

The problem of when to deal with language errors recurs in Course 3 when students are given a written assignment. They are told to write a short story based on a real-life event with a list of instructions. "Use imagery and detail to enrich your writing; remember to check all verbs, sentence structure, paragraphing and punctuation; write a well constructed story with a strong beginning and ending" (Course 3:148). What is unclear is WHEN it is appropriate to check for the identified language items. Should this occur while students are writing their first draft (after they have made content revisions) or while they are revising the essay? Also, how should they go about checking for these items? At this point, one needs to bear in mind the distinction between revision and editing (see 3.6).

One of the suggestions for dealing with this problem is to build up a language checklist as new elements of language are dealt with in students' writing. For each writing assignment, students will focus on a different aspect of language which is then added to the checklist for monitoring purposes by students and teacher. For example, after dealing with apostrophe "s" in a particular paragraph, it becomes one of the grammatical items on the language checklist used to check subsequent pieces of writing with. Each language item is checked separately even if this means scanning the piece of work a number of times.

It must be pointed out that content revision should be given

its own place and not be marginalised in the interests of a predominantly grammatical edit. A content checklist can be built up simultaneously with the language one because of the importance of focusing students' attention on the "level of meaning" rather than on "low-level substitutions" (Coe, 1988: 303). The content checklist concentrates on the purpose, audience and occasion of the writing as well as on structural elements linked to genre (see 4.6).

In the Tutor training document (April, 1988) it was stated that error is seen by TELIP in a positive light.

Errors show that learners are experimenting with the language. They have not yet understood the complete system of the language, and the errors show where their understanding is still incomplete (Tutor training, 1988: 13).

This attitude towards error is largely dependent on how teachers interact with their students and what type of error is concentrated on in class. Nevertheless, the material is indicative of a process orientation towards error which will prevent students being overwhelmed by it.

4.4 Structure

Students are asked to identify the main ideas in paragraphs throughout the coursebooks. These exercises facilitate students ability to recognise key points in paragraphs that

they read. Can one therefore assume that students will transfer this understanding to their own writing? It has been pointed out in the synthesis approach that it is only when students see their ideas written down on paper that overall structure starts to become clear. Students can be involved in identifying the structure of their own and each other's writing while they engage in re-ordering activities

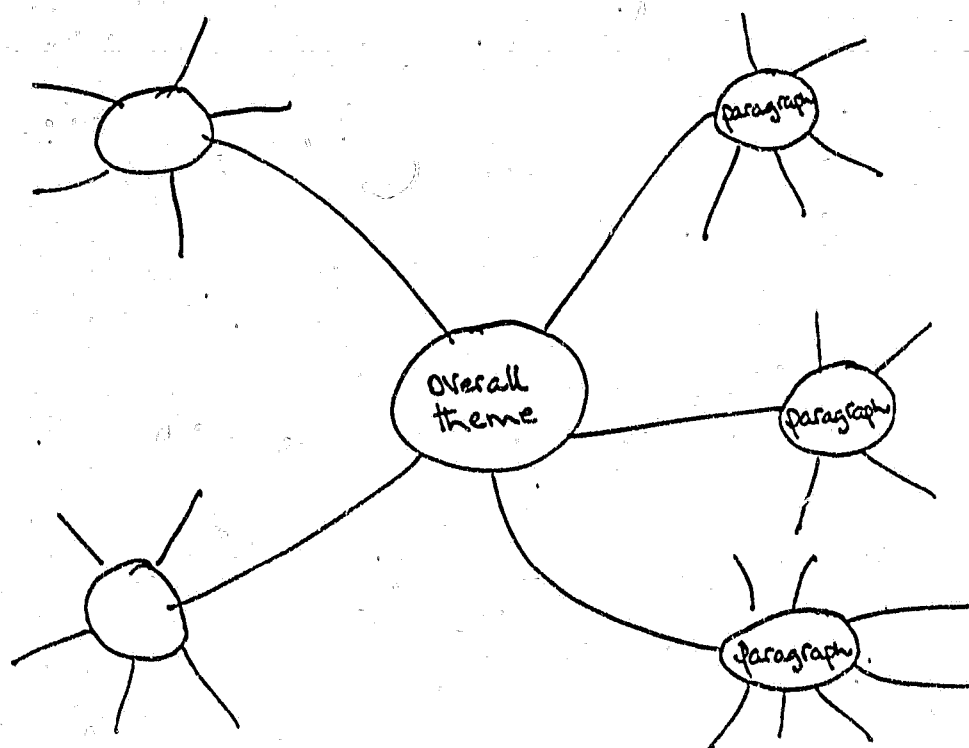
When students are involved in reading each other's stories with the purpose of identifying main points in paragraphs, they can write down these points on a separate piece of paper. Students will develop a list of main points which they can assess in terms of order and relevance to the topic. This involves the students in active reading of each other's writing and enables them to "come to grips" with the skeleton of the essay. From a synthesis perspective, this is preferable to asking students to merely "check that the story has been divided into paragraphs and that each paragraph has a main idea" and to "check that your paragraphs have been developed and decide how they could be improved" (Course 1: 43).

Since writing is a discovery process, writers do not necessarily know what they are going to say beforehand. The "after outline" serves to help them see what they have been saying (Coe, 1986: 305). The students need to have a record of what the main ideas are as well as strategies for improving the paragraphs. These strategies are clearer to students in

Course 3 when they are asked to physically cross out irrelevant sentences and give reasons for this. They are also asked to divide passages up into paragraphs. A link is made between these reading passages and students' own writing, "Look at the piece of family history which you wrote. Are there any irrelevant sentences in your paragraphs? If so, cross them out, or use them elsewhere" (Course 3: 43).

Students are encouraged to use tree diagrams to develop the overall theme and structure of an essay. They can see how ideas are linked together and that each paragraph contributes to the development of the theme of the passage.

Extract 7



(continued)

Here the tree diagram has the overall theme in its centre. This shows that the theme of a passage is similar to the main idea of a paragraph. Each paragraph in a passage contributes to or develops the theme of the passage. It is what the passage is about, the overall message that we, the readers, think the writer was trying to put across when she or he wrote the story. So we put the theme at the centre of the diagram to show its central position.

A tree diagram is useful to us because it enables us to pull the passage apart to see how it fits together. It shows which information is more important, or central, and which information is less important, and supports or develops the central information.

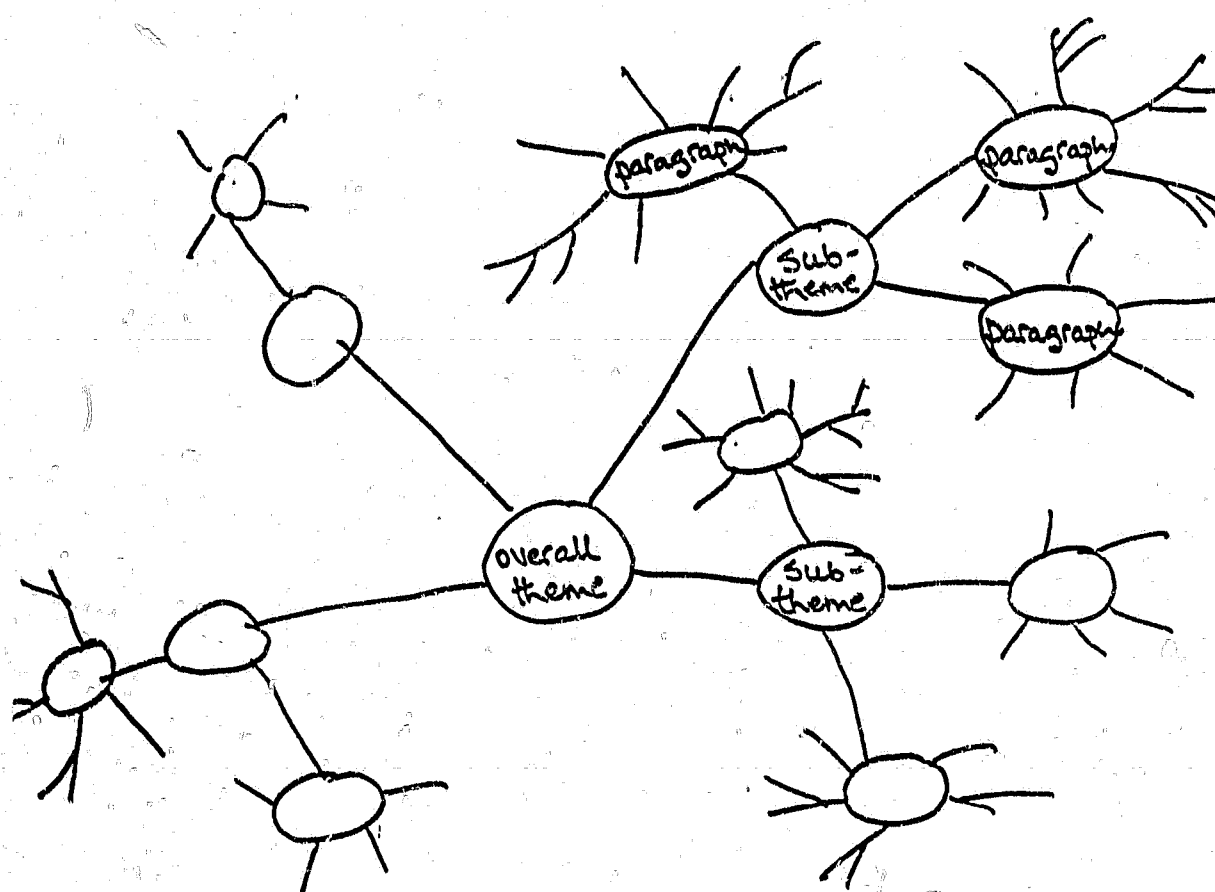
(TELIP Coursebook 2: 46.)

In this way the structure is part of the planning process and provides students with a non-linear, global outline of the essay. This concept is taken further when students are asked to look for sub-themes in reading passages.

Extract 8

Think about the structure of the story by Gcina Mhlope above. You may have noticed in your reading that not all paragraphs relate to the overall theme in the same way. Often several paragraphs discuss the same thing and relate closely to a similar idea. We call this a sub-topic or sub-theme, and can demonstrate it in a tree diagram:

(Continued)



(TELIP Coursebook 2: 51.)

However, instead of being asked to merely "think about the structure of the story by Gcina Mhlope", Students could be asked to write down the main points of her story and then see how they are interconnected. A valuable exercise would involve students being given the "skeleton" of a story and then being asked to work in groups to reconstruct the complete story. When students read their stories out loud to the class they can assess whether adequate development of the main theme has occurred. Another example of this is inserted below.

Extract 9

The following two paragraphs are first paragraphs of newspaper articles. Choose one and write the rest of the article yourself, using your choice as your first paragraph.

Keep in mind all the aspects of newspaper writing that we have discussed in Course 4 so far, including the "shape" of newspaper articles.

1. BRIGHTON - A team of scientists equipped with sonar, video and nets is planning to plunge into Africa next March to try to capture a living dinosaur
2. THE 10-week boycott of the Daily Dispatch has ended after a front-page apology by the newspaper's management.

(TELIP Coursebook 4: 44.)

The section on beginnings and endings highlights the important features of introductions and conclusions for students. This is done through students reading a number of extracts and deciding which ones are most suitable and attention-grabbing. This section could be more connected to students' writing as they judge whether their own and each other's introductions fulfill the criteria of a "good" introduction. Again this depends on the overall writing purpose and which qualities are important in a particular context. This could also apply in exercises where students decide, with reason, whether a particular ending is adequate. The assessment should be influenced by the writer's intention. A good example of this

is when students are told never to "conclude with a philosophical or universal statement" in newspaper articles (Course 4: 64).

The section on building sentences provides useful insight into techniques for improving sentences. Students are shown how to expand, combine and to avoid repetition of sentences.

Extract 10

● building sentences

Imagine that you are reading a novel which is written in the following way:

I was playing with my sister.
 We were playing "Hide and Seek".
 She cheated.
 I bit her.
 I ran away.
 My father heard her.
 He came looking for me.
 I ran.
 He followed me.
 He caught me.
 He hit me.
 I fell down.
 He pulled me up.
 He half-carried and half-tugged me.
 We got home.
 My father tied my hands and feet.
 I was sobbing.
 Tears rolled down my face.

If the whole book was written like this, you would probably soon become frustrated and would stop reading the book!

All these sentences are grammatically correct. But they are not interestingly written; there are no lively or interesting details to make the story seem real and vivid.

Furthermore, the sentences are "jerky" and short, and do not flow.

(Telip Coursebook 3: 70.)

The value of these activities is that sentence construction is seen as related to the writing purpose. Thus, one approach to the building of sentences is not prescribed as the "correct" approach. The selection of a variety of reading extracts confirms for students that "There are many, many different styles of writing - perhaps almost as many as there are authors" (Course 3: 78). Different functions of logical connectors are demonstrated to students in Course 2: additive, adversative, cause and effect and sequential. Students have to identify the connectors in reading passages and explain their functions. Perhaps students could be asked to look for inappropriate sentences in their own and each other's essays, such as run-on sentences or misused logical connectors.

The coursebooks contain valuable sections on different types of writing which require different structures. For example, Ellen Kuzwayo's description of members of her family in Course one highlights classic descriptive writing which uses lots of adjectives and which reveals the writer's character. Narrative writing is dealt with in Course 3 and incorporates the tense needed to write a story about the past. The reading passages which accompany Course 3 give students exposure to various forms of writing. Students are able to build up an understanding of how to use patterns of organisation in specific genres such as reports, newspapers and formal letters.

4.5 Models/Reading

The numerous reading extracts contained within the TELIP material illustrate that reading plays a crucial role throughout the writing process.

Reading well and writing well go hand in hand with each other. It is difficult to write well if you have not developed a familiarity with the written word through wide reading (Course 1: 16).

Yet the reading passages are not incorporated to be used as mere models for students to emulate in form and style. Students are expected to be active and to take control of the learning situation as they build up their reading skills. For example, a short story is not used merely as a model, but is analysed in terms of a range of questions which make the criteria for short stories more explicit.

Extract 11

Divide into 3 groups. Each group will take one of the following discussion topics. Talk about them, looking very carefully at the relevant parts of the story and at the exact words which tell you what you want to know.

Write down your group's ideas.

Afterwards, one person from each group will be asked to "report" to the class, summing up what you had discussed.

GROUP A

1. What are the author's attitudes towards Vukani?
2. What reasons do you think there are for his not wanting to play the violin?

GROUP B

1. What are the author's attitudes to Vukani's parents?
2. What are his parents' values (and those of their friends)?

(continued)

GROUP C

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1. What are Teboho's attitudes towards her mother?
2. What are Teboho's own values?
3. What are the author's attitudes towards Teboho?

(TELIP Coursebook 3: 146.)

The reading passages are selected on the basis of students' experiences and interests. They serve to facilitate students' understanding of other people's lives and allow students to become familiar with a range of written styles and forms. This inevitably has an impact on students' own writing processes as they develop their vocabulary and a feel for written structures. For example, before writing about an event that has changed their lives, students are asked to read two passages on a similar theme which indicate different approaches to this topic.

Extract 12

Your next task is to write a story about an event which changed your life. Before you do this, however, take some time to think about the two passages you have read from the books Call Me Woman and Let Me Speak.

1. Both passages, as we have said, describe important events in the writers' lives, events which changed their lives in some way or another. What were these events, and how did they change their lives? Were they positive or negative changes?
2. Notice how differently the two people describe these events. Ellen Kuzwayo uses lots of adjectives to describe her feelings and other people. Domitila Barrios de Chungara, on the other hand, manages to convey how she feels without using many adjectives. Different writers have different styles of saying what they want to say. Possibly this says something about the writers themselves; what do you think?

(TELIP Coursebook 1: 72.)

Students become aware of a range of reading strategies. This is particularly striking in the section on vocabulary as students are required to build up strategies to actively work out meanings of words.

Extract 13

Decide which of the words below each sentence expresses the meaning of the underlined word. Try to get the meaning of the word from the rest of the sentence.

If you can think of another word which also means the same as the underlined word, or is closer in meaning than those offered below, write it down as well.

If more than one word is possible, choose the one you think fits best.

1. He was so revolted by his neighbour's filthy kitchen that his repugnance showed on his face.
 - a. discouragement
 - b. hesitancy
 - c. regret
 - d. disgust
 - e. resentment

(TELIP Coursebook 1: 48.)

Students also make written predictions from newspaper headlines and compare these with the article itself. This is an integration of reading and writing activities in the coursebooks and focuses to some extent on the audience.

"Structure your writing in a clear and concise way, so that your reader can understand it as easily as possible" (Course 4: 61).

Students are encouraged to read each other's writing in the coursebooks. However, this activity could play a more substantial role both in developing students' reading skills as well as encouraging collective work. Models of exemplary students' work can be used as texts for critical analysis and for students to work out the criteria of "good" essays. Students also need to be shown pre-edited versions of "good" texts to demonstrate writing as a process.

4.6 Methods of Assessment/Revision

The synthesis approach argues that revision is an aspect of writing which does not begin when the writing ends. Writers are constantly in a state of self assessment, a process which is greatly facilitated by peer and group editing. Writers' circles have become an integral part of TELIP course "where writers meet in groups to read, discuss and criticise their own and each other's work" (Course 1: 40). Not only can students benefit from someone else's comments on their essay, but they can learn about their own essays from editing someone else's. Students become less channelled towards "writing for teacher" and they are aware of the criteria involved in a particular piece of work.

As mentioned in 4.4, when students are requested to read each other's stories in the writers' circles, these could be more task oriented. For example, students are instructed to "check

the following things as a group: grammar and paragraphing" (Course 4: 99). It is not clear what grammatical item is to be focused on or how students should check the paragraphs. Students are instructed to "read each other's event stories and to "discuss the use of the auxiliaries, present simple, present continuous, simple past and past continuous" (Course 1: 102). Despite the detailed focus, it is not certain how students should discuss these concepts. One possibility is for them to write down examples of good and bad sentences and to present these to the class for general discussion. An exercise which asks students to make corrections in pencil on fellow students' scripts is a more focused way of dealing with peer revision.

Extract 14

Before discussing these passages in class, decide what you think are the language mistakes which they contain,

Underline these mistakes in pencil (so that you can later rub them out if necessary.)

In pencil, write in what you think is the correction of each mistake. (We will check these later.)

(TELIP Coursebook 3: 35.)

Coe argues that for most good writers, "revision means reformulation as well as polishing" (Coe, 1988: 301). A problem with the TELIP materials is that there are a number of guidelines for language editing and not much attention is focused on assessing work in terms of how well it fulfills the writer's intentions. Students need to be given techniques that

will focus their writing on the level of meaning. For example they can ask questions like, "What is the paper's focus? what is it about? What has been left out? Have I considered all relevant aspects of the subject?" (Coe, 1986: 303). Students are guided by indicators relating to selection, use and organisation of content in a global reading of the text. When students edit each other's work for grammatical items, they scan-read the text for surface concerns such as spelling and punctuation.

The synthesis approach recommends a separation of content and grammatical checklists as the latter is seen to be more appropriate for the final stages of the drafting process to facilitate the expression of meaning in early drafts. In Course 3, pg 35, students are told to check "The correctness of grammar, punctuation, tenses and sentence structure" and "whether the subject matter is relevant to the title" There is no prioritising of aspects to be dealt with as the criteria are too general. Examples of this are inserted below.

Extract 15

Now create a story. Write a short story, transforming the experience that you have chosen, into fiction (that is, an imaginary story). That means that your short story will be BASED ON the event/experience in your real life.

(You may use imaginary characters or places, in this story. You may slightly change what happened; but remember to use the experience and feelings that you had, to make your story vivid).

- Use imagery and detail to enrich your writing.
- Remember to check all VERBS, SENTENCE STRUCTURE, PARAGRAPHING and PUNCTUATION.

(Continued)

- Write a well-constructed story, with a strong BEGINNING and ENDING.
- Write at least 4 pages (more if you wish).
- Enjoy writing!

(TELIP Coursebook 3: 148.)

Extract 16

1. When you have finished writing, check the followings things as a group:
 1. Grammar
 2. Paragraphing

(TELIP Coursebook 4: 99.)

In Course 3, there is one activity which comes the closest to the two-phase checklist system discussed in 3.6. Students are requested to read their stories out loud to the writers' circle. Both content and grammatical features are dealt with and students are asked to rewrite the stories and to reflect on how the feedback has affected the final draft. Again, there is no clear distinction between content revisions and grammatical edits even though the major areas are included.

The importance of students editing each other's work in the form of revision checklists is expressed by Flanigan when he says,

By teaching students to be first descriptive, then analytic, and finally evaluative, we teach them how to "decenter" themselves, to move outside their ego circle and into the roles of analysis and evaluation before the self is again incorporated into the writing (Flanigan, 1986: 317).

Students become less dependent on what teachers see in their writing and become responsible for their own and other's writing.

4.7 Function and Audience

In the coursebooks, learners have to perform tasks which draw mainly on real-life experiences.

Extract 17

Your next task is to write a story about an event which changed your life. Before you do this, however, take some time to think about the two passages you have read from the books Call Me Woman and Let Me Speak.

1. Both passages, as we have said, describe important events in the writers' lives, events which changed their lives in some way or another. What were these events, and how did they change their lives? Were they positive or negative changes?
2. Notice how differently the two people describe these events. Ellen Kuzwayo uses lots of adjectives to describe her feelings and other people. Domitila Barrios de Chungara, on the other hand, manages to convey how she feels without using many adjectives. Different writers have different styles of saying what they want to say. Possibly this says something about the writers themselves; what do you think?

(TELIP Coursebook 1: 20.)

Students are encouraged to keep personal diaries which are a record of past and present events. "We keep diaries for ourselves: we want to capture our experiences and not forget

them" (Course 3: 28). But the focus on writing does not remain purely personal as students are required to engage in writing tasks which concentrate on social responses as well as personal ones such as representations of local events. On-going journals can move beyond the area of "emotionally charged associations" and become a vehicle for understanding and participating in the community (Medway, 1986: 63).

The synthesis approach argues that writers' purposes are essential in determining what and how they are going to say something. In Course 3, there is a list of writers' aims or intentions which recurs in subsequent coursebooks as a reminder. This dimension could be included from the start of the Courses so that students can constantly ask themselves why they are writing and they can assess their writing in terms of how well it has fulfilled its purpose.

The TELIP coursebooks acquaint students with a variety of forms and structures for different purposes. A good example of this is when students are shown how to express an opinion and sum up main arguments in meetings for the purposes of taking minutes and writing reports.

Extract 18

agreeing, disagreeing, and expressing an opinion

Below are various phrases that we use in English when we want to agree with someone, disagree or express our opinion.

some ways of asking for an opinion

What do you think about.....?

How do you feel about....?

What's your opinion { on..... ?
about... ?

Would you agree } that..... ?
Wouldn't you say }

some ways of giving an opinion

I think }
believe } that.....
feel }

It's my belief that.....

In my opinion.....

It seems to me that.....

As far as I can see,.....

As far as I'm concerned.....

Surely

....., don't you agree?

some ways of agreeing

Yes, I agree/I'd agree with that/you

That's right.

Yes, of course/indeed.

Absolutely.

I couldn't agree more.

Quite.

writers' audiences

1. himself/herself.
2. the teacher or examiner.
3. the people he/she is teaching.
4. the people in his/her class.
5. his/her close friends - or the people who share his/her beliefs and ideals.
6. his/her employer.
7. the people who live in his/her community and share the same culture, language and background.
8. the people who live in his/her country, some of whom have different cultures, languages and backgrounds.
9. the academic community (i.e. teachers, lecturers, professors, etc. in schools, colleges or universities.)
10. the international community (i.e. people all over the world who are able to read and are interested in reading).
11. ordinary working people (in any of the communities mentioned) who read daily newspapers and popular magazines.

so you need to change the way you write according to the audience you are writing for.

(Continued)

For example:

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1. Your boss or your teacher expects good grammar, spelling and punctuation, and the kind of standard English which can be understood throughout the country or the world, but if you write to your girlfriend, the only thing that matters is that she understands you.
2. Ordinary working people who read popular magazines want to read simple language and articles which are presented in an exciting or dramatic way, but when academic people read text-books, they look for well-researched facts and accurate information.

(TELIP Coursebook 3: 100.)

Students realise, when they have to work out the different audiences of a variety of passages, that a range of potential readers exist. This is particularly apparent when writing is used for authentic purposes. In Course 5, students are required to write and post a formal letter thanking the Tour Manager of the Gold Mine Museum for the tour in which they recently participated. Before completing this task, students are asked to consider a number of crucial issues related to audience like "What do I want my reader to do? Who is going to read my letter? How much background knowledge do my reader and I share? What facts does my reader need to know?" (Course 5: 73).

Speech writing draws particular attention to the need to clarify purpose and audience. "In your pairs, imagine what kind of audience you will have in front of you when you make your speech. Discuss how this will influence the way you speak" (Course 5: 83). This brings in the importance of register and when it is appropriate to use "good and bad English" (Course 4: 68). Students are shown that African English like "My uncle is late", which means that the uncle is dead, is not incorrect depending on

the context in which it is used and readers' expectations. Accessible newspaper layout is taught to students as a way of making articles as easy as possible for readers to understand.

Extract 20

Which of the following two passages is easier to read?

As Security Police detained another six people yesterday, the country's three major business organisations issued a strongly worded warning that the wave of detentions of trade union leaders could endanger labour peace. The Afrikaanse Handelsinstituut (AHI), the Federated Chamber of Industries (FCI) and the Association of South African Chambers of Commerce (Assocom) said the detentions had put at risk the harmonious relationship between employers and a large section of their workforce.

(RDM 15 November 1984, p1)

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(TELIP Coursebook 4: 112.)

The synthesis approach argues that writers do need to define their target audience before they start writing. Nevertheless, students ought to work through and clarify their ideas in a writer-based draft before addressing themselves to external criteria. This does happen in the TELIP context in the "writers' circles" which broaden the sense of readership for

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students. The development of ideas is facilitated by feedback from colleagues who assess whether the criteria for a particular piece of writing have been met. TELIP's tutor training component should ensure that the space is created for the transition from writer-based drafts (getting ideas on paper regardless of form, order and expression) to reader-based drafts (taking the reader into account) in the classroom.

4.6 Methodology

TELIP has evolved a methodology which is learner-centred and which attempts to relate to learners' frames of reference and build on what they already know. An indication of this is in the proposed seating arrangement at the start of the course. There is either a clustering of students in groups with teacher as co-ordinator, or an open forum for discussion where the teacher is part of the circle. Throughout the courses, pairs and groups are encouraged, for example, "In pairs, discuss the underlined words and work out their meaning from the context" (Course 1: 53). Groups are generally given carefully structured tasks to perform and are aware of elements to look for.

Because the coursebooks have already been planned by TELIP course writers, the onus is on teachers of the course to adjust them to the classroom situation. Modifications to

planned lessons are inevitable, and teachers need to be aware of when and how to incorporate them. This allows for a negotiated syllabus.

In the classroom situation itself the teacher and learners together determine how a task is to proceed, e.g. whether working individually, in pairs, in groups or whole class (Greenwood, 1986: 16).

The coursebooks should be designed as "points of departure" for teachers to use selectively and flexibly. If teachers are comfortable and familiar enough with the course materials, they will feel confident to handle alternative interpretations of a set task. Training activities could focus on teachers' own approaches to teaching in relation to the structure of the coursebooks.

Handing teachers new curricula and materials is not nearly so effective as engaging teachers in the (re)creation of curricula and materials... Given access to information about up-to-date theories and research findings, teachers can figure out how best to apply such information with particular groups of students (Coe, 1986: 290).

It is necessary to equip teachers adequately with knowledge of the writing process by involving them in their own writing. Otherwise they are likely to reinforce traditional notions about writing which concentrate on the final written product. Coe makes the point that "the quality of the written product depends on the quality of the creative process" (Coe, 1986).

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It is necessary to equip teachers adequately with knowledge of the writing process by involving them in their own writing. Otherwise they are likely to reinforce traditional notions about writing which concentrate on the final written product. Coe makes the point that "the quality of the written product depends on the quality of the creative process" (Coe, 1986:

310). Teachers will be more effective if they can help students understand why certain qualities make their writing work better. Between-draft comments and feedback by teachers are useful for students if they are coupled with collaborative editing activities.

It is difficult for the TELIP students to imbue their own students with those qualities when faced with conditions such as overcrowded classrooms and lack of support. But if teachers are given the opportunity to develop their own capacity as writers and become more secure in relation to their subject matter, they will resist top-down, transmission approaches to teaching. They can explore possibilities for involving students in classroom activities and can develop innovative approaches to teaching and learning based on what they have learnt at TELIP.

4.9 Some Concluding Remarks on TELIP Materials

From analysing the TELIP coursebooks in relation to specific elements of writing, it is evident that they can be located within the synthesis paradigm. They provide a useful illustration of many of the underlying principles in the approach and insights have been gained from a systematic attempt to examine the materials. The strategies applied to analytical and argumentative writing at Khanya College can be adapted to other types of writing in the TELIP context as it is the approach itself that determines how writing is taught. Reading materials are integrated with language

activities as part of a communicative framework. The writers' circles give students the opportunity to assess what they are doing as writers in an ongoing way.

Shortcomings that have been identified in the materials should be seen in the context of the synthesis approach and not in terms of their practical implementation. It is acknowledged that teachers are present to guide students through the courses and that there need not be rigid adherence to the pre-packaged activities. The main thrust of the criticism is that students may "look on" the materials without necessarily participating in terms of their own approaches to language learning. It has been pointed out that the students' own writing practices are not an integral part of the courses themselves. Writing activities are generally included after a unit of work has been presented.

As mentioned throughout this analysis, the course material has the potential to fulfill all of the criteria of a synthesis approach to the teaching of writing if students are involved in their learning and if the material is used both selectively and critically. Otherwise the materials fall into the trap of being "prepackaged locksteps courses" which foster dependence on "correct" approaches to learning.

CHAPTER FIVE

5

CONCLUSION

This research report has analysed various approaches to the teaching of writing with a view both to understanding and to improving teaching practices in E.S.L. contexts. Writing is an area that cuts across most subjects in schools and academic settings. It is an area that is sadly neglected by subject teachers who expect magic remedies for dealing with students' writing difficulties from English teachers who they view as the language "experts". English teachers themselves are often forced to marginalise writing activities when faced with demanding literature syllabuses. Writing is usually allocated a limited number of periods per week and there is little scope for enabling students to communicate meaningfully through this medium.

In order to investigate this field, it was necessary to take into account both macro and micro-contexts that affect the teaching of writing. Constraints within Apartheid education such as large numbers of students, lack of facilities and teachers' own feelings of inadequacy prevent them from exploring various options within the teaching of writing. As a result, students are mostly assigned writing tasks without

negotiation. There is little scope for students to take control of their social realities or their thoughts through writing. Yet the purpose of this research report was not to adopt a defeatist attitude or to extend the analysis of how education functions to maintain the social relations of production. Rather it was an attempt to challenge notions of power and domination in one area of teaching with a view to developing an alternative approach to the teaching of writing.

This research report adopted a contextualised perspective of writing development which takes into account writing purpose, topic and audience. This differs from the traditional-product approach which generally equates the teaching of writing with the teaching of grammar in E.S.L. contexts. In the product approach there is concern with the final written product more than with the process of writing itself. There is a tendency towards decontextualised exercises, textbook explanations of punctuation and sentence structure and spelling corrections.

The major criticism of the product approach is its focus on form and structure of writing as opposed to content. Yet there was a need to come to an understanding of the basic issues involved in writing through an examination of the sub-skills contained within the product paradigm. These aspects are isolated and taught as discrete elements yet can be incorporated and used as a basis for other approaches to the teaching of writing. For example, the teaching of grammar

should not be discounted and can be used non-prescriptively within the process paradigm.

In contrast with the product view of the nature of writing, the process approach suggests that the writing process involves a number of strategies that are inter-dependent. The writer continuously moves back and forth between the activities of analysing the demands of the task, planning the text, integrating and evolving concepts, structuring and checking what has been written and finally editing the text. Issues such as pausing during composing and the role of re-reading are placed firmly on the agenda. Students are shown that effective writing takes time to produce and involves a number of redrafts. There is a concern that students should not become error-obsessed and surface concerns are relegated to the final stages of the drafting process.

What emerges within the process position, is that writing is a process of thinking and developing thoughts rather than writing down thoughts that have already been discovered. Writers constantly evaluate their tentative productions against prior knowledge, goals and audience. Thus students are seen to develop more of a sense of purpose and audience as they move from a writer-based to a reader-based draft (Flower and Hayes, 1980). This does not negate the importance of having a clear focus initially with audience in mind for particular writing tasks. In argumentative writing, for example, students need to

engage in debates with their readers from the start unlike in analytical tasks, where the focus is on the subject or problem to be investigated.

The division of writing into sub-skills, however, highlights a major problem within the process paradigm. Despite the inter-relatedness of all aspects of writing, certain process interpretations conceptualise writing as a series of stages which proceed in a linear fashion and which can be dealt with independently. The notion of writing as a process of pre-writing, writing and re-writing implies that "discovery precedes real writing" or that "revision is something less than a re-envisioning" (Coe, 1986: 296).

An additional criticism is the non-theorisation of the role of teachers in the process of writing. If teachers are not to focus exclusively on the products of writing, what role are they to play in guiding students through the drafting process? Peer editing and self questioning are seen as important activities to consolidate and extend learning. Teachers should be aware of when it is appropriate to facilitate such activities as well as when to provide input on crucial aspects of writing. If the writing process is broken down into a series of discrete steps, the danger is that teachers play the same role as in the product approach: merely prescribing to students how best to proceed.

It became evident from an analysis of the process approach that there was a need to build on and refine the basic principles of the process approach and to add a rigorous dimension to it based on elements within the product paradigm. This was part of an attempt to explore the role of teachers more thoroughly and to establish a balance between allowing students to take control over their own writing, and knowing when to intervene and to provide constructive input in a non-threatening manner.

The synthesis approach that emerged from a combination of elements of both product and process paradigms is not intended to become a model for the teaching of writing. The danger of models is that they can be easily adopted in situations that lend themselves to prescriptive teaching. The writing checklist, for example, should not be foisted on students without an understanding of what the criteria are. Writing checklists should be developed in accordance with particular writing tasks and their requirements. The checklist for descriptive writing will differ from the argumentative writing checklist. Students should have the opportunity to assess their own and each other's writing in terms of the criteria but need to play a role in formulating and criticising the checklists.

Any approach that pretends to be humanistic and effective must ultimately develop students' knowledge of those basic principles that will allow them to make their own critical decisions, to depend

on themselves even while accepting guidance from their instructors (Coe, 1986: 289).

The principle behind the checklist is that students are aware of what constitutes an acceptable piece of writing, something that teachers take for granted. At the same time, students are involved in a process that does not focus exclusively on this end-product and that takes into account the conflicts inherent in the writing process. Aspects of writing are not compartmentalised and students become aware of an interaction between aspects as they stop to reflect on the process of writing and the relationship among ideas.

It was essential in the research report to examine whether the synthesis approach could be applied to a language programme in which writing is a large component. The analysis of TELIP'S course material pointed to the need for students to become more involved in the materials in terms of their own learning and writing strategies. It became evident that not much scope exists in the materials for students to become empowered as writers. Students need to develop more of an understanding of what is involved in the process of writing in order to assess whether their own writing strategies are appropriate for particular writing purposes. Having gained this insight, they will be able to articulate and develop their own meanings more clearly.

A criticism of this research report is that merely looking at materials is insufficient especially in view of the fact that a synthesis approach is largely dependent on what happens in the classroom. Though materials are an important dimension of an organisation's approach to writing and can be easily read and analysed, it is not enough simply to change the material. A more meaningful intervention would involve working with TELIP teachers. Teachers need to be shown how to use the materials selectively and how best to integrate language activities with students' reading and writing processes. Teachers can be taken through the process of drafting, collaborative editing and "after-outlining" so that they feel confident enough to do the same with their own students. Teachers should be aware of what writing means for students in particular contexts and what enables them to become competent writers.

The need for intervention with teachers is also indicated by feedback from the TELIP course writers who express some of the difficulties of applying the synthesis approach. They find the suggestions for improving the coursebooks valuable particularly in the areas of revision and structure but point to potential shortcomings in terms of students' own learning backgrounds. For example, rigid planning procedures are incorporated to compensate for students' tendency to avoid structure altogether in their writing. Thus there is a need for teachers to grade planning activities from highly struc-

tured to more flexible ones. Because of students' difficulties in seeing underlying structures and relationships between ideas, "after-outlining" may have to be dealt with in relation to students' reading strategies. There is a need to take these practical constraints into account when implementing the synthesis approach, as well as to be aware of the fact that some students may feel inhibited about assessing each other's writing.

It is hoped that the synthesis approach will have a bearing on other areas of teaching practice particularly as there is a move away from the teacher as sole evaluator. Traditionally students wait for teachers to tell them what to do in their writing, an attitude which fosters feelings of dependence and passivity. Students should be allowed to internalise the revision process without having to be constantly told what to do (Beach, 1979: 113) What is needed is a combination of between-draft comments by teachers and collaborative, group revision described in the process approach. John Clifford's study on learning how to write collaboratively showed that

feedback from an immediate, socially appropriate audience seems to have provided a more compelling impetus to change than the abstract grade rewards typical of the current-traditional paradigm (Clifford, 1986: 315).

This research report has demonstrated that students' conceptions of essay-writing need to be the same as their

teachers' for genuine communication to take place. If feedback fails to connect and students are unaware of what is expected of them, it loses its credibility and students become unmotivated. "Feedback which amounts to information-giving rather than an attempt to articulate and explore premises - on the student's as well as the tutor's terms - is unlikely to connect" (Hounsell, 1987: 118). An important area for future research is the quality of feedback and how it affects students' writing.

A major strength of a contextualised approach is that students learn how to communicate effectively and how to accomplish their purposes with their intended readers. They learn to become more precise and to engage coherently with their audiences. A synthesis approach will be most effective in situations where it is used across the curriculum and where there is a possibility for students to transfer their writing abilities to different writing occasions.

When writing is regarded as a central rather than a peripheral activity in the curriculum and teachers and students come to grips with issues in the writing process, it can become a powerful means of furthering students' learning as a whole. Emig (1977) has argued that since writing's permanence allows for re-examination of ideas, students who do not write may lose many opportunities for learning. Learning to write changes the lives of students. Having gone through the process

of writing, students gain control over their thoughts and are able to construct new meanings for themselves. It is believed that students who are given the opportunity to explore and develop their ideas in writing will be empowered to engage with the wider world as critical and confident participants.

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