concord error (don't), spelling (suppost), and tense (tell).

  As indicated earlier, some underlined sentences/phrases end up with question marks (see Addendum D). Learners ignored these, because no attempt was made to do corrections. If the question mark was meant to provide feedback, it may be inferred that feedback was not successful.

- Teachers still provide those 'vague' comments (Zamel, 1985; Leki, 1991) at the end of the writing task – see Addendum B ('*Too short*'); Addendum C ('*Too long sentences*'); Addendum D ('*Be cautious about* (sic.) *correct use of punctuation marks! Avoid repetition!'* In all of these, there is little or no indication/guidance to the referred weaknesses. In Addendum D, only the comma in the first paragraph is circled despite reference to 'punctuation marks'. There is no indication to the repetition referred to above. The same can be noted in Addendum C. The comment, one may infer, does not help the learner to notice which of the sentences are 'too long'. The comment only comes at the end of the third paragraph. Does that suggest that the 'too long sentences' only occur in the third paragraph? The learner is also not given advice on how to deal with the 'weaknesses' pointed out.

- Although most teachers have reported that they encourage learners to revise/rewrite, there is no evidence of this in the learners' books. Learners go from one task to the next, thus confirming the argument presented earlier that there is no continuity in learners' writing, and neither is feedback transferable because a number of mistakes underlined and circled in the previous task still recur in the subsequent tasks. Teachers don't seem to take "corrections" seriously: for example, a learner who had spelt discipline as "dissipline" had it underlined and marked as a spelling error. In the learner's 'corrections', the word is again incorrectly spelt, and the teacher, probably marking the next task, just wrote 'Seen' and signed. This spelling mistake is repeated in the next task, underlined, and again not heeded as 'corrections' are then discontinued.

- Teachers still use the product approach to writing, and respond to texts as fixed products. There is no evidence of learners' drafting/planning and teachers' providing guidance before the final

product is submitted. The learner's first draft is immediately his/her last. As indicated above, the marked book bears the final mark and learners do not have a chance to improve on their weaknesses – thus suggesting that the teacher's feedback does not reach its intended goal (Hillocks, 1986).

- It has also been observed/confirmed that the teacher is the sole reader/audience of the learner's writing. This, unfortunately, the teacher does armed with the red pen (Byrne, 1979). The teacher underlines and circles even the spelling errors that could have been noted by peers, thus saving the teacher the agony of marking those basic errors. Knowledge of the teacher as the judge (Murray, 1968) and not the genuine reader/audience, makes anticipation of teacher feedback stressful as the learner knows that he/she will have to change 'read' to 'study' only because the teacher wants it so. Feedback in this regard is not a shared experience, but a teacher-dominated activity that does not effectively reach its goal (Hillocks, 1986).

From the discussion above, it may be observed that the intended feedback did not serve its purpose. The teacher might have wasted precious time annotating responses, in this case meaning circling and underlining in this case, only to have learners toss the script away without understanding what the teacher had intended to communicate.

5.2.1.4 Teachers' responses: Summary

Although responses on the three instruments used varied in some instances, a number of observations have been made that confirm the existence of a discrepancy between teachers' practice and what research suggests.

The following statements are pertinent:

- Teachers still prefer the product approach to writing. They mark the product and give feedback on it by means of 'red marks' and a 'grade/mark'.

- Teachers mark everything in each essay, an act that is detrimental to feedback. As stated by Murray (1968), learners see red marks as an indication of their incompetence in the task and the target language.

- There is little variation in feedback strategies currently in use. The old 'correct and award a mark' strategy is still the most famous. The teacher is, in this strategy, the sole marker. He/She still underlines, circles and writes question marks at the end of sentences.

- It has also surfaced that teachers do not really show much interest in their own feedback, and may be to blame that it (feedback) does not reach its goal. Despite the positive response – in the questionnaire – towards encouraging learners to rewrite, the interview revealed a half-hearted attempt, while book observation showed no evidence of this at all.

- The majority of teachers report that learners always/sometimes understand their – the teachers' – feedback. However, the feedback strategies used do not leave much room for understanding because of the variety of aspects that were marked as well as the vagueness of the feedback comments.

- The 'judge' character of the teacher as reader/audience leads to learners writing what the teacher wants, thus 'aping' the teacher. The learner is not given a chance to defend his/her case, or interrogate the feedback given, as would be the case in conferencing (Muncie, 2000).

Because of this lack of dialogue, the learner is left on his/her own with the teacher's feedback.

5.2.1 LEARNERS' RESPONSES

The learners' responses are discussed under the following headings:

- Questionnaire
- Interviews
- Book observation

5.2.1.1 Questionnaire

Ninety three percent of the learners report that their teachers mark their writing when they have completed their writing. Only two learners (seven percent) report having the teacher marking during the planning stage. This overwhelming response suggests a product-oriented environment, in which the end-product is more important than the process.

Some interesting responses – albeit on a small scale - were elicited by the question of when learners would like the teachers to mark their writing. One learner (three percent) feels that this should happen during the planning stage, while three learners (ten percent) feel that they must be marked during the draft stage. According to these learners, they can, having been corrected, rectify mistakes made and start afresh, improving on those mistakes. One of the three learners states that it would help him/her to know what is expected of him/her before the final mark is given. These are possibly learners who have been exposed to the process approach to writing, and who know that the first draft is not the last.

The majority of learners (ninety three percent), as reference to the product-orientation has been made, prefer to have their writing marked at

the end of writing. Some learners stated that they would not like to have their essays marked during planning, because 'If it is corrected when I plan it, the composition will not be my work'. Speculation about possible reasons for their answers could be:

- The teacher may change the learner's original text or ideas to suit him/her. As a result, the composition becomes his/her ideas and not the learner's. This may be evidence of student hostility arising from the co-optation of their words or ideas by their teacher's commentary (Burkland & Grimm, 1986: 245; Sperling & Freedman, 1987: 357). These students may be expressing unwillingness to surrender the content of their papers to the teacher.

- The learner, if nurtured into adoring the end-product view, may feel that if the teacher has provided guidance/feedback earlier on, then he/she has failed to, on his/her own, come up with an essay that the teacher could mark without having been (the learner) assisted. One learner states, 'If I pass, then I have the satisfaction of knowing I did it myself ... ' and then the surprise inclusion, '... with a few hints the teacher has given us.'

Either way, the assumptions made above suggest the educational environment in which the learner has been brought up. The first assumption suggests that teachers decide what the essay should be like, because they already know what they want the 'ideal text' to be like, and expect learners to change to that, without any regard for the learner's own ideas (Zamel, 1985). The second assumption suggests that learners see writing as an end-product, something that can only be read by the 'reader' when it is completed, and not beforehand. These and other misconceptions are common in classes where the product approach dominates.

One learner, who also believes in the end-product view, surprisingly states that the teacher should comment ' ... on where I went wrong and give me the golden opportunity to improve my performance by rectifying my mistakes'. This suggests the learner's desire to be guided along and to be given the opportunity – 'the golden opportunity' – to improve his writing, i.e. to be given a second/third chance to improve his writing.

Another learner, who also wants his essay to be marked at the end of his writing, explains that feedback would help him '... to know my weak points and where I went wrong for the improvement during the next task'. This awareness of 'transfer of value' to the next task is remarkable, and, although not a response to Leki's (1991) concern about the sustainability of feedback, shows that some learners understand that feedback must go beyond the current task (Dheram, 1995).

In response to their teachers' method of marking their writing, seventeen learners (fifty-seven percent) report that their teachers underline, circle and write question marks. Five learners (seventeen percent) state that teachers give a mark and a comment, for example, Good or Poor, and eight learners (twenty-seven percent) report that the teacher gives marks and a summary of where the learner went wrong.

The response above confirms the findings in L2 research that despite a general move in the profession away from a focus on errors to a focus on content and communication, teachers still prefer to mark errors.

The five responses to the teacher giving a mark and a comment like 'Good', 'Rewrite', etc., confirm those concerns cited earlier about vague comments (Zamel, 1985; Horvath, 1994) which do not help learners. If a learner is given a six out of ten, and the comment, 'Fair', the learner is not helped to become a nine or ten out of ten writer. As a result, the learner

could be justified in looking at the mark and merely hoping that he/she would get a better mark for the next essay.

The majority of learners (fifty-seven percent) also claim to be given a chance to improve the composition that they have written. There are, however, five learners (seventeen percent) who state that the teacher does not give them a chance to rewrite. This means that the draft submitted is the final one, as is the mark on it. It is clear that learners would only be concerned with the mark, and not the feedback (Cohen, 1987; Raimes, 1983). The feedback does not help because the act has been brought to an end, that is, learners will not be given another chance to work through the task. The other eight learners (twenty-seven percent) claim that they are not always given a chance to improve their writing.

5.2.1.2 Interviews

Having been taught in a product-oriented learning environment, most learners believe that feedback should be given at the end of writing. However, they note that when feedback is given at the end of their writing, they will not be able to use it to improve any of the tasks they are going to write. Despite their belief in feedback at the end of writing, they only look at the mark and ignore the comments or symbols made by their teacher.

Learners confirm that their teacher marks all their essays. A few learners, however, would like to have a peer reading and comments on their work. According to these learners, their peers could help them to address certain errors (e.g. spelling) before the task is submitted. Learners state that they would also like to explain to their teachers why they have used certain phrases in their essays, and what they had intended to achieve. They can do this with peers, genuine readers, but not with the teacher.

Learners thus blindly 'ape' the teacher as the opposite may mean disaster for the learner (Leki, 1991).

One of the learners confirmed 'learner-hostility' as suggested by Burkland and Grimm (1986). The learner states that if she wants to put an idea through, she does so, whether the teacher advises against it or not. She does not understand why the teacher has the right to 'judge' her presentation as weak or irrelevant and give her a low mark for it. Having been introduced to conferencing, the learner felt that it could make a difference as she and the teacher would discuss and reach common ground.

In response to the question on the number of errors and the way they are indicated on the essay, most of the learners (seventy-five percent) indicate that they do not know what to do at times as each sentence has a number of symbols, some of which they do not know what to do with; for example, a question mark at the end of an underlined sentence. Furthermore, even when students have managed to decipher a comment, they often have no idea how to respond to it and either ignore it or rewrite it as it is, with the knowledge that the teacher will not even bother about it. Although some learners successfully make corrections based on comments, such learners are still found to have no idea what the principle behind the teacher's directive might have been, and thus are unable to correct the same type of error in another part of the paper.

This also confirmed the finding in other research which shows that even native English-speaking students often do not understand the meaning of comments on their papers (Sperling & Freedman, 1987). Feedback is thus lost, and the learner embittered because the teacher does not understand what he/she has communicated, and neither does the teacher help him/her to do so.

Learners also feel that comments may help them to focus on what went wrong, and want to be given a chance to do so – that is, be given a chance to, with the help of the comments/cues, improve the original task. According to the learners, they are unfortunately not given a chance to do so, and neither are they encouraged to do so. As a result, whenever learners see a 'Rewrite' instruction in their book, they see it as punishment, not as a chance to improve their writing.

Although learners had unanimously agreed that teachers must go on as they do with their marking, the responses summarised above indicate that feedback, as currently given, does not reach its intended objective, that is, to improve learners' writing (Hillocks, 1986; Paxton, 1995).

5.2.1.3 Book observation

Although the majority of learners – in response to the questionnaire – report being encouraged to rewrite, there is no evidence at all of that happening. Learners' books reflect a number of tasks, one directly after another, with no indication of much learnt from feedback on the previous task as the same aspects are underlined all over again in the next task. This again confirms the assertion made of feedback not being transferable (Leki, 1991; Horvath, 1994).

A large number of responses to the questionnaire had also suggested that learners understand the teacher's feedback, and find it user-friendly. This was also refuted as learners, as well as fellow teachers, did not have any clue of what the underlining and question marks expected of them. This also added to the argument presented earlier, that feedback is not very effective (Hillocks, 1986; Knoblauch & Brannon, 1981), and neither does it improve the learner's writing. As may be inferred, learners would not have learnt much from the teacher's feedback, particularly as they do not have any idea of what the question marks and circles mean. Freedman and

Sperling's (1987) assertion that learners may do corrections without understanding the principle was also confirmed. It was noted that learners would effect the changes that teachers indicated if the correction was done for them by the teacher. As indicated in the discussion above, learners effect those changes even if they do not understand the reason for doing so. It is, thus, clear that learners do not always understand the teacher's feedback, and neither is it user-friendly.

5.2.1.4 Learners' responses: Summary

Learners' responses to the three instruments drew interesting results as discussed above. A summary of the learners' responses include:

- Learners have an idea that feedback is meant to help them improve their writing. In the words of one learner, they should be 'given that golden opportunity' to rewrite and improve the original task. This can be done by providing them with positive comments of what they did well, as well as cues on how to improve the weaknesses pointed out by their teachers (Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1994; Weir & Roberts, 1994; Paxton, 1995). No evidence of this could be found in books as rewriting/revision/reformulation is almost non-existent. At the moment, they still seem to look at the mark and toss the book aside.

- Learners' response in the questionnaire showed overwhelming support for teachers being the sole markers of their (learners') writing. However, some of the learners would like to have peers commenting on their work, thus allowing for continued interaction with feedback. At the moment, the teacher's word is final and learners are silent recipients of his/her judgement.

- In response to the questionnaire, learners confirmed the suggested view of the teacher as a judge, and not a genuine reader. Learners do

not want teachers to intervene during their planning because they (the teachers) may change the learners' arguments/presentation. This confirms the hostility that was noted by Freedman and Sperling (1987) against giving one's writing over to someone who has a right to score it. To avoid this, the one learner would rather write an essay and submit it full of surface errors than have the teacher change his/her original essay.

- Although learners stated, in the questionnaire, that the teacher's marking is effective, the interview yielded a negative response. Most of the learners do not understand what the question marks and circles mean, and how they are expected to respond to these symbols. The marking strategy used does not draw the learner's attention to his weaknesses, nor does it encourage the learner to revise his essay. The learner then just looks at the mark and tosses the script away.

- Learners want to rewrite and not only have 'Seen' written on their revised texts. They want to understand what was wrong, why it was wrong, and be given cues on how to improve.

5.3 COMPARISON OF RESULTS

Learners would like a chance to have a 'genuine' reader/audience go through their writing before it can be passed on for judgement. Learners would like to be guided into writing the best text, their own text (Leki, 1991; Knoblauch & Brannon, 1984) through continuous guidance and support given by the teacher and peers. This guidance, as may be inferred from the analyses above, should be anything but question marks and circles, or comments like 'Too long sentences', 'Mind your punctuation', etc. Comments must not be vague (Zamel, 1985), and must be transferable (i.e. help learners not to repeat the same mistake in the next writing task) (Horvath, 1994; Leki, 1991).

Although some teachers see the importance of continued feedback-dialogue between the teacher and the learner, some still feel that the process is time-consuming and ineffective as learners still commit the same mistakes. They feel that the 'general feedback session' after returning the books is still effective. This confirms the assertion made earlier that it will take time to change the attitudes of product-oriented teachers and learners, to the process approach notion (Dheram, 1995). These teachers still want to mark the product and give feedback thereafter. On rewriting, some teachers feel that they will not have time to remark the many drafts as suggested.

From the discussion above, it seems that there is a discrepancy with regard to teachers' and learners' view concerning appropriate feedback. While many learners feel that feedback should be a continued act, given during and between the act of writing, thus being helped to see their writing as ' a work-in-progress amenable to revision' (Horvath, 1994: 208), some teachers still want to give feedback on the product. While learners now want to have the audience base to be broadened, some teachers still see themselves as the sole markers whose verdict is final.

The initial presentation of results, the questionnaire in particular, presented an agreement on the value of feedback strategies. However, the discussion based on other instruments showed that learners would like to have other strategies, for example, ATF, Peer assessment, etc. used. The product-oriented teachers, on the other hand, feel that the teacher's marking is still the best strategy. This confirms the existence of a discrepancy between teachers' and learners' perspectives on the value of feedback strategies, particularly those that are currently in use.

5.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented the results of the three instruments used to collect data on feedback strategies used in assessing learner writing. Although the responses varied at times, book observations helped the researcher to compare what is reported against current practices. For example, while teachers' response to encouraging learners to rewrite had created anticipation of a number of rewrites, observation of books refuted this as there was no evidence of rewrites.

Learners might not have known much about the process approach to writing, but their desire to be given feedback on an on-going basis came out strongly, particularly during the interviews.

Although some teachers show a willingness to change to the process approach to writing, the majority still want to hold onto the product-oriented approach in which the learner's first submission is also his/her last. This formed the basis of the discrepancies between what research suggests, and current teacher feedback practices. Learners want to own the text, the original argument/presentation (Leki, 1991; Knoblauch & Brannon, 1984). However, the texts could be improved through continued feedback by both peers and the teacher. Some teachers, as indicated, feel that this would be time-consuming, and they would rather just mark the end product. Although teachers want to continue giving feedback to the product, the ESL Interim Core Syllabus (1995: 6) prescribes that they should change to the process approach of writing, which prescribes that feedback should be given continuously, i.e. between drafts. Research indicates that correction 'after the event' is a useless exercise (Diagon, 1986: 18; Freedman, 1987: 36; Lardner, 1989: 93), and rather suggests that revision and editing should be encouraged as much as possible

during the writing process (Hedge, 1988: 149; Keh, 1990: 11; Horvath, 1994: 208).

The argument above highlights the existence of the discrepancy between what research suggests about feedback, and what teachers' current practice suggests.

Furthermore, the discrepancy on the value of feedback strategies was also emphasised, particularly on current feedback strategies. Learners would like to have other strategies used, thus casting doubt on the value of those currently in use, while teachers still want to hold onto their current practice.

The next chapter provides the conclusion, suggestions for the development of effective feedback strategy practices, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION, SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

6.1 CONCLUSION

The following central theoretical statements were formulated in Chapter 1:

- There is a discrepancy in the type of feedback strategies used by teachers as well as when and how feedback strategies should be incorporated in facilitating the writing process, and that recommended by literature.

- There is a discrepancy between teachers' and learners' perspectives on the value of feedback strategies.

The results of this investigation indicate that acceptance of these central theoretical statements may be justified.

The currently prescribed process approach to writing advocates the view of writing as an on-going process, a 'work-in-progress amenable to revision' (Horvath, 1994: 208), and not as a product (Dheram, 1995; Muncie, 2000; Keh, 1990; Hedge, 1988; Tchudi, 1997; Perl, 1994; Paxton, 1995; Ferris, 1995). This view of writing suggests that the teacher's intervention will be effective during the process of writing, and between drafts, when learners can still use the help/cues/feedback that the teacher has provided (Keh, 1990; Hedge, 1988). The success and the value of the teacher's feedback can be witnessed when the learner is able to improve on his/her weaknesses. These weaknesses may also be pointed out by peers (Barass, 1995), and must be pointed out in a way that the learner will understand. Having understood what went wrong in the original text, the learner goes back to improve on the weaknesses pointed out.

The results of this investigation have indicated that the teacher is the sole marker, whose feedback is given to the product, an act viewed as judgemental by both research and learners. Teachers slash, underline, circle and write question marks at the end of sentences, hold general feedback sessions, and proceed to the next task. This act, as noted by various researchers (Byrne, 1979; Hairston, 1986; Leki, 1990; Horvath, 1994), discourages the learner and does not encourage him/her to read the feedback provided. The teacher's feedback is thus lost.

The summary above emphasises the discrepancy between what research suggests and what teachers are still currently doing at schools.

The three instruments used in this study have also emphasised the existence of the second discrepancy. Whilst teachers value their feedback strategies highly, learners seem to think differently about the value of the teachers' feedback. While teachers are happy with their being the only audience the learner has, learners communicate a yearning to have peers giving feedback (Barass, 1995). In many ways, the teacher is proved to 'hijack' the learner's writing to suit him/her (Burkland & Grimm, 1986; Sperling & Freedman, 1987). The learner's response is either that of sheer hostility or blind obedience as the teacher decides what the final mark is.

Being able to use feedback in a positive way is central to the process of developing writing skills. But feedback can only be truly effective in that development if the learners are encouraged and able to analyse and evaluate it themselves.

6.2 SUGGESTIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK STRATEGY PRACTICES

The following suggestions for the development of effective feedback strategy practices are made:

- It is important for teachers not to correct learner errors or give the right answers to them immediately, but to give them cues so they can correct their own errors (Allwright, 1975; Makino, 1993).
- For grades to be effective, the whole class must take time to put them into perspective. This may include, among others, deciding when a grade should be given, how often, and by whom. The class must also agree on what a particular grade means and how it should be responded to (Hammond, 1983).
- Muncie (2000) suggests a technique in which learners produce, on the day in which compositions are returned to them, a summary entitled 'How I can improve future compositions.' On this paper they write a list of text-general points extrapolated from the text-specific comments that they received from both their peers and from the final-draft feedback they have just read. Throughout the writing cycles, learners are frequently reminded to refer back to this summary whilst composing, and to ensure that they follow recommendations. At the end of every writing cycle, they add more points to the list, from the feedback which they have received. Over time, fewer and fewer points are added as learners begin to appreciate the areas which they individually need to concentrate on, and improvements are made.

The advantages of such a system over mid-draft written teacher feedback are threefold:

Firstly, learners need to process the feedback at the level of critical evaluation and decision-making in order to translate the comments into

points which they can use in the future – using greater mental effort which, in turn, is more likely to lead to internalization of that feedback.

Secondly, the summary which they produce and use is indisputably theirs in origin; the element of choice is always present when the learners construct their summaries from the variety of teacher and peer comments available to them. This ensures that learners are able to act on the teacher's comments, but in an autonomous, self-directed way.

Thirdly, this technique bridges the gap between learners' texts, allowing feedback on one composition to be used directly in the writing of future texts, and thus helping to produce improvement which goes beyond that of the current draft and into the long-term. The students have each produced, for themselves, a personalized guide to writing better compositions, which they can continue to use long after the course is finished (Muncie, 2000: 51).

- Frankenberg-Garcia (1999) suggests that the simplest way of providing feedback to students is through encouraging students to ask for help whenever the need arises, with the teacher acting as a facilitator. The kind of help the teacher can give, Frankenberg-Garcia (1999) elaborates, will vary as students will be helped according to their needs. For example, students who are not used to using dictionaries may be encouraged to look up words they do not know or cannot spell, when those who have problems with word-order sequence may be advised as soon as the problem arises.

- Various researchers (Glatthorn, 1981:8; Diagon, 1986:15; Freedman, 1987:36; Lewitt, 1990:2) have, however, found that teachers' remarks on written texts were mostly vague and insufficient, since comments such as "Poor" or "Pay attention to spelling" do not provide effective guidance on how to solve the underlying problem. Teachers must give feedback that is text-specific, that would help the student to address the weaknesses identified.

Various researchers (Knoblauch & Brannon, 1984; Sommers, 1982) also agree that comments should be student as well as text-specific. Inappropriate responses, which include generic responses, responding outside the assignment's context and approaching the student's work with preconceptions of what and how they should be, confuse and alienate students, causing negative attitudes toward writing (Horvath, 1994; Cohen & Cavalcanti, 1990).

- Horvath (1994) warns against the counter-productivity of too much comment. This may only confuse, frustrate and depress unsure students (in particular) who may not know which aspects of their prose most need attention. This may be a further suggestion to them that they cannot and will never write well.

- Teachers should refrain from responses that inhibit effective revision, for example, feedback on early drafts that focuses on mechanical matters rather than content. Sommers (1982: 148 - 156) suggests that these comments may cause students to see revision as punishment, as busy work and/or a reductive, formulaic tidying up of already finalized messages and more concerned with incorporating teacher's changes than with productively re-seeing one's content and aim.

Horvath's (1994) opinion is that the most inappropriate comments are those veiled attacks on the student, his/her opinion and interest, and, his/her worth as a writer. Writing is an intensely personal act, revealing character, belief, intellect and feeling. Therefore, responses that scorn, are hostile, condescending, superficial or convey boredom, are out of line.

- In giving feedback, the teacher has to understand that steering clear of a negative judgmental response in favour of more positive comments does not prohibit criticism. Horvath (1994) argues that a

critical attitude will convey to the student that his/her text is treated seriously and respectfully to warrant the teacher's attention.

- According to Cohen and Cavalcanti (1990), research on L1 writing has found that teachers and learners do not share common information, skills, and values when they come to the interaction situation; for example, a teacher's oral clarification of feedback may consist simply of deciphering his/her handwritten responses, which may not be the student's problem. It is further suggested that learners may make changes according to what they think the teacher's values are, out of a belief that the teacher knows best. The student in this case gives in to the teacher, thus sacrificing the original thought in order to be in line with what the teacher wants, albeit different from what was intended.
- According to Hillocks (1986), a review of L1 writing research found that teacher feedback was most effective if it was both focused and followed by subsequent student revision.
- Hammond (1983) asserts that whereas most readers peruse an article or a book looking for information, for some surprises, for good writing, most teachers come to students' papers looking for faults and they come armed with correction symbols. A teacher should come to every student paper armed not with correction symbols, but with solid expectations that he/she will be informed, pleasantly informed. Teachers should come prepared to hear what students write, not just correcting it. Teachers must stop taking themselves so seriously for that arouses, even in the best students, a feeling of being abashed, if not actually resentful. If we get students to take us seriously as readers, they begin to write more consciously and conscientiously.
- Research into the process of composing and the practices of skilled writers emphasizes the role of revision in the evolution of the text as well as the role of feedback in the teaching and learning of writing. The teacher needs to step out of the traditional role of the reader, which has been to evaluate the learner's first draft as if it were the

final product, and assume the role of a consultant facilitating the learner's step-by-step creation of the text. Learners also need to change their view of the first draft as a final one. They should learn to return to the text again and again, to discover not only what else they want to say but also how to say it better. The teacher and the learner need to reach a consensus on the nature and function of feedback (Cohen & Cavalcanti, 1990).

- Swanepoel (1998) cites a problem with the current teaching practice (ESL Interim Core Syllabus, 1995) which requires that students write examinations. This practice, according to Pratt (1990), prevents students from using the good writing habits that they have learnt in the process writing classroom. Exams are written under rigid time constraints and, students therefore, do not have enough time to go through all the writing stages that they have learnt. The introduction of the writing portfolio for which learners are awarded a Continuous Assessment mark may address this shortcoming as learners are allowed to do their writing tasks over time, rather than in the stringent examination setting.
- The best product can only be arrived at if there is continued dialogue between the writer and the reader during the process of writing. Throughout the process, the teacher, the reader, keeps the writer, the student, informed about how the text is developing, and how it can be improved to communicate what the writer, the student, wants to present. Through revising and reformulating the text, the writer produces a text that best presents what he/she wants to communicate to the reader. Feedback given during the process thus helps the learner to keep to the communicative nature of writing, as opposed to feedback given at the end, which may be seen to be judgmental.
- The importance of motivation is underlined by Blanche and Merino (1989:329) when they remind teachers that although 'attitude and aptitude can be related to achievement in foreign languages ...

attitudinal factors almost certainly outweigh aptitude factors in second language acquisition'. They furthermore revealed that the student's motivation is positively affected by 'self-evaluation devices'.

- The teacher's role in student writing is not the last event in the process of writing. Marking should always provide a platform from which students can reassess and redraft their work. Feedback must be interactive to be genuinely effective, and this requires teachers to find ways of correcting papers which both encourage students to think about what they have done and lead them to improve on it (Van der Walt et al., 1994: 15).

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Even though the central theoretical statements formulated in this study may be accepted, the results of this investigation cannot be generalized since the study was only conducted on a limited group of teachers and learners.

A suggestion for future research will be to repeat this investigation with a bigger number of subjects/participants, as well as a larger spread over provinces and educational districts.

A bigger challenge will be on how to motivate and encourage teachers, who were trained in the product approach to writing, to consider alternative feedback strategies. As indicated in this study, some teachers still want to hold on to "old practices", despite the change of focus recommended in various National Education Documents (Interim Core Syllabus, 1995; National Department of Education, 2001). The challenge, as noted by Dheram (1995), is enormous.

Attention should also be given as to how the introduction of portfolios – with effect from 2001- can be used to enhance the process approach to

writing, and subsequently, the on-going feedback dialogue (National Department of Education, 2001).

Additional research could also be conducted on the sustainability and transferability of feedback.

Another area that may need to be researched is whether teacher-education institutions sufficiently equip students/learners with alternative feedback strategies. This may shed light on the area that needs to be developed by teacher training institutions.

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ADDENDUM A.

16 JULY 2001

COMPOSITION

THE PERSON I ADMIRE MOST

The person I admire most is my moth She influences me to so many things. my mother education comes first. She use to say to me; 'my child educatio is the key to success. So when comin to education my mother influences a lot.

Every night around eight she encoura me to go [to] study. She don't even want to me to watch T.V. After eig at night I know that I must go to [study] read. Every morning she comes to my room and wake up me. If I dont want to wake up she just tell m that: the [warm] of my blanket is no important, but my education is the only thing which is important. So tha is why I am saying the person I ad re most is my mother.

I [supposti] to admire my mother beca really she influenced me so much. am doing Grade 12 today because my mother. She is a good motivator me. Every Saturday at 7 hour, she te

ADDENDUM B.

20/30

MY FAVOURITE TEACHER AND SUBJECT

My favourite teacher is Mrs Mamosikatsana and my favourite subject is English. I love the way she is presenting her subject. If it is a period of English I know that I am going to enjoy the lesson and she tries by all means to teach our needs. I also like the way she is treating us. She is possitive to each and every pupil. She is always shewing love on her face.

I love English because Mrs Mamosikatsana makes it easy for me and I am now trying by all means to speak English. I also want to speak English like her, because she speak a very nice and understandable English, she is always smiling so that is why my favourite subject is English.

29/05/2007
Smiling

Student 5

ADDENDUM C

Martha Phukuntsi

17 May 2001

People infected with HIV should not be compelled by law to inform their employers.

People infected with HIV are like all other uninfected ones. All they want is what anybody needs and that is their own right, to tell or not to tell.

They may want to keep it a secret and they have a right to secrecy. They may regard it as private and confidential and they have a right to privacy, as we all know that privacy is important. It is their own choice whether they want to inform their employers or not.

The law itself has a constitution proclaiming human rights or it says everybody is equal [redacted] the eyes of the law. I think in reading is my food for knowledge, living luxurious is my food for thought and for them it must be a good choice if a secret then it will be food for their heart's desire. Too long a sentence

They are not abnormal people, then why should the law try to treat them in unnatural ways. They would want to [redacted] that is totally unfair. They know what is best for them. For God's sake they'll have to be left alone, they can think for themselves, they can take care of themselves as well.

What if the employers are not concerned with that? What if they tell employers and eventually they get fired and they will have no where to go and no where to find food, water and shelter. What is going to happen to them?

ADDENDUM D

13/20 THE QAULITIES OF A GOOD LEADER.

A good leader must be someone who is kind and caring; someone who is well organized, easy to talk to and understanding, and she or he must stick to his things!!
Like Nelson ① He gave up his life for black people No matter how hard it was, he didint give up till he got what he wanted. A freedom for blacks.

A good leader has to be kind, caring, easy to talk to and understanding. Nelson Mandela was kind to blacks, he even sacrifised himself for going to prison He cared for them because after the elections, he tried his best that the schools should be enough for blacks as well as hospitals, clinics, rehabilitation centres.

He understood that blacks needed help, they needed water, houses, jobs and he made sure that some got those things. He organized an investment of house buildings, so there were jobs to offer out of building houses.

Nelson Mandela is a very good example for leaders, because he gave black people what they needed most freedom. Be cautious about the correct use of punctuation marks. Avoid repetition!

APPENDIX A: WRITING FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

1. Feedback strategies

1.1 Which feedback strategy do you use to give feedback to your learners?

a) Mark all their errors in detail
b) One-to-one conferencing
c) Pre-text feedback
d) Multiple draft feedback
e) Audio tape feedback
f) Learner self-correction
g) Peer assessment
h) Other. Please specify

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2. When and How is feedback given?

2.1 When do you mark your learners' writing tasks?

a) At the end of writing
b) When they are still writing
c) When they are still planning

2.2 When do you give feedback to your learners' writing tasks?

a) After I have marked their essays
b) When they are busy brainstorming the topic
c) On a one-to-one basis while they are busy with their writing

2.3 In your opinion, when would feedback be effective?

a) At the end of writing
b) When learners are still writing
c) When learners are still planning

2.4 When learners/students do corrections, do you check that this is done accurately?

a) Yes
b) No
c) Sometimes

2.5 Is your feedback user-friendly?

a) Yes
b) No
c) Sometimes

2.6 Who marks your learners' writing tasks (e.g. essays)?

a) I do
b) Learners do
c) Both the learners and I

2.7 Do you allow learners to comment on each other's work?

a) Yes
b) No
c) Sometimes

2.8 How do you mark your learners' writing?

a) I mark grammar/content/structure at the same time
b) I mark in detail, underline, circle, slash and give a mark
c) I mark content and grammar

3. The value of feedback

3.1 Do you think your learners/students understand the feedback that you give them?

a) Yes
b) No
c) Sometimes

3.2 Do you require your learners/students to do corrections on their essays?

a) Yes
b) No

c) Sometimes

3.3 Do your learners learn from the feedback that you provide?

a) Yes
b) No
c) Sometimes

3.4 Do you think marking all errors is important to your students?

a) Yes
b) No
c) Sometimes

3.5 Do you think marking your learners'/students' writing is important? If so, why?

a) Yes
b) No
c) Sometimes

Thank you for your contribution to this study. Your identity will be protected, and the results of this study will be communicated to you if you so desire.

Yours faithfully

Monyaki B.S. (Researcher)

APPENDIX B: WRITING FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE FOR LEARNERS

1. Feedback strategies

1.1 Does your teacher mark all your errors when you hand in your essay?

a) Yes
b) No
c) Sometimes

1.2 Does your teacher allow you to assess your own writing?

a) Yes
b) No
c) Sometimes

1.3 Does your teacher allow your peers to give you feedback on your writing?

a) Yes
b) No
c) Sometimes

2. How and When is feedback given?

2.1 When does your teacher mark your writing (e.g. essays)?

a) When I am still planning
b) When I have finished writing
c) When I am busy writing

2.2 When would you want your teacher to mark your writing?

a) When I am still planning
b) When I have finished writing
c) When I am busy writing

2.3 Are your teachers' comments helpful?

a) Yes
b) No
c) Sometimes

2.4 How does your teacher mark your essay?

a) He underlines, circles and writes question marks

b) He gives a mark and a comment, e.g. Good or Poor
c) He gives a mark and a summary of what is wrong

2.5 Does your teacher assist you in your writing before you hand in your final essay?

a) Yes
b) No
c) Sometimes

2.6 Does your teacher give you a chance to improve your essay?

a) Yes
b) No
c) Sometimes

2.7 Does your teacher encourage you to write corrections?

a) Yes
b) No
c) Sometimes

3. The value of feedback

3.1 Do you understand your teachers' feedback?

a) Yes
b) No
c) Sometimes

3.2 Do you learn from your teachers' marks and comments?

a) Yes
b) No
c) Sometimes

3.3 Do you want your teachers to mark and comment on your work in detail?

a) Yes
b) No
c) Sometimes

3.4 Does your teachers' feedback motivate you to try and do better in your next essay?

a) Yes
b) No
c) Sometimes

Thank you for your contribution to this study. Your identity will be protected, and the results of this study will be communicated to you if you so desire.

Yours faithfully

Monyaki B.S. (Researcher)