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WRITING FOR LEARNING IN HOME ECONOMICS

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Mini-thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree  
of Magister Educationis

Faculty of Education  
University of the Western Cape  
April 1992

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STATEMENT

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this mini-thesis is original and has not been submitted partially or in full to any other university for degree purposes.

Signed. P.A. Abrahams

P.A. Abrahams

Date... 25 April 1992

25 April 1992



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## ABSTRACT

This mini-thesis comprises two sections, the **what** and the **how** of writing-across-the curriculum (WAC).

Section one investigates the integration of writing into content area subjects through the writing process as a project of possibility for critical pedagogy. The view is held that the writing in content area subjects makes learning more meaningful, enjoyable and also empowers students to become critical self-determined thinkers. Students no longer only fill in blanks, choose the correct answer or rely on rote learning when writing in content area subjects, but write creatively and expressively in a variety of discourse forms.

In chapter two the literature on WAC is reviewed in depth. The chapter commences with some thoughts on what writing is. Then it investigates the writing process and proceeds to what writing across the curriculum is, with all its merits highlighted. The implementation of writing across the curriculum which involves the whole school as well as a proposed writing across the curriculum policy comprises the main section of the chapter.

One of the objectives of this research is to show that implementing the writing process in a content area subject not only improves the standard of writing but also enhances



the internalisation of subject matter. A further objective is to illustrate that writing across the curriculum can facilitate change in the classroom.

Section two, starting with chapter three, is devoted to the "how" of WAC, and its practical application. Observations in classrooms where writing in content area subjects were done in Missouri schools are described and examples of work done at the schools are cited.

In chapter four attention is given to the design and presentation of a writing project in Home Economics based on the standard eight Home Economics syllabus. This classroom research is based on experiential learning. A detailed description of the results is included.

The last chapter starts with a dream, an outline of a Home Economics project of possibility for a standard eight Home Economics class. The project is developed around community work to convince students that they can make a difference in the world by showing care and concern for the elderly.

The second part of chapter five, deals with constraints with regard to the implementation of a writing programme in Home Economics at the school where I teach. The chapter concludes with recommendations for the implementation of a writing programme in Home Economics.



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## CHAPTER 1

### WRITING IN HOME ECONOMICS

#### 1.1 AIM OF THIS STUDY

The aim of this study is to determine which selected features of *writing across the curriculum* (WAC) that I observed in the State of Missouri schools in the United States of America might be applied in the context of Home Economics in South Africa to improve the quality of writing in content area subjects and facilitate change in the classroom.

#### 1.2 RATIONALE

Change is not only needed in the curricula and the classroom, but also in the hierarchical structure at school. Authoritarian teachers must make way for more democratic progressive ones, and authorities should not use teachers as clerks, merely implementing management schemes of the State. Teachers must question what they are expected to teach, how they are expected to teach and most importantly, they must play an active role in shaping teaching conditions (Giroux 1987:176-180). This is because "...teachers are the only people who have the power, the commitment, the desire, and the capacity to be leaders in the process of change" (Mayher 1990:1).



According to Shor (1987:33) the most important function of education should be to facilitate transformation. If the South African education system is to be democratized it will have to be in harmony with the changes and policies of the new dispensation. We shall have to teach our students to be self-determined critical thinkers in preparation for the future. They must be taught to send messages and not merely to receive them unquestioningly. Students must develop enquiring minds, so that they can rid themselves of debilitating blinkers. Because writing is a "unique" way of learning and thinking (Emig 1977:122) students need to write (Fulwiler 1987:1). Writing not only teaches the writer to think but also teaches the writer to think in an organized fashion, thinking is an integral part of democratic decision-making. Informed decisions are empowering, and empowerment boosts the self-esteem. It gives the participant a feeling of well-being, a feeling of being a useful citizen whose actions can make a difference in the world (Giroux 1987:179).

One of the areas in the curriculum which requires attention, is the teaching of content area subjects. Many students find the learning of content area subjects threatening because of the failure potential it holds. Most students obtain low grades or even fail because they do not always comprehend subject material. Very little scope is allowed for interpretation or creativity. In many instances they are



expected to regurgitate the textbook material and the teachers' notes verbatim in class tests and examinations. If they do not, they are penalised. This is not necessarily the fault of the teachers. Many are under- or un-qualified to teach a particular subject and, because they lack confidence, they feel safer when no deviation from the text is allowed.

When the writing process is incorporated in the teaching of content area subjects, students become psychologically involved in the learning material (Frank 1979:14). This involvement is a pre-requisite for comprehension, because content then becomes meaningful to them. On the other hand, if students lack involvement a problem which has far reaching effects arises.

Firstly, many employers and tertiary faculty members complain that high school graduates lack the ability and confidence to write a comprehensive coherent report or essay. I believe that the blame for this is attributable, at least in part, to the present teacher-directed approach used in the teaching of content area subjects. Students are not generally taught how to select information for a particular purpose. Essays are often the work of teachers who are so result-orientated that they lose sight of the irreparable damage they are doing by "thinking" for their students. Secondly, the poor quality of writing in South Africa, as in the rest of the world, is of great concern to parents,



teachers, administrators, employers and students themselves (Tchudi and Huerta 1983: 5).

In the present school system language teachers alone are accused of not teaching students how to write or of not paying enough attention to writing in the classroom. Given the current practice of considering the improvement of writing the task of language teachers, the accusation may be justified. On the other hand language teachers alone cannot be expected to bear the sole responsibility for providing adequate time for writing. In order to give students more opportunities to write, we should encourage them to write in all subjects. This implies that the teaching of writing is the responsibility of every teacher in the school building (Maimon 1978:16). I support Maimon here, because through my teaching experience I have become convinced that every teacher should accept the teaching of writing as her responsibility in order to promote student learning. I have taught Home Economics from standards 6-10 for several years. The students have always fared satisfactorily in the practical examinations. However, poor student performance in theory examinations has often left me disappointed, and with questions such as: "*Where did I go wrong?*" "*Why is there such a large discrepancy between the marks for the theory and the practical sections?*" and "*What can I do to improve learning?*" While learners seemed to know the subject content during revision sessions, this knowledge was not reflected



in the written examination. I tried everything I could think of to assist the students, especially those at matric level, but matters did not improve.

During my visit to the United States I observed the teaching of writing in subjects such as History, Geography, Literature, Music, Home Economics, Guidance, Business Science, Physical Education and Art. I noticed not only how successfully students organised their knowledge of these content area subjects when they were required to write creatively, but also how enthusiastic they were about the various subjects. That was when I realised that the writing process might provide a method through which South African students could be taught to write in content area subjects with more confidence.

I then decided to investigate how improved language and language learning modes could be developed at my school through writing in Home Economics. I was curious to discover whether the learners' interest in the subject could be stimulated in this way, thus making learning more enjoyable, and, if so, whether this would enable them to comprehend the material better, and, consequently, perform more satisfactorily.

Progress is being made in our schools in moving away from mainstream, dominant, traditional curriculum theory towards a critical theory curriculum. In South Africa educational



organisations such as National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) and National Education Co-ordinating Committee (NECC) have been formed to investigate curricula designed for critical pedagogy. The object of critical pedagogy is to empower and transform existing social inequalities and injustices (McLaren 1989:160). Its aim is to foster education for liberation, and the experience of the learners is central to learning. Knowledge must be understood and analysed within forms of experience that students bring to school. Knowledge is not a commercial commodity to be managed and consumed (Giroux 1987:175). Learners must be guided to make connections between the known (their experiences) and the unknown (new material). Learners must be armed to understand their own histories so that they can have a better understanding of their present situation and try to model a desirable future (Giroux 1987:176). Experiences can only be successfully manipulated if the classroom atmosphere is conducive to student interaction and collaborative learning. It is also important that students be guided to appreciate difference as both a basis for democratic tolerance and as a condition for critical dialogue founded on principles of trust, sharing and a commitment to improving the quality of life (Giroux 1987:178).

I hoped that this project with the standard eight class which included a visit to a squatter camp and resulted in a



better understanding of their own as well as the squatters' situation could significantly contribute to the process of change.

Finally, I decided to introduce students to the writing process because I agree with Groenewald (1990) when she says that at the very least the writing process is a pleasant alternative to the present autocratic teacher-centred classroom practice. The writing process holds promise of many exciting activities which will stimulate interest in subject material, which in turn will stimulate learning. It gives the learner the opportunity not only to be creative and innovative, but also to be responsible for his/her own learning. In addition the classroom atmosphere is positive, which is conducive to making meaning and promoting democratised learning.

Because of the collaborative nature of the process approach to writing students learn to co-operate. Much discussion and sharing takes place. Since students socialize when they work in collaboration with others in the writing process, they learn tolerance because they cannot always have their own way, regardless of how strongly they may feel about an issue. In other words, they learn to practice democracy in preparation for their role in the real world. Furthermore, writing in a content area subject such as Home Economics is an attempt at realising change in the classroom.



### 1.3 OUTLINE OF THIS MINI-THESIS

Chapter one contains an introduction to the mini-thesis. Here the rationale of the study is set out. The reader is informed about the main thrust of the study.

Chapter two concentrates on the review of the literature concerning writing in content area subjects or writing across the curriculum. The purpose of the review is to inform the reader about as many aspects of the activity as possible.

In chapter three classroom observations in WAC done in schools in the state of Missouri in the USA are described. Some elucidating examples of student writings are also found in this chapter.

Chapter four is devoted to the description of the procedure followed during a classroom research project based on experiential learning.

The final chapter looks at a project of possibility for a standard eight Home Economics class based on community work. Constraints in the implementation of writing in content area subjects are mentioned and possible solutions are suggested. I also make recommendations for the implementation of writing in content area subjects at the school at which I teach.



#### 1.4 METHOD OF RESEARCH

The classroom research is ethnographic in approach. The experiential learning course unit is based on work that is dealt with in the classroom. Learners gain information at a personal level during a visit to a squatter camp. Upon their return they have to reflect on the experience and relate their personal knowledge to the prescribed "book knowledge". Learners have to record their interpretations by means of writing tasks which vary from expressive writing tasks such as poetry writing to writing a report. Although learners are expected to use all the different modes of writing, they can choose which mode they want to use for sharing a particular aspect of the experience. The purposes of the study are to enhance the students' critical awareness, to democratise classroom teaching and to improve the learning process through writing.

#### 1.5 VALUE OF THE RESEARCH

This project can contribute to a better understanding of the value of writing for learning. The reader is shown how writing can form an integral part of content area subject teaching.

In the second place this classroom research can show how it is possible to change learner attitudes towards writing in content area subjects.

Thirdly, this project can underline the paramount importance of communication as a means of changing the perceptions of young people about other people, in this instance the standard eight students' perceptions of the inhabitants of a squatter camp.



## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In South Africa where a significant group of people are illiterate one realizes that the ability to write is a latent treasure at the disposal of most persons, which could add to the quality of life of numerous other people. Although writing is an age old linguistic skill, taught at school, writing across the curriculum is relatively unexplored in South African schools. To be able to understand the concept of writing across the curriculum, or the role of writing in content area subjects, it is imperative that literature on the subject be reviewed.

Bullock (1976:188) believes that learning and language are interdependent, therefore, it is important that both language and content area subject teachers realize the vital role language plays in learning. Bullock argues that "the pupils' engagement with the subject may rely upon a linguistic process that his [the teacher's] teaching procedures actually discourage." Frank Smith's claim (1982:13) that "language is not just part of our lives; rather, it pervades all of our lives," supports this argument and stresses the importance of the adequate use of language for learning.



In the learning process reading enhances writing and writing enhances reading. Reading and writing are interdependent, mutually supportive skills, and both are essential to promote critical independent thinking. Reading is an important means of acquiring knowledge and has received a great deal of attention in schools. However, writing activities need to receive as much attention as reading activities if we wish to empower our students to reason systematically, logically and critically (Fulwiler 1987:3).

Although I agree that reading and writing are interdependent supportive language skills and should not be separated I am, however, going to concentrate on writing in this mini-thesis, because I want to emphasize the importance of writing for learning.

The emphasis which is placed on reading as a linguistic skill at the commencement of formal education must probably take the blame for the apparent neglect of writing. Fulwiler (1987:1) is of the opinion that the model which puts reading before writing in the development of language-using skills, makes a grave error, because this model separates reading from writing. Dominance of reading in the curriculum could even discourage active self-sponsored learning. Graves (Fulwiler 1987:1) argues that we now need to right the balance between writing and reading, which means we need to let our students write more.



## 2.1 WHAT IS WRITING?

I am of the opinion that to comprehend WAC it is important to review the characteristics of writing and their implication for writing in content area subjects. These characteristics can be categorised as follows:

### 2.1.1 Writing is a basic human skill

Because writing is a basic human skill (Walshe 1987:22) it is the birthright of every person to be able to write. The unfortunate person who cannot write is deprived of many privileges which writing affords. Walshe (1987:22) postulates the idea that language is man's greatest invention, and next to that, writing. It is the means whereby invisible language from the mind becomes visible on paper. Because thoughts become visible and permanent after writing, the writer can work on those ideas until the final polished product is achieved. People living in the age of writing are fortunate, because so many other inventions related to writing have been made.

Writing took humanity's thinking-languaging competence and put at its disposal a technology which enabled thought to operate much more deeply than it normally does during conversation or inward reflection. This opened new vistas for learning (Walshe 1987:22).

In order to develop the writing skill it is advisable to engage students in daily practice. By developing a consistent practice schedule it is likely that the writer



will develop self-confidence, enjoy the act of writing and realize that she has much untapped potential. "Writing is complex, high-level human behaviour" and, like any other human behaviour it requires developing time (Kirby and Liner 1988:2).

#### 2.1.2 Writing enhances cultural development

It is unfortunate that writing has not been given its rightful place in education, as its value is very evident in a learning situation. We only have to observe the cultural development that takes place when a child masters the art of writing and reading to realize its potential for promoting learning. It is only then that the child becomes aware of possibilities created in the sphere of the written word (Walshe 1987:23).

It follows then that persons who cannot write and read will be culturally deprived. Because of this deficiency they will miss out on many privileges and may have problems understanding the diversity of the society in which they live. Such deprivation could have long term negative effects resulting in maladjustment, which in turn could hamper personal development.



### 2.1.3 Writing is multi-sensory human behaviour

Writing places physical limitations on writers making it a slower process compared to thinking or talking. This slowness is advantageous to writers because some parts of the brain are freed for the making of discoveries so common among writers (Ruggles 1985:4).

Writing is also a multi-sensory human activity, because the senses and mind are involved (Emig 1977:125). The brain obtains information through the eyes, nose, ears, mouth (taste) and skin (touch). The fingers are also actively involved in the handling of the pen, pencil, crayon, brush or word processor.

Haley-James (1982:728) maintains "when writers write frequently they find it easier to keep writing coming. Writing frequently keeps the mind open to generating content and makes it easier to concentrate on writing. This preparedness helps to make writing to learn a habit."

By talking or writing about our experiences, we understand them better and can reclaim them for ourselves. Because writing is visible we can see how and when possible changes to the learners' lives can be made. Writing allows us to turn the chaos of the illiterate's world into something beautiful (Calkins 1986:3).

Writing involves the child in what is happening in the minds, the world and hearts of people. Frank (1979:14)



argues that through writing, writers make connections with their real world. Writers are also able to communicate with words that are created by real feelings. This is evident when Lindberg exclaims: "I must write, I must write at all costs. For writing is more than living, it is being conscious of living" (Frank 1979:14).

#### 2.1.4 Writing is a linguistic process

Writing is a linguistic process. "Like speaking, reading, and listening, writing draws on the resources of that most human of attributes - our language system" (Mayher 1983:3). According to Walshe (1987:23) reading was invented to make sense of their recordings only after humans recorded (wrote) their experiences. Walshe maintains that only writing can collect and store all the ideas that come from speaking, reading, listening and thinking.

Tway (1985:4) quotes the grammarian Chomsky who argues that

...children are developmentally ready to write before they are ready to read and [that] their introduction to reading should be through writing. Since the words are already in mind when a child actually writes, a child can compose meaning more easily in this way than in reading, for in the latter process, the child has to deal with someone else's words.

Because language is a linguistic process even the most inexperienced writer has the innate ability to express herself if she has the guidance and time to do so.



### 2.1.5 Writing is a developmental process

Writing is a developmental process which goes through three stages viz. fluency, clarity and finally correctness according to Mayher (1983:4). The goal of fluency is to build a sense of comfort, confidence, and control in the inexperienced writer. Only after writing has been done should clarity be emphasized. The final concern is whether or not the text conforms to the conventions of standard written language.

The developmental nature of writing is the premise on which the process approach to writing is based. First the student must get down the ideas, then attention is given to the formulation of the ideas and only then does the mechanics of the language receive attention (Mayher 1983:4).

Writers need the concerned sympathetic guidance of their teachers. I agree with Mayher (1983:5) that writing needs to be taught and the best means of teaching writing to date is through the process approach to writing.

### 2.1.6 Writing is a social activity which opens communication

The process approach to writing propagates collaborative learning. Like Draper (1983:150), I am also of the opinion that when writing is shared, "responsible and fruitful dialogue" develops between student and student and between student and teacher, which in turn not only enhances "academic learning, but also (provides) ... a process for



future adult learning". At the same time it stimulates social interchange.

Writing builds bridges between people. Frank (1979:24) uses the analogy of a valve that opens fluent, effective communication. Writing is relatively permanent, therefore, a written piece can be read, revised, and edited many years after it has been written. This is evident when one bears in mind that it is only after the art of writing was invented that history could be recorded.

When participating in the linguistic acts of writing and reading the writer and reader are communicating with each other. Writing enhances communication, because it is a means of crossing time and space and touching someone who is not present and it is a means of conveying experience (Haley-James 1982:727). The drive to communicate even with people who are not present spurs recollection and inspection of thought, and these enhance learning. Tchudi and Huerta (1983:5), suggest that students apply their language skills to real communication tasks, including writing Science, Geography, Social Studies, Mathematics, and other content area subjects rather than to fake tasks. This is important for teaching and learning.



## 2.2. ADVANTAGES OF WRITING

It is clear that writing has numerous advantages. The views of a number of writers who have expressed their opinion on this matter to further illustrate the point are listed below:

- (i) Writing separates our ideas from ourselves in a way that is easiest for us to examine, explore, and develop (Smith 1982:16).
- (ii) The writer can create and manipulate ideas and events in ways that would not be possible if all language had to be fleeting as thoughts or spoken words (Smith 1982:16).
- (iii) Writing allows the producer to examine his or her ideas more objectively (Smith 1982:16).
- (iv) Writers can examine the language they produced in a way that is not possible for speakers (Smith 1982:16).
- (v) Writing helps us to organise and develop the possibilities of our minds. Ideas are generated and developed when the writer interacts with what is being written (Smith 1982:16).
- (vi) Writing is a revelation of all our thought processes and our efforts to develop and express ourselves in the world around us, to make sense of that world, and to impose order upon it (Smith 1982:16).



(vii) Writing is a tangible construction, which makes the interaction and modification of thoughts possible Fulwiler (1987:6).

In this research project the writing process is advocated as a means of writing across the curriculum or writing for learning. It is, therefore, important to review the elements of the writing process very briefly in order to understand more fully how the writing process can contribute to clearer thinking when students write in content area subjects.

### 2.3 THE WRITING PROCESS

Walshe (1987:25) defines "process" in the process approach to writing as:

a term and an idea which point to a whole engagement of the mind with some problem or experience that needs to be worked through in detail in the course of the writing, with each detail accorded full attention.

According to him the *process* cannot be taught, it can only be used to guide the students to become better writers. Most South African language teachers see the written piece as a product (end) and because of the traditional approach to writing their main purpose when evaluating the writing is to point out surface errors. Herrington (1981:379) points out that Graves disapproves of emphasizing surface errors in writing in the early stages of the draft. For too many people the eradication of error is clearly more important than the encouragement of expression (Herrington 1981:379).



Clearly underlying this attitude toward the teaching of writing is the belief that most people, and particularly students, have nothing to say. In the writing process the focus is shifted from what students have written to the way they write. This focus has improved the way writing is taught Donald Murray (1984:6) explains that writing is a process which follows "a logical sequence of activities" or elements. Although a logical sequence is followed, the process is not linear but recursive. A synthesis of the phases or elements referred to in models are prewriting, writing/drafting, revision, editing, evaluation, presentation/publishing. The writer moves forward and backward and forward again through the writing process. For example, when the writer reaches the revision stage a discovery may be made that the material is inadequate so the writer moves back to the prewriting stage to find more information. Similarly whilst revising, mistakes may be rectified indicating that the writer moved forward to the editing stage.

Writing theorists such as Britton (1975), Murray (1985), Moffett (1968), Fulwiler (1977), Mc Cormick Calkins (1989) and Draper (1979) have varying process models of writing which are often basically the same, only the terms differ. I shall use a synthesis of the terms in these models viz. prewriting, writing/drafting, revision, editing, evaluation, presentation or publishing in this mini-thesis.



Many researchers Ruggles (1985), Bullock (1975), Smith (1982), Murray (1985) and Haley-James (1982:727) believe thinking is the foundation of writing, and writing that encourages learning is a process that involves prewriting, writing, revision, copyediting, evaluation and grading and lastly presenting and publishing.

The activities in each of these phases can be distinguished as follows:

(i) Prewriting

Preparation for the actual writing is very important. The preparation will be reflected in the students' writing. It is important that this stage of the writing process receive the necessary attention. This is the time when students read, discuss and think about their material. Emig (1977:123) believes that a silent class or one where only the teacher's voice is audible is not conducive to learning. At this stage the journal entries are particularly useful. No formal outlines for papers are required (Tchudi and Huerta 1983:16), (Mayher 1983) (Fulwiler and Young 1982), (Young and Fulwiler 1986) (Fulwiler 1987b) and (Zemelman and Daniels 1988), but writers should indicate their thoughts in writing in some or other form.



(ii) Writing

Writing assignments should not be made in isolation nor should they be unrelated to the rest of the lesson content and other learning activities. Well taught WAC activities will serve as motivation for additional work (Tchudi and Huerta 1983:23).

Whilst students are writing, teachers can play an active role by monitoring body language, glancing at writing and offering advice if it seems needed. Teachers should respect students' need to be left alone if their presence makes them nervous (Tchudi and Huerta 1983:23). Students should be encouraged to participate in collaborative activities such as discussions, reading of draft paragraphs aloud to seek advice, and asking friends for new ideas during the writing process. Students should be told not to worry about spelling, punctuation and mechanics during the initial drafting stage. Teachers should help students to focus on content and the audience with whom they are to share their knowledge.



### (iii) Revision

Revision does not mean making a clean copy in one's best handwriting. Revising means rearranging ideas, adding new information and removing that which is superfluous (Tchudi and Huerta 1983:18). Revising can be a community activity with peers serving as editors commenting on papers and making suggestions for changes (Walvoord 1982; Sommers 1980; Schiff 1982). When revising of papers is done in the small group it reduces the grading task of the teacher tremendously. Peer revision is recommended because it places the responsibility for revision with the writer, it creates valuable time for the teacher to use for individual conferences and the papers turned in are of a better quality than those that were not revised (Tchudi and Huerta 1983:18). Sample revision sheets in addenda B.1 and B.2 illustrate this point very well.

### (iv) Copyediting

"It is crucial for the teacher to train students to take responsibility for the final correctness of their work" (Tchudi and Huerta 1983:21). Small group work is useful when copyediting has to be done. The teacher can follow up these sessions with her written comments and suggestions on the papers if she is not satisfied with peer-copyediting (Tchudi and Huerta 1983:21). Tchudi and Huerta recommend that teachers and peers should concentrate only on one or two



common errors during a particular paper. They further urge teachers to comment critically on one item at a time (1983:21-22). If a paper has many problems, it may be a good idea to single out one or two conceptual or organizational problems for comment. Other problems should be dealt with on subsequent drafts (Tchudi and Huerta 1983 and Young and Fulwiler 1986). The marking of every error is time-consuming for the teacher and red-paper marks are discouraging for the student. Teachers should keep the focus on and praise content, and work on mechanics gradually, as a secondary matter (Young and Fulwiler 1986:29).

(v) Evaluation and grading

Many content area subject teachers consider evaluation and grading of written assignments a problem. Numerous opinions on this aspect have been voiced by proponents of WAC. Because evaluation is so important in the entire teaching/learning process I have selected some suggestions for perusal.

The evaluation of WAC must reflect the process approach to writing. Teachers should no longer focus their evaluation on the product. In Addendum C an integrated evaluation checklist designed by McKensie and Tomkins can be found to ascertain "how well students incorporate(d) specific writing process behaviors as they compose(d)" (McKensie and Tomkins 1984:210).



Herrington (1981:385) argues that an evaluator should consider only a limited number of criteria in the evaluation process. Criteria should be given as part of the assignment then both the teacher and students can focus on the specific conceptual demands of the assignment.

Draper (1983:150-151) and Camp (1983:151) refer to formative and summative evaluation. Formative evaluation refers to evaluation where the objective is "assisting and refining the development of a process". Summative evaluation is evaluation for the purpose of grading. In WAC formative evaluation is of the essence. Zeni Flinn has summarised criteria for the use of formative and summative evaluation which may be perused in addendum D.

Some practical hints given by Young and Fulwiler (1986:29-31) are useful for class use by teachers. They recommend that teachers respond positively and personally where possible. They suggest that teachers and other respondents should revise early drafts; edit later drafts; grade final drafts. Teachers should be specific when they comment on problems. They should point out exactly what they object to, but without necessarily correcting it themselves. They should show the student what constructions or stylistic problems bother them on the first page or two and how to edit these, then ask the student to edit by example the rest of his or her work. This approach also compels the learner to make autonomous decisions. In developing pupil autonomy,



the teacher should discuss anonymous samples of good and bad writing with her class.

Grading is necessary when students write in content areas so that students may receive feedback. Tchudi and Huerta (1983:53) and Walvoord (1982:24) advise teachers to grade writing holistically, i.e. grading should take into consideration content as well as writing quality. If there are class discussions on the criteria for the design of assignments and if the teacher explains and monitors progress carefully throughout the writing process then grading will be less arduous. Addendum E suggests how holistic scoring may be executed. To eliminate stress about grades and to allow students to concentrate on the quality of the writing and the content material, teachers may simply use the pass/fail system (Tchudi and Huerta 1983:53). The teacher's expectations must be clearly articulated so that students are fully aware of minimum requirements for drafts.

It may be a good idea to initiate a portfolio system for keeping copies of student writing for a term or a year. This will provide evidence of student growth in content mastery as well as in writing. A portfolio has the added advantage that it is better than an individual paper for diagnosing a student's writing problems and seeking solutions to the problems (Tchudi and Huerta 1983:54).



(vi) Presenting and publishing

Tchudi and Huerta (1983:22) argue that, if students are told that their work is going to be presented and/or published they will automatically be motivated to render their best. According to Mayher (1983:47), a published piece of writing is simply one that the student feels ready to deliver to the public or the teacher. Publishing can take the form of reading aloud to an audience, (a partner when working in a pairs, a group or the class) or be directed to a wider audience. Tchudi and Huerta (1983:22) suggest using:

- bulletin boards in the classroom or around the school;
- class newspapers and magazines;
- plays, letters;
- school assemblies;
- open day displays;
- speakers' contest;
- tape recordings; and
- publishing in community newspapers.

When students know they are going to publish their work beyond the classroom, they will devote more time to revision and copyediting, "but more significantly, it shows them that writing is important because it brings them a readership and a response or reaction. It is a payoff to the writing process" (Tchudi and Huerta 1983:23).



## 2.4 WHAT IS WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM?

The term writing across the curriculum (WAC) has been used quite freely so far without an adequate explanation of its meaning. In this section I shall try to explain in detail what it means.

Britton and other writing theorists (Applebee 1981:29 and Tchumy 1982:64) classify school writing into mechanical, transactional, expressive and poetic writing assignments and explain each mode as follows:

Mechanical writing includes multiple choice exercises, fill-in-the-blank etc.

Transactional writing includes note-taking, reports etc.

Expressive writing includes journal writing, letters, etc.

Poetic writing includes poems, stories etc

The question which remains is which one of these writing modes is most suitable for writing across the curriculum. We should first look at what writers have to say about WAC before this question can be answered.

Anne Ruggles (1985:5) differentiates between writing across the curriculum and writing to learn. She maintains that writing across the curriculum aims at improving the quality of writing, while writing to learn focuses on better thinking and learning. However, students who use writing as



a way of learning often produce better written products. Most writing theorists also believe that writing across the curriculum enhances the standard of writing as well as the quality of learning. I prefer to think of writing across the curriculum and writing to learn as being synonymous. Although many writers agree in principle about the meaning of WAC, or writing for learning they have nevertheless defined WAC in a variety of ways. Each description stresses a different aspect of WAC which gives the reader a good overview of what is meant by the term.

Mayher (1983:78) refers to WAC as "the productive use of language, and special writing, (as) a valuable tool for learning for students in all subjects at all ages".

Tchudi and Huerta (1983:5) on the other hand, argue that WAC ensures that teachers are concerned not only with the language children use to express academic content, but with the accuracy of the content as well. They also suggest that writing skills be sharpened on subject-matter projects, not just on isolated language arts exercises.

For Applebee (1981:59) WAC is the exploration of a subject area and the comprehending of new concepts in the process of writing about them. Writing across the curriculum assists the learner in discovering meaning. Its purpose is not solely to transcribe an idea (Applebee 1981:100).



Tschumy (1982:69) believes that WAC is a powerful ally to the teacher.

The nature of writing makes learning inevitable. Writing is not grammar, not punctuation, not spelling. Writing is composing, and composing is a sustained activity of discovering and stating relationships among bits of information. These relationships evolve as you write...

In reviewing the position of the above writers it has also become quite clear which type of writing each considers best suited to writing for learning. In my view the best type of writing is that which allows the student to make meaning.

## 2.5 SOME ADVANTAGES OF WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

For the sake of further clarification the most outstanding advantages of WAC are described in the following section.

### 2.5.1. Writing across the curriculum is exploring

WAC is a means whereby students may explore a subject area with the intention of gaining new insights and knowledge through writing. It is only when students begin to write on their own that the implications of new knowledge begin to be worked through that they really come to know the material (Applebee 1981:59). When writing in content area subjects students experiment with different modes of writing and in doing that they are exploring their own writing and knowledge potential. I agree with Walvoord (1982:3) who believes that a student should be able to express an idea very clearly in writing when she claims to understand.



### 2.5.2 Writing across the curriculum is learning

Theorists agree on the value of writing across the curriculum. Maimon (1978:19) appeals to teachers to allot time within courses for students to write. She maintains that writing is a marvelous tool for teaching, learning and thinking because students will get a better grip on the subject matter by writing and rewriting rather than passively listening to lectures. Emig (1977:122) also contends that "writing is a unique mode of learning."

### 2.5.3 Writing across the curriculum is revealing

According to Walvoord (1982:9-10) WAC reveals to the teacher whether the learning process in a particular subject or subject area has taken place successfully, because one can only write about a subject once one has understood it. WAC also indicates whether consideration should be given to changing the instructional techniques and/or methodology and also whether the teaching pace needs to be reduced. It is during the writing process that students reflect on their knowledge of the subject, gain understanding of remaining gaps, and sort out problem areas. WAC helps the teacher to identify those students who need extra attention in a subject or subject area (Walvoord 1982:10).



#### 2.5.4 Writing across the curriculum is discovering

Writing has an integral role to play in any course as a medium for learning and teaching how to learn (Herrington 1981:387). For these goals to be realized, though, we as teachers must first believe in the value of writing as a discovery process and be willing to commit ourselves to teaching this process to our students.

When WAC is practised the teacher's ideas are not forced onto a writer, instead the writer discovers knowledge independently. In this process of discovery Staton (1987:47) believes that writers get to know themselves as well as the world in which they live. Secondly, this is a way in which teaching of writing as process contributes towards democratising a classroom.

WAC implies participatory learning. In participatory education students no longer need to accept, memorize and regurgitate information provided by the teacher when required to give an account of their learning (Shor 1985:34). I support Mayher (1990:1) who says that teachers have too long believed that they must supply the answers. WAC enables the learner to become an active participant in the process of learning by finding out the answers for himself (Shor 1985:34). The teacher is no longer the depositor of knowledge but plays a facilitative role in the



learning process (Shor 1985:39). Through WAC students are encouraged to think independently. The value of writing cannot be underestimated because "writing could get into corners that other teaching tools couldn't" (Zinsser 1989:45)

#### 2.5.5 Writing across the curriculum is the making of connections

I concur with those writers who argue that writing across the curriculum is about what the learners already know and about making effective connections between known and unknown material (Tschumy 1982:66). Giroux (1987:176) also argues that the making of connections is important for the learning process to take place. Students bring to school with them their "dreams, experiences, histories and languages" (Shor 1985:33). Teachers and the curriculum must find links between what the students bring with them (known) and what they are to learn (unknown). In discovering those links students realize that they are people who matter (Shor 1985:33). In order to make connections, an element of "self" - something of the learner - must be evident. According to Freire in Shor (1985:33) that element of self could be the learner's expectations or any other life experience related to the present learning situation. With regard to relating new knowledge to the student's existing framework, Giroux (1987:176) reminds us that Paulo Freire and others have pointed out that schools do more than emit knowledge. I, too



acknowledge that apart from the home, the school is an important centre where the child internalizes a particular culture. The school influences specific ways of speaking, of accepting knowledge, of selecting certain histories and patterns of authority, and the verification of particular ways of experiencing and seeing the world (Giroux 1987:176).

Giroux (1987) says it is our duty as progressive teachers to practise a critical pedagogy which empowers our students to be critical self-determined thinkers. WAC is to be used to achieve that objective. Giroux (1987) argues that education falls into one of two categories, mainstream or dominant pedagogy and critical pedagogy. One way in which to understand the two pedagogical approaches is to draw a few comparisons which I propose to do at this juncture.



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Mainstream Pedagogy

Knowledge is viewed as a commercial commodity to be managed and consumed

Knowledge appeals to accountability schemes and is measurable to legitimate a particular view of learning

Classroom methods must be designed to suit most student populations

Teachers are regarded as clerks maintaining the status quo

Learners have very little say in their own learning situation

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Critical Pedagogy

Knowledge is to be understood and analyzed within the context of experience that students bring to school

Learning must promote critical self-determined thinking

Student experience is the nucleus of all teaching and learning

Teachers are facilitators promoting educative learning

Learners are regarded as people who matter and who have a say in their own learning



After comparing mainstream and critical pedagogy and discussing the advantages of WAC, one can undoubtedly claim that WAC falls within the framework of critical pedagogy, pedagogy which empowers both teacher and student. So far I have in this chapter what experts in WAC think about it. In the next section I will consider the experts views on how it can be implemented in class.

## 2.6 USES OF WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

According to Shirley Haley-James (1982:728-731) students' purposes for WAC provide a natural framework for looking at ways in which writing contributes to learning. This type of learning empowers them to:

### 2.6.1 Gain access to what is known

When the writer expresses the desire to discover what she knows, free writing renders good results, because writing is done without a plan in mind Haley-James (1982:728). Free writing and brain storming are especially useful when the writer is his or her own audience, because the content can be reviewed and it is also a useful exercise for the preparation of the actual writing assignment.

### 2.6.2 Preserve and express ideas and experiences

Throughout history pictures, photos, paintings, sculpture, music, story-telling and writing have been used to preserve ideas and experiences Haley-James (1982:729). When writers



write to preserve and express ideas and experiences the writers form a relationship with their topic. This relationship is important because it is through of this relationship that writers gain a sense of commitment to the topic and their writing.

### 2.6.3 Inform others

Haley-James (1982:730) contends we can only inform others if we know something about the subject ourselves. It is expected of us to decide how we want to convey what we know and to whom. Information is transferred in a variety of forms such as written reports, instructions, directions, bibliographies and speeches. These forms of writing are useful in every content area. Writing to inform others can for example be done by explaining how to perform a particular experiment in Science.

### 2.6.4 Persuade others

When we are unsuccessful in our efforts to persuade others we rationalize that maybe we have not thought our points through well. Is it perhaps that we did not organise them effectively, or did we fail to adapt the way in which we express our thoughts to the background of those we wanted to persuade (Haley-James 1982:729)? Since one of the purposes of writing is to persuade the audience, it is important to acquire these writing skills. Students who write persuasive letters to the municipality to complain about the state of



the roads, or to the press about drug abuse in a certain area, or petition to the mayor on the support for more recreational facilities for the youth, learn by writing to persuade.

#### 2.6.5 Transact business

Haley-James (1982:730) believes that when linking content area subjects to the real world outside, subject matter becomes alive and meaningful to the students, and teaching is more effective. What better way to make the link than through writing? Through writing students may order supplies for the accounts class, request information from a theatre, or arrange to measure the local sports field for forthcoming school sport events. Through writing they think about or act on the contents they are studying. Haley-James (1982:730) cautions that only real writing that relates to students' needs, interests, or dreams will evoke writing to learn. However, students must be made aware of the fact that almost any kind of writing requires discussing and clarifying of what they want to say.

#### 2.6 6 Entertain

Writing is one of the best means of entertaining. Stories, poems and plays involve information, experiences, points of view and imagination (Haley-James 1982:731). When students shape their content, when they have one or more reason for writing and when oral language processing and feedback



support their work, writing fiction, plays and poetry support learning content area subjects.

Learning through writing occurs when teachers encourage students to find their own purposes and topics for writing, when they support them as they write, and when they link writing to learning content. That is why teachers who want students to learn give writing its proper place in the curriculum.

Various researchers make different recommendations to obtain the best possible results. Anne Ruggles (1985:5), for example, advises implementors of WAC to select from a wide range of approaches those which seem best suited to achieve desired goals in their school. Bullock (1976:188) on the other hand believes WAC should start at primary school level, because the primary school teacher usually teaches most, if not all the subjects to the class. He argues that at secondary level there is a lack of writing across the curriculum opportunities because of specialization.

## 2.7. THE WAC CLASSROOM

As previously mentioned the WAC classroom is not a teacher-centred classroom, because writing across the curriculum is based on the premise that **collaborative** learning takes place in an interactive classroom. Interaction takes place in a relaxed yet structured atmosphere which is conducive to



learning. Rivers (1987:9) warns that "Teacher-directed and -dominated classrooms cannot ... be interactive classrooms"

The WAC classroom is a **democratic** classroom where students decide with the teacher what to write about. Topics chosen by the students encourage thinking and learning and give them a sense of ownership (Hayley-James 1982:727).

The WAC classroom is a hive of **activity**. The classroom may seem noisy and disorganised, but Hayley-James (1986:728) reminds us that in the WAC classroom talk is central to learning from writing, because discussion of the work in progress provides instant feedback. "Conversation helps all writers objectify and analyze their efforts to construct and communicate meaning" Hayley-James (1986:728).

Walshe (1987:26) informs us that the WAC classroom takes on the form of a workshop where problems are generated and discussed. Students enjoy the challenge to **explore** answers with the assistance of writing which helps to clarify and direct thoughts. In the WAC classroom an atmosphere of mutual trust and **collaboration** is established (Applebee 1981:105). Students and teachers have common goals and they strive to attain these goals with minimal conflict or resistance.



Kiewitz (1990:26) draws our attention to the fact that the process approach to writing and WAC is functional by nature and the students could be busy with a variety of tasks. A WAC classroom can amicably act as a catalyst during this period of transformation in the history of South Africa. Shor (1985:14) cautions that it is "politically naive" to try and separate the classroom from the students' reality. For WAC to be meaningful it is desirable to relate most, if not all writing in content subjects to matters concerning issues in the real world.

Exploratory talk in a WAC classroom is the forerunner of exploratory writing, and exploratory writing is a very effective learning tool. Exploratory talk can only take place in an informal and relaxed atmosphere. Well organised and controlled small group discussions are, therefore, fertile soil for exploratory talk (Bullock 1976:188).

I see the WAC classroom as creating an environment conducive to empowerment which enables students to make informed decisions. I further think that the WAC classroom forms a strong contrast to the traditional classroom where knowledge is deposited and regurgitated.

#### 2.7.1 Teaching writing in content area subjects



Writing can be used to ascertain what students know by listing, answering multiple choice questions or filling in blanks. However, it is desirable to reserve real writing assignments for when students are expected to put their learning together and to explore new avenues (Tchudi and Huerta 1983:10). Because progressive teachers would want to have a say in defining the nature of their work as well as shaping the conditions under which they work (Giroux 1987:180), they would be prepared to take risks that would be to the advantage of their students.

Tchudi and Huerta (1983:8) argue that content area teachers do not need a degree in language to teach content area writing. It is better for content area teachers not to have a preconceived idea about how writing "must" be taught. The objective of WAC should not be to tell students how to write. It should rather create situations where students use their subject-matter knowledge to write about a subject and to write well about it.

Tchudi and Huerta (1983:9-23) suggest that, when planning content area writing lessons, content goals be determined and writing ideas to pursue the goals be developed, because content-area writing is more successful "when it involves discovery, synthesis and inquiry, rather than recitation of factual material" (Tchudi and Huerta 1983:9). Furthermore, the phrasing of the assignment must be unambiguous so as to



leave no doubt about expectations concerning the execution of the assignment.

There are a variety of ways to express content ideas in writing apart from the humdrum essay, report and research paper (Tchudi and Huerta 1983:11). A list of different kinds of discourse forms that can be used for content-area assignments can be found in addendum A.

It is essential for the teacher to assist the students in finding the best possible means of getting their ideas on the subject into writing. Audience provision in assignments enables students to write for someone other than the teacher, thus the assignment becomes more meaningful because of the element of reality that is added to the writing process (Fulwiler and Young 1982:36). The audience for writing can be other students, an imaginary or real audiences in the real world (Lehr and Lange 1981).

## 2 7.2 The role of the teacher and the school

Writers on learning differ in their views on the role of the teacher in the writing for learning class. Ruggles (1985:5) contrasts the traditional teacher, who used to "hold" both the knowledge and the stage, with the writing teacher adopting the role of the guide who helps students find their own knowledge. Teaching now becomes student-centred, but a



student-centred teaching style does not necessarily relieve the teacher of any responsibility. In actual fact, the teacher has to be more thoroughly prepared and she has the added responsibility of exercising leadership and control. Without the leadership of the teacher WAC can be a dismal failure.

Walshe (1987:26) assumes that the teacher is not only the guide, but should also circulate among the students as stimulator and commentator. Learning becomes reciprocal when students write across the curriculum, because teacher and students are partners in the learning process.

"People's Education for People's Power", is a concept born during the upheaval in black education in South Africa during the eighties. Zwelakhe Sisulu (Walker 1988:149) and Molobi (1986:77) argue that education should be emancipatory so that social transformation may take place. One way in which education can become emancipatory is by allowing students to write creatively in content area subjects, because students are forced to think critically. Elsasser and John-Steiner (1985:53) maintain that

"[d]uring periods of rapid social change many individuals envision new futures for themselves. However, for people to benefit from new possibilities, meaningful educational programs must be created".

Fulwiler advises that schools must move away from "classificatory writing which reflects information in the form in which both teacher and textbook traditionally



present it" (Fulwiler 1987:8). He warns against the danger of relying too heavily on the transactional function of language which may to a great extent be responsible for our students' inability to think critically and independently.

In the writing class students can free-write, brainstorm, and keep journals to explore and develop their thoughts through personal, private language. These practices create opportunities for students to think critically and independently. In the process approach to writing the teacher partly plays the roles of leader, stimulator, facilitator and guide.

Teachers of content area subjects need to allow time for students to write and rewrite subject matter in a number of interesting ways rather than only letting them listen to lectures. By viewing themselves as people capable of teaching writing, historians, biologists, home economists, economists, musicians and others are also finding that writing can be a marvelous tool for teaching, learning, and thinking (Maimon 1978:19).

Most writing assignments in content area subjects require students to write to communicate learned information to teachers. Students will be evaluated, judged, and graded through this writing. We must, however, not lose sight of the fact that an individual's language is crucial in



discovering, creating, and formulating ideas as well as in communicating their worth to others (Fulwiler 1987:4).

Many teachers regard writing only as a technical communication skill necessary for the clear transmission of knowledge. In this view the composing function of writing is disregarded as the mental activity which makes humans the supreme species (Fulwiler 1987:4).

If we want expressive writing to develop to its full potential in South African schools, then we must allow our students to write expressively across the curriculum utilising the process approach to writing and take cognizance of what Berthoff (Fulwiler 1987:5) says:

The work of the active mind is seeing relationships, finding forms, making meanings: when we write, we are doing in a particular way what we are already doing when we make sense of the world. We are composers by virtue of being human.

### 2.7.3 The role of the language department in getting other departments involved

Proponents of WAC have different views as to which department(s) should be responsible for the execution of WAC. Writing teachers such as Mayher (1983) and Tchudi and Huerta (1983) believe that the English department should take the lead. I support Blair (1988), Fulwiler (1981), Tchumi (1982), Lehr (1982) and Smith (1988) in their argument that a WAC programme should emanate from dialogue



among all departments in the school. The language department should only be one of the voices.

A writing across the curriculum programme should be designed through dialogue by an interdisciplinary committee (Blair 1988:387).

The language department acknowledges its responsibility to teaching writing, but at the same time it denies the fact that only language departments should teach writing. Teachers in the other disciplines should also teach writing in their subjects. By trying to convince teachers of other disciplines to write, language teachers are merely "recognizing the diversity of the kinds of writing which will be demanded of students in the real world and in academia" (Mayher 1983:86). Content area teachers need to realize that in helping their students learn to write they also master subject matter. Content area teachers also need to be assured that writing across the curriculum need not be an additional burden in their already full schedules, neither are they requested to become teachers of writing (Mayher 1983:86).

It is evident from the above that the success of a WAC programme will be determined by its policy and the manner in



which it is implemented and executed in a particular situation.

## 2.8 ESTABLISHING A WAC POLICY

Obviously schools will implement WAC to suit their own needs. Researchers have made suggestions about getting the process into motion. Their recommendations inter alia, are that:

subject area teachers must become involved (Tchudi and Huerta 1983:62);

the interest of content area subject teachers by means of a multiple choice questionnaire should be assessed (Lehr 1982:48);

interested teachers from the various departments should meet to determine the specific problems they are having with writing assignments (Lehr 1982:48)I;

a teaching team consisting of language and content area subject teachers should plan the form and content of writing assignments. The language teacher should evaluate rough drafts and content area teachers should assess revised papers (Matlak 1978:19 and Maimon 1978:19).



Much has still to be done in our schools about establishing a WAC policy, but first teachers have to be made aware of the possibilities of such a programme.

## 2.9 CONCLUSION

After this comprehensive survey of the relevant literature, I believe that:

if we wish to propogate education for transformation and we want schools to teach critical, independent thinking, we must seriously consider making more and better use of expressive writing. Teachers must believe in writing as a discovery process and must be committed to teaching this process to their students (Herrington 1981:387).

I, therefore, heartily endorse Fulwiler's (1987:10) view that "writing deserves serious reconsideration, increased attention, and ever more thoughtful practice - across the whole curriculum".

In the next chapter I describe my observations on writing across the curriculum in state schools in Missouri in the



United States of America where many of the ideas expressed in this chapter have been put into practice.



## CHAPTER 3

### WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM IN MISSOURI SCHOOLS

The purpose of this chapter is to emphasize the connection between theory and practice, to share my experience, and to illustrate the use of writing across the curriculum in a variety of content area subjects.

I visited schools in Missouri to observe WAC in different content area subjects. Initially I did not focus on a particular subject as my research project would be of greater value if I observed WAC across the board, rather than limiting my experience to a single subject. After reflecting on the observations I decided to concentrate on Home Economics only since I could relate to the subject matter, because I taught it for a few years. Since I only managed to get into the schools in mid-April, when the academic year was nearing closure and teachers were in the process of rounding off the year's work. I could not observe all the phases of the writing process in the WAC programme.

I was fortunate to visit fifteen schools (the names of which may be found in addendum F) ranging from primary schools, high schools to a teachers' training college in St Louis and Kansas City in the state of Missouri where WAC formed part of the curriculum. At all these schools I was warmly received by the principal, teachers and the students. Apart from observing I interviewed and had interesting discussions



with teachers who let their students write in content area subjects. I was presented with samples of students' writing and also spoke with students and principals of schools where writing across the curriculum is practised.

### 3.1 SUBJECTS IN WHICH WAC WAS OBSERVED

I observed the teaching of writing in subjects such as History, Literature, Music, Home Economics, Guidance, Business Science, Physical Education and Art at different schools. I was impressed to see how successfully students manipulated their knowledge of content area subjects when they were required to write creatively. The enthusiasm with which they wrote was inspiring. That was when I realised that the writing process might provide a method through which South African students could be taught to write in content areas with more confidence. In addition to helping students make their learning more profitable, I could teach creative writing at the same time as encouraging them to have fun while studying content subjects.

The observations were very interesting and inspiring, particularly because

"We all need models, whatever art or craft we're trying to learn. Bach needed a model; Picasso needed a model; they didn't spring full-blown as Bach and Picasso. This is especially true of writers. Writing is learnt by imitation" (Zinsser 1988:14).



After reading Zinsser's statement I thought it might be a good idea to include models of writing across the curriculum in different subjects.

I then decided to investigate how improved language and learning modes could be developed at my school through the writing process in Home Economics. I was curious about whether the learners' interest in the subject could be stimulated in this way, thus making learning more fun, and, if so, whether this would enable them to comprehend the material better and consequently perform more satisfactorily.

### 3.2 INNOVATIVE IDEAS IN SUBJECTS OBSERVED

Throughout my visits to classes I was impressed by the degree to which the theoretical arguments in favour of WAC were supported in practice.

#### **Literature**

Literature falls into the ambit of language teaching, therefore, it is expected that writing in this area would be used more extensively than in other subjects. I came across a number of refreshing ideas, e.g., students were asked to write a totally different ending to a novel. In some instances students would let characters in the novel or drama enter into dialogue on a contentious matter not dealt with in the actual work.



Another novel idea was the drawing of cartoons with dialogue added. Some wrote soliloquies, or letters to characters in the novel or drama.

### **Mathematics**

Students could choose to explain a concept or even how to solve a problem. One student wrote about the significance of the number seven in the Bible. Others endeavoured to do a short research paper on various mathematicians of their choice.

Students in a Maths class at a St. Louis High School wrote papers on the construction of a geometric design using a ruler and a pen.

### **Science**

At high school level I found that majority of writing assignments in Science consisted of short research papers and reports on experiments. However, dialogue and poetry were also extensively used. At one school which I visited the students wrote an essay "Why Science is important to me".

### **African American History**

In a sub-standard A (grade one) class pupils wrote a story book entitled "Our Black History Stories" during the month of February, when Black History Month is celebrated in America. They wrote about figures such as



George Washington Carver, Fanny M. Jackson Coppin,  
Abraham Lincoln, Rosa Parks and Nelson Mandela.

A high school student rewrote part of the biography of Rosa Parks. In the biography Rosa gives up her seat to a white male and the Civil Rights Movement does not take place. The writer uses the opportunity to inform the readers of the suffering of Blacks in America.

A student at Normandy Senior High School wrote this poem when her class had to write a paper on Key African Americans who made profound contributions to Black History.

#### FACES

When I was younger I would always ask,  
What of my race?  
Why aren't we important?  
"That is just the way it is"  
Was the answer I would always receive.  
Growing and getting the knowledge that I  
needed,  
helped me to see things that should have  
been taught.  
There were persons who reached for better goals,  
Who felt there should not be a dividing line.  
These people were strong but they could not fight alone.  
They cleared the path for many of us today.  
If it were not for Malcolm we would not know how to fight.  
If it were not for King, we would not have freedom.  
We've seen our beauty in Dorothy Dandridge,  
We've learned of our "Roots" through Alex  
Hailey,  
We've seen our heritage in Cleopatra,  
And seen our strength in Joe Louis.  
All of us have the ability of any other man.  
So why not use it for positivity?  
Let's get more darkness in the spotlight !



## **Geography**

In a grade eleven (standard nine) Geography class the students could select a particular place they had studied. They would then go on an imaginary tour of the place. The route to be taken would be plotted on a map from St. Louis. The vegetation, products, industries, climactic conditions and places of interest would be described as if the writers were the tour guide. The students executed the task painstakingly and many included brochures of interest which they obtained from information centres.

The learning process had to be successful to enable the students to execute the assignment referred to. This bears out the relevance of the statement that WAC reveals whether the learning process has taken place successfully (Walvoord 1982:9-10).

## **Social Studies**

A grade one (sub-standard A) class wrote *monologues*. They pretended to be various kinds of fruit and had to relate some of their life experiences in three or four short sentences. This was a means of depicting the various stages that certain kinds of fruit may have go through before they reach the consumer.



At another school a grade two (sub-standard B) class was preparing to go on a *field trip* to a park which was approximately a ten minute walk away from the school. The park also happened to be the place where some members of the class spent many hours playing. The teacher gave the class a list of questions to answer on the field trip.

On the day of the trip the pupils were very excited, if I did not know that the park was so close and familiar to the class, I would have thought they were going to Disney World. The pupils brought refreshments along to have after they had completed their assignments. I was delighted to see that some parents joined their children on the fieldtrip to share in their learning experience. Everyone was enthusiastic and the assignment was completed in a minimum of time. The outing was concluded with games which were organised by the teacher and parents. Whilst parents and pupils were engaged in the assignment which focused on discovery, they actually reiterated the truth of Maimon's claim WAC is a process of discovery (1978:19).

Furthermore, this assignment very aptly illustrated Tchumy's (1982:66) viewpoint that WAC is about making connections between known and unknown material because the teacher designed assignments based on pupil observations. They had to classify and exhibit what



they collected in the park. At the end of the project the class was going to invite other classes to view the exhibition.

An interesting revision lesson that I attended was an exciting way of conveying to others information that is known (Haley-James 1982:730). Instead of formally revising "care of the teeth", a grade three (standard one) class wrote a dialogue between a healthy tooth and a bad tooth. The children had great fun while doing the assignment and I was pleasantly surprised to see the initiative some pupils displayed in their writing. Incidentally, the dialogues were written on writing paper cut in the shape of a tooth. Whilst revising "teeth" the students were informally introduced to personification.

In a grade eight (standard six) class the students wrote *poems* on weather elements such as rain, snow, wind and clouds. Here is a poem written by a student from Normandy Senior High School in St Louis, which was published in the Creative Writing Magazine of 1989-1990.

Rain  
Cool, wet  
refreshing, cleansing, drizzling  
purifier of the earth  
Shower



Snow  
Cold, white  
Drifting, covering, glistening  
the blanket of winter  
Powder

Wind  
Gentle, cool  
aressing, calming, blowing  
the breath of God  
Breeze

Clouds  
Fluffy, white  
billowing, rolling shadowing  
toy of the wind  
Cotton

Senior Social Studies classes wrote *persuasive essays*.

Some of the titles were:

"The Republican Party's errors - People's loss"

"Why must trees be saved?"

"The effect of divorce on children."

"Do the elderly folk have a contribution to make in today's society?"

"Africa: should the United States become involved?"

### **Music**

The music teacher at one of the high schools I visited, related her experiences of writing in the music class. She said it was no easy task. She experienced much resistance, but she persevered. After a while the students became interested and started to enjoy the new approach.



Dialogues between musical expressions such as crescendo, decrescendo, allegro and adagio were written. In the music class WAC was also used to entertain, something Haley-James (1982:731) says that writing is well suited to do.

Some wrote the lyrics for songs whilst others wrote research papers on musicians of their choice.

A student from Normandy Senior High School dedicated the following poem to the orchestra in the school writing magazine Echoes of Expression - 1989-1990.

#### ORCHESTRA

Strings  
Sweet, Elegant  
Plucking, Bowing, Singing  
Strands vibrate in harmony  
Fiddles

Woodwinds  
Melodious, Harmonious  
Tooting, Fluting, Trilling  
Like songbirds they chirp  
Whistlers

Brass  
Majestic, Brilliant  
Flaring, Blaring, Trumpeting  
Triumphantly they announce fanfares  
Horns

Percussion  
Simple, Powerful  
Thumping, Shaking, Banging  
Steadily keeping the beat  
Drums



## **Art**

Although I paid a brief visit to an art class I noticed that learners reflected on, analysed and synthesized the process of writing (Mayher 1983:24) The teacher showed me around the classroom and told me about what was being done. I read some research papers on the biographies of famous artists. Some students selected a specific colour and wrote essays about its significance. A novel idea was the drawing of cartoons and the writing of dialogues. I was informed that visits to art galleries and exhibitions were frequently undertaken and reports were written. I also noticed that in the art class much use was made of writing up journal entries.

## **Physical Education**

I happened to make my appearance at the department when a grade ten (standard eight) class was preparing to attend a ballet performance of a visiting company. Before attending the performance the class was assigned a variety of research tasks. Some had to find out about the meanings of the ballet movements; others had to investigate the history of the performing group, and some had to gather information related to the performing history of the main dancers. In actual fact, the students were exploring the subject area with the



intention of gaining new insights and knowledge (Applebee 1981:59).

The class was very excited the day they had to report back. They seemed to have gone out of their way to execute the assignments. Everybody was keen to report on their research. Some brought newspaper clippings and pictures related to specific tasks.

When a Physical Education class at another high school was given the task by a teacher to compose their dream baseball team they had to use their writing as a tool for learning as Maimon (1978:19) suggests. They wrote papers on topics such as "Ban athletes who use drugs in sports," "Why exercise is important to the human body", "My favourite sport".

### **Career Guidance**

I did not have the opportunity of observing the actual writing in Career Guidance, but I was shown work done in the Career Guidance class.

Pupils at an elementary school in the Florissant district had to record their negative feelings. They had to write in bug shapes drawn on a page what it was that "bugs" them. The assignment was entitled "Things that bug me."



Another assignment was a very simplistic self-analysis. The assignment was entitled "My special feelings". Students were given a number of sentences to complete, e.g. "I am happy when ...". An example of the assignment is found in the addendum G.

In Career guidance the students wrote mostly in their journals. In the journal they were given the opportunity to reflect on their feelings about themselves, their classmates and others. This exercise gave students an opportunity to consolidate their knowledge about themselves and others as Mayher (1983:24) advocates.

Students also wrote letters of application for admission to tertiary institutions and also for employment. Through WAC the students learned to transact business as suggested by Haley-James (1982:730). In a senior class students wrote research papers on topics such as "Aids, the feared disease", "Sexism - men are more equal than women", and "The effect of unemployment on a community." In this instance WAC was used to express ideas and also to gain access to what is known (Haley-James 1982:728-729). After completing a research paper on sexually transmitted diseases a student at a St. Louis high school wrote a persuasive essay entitled "End sexually transmitted diseases" which illustrates that WAC can



also be used to persuade others as (Haley-James 1982:728-729) suggests.

The next poem, describing certain emotions, was written by a St.Louis high school student.

#### SAD

Your face frowns  
Your eyes droop  
your face looks pouty  
Your shoulders are slumped  
Your stomach might hurt  
You cry

#### ANGER

Your mouth and teeth are tight  
Your body is clenched and tight  
Your eyes squint  
Your hands sweat

#### FEAR

Your body shakes  
Your eyes open wide  
Your mind is blind  
You just committed a crime.



In the same magazine in lighter vein a student gave her view of love.

LOVE IS LIKE GRASS  
It comes and it goes  
It dies and it grows  
You laugh and cry  
Then it's goodbye.

### **Home Economics**

The few Home Economics classes I visited did not really write, because it was about three weeks before the end of the academic year and most of the work was already rounded off. However, I had the opportunity to conduct discussions and interviews with a Home Economics teacher at a high school in the Florissant-Ferguson district who practised writing in the subject.

Students in a grade ten (standard eight class) Home Economics class each adopted a nursery school pupil. The Home Economics students spent time at the school assisting with dressing, feeding and potty-training the little ones. They kept meticulous notes on their observations and later used the notes for drawing up comprehensive reports which they published. Each student in the class wrote and illustrated a story for a particular pupil. At the end of the semester they read this to their play sisters and brothers. The



little ones in turn also "wrote" stories dedicated to their big play sisters.

Dialogues were written between nutrients e.g., proteins and carbohydrates discuss and compare their sources, functions and digestion with each other. An illustrated biography of a jar of yoghurt was prepared. and the poem cited was written by a Standard seven pupil. The project mark formed part of the students' year marks.

NUTRIENT

Shy, helpful

Protecting, stimulating, catalysing

You are lost without me

Vitamin

As I was observing writing assignments in the various disciplines, I realized that with a minimum amount of initiative on the part of the content area subject teacher, practically all the cited assignments could be modified for use in other subjects.

Judging from the teachers' and students' enthusiasm in the preparation, and execution of the writing assignments it became quite clear that the learning process, if nothing else, was an enjoyable experience.



It would have been ideal if I could spend more time in Home Economics at the various schools in Missouri. I would then have been able to draw comparisons between Home Economics in Missouri schools and Home Economics in South African schools under the Department of Education and Culture. However, I did make a few interesting observations.

Firstly, the standard eight (grade ten) Home Economics syllabus in the State of Missouri during 1990 was similar to the standard eight Home Economics syllabus of the Department of Education and Culture in 1990. I can only recall one additional section in the Missouri syllabus and that is family life and parenting.

The school I frequented in the Florissant district had a very spacious well lit Home Economics room. The room was equipped with resources such as a television, a video tape recorder, an overhead projector and a photocopying machine.

Leading from the classroom, (known as the Home Ec. lab) was a furnished dining-room cum lounge in which the students served the dishes they had prepared. The Home Economics teacher had her own neatly furnished private office. An unheard of luxury in our schools.

The needlework section of the syllabus was taught by a teacher responsible for needlework in a fully equipped needlework room down the corridor and cookery was taught by



the teacher responsible for cookery in the cookery laboratory.

One school I visited in the St.Louis district served the community in a unique way. It had in-service training facilities in catering and culinary arts for students employed at restaurants, hotels and take-away eating places. These students would attend classes in the mornings and return to their places of employment at about noon. At the end of the course the students receive diplomas.

I was also very privileged to attend the following enrichment courses in WAC:

a Writing to Learn weekend workshop in Rhinecliff New York State;

a five day Leadership Course in WAC of the Ferguson-Florrissant Writers' Project;

an afternoon workshop on WAC at a St.Louis high school.

Little, if anything has been done about writing for learning in the Home Economics classes in South African schools, but there are wonderful opportunities which can be exploited by teachers as had been done in the schools which I visited. These experiences gave me the confidence to design a course unit and to attempt research in WAC at the high school where I teach.



This research is described in chapter 4.



## CHAPTER 4

### A WRITING PROJECT IN A HOME ECONOMICS CLASS

All teachers are familiar with statements such as "School is boring", "I hate school", "School is one big yawn", "Is school really necessary?" "Must we learn this?" "What is it worth to me?" It is learning and not school in the true sense that arouses these negative feelings. These statements tell us that students have very little say in their own learning, hence these negative feelings, (Shor 1987:41). Therefore, not only curricula but also attitudes and approaches need to be changed to bring about change. We, as educators are committed to stimulate the interest of our students so that learning can be meaningful and pleasant.

#### 4.1 RATIONALE

During my teaching career I have experienced much political and educational turmoil. Colleagues of mine have suffered for their political beliefs and ideologies. Some have been transferred from their posts in town to outlying districts they have never heard of before. One teacher was banned for a period of five years and others were summarily dismissed. Since the late seventies and early eighties I have lived through a number of school boycotts.

During the boycott periods students usually compiled a list of grievances and demands. One demand which was repeatedly



made, was that the daily school schedule should make provision for Awareness Programmes. Teachers felt differently about this issue. They were of the opinion that awareness should form an integral part of every lesson and should not be treated separately.

Although staff members offered to assist the students in drawing up awareness programmes, their offers did not meet with success. Students suspected that if teachers became involved in their political activities, they might lose their freedom to organise the programmes since teachers' interests were usually vested in a return to "normality".

In spite of the fact that students claimed to be knowledgeable about the political situation, teachers discovered that they were not really politically aware of the existing situation in their own neighbourhood. I often tested the students' awareness of their less privileged neighbours' living conditions less than ten kilometers away from the school. Most times the students were ignorant of what was happening.

As I was contemplating a course unit in Home Economics to illustrate the use of writing, I decided on an alternative course unit. I realized that, if I wished to make the students aware of the plight of their neighbours, it would be difficult to escape the reality of oppression and repression. I decided to name the course unit "Life in a squatter camp".



Because of the time into which the classroom research could be slotted, I saw this unit as an ideal and novel idea of revising certain sections of the standard eight syllabus.

Sections to be covered would be housing, food and nutrition, food and hygiene, storage of food, methods of cooking, interior decoration and consumer education.

I also intended integrating other aspects of life such as education, religion and health and social services. The preliminary plan involved taking the students on a tour of a squatter camp accompanied by someone who could speak the people's language and act as an interpreter to accompany us. Before all this could be arranged unrest broke out in the black townships as a result of conflict amongst taxi organizations.

I found myself in a dilemma and had to think of an alternative. Because of the time factor I changed plans and tried to get hold of a video cassette portraying life in a squatter camp.

The video cassette would then be the stimulus for the assignment. Trying to find a suitable video tape was like hunting for the proverbial needle in a haystack.

After making numerous fruitless attempts I eventually obtained a video cassette entitled "Mayfair" from Education Resources Information Project (ERIP). I was elated because



at last I could set out to plan the course unit "Life in a squatter camp."

#### 4.2 COURSE UNIT: LIFE IN A SQUATTER CAMP

##### 4.2.1 Rationale

The project will evolve around the lifestyle of the residents of a squatter camp. It will be linked to the Standard eight Home Economics syllabus. Other aspects of living such as education, recreation and religion not necessarily covered by the Home Economics syllabus but which are an integral part of life, will also be included. These will give the students a holistic idea of what life is like in a squatter camp.

##### 4.2.2 Contents

My classroom research was designed on Lewin's model for classroom research (Kemmis and Mc Taggart 1982:6).

The project content will be focusing on the following prescribed sections of the standard eight Home Economics syllabus:

#### **Consumer Education and Home Management**

- (i) The consumer
- (ii) Shop layout and display of goods
- (iii) Determining needs



Various methods used by residents to be self supporting.

### **Care of the home**

- (i) Materials used in the home
- (ii) Safety in the home
- (iii) Interior decoration

### **Food and Nutrition**

- (i) Choosing the food we eat
- (ii) Factors influencing eating habits

### **The storage of food**

- (i) Where to store food
- (ii) Problems with storing food
- (iii) How to store various food

### **Methods of Cooking**

- (i) Methods commonly used by the residents
- (ii) Other aspects

### **Education**

Schooling in the squatter camp



## **Health and Social Services**

- (i) Clinics / medical services
- (ii) Churches
- (iii) Recreation
- (iv) Sport

### **4.2.3 Method**

The students will observe the lifestyle of the residents of a squatter camp with the intention of looking at similarities and differences in comparison to what they are accustomed to and what they have studied.

I propose spending ten Home economics sessions on the writing project. My research will be based on experiential learning because the students will be taken on a field trip through a squatter camp. Before the students go on the field trip they will be requested to collect information on squatter camps to generate discussion.

I am going to use a democratic approach so that the students will have the opportunity to make their voice heard. They will have the freedom to write on topics of their choice in the major project with the proviso that they select a topic



related to the unit. They will be engaged in the following writing activities:

A "free-write",  
brainstorm,  
focused "free-write."

One major writing project selected from the list:

- (i) A letter to a pen-pal in Missouri relating experience or concerns of a squatter camp.
- (ii) An investigative report based on the issue addressed in the "free write."
- (iii) A story
- (iv) A dialogue.



**Day one** duration 70 minutes

**Lesson**

The writing process in Home Economics.

Introduction to the project.

**Goals**

To get the students to realize that they have much to write about.

To assist the students in writing fluently and naturally.

To inform the class of the proposed programme for the duration of the research project.

**Writing Tasks**

A free-write

The students are expected to write about how they feel about themselves and life in general in their journals. They will also write about their feelings about having a language teacher teaching Home Economics. The idea is to keep the pen moving continuously for ten minutes. If they run out of ideas they must not stop. They can write something like "I am stuck," "my mind's a blank".  
(10 mins.)



### Sharing

The teacher will share her writing with the class as an icebreaker. A few volunteers will be asked to share their writing with the class.

(15 mins.)

### Discussion

The teacher will share her American experience with the class. Students will be allowed to ask questions.

(30 mins.)

### Journal entries

The teacher and students will write about impressions of the lesson. A few volunteers will share their journals. This is focused free-writing, because the writers will focus on the lesson.

(15 mins)



## CYCLE ONE REFLECTIONS

### A personal journal entry

#### Day one

Despite the fact that the class was expecting me I had the distinct feeling that they were viewing me with suspicion. What does a language teacher want from us in a Home Economics class? What does she know about the subject?

We started off with a free-write. At first the class experienced problems with the idea of just writing and more so, writing without stopping and not really paying attention to the mechanics of the language. Some class members visibly experienced difficulty in writing without "thinking" (stopping). To them thinking implies stopping at intervals before continuing to write. After the ten minutes were expired, I shared my journal entry with the class after which three classmembers volunteered to share theirs.

I introduced myself to the class and told them about my interests and hobbies. During the introductions many students expressed negative feelings about school. The students found the brief informal report on my American experience interesting and asked many questions about life in America in general and about the American schooling system.

I explained the proposed writing project in Home Economics to the class. The students enjoyed the journal entries which



were done at the end of the session. The report back was overwhelmingly positive. Students reported the approach to be refreshingly different to the hum-drum presentation of most lessons. One student said that she was glad to have the opportunity to participate in the research project and wished me well. Another said that she was looking forward to the next session.

On collecting the video cassette Mayfair, I was told by one of the workers of Education Resources Information Project (ERIP) that all the video cassettes dealing with squatter camps were confiscated by the police during 1988. The video cassette Mayfair was shot by an American group of journalists and was one of the few that "got away".

On viewing the video cassette the evening prior to the lesson, I discovered that it did not address the topic "Life in a squatter camp". It dealt with the problem of eviction and resettlement of whites and Indians in the Johannesburg area. I had no alternative but to show the video cassette to the class because eviction and resettlement were often the direct causes of squatting. Another reason why I had to show the class the video cassette was because there was no time to make alternative arrangements.



## CYCLE ONE LESSON PLAN

Day two duration 70 minutes

### Lesson

The Writing process in Home Economics - housing, food and nutrition, food and hygiene, storage of food, methods of cooking, consumerism, marketing, education, religion, health and social services.

### PRE-WRITING

#### Brainstorm

The students do a brainstorm on the video cassette viewed.

#### Cinquain

The students write a Cinquain on an experience regarding life in a squatter camp

#### Free-write

The students do a free-write in response to the video tape.

### Goals

To teach the students how to view a video cassette with the intention of using the information as a resource.

To teach the students' the concept of brainstorming.

To teach the students how to write a Cinquain.



To teach the students the concept of focused free-writing.

The students do a focused free-write on life in a squatter camp.

### **Resources**

Video cassette

Viewing of the video cassette "Mayfair"

(35 mins)

### **Writing Tasks**

#### **Brainstorm**

The class does a brainstorm on the theme of the video cassette on aspects such as housing, food and nutrition, food and hygiene etc., (the integrated approach).

(10 mins)

The students will be given the required instructions and an example of a Cinquain. After discussing the poem the students will attempt to write one on life in a squatter camp for homework.

(15 mins)



Journal entries

The students will write in their journals about the day's experience in Home Economics.

(10 mins)



## CYCLE ONE REFLECTIONS

### A personal journal entry

#### Day two

The viewing of the cassette started on a negative note. The video recorder was defective and the media person at school needed about fifteen minutes to trace the fault.

Eventually everything was under control. The class was relaxed and enjoyed the viewing. They laughed and made remarks about what they were seeing. At times the sound was inaudible because it seemed as if the video cassette was a copy of a few previous copies.

During the brainstorming session the group wrote feverishly. The sharing of the brainstorm went well, but at times the exercise became chaotic when students became over-anxious to contribute. Their revelations gave me insight into their impressions of the experience, and I also learnt which emotions were aroused by the video cassette.

I had to postpone the writing of the cinquain because of the delay in getting the video recorder going.

I decided to let the students write a journal entry after the brainstorm. Whilst the class wrote in their journals it appeared as if they had lots to write about. The class was



invited to write a personal journal for homework if they so wished.

The afternoon on returning the video cassette I decided to visit the Western Province Council of Churches (W.P.C.C.). There I was told about a person, Mr S., a Western Province Council of Churches (W.P.C.C.) co-ordinator who arranges walking tours through squatter camps for visitors.

After conferring with the principal and Home Economics teacher at school, I proceeded to make enquiries about a possible tour.

I had to suspend lessons for a few days because I was setting up the tour with Mr S. The day of the tour I managed to "borrow" a period from another subject teacher so that I could brief the students. Briefing notes are found in addendum H.1.

When we arrived at our meeting place, the police station, Mr S. was not there. The atmosphere was tense and there were many mini-buses and people milling around. The students were visibly scared and hardly spoke whilst we were waiting. After waiting for about 30 tense minutes Mr S. arrived.

At the camp my two colleagues and I were introduced to the chairperson of the camp committee who gave us permission to go on the tour. We were split into three groups each



consisting of a resident, one of our teachers and some students.

The day was hot and sticky, and it was very uncomfortable ploughing our way through the thick black sand. On our way through the camp we met and spoke to some of the residents. The residents were very co-operative and were pleased to answer our questions. The residents also felt comfortable to question us.

On completing the tour the group met at a central venue where we were entertained to ice cold minerals. There was a general atmosphere of excitement and shock. Everybody had something which they wanted to share.

Whilst at the camp, the students decided to collect good second-hand clothing specially for the scantily dressed little children.

The journey home was a contrast to the journey to the camp. On our way to the camp students were talkative and listened to recorded music. On our way home the students were quiet and appeared to be in a pensive mood. I think they were physically, emotionally and spiritually drained like myself.

All Friday's lessons were suspended because a setwork examination was scheduled for the day.



#### 4.2.5 REFLECTIONS - DAYS ONE AND TWO OF CYCLE ONE

After day two of the first cycle I reflected on what was happening. After negotiations a field trip could be arranged through the squatter camp and that means that the rest of the course unit will be affected. I decided to replan for cycle two from day three onwards, because the original plan was not viable any longer.

I also decided to plan lessons and activities on a daily basis. By planning and reflecting on a daily basis I would be able to put into practice principles of democracy on which the project would be based. I did not wish the project to be artificial and rigid, therefore, planning for the complete project was not very practical, especially in view of the fact that the situation at school could change for a day or a period. Journal entries recording experiences and reflecting on experiences will be done on a daily basis. Cycle two commences on day three.

#### **NOTE:**

The same introductory paragraph to each day's programme is included, because a democratised approach to the classroom strategy is followed in this research project. This means that students may decide which of the aspects referred to in the paragraph they wish to deal with. A student could decide to give an in-depth description and evaluation of a single aspect e.g. food and nutrition, or methods of cooking.



**Day three** duration 70 minutes

**Lesson**

The process approach to writing in Home Economics - housing, food and nutrition, food and hygiene, storage of food, methods of cooking, consumerism, marketing, education, religion, health and social services.

**PRE-WRITING**

The class will discuss and answer questions on the various aspects of life in a squatter camp such as health and social services, education, food and hygiene etc., (the integrated approach).

**Goals**

To encourage the students to share their experiences of the field trip with one another.

To teach the students the art of reflecting.

To test the students' reaction to the learning material by getting them to answer questions about their experience.



## Writing Tasks - process development

### Sharing

The class is divided into three groups. The groups are representative of the three groups that went with different guides through the camp. The groups discuss their experiences with one another. Each group selects a leader and the groups share two unique experiences of the field trip with the class. The teacher writes the experiences on a transparency for the class.

(25 mins.)

### Questions

The students are given a set of questions (addendum H. 2 1) concerning the field trip. The teacher and class first discuss the questions before they are answered individually in writing.

(20 minutes)

### Sharing

The students share their answers in response groups.

(10 mins)

### Journal entry

(15 mins)



## CYCLE TWO LESSON PLAN

Day four duration 35 minutes

### **Lesson**

The process approach to writing in Home Economics - housing, food and nutrition, food and hygiene, storage of food, methods of cooking, consumerism, marketing, education, religion, health and social services.

### **WRITING**

The class will write a Cinquain on any aspect of the integrated course unit on life in a squatter camp. Aspects such as housing, food and nutrition, methods of cooking, education etc., will be covered.

### **Goals**

To teach the students how to use information obtained through discussion in writing.

To teach the students how to write a Cinquain.

To inform the students that poetry may also be written during Home Economics lessons and is not confined to the language class only.

### **Writing Tasks - process development**

Poetry writing



The class is given an example and the instructions for writing a cinquain (see addendum H.3). The instructions are discussed in class before commencing with the writing.

(10 mins)

The students attempt writing a cinquain on "Life in a squatter camp."

(25 mins)



## CYCLE TWO LESSON PLAN

**Day five** duration 70 minutes

### **Lesson**

The process approach to writing in Home Economics - housing, food and nutrition, food and hygiene, storage of food, methods of cooking, consumerism, marketing, education, religion, health and social services.

### REVISION AND EDITING (response to poems)

The students read the poems to their respective response partners and one positive comment and recommendations are made if necessary.

### PRE-WRITING

The class discuss newspaper cuttings and pictures as well as their brainstorms as a pre-writing exercise.

### **Goals**

To teach the students how to respond positively to each other's writing and to render assistance where needed.

To teach the students how to reflect.

### **Writing Tasks - process development**



### Student response

The students read their poems to their respective response partners. Students make one positive comment on the poem and suggest any changes where necessary.

(10 mins)

### Sharing

The class is divided into three groups representative of the different groups that went through the camp. Members share the experiences unique to the rest of the group.

(15 mins)

### Topics

Students share pictures and cuttings on life in a squatter camp, which they have collected.

(20 mins)

Students choose topics they would like to write about from the list such as housing, methods of cooking, food and nutrition, consumerism, education or which ever topic they may prefer. Students also have a choice of discourse forms for their writing.

(15 mins)



Journals entry

(10 mins)



## CYCLE TWO LESSON PLAN

**Day six** duration 70 minutes

### **Lesson**

The process approach to writing in Home Economics - housing, food and nutrition, food and hygiene, storage of food, methods of cooking, consumerism, marketing, education, religion, health and social services.

### **PRE-WRITING**

The class will do a collaborative cluster on an aspect of life in a squatter camp e.g. housing, storage of food, education, health services etc.

### **WRITING**

The class will write freely for a prescribed length of time on one chosen topic taken from the course unit e.g. methods of cooking, food and nutrition, storage of food, education, etc.

### **REVISION**

The students will be guided on effective ways of responding to writing on a prepared response sheet.

### **Goals**

To teach the concept of clustering in a collaborative writing activity.



To teach the students the concept and value of a focused free-write.

To teach the students how to respond to peer writing in Home Economics.

### **Resources**

Overhead projector

Transparency

Unprinted newspaper sheets

Koki pens

### **Writing Tasks - process development**

#### **Clustering**

The teacher and the class do a cluster on a transparency on a topic selected by the class .

The class is divided into x number of groups depending on the number of topics selected by the students. Each group is given an unprinted newspaper sheet with one of the selected topics written on it. Each group is given a coloured koki pen. The group selects a scribe. Each group must write down words and/or ideas concerning the topic written on the page in their possession. After five minutes the sheet is passed on to the next group.



The procedure is repeated until all the groups have contributed to every topic. The sheets are given to the respective groups that selected that particular topic.

(20 mins)

#### Writing

The students do a focused free-write on the selected topic. They make use of the clusters and journals if necessary.

(10 mins)

#### First draft

The students are requested to write in a discourse form of their choice, such as: a story, a dialogue, a monologue, a report, or a letter to a friend or to the editor of a local newspaper about the visit to the squatter camp.

The student must concentrate mostly on the content of the topic selected.

(30 mins)

#### Peer response

When the class have completed the first draft they will be put aside and discuss the Peer response sheet (addendum H.5) given by the teacher. The class will



receive a text on which to practise the concept under her supervision. Students are to respond only to the first paragraph of addendum H.4.2.

(10 mins)

**NOTE:**

The writing I use for peer response is my own expressive writing done according to the process approach to writing whilst attending the Gateway Writing Project Summer Institute during 1990 in St.Louis, Missouri. I use the final draft for the response, and the former drafts are used to illustrate the phases of the writing process.



## CYCLE TWO LESSON PLAN

Day seven duration 35 minutes

### Lesson

The process approach to writing in Home Economics - housing, food and nutrition, food and hygiene, storage of food, methods of cooking, consumerism, marketing, education, religion, health and social services.

### REVISION

The class will respond to each other's first drafts on the praise, question and polish questions on the (PQP) forms (addendum H.4.1). During this stage the students will only concentrate on content.

### Goals

To give the students the opportunity to revise each other's work.

To teach the students the concept of revision. Revision is by necessity improving on the content of the written piece, and not the making of a neat copy or scrutinizing the mechanics of the language.

### Writing Tasks - process development

#### PQP

The students work in pairs. They exchange assignments and follow the instructions on the PQP form of Bill



Lyons (1981) found in addendum H.4.1. The teacher will circulate amongst the students to render assistance if necessary.

(20 mins)

#### Writing

If time permits the class will commence work on their second drafts and complete them for homework. They will be told that the suggested changes are optional.

(15 mins)



## CYCLE TWO LESSON PLAN

**Day eight** duration 35 minutes

### **Lesson**

The process approach to writing in Home Economics - housing, food and nutrition, food and hygiene, storage of food, methods of cooking, consumerism, marketing, education, religion, health and social services.

### **EDITING**

The class will scrutinize the mechanics of the language of the written piece as prescribed on the editing focus sheet in peer response groups.

### **Goal**

To teach the students the art of editing.

### **Writing Tasks - process development**

#### **Editing**

The teacher together with the class will make a thorough study of the editing focus sheet (addendum H.6). The class is divided into editing groups. Each student will concentrate on one aspect of grammar and usage mentioned on the editing focus sheet. The teacher moves around amongst the class members to offer assistance where necessary.

(35 mins)



## CYCLE TWO LESSON PLAN

**Day nine** Duration 35 minutes

### **Lesson**

The process approach to writing in Home Economics - housing, food and nutrition, food and hygiene, storage of food, methods of cooking, consumerism, marketing, education, religion, health and social services.

### **WRITING**

The class will write the fourth draft of the assignment. This is the final draft before evaluation.

### **Goals**

To draw the students' attention to the fact that writing is never complete, there are always changes which may be made.

Writing Tasks - process development

### **Writing**

The students may work on the fourth drafts after the editing stage. The teacher will evaluate this draft, which is the final one.

(35 mins)



## CYCLE TWO LESSON PLAN

Day ten duration 35 minutes

### Lesson

The process approach to writing in Home Economics - housing, food and nutrition, food and hygiene, storage of food, methods of cooking, consumerism, marketing, education, religion, health and social services.

### PRESENTATION AND PUBLICATION

#### Goals

To encourage the students to be proud of their writing by publishing and exhibiting their work.

To make the student population of the school aware of how writing may be used in content area subjects by inviting them to the exhibition.

#### Writing Tasks - process development

##### Publishing

Students publish their final copies on the bulletin board of the Home Economics room after teacher evaluation. Students display the posters they have made on strategic places around the school premises, to make the rest of the student population aware of the plight



of the squatters. Students also distribute letters of appeal to their fellow students for good used clothing.

(20 mins)

#### Journal entries

Students are requested to evaluate the course unit in their journals. The focus must be on their experience of writing in Home Economics.

(15 mins)



Firstly I developed a plan of action to improve the teaching of Home Economics (cycle one of lesson plans). I then proceeded to implement my plan. This was done during the first two days of cycle one. My observations revealed that the effects of the action in the context did not present the desired results. (I was obliged to rethink the situation after viewing the video recording of Mayfair, which I found unsuitable and because I was successful in arranging a field trip through a squatter camp.) On reflecting I decided to proceed with the planning of cycle two on a day to day basis, because I wanted my approach to be flexible and not prescriptive. Cycle two of the lesson plans commences on day three.

I decided to discuss global reflections under specific headings.

#### 4.2.7.1. Lesson procedure and results

The field trip served as the starting point for the classroom research. The research which was based on experiential learning, revealed that students enjoyed writing creatively in Home Economics. Students displayed the ability to think holistically and not in compartments as they had previously done. Because collaborative learning was of paramount importance, the atmosphere that prevailed in the classroom was relaxed and students felt confident to



take risks. The hands on experience of the writing process contributed to the realization of the participants that everyone is a writer in his/her own right. Positive aspects of the writing process such as pre-writing, peer response and publishing did much to enhance the confidence of the hesitant students.

I drew on the reflections of the participants in the project viz. the students, the participant observer (Home Economics teacher) and myself to determine to what extent change/learning had taken place. I made use of audio tape recordings, participant journals and informal interviews. Comments in journals were sincere and sometimes even harsh. I have selected a few comments at random which I include here.

**Researcher:**

There could have been closer liaison between the subject teacher and myself, as the researcher. The subject teacher could have been more involved in the actual planning of the lessons. She should never have been only the respondent observer who wrote journals. After all, she was the expert in the subject Home Economics.

P.A.

**The participant observer: (Home Economics teacher - B.S.)**

We became acutely aware of living conditions in squatter camps. Some students are often hesitant to join in class discussions but because of the fieldtrip all the students could participate in discussions.

B.S.



The poetry writing was fun as well as a learning experience. Who would have imagined that poetry writing could be used in Home Economics?

B.S.

Maybe it would be a good idea to attempt only one writing project per term, otherwise problems may arise with the completion of the syllabus.

B.S.

**The students:**

I enjoyed the way the lessons were presented. It is a change from the humdrum of most lessons.

G.M.

I learnt that language is used in all subjects and that poetry can assist one to understand the work better.

C.C.

The atmosphere in the class was good. One could feel free to talk and everyone's opinion was considered as important.

C.Hu.

I think it's a good idea to display the work we've done. It teaches us to be proud of our work and others can learn from us.

N.P.

The teacher kept on reminding us of the time and this upset me. Sometimes I wanted to write or do something more and then I'll just think never mind what's the use.

T.B.

I did not like writing the same work over and over. It wastes time.

H.J.



Sometimes the teacher explained in too much detail. Maybe she thought we could not work it out for ourselves.

T.S.

#### 4.2.7.2 Time management

Time management was a problem throughout the project, mainly because research of the nature which I did, had to be done earlier in the year and with a class I normally teach. I found myself rushing the students most times and I observed from their body language that they were feeling uncomfortable. They needed more time to internalize the new information, and to enjoy the experience. Despite this they were always pleasant and co-operative. My observations in the Missouri schools stood me in good stead to handle this constraint, otherwise I would have been totally lost.

As in any normal school situation there were days that things did not go according to plan. Disruptions such as a visit from a guest speaker, or a farewell programme for the matrices who were leaving the school, or the writing of a set-work examination upset the programme. Because of disruptions it was imperative to ask for extra time from the subject teacher, which in turn prolonged the project. I felt guilty about the timeslot (a month before the final examinations) into which the project had to be fitted. The students in actual fact had two Home Economics teachers for the duration of the project. This was due to the fact that the subject teacher had to carry on with the work scheduled



for that period, whilst I was doing the research with the class. This made me feel even more guilty, because it appeared as if the class now had to contend with an extra subject.

Using a pen for writing also had direct bearing on the time factor. The writing process is ideally done with a word processor (computer) because of the revising and editing elements in the process. I noticed that the students were becoming agitated revising so often. I thought it wise to cancel the second revision session (which I realized on reflection, could possibly have affected the quality of the final product). I used my initiative to allow the students to revise only the relevant parts on the opposite page. I also considered teaching the students the cutting and pasting technique, but time did not allow that as they expressed concern about preparing for the final examination in the traditional way by working out typical examination questions. When I discussed the students' concern about the final examination with the teacher I gave her the assurance that the class was being prepared for the final examination through the assignments done in the project. The teacher drew my attention to the fact that the class was not aware of the fact that we were revising the work but that we approached it differently.



Although time was a worrying factor, I conceded to the class request to make posters from the newspaper clippings which they collected. The class agreed to make the posters extra-murally. The motivation for making the posters was to make the rest of the school population aware of the plight of the squatters. Students felt that the posters would move a larger percentage of the student body to donate clothing, blankets and food. This student reaction showed that the positive results of the project far outweighed the negative ones.

My teaching writing in Home Economics through the process approach has been a wonderfully revealing experience which was in total contrast to what I had been accustomed to in a traditional Home Economics class. I therefore, want to make a comparison between the two approaches. I shall start by comparing a traditional Home Economics classroom with a Home Economics classroom where children learnt through writing where I used the process approach in the writing programme. I shall also reflect on my observations of the pre-writing, revision, editing and publishing phases of the writing process. Finally I shall look at how the process approach to writing in Home Economics enhanced critical independent thinking in the students.



#### 4.3 THE HOME ECONOMICS WRITING CLASSROOM AS OPPOSED TO THE TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM.

I agree with Jaques (1984:xi) that **small groups** are invaluable in the all-round education of the student. I experienced the benefits of this strategy during my research. I shall try to cite examples of changes in individual students who were involved in small working groups.

In the writing process classroom during such phases as pre-writing, revision and editing, students worked in small groups. Working in small groups had the advantage that a student (I particularly think of T.A.) who had a low self-esteem and who was always hiding behind someone else in class, had to participate in group activities and discussions, because the group was too small for her to hide.

On the other hand, students with **leadership qualities** (like C.Hu.) could utilize those qualities more effectively by taking the initial lead and thereby instil confidence in the shyer ones. These leaders had to take a less prominent position to give the quieter ones a chance to take the lead as well.

In contrast to the traditional classroom where only the bright students usually stand out everybody was keen to give assistance as **collaborative** learning is the core of the process approach to writing. Writers on WAC agree that



the skills of every learner add to the quality of the work where writing is done in content area subjects. In this particular project students learnt to share ideas and material during the pre-writing and drafting phases. During the revision and editing phases knowledge and expertise were also shared. C.Hu. was a good language student and she rendered valuable assistance during the editing phase. On the other hand E.A.'s critical analytical skills were used during the revision phase.

In the writing process classroom, because of small group work, a student (T.A.) who was nervous and unsure, showed much more **confidence** at the end of the project than before. The joy that she experienced at times during the project after she voiced her opinion was visible on her face. In the traditional classroom the shy, uncertain student is dominated by the confident assertive peer. Very little, if anything, is done in the traditional classroom to boost the introvert's ego.

Students in the class where the writing process is taught feel **less threatened** during the first draft phase because the mechanics of the language only receive attention once ideas have been formulated and satisfactorily arranged. I found that students enjoyed and learnt from revising one another's writing and that they did not particularly mind re-drafting after revision. In the traditional classroom revision of content is of no consequence. Students are more



anxious about writing grammatically correct language than stimulating or challenging content.

#### **A note on revising and polishing**

Initially the PQP exercise was rather disappointing despite the fact that the class had previously practised the activity. The students made meaningless and general remarks of praise such as, "the story was interesting" and "the writer uses nice words". After revising the PQP concept with the class a second time there was an improvement on the type of input made by the students e.g. "The writer uses good descriptive words in the introduction," "The writer captured my interest from the first sentence."

The students found the editing exercise difficult, although the teacher and the class revised the form before the writing was actually done.

The students were unsure about the editing procedure and, therefore, kept on asking questions to be reassured. The exercise took longer than I contemplated. I realized that I will have to display a more sympathetic attitude when it comes to the editing of peer writing. I think that another possible reason why the students experienced problems with the editing was that the peer response sheet was too complicated for beginners. I re-designed the editing peer response sheet which I think students would be able to



relate to with less difficulty. The re-designed editing response sheet may be found in addendum I.2.

Eventually the idea of revising and editing appealed to the students, because they realized that by the time the writing reached me for evaluation and grading the number of **errors would be remarkably reduced**. The fact that their writing was not smudged by my red pen marks boosted their ego. Incidentally, I used a lead pencil for evaluation because red pen marks have negative connotations for students. A comment from one of the writers was, "Oh Miss, I'm so glad that my writing doesn't bleed any more." The red marks symbolized pain/hurt for this particular student.

The atmosphere in the writing process classroom was warm, sharing, caring, and relaxed. The traditional classroom on the contrary is often a cold, lonely, cruel world where students become frustrated and disillusioned, because the emphasis falls very heavily on working quietly and individually.

Apart from the different dimension which I perceived in the Home Economics class in which students learnt through writing, students revealed positive signs of growth which can be attributed to certain phases of the writing process.

In the traditional classroom the teacher's main tasks are to highlight errors, and students often have to engage in



meaningless corrections. When students were writing in Home Economics, the only mechanical error I worked on was the **subject verb agreement**. I commente on this aspect in the next section.

#### 4.4 OUTCOMES OF THE PROCESS APPROACH TO WRITING IN HOME ECONOMICS

##### 4.4.1 The writing phases

The inter-active and co-operative value of pre-writing in a Home Economics writing classroom was evident. The classroom was a hive of activity and the atmosphere can be described as organised chaos. Students learnt to distinguish between a brainstorm and a cluster.

At times fairly serious arguments were conducted and I had to act as arbitrator. The value of discussion and expressive talk as an integral part of the writing process cannot be disputed. Resources such as journals, brainstorms, clusters and newspaper cuttings were effectively used during this phase of the writing process.



The field trip and the newspaper cuttings provided the students with invaluable writing material. One student, T.B., said that, while she was writing, the tour through the squatter camp played in her mind like a film. She said that she had so much to write about that it was difficult to decide what information to include or exclude.

Students felt personally involved with their writing because of the experiential learning they were involved in, I am now thinking of the writing of the cinquain. The democratisation of the classroom which involved allowing students to select their own topics did much to add to the enjoyment of the writing. Students did not wish to be interrupted in the process. There was not much collaboration during the drafting stage, because they did not want to lose the thread of their arguments.

The idea of responding to a peer's poetry was met with reluctance, maybe because this was something new to the students, or because they were unsure, or perhaps the students did not wish to offend their friends. I had to convince the class that they were not to see response as criticizing their friends, but rather as making positive suggestions. After the pep talk the students seemed to be more comfortable with the responding exercise. When the exercise was completed it was gratifying to see the proud expressions on many of the faces. I am including the first draft of G.M. again, because it would be easier to



comprehend the concepts of revision and editing and also to observe the growth that had taken place.

First draft

**COMMUNITY**

Community  
Poor, unhappie  
Understanding, -erying, feeling  
I velt so sad  
Community

(G.M.)

Second draft (Revised by E.A.)

**COMMUNITY**

Community  
Poor, -unhappie  
Wondering, gazing, feeling  
I velt so sad  
People

(G.M.)

Third draft (Edited by C.C.)

**COMMUNITY**

Community  
Poor, unhappy  
Wondering, gazing, feeling  
I felt so sad  
People

(G.M.)

I wish to reiterate that students definitely learnt from their peers' errors. Students did not hesitate to ask for peer opinion and when in doubt, they did not hesitate to ask me.



The revision phase of the writing process illustrated the concept of peer tutoring very effectively. Co-operative learning was strongly reflected. Students questioned each other and again asked for advice from their classmates when they were uncertain. Dictionaries and language textbooks were consulted. It proved to me that Home Economics students were becoming better writers as a result of the different approach to writing.

In the traditional Home Economics class writing of a transactional nature such as filling blanks, selecting the correct answer, and note-taking is usually done. Students are denied the opportunity of writing expressively and creatively as was done in the Home Economics writing process classroom. All that has been said about the advantages of WAC is best illustrated in the writing of a paragraph taken from H.J.'s report.

First draft of H.J.'s **PARAGRAPH**

We one day visited a squatter camp near us. It was very big with thosands of people living their. In the camp is shabines and furniture shops and supermarkets and clothes shops and a witchdoctor



Second draft - written by H.J. and **revised** by C.HE.

Apparently C. He. was more observant than H.J. that is why she could make such good suggestions to add to H.J.'s paragraph.

Our class once visited a squatter camp close to us. It was very big and it was home to thousands of people living their. **The houses was small and made of wood, cardboard, plastic and zink irons.** In the camp **was facilities such as** supermarkets and furniture shops and clothes shops and **hairdressing salons** and shabines and a witchdoctor room.

**NOTE:**

The bold printing is indicative of the **idea/s** added during the revision stage.

Third draft - written by H.J. and **edited** by J.S.

Our class once visited a squatter camp close to us. It was very big and it was home to **thousands** of people living **there**. The houses **were** small and made of wood, cardboard, plastic and zinc irons. In the camp **there were** facilities such as supermarkets, furniture shops, **clothing shops, hairdressing salons, shabeens** and a **witch doctor's consulting** room.

**NOTE:**

The bold printing is indicative of the corrections done to the **mechanics** of the language.

Writers on writing advise teachers to limit the number of errors they point out in a piece of writing in order not to overwhelm the students (McKensie and Tomkins 1984:208).



Various reasons are given for this suggestion. I decided to concentrate on the subject verb agreement. On reflection, I realized that I had probably decided to concentrate on that particular aspect of language because I am a language teacher and I find grammar incongruities such as the subject verb disagreement uncomfortable and difficult to ignore. It is not necessary to become too technical as far as language usage is concerned when students are writing in a content area subject. The main objective of language here is to facilitate communication. Subject verb agreement is usually not crucial for communication purposes as content teachers should primarily concentrate on content, because writing in content area subjects has the express purpose of promoting understanding of writers' insight and understanding of subject content and to communicate meaning in the subject (Van Heerden 1992).

The pass/fail grading and a positive comment to written assignments was gracefully accepted by all. The fact that no mark was allocated removed the negative aspects of the competitiveness that usually prevail when it comes to grading. I must admit that it was a pity that the grade of the project could not be included in the students' year-mark, because the year-marks had to be ready for moderation earlier in the fourth term. The students, however, benefited qualitatively from the project and their



awareness and critical thinking about their own situation were greatly enhanced by the exercise.

Students revelled in publishing and exhibiting their end products. They assisted each other in making attractive borders and covers for their products. I actually saw T.S. smiling while looking at her poem after pinning it onto the bulletin board in the Home Economics classroom. They literally motivated or even coerced each other into presenting their work neatly and attractively. I must honestly admit that I became a little anxious during this phase, because I thought the class was spending too much time preparing products for presentation and publication.

Apart from writing to learn, "**making students aware**" was also one of the main objectives of the project. The field trip and the actual writing in Home Economics made those of us who visited the squatter camp aware of certain emotions such as sympathy, concern, pity, disgust, anger and resentment directed at the authorities.

Here are a few poignant statements which students made to illustrate some of the emotions aroused:

"When I went to bed I prayed that God would protect them especially the little child that touched me."

G.M.

"That evening I went home and felt like giving away most of my possessions to the poor needy people in the squatter's camp."

G.M.



"I think that these people are God's forgotten children."

T.S.

"I definitely think that the wealth of the country must be re-distributed. It's so unfair that some people have so much and others so little."

O.J.

Apart from our greater emotional awareness aroused by the situation, participants (the students, the Home Economics teacher, and I) became more aware of our own and other people's (political, social, economic and cultural) situation.

It became clear why residents of squatter camps behave in a particular fashion under certain circumstances and we came to the following conclusions:

Many of the problems in the squatter camps are caused by the fact that the residents find themselves in the dilemma of being caught between two worlds - the Western world and their traditional world. These conflicting worlds are a source of strife, tension and frustration to these people.

The opposing forces of Western and traditional cultures are reflected in their lifestyles. We noticed a take-away food stall under rather unhygienic conditions in the shade of a tree; an open-air hairdressing salon; a pub (shebeen) with little tables covered with colourful plastic cloths; a witch doctor sitting in the doorway of his "consulting



room" (a shack); and a double storey wood and iron shack housing a shop at ground level with living quarters upstairs.

The result of the collision of the opposing forces led to the rubbing off of the negative effects of Western civilisation on the residents of the camp resulting in problems such as teenage pregnancies, crimes such as petty thieving, assault, rape and a general laissez faire attitude towards life.

The unemployment rate was very high amongst the residents of the camp. This was due to the influx of unskilled labourers into the urban areas. Another reason for the high unemployment rate is their inability to speak the official languages. Some residents spoke neither English nor Afrikaans, so finding employment in a city was virtually impossible.

I am proud to report that writing in Home Economics enhanced the students' ability to **think independently and critically** about their own circumstances and those of other people.

Students could draw conclusions for themselves, for example, C.He. made the following statement in her report on education:

It is obvious that the D.E.T. shows no concern, and it is not interested in providing a better life or future for these children. If we should compare the



amount spent on a "white" child at school, it will only show that the D.E.T. is insincere about having insufficient funds to sponsor the squatter school.

C.He.

**NOTE:**

The D.E.T. is the Department of Education and Training, responsible for black education.

Students were also comparing and contrasting life in a squatter camp with their own lives. T.B. exclaimed in her report:

"I was shocked, really shocked, by what I saw."

She could only be shocked after making comparisons and contrasts. The field trip through the squatter camp made the students acutely aware of the poor socio-economic conditions which prevail and aroused in them a need to make life more bearable for the residents. Students, therefore, decided amongst themselves to render meaningful assistance by collecting good second-hand clothing and donating it to the squatters of the camp, who welcomed them so warmly and from whom they learnt so much. They did not only learn



about the squatters, they also came to know themselves better. G.M. wrote the following journal entry:

"My room looks as if a pig paid it a visit. I've got everything but I take it for granted. Just look at these people they are so poor and have so little but still they keep their homes tidy."

Before discussing conclusions, I wish to make a few remarks:

The collecting of clothing, blankets and tinned foods is an on-going project at school. The Home Economics research group has involved a large percentage of the school population in the project.

Samples of the students' work in the mini-thesis are:

poems are found in addendum J.1;

letters in addendum J.2;

and reports and other discourse forms in addendum

J.3.

As a token of appreciation I invited the Home Economics teacher, the principal and the students to my home to celebrate the successful conclusion of an informative and enjoyable research project. The social afternoon rounded off the activities in a very pleasant and memorable way as can be witnessed from the photographs taken on the occasion.



#### 4.5. CONCLUSIONS

- 1 As a result of the experiential learning theoretical knowledge became meaningful, especially since a democratic approach was adopted.
- 2 Experiential learning in a democratised fashion empowers students to reflect critically on their own situation.
- 3 The democratisation of the writing in the Home Economics classroom made the students responsible, trustworthy people who were given a task to complete which empowered them tremendously.
- 4 Writing expressively in content area subjects does not only empower students to reflect critically but it also promotes critical learning. It is, therefore, crucial to successful learning.
- 5 Writing in content area subjects must be planned at a time when the mark for the assignment can be included in the students' class or yearmarks because the expected quality of the work is much higher than in the traditional classroom.
- 6 The study highlighted the fact that the principal, staff, students, parents and the community such as the shopkeepers and other businessmen have a role to play in making a success of a WAC programme. There will be constraints such as those mentioned previously, but they are not insurmountable.



I wish to reiterate Giroux's (1987:179) argument that we need to empower our students to fight and struggle in order to advance the discourse and principles of a democracy.

In South Africa we can start by creating opportunities for our students to write creatively across the curriculum as Fulwiler reminds us that: "Writing deserves serious reconsideration, increased attention, and ever more thoughtful practice - across the whole curriculum" (Fulwiler 1987:10).

Finally, the project made it possible for me to design a project of possibility and to make recommendations for the implementation of a writing programme in Home Economics at the school where I teach.



## CHAPTER 5

### IMPLEMENTING A PROJECT OF POSSIBILITY: A DREAM

When I was teaching Home Economics I secretly cherished the idea of involving my senior students in a community project with the elderly. This dream never became a reality, because I did not have the skills or expertise to implement it. I left Home Economics to teach a language and forgot about the dream.

One day I was invited to accompany a grade ten (a standard eight) Home Economics class in Missouri to visit a Nursery school which the class had "adopted". The students were assisting the overtaxed teachers with their daily chores, and at the same time learning about their little "play brothers and sisters". The community work project was the class writing project in Home Economics.

Whilst working on this mini-thesis I decided to design a project of possibility as a result of the visit to the nursery school which had awakened my dream of involving young people in community work with the elderly.

#### 5.1. A PROJECT OF POSSIBILITY

Critical pedagogy demands from us as progressive teachers that we educate our students to make informed choices, to think critically and to believe that they can make a difference in the world. A project in which these objectives



are achieved, is known as a project of possibility. Projects of possibility can be developed around forms of community work based on the curriculum that address perceptible examples of suffering, or through school projects aimed at addressing public issues with which students are familiar (Giroux 1987:179).

#### 5.1.1 RATIONALE

Senior citizens are to a great extent the forgotten generation in most communities. The elderly are very often regarded as a nuisance, their advice is viewed as interference and they are best placed in homes for the aged or housed in a granny flat or in a poky damp outside room or garage in someone's backyard. Those who are placed in homes for the aged, are often more fortunate than those living on their own. At the homes for the aged an attempt is made to address the physical, emotional and spiritual needs. Those living on their own are deprived of many privileges and they experience loneliness and rejection.

I decided to do the project on the elderly to make the young people aware of the fact that the elderly also need to lead meaningful lives. Young people also need to be reminded that the elderly made valuable contributions to life and the community in the past, and that we can learn from their experience. The main objective of this project of possibility is to foster in the students the realisation



that their contribution, no matter how insignificant, can add to the quality of the lives of the senior citizens.

#### 5.1.2 Approach

All the project activities fall within the scope of the standard eight Home Economics syllabus.

Because the approach to this project is built on a relationship of trust it implies responsibility. In this approach, theory and practice will be integrated enriching the learning that takes place. The students will have a voice so that the classroom can be a democratised arena. The background of the students as well as the histories they bring with them, will be borne in mind, and the facilitator will strive to build on the students' prior knowledge to make learning meaningful (Shor 1985:33). Classroom research will be conducted in such a way to enable the participants to cope with limited resources. The project proposes to highlight the importance of all living people.

#### 5.1.3 Procedure

The project will be run on two levels, the informal and non-prescriptive and the semi-structured level.

On the informal and non-prescriptive level the teacher will explain the term "project of possibility" to the Home Economics class as well as the objectives of such a project. Students will be requested to "adopt" an elderly person



(grandparent) for at least four weeks. The "adopted" grandparent must preferably live close to the student. Students who do not have access to an elderly person living privately, may approach the social worker at the local home for the aged.

The students will be requested to visit the "adopted grandparent" after school for approximately one hour per week. The visits will take place on an afternoon convenient to both the individual student and the grandparent.

The semi-structured level informs the Home Economics students about the sections of the work to be covered, viz.,

health care

social services

recreation

budgeting.

These sections will be taught prior to the project and now students will be expected to apply their theoretical knowledge to practical situations and then reflect on situations which they experienced. Assignments will take into account the fact that the reflections on practical situations are each individual's own experience. The students are required to assess the needs of the adoptive grandparent.

Each student is required to select and complete at least ONE chore from sections A, B, or C. per week, complete ONE



practical assignment and BOTH written assignments for the duration of the project. The teacher will visit each student at least once during the execution of the project.

The project will be concluded by sending the "play grandparent" a personalised "thank you" card made by the student. The card will be published in class before being mailed.

#### 5.1.4 Content

##### A. Health care for the elderly

###### (i) *Personal hygiene, e.g.*

clipping of finger and toe nails;  
the shampooing and styling of hair;  
the rinsing of small articles of clothing.

###### (ii) *Dietary care:*

Preparing simple, economical, well-balanced meals for the grandparent. The method of cooking and selection of food must be suitable for the purpose.

##### B. Social services and recreation

(i) *Running errands, such as shopping,*



- (ii) *Services*, such as  
letter writing;  
reading from novels, magazines or the Bible;  
doing simple darning and mending duties such  
as the stitching of buttons;  
  
playing card games, scrabble or dominoes with  
the grandparent;  
taking the grandparent for a walk.

### C. **Budgeting**

- (i) *Consumer education*, such as  
making the grandparent aware of purchasing  
goods wisely by studying newspapers or hand  
outs for bargain buys in food and other  
goods,
- (ii) *Economising*, such as  
how to use bits of left over toilet soap in  
the making of bubble bath;  
  
the toasting of stale bread for dried  
breadcrumbs;  
  
using worn bed sheets for making pillowcases,  
and towels for wash cloths.



### 5.1.5 Practical assignments

Students are to select ONE of the following assignments:

**(i) Dietary care and budgeting**

Every student will compile a menu for a three course surprise luncheon at her home for four people to celebrate her "play grandparent's" birthday. The meal must not cost more than twenty five rand. She must write out the menu and the cost of every ingredient necessary for the meal.

She must compile a recipe book of simple, economical, well- balanced meals for the aged. Illustrate the book with suitable pictures, and give the book a title.

**(ii) Social service and budgeting**

Every student will teach her "play grandparent" how to make a gift for a housewife. The cost must not exceed five rand. The directions for the making of the gift must be neatly written or typed.



#### 5.1.6 Writing assignments

- (i) Journal entries after every visit and in between for reflecting, and planning
  
- (ii) A written report of the experience of between one and one and a half A4 pages. All the phases of the writing process will be worked through in the report.

#### NOTE:

A revised PQP and peer response form which may be used for this assignment will be found in in addendum I.1 and I.2 respectively.

A "thank you" card made by the students themselves.

#### 5.1.7 Evaluation of the project

The project will be evaluated by the teacher and the grade will count towards the Home Economics yearmark.

The teacher, parent and grandparent will be requested to comment on aspects of the project which are relevant to them such as:

- (i) The student's attitude towards the project;
  
- (ii) The student's attitude towards the grandparent during the project;



- (iii) Comments about the duration of the project;
- (iv) Thoughts on what the student learnt from the project;
- (v) Advice on what could have been done differently.

The **students** will be expected to comment on aspects of the project such as:

- (i) how did you feel towards your "grandparent" during the project;
- (ii) what can you say about the duration of the project;
- (iii) how do you feel about the sections of the syllabus that was covered by the project;
- (iv) which sections of the project would you delete, why;
- (v) which sections of the syllabus would you rather include, why;
- (vi) what did you learn from the project;
- (vii) how did you feel towards your grandparent at the end of the project.



We must anticipate constraints and counteract them with innovations. Constraints are challenges and must be seen as such. These challenges will be discussed and an attempt will be made at resolving them in the next section.

## 5.2 CONSTRAINTS

The objective of education should be to empower students "to recognize ideological and material constraints that restrict human possibilities, especially those possibilities that function to improve the quality of human life for all" (Giroux 1987:178). If we regard ourselves as progressive teachers we must teach our students not to have a defeatist attitude, but to challenge constraints.

The launching of a writing programme in a content area subject is not going to be an easy task. Initiators must expect opposition from students, colleagues, the principal, subject advisors and school inspectors. Factors such as lack of time, lack of proper evaluation and grading, lack of money, and fear of the attitudes of the authorities will be seen as constraints in implementing a writing programme in content area subjects.



### 5.2.1 Time

Our education system is very examination orientated, therefore, the idea of writing in Home Economics may not appeal to some inspectors, subject advisors and perhaps even the teacher, because of the time factor. Very often the main concern is to cover the syllabus within the prescribed time, regardless of whether the subject matter is comprehended satisfactorily.

### 5.2.2 Money

Students are going to require resources such as extra writing material, cardboard, plastic and coloured pens to produce the materials. Money is definitely going to be cited as a constraint in the implementation of a writing programme at our school.

### 5.2.3 Fear

Writing in content area subjects is a relatively new concept in South African and it implies change. Many people, not only teachers, are reluctant to try out new ideas, because of fear of change. Many teachers are scared, because change implies risks which are associated with feelings of apprehension, frustration, anxiety, fear of criticism, fear of ridicule, and fear of failure. The fact that WAC has been tried and tested in Britain, the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand should dispel fear. WAC has stood



the test of time, and research in the subject is still continuing.



#### 5.2.4 Attitudes

The autocratic attitude of some inspectors and subject advisors who come to criticize instead of advise, has been very debilitating to enthusiastic innovative teachers. Consequently many teachers are only prepared to implement ideas mooted by the powers that be.

#### 5.2.5 Evaluation and grading

There is no doubt that evaluation and grading will be regarded as major obstacles. I agree that students must be rewarded for work done and also that they must receive feedback. These constraints have been dealt with in chapter two section 2.4 (v).

### 5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

In chapter two section 2.8 I discussed the implementation of a WAC policy in general. In this section I shall make recommendations dealing with the implementation of a writing programme in Home Economics at the school where I teach.

Ideally WAC programmes should be initiated by trained consultants. Such programmes may take a few years to show results, but it would be well worth waiting for.

The principal, parents and the community all have a definite role to play in a writing programme if it is to succeed.



### 5.3.1 The role of the principal

It is advisable to discuss the innovation of writing-across-the-curriculum with the principal before doing anything. If the principal finds the idea appealing, half the battle is won. The principal can **use his/her influence to convince** the subject teacher that writing in Home Economics is advantageous to both the teacher and the students. Once the Home Economics teacher sees that the principal has given his/her blessing to the idea, she too may be **more agreeable** to accepting the idea.

I think that school time should initially be utilised for **introductory workshops and seminars**, just to get the writing in Home Economics programme off the ground. Once the teacher has become interested in such a project she will not have a problem staying after school to work on the programme. The principal could **release a press statement** to the local newspaper informing the community about the purpose of the writing in Home Economics project. The press statement could serve a dual purpose, that of informing the community, and asking for donations of necessary materials. After the programme has been well organised the principal can arrange workshops and seminars for Home Economics teachers in the area. The potential value that a principal can have can be illustrated by referring to the role of the principal at my school. We are in the fortunate position that our principal can become involved in these writing workshops and seminars,



because he has the skills and expertise to assist. The principal can also be instrumental in inviting writing consultants from a university and have them work on a long-term programme, helping develop the programme, not simply making one-time presentations and then leave.

### 5.3.2 Getting parents involved

Parents are informed people as far as their children are concerned. They know the context of their homes, have a sense of a good school and they understand the values, institutions, and operations that exist in their neighbourhood. Usually parents are also very concerned about the quality of their children's writing. Often, however, many of the parents are not involved with educational activities. Getting a writing programme in Home Economics under way may be a golden opportunity for teachers to get parents involved in a **writing programme**. Interested parents can establish a committee where parents can become **actively involved** in the planning of the project. Some can serve as tutors or even as volunteer theme readers. Parents can even assist the programme by providing necessary materials such as the use of the personal computers at home, writing paper, coloured paper, cardboard, plastic and any other materials needed for publishing student work. Parents can also be influential in obtaining **sponsors** for writing courses and writing awards programmes. Parents can release **press**



**statements** about their concern for literacy to notify the community of the schools's commitment to writing and literacy.

### 5.3.3 Community involvement

All communities are interested in programmes which empower their students and are usually eager to render assistance. Apart from the parents I here refer to other members such as shopkeepers, local printers, fruiterers, hawkers, and other business people. It may be a good idea to select a working committee from all these people so this committee can take the responsibility for a few **organisational procedures**. The community can assist by donating money for the project and by organising fund-raising drives. Some may be able to assist with the making of copies for publication and others may have **contacts** with newspapers to have articles published and to issue press releases to notify the community of the school's commitment. **Prizes** for school writing award programmes can also be the responsibility of the committee.

### 5.4. GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

An annual school **writing week** can be conducted in which students in all Home Economics classes write on a common theme. At the school's annual Open-day the students' writing done during the writing week can be exhibited for the community and media to view.



Writing in Home Economics should not be a burden, therefore, I would recommend **one assignment** per term, or one for every section of the syllabus depending on the length of the section. The assignments need not all be long and time consuming. A short assignment after completing the chapter on Milk and Dairy Products could well be a letter to the Dairy Board requesting a donation of powdered milk for needy primary school pupils in the area. A longer assignment could be the compilation and illustration of a recipe book of economical milk recipes. Teachers must use their discretion when designing assignments, so that writing in content areas is experienced as a challenge to both teacher and student. Teachers should, therefore, allow students to write creatively and to choose interesting themes.

It might be a good idea to implement the writing programme and really get it off the ground to prove to oneself that it can work before having to defend it to someone else. I think that the teacher should invite the subject advisor and tell her what she has done, and how she went about doing it only when she feels confident of success, even if it takes a considerable time. A final suggestion is to introduce the writing programme in standards six and seven, and continue with it through to standard ten.



## 5.5 CONCLUSION

Teachers are the people to whom the learners have been entrusted and, therefore, it should be their objective to prepare the students for the real world. It is time that the classroom be democratised. The democratisation of the classrooms at our school can commence in the Home Economics classroom by introducing writing into the teaching programme. If the writing programme is well planned and conducted, other content area subject teachers will become interested and they may be prepared to implement it into their teaching programme as well.

I have a strong conviction that our school can become a pioneer in writing across the curriculum in our area. However, this can only become a reality if the writing programme receives the full co-operation of the whole school as well as that of the parents and the community.

Efforts to establish a writing across the curriculum programme could be like hoping to find the proverbial pot of gold at the foot of the rainbow, but the dream may not be as unattainable. In fact, I think that it is within the power of every teacher and her class to write meaningfully in a content area subject.



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## ADDENDUM A

### SOME DISCOURSE FORMS FOR CONTENT WRITING

Journals and career; (real or imaginary)	Reviews: books (including textbooks)
Biographical sketches	films
Anecdotes and stories: from experience	outside reading television programmes
as told by others	documentaries
Thumbnail sketches: scenes	Historical "you are there"
of famous people	Science notes:
of places	observations
of content ideas	science notebook
of historical events	reading reports
Guess who/what descriptions	lab reports
Letters:	Maths:
personal reactions	story problems
observations	solutions to problems
public/informational	record books
persuasive:	notes and observations
to the editor	Responses to literature:



to public officials	Utopian proposals
to imaginary people	Practical proposals
from imaginary places	Interviews:
Requests	actual
Applications	imaginary
Memos	Directions:
Resume's and summaries	how-to
Poems	school or neighborhood guide
Plays	survival manual
Stories	Dictionaries and lexicons
Fantasy	Technical reports
Adventure	Future opinions, notes on:
Science fiction	careers, employment
Historical stories	school and training
Dialogues and conversations	public service
Children's books	Written debates
Telegrams	Taking a stand:
Editorials	school issues
Commentaries	family problems
Responses and rebuttals	national issues
Newspaper "fillers"	moral questions



Fact books or fact sheets

Books and booklets

School newspaper stories

Informational monographs

Stories or essays for

local papers

Radio scripts

Case studies:

Dramatic scripts

school problems

Notes for improvised drama

local issues

Cartoons and cartoon strips

national concerns

slide show scripts

historical problems

Puzzles and word searches



ADDENDUM B.1

SAMPLE REVISION SHEET

Tchudi and Huerta (1983:19)

Today I want you to focus on whether or not the writer kept the audience in mind during the writing process. Answer these questions in your small groups.

1. Who is the best audience for this paper as it is written ? Can you describe the people who would be most interested in it?
2. Did the writer tell the audience everything it needs to know to understand the topic? Help the writer figure out if anything is left out.
3. Did the writer perhaps tell too much? Is there more information here than an audience can possible handle? Help the writer figure out where to cut.
4. After you have completed your small group discussion, write a note to the author, reacting to the paper as if you were a member of the audience.



## ADDENDUM B.2

### OTHER QUESTIONS FOR REVISION GROUPS

Tchudi and Huerta (1983:20)

Note: Do not have students ask *all* these questions (or similar ones) at every revision session. Rather, pick some questions that seem most appropriate to your assignment and have the students work on two or three each time.

#### PURPOSE

- \* Where is the writing headed? Can readers clearly tell?
- \* Is it on one track, or does it shoot off in new directions?
- \* Is the writer trying to do too much? Too little?
- \* Does the author seem to care about his/her writing?

#### CONTENT

- \* When you're through, can you easily summarize this piece or retell it in your own words?
- \* Can a reader understand it easily?
- \* Are there parts that you found confusing?
- \* Are there parts that need more explanation or evidence?
- \* Are there places where the writer said too much, or overexplained the subject?
- \* Can the reader visualize the subject?
- \* Does it hold your interest all the way through?
- \* Did you learn something new from this paper?



## **ORGANIZATION**

- \* Do the main points seem to be in the right order?
- \* Does the writer give you enough information so that you know what he /she is trying to accomplish?
- \* Does the writing begin smoothly? Does the write take too long to get started?
- \* What about the ending? Does it end crisply and excitingly?

## **AUDIENCE**

- \* Who are the readers for this writing? Does the writer seem to have them clearly in mind? Will they understand him/her?
- \* Does the writer assume too much from the audience? Too little?
- \* What changes does the writer need to make to better communicate with the audience?

## **LANGUAGE AND STYLE**

- \* Is the paper interesting and readable? Does it get stuffy or dull?
- \* Can you hear the writer's voice and personality in it?
- \* Are all difficult words explained or defined?
- \* Does the writer use natural, lively language throughout?
- \* Are grammar, spelling, and punctuation OK?



ADDENDUM C

McKensie and Tomkins (1984:211)

INTEGRATED EVALUATION CHECKLIST

Student _____							
<b>Prewriting</b>							
Can the student identify the							
specific audience to whom he/she will							
write?							
Does this awareness affect the choices							
the student makes as he/she writes?							
Can the student identify the purpose							
of the writing activity?							
Does the student vary the register							
according to the purpose?							
Does the the student write on a topic							
that grows out of his/her own							
experience?							
Does the student engage in rehearsal							
activities before writing?							
<b>Drafting</b>							
Does the student write rough drafts?							
Does the student place a greater							
emphasis on content than on mechanics							
in the rough drafts?							
<b>Revision</b>							
Does the student share his /her							



writing in conferences? | | | | | |

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Does the student participate in  
discussions about classmates writing? | | | | | |

---

In revising, does the student make  
changes to reflect the reactions and  
comments of both teacher and classmates? | | | | | |

---

Between first and final drafts, does the  
student make substantive or only minor  
changes? | | | | | |

---

Editing  
Does the student proofread his/her own  
papers? | | | | | |

---

Does the student help proofread class-  
mates' papers? | | | | | |

---

Does the student increasingly identify  
his/her mechanical errors? | | | | | |

---

Publishing  
Does the student publish his/her writing  
in an appropriate form? | | | | | |

---

Does the student share this finished  
writing with an appropriate audience? | | | | | |

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## ADDENDUM D

Zeni Flinn "The writing process"

### EVALUATION

#### 1. Formative evaluation

- a) Teach specific praise
- b) Use very brief conferences
- c) Help students set individualized goals
- d) Give writers checklists, editors' guides,  
and --most important -- the rubric to be used  
in grading the papers; encourage  
evaluation
- e) Use peer response early in the process  
(Praise-Question- Polish)
- f) Use peer evaluation  
groups use primary trait system for drafts  
teacher uses a holistic rubric for the  
final copy
- g) Use peer evaluation  
groups use the same criteria as the  
teacher does and compare scores.

#### 2. Use summative evaluation for reliable grades

- a) Remember - growth is slow - you need not  
grade every paper
- b) Use primary trait to grade each assignment on  
the basis of just one major objective, one  
major skill
- c) Work with other teachers to develop  
consistent grading standards



- d) Have two teachers score each paper holistically to maintain consistent standards
- e) Don't waste time with elaborate comments on the final copy - keep it simple.

Share your own experiences as a writer with your students. Show them your messy drafts, your letters of rejection, your polished successes. Introduce them to the methods of thinking, problem-solving, and writing actually used by skilled adults in your field.



ADDENDUM E

ERROR ANALYSIS AND STANDARD ENGLISH USAGE  
Jane Zeni Flinn  
University of Missouri- St. Louis

WRITING SAMPLE DIAGNOSIS

HOLISTIC SCORE (5 = high; 1 = low) \_\_\_\_\_

	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
CONTENT (fluency, ideas, support, details)		
ORGANIZATION (of ideas, of p'graphs)		
SENTENCES (correct structure, maturity)		
DICTION (standard usage, originality, humor, style)		
MECHANICS (spelling, punctuation, correct form)		



ADDENDUM F

SCHOOLS VISITED

KANSAS CITY

In Kansas City Nancy Myers, Director of the Kansas City Writing Project, kindly arranged the visits for me. The schools I visited in Kansas City were:

Butler-Dwyer Junior High

Cordill-Manson Elementary

St. Peter's Elementary.

ST LOUIS

In St Louis Dr. Jane Zeni, Director of the Gateway Writing Project who also helped to start The Cape Writing Project at The University of the Western Cape in South Africa in September 1989, was instrumental in putting me into contact with some really excellent proponents of writing across the curriculum.

The schools in St Louis were:

Marquette Visual and Performing Arts Magnet  
Middle School, St Louis City



Hixson Junior High, Webster Groves

Cardinal Ritter College Preparatory High, St  
Louis City

University City Senior High

Mc Cluer Senior High, Ferguson-Florissant

Beaumont Senior High, St Louis City

Normandy Senior High

Scullin Elementary, St Louis City

Cool Valley Elementary, Ferguson-Florissant

Parker Road Elementary School for the Gifted and  
talented, Ferguson-Florissant

Hazelwood West High

Harris-Stowe State College.



ADDENDUM G

MY SPECIAL FEELINGS

I am happy when \_\_\_\_\_

I get angry when \_\_\_\_\_

I hope that \_\_\_\_\_

I am good at \_\_\_\_\_

I am afraid of \_\_\_\_\_

I am ashamed of \_\_\_\_\_

I feel sorry for \_\_\_\_\_

I get excited when \_\_\_\_\_

I feel safe when \_\_\_\_\_

I need \_\_\_\_\_

I am thankful for \_\_\_\_\_

I am lonely when \_\_\_\_\_

I am proud of \_\_\_\_\_



## ADDENDUM H.1

### STUDENT PREPARATION

This paper was prepared to direct the students' observations, questions and comments.

The purpose of the field trip is to acquaint us with life in a squatter camp.

In our observation we are going to look at life in general, but we are requested to take particular notice of housing, consumerism, food and nutrition, methods of cooking, food and hygiene and lastly, marketing. We are going to pay attention to these aspects because we have made a study of them in our Home Economics course during this year. The section on housing was covered during the standard six year.

Do not hesitate to chat with the residents and to ask questions. Here are a few suggestions to assist you in what to look out for.

### HOUSING

What materials are used for building the homes in the camp?

Take note of the number of outside doors of each home.

What can you say about the windows?

How many rooms do most of these homes consist of?

What is different about the inside walls of the homes?

What do you notice about the way the homes are furnished?

Look at the living space of the residents.

What do you notice about the surroundings of the homes?

How does the water supply differ from ours?



Tell us something about the sanitary system of the camp.  
What can you relate about the lighting in these homes?

#### CONSUMERISM

- \* What consumer services have you noticed?
- \* How do they differ from the services we have ?
- \* What can you say about the recreation facilities of the area?
- \* What type of transport do the residents make use of mostly?
- \* Tell us about this type of transport.
- \* Where do the residents purchase their unperishable foods?
- \* How do their methods of selling differ from ours?
- \* What kind of shop is popular in the area?
- \* Mention at least three rights consumers have. Are these rights seen to by the local shopkeepers?

#### FOOD AND NUTRITION

- \* Which foods are commonly eaten by the residents? \* Why is this food so popular?
- \* Which foods do the residents eat mostly to supply the following nutrients to the body?  
calcium, proteins, vit.C, carbohydrates, cellulose.
- \* How does the State assist in helping to prevent malnutrition?
- \* Which vegetable protein would you advise residents to buy and use? Why would you make such a suggestion?
- \* What can you observe about the water supply in the area?
- \* Make a suggestion how the problem of the water supply can possibly be solved.



## METHODS OF COOKING

- \* What kinds of fuel is mostly used by the people in Miller's camp?
- \* Name the kind of stove mostly used.
- \* Give some information about those stoves.
- \* Which methods of cooking did you notice are being used in the camp?
- \* What kind of material is mostly used for cooking utensils?
- \* How do their cooking utensils differ from ours?

## FOOD AND NUTRITION

- \* What comments can you make with regard to the way food is generally handled in the camp by the shopkeepers?
- \* How do the shopkeepers keep their perishable foods fresh for a limited short period of time?
- \* How can residents keep meat fresh for about 24 hours?
- \* How can they keep their food protected against the housefly?
- \* Gastro-enteritis is a common illness amongst the toddlers of squatters' camps. What suggestions would you make to a mother to protect her child against this illness?

## MARKETING

- \* Which products are distributed directly to the residents?
- \* How is much of the clothing of the residents supplied?
- \* Which home industries did you notice?



\* Which of these home industries made the biggest impression on you? Why?

\* What are the advantages of these outlets?

\* What are the disadvantages of these outlets?

\* Which services did you not notice in Miller's camp

\* What about schools in the area?

#### EDUCATION

\* Compare the materials used for school buildings, are they different to the materials used for our schools? If so, what is the difference?

\* What have you noticed about the facilities in the schools.

\* What did you notice about the size of the classes?

#### RELIGION

\* Have you noticed any church buildings as you walked through the area?

\* Where do you think these people worship?

\* When you visited the homes did you notice any indication that the residents were worshipping people? What did you observe?

#### HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

\* What are your observations of the general state of the residents health?

\* Did you see any clinics or doctors' rooms in the vicinity?

\* Where do these people go if medical attention is required?

\* What about day care centres for the little ones?

\* Did you see any recreation facilities such as sport fields, parks, halls where the young people could meet to relax and have fun?

\* Where do the adults go to relax after work or over the weekend?



\* What about services such as hairdressing salons and barber shops?



ADDENDUM H.2.1

REFLECTING ON A VISIT TO A SQUATTER CAMP

1. Write down one thing about the visit to the squatter camp that made you feel happy.
2. Why did you feel happy?
3. What made you feel sad?
4. Give a reason for feeling sad.
5. What experience made the biggest impression on you?
6. How would you describe the residents' attitude towards you?
7. How did you feel while you were walking through Miller's camp?
8. Do you think the visit was worth your trouble? Give a reason for your answer.
9. Mention one privilege you are grateful for when you think of life in a squatter camp.
10. How do you think you can assist in making life more bearable for squatters?



## ADDENDUM H.2.2

Twelve of the participant students responded to the questions. The initials of the respondents are in brackets.

### RANDOM ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

1. The way in which the residents welcomed us. (N.P.)
2. I don't think we would like strangers to walk into our homes unannounced. (E.A.)
3. I felt sad to see so many hungry looking children. (C.C.)
4. Because we at home we waste so much food, and sometimes I don't want to eat what is given to me. (T.B)
5. A number of children eating out of one bowl and there were no argument and fighting about who got the most and the next person receiving nothing were we would argue about such a matter. (O.J.)
6. Generlly the residents were warm and friendly, although I must atmit that a few didn't look too happy to have coloured people around. (T.A.)
7. Scared but determined to find out more about them. (H.J.)
8. Yes. I think if it wasn't for, this project we wouldn't have had the oppportunity to really see how deprived these people are. It made me understand why they are frustrated and angry. (Gl.M.)
9. I am grateful that I am given the chance to go to school and get my education while other people are



being deprived from this. We say that education is the most powerful weapon. What is this peoples' weapon if they cannot have a decent education?  
(O.J.)

10. I can assist by organizing a community centre for children and getting people to come to these squatter camps and sell rummage. I can also assist by asking some of our teachers to volunteer to teach some of the people from the Homelands to speak English. (C.He.)



ADDENDUM H.3

CINQUAIN

- Line 1            one noun, subject or an idea
- Line 2            two adjectives describing the subject
- Line 3            three verbs related to subject, usually  
ending with -ing
- Line 4            a four word phrase or sentence giving your  
feeling or reaction to subject
- Line 5            repeat noun or use a synonym for the  
subject.

(FERGUSON-FLORISSANT WRITERS PROJECT 1989:42)

EXAMPLE

Sarah  
Cheerful, busy  
Sharing, listening, caring  
She was my friend  
Mother



ADDENDUM H.4.1

PQP RESPONSE

**PRAISE**

Make a positive comment

**QUESTION**

Ask for understanding

**POLISH**

Suggest an improvement

IT IS IMPORTANT TO BE SPECIFIC TO BE HELPFUL



#### ADDENDUM H.4.2

##### NOTE:

I used an example of my own expressive writing for student response. It is a piece of writing done according to the process approach to writing whilst attending the Gateway Writing Project Summer Institute during 1990 in St.Louis, Missouri. I used the final draft for the students' response and the former drafts were used to illustrate the process approach to writing.

##### WHY CAN'T I..?

This was the third time round that I had taken swimming lesson. The lessons normally went well and I had tons of fun. But whenever I attempted to go into the water after taking a lesson, my courage would fail me.

Why, oh why can't I also swim like my friends? This is nonsense, I am going to take the plunge now! "Oop! the water's too cold. I'll come back later."

Come on Pat, get in, the water's gor..geous! Don't be scared, nothing will happen," Verna shouts.

I feel like screaming, "Hold it, dammit! I'll get in when I'm ready." ...When? I don't know.



"Pat," Verna shouts again, "you shouldn't be scared, come on didn't you take swimming lessons with Mr. Jones? He's a good instructor ."

"Yes, okay! I know he's a good instructor." "It's not Mr. Jones it's meee... meee ...," it rings in my head. And this sensation like worms crawling down my back? I noticed it every time I attempted to get into the water. It's always there to remind me of something, but what?

I was about eight or nine years old. We lived a few blocks away from the store on the corner. My mom had a young baby and, I being the eldest, sometimes had to run errands. Whenever I was sent on errands, Mom would usually see me off at the gate.

It was one of those days when I had to run an errand. As Mom looked over the garden wall she shaded her eyes and said, "Pat, do you see that pile of sand lying next to the wall of the store?" "Yes. Mom." "Well, don't go near there, it could be dangerous, is it clear?" "Yes, Mom" I replied, and was on my way.

For the next few days after Mom's warning, I refused to look in the direction of the sand. Mom said it was dangerous, and mothers know best. As the days went by, I really started to wonder what was so dangerous about that pile of sand. Playing on sand can be so much fun. I experienced a nagging urge to investigate the matter.



It was one of those times that I felt absolutely bored and was very pleased when I was requested to deliver a message to an aunt living in the direction of the store. I would also be able to spend some time with my favourite cousin.

As I approached the sand, I looked over my shoulder. Wow! Mom's not at the gate. Now's my chance to explore the unknown. I'll just take a quick glimpse. One glimpse won't hurt anybody. I moved swiftly in the direction of the sand.

Oooh! so this is what it looks like. Why the fuss over a pile of sand and a hole filled with dirty water?

What's that? Is the soil moving from under my feet? Swish...swish...swish..., I noticed some sand disappearing into the deep, dark hole. I then realized that I was moving with the sand towards the mouth of the dragon, waiting to devour me. I looked for something to grasp but there was nothing. I voiced an inaudible "H E L P !" which nobody could hear. Everything became black and silent.

When I opened my eyes again. I saw objects which resembled feet right next to my head. Where am I? What happened? Why am I lying on the sand? Oh, I must have ... oh, yes! I know, I fell into the hole. Just as I started to cry a pair of arms picked me up and hugged me. It was Dad.

Oh, what was that? Is someone calling?



"Hey. Pat this is not the time to daydream. Snap out of it, let's enjoy the water." It was Verna attempting to bring me back to earth.

"Oh hey! I'm coming, I just want to find my earplugs," I replied.

As I walked away from the edge of the pool, I knew that I had found the solution to the mystery of the worms. I am HYDROPHOBIC !!!

The worms will always remind me of the fact that I almost did not live to tell the tale.



ADDENDUM H.5

PEER RESPONSE SHEET

The main idea of your paragraph was \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

One sentence I really liked was:

\_\_\_\_\_

One word choice I really liked was \_\_\_\_\_

One sentence that needs revision is:

\_\_\_\_\_

I think you should say more about

\_\_\_\_\_

THINGS TO DO:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Positive Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



ADDENDUM H.6

EDITING FOCUS

MECHANICS:

-Grammar

-Usage

-Capitalization/Punctuation

-Spelling

-Form

( Ferguson-Florissant Writers Project 1989:71)



ADDENDUM I.1  
REVISED PQP FOR RESPONSE

Name of the author: .....  
Date: .....  
Topic: .....  
.....  
Discourse form:.....  
Respondent: .....

P (Praise)

What do you especially like about the paper?

Q (question)

What part/s need to be explained?

P (polish)

Mention at least one thing the writer could do to improve this paper.



ADDENDUM I.2

(REVISED) EDITING IN PEER RESPONSE GROUPS

1. List any spelling errors

Your name:.....

2. Which capitals and punctuation marks were omitted?

Your name:.....

3. List errors in subject verb agreement.

Your name:.....

4. List errors in verb tense.

Your name:.....

5. Are there any words, lines or sentences which do not fit in with the order of the paper?

Your name:.....



ADDENDUM J.1

POETRY

SCHOOL

School

small, crowded

Teaching, training, helping

It educates the children

School

C. Hu.

GUIDE

Florence

Friendly, talkative

Introducing, walking, smiling

'll always remember her

Florence

G. M.



LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT

David

Excited, intoxicated

Persuading, demanding, following

He wanted my friend

David

T. B.

HOME

Squatter camps

Busy, crowded

Fighting, helping, loving

A place for underprivileged people

Home

T.S.



SQUATTERS

Squatters

Lonely, hungry

Hoping, searching, dreaming

for a better life

Squatte

C. He.

BABIES

Babies

Hungry, sick

Crying, laughing, talking

Bless them O Lord

Babies

E. A.



CHILD

Child

Dirty, hungry

Wanting, needing, taking

From the dog's plate

Child

J. S.

N.B. The cinquains were edited by the students themselves  
during a PQP session



ADDENDUM J.2

22 R. Crescent

H.F.

0004

22 October 1990

Dear John

I would really like to tell you about my visit to a squatter camp.

It was about two weeks ago on a Thursday if I remember correctly. We left school the last period of the day. When we entered the camp I was quite nervous and did not know what to expect. The homes of the people were all crowded and tightly packed together. Many of the homes were made of any materials they could find, such as wood, zinc, cardboard or plastic.

The inside of the houses were decorated with toiletsoap wrapping paper and other glossy advertisements. Its amazing the papers we throw away the squatters use as building materials. Some homes have shops or other businesses attached to them. One such building was a wood and iron double storey.

The homes are not all that steady and looks as if it is ready to fall over anytime. During winter rain seeps through the houses and everything is wet...wet...wet...

Thanks for bearing with me pal, but it hurts to see fellow persons suffering.

Your sincere friend

E.

E.A. This letter was

revised by G.M. and edited by J.S.



### ADDENDUM J.3

#### LIFE IN A SQUATTER CAMP

Once upon a time there lived a girl, her name was G. She lived in a big and comfortable home. It protected her from the wind and rain.

One day she visited a squatters' camp. She entered one of the houses and began to feel very upset. She looked around and saw an overcrowded two roomed house. The rooms were dark. The only lighting was the sunshine. The house was made of zinc and the walls were covered with paper. The house was stuffy but very neat. She thought, my room looks as if a pig paid it a visit. I've got everything but I take it for granted. Just look at these people they are so poor and have so little but still they keep their homes tidy.

More than two persons share a bed. It must be so uncomfortable. There were cupboards with hardly anything in them. I take too much for granted, she thought. G. was just standing there with tears filling her eyes. Her heart was filled with anger and sadness. She had never ever felt so sad because she always had everything and never knew about these deprived people. She then felt something touch her leg. It was a little baby trying to stand up against. She picked the baby up and held her tightly. As she held the baby she asked God, "What can I do to help these people? There's so much I can do I don't know what to do."

That evening I went home and felt like giving away most of my possessions to the poor needy people in the squatters' camp. I sat in my room thinking of the small overcrowded houses with small cupboards, beds, and no windows made of zinc, wood and cardboard. These houses offered very little protection against the elements.



When I went to bed I prayed that God would protect them especially the little child that touched me. G. vowed never to take anything for granted again.

G.M.

This story was revised by H.J and edited by E.A.



## HOUSING

I was shocked, really shocked by what I saw. Everything looked pathetic. Some Houses were small, some were big, but always overcrowded. Most of the shacks were made with zinc and there were others made with cardboard, plastic and wood.

The houses were stuffy, mouldy, some were untidy, others tidy some clean and others filthy. Felt and plastic were used for floor coverings. There was no ventilation, with the exception of an open door.

In order to obtain money some families converted their houses into shabeens, hairdressers, cafes and small shops. Dressmaking was also done at some houses. Most houses were usually unfurnished with only one or two pieces of furniture.

Newspaper, coloured paper, material and cardboard were usually used as wall covering. Outside most of the shacks were very uninteresting. Only a few shacks had gardens. Shacks are built closely together and I can understand why so many shacks are destroyed by fire so often.

T.B.

This report was revised by C.He. and edited by N.P.



## FOOD AND HYGIENE

Students in my class and I went with our Home Economics teacher and two other teachers to a squatters' camp.

The thing that struck me the most was the way they cook their food and the things they eat.

The food they eat we won't even look at. They mainly eat samp and intestines of animals and here and there some eat tripe and trotters. They make use of whatever they can find to eat and they try their best to make the food tasty.

The way they cook their food is very unhygienic because the utensils do not look too clean. We went into a shop where the milk is stored in a big plastic container and people who come to buy milk have to bring their own containers. The jug they use for dishing the milk is left uncovered and the flies walk in and out of it. The milk also turns sour quickly because plastic heats quickly.

The stoves they use are dangerous. We went into a small house where the small children were playing next to the primus stove which was standing on the floor.

They wash and scrub the tripe as clean as possible and hang them like washing on a meshwire fence. This is unhealthy because flies and dust settle on it, so what is the use of all the washing and scrubbing?

The iron grids on which they braai their meat can also be a health hazard because it is filthy. They cook their meat on an open fire on the rim of the wheel. The open fire "restaurant or take-aways" is the meeting place for many residents of the camp.

Gl. M.

This report was revised by C.C. and edited by T.S.



## EDUCATION

Education is a very important aspect in each individual's life, because it will/could determine why we live like this today and how we might live tomorrow. In this essay I would like to reflect on "education in a squatters' camp."

The principal of the school kindly informed us about the problems experienced by the pupils and staff and kindly appealed for assistance if we were able to do so. It seemed as if there was a serious lack of books and furniture. Due to the overcrowding, it is quite difficult for teachers to ensure that each student understand what is being taught in the classroom. There is also a serious lack of equipment and teachers. Most of the teachers are unqualified and therefore effective teaching cannot be ensured. The school building has no foundation with the result, that the schoolbuilding is flooded during the rainy season. The school is surrounded by shanties.

In the lower standards like sub A and B an average of 150 children cram into one room. Weather conditions also add to the uncomfortable conditions. Teachers often work up to 6 mnths for little/no pay. This is due to the D.E.T.'s refusal to recognize the schools.

In a memorandum to the minister of education, Stoffel Botha, they recently demanded that the goverment takes responsibility for providing quality education to all. It further demanded that squatter community schools be registered under the D.E.T. In a reply to the memorandum, the deputy minister of the regional D.E.T.said that they had insufficient funds and could not register the schools. They proposed that the squatter residents accept this system as a temporary arrangement. They also stated that they were



unable to register creches as these were the responsibility of the community.

It is only obvious that the D.E.T shows no concern, and it is not interested in providing a better life or future for these children. If we should compare the amount spent on a "white" child at school, it will only show that the D.E.T. is insincere about having insufficient funds to sponsor the squatter schools. This can be due to the many education departments found in the country.

Education is the key to a better future and it seem as if the D.E.T. wants to prolong the suffering of these people. It is the only key to set them free from their life of poverty and exploitation. If these people are being deprived from the one chance of finding what will become of the generations yet to be born? Will they ever find that key? I really do wonder.

C.He.

This report was revised by O.J. and edited by T. It was posthumously included.