

**Process writing approach as intervention to first-year students'
essay writing challenges at North-West University, Mafikeng
campus**

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DECLARATION

I, Kehilwe Sadi Mose neé Morwe, hereby declare that:

PROCESS WRITING APPROACH AS INTERVENTION TO FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS'
ESSAY WRITING CHALLENGES AT NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY, MAFIKENG CAMPUS

is my own original work, that the project has not been submitted previously and that all the external sources used have been duly acknowledged by means of complete reference.

Signed.....

Date.....

KEHILWE SADI MOSE

DEDICATION

I humbly and respectfully dedicate

PROCESS WRITING APPROACH AS INTERVENTION TO FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS' ESSAY WRITING CHALLENGES AT NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY, MAFIKENG CAMPUS

to the following people posthumously:

My mother Sebaka Morwe, Mr David Segatlhe and Professor Themba Lancelot Ngwenya. These souls' altruism instilled in me confidence for academic success for they all had great love for books and education. Their collective memory and their love for academic prowess have been my extrinsic motivation to complete this project.

I also dedicate this study to my daughters, Rebaone, Oratile and Princess for having always reminded me how important it was for me to complete what I started.

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Lastly, but most importantly, I am truly indebted to my AGLE Class 2 students who were more than willing to participate in the study without being coerced. Had it not been for their willingness to participate in this study, the study would not have materialised.

EDITING CERTIFICATE



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CERTIFICATE OF EDITING A DISSERTATION

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This serves to confirm that I have read and edited Ms Kehilwe Mose's dissertation titled: **Process Writing Approach as Intervention to First-Year Students' Essay Writing Challenges at North-West University, Mafikeng campus**. The candidate corrected the language errors identified. The document is of an acceptable linguistic standard.

Thank you

Yours Faithfully

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ABSTRACT

The researcher has continuously observed the perennial trend of incompetency in the quality of first-year students' academic writing skills at the North-West University, Mafikeng Campus. 'Inadequate' and 'incoherent' best describe the level of incompetency in the quality of these students' academic writing. This has been observed from the essays submitted for assessment. Based on these perennial trends (described as 'inadequate' and 'incoherent'), the researcher was eventually prompted to explore systematically-informed mechanisms by which the observed first-year students' essay writing skills and challenges could be improved.

The observed challenges became a catalytic factor in the researcher's employment of the reflective journal approach as an ameliorative mechanism or strategy to address these challenges. The teaching approach embedded in reflective writing is a process that involves eliciting students' views regarding the essay writing problems they encounter, which is what this study aims to achieve by means of participatory action research. Data was analysed qualitatively through the on-going narrative process.

The theoretical framework of the study is based on the Grammatical Theory of Learning, the Error Correction (Analysis) and the Building Block Theory.

The results of the study indicate the effectiveness of the intervention strategies which was reflected in the journals.

Key-words: Process Writing Approach, Participatory Action Research, Narrative Analysis, Reflective Journals, Teaching, The Grammatical Theory of Learning, The Building Block Theory, Error Analysis, Intervention Strategies.

OPSOMMING

Die navorser was deurentyd bewus van die onvermoë wat weerspieël word in die kwaliteit van die akademiese skryfwerk van eerste jaar studente van die Noordwes Universiteit se Mafikeng kampus. “Ontoereikend” en “Onsamehangend” beskryf die gebrek aan skryfvermoë van hierdie studente soos waargeneem in ‘n opstel wat ingehandig is vir assessering. Aangemoedig deur hierdie immerteenwoordige aspek (hierbo na verwys as “ontoereikend” en “onsamehangend”), is die navorser aangespoor om ‘n sistematies-ingeligte meganisme te ondersoek waardeur die eerste jaar student se tekortkominge en uitdagings by die skryf van opstelle aangespreek kon word.

Die uitdagings wat waargeneem is, was ‘n bepalende faktor in die navorser se gebruik van die reflektiewe joernaal benadering as ‘n verbeterings meganisme of strategie ten opsigte van die uitdagings. Die onderrigbenadering deur middel van reflektiewe skryfwerk is ‘n proses wat die siening van studente rakende die uitdagings wat hulle tydens die skryf van ‘n opstel ervaar, bepaal. Dit is die doel van hierdie studie deur middel van deelnemende aksie navorsing. Data is kwalitatief geëvalueer deur middel van die voortgaande vertellende proses.

Die teoretiese raamwerk van hierdie studie is gebaseer op die Grammatikale Leerteorie, die Fout Korreksie (Analise) en die Boublok Teorie.

Die resultate van die studie toon die effektiwiteit van die intervensie strategieë wat in die joernale na vore gekom het.

SLEUTELTERME: Prosesskryf Benadering; Eelnemende Aksie Navorsing, Vertellende Analise, Refleksiewe Joernale, Onderrig, Die Grammatikale Leerteorie, Die Boublok Teorie, Fout Analise, Intervensie Strategieë

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AGLE:	<i>Advanced General Literacy in English</i>
AL:	<i>Academic Literacy</i>
AR:	<i>Action Research</i>
ARMS:	<i>Add Remove Move Substitute</i>
BICS:	<i>Basic Interpersonal Communication Skill</i>
BB:	<i>Building Block</i>
CALP:	<i>Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency</i>
CUPS:	<i>Capitalise Usage Punctuation Spelling</i>
EA:	<i>Error Analysis</i>
EAS:	<i>English as Additional Language</i>
ESAL:	<i>English as a Second Additional Language</i>
I+O:	<i>Input and Output</i>
PA:	<i>Participatory Approach</i>
PAR:	<i>Participatory Action Research</i>
PA:	<i>Product Approach</i>
PWA:	<i>Process Writing Approach</i>
PWA-AR:	<i>Process Writing Approach-Action Research</i>
MP:	<i>Meeting Place</i>
O+I:	<i>Output plus Input</i>
RT:	<i>Reflective Teaching</i>
RW:	<i>Reflective Writing</i>

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the skills that should be fully developed in academic settings particularly, since it is an expressive tool that demonstrates both communicative competence and evidence of critical thinking in the target language (Vyncke, 2012: 3; Tarnopolsky, 2004: 27). As demonstrative of both a communication and meaning-making competence in the conceptualisation and development of language, writing is therefore construed as interactive, iterative and multi-faceted in nature (Kent, 1993: 145-146). Kent posits further that communication is not unilateral transmission but a reciprocal and interactive transaction for the specific transmission of messages in a particular form. It is largely on account of the latter reason that the teaching of writing should focus primarily on demonstrating and measuring that learning and mastery of specific skills is taking place (Vyncke, 2012: 31; Clark, 2009: 5, 7). The demonstration and measurement of competence could then be assessed and established in the event that learners are able to communicate their ideas competently, effectively and succinctly in writing by producing coherent and cohesive texts.

Writing enables students to proceed from the open-ended processing techniques which are common in reading, to the complete grammatical processing techniques that demand accurate written output (Ngwenya, 2010). Ngwenya further explains that writing is more likely to foster the development of morphology and syntax, rather than semantics and pragmatics only; which is the case in the use of the other language skills. The morphology-syntax and semantics-pragmatics transition further implies that those students whose adequate exposure and immersion in a second language has resulted in their good command of the language, may not be as equally competent in the semantics and pragmatics of the self-same language. Consequently, such students would need their semantics and pragmatics competencies to be developed and sharpened.

Throughout its metamorphological stages of conceptualisation, writing has been viewed mainly as a tool for the practice and reinforcement of grammatical and lexical patterns (Aljoundi, 2014: 4). In this regard, students were viewed as “writing to learn”, as opposed to “learning to write” (Tribble, 1996: 118). However, the increased concern with equipping students’ writing skills and needs beyond the classroom has changed the focus of writing instruction towards a student-centred perspective. Leki (1987) is one of the advocates and proponents of the student-centred orientation in writing. One of

the remarkable elements resulting from this change is that the teacher is no longer 'the dispenser of knowledge' nor 'the distributor of sanction and judgment' (Weimer, 2002). Instead, the teacher should be viewed as a facilitator and a 'coach on the margins' rather than a 'sage on the stage' (Leki, 1987). This paradigmatic shift from teacher to learner-centredness also demands more student participation and responsibility in the learning process (Marginson, 2000: 34; Naude, 2003: 72-73).

1.2 RATIONALE AND BACKGROUND OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

From the researcher's point of view, there exists a level of differentiation between the rationale of the study and its background or context of the research problem. Cast in this mould then, the rationale for undertaking the study is preceded by the background or context of the research problem (de Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2011: 359-360). Whereas the rationale rests on the researcher's own justification or motivation of her reasons for conducting the study; the background or context of the research problem is necessarily allocated some degree of 'physicality' or historical manifestation of the research problem to be resolved (Babbie & Mouton, 2010: 72-73). The rationale of the study further provides an explanatory framework of reasons which indicate and subjectively justify the researcher's own interest in the study as relevant to a particular problematic or unresolved state of affairs. On the other hand, the background or context of the study describes the who, the what, the how, and the why of the problematic state of affairs to be resolved (de Vos et al., 2011: 360). In this regard, both the rationale of the study and its background or context of the identified research problem is logically inextricable from the purpose and objectives of the study (De Laine, 2000: 3-4).

There is a real need for researchers to focus on the role of teachers as central facilitators in the effort to change academic writing instruction for the benefit of the students (Graves, 1981), Leki (1990), Kumaravadivelu (2003), and Yesilbursa (2011). For this reason in particular, the rationale of the study is located within the researcher's own occupational domain. The researcher has been in the employ of the North-West University (NWU) as a lecturer in a compulsory first-year module, Advanced General Literacy in English (AGLE) 111 and AGLE 121). It is in this capacity that the researcher continuously observed the perennial trend of incompetency in the quality of first-year students' academic writing skills at the North-West University, Mafikeng Campus. 'Inadequate' and 'incoherent' best describe the incompetency in the quality of these students' academic writing, observed from the essays submitted for assessment by the self-same students. Based on these perennial trends (described as 'inadequate' and 'incoherent'), the researcher was eventually

prompted to explore systematically-informed mechanisms by which the observed first-year students' essay writing skills and challenges could be improved.

Students mistakenly believe that their fluent English-speaking skills automatically translate into coherent and cohesive writing (Zulu, 2008). Ngwenya (2010: 85) corroborates Zulu (2008) above, adding that writing is more cognitively demanding than reading. The latter author's observation of the hiatus between speaking fluency and writing accuracy is based on Cummins' (1979) distinction between Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). The BICS-CALP matrix syllogistically implies that students who have acquired the basic English conversational skills do not necessarily have the higher-order cognitive skills that would enable them to succeed in a higher learning context in which accuracy, coherence, cohesion and proficiency in academic writing is required.

From the researcher's perspective, the syllogism referred to above, coheres with the cognitive process model of writing expounded by authors such as Flower and Hayes (1981), and Pinker (1994). In terms of this model, writing is a symbiotic non-linear process (Flowers & Hayes, 1981: 367). That is to say, writing proficiency is not an automatic linear communicative competency based on speaking fluency. Each of the two (writing and speaking) are developmental processes influenced by a variety of cognitive factors (Aljoundi, 2014: 3-4). Swain (1995: 128), most succinctly articulates the writing-speaking narrative thus:

The ability to decode language, [that is, the ability to understand the meaning conveyed by a particular sentence], is not the same as code-breaking, that is, discovering the linguistic systems which carry that meaning.

The researcher observed further that the essay writing challenge of most first-year students was compounded by 'the disconnect factor'. Accordingly, the students are uncharacteristically withdrawn and 'disconnected' from each other. In most instances, they sit quietly and finish their writing tasks without interacting with others or asking questions during lectures, as they are averse to ridicule by their peers. Furthermore, the researcher's lecturing responsibilities are not sufficiently structured for attending to every student's academic writing needs adequately. The diverse needs, backgrounds, and abilities of the class necessitate this attention for the identification and improvement of their academic essay writing skills.

It is in lieu of the above-cited factors that the researcher's interest was prompted to conduct the study as a systematic intervention mechanism and strategy in the teaching and improvement of first-year university students' academic writing. The researcher subsequently embarked on the systematic

identification of the challenges encountered by accessing some seminal studies on the history of the teaching of academic essay writing skills in accordance with arguments advanced by authors such as Cummins, 1979; Oller, 1979; Gibbs, 1988; et al., and other notable scholars in the field (The latter aspect is presented in more detail in the ensuing literature review section of the current study). In the literature review process, the researcher sought to develop an effective writing model that could serve as a framework for the amelioration of the identified academic essay writing challenges. The researcher's pursuit for an effective writing model for the benefit of first-year students is then in tandem with the assertion by Graves (1981: 106), who states that:

Even though much of our research has focused on teachers in the past, we have never actually studied the process of teaching writing. We have never studied even one teacher to know what ingredients are involved in teaching writing.

The observed challenges pertaining to the first-year university students' academic essay writing challenges became a catalytic factor in the researcher's employment of the reflective journal approach as an ameliorative mechanism or strategy to these challenges. The teaching approach embedded in reflective writing is a process which involves the elicitation of students' views regarding the essay writing problems they encounter, which is what this study aims to achieve by means of participatory action research. The reflective approach to the teaching of writing is in conformity with the affirmation by Williams (2000: 12) that, "reflection, which is self-consciousness and self-critique is crucial to competence". Additionally, the reflective journal approach is advantageous in the writing-learning process, as it enables students to develop their critical thinking skills (Lam, 2014).

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The afore-mentioned rationale of the study and background or context of the research problem has essentially defined the parameters within which the identified research problem is prevalent. The research problem refers to "the level of conceptualization" in terms of which the researcher observes and acknowledges the existence of an unresolved or problematic state of affairs (De Laine, 2000: 4). Kothari (2004: 20) accentuates the problematic in the research problem, stating that, "A research problem, in general, refers to some difficulty which a researcher experiences in the context of either a theoretical or practical situation and wants to obtain a solution for the same".

A research problem generally highlights some measure of disjuncture or gap (lacuna) between theory and practice within a particular field or body of knowledge. In the current study, the corpus of knowledge relates to the teaching and learning of academic essay writing in higher education

contexts (de Vos et al., 2011: 362; Babbie & Mouton, 2008: 74-75; Holtzhausen, 2007: 22). Accordingly, the research problem then validates and gives currency to the very reasons which initially necessitated the study to be undertaken (Holtzhausen, 2007: 22-23).

It is worth mentioning that the research problem is not a 'stand-alone' or peripheral component of the entire research value chain. Instead, the "level of conceptualization" of the research problem is an apt demonstration of the inextricable relationship among all the research variables; such as the research topic, the research aim and objectives, the research questions, the conceptual or theoretical framework, as well as the data collection and analysis processes (Holtzhausen, 2007: 23; Bless, Higson-Smith & Kagee, 2006: 30).

Prompted by the rationale of the study, the researcher then embarked on a systematic process of exploring, identifying, describing, and explaining the problematic or unresolved state of affairs (de Vos et al., 2011: 361; Babbie & Mouton, 2008: 73). In this study, the research problem is located specifically within the context of academic essay writing challenges faced by first-year university students, as well as the ameliorative teaching strategies proposed in this regard.

The researcher's pilot study provided evidence that many students' writing at first-year level was fraught with semantic, lexical, grammatical and morpho-syntactic challenges. Despite their twelve years of learning English as a Second Additional Language (ESAL) from grade 1 (one) to 12 (twelve), the construction of basic, coherent, and cohesive texts at first-year university level remains an extant challenge. These writing challenges confirm the view that writing is a skill that cannot be mastered in a short time and that students need to be continuously trained to acquire this skill (Maarof & Murat, 2013; Bayat, 2014). The prevalence of writing and other language-related challenges was exemplified by the gamut of grammatical errors found in the essay of a final-year university student, such as: punctuation, inappropriate tense, misspelt words, concord errors, phlegmatic vocabulary, and wordiness (verbosity). In the light of the rationale and identification of the research problem and its magnitude, the researcher was prompted to fulfil a professional obligation by undertaking this particular study.

1.4 RESEARCH AIM

Depending on the intellectual persuasion, tradition, or paradigm adopted by various research scholars and practitioners, the concepts 'research aim, purpose or goal' and 'research objectives' are viewed and understood differently (Henning, 2005: 10; Babbie, 2010: 562; Fouche, 2002: 106). One school of thought maintains that these two research nuances are synonymous, while the other holds the opposite view. Accordingly, 'the similarity perspective' contends that 'research aim, purpose or goal' and 'research objectives' are interrelated, and could be used interchangeably. On the basis of their interchangeability, these two terms are then viewed as similar; that is, of the same conceptual currency.

In contradistinction, the 'opposing' school of thought maintains that these two terms are interrelated, but not interchangeable. Accordingly, the two terms are then construed as two sides of the same coin; they are distinct from each other and carry two different, but complementary meanings (Henning, 2005: 10; Babbie, 2010: 562; Fouche, 2002: 106).

In the context of this study, the research aim, purpose or goal on the one hand; and the research objectives on the other, are construed as two different but interrelated (complementary) research concepts. In this regard then, the aim, purpose or goal of the study refers to "the broader or more general intentions" of the study (Henning, 2005: 11). The aim or purpose of this study is to identify the critical academic essay writing challenges of first-year university students and consequently generate pedagogically acceptable strategies in order to improve these students' essay writing competencies.

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

In terms of the differentiation of research aim, purpose, or goal and research objectives presented above, the research objectives refer to the narrower, irreducible, or specific intention of the study (Henning, 2005: 11; Babbie, 2010: 563; Fouche 2002: 107). Whereas the research aim is more general, the research objectives particularly address "the specific aspects of the topic that you [the researcher] want to investigate within the main framework of your study" (Kumar, 2011: 62). Therefore, specific intentions of this study are to:

- i. Identify the essay writing challenges of first-year AGLE students.
- ii. Evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention applied at each phase of the writing process.

- iii. Incorporate students' suggestions on the development of the writing process and subsequently assess their editing skills.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Research questions are not peripheral to the entire research process (Kumar, 2011: 36). Rather, the research questions are inextricably linked to the various units of analysis (e.g. research topic, research problem, as well as the research aim and objectives); and are specifically intended to guide the researcher, rather than the research participants (Kumar, 2011: 36; Babbie, 2010: 563). Each of the research questions below addresses, and are related to “a specific aspect of both the research problem and intended intervention” by the researcher (Kumar, 2011: 195). The latter author further articulates writ large, the criticality of the research questions thus: “Each question should contribute clear information on a specific aspect to be explored”. For purposes of this study, the following interrogative propositions constitute the study's research questions:

- i. What is the nature of challenges experienced by first-year AGLE students in their essay writing?
- ii. How can effective essay writing intervention strategies be evaluated?
- iii. How can students' suggestions and editing skills be incorporated into the essay writing process?

1.7 CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Albeit a truism, it is critical and worth mentioning that there exists a level of differentiation between a conceptual model and a theoretical framework. Kumar (2011: 54) most succinctly articulates this level of differentiation thus:

The conceptual framework is the basis of your research problem. It stems from the theoretical framework and usually focuses on the section(s) which become the basis of your study. Whereas the theoretical framework consists of the theories or issues in which your study is embedded, the conceptual framework describes the aspects you selected from the theoretical framework to become the basis of your enquiry. For instance, in the example cited, the theoretical framework includes all the theories that have been put forward to explain the relationship between fertility and mortality. However, out of these, you may be planning to test only one, say the fear of non-survival. Similarly, the conceptual framework is focused on indicators to measure the success or failure of the strategies to enhance community responsiveness. Hence the conceptual framework grows out of the theoretical framework and relates to the specific research problem.

Further to the above, a study's conceptual and theoretical frameworks are generated within the researcher's preferred research paradigm or tradition intended to locate or contextualise the research problem within its philosophical provenance (Kumar, 2011: 26, 52; Ramenyi & Bannister, 2013). According to Holloway and Wheeler (2010: 24), "a paradigm consists of theoretical ideas and technical procedures that a group of scientists adopt and which are rooted in a particular world view with its own [esoteric] language and terminology". The above-cited authors clarify unequivocally that cognitive concepts are the actual foundational tenets of conceptual models or theoretical frameworks, which are developed on the basis of thematically and logically organised associated philosophical principles or abstract ideas.

Conceptual models, frameworks or perspectives enable researchers "to organize ideas that demonstrate the study as a logical extension of current knowledge by means of theoretical framework, based on theories, conceptual paradigms, or assumptions" (Brink et al. 2010: 25). Van der Walt and Van Rensburg (2010: 22) add further that conceptual models also depict "less formal and less developed mechanisms for organizing [sic] phenomena than theories". From the researcher's point of view, the latter contention by Van der Walt and Van Rensburg (2010: 22) logically escalates the proposition of theoretical frameworks as transcendent to the conceptual.

Kumar (2011: 52) adds a critical dimension, of the nexus between literature review and the development of a theoretical framework, stating that:

....until you go through the literature you cannot develop a theoretical framework, and until you have developed a theoretical framework you cannot effectively review the literature.

It is axiomatic from the excerpt cited above that a study's conceptual or theoretical perspective is cognate from the review of literature. On the other hand, Kolade (2012, 17-18) mentions that "the writing skill has been theorised in an attempt to systematically develop this skill in the students". It is from the review of literature (rather than the empirical phase of the study), that the following three theories on students' academic literacy have been found to be pertinently useful in the current study. These theories are: the Grammatical Theory of Learning, the Error Correction and the Building Block Theory. The pertinent three theories constitute the basis for theoretical triangulation, according to which convergent perspectives, concepts and philosophical principles were established in order to maximise or enhance the realisation of the study's objectives and findings (Merriam, 2002: 30).

1.7.1 The Grammatical Theory of Learning

According to Proett, (1986), the theory of grammatical theory contends that learning is founded on the hypothesis that knowledge of language structures and the rules for combining these result in students becoming accomplished and articulate writers. Contrarily, Oden (1999) contends that the teaching of these grammatical structures does not directly improve students' writing skills. It is precisely this disjuncture between students' English speaking and writing proficiency which informed the present study's focus on the writing process with students' involvement as reflective participants. Through reflective participation, students are expected to acquire critical skills and enhance their individual understanding of the writing process (Lam, 2014; Weigle, 2002; Belanoff & Dickson, 1991). Various authors emphasise that grammar and its structuring transcend mere linguistic parameters. For instance, Shelton (2007: 58) illuminates that "language learning is not a politically neutral activity. English teachers carry with them the possibility of ideological domination and linguistic imperialism ... teachers [of English should] critically examine their hidden curricula." Yi (2006: 495) corroborates 'the ideological factor' thus:

As grammar and form are ideological, students need to develop a sensitivity to their ideological implications in order to foster independent expression ... It is important that students are engaged in negotiating with grammar, so that they understand grammar as being contextual, ideological, and negotiable.

Given the ideological prominence of grammar as a component of (English) language, the above-cited author avers further that the approach to the teaching and learning of the language should prioritise "the place of functional grammar in text structure" (Yi, 2006: 495).

1.7.2 The Error Correction Theory

The error correction theory emanates from error analysis, 'quod ab aliis dicitur' (Dulay & Binnui, 2008; Yin, 2003; Burt & Krashen, 1982; Corder, 1981; Canale & Swain, 1980). Correction of students' language writing errors is a means towards making them effective writers. Kolade (2012) opined that classroom experiences show that incessant corrections frustrate students. He further indicated that earlier researchers on writing have, however, failed to establish the positive correlation between error correction and improvement in students' writing ability. It is on this basis that the study supports the training of students in editing their own written work. They can do this in pairs and record their experiences of these tasks in their journals.

Corder (1981) also discussed the advantages of error analysis for learners, teachers and researchers. For learners, it is the learning instruments of language learning. For teachers, it indicates what types of errors learners make, what skills learners have achieved and what remains for them to learn. Also, for researchers, errors provide evidence of how learners acquire the language and what strategies they employ to achieve the learning goal. It is on the basis of this study that the researcher also captures her observation of errors in her journal so as to develop relevant intervention strategies to address students' challenges which would in turn contribute towards her professional development as well.

1.7.3 The Building Block Theory

The building block theory is premised on the notion that students learn to write by means of smaller units, known as building blocks (Kolade, 2012). The theory focuses more on form, rather than the actual content and substance of the written text. Learning of the structuration of sentences, paragraphs, clauses and other mechanics may not individually or collectively address the paucity in the conceptual practices of writing (Kolade, 2012). In this study, the process method of the teaching of essay writing addresses this concern. The goal is to assist students from the moment they start preparing themselves for writing tasks, until they eventually produce the final written product.

The reference to relevant or applicable theories in the study is not an end in itself, but a means towards the fulfilment of certain expected outcomes (Shelton, 207; 66). Firstly, the theoretical and conceptual frameworks facilitated “a more linguistically informed perspective on teaching [English] language” in respect of its standard and non-standard variants or dialects (Shelton, 207; 66).

Several centuries ago, language became a class marker for English-speakers and so any dialect not spoken by the rich and powerful became tainted and labeled as lower class, uneducated and “incorrect”.

Secondly, learning about the applicable theories is, in itself, a process for narrowing the space between theory and practice (Shelton, 207: 66). Most importantly, linguistic and cultural barriers are diminished, since language rights is equally a component of human rights mantra and discourse:

We cannot change the worldly reality that the ability to speak and write in Standard [English] is required to increase the opportunity for success. However, we can change the way teachers treat students who speak other home languages and we can change teachers' attitudes toward those varieties of language. It is another linguistic truth that a

person's identity is wrapped up in his or her language. If we attack the language, we attack the person and his or her home, roots and heritage. When teachers help students bridge linguistic and cultural barriers, both the teachers and students find greater success.

1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study's significance or relevance is premised on the extent of justification or motivation of the reasons for which the study's execution were advanced in the initial instance (Kumar, 2011: 313; Kothari, 2004: 9). In this regard then, there already exists a symbiotic association between the study's significance or relevance on the one hand; as well as its other pertinent units of analysis such as the research problem, the research aim/ purpose and objectives, the research questions, and the attendant data collection and analysis processes (Holtzhausen, 2007: 23; Henning, 2005: 11). Logically, the study could be regarded as either relevant or irrelevant, useful or otherwise; depending on the strength or weakness of the reasons advanced for its execution. Since research is undertaken to resolve real-life situations, a measure of practicality becomes a necessary measure of its usefulness or otherwise, as well as its relevance or otherwise (Kothari, 2004: 7).

The following assertion by Bunting (2002: 66-67) is profoundly insightful, especially in respect of the significance or otherwise of any study:

Knowledge is not regarded as something which is good in itself, and hence worth pursuing for its own sake. It follows that knowledge which could be used for a specific social, economic or political purpose would be the primary form pursued ...

In the context of the current study, the study's significance or relevance is justifiable on two accounts, namely: its institutional or organizational and disciplinary or epistemological value.

1.8.1 Institutional Significance of the Study

The institutional significance of the study specifically refers to its practical usefulness or relevance in terms of enhancing or advancing the reputation or performance of the particular institution or organisation within which both the research topic and its research problem are located (Kumar, 2011: 25; Bunting, 2002: 66). Both the rationale of the study (outlined in Section 1.2 (p. 2) and the research aim (outlined in Section 1.4 (p. 7) were informative in the determination of the study's institutional value. Informed by her professional experience of five (05) years as AGLE 111 and AGLE 121 lecturer, the researcher's interest in the study was motivated by the need to ameliorate the first-year

university students' essay writing challenges. In this regard, the reputation and performance of the UNW's Faculty of Human Sciences would benefit from the study's envisaged framework of guidelines (see research objectives, p. 7) intended to improve both the individual and collective performance of first-year students' expected level of performance in AGLE 111 and AGLE 121 modules. Ultimately, the envisaged framework of guidelines, together with the recommendations, ultimately contribute towards curriculum policy formulation and implementation for the improvement of first-year students' essay writing skills.

In their article titled, *Mediocrity and the Fraud Called Education*, Hove and Maruma (2014b) assert that historically, any curriculum invites a re-examination and undergoes change in order to relate to evolving trends such as modernisation, technological innovation and instructional methodologies. This study therefore proposes innovative interventions that are likely to add to the existing knowledge of the curriculum developers for AGLE 111 and 121 first-year university students in particular; as well as the broader student community whose essay writing skills demonstrate a modicum of acceptable academic literacy across the curriculum in the higher education context.

1.8.2 Epistemological Significance of the Study

The study's epistemological significance is based on the degree to which the study contributes to both theory and practice in the body of knowledge pertaining to the field of teaching and learning in academic essay writing (Vyncke, 2012: 28-29; Kumar, 2011: 60, 315). With the benefit of literature review, the epistemological contribution of a study is most observable in the researcher's identification of gaps or lacunae in the body of knowledge pertaining to academic essay writing (Sing, 2006: 39, Kothari, 2004: 17). The indispensability of literature review in a study's epistemological contribution and significance is aptly encapsulated by Kumar (2011: 47) thus:

When reviewing the literature you [the researcher] learn what aspects of your subject area have been examined by others, what they have found out about these aspects, what gaps they have identified and what suggestions they have made for further research. All these help you gain a greater insight into your own research questions and provide you with clarity and focus which are central to a relevant and valid study. In addition, it helps you to focus your study on areas where there are gaps in the existing body of knowledge, thereby enhancing its relevance.

The researcher has highlighted in Section 1.2 (p. 2) above, that there is a dearth of university teachers (as practitioners) in research. Ergo, there is emphatically a real need for researchers to

focus on the role of teachers as central facilitators in the effort to change academic writing instruction for the benefit of the students (Yesilbursa, 2011; Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Leki, 1990; Graves, 1981). The study is therefore a methodological contribution to empirical research by a practitioner in the very field of knowledge currently investigated. The researcher's preferred mode of involvement in this exegetic enquiry then becomes "a sort of formal training which enables one to understand the new developments in one's field in a better way" (Kothari, 2004: 7).

The involvement of first-year students themselves in an exegetic enquiry on issues affecting them directly is in itself a methodological contribution in respect of participatory action research (Kumar, 2011: 126; Singh, 2006: 261-262; Kothari, 2004: 16; Street, 2003: 84). Copious research studies have focused on the problems encountered by students regarding cohesion and coherence in essay writing (Cekiso, 2016; Ahmed, 2010; Crossley & McNamara, 2010). However, there is scant evidence of the involvement of students as reflective participants in the production of coherent and cohesive texts in their academic essay writing. The students' utilisation of reflective journals at the end of each writing session during the (empirical) data collection phase is indicative of the enhancement of their learning experiences. Writing reflectively becomes meaningful and fruitful in the process of learning. The reflective journal, if effectively deployed in the teaching of essay writing skills by means of a process writing approach, is intended to help students to narrow the gaps between writing theories and practice, and most importantly it would heighten students' need of constantly monitoring their individual writing learning progress (Vyncke, 2012: 48-49).

1.9 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The review of literature is concerned with the foundational data collection process in terms of which secondary sources of information are searched, analysed, synthesized, and eventually selected for relevant information, ideas, and evidence pertaining to the chosen research topic (De Vos et al., 2011: 116; Holtzhausen, 2007: 22-23). Amongst other contributions, the literature review process enabled the researcher to obtain mainly theoretical knowledge on the nature, background, and evaluation of the research topic within the ambit of the research problem; the research aim/ purpose and objectives; the research questions; the theoretical framework; the ethical issues; as well as the attendant data analysis processes (Ramenyi & Bannister, 2013: 36; De Vos et al., 2011: 115; Sing, 2006: 39). In various parts of Section 1.7 (pp. 8-10), the inextricable association between literature review and the study's conceptual and framework was discussed. In addition, Kumar (2011: 199) aptly encapsulates the totality of the literature review thus:

As a rule, the literature review includes: a conceptual framework, theoretical and empirical information about the main issues under study; some of the major research findings relating to your topic, research questions raised in the literature and gaps identified by previous researchers. Your literature review should also raise issues relating to the methodology you are proposing. For example, it may examine how other studies operationalised [sic] the major variables of relevance to your study and may include a critique of methodology relevant to your study. The critiques of methods and procedures should be included under their respective headings. For example, a critique of the sampling design you adopt should be included under 'sampling' or a critique to the study design should be discussed under 'study design'.

It is evident that literature review encompasses both a general bibliographic orientation and a scholarship perspective (Babbie & Mouton, 2001: 565). The ordinary review (searching, synthesising, analysing) of literature focuses primarily on the comprehensive bibliographic listing of consulted sources (Sing, 2006: 39; Babbie & Mouton, 2001: 565-566; Mouton, 2001: 4-6, 90-91). Stated differently, the comprehensive listing of primary and secondary data sources primarily positions the study "...in the context of the general body of scientific knowledge ..." (Babbie & Mouton, 2001: 565). It is on the latter basis that the general list of consulted sources is provided immediately after the study's last chapter in the form of a List of References, or Bibliography, which was itself continuously pared in accordance with the conceptual and analytic logic of the study; that is, "the weight of evidence" (Mouton, 2001: 114). The bibliographic listing of references increased or decreased continuously in respect of those sources which either had direct or indirect peripheral connections to the study. All of these listed sources contributed, in varying degrees, to the development of the research topic, and the conceptual background and parameters of the research problem and its objectives (Sing, 2006: 39).

As opposed to the general listing or bibliographic orientation, the scholarship perspective adopted in this study enabled the researcher's orientation towards, and emphasis on the multiple intellectual insights and persuasions from various academics, scholars, practitioners, and researchers in the field(s) of academic writing and critical thinking in decolonized contexts (Babbie & Mouton, 2010; Shelton, 2007: 59-60; Canagarajah, 2002: 4). In this latter regard, the process of searching, consulting, analyzing, synthesizing, and ultimately selecting relevant literature was undertaken concurrently with the data analysis process; thus making it possible for information paring and refinement of the research problem in respect of the identification of dominant theories and themes;

current practice trends and innovations; topical issues and challenges; policy implications; as well as lessons learnt in the field of academic essay writing (Ramenyi & Banister, 2013: 36; Babbie & Mouton, 2010; 218).

1.9.1 Expected Outcomes of the Literature Review Process

The nature, purpose and value of the literature review as well as scholarship perspectives have been briefly articulated in the foregoing Section 1.9 above. From the researcher's point of view, the multiple intellectual perspectives by various scholars in the field of academic writing (rather than the general bibliographic listing of references) was most instrumental in the exploration and development of the expected literature review outcomes in the context of identifying dominant theories and themes; current practice trends and innovations; topical issues and challenges; policy implications; as well as lessons learnt in the field of academic literacy (Ramenyi & Banister, 2013: 36; Babbie & Mouton, 2010; 218). Mouton (2001: 6) accentuates the salience and insightfulness of the scholarship review perspective, on the basis of orientation towards: "... a review of the existing scholarship or available body of knowledge to see how other scholars have investigated the research problem that you [researcher] are interested in. Your interest is, therefore, not merely in literature (which sounds as if it refers merely to a collection of texts), but in a body of accumulated scholarship. You [researcher] want to learn from other scholars: how they have theorized [sic] and conceptualized [sic] on issues, what they have found empirically, and what instrumentation they have used and to what effect. In short, you are interested in the most recent, credible and relevant scholarship in your area of interest" (Mouton, 2001: 6).

The following discussion is thus premised on the thematically organised perspectives of various scholars, intellectuals, academics, practitioners, and professional researchers in the field of the teaching and learning of academic literacy (A more detailed discussion on the thematic integration of various authors' organisation, analysis, and interpretation of ideas and relevant information pertaining to the teaching and learning of academic essay writing is presented in Chapter 2 of the current study).

White (1981), Leki (1998) and Lam (2015) express the view that "writing is not a natural activity. All physically and mentally normal people learn to speak a language. Yet all people have to be taught how to write." It is right from this perspective that the teaching and learning of writing should be organised and accompanied with concerted effort of the language teacher and careful approach of the students towards the meaning-making and learning processes (Street, 2003: 83).

Some of the proponents of the academic essay writing assert that writing is a skill which demands that students plan and organise their imaginative and academic intentions clearly and sequentially in order to fulfil the essence and functionality of writing (Kolade, 2012; Kellog, 1988; Oluikpe, 1979). The teaching of essay writing and writing processes is more difficult than teaching and practising other language skills, especially that 'teaching' does not happen in a socially neutral context (Street, 2003: 78). The latter assertion is in agreement with views such as those expressed by Bell and Burnaby (1984), and Lee and Tan (2010); who ascertain that writing is an extremely complex cognitive activity in which the writer is required to demonstrate control of a number of constructs and variables simultaneously. The implication is that the writer should plan the content, format, sentence structure, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling and expression of ideas in order to demonstrate a foundational understanding of the writing processes in the particular language being taught and learnt (Street, 2003: 78).

The teaching of writing is more effective through the process writing procedures (planning, drafting, editing, revising and final version); which place more emphasis on the stages of the writing process than on the final product (Street, 2003: 85; Leki, 1998:11). In the present study, the process writing procedures is implemented as a mechanism to enhance first-year AGLE students' essay writing skills. However, the difference between Leki's approach and the one proposed in this study lies in the fact that students are the reflective participants under the lecturer's observation in the writing process. Such an approach allocates full ownership of the writing process to the students themselves. The approach also enables them to revisit, reframe and critique their own work.

Learning to write is not only a question of grammar (e.g. sentence construction, appropriate use of tenses and punctuation), but also requires critical thinking skills. Heaton (2005: 135) asserts this view thus:

Writing does not only require mastery of lexical, grammatical and rhetorical devices but also of conceptual judgement skills.

Heaton's assertion above shows that the ability to express ideas clearly and effectively in writing is crucial. Therefore, the reflective journal approach to writing aims at improving students' ability to communicate ideas proficiently, critically and analytically in a bid to promote success inside and outside of the writing classroom (University of Birmingham, 2015: 2).

1.10 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

There are some limitations inherent in investigations of this nature (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche' & Delport, 2011:76). However, the value of the study is not diminished by the fact that these exist, and reporting on them actually enhances the value of the study.

Firstly, the study is limited to a sample of two groups of AGLE first-year students' population due to variable accessibility and the time frame for this study. A more comprehensive overview of the impact of the students' diary reflections would be gained by the broadening of the sample to include every student. However, triangulating the data collecting techniques and obtaining the assistance of an external researcher would mitigate against this limitation.

Secondly, due to time constraints, the implementation of the students' recommendations is limited to six weeks and only to the AGLE course. A broader view of the writing intervention strategy would increase on account of more time being allocated to the study.

Notwithstanding the limitations, the study is expected to be a foundation for further research since the cohort utilised represents the first-year population at NWU. The AGLE module is a front-end entry module for all new entrants. The findings of this investigation, though limited, could thus inform and form the basis of an in-depth action research project in the field of a new approaches to the teaching of writing skills at the next level in the North West University, Mafikeng Campus.

1.11 THE RESEARCH OUTLINE

CHAPTER 1

The chapter outlines the background of the study, the research objectives, the research problem, the research questions, the motivation of the study, the research design and proposed data collection methods, ethical considerations, as well as possible limitations of the study.

- i. Introduction
- ii. Background to the study
- iii. Statement of the research problem
- iv. Research aim and objectives
- v. Significance of the study
- vi. Brief review of related literature
- vii. Research design and methodology
- viii. Limitations of the study
- ix. Data management and analysis

x. Chapter overview

CHAPTER 2

The chapter outlines the multiple local and international perspectives and sets parameters within which the research problem and research questions that are investigated. More importantly, an overview of concepts and theories applied in the study is presented and discussed in this chapter.

- i. Introduction
- ii. The literature review
- iii. History of the AGLE on the Mafikeng Campus
- iv. Theoretical models of teaching writing
- v. The nature of reflective teaching
- vi. Conclusion

CHAPTER 3

This chapter outlines the research methodology utilised in detail and justification thereof.

- i. Introduction
- ii. Research method
- iii. Research design
- iv. Research instruments
- v. Ethical procedures
- vi. Conclusion

CHAPTER 4

The chapter provides in detail the research findings. Conclusions are then drawn from data and implications of the findings related to the theories under discussion.

- i. Introduction
- ii. Data analysis
- iii. Research results
- iv. Summary of the research results
- v. Conclusion

CHAPTER 5

The chapter outlines the research findings, but most importantly, discusses the findings and other factors emerging from the study as it progressed in order to align it to the recommendations and conclusions reached. This chapter also provides a summary of the dissertation. It emphasizes the

results obtained, the contribution made by the results, and makes suggestions for further research in this area.

- i. Introduction
- ii. The research conclusion
- iii. Recommendations for implementation
- iv. Suggestions for further research
- v. Conclusion

1.12 CONCLUSION

Academic writing poses a challenge to mostly first-year university students. It is the intention of the study to examine causal factors to this problem, as well as possible remedial teaching strategies in this regard. Chapter 2 of the study provides a literature-based approach to the theoretical and multiple scholarly perspectives to ensure that concrete steps are applied to ameliorate the identified challenges.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The review of literature is concerned with the foundational data collection process in terms of which sources of information are searched, analysed, synthesized, and eventually selected for relevant information, ideas and evidence pertaining to the chosen research topic (De Vos et al., 2011: 116; Holtzhausen, 2007: 22-23). This chapter therefore privileges the perspective and sets parameters within which the research problem and research questions are investigated. Most importantly, an overview of the following is discussed in this chapter:

2.2 The Advanced General Literacy in English (AGLE) Course

In the new political dispensation, South African universities have opened doors of learning to students of all races and academic backgrounds. Even the previously White institutions have seen an influx of students from all South African ethnic groups. The advantage of a mixed student population is simultaneously replete with tremendous academic challenges as first-year students lack academic discourse. These students are products of different learning environments. Combining the different education systems into a single unit at the dawn of democracy did very little to close the education lacunae of most of these students. For example, most Black and Afrikaner students enrolled at the Mafikeng Campus and face similar challenges when writing in English. Apart from the language issue, they enter the university unprepared and experience a culture shock of being in an environment where they are expected to be independent learners, expected to write competently and convincingly in academically acceptable standards.

The AGLE (commonly known as Academic Literacy – AL) in the North-West University (NWU) was a response to the government initiative to assist students in making the transition from high school to university. The course was regarded as a support module that would address the tacit under preparedness of first-year university students with language challenges like in other universities in South Africa. Its main purpose was to bridge the English language gap (lacuna) between high school and university, in other words as some researchers put it “to develop the skills that are responsive to the needs of the new South Africa” (Pineteth, 2012 and Archer, 2010). AL was also intended to help students to handle higher education writing demands for academic success. Sebolai (2016, 46) affirms this by stating that academic literacy “is the kind of language competence that students need to possess in order to cope with the demands of academic study”. Sebolai (2014) further asserts that

AL teaching has become a priority in all South African universities as a result of the academics' general perception of low academic literacy skills among the majority of first-year students at these institutions. It is in view of these observations that this study is envisaged to minimise challenges along the tertiary academic journey and to ensure that interventions to handle academic demands are developed.

According to Chokwe (2013), the under preparedness of first-year university students is not unique to the South African context only but it is also an international concern. To justify her contention, she cites that in the United States, society still struggles with translating the gains of access to college into increases in college completion. She argues that colleges serve a large number of working class and under-represented students. Also Choudhury (2001), in working with English language students at a private university in Bangladesh noted that even after 12 years of English education, students could not communicate effectively and failed to develop an acceptable level of English proficiency. The fact that most learners are ESL seems to be a major contributing factor to the dismal performance in writing amongst tertiary students (Jacobs 2005:476). The majority of NWU first-year students are also ESL speakers whose writing competencies are at differentiated levels depending on their exposure and induction into the writing academy. This, therefore, poses a serious challenge in the students' academic success. Hence, the researcher's quest to develop intervention strategies that would minimise these challenges for students towards the university throughout.

Chokwe (2013) states that student under-preparedness tends to be perceived as a student problem. However, institutions that are serious about supporting the academic success and persistence of underprepared students must prepare the teachers, not just the students, about what these students need to learn in order to succeed (Engstrom, 2008:17). Engstrom (2008) further states that in order to address academic writing difficulties, lecturers should also see themselves as active participants in the process by making sure that they are fully equipped and trained to help students with academic writing skills and practices. This is what this study seeks to accomplish through the lessons delivered, and a critique of inputs from the students' journals. As both (students and the researcher) engage in writing protocols as reflective participants, the researcher also engages in self-reflection activity and incorporates students' inputs into her subsequent lessons to enhance her pedagogical skills as well. Thus, the two-pronged efforts consequently result in enhancing professional development through research.

Researchers assert that effective academic writing is crucial to every university student since much of the assessment that goes on at university is based not only on what information students present but also on how that information is presented in writing (Gonye, Mareva, Dudu, et. al., 2012). According to Hardaway and Hardaway (1978:9) “writing lacks features such as facial expression, body language and gestures. For this reason, it has to be coherent and cohesive if it is to achieve that communicative and meaning-making purpose”. They further affirm this by stating that because writing is permanent, it should be better organized and easier to understand than speech (Hardaway and Hardaway, 1978). That is why it is imperative that the present study should develop an intervention to address essay writing challenges by first-year students. Every university student should possess good writing skills because such skills are regarded a facet of AL.

2.3 Theoretical models of teaching writing

The purveyors of writing assert that when discussing how to teach writing, it is important to understand that the teaching of writing has often been overlooked by language teachers (Silva, 1993, Choudhury, 2001, Lehman, 2013). This contention is also echoed by White and Arndt's *Process Writing* article where they submit that ‘writing has tended to be a much neglected part of the language programme’ (White and Arndt 1991:1). Thus, by implication, while writing to convey the intended meaning, the usage of writing as form of expression has not been adequately interrogated. This could be attributed to the usage of the Product Approach (PA) which is a traditional approach to teaching writing that is based on the reproduction of models (Nunan1991:96). Additionally, Gabrielos (2002) and Hyland (2003) state that this product approach in writing deals with writing as a straightforward action. Hyland further elaborates that according to this perspective, writing development is considered to be the result of structurally imitating and manipulating models provided by the teacher. In essence, one could deduce that the product approach is directly related to the Grammar Theory of Learning as outlined on page 9 of this study because the ‘structural imitation’ refers to the mimicking of the grammar rules for accuracy.

The proponents of the PA which is also known as ‘Model Approach’, hold the belief that students internalise and imbibe qualities of a successful writer to study before undertaking their own writing. Nunan (1999) states that the PA concentrates on writing tasks in which the learner duplicates and mutates from teacher supplied models. In this approach, students would be given writing exercises that would emphasise language structures that they have learned through the imitation of grammatical patterns (Kolade, 2012). What this means is that the PA only focused mainly on the

modelled end-product. As a result, students disliked writing activities since it became a chore not a form of innovative and nuanced expression (Tribble 1996:18). This disquiet then led to the emergence of the Process Writing Approach (PWA).

Despite the negative attitude of students towards the PA as alluded by Tribble (1996), this study does not discard the approach completely because for writing to be meaningful, it cannot be presented haphazardly but should adhere to certain writing standards which are made of elements of grammar components, and these are ingrained in the PA. Thus, in this study, it is imperative to take into cognisance the importance of grammar rules during the development of intervention strategies of addressing essay writing challenges encountered by students.

The PWA came into being because of the inadequacies and narrow scope of the PA towards writing. Various researchers (Zamel, 1983; Fowler, 1989; Sun, 2009; Nunan, 1991; Brown, 2001, et al.) attribute different definitions to the PWA. However, this study aligns itself with Barbara Kroll who defines PWA thus:

The “process approach” serves as an umbrella for many types of writing. What the term captures is the fact that student writers engage in their writing tasks through a cyclical approach rather than a single-shot approach. They are not expected to produce and submit complete and polished responses to their writing assignments without going through stages of drafting and receiving feedback on their drafts be it from peers and or from the teacher, followed by revision of their evolving texts (Kroll, 2001, pp. 220-221).

Although researchers perceive the PWA differently, they share certain common elements such as; its cyclical nature where there is pre-writing, brainstorming, synthesising of ideas, revision of drafts before submission of a final polished version could be made. Again in this process, students manage their own writing by deciding on what to write, how to write it, when to write it and where to write it so that ideas could be effectively integrated. This therefore, affirms Chomsky’s (1988) contention that learners’ minds are not blank slates (tabula rasa) where information just gets imprinted. This means that students also have the ability to connect their writing activities to their background knowledge.

The cyclical nature of the PWA corroborates well with the Error Analysis (EA) and the Building Block (BB) Theories mentioned on pages 9-10 of this study. For example, when writing, presentation of

content and the sequential progression of ideas have to go through a process of several drafts where errors are identified and eliminated so that effective communication of meaning could occur (Richards and Renandya, 2002). In order to write an effective piece of English writing, students should not only learn how to write, but they should also know how to identify their weak points, that is why the analysis of errors is an essential reflexive and meta-cognitive process that the students themselves should be au fait with (Hannon, 2015). The point of departure in the identification of errors and analysing them would be done by moving from the known to the unknown, thus, the necessity of the BB theory in this context. Therefore, in the current study, the element of error identification by students could be realised through peer editing.

In juxtaposing the PA and the PWA, Onozawa (2010) states that in the PA, the focus is on the end result of the learning and writing process where the student is expected to perform as a fluent and competent user of the language. On the other hand, the PWA stresses the processes that writers go through in composing texts. Lam (2015) postulates that regardless of the PWA having its benefit as a liberating instructional approach, there has been no robust conclusive evidence that application of this process results in writing improvement. Thus, one aspect of the significance of the study is to fill up this literature lacuna.

There are several studies that have been conducted where a positive impact of the PWA towards essay writing of the university first-year students has been reported (Sam, 2009; Bayat, 2014; Pritchard and Honeycutt, 2005; et. al.). The researcher in the current study engaged in this project because none of its nature has been conducted in the NWU using the reflective journal approach as an intervention strategy in teaching writing through the PWA.

2.4 Nature of Reflective Teaching (RT)

Jacobs and Gawe (2011:55) define RT as an approach in teacher education in which teachers and students critically examine their own actions and attitudes and then contemplate how they can improve these actions and attitudes. Research also elaborates that RT encourages teachers to become motivated in developing new teaching techniques in assisting their students to learn (Jacobs, et al., 2014). It is, therefore, on the basis of these factors that the researcher seeks to ameliorate the situation under investigation by giving herself the opportunity to take control of her professional growth. On the other hand, students would also be participating in suggesting suitable methods to enable them to grasp concepts being taught.

“Reflective practice is “a reflection in and on action” (Schön, 1987). In this model, the researcher continuously raises questions about her teaching practice in order to improve it. In the context of the present study, the following questions were set out from the onset: *what challenges do first-year AGLE students experience and exhibit in essay writing? How can the effectiveness of intervention be evaluated? What students’ suggestions and editing skills could be incorporated into the writing process?* These questions enable the researcher to critique her own teaching and also allow students to critique her teaching while also reflecting on their own learning. To use Zuber-Skerritt’s description, the critical reflection involved in this study is what she calls ‘critique of self.’ In this study, the questions raised allow the students to critique the lesson, make suggestions and also monitor their own learning of the meaning-making processes.

Journaling encourages transformational learning through critical reflection and development of different thinking skills. For learning to be truly transformative, it needs to include critical self-reflection. Critical thinking is a process that facilitates transformational learning (Zuber-Skerritt, 2014:2). Action research, according to Zuber-Skerritt, promotes critical thinking.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter presented writing strategies which are pertinent to the current study were also attended to where students are capacitated to critically engage with the PWA to academic essay writing. The PWA has been essay writing teaching strategy used by ESL practitioners for many years (Chokwe, 2011:31). The stages of the PWA include thinking (idea generation); planning (pre-writing); drafting (composition or construction); revising, rewriting, and editing (transformation process); as well as execution (writing or typing the final version). Furthermore, some of the PWA proponents (Hyland, 2003; Hedge, 2005; Chokwe, 2011; et al.,) state that idea generation is a process of problem solving to achieve a goal. The *idea generation stage* is characterised by brain storming of the idea(s) about which the student has to write an essay on. The *planning phase* focuses on stimulating students’ creativity and letting them think about what they will write by writing down thought as they come in their minds. The *drafting (composition or construction) stage* of critical academic writing is characterised by the student writer’s adoption of ‘free writing’, in which case grammatical perfection is not a primary issue of concern (Anderson, 1995: 394). Not many students possess the ability to present a final draft on the first attempt. The *transformation* (revising, rewriting, and editing) process reflects the improvement of the essay by eliminating some ideas and generating new ones, correcting language and grammatical issues, as well as connecting the structure and style of writing (Chokwe, 2011: 31). In the *execution* stage, the student then presents the final essay as the complete product of what was intended to be communicated.

A brief discussion regarding the nature of the RW was presented in the chapter. The purpose of RW is to share good teaching practices and engage with others to continue with professional development.

Lastly, the chapter presented a brief background regarding the nature of the AR which promotes critical thinking. AR also promotes introspection of teachers about their students, method of teaching and mainly about their own approach towards presenting concepts to students with the view of responding accordingly to students' identified concerns for professional growth.

The following chapter outlines the detailed research methodology implemented in the study and justification thereof.

CHAPTER 3

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

The previous chapter outlined the multiple local and international perspectives and established parameters within which the research problem and research questions are investigated. Most importantly, an overview of concepts and theories applied in the study has been presented and discussed in Chapter 2.

At this stage, it is imperative to reflect briefly on the distinction between research design, research methods, and research methodology. Such a distinction is necessary in order to differentiate between processes and methods (Kumar, 2011: 96).

The research design of a study refers to “the overall integration and sequence of the research processes linking the critical units of analysis in order to enable the study to reach its conclusions” (Yin, 2014: 26). It is clear from the above excerpt that the research design is not a stand-alone aspect of a study. Rather, it could be the researcher’s point of integration or plan for conducting the entire research process. Kumar (2011: 95) on the other hand, elaborates by adding that:

A research design is a procedural plan, structure and strategy of investigation so conceived as to obtain answers to research questions or problems. The plan is the complete scheme or programme of the research. It includes an outline of what the investigator [does] from writing the hypotheses and their operational implications to the final analysis of data ... A traditional research design is a blueprint or detailed plan for how a research study is to be completed operationalizing [sic] variables so they can be measured, selecting a sample of interest to study, collecting data to be used as a basis for testing hypotheses, and analysing the results.

The purpose of research design is to develop and “conceptualise an operational plan to undertake the various procedures and tasks required to complete your study; ensure that these procedures are adequate to obtain valid, objective and accurate answers to the research questions ... that is, the control of variance” (Kumar, 2011: 96).

In this study, a triangulated ‘operational plan’ was adopted, at multiple levels outlined by Janesick (1999) “first, the interdisciplinary triangulation of journal writing as a trope of literature, and second, data triangulation in terms of journal writing of the researcher, participants, and interaction between both”. The qualitative aspect of the design includes exploratory and descriptive elements, while the quantitative aspect of the students’ feedback is numerically or statistically quantified and evaluated

on the basis of frequencies of occurrence pertaining to observed and emerging patterns and themes (De Vos et al., 2011: 181). However, the approach for the current study will be a qualitative one.

The rationale for the triangulation approach to research design is premised on the need to maximise or optimise the research processes and to facilitate different, but complementary data on the same topic and advance multiple perspectives for understanding in depth the research problem; leading to the acquisition of the results on whose basis recommendations and probable courses of action could be undertaken concerning the research topic (De Vos et al., 2011: 181).

3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Mouton (2001: 55-56) illuminates that the terms 'research methodology' and 'research methods' are understood, interpreted, and applied differently by research scholars and practitioners in the Social Sciences. While some view these research nuances as two distinct, but complementary and interchangeable research concepts which could not be used or applied interchangeably; some regard these terms as similar and interrelated, and could be used synonymously. Accordingly, in their context as similar, interchangeable, and complementary, it is then implied that the preferred data collection methods or tools and their concomitant analytic procedures are integrated into a single mode of enquiry. Therefore, the research methodology and research methods in this context focus on the type and nature of the research tools or instruments opted for by the researcher.

In contradistinction, in the context of their differentiation, the research methodology specifically refers to "the systematic study of processes and principles that guide scientific investigations and research" (Mouton, 2001: 55). Therefore, research methodology in this instance relates to the intellectual paradigm, tradition, or perspective according to which the entire research process was conducted. In this study then, the terms 'research methods' and 'research methodology' are construed as two distinct, separate, or different research concepts. However, in their 'separate-ness' they are still construed as complementary and interchangeable. The researcher regards such an integrated approach as useful, as it integrates both the type and nature of the preferred data collection instrument; as well as the data collection techniques and processes deemed appropriate for this study.

This research is based within an interpretivist-constructivist approach, whose intention is to understand "the world of human experience" (Cohen & Manion, 1994: 36), on the basis that "reality is socially constructed" (Mertens, 2005:12). Within this paradigm, the researcher relies upon

“participants’ views of the situation being studied” (Creswell, 2009: 8) and recognises the impact on the research of their own background and experiences. Constructivists do not generally undertake a study on the basis of a particular theory. Rather they “generate or inductively develop a theory or pattern of meanings” throughout the research process (Creswell, 2009:9). In this study, students recorded their writing experiences in journals to capture their own views, which was subsequently incorporated into the lecturer’s intervention strategies.

In the light of the above-cited interpretivist-constructivist orientation to the construction of reality in the context of those who experience that reality, it implies that an interstitial connection exists with the collaborative mode of enquiry, also referred to as “participatory research that advocates a close collaboration between the researcher and the research participants” (Kumar, 2011: 331). The purpose of conducting the study through the Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach is to investigate the researcher’s own professional practice with the view to improving it and contributing to its theoretical knowledge (Norton, 2009). The latter view is corroborated by Corey (cited in Singh, 2006: 10) thus: “Action research is a process for studying problems by practitioners scientifically to take decision for improving their current practices.” The PAR mode of enquiry is cyclical in nature, and involves the planning, action, observation, evaluation, and analysis phases. The original action research model was introduced by Lewin in 1940, and consisted of a spiral design with only four steps. Twenty years of implementation in teacher education has resulted in theorists such as Kemmis, Elliot and Adelman (1973), and Ebbut (1983) enhancing Lewin’s spiral design by adding self-reflection after each cycle phase. Action research usually occurs after the teaching and learning problem has been identified, and a solution is identified and implemented; while the outcome of the intervention is monitored. Self-reflection then occurs at each phase of the cycle with the utilisation of reflective journals by students as reflective participants in the study.

Reflective teaching and learning is a skill which has the potential to transform the manner in which students learn in the 21st century; from being passive recipients of information to potential resources for deep learning, which informs students to learn better in developing the required higher education levels of performance in academic writing (University of Birmingham, 2015: 2-3). Reflection in this study implies thinking deeply about the teaching and learning processes and strategies of both lecturers and students (Lam, 2014). From these reflections, possible future interventions are identified and implemented in a cycle of action and reflection.

The orientation towards the reflective journal intervention approach to writing allows students to take control of expressing their views regarding the acquisition and improvement of their essay writing and

editing skills. It is envisaged that the reflective journal approach ultimately enables students to articulate their own writing challenges from their own perspectives and social realities, and propose new ways of addressing those challenges. Whereas studies in the field have focused on process approaches (as opposed to product approaches), there is a noticeable gap in the manner in which reflective journals capturing students' views on writing challenges could be incorporated into course designs. The researcher was also able to improve and contribute towards the body of knowledge by presenting first-hand information from students' perspectives. In addition, students' input also assisted the researcher to reflect on her own teaching methodologies and incorporate students' suggestions into her teaching of academic essay writing and critical thinking skills in situ.

3.3 NATURE OF ACTION RESEARCH

Action research is defined as a systematic inquiry into one's own practice for the purpose of gathering information about how they teach and how their students learn. Mills, (2007) concedes that action research (AR) is conducted by teachers or others with a vested interest a paradigm that integrates action, learning and researching. The action occurs when a problem identified in the learning environment requires change and occurs in repeated cycles. AR is also a process that consists of phases of planning, acting, evaluating and reflecting. The primary objective of AR is to improve practice through the involvement of all the members, in this case, students and the lecturer. This view of AR allows the study to reconceptualise it as a Participatory Approach (PA) to teaching and learning.

The purpose of conducting AR is to investigate one's own practice with the view to improving it and contributing to theoretical knowledge (Wilkinson 2014: 128). According to Zuber-Skerritt (2002), AR includes action learning which is learning from experience and with reflection in that learning. For the purpose of this study, focus is on learning from experience, reflecting and actively solving problems which echoes Zuber-Skerritt's famous statement that "we do not learn from experience but from reflecting on experience" (Zuber-Skerritt, 2002:2). Students are then encouraged to reflect on their learning experiences through journals.

AR is grounded in participatory theory. Corr and Kemmis (1986) state that AR is a self-reflection inquiry that involves both students and their lecturer as participants involved to improve practice. In the action cycle model in this study, students are involved in the first phase of the cycle to confirm the problem identified by the lecturer. Critical reflection occurs in all the phases in the model. AR is participatory because the lecturer questions her practice and because in this study students are also

involved in reflecting in the practice and providing feedback that postulates suggestions to be implemented. Consequently the participant students are also arbitrators of their own writing processes and products.

3.4 RESEARCH CONTEXT

The research setting or context (research milieu) refers to the physical location of the study, the people, institutions, or research participants involved in the research process; as well as the timing of the study in respect of the historical, political, or socio-economic period or era, or moment during which the study was conducted (De Vos, 2005: 334). The current study was conducted at the Mafikeng Campus of the North-West University with selected students.

3.4.1 Study Population and Sample Size

The study population refers to “the aggregation of study elements, group of people, or a collection that researchers are interested in generalizing about and from which the sample is selected and conclusions are drawn. This is done because it is not possible to study all the members of the population that one may be interested in” (Barker, 2003:12). The study population in this research consisted of 350 students. Two groups of the first-year students registered for the AGLE 121 module at the North-West University, Mafikeng Campus were sampled. The participating groups were drawn from students from the Faculty of Agriculture Science and Technology (FAST), which was a class assigned to the researcher by the AGLE unit.

Babbie and Mouton (2007: 173) mention that sample size is “a representative number or sub-group which possesses the approximated qualities or characteristics of the larger group or population”. In addition, a representative sample is established on the basis of either the similarity (homogeneity) or dissimilarity (heterogeneity) of the attributes or qualities of the larger group or study population. It is in this context that the sample size is then regarded as “an approximation of the whole, rather than the whole” (Burns & Groove, 2011: 42).

For purposes of this study, the Raosoft sample size calculator was used to determine the sample size from the 350 FAST registered students. The expected response rate is set at 50% (default), with 5% error margin and 95% confidence interval. The Raosoft sample calculator suggested that 184 students was an adequate representation of the population of 350 students in the targeted group. Both groups were drawn from the researcher’s class. One group was the control group, while the other one constituted the focus group with 92 students each. The control group was not exposed to

any treatment (journal keeping), but the focus group was fully engaged in the novel intervention. Students were requested to participate in the study as a way of improving teaching and learning methodology.

3.4.2 Sampling Techniques and Criteria

Sampling refers to the selection of participants according to their representative characteristics in relation to the larger group from which they have been selected (Singh, 2006: 33). It is in this context that the non-probability judgement or purposive sampling technique was deemed most relevant for this study. The relevance of this technique was enhanced by the researcher's professional knowledge, experience, and familiarity with both the research problem and its prevalence; as well as the general research environment (Singh, 2006: 91).

With regard to sampling criteria, the researcher objectively determined a range of profiles to justify the involvement or non-involvement of students in the study. The selection criteria, therefore, relates to the degree to which the sampled research participants could be considered or not even be considered for participation in the study (Brink et al., 2012: 131; Barker, 2003: 12). Research participants could therefore, be considered or not considered for participation in the study on the basis of pre-selected representative qualities by the researcher; also mindful of the research problem and other associated units of analysis (Brink et al., 2012: 131; De Vos et al., 2011: 223).

3.4.3 Eligibility or Inclusion Criteria

The inclusion criteria refers to the research participants' representative homogeneous qualities which qualify them for inclusion or eligibility in the study (Holloway & Wheeler, 2010: 144; De Vos et al., 2011: 223). Participants were involved in the study on the basis of their fulfilment of the following criteria:

- only students registered for the AGLE 111 and AGLE 121 modules;
- only students of the North-West University, Mafikeng Campus;
- only students who reflected on their writing experiences in the journal provided at the onset of this study.

3.5 RESEARCH METHODS AND DATA COLLECTION

In Sections 3.1 and 3.2 above, the researcher has elaborated in varying degrees of detail, the respective levels of differentiation argued by Mouton (2001) in respect of research design, research methodology and research methods. The researcher has also indicated an approach in this study, in terms of which the nuances, 'research methodology' and 'research method' are viewed as two distinct, but inter-related and interchangeable concepts. Accordingly, both terms are then construed as referring to both the nature and the type of research instrumentation or tools utilised in the collection of the study's raw data. Since the study adopts a method type of triangulation by virtue of the mixed approaches within the qualitative data, the data collection instruments were concomitant to these approaches. In this regard, the mixed-methods research approach are also viewed as concurrent, but distinct collection and analysis of qualitative data methods intended to enhance better understanding of the research problem (Creswell, 2009: 15). Furthermore, the findings from the different multiple levels of the qualitatively collected data could be compared and analysed complementarily.

3.5.1 Qualitative Data Collection

Qualitative data collection involves non-numerical, prosaic, exploratory and descriptive aspects in a study for purposes of facilitating a better understanding of the characteristics and prevalence of a usually problematic phenomenon or state of affairs (Burns & Grove, 2011: 37). In this study, the qualitative data collection was undertaken by means of reflective journals of the sampled first-year students in the AGLE 111 and AGLE 121 modules at North-West University. As qualitative data collection methods for this study, lecturer-researcher and the students journals are advantageous in that "they provide an opportunity for the researcher to investigate unresolved questions further, and to gather data which could not have been obtained quantitatively" (Gerrish & Lacy, 2010: 349). Qualitative researchers believe that "approaching people with the goal of trying to understand their view point which can bring about deeper insights and understandings of the participants' experiences is of great importance" (Bodgan and Biklen, 2007:26). Therefore, the study's AR nature (where teachers study their own classroom, instructional methods and their own students in order to better understand them and be able to develop appropriate strategies to enhance academic success) dictates and warrants for a qualitative approach. A qualitative paradigm will be significant in this study because it will haul out first-year students essay writing challenges with the aim of developing appropriate and relevant strategies to ameliorate those essay writing incompetencies.

3.5.2 Quantitative Data Collection

Whereas the qualitative data collection methods are mainly prosaic, narrative and discussion-oriented, the quantitative variants are primarily numerical or statistical, non-descriptive, and measurable (de Vos et al., 2011: 171). Furthermore, the quantification and analysis of collected data is more controlled, objective, and not susceptible to manipulation to 'fit' a particular research agenda (Creswell, 2009: 15). Kothari (2004: 216) illuminates that the controllability of the collected quantitative data translates into more standardised and scientifically valid and reliable data analysis; while the precision and accuracy of the quantitatively obtained research results enhance the effective realisation of the study's objectives.

However, this study only used qualitative methods through students' reflective journals to obtain qualitative data pertinent to the identification of first-year students' essay writing specific challenges. The researcher distributed booklets to be used as journals only to the selected group for participation in the study according to the researcher's pre-determined criteria (Brink, Van der Walt, & Van Rensburg, 2012: 131; De Vos et al., 2011: 223).

3.6 DATA MANAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS

Data analysis is described as a process according to which the collected data is qualitatively and or quantitatively reduced and converted into meaningful and intelligible reality in order to test the relevance and relationship of the accrued evidence to the research problems (De Vos et al., 2011: 249). The reduction of data involves its categorisation and organisation into manageable themes, patterns, trends, and relationships (Brink et al., 2012: 177). Eventually, the categorised or classified data patterns ultimately establish the framework on which the key findings, conclusions and the recommendations are drawn (Brink et al., 2012: 179).

Data was only analysed qualitatively. The qualitative data generated from the reflective journals was analysed narratively to identify the impact of the intervention strategies. This was an on-going analysis because at each stage of the action research cycle, the researcher documented the effectiveness of her interventions in the teaching of essay writing and also incorporating the suggestions of students. The journal analysis was done by the researcher's colleague who consented to act as an external researcher.

The qualitative data generated from the journal reflections was analysed to identify the impact of the intervention strategies. The analysis of the data qualitatively served the central aim of this study which was set to identify and develop relevant intervention teaching strategies towards the essay process writing approach which informed the ultimate recommendations of the study.

3.7 Data Capturing

Hand written notes were used to capture data which was later analysed, synthesised and thematically categorised.

The management and analysis of data is a quality assurance mechanism by which the researcher attempts to infuse some measure of trustworthiness or scientific rigour to the study (Hollow & Wheeler, 2010: 146). In this study, the validity, credibility, and reliability of the research instrumentation (trope of literature, students and lecturer-researcher journals) are the standards by which the quality and scientific rigour of the study was determined (Brink et al., 2012: 179).

3.7.1 Validity

According to (Brink et al., 2012: 179), “validity in research is concerned with the accuracy and truthfulness of scientific findings”. Validity, therefore, demonstrates the accurate measurability of the research results based on the actual social reality it was supposed to measure. The goal of validity, then, is to ensure that the plausibility of the research findings rests “upon the soundness of the research methods and procedures adopted by you [the researcher]” (Kumar, 2011: 25). Brink et al. (2012: 179) make a distinction between internal and external validity.

Internal validity is defined as the extent to which research findings truthfully reflect or represent reality. On the other hand, external validity, is defined as the degree to which the representation of such reality are accurately applicable to a collective of research participants in a different context under the same conditions as those which prevailed in the original study (Brink, 2012: 178-179; Singh, 2006: 80). External validity is also associated with transferability, interchangeably used with generalisability. In this study, the findings’ transferability or generalisability was established by ensuring that there is a degree of consistency between the research objectives and what transpired in the journals (Singh, 2006;80).

3.7.2 Credibility

Credibility relates to the researcher's assurance that the conclusions drawn from the findings unequivocally emanate from the data collected (Brink, 2012: 178). Trochim and Donnelly (2007: 149) add further that "credibility involves establishing that the results of qualitative research are credible or believable from the perspective of the participant in the research". In this study, credibility was ensured by means of prolonged engagements with the research participants; peer debriefing by the researcher with colleagues who are research professionals and experts in academic writing and literacy. In addition, member checking was operationalised by consulting the research participants during the drafting of the preliminary research report in order to check that the level and nature of their input is captured accurately and reflected in both the preliminary and the final research report. (Brink, 2011: 124).

3.7.3 Dependability or Reliability

Reliability is defined as the degree of consistency and accuracy that is maintained throughout a series of measurement procedures (Kumar, 2011: 26; Brink, 2011: 35). It could be said that the purpose of reliability is to establish a semblance of consistency, stability accuracy, and repeatability (Brink, 2011: 35). The higher the accuracy, the higher the repeatability and predictability of the research instrument and its findings (Kumar, 2011: 345). In the context of the study, reliability was applied primarily by means of the audit trail and reflexivity.

The audit trail ensures that all pertinent document and records pertaining to the study are kept safely. These documents constitute the basis on which the researcher took major decisions pertaining to each phase of the entire research process, which greatly assists future researchers undertaking studies of the same level of interest pertaining to the field of teaching and learning.

3.8 ETHICAL ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

Studies involving human subjects mostly entail a critical aspect of acceptable professional, ethical, and moral norms and standards which regulate the nature of the relationship between the researcher and the selected research participants or respondents (Wiles, 2013: 4). In this regard, there are ethical issues pertaining strictly to the researcher and those pertaining to both the researcher and the selected research participants in respect of their fair treatment.

3.8.1 Ethical Aspects Affecting the Researcher

The study's commencement was entirely dependent on the researcher first making a presentation to the Department of English at the North-West University, Mafikeng Campus. Secondly, to the Higher Degrees Department of the University where formal approval to continue with the study was granted. Subsequent to the granting of approval, ethical clearance form process was facilitated. Then, the researcher wrote formal letters of request to the concerned students, requesting their formal participation in the study (Creswell, 2009: 123).

3.8.2 Ethical Aspects Affecting the Research Participants

Based on the appropriateness of the study's selection criteria, the research participants' involvement is principally vested in their inviolable and legally protected rights; and all other rights are subject to the degree to which their informed consent was observed in observance and respect for their human dignity (Kendall & Halliday, 2014: 306).

3.8.3 The right to informed consent

The right to informed consent entails that all the research participants participated in the study of their own volition (un-coerced), and on the basis that they were made fully aware of the intentions of the study; as well as how the study's results would be used. In this regard, the right to full disclosure could be viewed as preceding informed consent. In addition, the participants were entitled to withdraw from the study at any point of its execution, in the event they viewed their rights as being violated (Wiles, 2013: 4).

3.8.4 The right to privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity

All of the rights (privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity) are symbiotically related. The most perennial aspect is that of ensuring and safeguarding the personal identity of the selected research participants. The personal identity of the participants was not disclosed to any unauthorised person who was not directly linked with the study (Wiles, 2013: 4). The participants were not requested to divulge their names in any way, neither were they requested to link any of their next of kin to the study.

3.8.5 The right to full disclosure

The participants' right to full disclosure demands that no aspect of the study should be withheld from the participants, which is an accentuated form of respecting their human dignity, and not merely subjecting them to 'guinea pig' treatment. In this regard, full disclosure reciprocates informed consent. Accordingly, participants were fully informed of the purpose of the research and that they would be consulted prior to the official release of the study's findings.

3.8.6 The right to legal recourse

The right to legal recourse entails that the research participants, in their full capacity as juristic persons who voluntarily participated in the study, also have the right to resort to legal recourse in the event that they were of the view that their human rights were violated. They could withdraw from the study and seek legal recourse, and also report any unprofessional or unethical behaviour to the relevant authorities at North-West University.

3.8.7 The right to freedom from harm and exploitation

Human subjects are not to be subjected to the same treatment as non-human experimental objects (Kendall & Halliday, 2014: 306). At no stage were the participants exposed to any form of physical or psychological danger or harm. For instance, the fieldwork was conducted in ergonomically conducive rooms, with no exposure to any health hazards.

3.9 Data Analysis

AR was adopted in this study because it involves learning in and through action and reflection (McNiff and Whitehead 2002). AR involves planning, acting, reflection and evaluating. Reflection occurs at each phase of the cycle. At each phase of the cycle, reflection on the content and process of the lesson occurred through raising questions such as 'what', 'how' and 'why'. The students reflected on whether they understood the way they were taught and if they did not, they were to give possible reasons for not understanding the lesson. The reflection process for the lecturer meant deciding why she taught the way she did and how best she could improve and change her practice based on feedback received from the students. She saw her own practice through the students' lenses of her learners' eyes. Brookfield, 1998 and Zuber-Skerritt 1997:6 assert that 'examining one's own practice through different lenses enables the practitioner (the lecturer in this case) to detect assumptions

entrenched in how she teaches'. It is therefore, on the basis of this assertion that AR was part of the ongoing analysis process of this study.

Data analysis is defined as the “reduction of data without losing its meaning” (Saldaña, 2013: 2). In this section, in-depth data analysis which was on-going throughout the study is presented. Qualitative data analysis researchers (Morgan, 1998; Onwuegbuzie, 2009; Leech, 2008; Saldaña, 2013; et al.,) unanimously state that it is within the researcher’s jurisdiction to choose the relevant technique that would make interpretable sense to the data collated. Therefore, the following structure illustrates how the intervention process took place during the teaching-learning process. The lecturer-researcher developed the following model to illustrate how analysis process was executed.

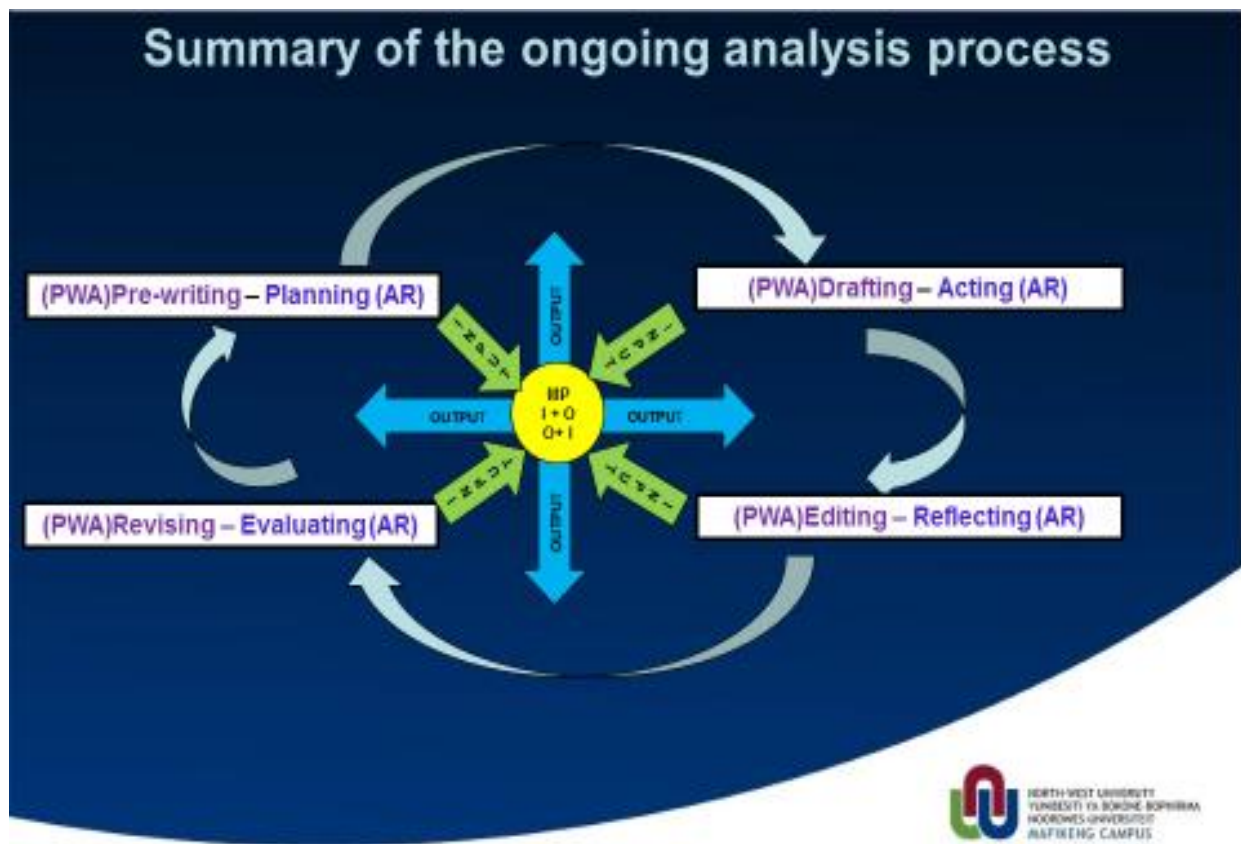


Figure 1: PWA - AR Intervention Model Adapted from White and Arndt's (1991:43)

- i. Yellow spot in the middle of the diagram stands for the intersection where the synthesising process of students' inputs are incorporated towards the following lecture presentation by

the researcher. The centre is also called the Meeting Place (MP) because that is where decisions are made based on the inputs from the students which would in turn dictate the output. **(Refer to Annexure 2, Students C and D)**

- ii. Shorter arrows facing towards the yellow spot represent students' suggestions for the next writing phase of the PWA with the relevant corresponding activity as stipulated in the AR **(Refer to Annexure 2, Students C and D)**.
- iii. Longer arrows moving away from the middle spot represent the researcher's next lesson where students' inputs would be presented **(Refer to Annexure 2, Student C and D)**.
- iv. Semi-circles on the periphery indicate the recursive nature of the AR as well as demonstrating that the PWA phases are interwoven in nature.

3.11 Justification for the presentation of the PWA-AR model activities:

A brief background and justification of the relationship between the PWA phases and the iterative AR components as presented in **Figure 1** are discussed as follows:

3.11.1 PWA, Pre-writing and AR, Planning

The PWA, pre-writing activity corroborates well with the AR, planning phase because both phases deal with the generation and development of ideas. This view is substantiated by excerpts from the participants' journal as illustrated in **Annexure 3**.

3.11.2 PWA, Drafting and AR, Acting

Both the drafting and the acting phases deal with the implementation of the writing plans as reflected in **Annexure 3** of the students' and the lecturer-researchers' journals.

3.11.3 PWA, Edit and AR, Reflect

These stages involve the sharing and communication of drafts with the view of reflecting on the process as documented in **Annexure 3**.

3.11.4 PWA, Revise and AR, Evaluate

During these stages, participants reflect on the effectiveness of the new acquired strategies with the view of improving them where applicable, **Annexure 4**.

3.12 Data capturing

One of the researcher's intentions was to identify essay writing challenges of first-year AGLE students. Data for the current study was mainly acquired through the students' reflective journals

which were issued out to the focus group by the researcher. The research participants were required to record their learning experiences for six weeks after every AGLE lesson which was conducted once a week.

The research participants were given clear instructions that in each journal entry they could write their reactions, personal feelings and make suggestions for improvement in the subsequent lectures regarding the PWA phases since this was the main tool used to identify the challenges they encountered. Students were also informed that revealing their identity was optional and that their journal entries would be used for research purposes. This, therefore means that students revealed their identities voluntarily. They were also not coerced to participate in this study (**Appendix 5**).

The researcher also kept a journal of reflective notes where she recorded thoughts and feelings experienced while teaching essay writing. Qualitative data acquired from the journals were recursively read for proper coding and categorisation to identify emergent themes (Patton, 2002). The overarching purpose regarding analysis of the journals was to realise the aim of the study of developing sound pedagogic strategies to improve first-year students' essay writing competencies.

CHAPTER 4

Chapter 3 outlined the research methodology utilised in detail and justification thereof. It also addressed ethical procedures which were followed before embarking on the study. Methods of how data were collected and analysed were also presented. The current chapter provides the research findings and discussion. Conclusions are drawn from data and implications of the findings related to the theories under discussion.

4.1 Research Findings

The results of the study constitute a narrative that describes how the PWA was provided to the first-year university students and how the participating students responded to such instruction. The data collected via the students' and the lecturer-researcher reflective journals were put together to form the structured narrative on the basis of Labov's Evaluation Model of Narrative Analysis (Cortazzi and Archer, 2002). According to Lin (2016), Labov's model addresses the **abstract** (*what was this about?*), **orientation** (*who? when? what? where?*), **complication** (*then what?*), **evaluation** (*so what?*) and **results** (*what finally happened?*). The model components were used as a basis to respond to the following research questions:

- i. *What challenges do first-year AGLE students experience and exhibit in essay writing?*
- ii. *How can effectiveness of intervention strategies be evaluated?*
- iii. *What students' suggestions and editing skills could be incorporated into the writing process?*

The following observations are based on Labov's narrative analysis model as outlined-above. The study reviews excerpts from the students' journal reflections related to lecturer-research class presentations, students' class presentations and students' attitude towards the lecturer-researcher.

4.1.1 Lecturer-researcher class presentation reflections

At this stage, students were introduced to the elements of the PWA in order to elicit their views on the effectiveness of various phases of the essay writing activity. The class presentation began with a brief introduction of the PWA and its different stages. The participants were attentive and actively participated because their prior knowledge from AGLE 111 (first semester course) about writing was triggered. Students' views towards the pre-writing activities were reported in their journal reflections, thus:

“My observation about the presentation of pre-writing...it was exciting. I learned the productive way of organising thought and brainstorming idea.” (Student A, lines 1-4).

“The experience and the knowledge I was given regarding pre-writing skills was beneficial...because different techniques were used, it was more beneficial...the approach in which the lectures were presented had a positive impact on us...” (Student B, lines 1-5).

From the excerpts above, students acknowledge that they have learned and that the activities were beneficial. The lecturer-researcher then had to think on her toes and come up with strategies that would maintain the participants' excitement throughout the process for learning to be more effective.

In order to keep students motivated, the lecturer-researcher facilitated group discussions which was also a response to students' needs (as indicated in one of the reflections below). Students were requested to implement the initial stages of the pre-writing activities and come up with their own essay topics which were directly related to their respective disciplines. The rationale for allowing them to come up with their own topics was to increase participation and allow them to be more creative when discussing topics of their own initiative.

“In order for students to understand and apply the writing process, I suggest that they should be divided into small groups, each group should be given a step in the writing process to present in front of the class...After each presentation, the other students should be given a chance to ask or comment on what was presented. ” (Student G, lines 3-9)

“When the writing process was introduced to us, we were given a chance to work in groups and also to choose our own topic as groups. This allowed us to have a chance to write about something we are all comfortable with and fully understand rather than be given topics that limit our expression and creativity...” (Student D, line 1-5)

From the reflections of Student C and D, it is evident that the student participants were able to identify the learning strategies which they are comfortable with. Not only that, but also strategies which afforded them to widen their thinking horizons with a lot of creativity in addressing their academic needs. The same sentiments are also expressed thus:

“In a group, we discuss ideas, agree or disagree to opinions and mostly we teach each other what is more relevant and necessary to be said in an essay.” (Student G, line 13-15).

As already stated in 2.4 of this document, research encourages teachers to become motivated in developing new teaching techniques in assisting their students to learn (Jacobs, 2014). The lecturer-researcher sourced out additional essay writing teaching material from the internet (**Annexure 4**) to teach the Revision and Editing phases. This supplementary material used acronyms **A.R.M.S.** (*Add, Remove, Move, Substitute*) for revision phase and **C.U.P.S.** (*Capitalisation, Usage, Punctuation, Spelling*) for the editing phase. The following was recorded by students:

“since acronyms were used to guide us on how we should revise and edit our essays, it was easy to understand and remember how we revise and edit. If we continue with this strategy, it will enhance our understanding of things we are learning” (Student M, line 2-6)

“Editing and Revision presentation which was presented by Ms Mose last week was very helpful. One can now understand how and be able to write a proper essay. Many students faced a lot of challenges when it came to punctuation and spelling but the presentation came to their rescue” (Student L, line 1-5)

“Students often make mistakes while writing essays or letters. We need to be guided more especially when it comes to constructing a sentence; grammar, spelling and punctuation”(Student H, line 7-9).

“Those writing strategies was presented by Ms Mose and really helped us a lot when coming to write our essays formally” (Student J, line 1-5).

The above four excerpts demonstrate that students were able to identify the challenges they have in essay writing and embraced the intervention strategies that could eliminate those challenges.

4.1.2 Students' views regarding class presentations

The process of reflection requires students and teachers to critically examine their own actions with the view of recalling, assessing, questioning and achieving the desired goals (Gawe, 2011). Under this category, there was a group which presented on sentence construction. This is how a fellow student responded to the group's presentation:

"This is what I've learned from this group. I will surely remember this lesson when I come across such a challenge" (Student L, line 6-8).

"As we agreed that we will present topics under revision and editing, we did that.....Group 1 had a good presentation but they took too long to get their point across" (Student M, line 7-9).

4.1.3 Students' views towards the lecturer-researcher

In this category, students expressed their views towards the lecturer-researcher. It is imperative to note that external researcher assisted in the selection of students' excerpts in order to avoid the possibility of bias and subjectivity of the lecturer-researcher towards the collected data.

"The lecturer's presentation was complex for me to understand. It was really hurting not to understand exactly what is expected of us." (Student N, line 1-4)

"The only problem was that she was not clear on other things. The only problem is that the lecturer did not set time for groups. Some groups took forever to present" (Student O, line 3-11).

"The only way to see if students have grasped the information

about the writing process is to give individual tasks” (Student F, 17-19).

Despite the fact that the external researcher assisted with the selection of excerpts to avoid the lecturer-researcher’s bias, it is evident from these ones that the researcher was not objective in certain instances. Subconsciously, she allowed her own bias towards teaching strategies to neglect others without realising it. She might have got quite excited when she got praised for the excellent presentations of the pre-writing activities. However, since she was ethically bound to conform to confidentiality and students’ anonymity, she addressed these concern in a general way. This added value to her professional growth since the criticisms were genuine.

4.2 Assessment of students’ editing skills

The following submission is a response to one of the research questions *what students’ suggestions and editing skills could be incorporated into the writing process?* Here, students were given individual tasks to write a short essay on *what their expectations were when they came to the university*. This topic was chosen on the understanding that they would express themselves freely. Thereafter, they exchanged scripts for peer editing in order to put the editing skills acquired in class into practice. According to the comments on the peer edited scripts (**Annexure 3**), it is evident that the participants were able to recognise errors made by their peers. Peer editing is an interactive method where students with more writing challenges learn from those with less challenges (Parker 1989).

4.3 Journal entry findings

The following is a submission of how the journal entries corroborate with the PWA-AR model in response to the research objectives:

- i. Identify the essay writing challenges of first-year AGLE students.
- ii. Evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention applied at each phase of the writing process.
- iii. Incorporate students’ suggestions on the development of the writing process and subsequently assess their editing skills.

4.3.1 Pre-writing activities – Objective 1

Pre-writing is where students write down ideas about a particular topic under investigation as and when they come into mind without following any sequence. The activity also stimulates students' creativity. According to Murray and Hughes (2008), pre-writing activities do not only help students to write about what they like but they provide them with opportunities to generate ideas and write with confidence. For objective 1 in this study, **Students H and K** managed to state their challenges in essay writing such as; punctuation, spelling, grammar and sentence construction thus:

*“Students often make mistakes while writing an essay,
we need to be guided more especially when it comes to
constructing sentences, grammar, spelling and punctuation”*

(Student H, line 8-9).

*“It gave me clear indication on how to use punctuation(s)
when writing an essay which usually gives me problems”*

(Student K, line 4-6).

These were also reflected in the students' text when this study was piloted (**Annexure 1**). The challenges were also echoed by Chokwe (2013) and Choudhury (2001) who state that in working with English language students at a private university in Bangladesh they observed that even after 12 years of English education, students could not communicate effectively and failed to develop an acceptable level of English proficiency. The fact that most learners are ESL seems to be a major contributing factor to the dismal performance in writing amongst tertiary students. Therefore, much attention needs to be given to student writing in a bid to enhance their academic success. PWA researchers state that the significance of identifying essay writing challenges cannot be overemphasised because there is a possibility that failure to write might leads to communication failure since students find it difficult to write properly the assigned essays (Elachachi, 2006 and 2010; Awatef, 2014; Faten, 2014; et al.,)

4.3.2 PWA phases – Objective 2

It should be noted that in order to adequately address objective 2 which is *to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention applied at each phase of the writing process*, the recursive nature of the PWA was taken into consideration. The PWA phases were implemented at the Meeting Place (MP) of the PWA-AR intervention model where students' input were incorporated into the

presentation of the next phase. At this stage, the lecturer-researcher together with the external one, categorised the themes accordingly as emanated from the journals.

4.3.2.1 Time management

Since AR addresses how teachers constantly learn through the teaching process in order to enhance their skills, **Students J and M** indicated that some of the presentations took longer than anticipated in class. Thus:

“Group 1 took a lot of time but its presentation lacked core points” (Student J, line 9-10).

“Group 1 had a good presentation but they took too long to get their point across” (Student M, line 8-9).

They further stated that this happened because the lecturer did not stipulate the duration for the presentations, **Student O**:

“The only problem is that the lecturer did not set time for groups. Some groups took forever to present, like the first group” (Student O, line 8-9).

From this allegation, it could be deduced that time is of great significance in the PWA. This is a lesson which the lecturer-researcher took into consideration to ensure that her teaching becomes effective by incorporating students' thoughts. Also taking into consideration what the role of the teacher is, in this case the researcher, according to Leki (1997), the teacher should be viewed as a facilitator and a 'coach on the margins' rather than a 'sage on the stage'.

4.3.2.2 Critical thinking and ownership

Excerpts from **Students D, E, F and M** express critical thinking skills and a sense of ownership of the learning process which is one major element of AR and PWA “learner-centred” This include a learning style which the students are comfortable with.

“This allowed us to have a chance of writing about something

*we were all comfortable with and understand fully rather than
be given topics that limit our expression and creativity”*

(Student D, line 3-5).

A lesson taken from this is that when students take ownership over their learning by coming up with their own essay topics, they become critical thinkers and develop thought provoking characteristics that requires their lecturer to always be on her toes when preparing lessons for them. Again, research has shown that through reflective participation, students are expected to acquire critical thinking skills and enhance their individual understanding of the writing process (Lam, 2014; Weigle, 2002; Belanoff & Dickson, 1991). Because student **E** explicitly indicated discomfort towards group work which was used in the previous lessons, individual tasks had to be assigned to students.

*“Working in groups does not accommodate everyone,
this is not fair for other students”* **(Student E, line 11-12).**

This intervention strategy was provided to students so that all could have a sense of belonging and take ownership over their learning activities.

4.3.3 Evaluation phase – Objective 3

In addressing the third objective of the study - *to incorporate students’ suggestions on the development of the writing process and subsequently assess their editing skills* - students were given individual task. They were requested to write an essay on *what their expectations were when they came to the university*. Thereafter, their peers were requested to edit those essays. The purpose here is different from the one that has been stated on **page 51** of this document. Here, students’ peer editing comments are used to analyse the comments as a way of getting meaning of what they identified as strengths and limitations in their peers’ work.

4.3.3.1 Spelling

Students 1 and 3 picked up spelling errors. The fact that students were able to identify errors in their fellow peers’ writing was an indication that learning had taken place. In essence, students were being exposed to the errors as partial indicators of language learning processes as indicated by Corder (1981) on **page 11** of this document. Intervention which was used to address the spelling challenges was to request students to write words on the board and get their peers to correct them. This approach was incorporated into the PWA class activity after the edited comments were reviewed.

The lecturer-researcher decided to employ this strategy because according to her it promotes active participation even amongst those who are not vocal in class to fully participate. Her approach was also buttressed by Innes-Brown (2005) where she stated that the writing teacher's job is not to correct, write, revise, or edit **for** writers, but to teach them the skills to do that themselves.

STUDENT 1

Academic expectations Capital letter "I"

When I arrived in the university I was happy to meet new people in the new environment. It was a great pleasure for me to be here. I had expectations of meeting new people, exploring more, getting good grades and having a nice time with lectures and of course, studying hard.

In the midst of my expectations some of them were met and some were not. I wanted to meet people and make friends with them, but when I look around people seemed busy and minded their own business. They had no time, then I also went about to studying and getting good grades some of my lectures were fun and some were boring but I tried to fit in. Studying hard was not an easy thing to do, when I try to study hard I get tired and give up and go to my bed and sleep.

No need for "my"

tried Introduce new idea of past particle feeling.

Good Ideas, keep it up

STUDENT 3

AGLE 121

When I came to ^{University} University, I had many expectations about ^{the University} the University life. Some were met and some were not met. One of the expectations I had was how easy the ^{University} University life would be. I thought doing the modules that are relevant to my ^{career} career would be ^{easier} easier and there would be less pressure as compared to high school, but instead the pressure I ^{worked} feel is as higher than the ^{pressure} pressure I ever ~~felt~~ ^{worked} under in high school.

As I ^{had} expected to be learn to be independent and make my own decisions without consulting parents first, ^{will definitely} ~~would~~ make me a better person.

That expectation is met. I had have learned +

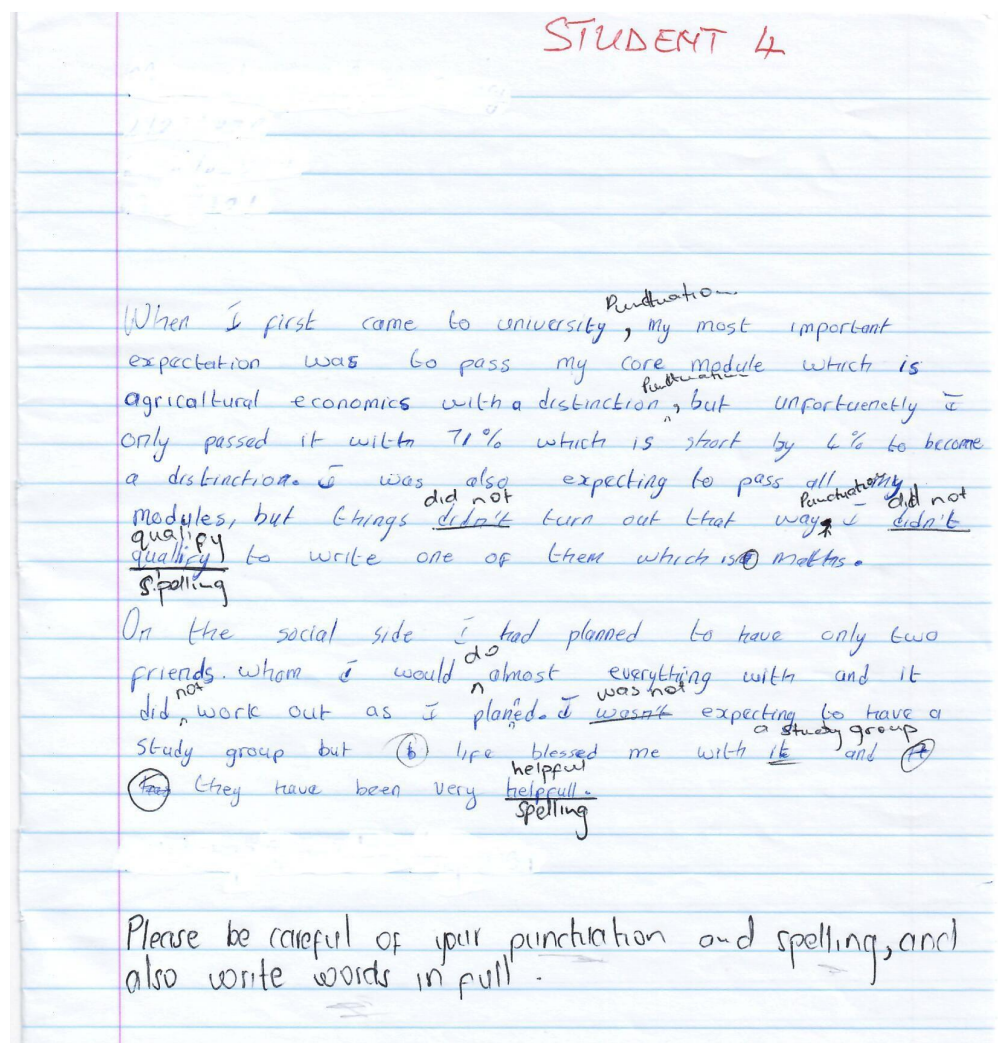
not really important.

Comments:

Your expectations were quite like mine and I am glad you had goals and you managed to succeed in them. Well done. Focus more on your spelling.

4.3.3.2 Word contraction and Colloquialism

Editors' comments from the texts of **students 4, 7 and 9** captured word contraction errors and colloquial words used by the student writers. It is evident that when revision and editing phases were taught through the PWA, students grasped the concepts, moreover that outstanding and interesting model - A.R.M.S and C.U.P.S (**Appendix 2**) were used. This therefore implies that students took into cognisance what has been proffered by Hedge (2005) that students should keep in mind the intended readers and purpose of their writing. With these in mind, students would consciously know what to say and how to say it. In remedying this challenge, again the lecturer-researcher facilitated the class activity by asking students to write contracted words on the board and others were requested to write them in full. I also learnt a lot from my students from this process.



STUDENT 7

Capital letter (beginning
a sentence.)

When i got to North west university i had lot
of expectations such as going to the laboratory and
knowing how to use some of the equipments. i expected
to use micro-scope to see things that we cannot see
with our naked eyes. It feels good because i never
used microscope in secondary ^{School} and now i am able to see
lot of things at Varsity, such as bacteria.

to it is university

Secondly i expected to find a free access to the
internet so that i can be able to do researches
and also use the computers for typing assignments as
some of us don't have laptops at home. So access to
use computer and internet makes my life more easier than
i thought.

Your essay Structure is good
You need to work on your punctuation.
and refrain from writing spoken
informal language

STUDENT 9

Things I expected by the time I ^{came} ~~come~~ to University.

I expected so many things, I ^{had} ~~had~~ set goals that I was so looking forward to achieve in ^{the} first semester. But not all of them ^{went} ~~went~~ the way I ^{had} ~~was~~ ^{expected} ~~expecting~~ them to be. ~~At~~ Earlier this year, I told myself that at the end of the first semester I will be having three distinctions, but it turned out that I only achieved to get one distinction. You ~~can~~ could have used managed instead of achieved. Or even better, left out 'to get'.

I was expecting to pass all my modules, ^{fortunately} ~~fortunate~~ enough I passed them. I ^{aimed} ~~was aiming~~ to attend all ~~the~~ my classes for the first semester and make sure I ^{understood} ~~understand~~ ^{everything that was said} in class but in class, unfortunately some of the classes, I ~~didn't~~ ^{did not} attend.

Since well this is about the expectations you had, the entry has to be written in past tense.

Again, we learned that when writing formally we should not use contractions like 'didn't'.

One other thing, punctuate your sentences/paragraphs.

Overall your expectations were good. I would have been glad if they were all met.

4.3.3.3 Tense and Linking Devices

Students **2** and **8** submitted challenges relating to tense and linking devices. The identification of these errors through peer editing indicates that students gain insight of their own strengths and weaknesses by learning from each other.

STUDENT 8

~~The~~
There first time I came to the university it was not good because I was ~~never~~^{not} expecting that I will stay far away from home and my loved ones. It was hard for because I ~~he~~ was not used to do things on my own, e.g washing my own clothes and cooking for myself. It was hard for me to even adapt to the new environment because I had no friends or someone to lean on. It was also hard for me because I was used to ~~be~~^{being} pushed to do my school work.

Now my expectation Now some of my expectations have been met eg ~~getting~~^{used} to stay away from my ~~family~~ and friends, ~~taking~~^(independent) care of myself. Now I have learned to be self dependent. and getting to do school work without being told to do. ~~I~~^{no} have not met the expectation^{??} of cooking for myself but now am ^{??} (willing to give my best to meet all my expectations^{??}.)

Candidate uses the word 'because' alot. His statements are repetitive and I am not sure he/she understands what the word 'expectations' really means. All in all, I understood where the candidate was coming from. Great effort!!

STUDENT 2

Expectations

Since I got here, the most thing that I've expected was the way lecturer gives the tutorials in Lecturer hall. That was the most expectation I have met. The attending style to tutorials ^{tutorials was new to me.} is very new to me, since I've never expected such. I knew that I'll come across with new styling of attending classes at tertiary level. The other expectation that I've met is the one of academic ^{the} part, where I'll have to strive to achieve better in my performance academically, though it's not so too difficult ^{at HET.}. The expectation that ~~were not met~~ ^{met} I never met is temptations. I never ^{met} got people who would tempt me or do anything to get me distracted in my academic field, and also I never came across ~~with~~ anything that would tempt me to ^{lose} ~~lose~~ my focus. The last ~~were~~ one which I expected was liquor stores in university campus like the other universities but sadly to drunkards were no such.

Ordering of points:

- Expectation that were met:

- ① Lecturer's style of teaching
- ② Attendance to lecturer's hall/classes
- ③ Academic challenges.

- Expectation that were not met:

- ① Temptations.
- ② Liquor stores in ~~the~~ campus yard.

* learn new words.

* Check your spelling and punctuation.

* ~~Set~~ Make simple sentences.

* Check Margins.*
* learn Grammar.

4.3.3.4 Cohesion and Coherence

Students' essays should be presented in a coherent manner to demonstrate competence in the target language. Therefore, when teaching writing, the aim should be to demonstrate and simultaneously measure that learning and mastery of specific skills is taking place. This competence could be assessed and established when learners communicate their ideas competently, effectively and succinctly in writing by producing coherent and cohesive texts. Editorial comments in **Student 6** implies the lack of sequential progression of ideas in the text. In response to this challenge, the lecturer-researcher encouraged students to continue journaling experiences so that their writing challenges could improve. Zulu (2008) concurs with this notion by stating that students mistakenly believe that if they are fluent in speaking English, they can automatically write coherent and cohesive texts.

STUDENT 6

My expectation Here in MWU campus :

I expect to change and secure my future in that I have to balance and eliminate my studies nicely so. What I expect most in this campus is that I want to gain more resourceful information that boosts my knowledge, ^{Strategically} Strategically so, some source of information in my knowledge & Adpdt to how to react ^{react to a situation} in situation. We all^{as} student, We have to keep up doing best in our Achievement.
 (We have to keep doing our best in order to achieve

I ex gain extra information by pratising to read regularly

My overall feedback ~~is~~ is that your expectations are not well put, you didn't follow the instructions in the sense that you did not say if the expectations were met or not. How you are feeling towards meeting those expectations is also missing from your piece of writing.

One last thing the flow in your points ^{is really} confusing, try and make the points flow ^{properly} next time, also a lot of grammatical and punctuation mistakes are there.

5. Conclusion

To conclude the findings of this study, students demonstrated that they had grasped the concept of journal reflections where their suggestions were incorporated in teaching essay writing through the PWA. On the other hand, the lecturer-researcher was also reminded that initiatives have to be made in ensuring that no students are left behind during the teaching process. Similar to Everett (2013), the journaling experience provided me with an opportunity to know my students better and to gain an in-depth understanding of their essay writing challenges. Allan, Clarke and Jopling, (2009) assert that knowing students' individual struggles is essential to the process of shaping a learning environment that supports the development of first-year students. I have also received encouragement through reflective journals knowing the positive impact I am making in their lives particularly in relation to the way PWA phases were executed.

In the final chapter, overall findings of the study and its implications are presented. Subsequently, the limitations and recommendations before making suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER 5

5.1 Summary

To sum up, the quality of first-year students' writing at the North-West University, Mafikeng Campus has been identified as inadequate and often incoherent. That is why the researcher had to develop ways that could be used to improve the essay writing challenges identified. AR was used where students and the lecturer-researcher were required to keep reflective journals for the implementation of the PWA phases. Thereafter, Narrative Analysis Model was used to ensure that the essay writing teaching-learning challenges were adequately attended to. Students' active participation and the implementation of the peer editing process (which could be improved) were an indication that the challenges could be resolved through the PWA-AR model.

Figure 5.1 below displays students' essay results. These indicate that the control group's were lower than the experimental one with 10% because of lack of treatment received by the latter group. In this study, the sample size was 184 FAST students, with 92 students in the control group and 92 in the experimental group. The overall marks of the two groups show that the control had a performance of 45% and the experimental group of 55%. This therefore, indicates the success of the PWA essay teaching through reflective journals.

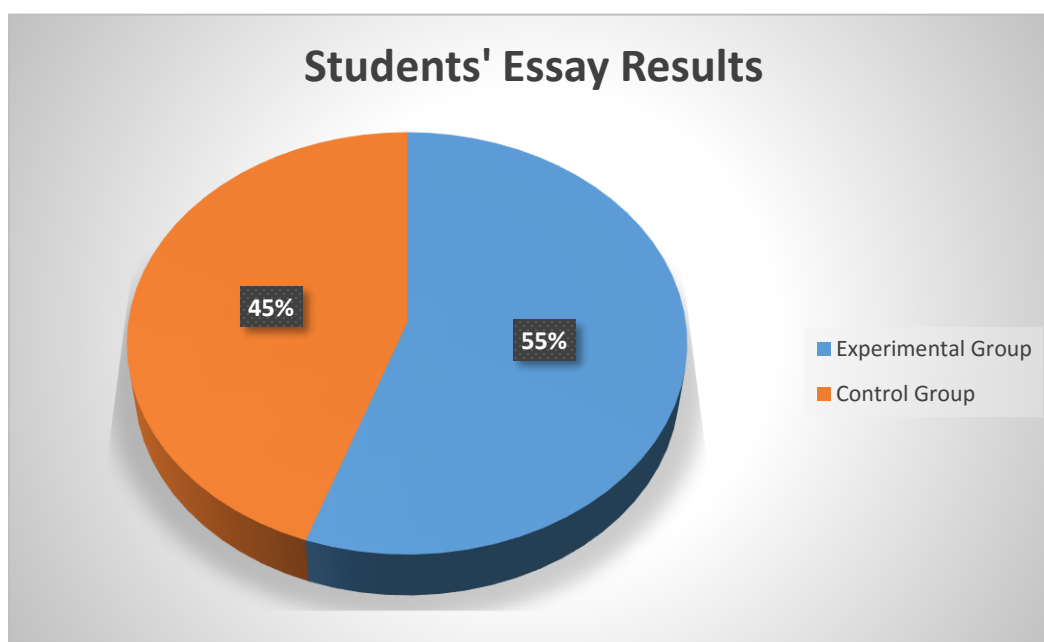


Figure 5.1: Students' Essay Results

5.2 Implications of the study

In the context of the current study, the study's significance or relevance is justifiable on two accounts, namely: its institutional and epistemological value.

5.2.1 Institutional Implication of the Study

The institutional implication of the study specifically refers to its practical usefulness and relevance in terms of enhancing or advancing the reputation or performance of the particular institution or organisation within which both the research topic and its research problem are located (Kumar, 2011: 25; Bunting, 2002: 66). The researcher's interest in the study was motivated by the need to ameliorate the first-year university students' essay writing challenges. In this regard, the Faculty of Human Sciences benefits from the study which was intended to improve both the individual and collective performance of first-year students' expected level of performance in AGLE 111 and AGLE 121 modules. Ultimately, the recommendations, significantly contribute towards curriculum policy formulation and implementation for the improvement of first-year students' essay writing skills.

5.2.2 Epistemological Implication of the Study

The study's epistemological implications is based on the degree to which the study contributes to both theory and practice in the body of knowledge pertaining to the field of teaching and learning in academic essay writing (Vyncke, 2012: 28-29; Kumar, 2011: 60, 315). The epistemological contribution of a study is most observable in the researcher's identification of gaps or lacunae in the body of knowledge pertaining to academic essay writing (Sing, 2006: 39, Kothari, 2004: 17). There is a need for researchers to focus on the role of teachers as central facilitators in the effort to change academic writing instruction for the benefit of the students as one of the findings of this study (Yesilbursa, 2011; Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Leki, 1990; Graves, 1981).

Extensive research studies have focused on the problems encountered by students regarding cohesion and coherence in essay writing (Cekiso, 2016; Ahmed, 2010; Crossley & McNamara, 2010). However, there is scant evidence of the involvement of students as reflective participants in the production of coherent and cohesive texts in their academic essay writing. The students' utilisation of reflective journals at the end of each writing session during the (empirical) data collection phase is indicative of the enhancement of their learning experiences. Writing reflectively becomes meaningful and fruitful in the process of learning. The reflective journal, if effectively deployed in the

teaching of essay writing skills by means of a process writing approach, was intended to help students to narrow the gaps between writing theories and practice, and most importantly, it has heighten students' need of constantly monitoring their individual writing learning progress (Vyncke, 2012: 48-49).

5.3 Limitations of the study

The qualitative nature and limited scope of the present study are the major limitations since the results cannot be generalised. The study would have yielded different results if mixed methods were used. However, that does not make the study devoid of significant contributions to the writing processes of first-year university students.

Firstly, the study is limited to a sample of two groups of AGLE first-year students' population due to variable accessibility and the time frame for this study. A more comprehensive overview of the impact of the students' diary reflections would be gained by broadening of the sample to include every student. However, obtaining the assistance of an external researcher mitigated against this limitation.

Secondly, due to time constraints, the implementation of the students' recommendations is limited to six weeks and only to the AGLE course. A broader view of the writing intervention strategy would increase on account of more time being allocated to the study.

Notwithstanding the limitations, the study is a solid foundation for further research since the cohort utilised represents the first-year population at NWU. The AGLE module is a front-end entry module for all new entrants. The findings of this investigation, though limited, could thus inform and form the basis of an in-depth action research project in new approaches to the teaching of writing skills at the next level in the North West University, Mafikeng Campus.

5.4 Recommendations and suggestions for further research

The following recommendations for further research are based on the limitations identified in this paper as well as the rich data obtained from students' reflective journals:

5.4.1 Further research of the current study be undertaken where mixed approach methods would be used.

5.4.2 More time be added to the current study to check if the research would yield the same results.

5.4.3 Same data of the current study be used to address conventions of academic writing of the first-year university students.

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ANNEXURES

Annexure 1: Pilot texts

Where do I see my-self 10 years from now

As a final student happened to be still studying AGRIE III due to unfortunate circumstance. I would like to see myself a very successful young man in the Faculty of Agricultural Science and Technology, contributing positively by putting forth or carrying out the researches as the ~~profess~~ professors do day by day bringing out solution from their findings, especially in the career I took or chose, of microbiology and Chemistry. My desire for success is not tied with having money but to be a well known professor writing series of article and journals.

I come from a background with financial constraints and that is my motivation to change my life to the better and with education by my side is of a paramount importance to change or alter that.

~~What~~ Where do I see my self in 10 years?

I want to see my self as a good and growing ~~to~~ interpreneur, who brings new thing around the world, and I want to work with countries like ~~the~~ Brazil, Spain and France in growing ~~what~~ what I sell, and help those who want to sell their they are products overseas.

NAME

SURNAME

STUDENT NO.

AGE 11

- Where do I see myself ten (10) years from now.

=> I see myself on a better future full filling my choices. After ten (10) years I will ~~be~~ see myself independent as I will be tall standed and building my own empire, ~~over~~ overall. I will be leaving my dreams/my achievements after ten (10) years.

=> As from now is the begining of my own journey which I have ~~to~~ promised myself that after some years I can see myself going places so that, I will be happy and proud of myself!

As from now in my first Academic year studying Diploma in Animal Science, I wanna see myself as an qualified farmer bussiness man And it will take me about 3 to 4 years from now.

My aim is to help and improve farmers from my village. My village contains of more farmer whom some lack knowledge about how to maintain their farming system. In six year after my academic studying I will pleased to see my village as the producer and knowler more about farming.

Annexure 2: Writing stages

STUDENT A

1. My observation about the presentation of
2. ~~pre-writing~~ pre-writing is that I think it was
3. exciting. I learned the productive way of
4. organising thought and brainstorming idea.
5. I discovered the sources that are reliable
6. for my topic of choice and the one that are
7. not. I studied learned how to find books
8. that are relevant with information based on
9. the topic.

10. I think we
11. getting the students more involved by creating
12. activities that follows the steps of pre-writing
13. through which student may grasp productive
14. way of pre-writing. We can get the lecturers
15. to stand in front of the students to
16. present with visuals.

STUDENT B

1. The experience and the knowledge I was given regarding pre-
2 writing skills was beneficial. A lot was taught and
3 because different techniques were used, it was more efficient.
4 I feel like the approach in which the lectures were presented
5 has had a positive impact on most of us, even though
6 the information presented was ~~was~~ not that much.

7 From my point of view, I think they should let us do
8 most of the work on the writing process. We should
9 be able to express our own views and dig further for
10 more information in order to improve our writing skills
11 and have more knowledge. We should have debates, discussions
12 and oral presentation as students and do a lot of writing
13 activities to add on pre-existing knowledge. It is not
14 always that the lecturers will provide us with the
15 information that meets our satisfaction.

16 I believe that we should be the one doing much of
17 the work. We should be active and participate more
18 actively in class in our groups because our degrees
19 depends on this process writing activities.

20 We should be creative thinkers, go all out instead of waiting
21 for lecturers to spoon feed us.

STUDENT C

How the writing process should be taught.

- 1 The writing process is the most important planning phase
- 2 as it guides you into ~~use~~ writing your essay ~~or any~~
other
- 3 In order for students to understand and apply the
- 4 writing process, I suggest that they should be divided
- 5 into small groups, each group should be given a step in
- 6 the writing process to present in front of the class
- 7 as well ~~as~~ as give examples. After each presentation,
- 8 the other students should be given a chance to ask
- 9 or comment on what was presented.

STUDENT D

1 When Pre writing was introduced to us, we were given chance
2 to work in groups and also choose our own topic as a group.
3 This allowed us to have a chance of writing about something we
4 all comfortable with and understand fully rather than be given topics
5 that limit our expression and creativity. This approach allowed us
6 to flow in our creativity skills. We also had a workshop with the
7 librarian where he showed us how to access different sources for our
8 writing from the library using internet or library website. This will
9 enable us to enhance our knowledge and ideas about the topic we
10 choose.

11 The next phase of Process writing we should be allowed to
12 work in groups where we can engage and come up with ideas and
13 information regarding the topic. Our creativity should not be limited
14 and we should not present in class as that will not allow us
15 to express ourselves fully. We should write each stage and be
16 corrected where necessary.

STUDENT E

1 The previous pre-writing activity should have been
2 done individually, because working in a group is not
3 really effective for everyone as some students never
4 express their own points of view, because there are
5 others who feel that whatever they say should be
6 taken into consideration. Such things cause conflict
7 among students, which is not good for academic
8 purposes. Everyone has to know his/her own strengths
9 and weaknesses, hence always working in groups
10 hibernates one's position in an academic writing.
11 The Working in groups does not accomodate
12 everyone, which is not fair for other students.

13 The presentation on how to reference was presented
14 in an understandable manner. The presenter was
15 really clear. I would like ~~if~~ the next writing
16 steps to be done individually, because working in a
17 group does not work for me.

STUDENT F

1 During my time in class the writing process lecture was conducted in
2 an understandable and audible manner. Everything that was said was
3 straight to the point and easy to understand. The instructions were
4 easy to understand and were made clear when issues to understand
5 arose. The ~~presen~~ flow of the presentation was well conducted.

6 In the next lesson or lecture I would like to see more humour in the
7 presentation as it would relax ~~and~~ anybody who is feeling uneasy or
8 anyone whose minds has wandered off.

9 As for group work, I think that it is a good idea to a certain extent.
10 To back up my statement, It is a good idea, because it allows the lecturer
11 to have less marking to do and more time for planning good to almost
12 excellent lectures. It is also a good idea as individuals would interact
13 with one another and understand that team work makes the dream work.

14 Group work is also a bad idea as some individuals does not participate.
15 Some individuals feeds off of other individuals ~~we~~ hard work and ideas.
16 They do not give any input as to how to go about the assignment at hand.

17 So either way group work is a win and a lose situation. The only way to see
18 if students has grasped the ~~we~~ information about the writing process is to
19 give individual tasks.

STUDENT 9

1 The previous lessons on writing approach were great.
2 We did Pre-writing and drafting activity in groups. Group
3 Work in most times is stressing but in this one it was
4 enjoyable because it was more of discussion. We also did the
5 referencing guide and how to search for valid information.
6 Where I learnt I only need to get information from google
7 scholars and primary source because they are more reliable.

8 The next lesson on Revising and Editing, I would like it
9 also to be in a group-work manner. It gives us an idea of
10 how other students in a group approach writing of an
11 essay. Presenting to a group is less stressing and less being
12 nervous than presenting to a lecture. Doing Writing approach
13 in a group is more beneficial to us, students. In a group
14 we discuss ideas, agree or disagree to opinions and mostly
15 we teach each other what is more relevant and necessary
16 to be said in an essay.

STUDENT H

HOW WRITING PROCESS SHOULD BE PRESENTED

- 1 Writing process should be presented by both students and lectures
- 2 As students engage in a group work type of a presentation it
- 3 is more likely for them to capture information from the things
- 4 they have been working on. The involvement of lecturers is highly
- 5 needed because they are the one who have the most information
- 6 about how to write an essay and ect.
- 7 Students often make mistakes while writing an essay or letters,
- 8 we need to be guided more especially when it comes to
- 9 constructing a sentence; grammar, spelling and punctuation.

STUDENT I

1 The presentation presented by the librarian was important and
2 of good purpose. It related to what we are presently doing
3 in class or the curriculum.

4 Although it was hard for previously disadvantaged students who
5 did not have the privilege to gadgets, they were able to grasp
6 some bit of knowledge. And furthermore, to test knowledge,
7 students should be given an activity individually on what was
8 taught.

9 From my perspective, I think it would have been better if it
10 was presented by our lecturer (Ms Mose) as it would have
11 been better to understand. Reason being the connection shared
12 between the student and lecture, the lecture is able to predict
13 confusion from the student and therefore rectify whatever that
14 ~~the~~ brings about confusion to the student. (Considering that there
15 are shy students / students with no confidence).

STUDENT J

- 1 Last week's presentation was all about the
- 2 strategies to be followed when writing an essay.
- 3 Those writing strategies was presented by
- 4 Mrs Mose and really helped us a lot when
- 5 coming to write our essays formally.
- 6 The strategies was based on Revision part
- 7 and Editing part.
- 8 Revision part involved:
 - A - Add information
 - R - Remove unnecessary information
 - M - Move paragraphs accordingly
 - S - Substitute with Antonyms

Editing part -

- C - Capitalisation
- U - Usage
- P - punctuation
- S - Spelling

Presentations were observed and heard.

- 9 Group 1 : Took a lot of time but, presenting its
- 10 presentation was lack core points

STUDENT K

- 1 The presentation done by my lecturer was quite
- 2 useful because it made me aware of the
- 3 important tools that must be used when writing
- 4 an essay. It gave me clear indication on how to
- 5 use punctuation when writing an essay which
- 6 normally gives me problems.

- 7 All three groups were on point with their
- 8 presentations on editing ^{an} essay. They highlighted
- 9 all important points about editing even went beyond
- 10 on advising us how we usually make mistakes
- 11 when using commas on our essay which normally
- 12 cost us our marks.

STUDENT L

- presentation
- 1 Editing and Revision, which was presented by Ms. Mose
 - 2 last week was very helpful. One can now understand how
 - 3 and be able to write a proper essay. Many students
 - 4 faced a lot of challenge when it came to punctuation
 - 5 and spelling but the presentation came to the rescue.

Group 1.

Sentence constructing.

- 6 This is what I've learned from this group, I will surely
- 7 remember this lesson when I come across such a
- 8 challenge.

Group 2.

- 9 Does and don't from Mzipho from the group, very
- 10 helpful.

STUDENT NZ

1 last week we did revision and editing where our lecture used different
2 methods to take us through this phase. Since acronyms were used to
3 guide us on how we should revise and edit our essays, it was easy
4 to understand and remember how we revise and edit. If we continue
5 with this strategy it will enhance our understanding of things we are
6 learning.

7 As we students agreed that we will present topics under revision and
8 editing we did just that. We had three groups presenting. Group 1 had a
9 good presentation but they took too long to get their points across. Group
10 2 and 3 fairly presented better as they got straight to the points.

STUDENT N

- 1 - The Lectures presentation was complex for me to understand - I
2 tried to interact for clarity - but humor seemed to be the
3 response. It is really hurting to not understand what is it
4 exceptly is expected of us.

5 - The presentation

6 - The Presentation was about Editing & Revision

7 I understood the skeleton of it.

8 - I was hoping for the meat.

STUDENT ①

1 Last week presentation with Mrs Mose was just
2 fine. She presented her work well and her punctuatioⁿ
3 and ~~to~~ tone was also on point. The only problem was
4 that she was not clear on other things. To make it
5 better or to improve that she could have made a clear
6 definition with more examples for better understanding.

7 Today's presentation was well. It showed that people
8 were prepared. The only problem is that the lecturer
9 did not set time for groups. Some groups took forever
10 to present, like the first group. They were well prepared
11 but they took forever to present, The lady's voice
12 was also a bit low.

13 The second group elaborated from the first group.
14 She was briefly good, the only problem is her
15 pronunciation, otherwise she was great.
16 For the last group everything was on point, there is
17 nothing to correct on them.

STUDENT P

- 1 * Group 1 presentation of the word Cops which they changed it from cups. The
- 2 C.O.P's that stands for capitalising order punctuation and spelling which is
- 3 a good thing or matter to do. The thing that I learned or find mostly important
- 4 is that even when your sentence is fully capitalised, punctuated or spelled
- 5 if you did not put it in order, the sentence won't make sense.

- 6 * Group 2 presented the original word cups which stands for capitalisation
- 7 usage punctuation and spelling that was a very good presentation of all
- 8 that I am going to use during my editing.

Annexure 3: Revision and Editing (Supplementary Material)



Source: <http://www.wearetheteachers.com> (Accessed on 06 June 2017)

Annexure 4: Peer editing skill

STUDENT 1

Academic expectations Capital Letter "I"

→ Is this a comma or full stop?

repetitive idea

When I arrived in the university I was happy to meet new people in the new environment. It was a great pleasure for me to be here. I had expectations of meeting new people, exploring more, getting good grades and having a nice time with lectures and of course, studying hard.

Idea is too repetitive

express in a more less go comma not needed.
 In the midst of my expectations some of them were met and some were not. I wanted to meet people and make friends with them, but when I look around people seemed busy and muddled their own business. They had no time, then I also went about to studying and getting good grades some of my lectures were fun and some were boring but I tried to fit in. Studying hard was not an easy thing to do, when I try to study hard I get tired and give up and go to my bed and sleep.

No need for "my"

tried → Introduce new idea & past particle feeling.

new paragraph. to

Good Ideas, keep it up

STUDENT 2

Expectations

Since I got here, the most thing that I've expected was the way lecturer gives the tutorials in Lecturer hall. That was the most expectation I have met. ^{The attendance of} The attending style to ^{tutorials was new to me.} tutorials is very new to me, since I've never expected such. I knew that I'll come across with new style of attending classes at tertiary level. The other expectation that I've met is the one of academic ^{the} part, where I'll have to strive to achieve better in my performance academically, though it's not so too difficult ^{at HET.} as ^{yet} ~~met~~. The expectation that ~~were not met~~ I never met is temptations. I never ^{met} ^{got} people who would tempt me or do anything to get me distracted in my academic field, and also I never came across ~~with~~ anything that would tempt me to ^{lose} ~~lose~~ my focus. The last ~~were~~ one which I expected was liquor stores in university campus like the ^{other universities} others, but sadly to drunkards were no such.

Ordering of points:

- Expectation that were met:

- ① Lecturer's style of teaching
- ② Attendance to lecturer's hall/classes
- ③ Academic challenges.

* learn new words.

* Check your spelling and punctuation.

* ~~Set~~ Make simple sentences.

- Expectation that were not met:

- ① Temptations.
- ② Liquor stores in ~~the~~ campus yard.

* Check Margins.*
* learn Grammar.

STUDENT 3

AGLE 121

When I came to ^{University} University, I had many expectations about ^{the University} the University life. Some were met and some were not met. One of the expectations I had was how easy the ^{University} University life would be. I thought doing the modules that are relevant to my ^{career} career would be ^{easier} easier and there would be less pressure as compared to high school, but instead the pressure I ^{feel} is as higher than the ^{pressure} pressure I ever ~~felt~~ ^{worked} under in high school.

As I ^{had} expected - to be learn to be independent and make my own decisions without ~~or~~ consulting parents first, ^{will definitely make me a better person.} ~~would make me a better person.~~ That expectation is met. I had have learned +

not really important.

Comments:

Your expectations were quite like mine and I am glad you had goals and you managed to succeed in them. Well done. Focus more on your spelling.

STUDENT 4

When I first came to university, my most important ^{punctuation} expectation was to pass my core module which is agricultural economics with a distinction, but unfortunately I only passed it with 71% which is short by 4% to become a distinction. I was also expecting to pass all ^{punctuation} modules, but things ^{did not} didn't turn out that way. I ^{did not} didn't ^{punctuation} qualify to write one of them which is ^{spelling} maths.

On the social side I had planned to have only two friends whom I would ^{do} almost everything with and it ^{did not} didn't work out as I planned. I ^{was not} wasn't expecting to have a study group but ^{life} life blessed me with ^{a study group} it and ^{they} they have been very ^{helpful} helpful. ^{spelling}

Please be careful of your punctuation and spelling, and also write words in full.

STUDENT 5

My expectation for ²⁰¹⁷ 2018

My expectation for ²⁰¹⁷ 2018 was that I pass all my modules with a minimum average of 75% ~~percent~~.

I had ^{not achieved} not achieve my goal for achieving 75% for all my modules for the first semester. I am not ^{disappointed} disappointed because I had passed all my modules with an average of 60%.

STUDENT 6

My expectation here in NWU campus is
I expect to change and secure my future in that
I have to balance and eliminate my studies nicely so.
What I expect most in this campus is that I want
to gain more resourceful information that boosts my
knowledge, Strategically so, some source of information
in my knowledge & adapt to how to react to a situation
We all as student, we have to keep up doing best in our
Achievement. (We have to keep doing our best in
order to achieve

I gain extra information by practising to read
regularly

My overall feedback is that your expectations are
not well put, you didn't follow the instructions in
the sense that you did not say if the expectations were
met or not. How you are feeling towards meeting
those expectations is also missing from your piece of
writing.

One last thing the flow in your points is really
confusing, try and make the points flow ^{properly} next time,
also a lot of grammatical and punctuation mistakes
are there.

STUDENT 7

Capital letter (beginning
a sentence.)

When i got to North west university i had lot
of expectations such as going to the laboratory and
knowing how to use some of the equipments. i expected
to use micro-scope to see things that we cannot see
with our naked eyes. It feels good because i never
used microscope in secondary ^{School} and now i am able to see
lot of things at varsity, such as bacteria.

to It is university

Secondly i expected to find a free access to the
internet so that i can be able to do researches
and also use the computers for typing assignments as
some of us don't have laptops at home. So access to
use computer and internet makes my life more easier than
i thought.

Your essay Structure is good
You need to work on your punctuation.
and refrain from writing spoken
informal language

STUDENT 8

The

There first time I came to the university it was not good because I was ~~never~~^{not} expecting that I will stay far away from home and my loved ones. It was hard for because I ~~he~~ was not used to do things on my own, e.g washing my own clothes and cooking for myself. It was hard for me to even adapt to the new environment because I had no friends or someone to lean on. It was also hard for me because I was used to ~~be~~^{being} pushed to do my school work.

Now my expectation Now some of my expectations have been met e.g getting used to stay away from my family and friends, ^(independent) taking care of myself. Now I have learned to be self dependent and getting to do school work without being told to do ^{so}. I have not met the expectation^{??} of cooking for myself but now am ^{??} (willing to give my best to meet all my expectations^{??}).

Candidate uses the word 'because' alot. His statements are repetitive and I am not sure he/she understands what the word 'expectations' really means. All in all, I understood where the candidate was coming from. Great effort!!

STUDENT 9

Things I expected by the time I ^{came} ~~come~~ to University.

I expected so many things, I ^{had} ~~had~~ set goals that I was so looking forward to achieve in ^{the} first semester. But not all of them ^{went} ~~gone~~ the way I ^{had} ~~was~~ ^{expected} ~~expecting~~ them to be. ~~At~~ Earlier this year, I told myself that at the end of the first semester I will be having three distinctions, but it turned out that I only achieved to get one distinction. You ~~can~~ could have used managed instead of achieved. Or even better, left out 'to get'.

I was expecting to pass all my modules, ^{fortunately} ~~fortunate~~ enough I passed them. I ^{aimed} ~~was aiming~~ to attend all ~~the~~ my classes for the first semester and make sure I ^{understood} ~~understand~~ ^{everything that was said} in class but in class, unfortunately some of the classes, I ~~didn't~~ ^{did not} attend.

Since well this is about the expectations you had, the entry has to be written in past tense.

Again, we learned that when writing formally we should not use contractions like 'didn't'.

One other thing, punctuate your sentences/paragraphs.

Overall your expectations were good. I would have been glad if they were all met.

STUDENT 10

My expectations when I first came to University.

1. I was expecting high-order security. I was expecting high-order safety. This expectation was not met because there was a time when I heard that there were school bags stolen at the Reading Lab entrance. Most of them lost their very precious and valuable goods. ~~It made me~~ This made me feel insecure and unsafe on campus because I now don't know what to expect when I am on campus.

I was also expecting tons of work. This expectation has come to life because there ~~are~~ a lot of units to study in each and every module. This makes me determined and passionate because I've always liked challenges. I also learn a lot from all of my modules. I was also not expecting to cope with all of the work in University. With the help of the ACLE III I am able to cope because we're taught of different effective study skills and how to cope with our fears and stress when coming to examinations and assignments. This makes me feel positive and driven to pass because I believe that I can and ACLE III has given me that passion and belief that I can pass easily.

Comment

* I don't know much about writing but this is excellent.

STUDENT 11

I came to North-West with many ^{expectations} ^{hoping} ~~hoping~~ that life will be good in every area of ^{my} life, but ^{it} is not the way ^{thought} ^{would} it should be.

From that time things has turn from good to worse in my life. But i still believe that i will make it in life only what i need is determination that i will make it in North west university.

don't give up so early, you still have a long way to go. Just focus on your studies, the rest will follow after. Believe in yourself.

Annexure 5: Letter of Request to Students

P. O. Box 390

Ratshidi

2739

Dear Class 2 AGLE student

PARTICIPATION IN A MASTER'S DEGREE RESEARCH PROJECT

I am your lecturer (Kehilwe Mose) doing a Master's Degree in English in the North West University, Mafikeng Campus. I would like to request your assistance to participate in my research study. The title of my research is: ***"Process Writing Approach as Intervention to First-Year Students' Essay Writing Challenges at North West University, Mafikeng Campus"***.

The purpose of my study is to develop systematic intervention strategies in the teaching and improvement of first-year university students' essay writing.

To do the study, I shall be requesting you to keep reflective journals where you will be recording your writing learning experiences in class. Your written views will then be incorporated into the subsequent lessons of the teaching writing process. I will also make copies of some of your journal entries, analyse them and use it for research purposes. For this, I need your permission.

Be informed that your names will not be disclosed to anybody. Your reflective journals will be kept in a lockable cabinet in my office and your participation or lack of participation will not affect your academic performance negatively or positively. You are therefore, free to decide to participate or not to take part. If you choose to participate, you are allowed to pull out at any time if you feel uncomfortable.

Volunteer to participate in this study by signing the attached agreement form.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely

.....

Kehilwe Mose (Ms)

Contact number: 082 572 7137

.....

Dr A. H. Hlatshwayo, Supervisor

.....

Dr M.L. Hove, Co-supervisor

Annexure 6: Agreement Form

I,.....voluntarily agree to take part in the study. I have been informed that my participation or lack thereof will not impact on my academic performance. Again I know that my name will not be disclosed and my written work will be kept in a safe place after being used.

I also understand that I may pull out at any time if I feel uncomfortable.

Student's signature:.....Date.....

Researcher's signature:.....Date:.....

Figure 1

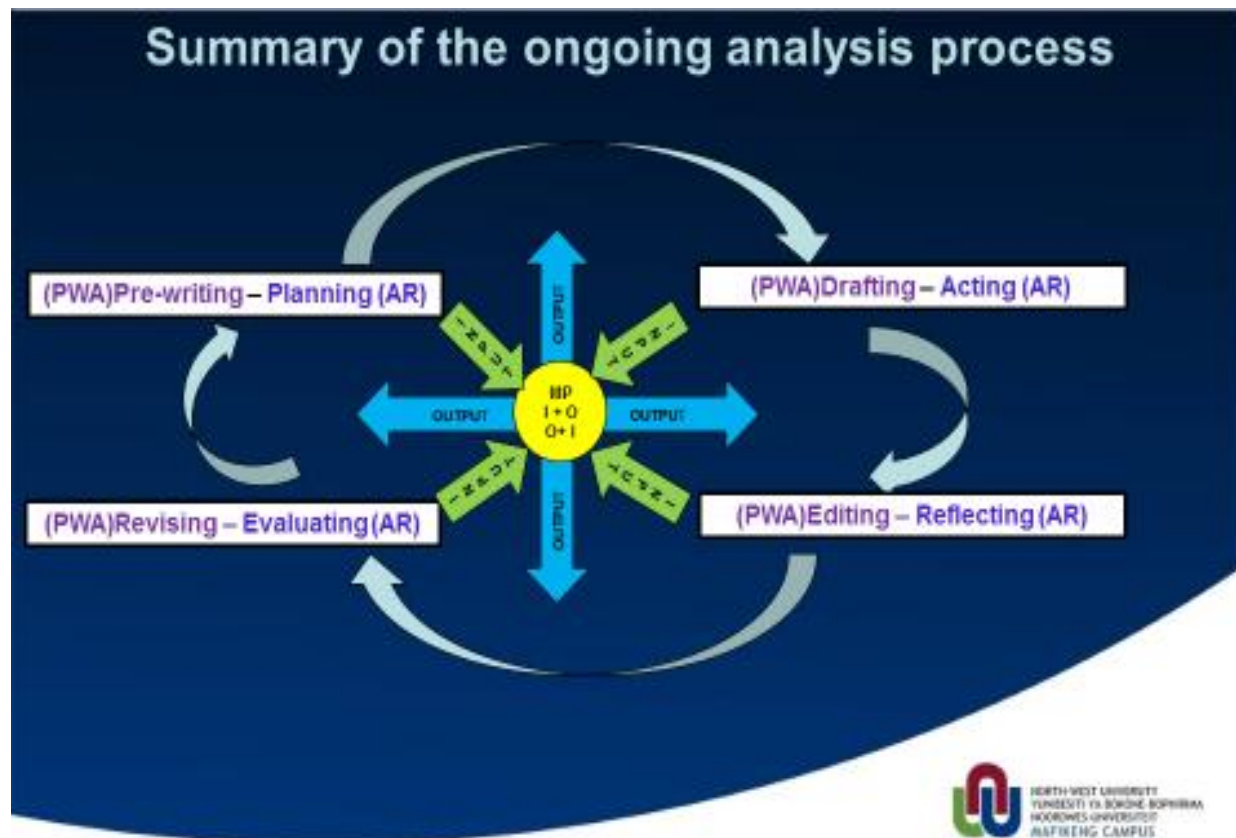


Figure 2: PWA - AR Intervention Model Adapted from White and Arndt's (1991:43)