

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE USE OF GENRE THEORY AS AN  
APPROACH TO TEACHING WRITING AT PARK HIGH SCHOOL IN  
DURBAN**

**AYESHA BAYAT**

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**Department of Education  
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## DECLARATION

This study represents original work by the author and has not been submitted in any form to another university. Where use has been made of the work of others, this has been duly acknowledged in the text.

Ayesha Bayat

Ayesha Bayat

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**ABSTRACT**

The transition to democracy in South Africa has resulted in systemic efforts to ensure equality education for all. However, despite such endeavours to address inequities, inequalities still remain regarding not only resources but also classroom pedagogies. One aspect of classroom pedagogy is the teaching of writing. The writing proficiency of mainly non-mother tongue learners seldom surpasses that of mother tongue speakers of English. Writing is seldom explicitly taught. Moreover, factual texts are almost never taught in schools although they are one of the most powerful genres in society.

Systemic transformation in South Africa is often driven by global trends that focus on functional literacy. The Outcomes Based Curriculum is such an initiative with its emphasis on skills, values, critical thinking, and learner centeredness. The current process writing approach in our schools, within the framework of Outcomes Based Education, does not address the needs of all learners. The focus on grammar, correctness, and creative outpourings of self-reflective essays, advantages the learner familiar with the cultural heritage discourse. It disempowers those who are from different cultural or linguistic backgrounds. Writing is a social practice, and in order to write effectively learners have to uncover the generic conventions that configure different genres.

In schools this translates into an explicit pedagogy of writing underpinned by theory. This thesis attempts to seek an alternate approach to the teaching of writing in a multicultural classroom, using the genre approach. The research was collaboratively planned and implemented as an action research intervention, at a multicultural school in Durban. The aims were to change learner attitudes to writing, use genre theory to teach learners explicitly about linguistic and generic conventions, produce a factual group text, and to transform my own practice. The first part of the thesis describes the rationale for the research within the context of transformation, issues of democracy education, and multiculturalism as a challenge to educators teaching English primary language. The second part examines the theories that inform this research especially genre theory, critical language awareness, functional grammar, and critical literacy. The implementation of the project in carefully planned and explicit stages is the subject of the third part of the thesis. It also describes how field notes, questionnaires, and the leaflets were used for data collection in the field of research. The fourth section addresses the action research intervention at Park High within a ten-day cycle, together with an integrated analysis of data collected and the findings. The final section of the thesis examines the limitations of the project together with recommendations for improved practice in the writing classroom. The findings indicate that learners value explicit pedagogies and that learning about generic conventions improves confidence and competence. The findings further suggest that learning about genres and generic conventions is a lengthy and difficult process. However, this process has the potential to transform implied pedagogies for both mother tongue and non-mother tongue learners in a post-apartheid society.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This dissertation describes an action research project, which is concerned with exploring the possibilities of genre theory, and its application for writing development in schools. The intervention designed for this research project, intends to inform my own as well as learners' practice, regarding the use of the genre approach to writing in the classroom. The research project was undertaken in June 2002 at Park High, a multi-cultural girls' school on the Berea in Durban.

This introductory chapter presents an overview of the intervention, its aims and rationale, as well as the context within which it was produced. The chapter also focuses on educational changes and transformation in South African schools, together with matters relating to the training of educators in writing pedagogy at tertiary level. The final section of Chapter 1 describes the research aims and questions prompted by constantly changing educational policies since 1994.

#### **1.1 Rationale for the Research**

Changes to the political landscape in South Africa since the 1990s, have created a dire need in schools as social organisations, to re-visit pedagogical practices, which had previously been planned for homogeneous and mono-cultural learners. Educational transformation, in accordance with democratic principles, and the influx of other races

to ex-Model 'C' schools, affected educators and educational practices in these institutions. Whilst most schools are in the process of transformation, others are unaware of the need to deliver equal education and redress the injustices of the past through transformed classroom practice.

Since the 1990s, political changes have acted upon educational policies. The rapid transformation evident in national policies and directives, have in most instances, been implemented without adequate prior training for practising educators. *Curriculum 2005*, *The Language in Education Policy Document* (1997), and the *Language Standardisation Policy Document* (July 2001), are examples of such transforming policies. The latter document focuses on the promotion of equity and redress, efficiency, and quality in the teaching and assessment of the eleven official languages in South Africa. However, policies can be effective only if translated to action within the classroom, by proactive educators who are prepared to change methodological and pedagogical practices that are inclusive and explicit.

This dissertation explores the possibility of critically transforming the writing pedagogy at Park High an ex-Model 'C' school. As an intervention this research project attempts to translate policies into action. It proposes to do this through the implicit and purposeful teaching of writing using the genre approach, as well as functional language, and critical language awareness.

### ***1.1.1 Educational changes***

In a post-independent South Africa, educators face the challenge of re-designing curricula, hitherto conceptualised by departments of education, for learners divided

along racial lines. An awareness of how language functions in writing as well as explicit practices are critical teaching tools for educators. Moreover, the transformed political climate, changing schools, changing learner needs and, changing local and global trends have impinged on the skills that are needed in the post-modern workplace. Whilst first world countries like United Kingdom, United States, and Australia had begun transforming education as early as the 1960s, transformation efforts in South Africa are relatively recent. The impact of obsolete norms and values, applicable to a mechanistic and homogeneous population in a technocratic and culturally plural society, has not filtered down to the practising educator in the classroom.

According to Giroux (1997), the boundaries that held back diversity, otherness and difference, are broken. The third world has imploded into the metropolis, destroying the difference between elite and popular culture. In the face of such transformation, which reflects the reality in most ex- Model 'C' schools, past literacy practices have to be revisited. Conventional practices based on grammar - rules are unworkable in classrooms with large numbers of previously 'disadvantaged' non-mother tongue learners.

Therefore, literacy practices, including writing, should focus on nation building with a promise for change for the previously disadvantaged millions in South Africa. This study highlights the issues that arise in an attempt to introduce a different writing curriculum design as an interventionist measure. Gee (2000), in Cope and Kalantzis (2000), captures the key aim of my dissertation in, *Literacy Learning and the Design of Social Futures*. The challenge facing educators, he claims, is to ensure the

participation of disadvantaged children in building and transforming our society, and to ensure that advantaged children come out of school and address issues of power in the new global capitalist order (63). In order to achieve this aim, the educator in the multi-lingual South African classroom has to take cognisance of the changing views in literacy practices.

### *1.1.2 Changing views of writing*

Theories of writing that currently inform educator practice in South Africa derive from the cultural heritage tradition (*c.f.* Chapter 2 for further discussion), of nineteenth century English education. An emphasis on correctness of grammar, neatness, enunciation and writing styles reminiscent of the canon, were deemed important in any English curriculum. This position assumes a homogeneous mono-cultural learner population and disregards socio-cultural differences, disparate literacy experiences, and histories of learners. Whilst in most schools this has largely disappeared, in certain schools conventional practices still prevail. Moreover, the explicit, teaching of a range of writing genres, from my experience, is limited in most schools and classrooms. The teaching of writing in the classroom is synonymous with 'creative' narrative and letter genres. Most educators regard the teaching of writing as secondary to literature studies in the English classroom.

Furthermore, the producer of written texts in the post-apartheid classroom is still viewed as being independently capable of writing texts with minimal guidance and intervention from the educator. The socio-historical context and literacy experiences learners bring into the classroom are ignored. In this regard the *National Curriculum Statement for Grades 10-12* (2002) states: "The imperative is to transform South

African society through various transformative tools... that the educational imbalances of the past are addressed... artificial barriers to the qualifications are removed" (3).

In genre theory, the teaching of writing, is grounded in a social theory of texts and is a 'transformative' tool that can address imbalances and remove artificial barriers to learning and skills training. A text is the product of social interaction between two or more participants and the ability to use language as a resource to make meaning. "In a multi-cultural society the values, meanings, and structures realised in texts are not shared by all members of the society. They must therefore, become the subject of an explicit curriculum" (Kress, 1995:64).

This quote suggests that those who do not share the metropolitan values, meanings, and structures by definition are disadvantaged and powerless. Generic conventions that govern genre literacy practice can therefore be learned and understood in terms of the values and meanings underpinning them.

Interest in genre as a theory of literacy began in the 1980s in Australia, when social issues and the development of language studies began to impact on education. The theory of genre as defined by linguists and genre theorists, attempts to answer questions that relate to the social purpose and function of texts, as well as the language required to fulfil the purpose. Genre theory attempts to address 'difference' by acknowledging the social and cultural diversity of learners in a classroom. In such classrooms implied pedagogies work against learners from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds.

The teaching of writing in most schools is based on an implied pedagogy without any purpose or function besides 'creativity'. The generic conventions of texts are seldom addressed as educators assume that learners 'know' what to do when asked to write. According to Kress (1995:65), genre theory has spread to other countries like U.S.A and Canada, whilst meeting with resistance in Britain. In South African schools the implementation of genre theory in the teaching of writing skills, can lead to social justice in the classroom. Structured writing skills based on genre theory, implies re-training for the educator to fulfil the needs of culturally diverse learners. Knowledge about generic conventions is therefore fundamental to teaching writing skills, according to genre theory.

Generic conventions are constructs, and most educators assume that they are 'known' to all learners and therefore do not require any teaching. The case may be true for mother tongue learners but not for non-mother tongue learners who often encounter literacy for the first time, at school entry level. Educators believe that exercises in grammar rules, vocabulary, and good sentence construction are useful skills for good writing. While this may be true, good writing is not solely dependent upon adherence to grammar rules. It also depends upon an understanding of word choices that encode the message. Educators therefore require a basic understanding of functional grammar.

Functional grammar is a grammar in which words, phrases, or clauses are described according to their contribution to the creation of the text, reflecting on what texts do, and relating purpose and audience to language. The principles of functional grammar

signal a movement away from traditional rule-based grammar towards functionality. It includes a teaching of meta-language or knowledge of language about language. Meta-language awareness empowers both educator and learner insofar as it creates awareness about the analysis and nature of meanings, and how language constructs meanings and positions that are naturalised and embedded in texts. Meta-language focuses on issues of text and message construction, together with the choices available to the writer of texts, depending on audience, context and purpose. Writing is not autonomous but shaped by the socio-cultural environment of the writer. This position is supported by linguist and genre literacy theorists, Halliday and Hasan (1985). The question as to what extent educators are equipped to transform how writing should be taught is addressed in the next section.

### *1.1.3 Educator empowerment*

Educators in a post-democratic South Africa are powerful agents of change and literacy education is central to how schools design their curricula. Insofar as the writing is concerned, 'composition' writing was recently (1996) replaced by process writing approach prescribed by the Department of Education. In 1996 when the ex-departments of education merged, composition examinations were abandoned, in favour of the portfolio system initiated by ex-National Department of Education in Kwa-Zulu Natal. The teaching and assessment of writing practice in schools, is still controlled by directives from the National and Provincial Departments of Education. *The Department of Education Curriculum 2005, Assessment guidelines for Language, Literacy and Communication for Grades Ten to Twelve*, direct how writing should be taught. According to the document learners should engage in writing skills using the process approach of pre-composing, planning, drafting, and editing. The document

suggests that creative writing must be inspired by some form of stimulus, and that assessments should be based on 'creativity' and 'imaginative' aspects of writing (43). Educators design their teaching according to these guidelines and directives, which in turn, dictate what happens in the classroom. Currently, the process writing approach is pervasive and firmly established within most schools as an acceptable methodology that is systemically promoted.

*The KZN Companion Document for Official and Additional Languages (2001)*, focuses on language, imagery, literary expression, content, style, structure and planning (37). The documents are both confusing and contradictory. On the one hand they promote a conventional writing approach, and on the other the progressive model of process writing. Current practice in first language classrooms is therefore guided by both these documents that penalise non -mother tongue learners unfamiliar with such discourses. Process writing focuses on the process in the different stages of writing.

*The Curriculum 2005 Guideline Document 2005* describes the stages of process writing. It describes pre-composing as the stage at which topic discussion, reading and research is undertaken. The next stage is planning in which learners select ideas for their composition followed by a written first draft. This initial draft is then submitted to a peer or an educator to be proof read and corrected for grammatical errors. The final text is the 'fair copy' that is submitted once corrections are made for assessment (43).



The document also defines creative writing as texts “inspired by some form of stimulus... the emphasis will be on creativity, individuality and imaginative aspects of the writing” (43)

The document fails to address the conventions and generic structures of different texts, assuming that all writing is creative and imaginative. These documents are short sighted because few learners will continue to write creatively or pursue any meaningful career in writing after leaving school. Moreover, factual writing is largely ignored in the above-mentioned documents. No mention is made of the different language processes that learners and educators have to learn (meta-language) in order to become proficient writers.

Macken and Slade (1993), in Cope and Kalantzsis (1993) claim that knowledge cannot be viewed as divorced from language processes. The role of language is underestimated, since academic success at schools is construed as the ability to create discourses appropriate to different disciplines. Non-mother tongue learners do not possess the skills necessary to construct discourses in different disciplines, because the generic forms and language used to realise them are implied. According to Clark and Ivanic (1997), orders of discourse are the ‘templates’ or appropriate ways of writing about particular topics (12). Genres are linked to orders of discourse as socially legitimated ways of using language, with norms and conventions the writer draws upon to reproduce certain social roles and socially acceptable ways of communicating. Linked to this view is the idea that generic conventions are not beyond scrutiny, but open to contestation. Like discourses they can be ‘mixed’.

Genres and discourses are intertwined with a particular genre representing a 'discourse type' (Clark and Ivanic, 1997:14).

My research intervention attempts to locate a theoretical framework for the teaching of writing skills at school level focussing on genres as discourse types. As educators are shifted into the paradigm of Outcomes Based Education, an implied pedagogy becomes redundant and self-defeating. My intention is to motivate and empower learners not only to enjoy writing, which is currently a 'chore' for many, but also to equip them in the writing of both factual and non-factual genres. Presently, most learners are intimidated by writing, as they are often unsure of what is expected of them. Learners are advised to mimic the style of famous novelists, yet many speak a different variety of English or even another language out of school. It is evident that the context within which writing is taught is fraught with tensions and contradictions. The teaching of writing skills is about curriculum development, and curriculum development must rest on teacher development. A revised curriculum translates ideas into classroom practicalities and thereby, assists the educator to strengthen practice by systematically testing ideas (Stenhouse, 1975:24). The need to revisit current curricula is described in the following section.

#### *1.1.4 The changing context of writing in South African schools*

Accelerated transformation in post-independent South Africa has affected schools, and more especially educators who 'changed' their employment from the 'ex own affairs' departments of education. My teaching career at an ex-Model 'C' school began in 1996. The appointment signalled a milestone in my professional development as I found myself in a multicultural and multi-lingual environment for

the first time. My experiences had been shaped by teaching in Indian schools, where the culture of teaching and learning was largely informed by political issues. Moreover, the learners I taught were largely mono-cultural and homogeneous, drawn from Asian backgrounds. I was unprepared for the challenges of a multicultural context. Not only was I a non-mother tongue speaker teaching first language English to African learners, but also to Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and, Yugoslav learners. As a graduate from the University of Durban Westville, I felt powerless because my teacher training did not equip me to meet the challenges of multiculturalism. The aspect that posed the greatest challenge within the language curriculum for me was writing. My experiences together with a lack of direction from the Education Department have been instrumental in the formulation of this research project.

Park High, like other ex-Model 'C' schools in the 1990s, increasingly began to represent the hopes of the previously disadvantaged who began enrolling at such schools in droves. In the early years (1996-1999), these schools managed for non-mother tongue learners. Moreover, there was little support from the Education Department. Educators were forced to manage change by devising their own coping strategies. Whilst many learners from ex-African schools were extremely articulate, writing presented a real challenge and this was evident in the Matriculation results at Park High. As the Head of the Languages Department, I realised that at matriculation level there was a greater disparity between the performance of mother tongue learners in aspects of speech and writing, than non- mother tongue learners.

The increasing enrolment of Black learners at Park High gave rise to concerns about 'standards'. To this end a group of well-meaning educators, qualified in second

language instruction, began after-school tuition. Great emphasis was placed on vocabulary, rule based grammar, and comprehension skills. Although these measures may have had some effect, writing skills did not improve. Between 1997 and 2001, to my knowledge, three non-mother tongue learners attained an 'A' symbol in English at Matriculation level.

In 1997, the writing portfolio was introduced to all schools. Learners at Grade Twelve level were expected to produce a minimum of six written units of work for assessment and inclusion in the final matriculation result. The portfolio was meant to be a record of a learner's growing maturity and engagement with writing exercises. As a cluster co-ordinator<sup>1</sup> for some of the top schools in the North Durban region, the repertoire of genres I encountered in these portfolios was limited. Most educators believed that a few 'essays' from narrative, exposition, description, or reflection genre would develop the writing skills of learners in Grade Twelve. The writing of factual texts was/is almost non-existent in most schools

It is within this context of change, transformation, uncertainty, and powerlessness that I designed and implemented my research project. Another issue that needs to be addressed at this point, is the extent to which tertiary institutions prepared teacher trainees to teach writing in schools and it is this I will attempt to address in the following section.

#### *1.1.5 Tertiary institutions*

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<sup>1</sup> A cluster co-ordinator hosts meetings for schools in the cell group in an effort to standardise work at Grade Twelve level and to assist schools with problems by liaising with the English Subject Advisor.

The legacy of separate development under apartheid meant that most educators who qualified for teacher training until the 1990s graduated from 'tribal universities' allocated to specific race groups. The teacher training I received at such an institution in 1984, did not prepare me for teaching in a multicultural school environment. The English Method course modelled to equip educators to teach English, focussed on grammar, sentence construction, and writing in journals. The result was that newly qualified educators from such institutions were unprepared for the challenges of teaching writing skills in the classroom. Until the 1990s, composition writing was an examinable component of the Grade Twelve examination and newly qualified educators taught 'composition' as they had been taught-implicitly. Further, educators believed, and still believe, that avid readers are naturally skilled writers.

It has become increasingly evident that there is a need to address these skills because writing as a social practice is about conscious choices made when using language for communicating. Writing is far more rigorous and disciplined than speaking. It is also fallacious to assume that mother tongue speakers are more proficient writers especially if little or no explicit teaching is involved. There may well be schools that do focus on the teaching of writing within the framework of genre theory, but in my experience these are in the minority. In certain institutions, rule-based instruction is still emphasised as prerequisites for good writing. However, there is little evidence to suggest that this improves the proficiency of learners in a range of genres. Much more needs to be done at school level as well as by the Department of Education to empower educators so that writing, the most powerful aspect of the English curriculum, can be adequately addressed in the classroom. Various documents issued by the Department since 1994, address the questions of 'what' to teach within the

writing curriculum. However, 'how' to teach is rarely addressed. This is the case especially in the teaching of writing factual genres. In Western society it is the writer who wields the most power. Therefore, more has to be done to address literacy, power, and access in the post-apartheid classroom, which continues to be influenced by Western traditions and pedagogic practices.

Such were the considerations informing the design of my research intervention at Park High in 2002. In planning this intervention certain aims and questions had to be addressed and the discussion that follows explicates these.

### **1.2 Aims, questions, and reflections**

One of the objectives of this action research project was to address my own inadequacies in the teaching of writing skills in the English primary language<sup>2</sup> classroom. Another aim was to extend learner abilities in a range of different genres, including factual ones. Linked to both these aims was to teach learners about the range of language choices, together with functional language in the construction and communication process.

Another aim was to investigate whether an innovative, ten-day intervention would make a difference to learner attitudes towards writing, as well as improving their understanding of genre. My intention was to reveal to students that certain ideological conventions govern writing practices and once these are 'mastered', writing can become less tedious, intimidating, and daunting. Initially my agenda was a political one since Park High had a large percentage of non-mother tongue speakers. I felt that

there was a need to address past injustices for these learners who belonged to previously disadvantaged racial groups within the education system. I have since realised that even mother tongue learners require explicit teaching strategies.

National policies will continue to shape teaching methodologies and pedagogies in South African schools regarding the teaching of English as a primary language. Debates continually arise concerning the preference for a language that is the 'native tongue' of a mere 8.68% of the population ( Janks,1997:8).

Meanwhile, as a language of instruction in schools and tertiary institutions, the focus on which aspect of the language curriculum is more important, raises questions. How receptive are educators to changes and perceptions in how writing should be taught? How can the preference for literature studies over writing be addressed? How adequate is the training at tertiary level regarding the teaching of writing skills to trainee educators? How can educators bridge the cultural and plural divide by transforming how writing is taught?

Many of these questions are larger than my project although relevant to almost every aspect of it. The form of this research is classroom based, hence limiting the investigation to the immediate effects of the intervention. It is undertaken at a time when there is instability and constant change in the policies promulgated at national level. The introduction of the General Education and Training, as well as the Further Educational and Training certificates for learners in the senior phase are a case in point. These paradigm shifts are further accompanied by the uncertainty of the fate of

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<sup>2</sup> Since 2002, in an effort to promote all eleven official languages, the Department of Education

the matriculation examinations as well as Outcomes Based Education for Grades Ten to Twelve. Against the insecurity and uncertainty experienced by educators is the promise of the *Draft Curriculum Statement Document* (July 2002), for languages. The document provides for both explicit and implicit teaching strategies, at the same time affecting a more learner centred approach to problem solving and critical thinking in education.

The theoretical principles that underpin the teaching of writing using the genre approach have the potential for promoting critical thinking and problem solving in the classroom. However, educators in many schools have not been adequately been trained at the workshops hosted by the Department of Education. Educators often appear disillusioned, frustrated, and burdened by the onerous requirements of curricula that are constantly under review and transformation. Stenhouse (1975) maintains that a curriculum is an attempt to communicate the essential features and principles of an educational proposal in such a form that it is open to critical scrutiny and capable of effective translation into practice (4). It is against this backdrop that I hope that this research will generate further questions about implicit and explicit teaching in the classroom. To conclude this chapter I will provide a structural overview of this dissertation regarding its context and rationale.

### **1.3 Overview of the dissertation**

This chapter has sought to provide a context and rationale for the action research project undertaken at Park High in June 2002. The chapter examined systemic efforts designed to transform education and the increasing frustration of practitioners within

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describes the language of instruction in a school as primary and any other language offered as an



the system. Chapter 2 examines the theoretical context that informs the action research project as well as the various debates around literacy practices. Chapter 2 also looks at the key principles of genre theory, systemic functional language, critical literacy, and their role within the context of a post-apartheid classroom. The chapter further traces the influence of conventional and progressive approaches to teaching writing evident in South African classrooms today.

In Chapter 3 the design and implementation of the project in carefully planned, structured, and staged phases is discussed in accordance with explicit pedagogical principles. The chapter also describes the ethical considerations and constraints taken into account in the design of the project. The final section of this chapter describes the research instruments chosen for data collection within the research field at Park High.

Chapter 4 describes the analysis of the action research intervention that developed out of the actual classroom interaction with the Grade Ten learners at Park High. The analysis of the data collected is presented according to the field notes, observation and questionnaires and is discussed in an integrated manner. Chapter 4 examines both the process and the product including the writing of the learners according to the principles of textual cohesion and outcomes achieved. The final Chapter concludes with a reflection on the strengths and weaknesses of the leaflet action research project and a general evaluation of the project's aims. The chapter also addresses the role of educators as action researchers and the value of explicit pedagogies especially in culturally plural and multi-literate societies.

## CHAPTER 2

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 2.1 Introduction

The consideration in Chapter 1 was the uncertainty and lack of direction in the teaching of writing skills for educators in post-apartheid classrooms. A theoretical framework for the teaching of writing skills is the focus of this chapter. This research is concerned with improving the teaching and learning of writing skills, using a genre based approach, in a multi-lingual school on the Berea in Durban. The framework consists of the following theoretical orientations,

- a. Genre theory and literacy pedagogies (Halliday and Hasan, 1985; J.R.Martin, 1989; Cope and Kalantzsis, 1993; Kress, 1982, 1995).
- b. Systemic functional linguistics or grammar (Halliday, 1976, 1985; Thompson, 1996; Martin, Matthiessen and Painter 1997).
- c. Critical language awareness (Hilary Janks, 1994; Morgan, 1997).
- d. Critical literacy theories (Luke, 1993; Cope and Kalantzsis, 2000; Clark and Ivanic, 1997).

Writing is an aspect of literacy, and for the purpose of this thesis, my understanding of literacy is derived from the definition by Cope and Kalantzsis (2000). They define literacy as the ability to produce, understand, and use texts in culturally appropriate ways (50). This definition is important to my research because texts are underwritten

by the cultural and ideological assumptions of their producers.<sup>1</sup> What follows in this chapter is a brief overview of the theories pertaining to this research.

*a particular type/style of literature/art*

### 2.1.1 Genre theory

Genre theory and related literacy pedagogies were pioneered and developed by M.A.K. Halliday and other linguists in the 1970s and 1980s at the University of Sydney, Australia (Gadd, 1996: 10). These pioneers (Halliday and Hasan, 1985; Eggins, 1994; Gerot and Wignell, 1994) describe genre as the use of language in real social situations and cultural contexts. When writers use genres, they reproduce certain social roles and relationships in socially acceptable ways. Genres are staged and structured writing processes. Interest in genre emerged in the 1980s and, according to Kress (1995), "the questions to which genre theory attempts to provide answers are all new questions, posed by new conditions such as multiculturalism, technological change, and globalisation" (62). The concept of a homogeneous culture was taken for granted until the 1980s Kress maintains, and differences between society and culture were non-issues. These concerns now dominate developed and developing countries especially with regard to curriculum designs (61, 62).

Cope and Kalantzis (1993) describe genre as an attractive alternative to the current 'photocopier' writing curriculum whereby learners are expected to produce limited, and monotonous personalised accounts (6). Genres connect the social purpose with the language and process as patterns of interaction in a particular culture. The learning

<sup>1</sup> McLaren's (1989) definition of culture is the particular ways in which a social group lives out and makes sense of its given circumstances and conditions of life; a set of values and practices from which draw to make sense of the world; ideology is the production and representation of ideas, values and beliefs and the manner in which these are expressed and lived out by groups or individuals; a framework of thought which is used to explain, make sense or give meaning to the social and political world (171,172).

of new genres they claim, allows learners to realise the linguistic potential to “join new realms of social activity and social power” (Cope and Kalantzis 1993: 7).

For Kress (1995), genre literacy is based on a social theory of text. He emphasises that the key issue in genre is the meeting of language in a text, by a learner from a different cultural and linguistic background. Kress argues that in a multicultural society, the values, meanings, and structures, inherent in texts are not shared by all members of the society. Text construction must therefore become the subject of an explicit curriculum (64, 65). Both the above theories regarding genre, acknowledge that genres are social constructs, and that certain hegemonic<sup>2</sup> writing practices would prevail in its implementation. However, using genre as a theory of writing provides learners with ‘rules’ that are often implied in teaching or, assumed to be known by all learners.

This research focuses on the equity of access, made possible by genre theory, to learners who are outside of these hegemonic practices. As a co-ordinator of writing assessment for a group of well-resourced schools on the Berea in Durban, Kwa-Zulu-Natal, I am aware that current practice in schools excludes the teaching of a range of genres. Writing is taught ‘vacuously’, often in an implied manner with little theoretical orientation. Genre theories challenge the ‘how’ and ‘what’ of writing skills taught, in multi-lingual, first language classrooms.<sup>3</sup> Fundamentally, genre as a theory of writing acknowledges language as an important resource in the construction of

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<sup>2</sup> McLaren (1989) defines it as the maintenance of domination not by sheer force but through consensual social practices, social forms, and social structures such as schools, churches, media, political system, and the media (173).

<sup>3</sup> In South African schools, English is offered either as a first language or a second language at the matriculation level. First language would require more proficiency and imply ‘standard’ English practices.

written messages. Genre theory has its origins in applied linguistics as pioneered by Halliday (1985) and other linguists in Australia. A consideration of genre principles will not be complete without reference to functional linguistics.

### *2.1.2 Systemic functional linguistics*

Halliday and Hasan (1985) outline three considerations in the production of all written texts. The first is the written message and what it intends to do, the second is the nature of the relationship between the communicators, and the third is the role language will play in the communication (20). The role language plays is its 'functionality' according to Thompson (1996), which investigates a range of choices available to the writer and the functions that are to be performed. Functional grammar is important for this research as it shifts the current focus from language 'correctness', to language functionality.

Kress (1996) outlines the importance of functional grammar, as a resource in the construction of experiences and values. Overt teaching, he concludes, is essential in any literacy curriculum because simply teaching grammar rules does not make learners better users of the language (49). The difference between functionality and grammar labels is illustrated in the following example by Kress where he considers two clauses:

She heard a noise  
She kicked a ball.

In traditional grammar, the labels would be the same, pronoun, verb and noun, in both utterances. However, in terms of functionality, the linguistic choices reveal that in the first example, there is a process of perception; in the second there is a material process

of kicking a ball. (49). These illustrations convey clearly the social purposes of messages, in the linguistic choices made to realise them.

Concepts such as these concerning language and functionality are also mentioned by Martin, Matthiessen and Painter (1997). They assert that writers use language to talk about events and to get things done. The function of language, and what it intends to do, depends on the choice made by the user, which in turn depends on the context. According to Martin *et al*, context is what in the society in which the writer finds her/him/self, does he/she wish to communicate (14).

Functional grammar is important to my research as it focuses on texts as social constructions, and denaturalises the notion of 'knowledge' in factual genres. It is a grammar that allows for meta-language awareness (a knowledge of using language to talk about language) emphasising function labels instead of sentence part labels. The theories of functional grammar challenge the idea that texts are innocent outpourings of creativity and 'truth'. A more critical examination of language and an awareness of how it positions and shapes literacy practice is the focus of the next section.

### 2.1.3 *Critical language awareness*

Critical language awareness (CLA)<sup>4</sup> is a theory of language that shares a 'symbiotic' relationship with genre and functional grammar. It is a theory of language, developed by the Lancaster group in England and H. Janks (1990) at the University of Witwatersrand, in South Africa. As a theory of language, it is aimed at teaching learners that language is neither transparent, nor an innocent medium of

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<sup>4</sup> The work of Norman Fairclough in Britain, and Janks in South Africa (1990).

communication. CLA is a critical language awareness,<sup>5</sup> which defines language as a social practice. Discourses,<sup>6</sup> according to Morgan (1995) are, “those characteristic ways of talking and writing, hence thinking and being which are common to members of a particular socio-cultural group” (2).

Morgan (1995), a critical theorist, examines the importance of discourse and how subjectivities are formed by discourses in the language classroom. She explains how discourses can either “converse with” or “argue against” each other. She asserts that they shape educators and learners, depending on what knowledge and competencies are important, how they act, and what they value (3). Discourses also do political work, circulating and promoting certain ideologies.

Schools in South Africa are sites where discourses compete, especially between educators and learners. Discourses are policed by educators, who define what is acceptable or not in the English first language, writing classroom. Whilst ideology does its work by helping us make sense of the world, it privileges certain discursive groups, creating unequal relations of power between mother tongue and non-mother tongue learners. CLA is useful as it creates awareness, about linguistic choices and the discourses that operate at the point of text construction. The linguistic choices made by writers are not innocent, natural or arbitrary.

This brings me to a consideration of the concept of the regulation of discourses in schools. Foucault (1981) and Janks (1990) contend that in terms of acceptability the language of students is controlled by parents, teachers, and other groups in society.

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<sup>5</sup> Critical literacy derives from critical social theories and their interest in class, gender, and ethnicity.

<sup>6</sup> A discourse is a family of concepts made up of discursive practices which are rules that govern what can be said, who can speak with what authority, and who must listen (McLaren 1989:180).

(95). These ideas also link with Bourdieu's (1991), concept of 'linguistic capital'. Bourdieu is of the opinion that words are signs of wealth and capital, and that different varieties of the same language are valued differently (170).

These theories raise important questions about the symbolic power of certain discourses in English first language classrooms. It also questions the discursive identities of educators and how this influences their teaching and evaluation of writing. Language conventions and language practices are invested with power relations and ideological processes, which are important considerations for educators and learners. South African learners who belong to groups from the 'previously disadvantaged', are ignorant of such discursive rules because they are from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. This shift in attention to learning is what critical literacy is concerned about and which will be discussed in the next section.

#### **2.1.4 Critical literacy**

In *A Genre Approach to the Teaching of Writing* (Luke cited in Unsworth:1993), explains that critical theories of education address issues of access and equity to educational resources. Critical literacy begins with the premise that literacy education is central to how schools and curricula reproduce power, identity and inequality. Schools as potential sites of control and domination, render learners from different race, sex, or class backgrounds, as either empowered and privileged, or powerless and oppressed.



McLaren (1989) is of the opinion that critical theorists are aware of the dialectical nature of schools, simultaneously empowering, and legitimising, as well as sustaining dominant class interests (166). The critical educator has to be aware of how the writing curriculum is structured and taught and how it legitimates certain race, class and gender interests. It challenges the value of certain powerful genres in society to which mother-tongue learners have access. Macken-Horarik (1998) asserts that, "Teachers do bear an onerous responsibility for assisting students from poorer backgrounds to gain access to specialised and critical literacy practices" (77).

Any theory of writing has to consider a reframing in terms of race, class, and sex. Herein lies the importance of critical literacy for my research in South African schools. Current practices in writing, advantage mother tongue learners who unconsciously imbibe the conventions of certain genres they are exposed to from childhood. Using genre as a theory of writing has the potential to reframe teaching in an inclusive way because it empowers non-mother tongue learners, and further empowers mother tongue learners.

Since my research is based on the need for change and growth in the teaching of writing, it is important to understand the forces that have thus far shaped the teaching of writing in our schools. What follows is an account of the rise and influence of English literature studies and the effect on writing approaches taught in schools.

## **2.2 Introduction**

It is important to emphasise that the pedagogy of writing in South Africa has not reached the level of sophistication found in countries like Australia, the United States,

and the United Kingdom. The obvious reason is our recent democracy (April 1994), and transforming educational and political systems. The systemic intervention at National level, of Outcomes Based Education, has led to confusion, disinterest, and sometimes, even apathy. Although, its objectives represent a paradigm shift, many educators are unsure about its implementation. It is also important to acknowledge that despite adversities, a lack of support, and a paucity of resources, many educators in South African classrooms have pioneered ingenious methodologies to address inequities, and imbalances.

In the historical overview of literature studies that follows, it is clear that South African schools have always endorsed an elitist tradition of English education and its accompanying literacy practices. In many schools the teaching of writing occurs without theoretical basis and the exploration of a variety of genres is considered tedious and unnecessary, adding to the workload of educators. The energies of first language educators are invested primarily in literature studies. Monaghan and Saul (1987) claim that society has focused on children as readers because historically it has been more interested in children as 'receptors' rather than 'producers' of the written word (91).

This emphasis on reading, text analysis, and synthesis rather than writing, and production has its origins in the rise of English as a discipline in 18<sup>th</sup> century England.

### ***2.2.1 Literature and the rise of English***

I have drawn mainly from Eagleton (1983) in this study of how literature established itself as an ideology in England. He traces the development of literature to eighteenth

century England when the values that embodied the 'tastes' of a particular class, were used as criteria for what 'counted' as 'good' literature. To write about what did not exist, it was believed, was more soul stirring and valuable than real life situations (17). From Eagleton's description it is obvious that the genteel and polite social manners of a privileged class were reflected in the writings of creative and imaginative men whose works comprised a 'canon'.<sup>7</sup> Literature became an ideology replacing religion, as a panacea that would save souls, delight and instruct, and communicate to the masses the moral riches of a bourgeois civilisation (18).

By the beginning of the twentieth century, literature became established as a discipline in British schools, and universities. Leavis became synonymous with 'close reading' and 'practical criticism' in the study of English literature.<sup>8</sup> The tradition of Leavis also began to be associated with the 'cultural heritage' tradition, as it reflected the privileged position of a cultured class. Ulmer (1985) labels it as 'a bourgeois hegemony' (168). Eurocentric curricula and practices that emanated from the United Kingdom continue to influence the teaching of English studies and literacy practices.

Literature as ideology became a powerful tool for social transformation. Eagleton mentions that the cultural tradition emphasised some works as being better than others hence these authors became responsible for keeping the torch of English culture burning through their works (34).

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<sup>7</sup> Eagleton defines it as the works of a body of revered writers and poets who reflected the values of English society at the time.

<sup>8</sup> Close reading was attention to words on a page and practical criticism implied the dissection of poetry and prose to assess tone and sensibility.

It was only in the post-war years that English emerged as a serious discipline made possible by the Leavisites<sup>9</sup> who transformed literature studies in English schools and universities. Eagleton explains how they initiated critical analysis, and attention to the 'feel for the creative uses of language' (32). Adherents hoped to continue in the tradition through teaching of a certain 'culture' and values in an effort to effect social change. Their main belief was that the study of qualitative writing by discerning writers of the canon, made one a better person. According to Eagleton (1983), the Leavisites believed that:

True English literature was verbally rich, complex, sensuous and particular (36)

[and that]

Some kinds of English were more English than others... language is alienated or degenerate unless it is crammed with the physical textures of actual experience plumped with rank juices of real life (37) (brackets my own).

The Leavisite tradition is hegemonic in classrooms in South Africa and abroad. It is one of the competing discourses in ex-Model 'C' schools, shaping and influencing literacy practices. The ideological framework that gave rise to the teaching of English still informs practices in our schools with the emphasis on literature studies overriding all concerns. It presupposes homogeneity and mono-culturalism (Doherty, 1989). When such discursive practices become institutionalised, they become prescriptive, and controlling, as does any approach. The belief in essential Englishness in the teaching of English in the classroom as well as focus on text consumption rather than production is common practice. This view is expressed by Millard (1997) who perceives education as being synonymous with literacy and literacy itself as the ability to consume rather than produce texts (37). This is important for the purposes of this

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<sup>9</sup> Eagleton describes them as architects of English at Cambridge. They were Leavis, Roth, and Richards.

thesis because schools create identities for learners more as consumers rather than writers of texts. Although it can be argued that the role of parents in early literacy development is critical, the onus rests on educators to teach skills in the different written genres, in order to empower learners as citizens of a global society.

Morgan (1995) reports that the discourse of the cultural heritage tradition is not popular in Australia although 'residual traces' do exist in certain institutions. According to Morgan, the adherents of this discourse argue in favour of an education that offers a particular subjectivity, attuned to nuances of language, keenly alert to excellence in artistry, and ever refining their moral vision through the explorations of literature. Wider support for the discourse is found in Britain and United States (18). West (1989) contends that if schools are following the literacy discourse of the cultural heritage tradition, there is a need to re-conceptualise the curriculum to accommodate marginalized groups (8). The same perspective is presented by Freire and Macedo (1987), who call for "critical reflectiveness" in the classroom whereby a person's culture ought to be cherished and cultivated by educators, not absolutised (24).

The influence of literature studies together with correctness of spelling, grammar, expression, and punctuation, still inform the writing curricula of schools. Although Outcomes Based Education in South Africa reflects a paradigm shift in literacy teaching, the teaching and assessment of writing is largely confined to discourses shaped by the cultural heritage tradition that began in England. In the next section, I will discuss how writing has developed since the eighteenth century as well as the attention it received as an important, yet neglected, aspect of the curriculum.

### *2.2.2 The development of writing approaches*

In the eighteenth century, the purpose of educating the working class was to ensure a labour supply that required limited writing skills. A revised code of education in 1862 emphasised the copying of words with speed and accuracy (Millard, 1997:34). Writing or composing as it was called, emphasised speed and accuracy and was only for those who succeeded in secondary school.

Green (1993) cites Monaghan and Saul's report of how similar practices abounded in America in the 1900s. The basic unit of instruction was the letter and once this was mastered, larger units like sentences were learned. The framework for the curriculum was rigidly Calvinistic, based on repetition and discipline together with mastery of the pen through constant repetition and copying (197). Christie (1995) reports similar practices in colonial Australia. Literacy was developed through a series of measured stages in learning so that the learner could move from the smaller to larger units of language. For most of the primary years, writing consisted of copying and improving expression (6, 7).

These reports indicate that, historically, writing as a pedagogy was all but omitted in school literacy programmes. Green (1993) makes the point relevant to how literacy practices were conceived:

The political implication of what is unquestionably, a devaluing of active writing pedagogy in the history of schooling should be patently clear. This is further highlighted when school writing in what might be called its normative form is considered: a regime of copying and regurgitation (203).

Graff (1987) is of a similar opinion that early schooling pedagogies rigidly pursued correctness, vocabulary, and spelling as a means to inculcate punctuality, respect, and subordination. Furthermore, the privilege of writing was accorded to a few who would eventually participate in the civic and political processes of society (30).

It is quite obvious that although writing is as critical as reading in the development of literacy yet it did not receive due attention. In the 1960s the school curriculum, including writing, soon came under attack by a group of post-war educators. Foremost was Britton (1975) who conceptualised and identified 'types' of writing, with which learners were expected to engage. The curriculum was defined to include, for the first time, expressive and transactional genres in writing. Expressive writing was described as informal and essential for early learning and development. It permitted learners the freedom of self-expression conveyed in writing, through attitudes and feelings. Transactional writing, was more formal and concerned with the writing of letters, reports, and explanations (34, 35). It was believed that children would naturally acquire mastery in the skills of such writing.

Britton's curriculum revision was termed 'progressive' as it initiated a move away from teacher centred instruction of the early eighteenth and nineteenth century classrooms. It also heralded a move toward the formulation of genres as well as a definite move away from traditionalism. For the first time, learners were central to learning and writing became more than correctness, neatness, and copying.

Another view of the progressive development in writing is expressed by Cope and Kalantzsis (1993). According to them this was "a pedagogy of modernism and

experience” (45). They cite Maria Montessori in Italy and John Dewey in the United States, as influential in the new approach to a learner-centred pedagogy, and practice in the classroom. Of importance to this chapter, is how writing transformed from copying words on pages to self-expression, after more than a century of rigidity. In the section to follow the differences in the approaches to writing are more fully discussed.

### *2.2.3 The process and personal writing approaches*

Another major influence on writing was initiated by Graves (1983) and appropriately labelled as ‘process’ writing. The fundamental principle of process writing is the belief that the ability to write starts with the learner. For Graves, the idea of topics set by educators was inhibiting and restrictive because he believed that learners should explore their own world and experiences, in order to write meaningfully (19). The proponents of writing as a process believed that writing could not be taught because it was a naturally acquired skill. Learners, as writers, had to undergo a process involving stages of pre-writing, planning, drafting, editing, and publishing. The approach was radical in that it acknowledged that learners were social beings, as well as producers of texts.

Another approach to writing that became practice in schools was the ‘personal growth’ approach. For Medway (1990) the approach coexisted alongside process writing and developed out of literature studies. The personal growth approach to writing emphasised “relationships, feelings, and sensory awareness” (33). According to Millard (1997) the development of this approach arose out of concern expressed by a group of Anglo-American educators about what constituted English. At a



conference at Dartmouth in England, they conceived of a personal growth approach (41). It was learner centred, emphasising that learners were individuals with feelings who could reflect upon their experiences and write about them.

Process and the personal growth approaches to the teaching of writing, are perceived by Cope and Kalantzis (1993) as pedagogies that are progressive, but also culture bound. They reject these approaches to writing on the grounds that:

The progressive mould with its prescriptions for student motivation, purposeful writing, individual ownership, power of voice, matches the moral temper and cultural aspirations of middle class children from child-centred homes...it reproduces educational inequities ...it encourages children to produce texts in a limited range of genres, mostly personalised accounts that are monotonous and repetitive (6).

This also brings me to a consideration of the work of Bernstein *et al* (1975). Their research and studies at the Social Research Unit of the Department of Sociology at the London Institute of Education, involved both working and middle class families. The studies undertaken document the differences between speech patterns and language usage between them. They concluded that middle class children were exposed to a greater range of educationally relevant information than working class children. They attributed this to the differences in speech and communication patterns within the home environment (70-71).

Process writing works only for children who arrive at school with knowledge of the conventions of written texts. Texts produced by non-mother tongue learners, appear 'foreign' and strange to educators because they violate the logic, and sequence, of standard English convention. Process writing is an implied methodology based on the assumption that all learners are familiar with the genres expected of them at school.

Non- mother tongue learners therefore continue to write 'strangely' because the rules for writing are unclear and vague.

Further debate about implied writing is taken up by Martin (1989), and Delpit (1988). They have established connections between the reproduction of inequality in education and implicit pedagogical practices in the classroom. Moreover, Martin (1989) draws attention to 'misconceptions' about children within implied pedagogies.

He outlines the following:

- Children are valued for their creativity and to teach them explicit writing skills would stifle creativity.
- Children learn language spontaneously and do not have to be taught explicitly about writing genres.
- Process writing is an attempt to allow children to express their creative spirit which society crushes.
- Children are immature and factual genres are beyond them (9).

Martin's main argument is that confining writing to a narrow range of genres renders children powerless since few children would be called upon to write narratives or personal expressive genres in the workplace. This viewpoint is an important consideration for the purposes of this research because factual genres are almost never taught in schools probably because educators do not know how to teach them. The implied approaches of teaching writing discussed thus far, are responsive to the needs of certain learners. Studies by Gee (1990), Heath (1983), and Luke (1993), reveal that narratives constructed by children reveal different linguistic conventions if they come from different backgrounds. The nexus between literature studies and writing is both emphasised and encouraged. Moreover, educators in both developed and developing countries are guided in their practice by departmental or national initiatives, which

appear to be an eclectic mix of disparate approaches to writing. These developments have influenced how writing is taught in South African schools as well.

### 2.3 Writing in South African schools

In South Africa, the development of writing reflects similar contradictions insofar as classroom practice is concerned. Since democratisation in 1994, former ex- Model 'C' schools have been inundated with learners from previously disadvantaged backgrounds. Insofar as the English curriculum is concerned in such institutions, little has transformed for non- mother tongue speakers. For many, writing is a serious undertaking that requires correctness and neatness, as well as expression and creativity. As studies by Gee, Luke and Heath (1990, 1993, 1983) have indicated, non-mother tongue learners' efforts in the writing of texts, will be 'different' and undervalued.

It is important to emphasise that the pedagogy of writing in South African schools has not reached the level of debate or sophistication as in countries like Australia, the United States, and the United Kingdom. Our recent democracy and continuous systemic transformation appears to address general curricula needs rather than specific aspects like writing. It is also clear that South African schools have always emulated and endorsed the British system of education so that even in a post independent situation past practices persist.

An example of such persistence and case in point is the *Department of Education Document (1997)*, sent as a guideline for the assessment of writing to schools. The document describes outstanding writing as "... a mind at work, lively sentence

construction, rich precise language, real powers of literary expression... “ Writing that is pass-worthy is described as having “distinct language flaws, dull, and unimaginative...” (4). The various descriptors offered as a guide to assessment focus on deficit, emphasise correctness, as well as the ability to write in the acceptable, purist English tradition. Another Document dated March 1997, contains suggestions on how learners can improve their writing potential. Reference is made to George Orwell’s *Politics and the English Language*. The following advice is offered, “ analyse the literature you are studying and learn from the way the best writers write. Look critically for flaws in the style of others” (33).

These guidelines and suggestions raise important questions about the writing curricula suggested in these documents. Who decides which writers are the best to emulate? What do these guidelines suggest about the genres learners ought to engage with and the criteria for assessment? What kind of pedagogy is suggested in these guideline documents? It is obvious that tradition of Leavis, among others is still given prominence. Writing skills are not explicitly taught in our schools because it is assumed that narrative genres can be imitated and reproduced by imitating the writing style of the ‘best’ writers.

Yet the Revised National Curriculum Statement (2001) mentions different genres like e-mails, reports, arguments, descriptions, and explanations. There is no attempt to theorise writing or to break down assessment according to generic conventions. This is an important consideration in my thesis since it demonstrates the need to explicitly teach all genres. Another important consideration is the assessment practices related to writing. The current practice is to assess all writing according to narrative

conventions. Different genres need to be assessed according to the generic conventions peculiar to them. The question then is how can educators provide all learners with equal access and opportunities in the writing classroom? Post-modern and critical literacy theories may well be the answer to these questions.

### *2.3.1 Post-modern literacy and cultural pluralism*

In this section I shall present a selection of post-modern thinking on issues of culture and society, and its impact on literacy development. The concept of social education emerged from the Frankfurt school of neo-Marxism. Neo Marxist theories perceive the human as a constructed subject and of society and culture representing new arenas of domination acting upon the subject.

According to Kalantzsis, Cope, Noble and Poynting (1990) the post-modern world is becoming increasingly plural. Cultural capitalism, they claim, is driven by the universalisation of migratory labour. People are moving more freely between countries as countries become economically independent. The outcome of such movement has led to issues of race relations, cultural pluralism, and the teaching of national languages to be placed on the agendas of developing nations, including South Africa.

In schools this translates into how language is used by different linguistic and cultural groups. In post-modern literacy this is defined as 'difference'. According to Cope and Kalantzsis (1993) difference implies that there can no longer be fixed language facts or a standard dialect in English (5). Eagleton (1983) supports this view suggesting that practices rooted in standard English discourses are under the threat of cultural

pluralism (227). To counteract this threat Rothby (1992) expresses that teachers in post-modern classrooms have to promote linguistic diversity and uniformity, monolingualism and multilingualism, univocality and polyphony (10). The needs of all learners have to be addressed, given the dialectic nature of the post-modern classroom.

Genre theory is a post-modern theory of writing and therefore useful in the classroom because it defines conventions, acknowledges 'difference', and discounts rule-based grammar. Australia has taken the lead in addressing 'difference' in education with systemic interventions and policies aimed at assimilation and integration. Since the 1990s the Queensland Department of Education initiated a programme for providing migrant children with equal opportunities for success within the school system. Despite efforts at integration, migrant children were still failing because classroom practices <sup>10</sup>were implicit and "many teachers found it more comfortable to stay with their old ways of teaching" (Cope and Kalantzisi, 1993: 1).

Postmodernism is not without its critics. There has been strong reaction from 'language purists' in both Britain, and in the United States, to 'lefty trendy' paradigms of literacy as well as different strands of English dialects (Cope and Kalantzisi, 1993:5). Clark and Ivanic (1997) and Miller (1994), label the "back to basics movement" as the "complaint or corrective tradition" (5). They assert that the outcry is compounded by misunderstandings about language and its use in context. Language is not about rules, nor correctness in writing, but about "how words in text production

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<sup>10</sup> A practice is a prototypical way of doing things. It is a template for ways of writing about particular topics.

are limited to institutional and socio-historical conditions in which the participants are situated” (10).

It is clear that writing has to be located within a wider socio-political context especially in classrooms where potential writers emerge from widely differing socio-political and historical backgrounds. Clark and Ivanic (36, 37), describe how people who write for public readership have enormous power, and that certain public writing acquires more status and power.

Similar views are shared by Halliday and Hasan (1985) who maintain that writing in schools is not ‘autonomous’ or free of social context. They too are of the opinion that writing practices are ideologically shaped by the socio-cultural environment of the child. Kress (1982) argues a similar point about access to writing in schools. He claims that children at school are exposed to concepts about good writing, which contribute to the reproduction of established values. The prestige afforded to excellence in narrative and essay genres is a sign of intelligence and a measure of being educated (53). This opinion adds to the assertion, that literacy practices in schools, favour middle class children and fail ethnic minorities. Essay and narrative writing genres predominate in South African schools hence placing them at the interface of this debate.

These studies further illustrate Bourdieu’s (1984) concept of ‘cultural capital’.<sup>11</sup> For Bourdieu, education favours the cultural capital of the dominant culture, which in monolingual schools is primarily associated with conventional values. Middle class

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<sup>11</sup> It refers to the culture that is most appreciated and valued and the different power that is attributed to different cultures.

children come to school with more cultural capital, and acquire more than other groups. Clark and Ivanic (1997) also support the view and explain why certain learners do not enjoy writing in schools. Learners they claim, who fail to identify with the kinds of readings they are forced to engage with from a narrow canon, are left feeling that they cannot write like that. Out of school the conversation of these children is in another language or in different English dialects (121). This is important because the responsibility of teaching such learners access to these discourses, rests with the language educator.

The arguments outlined above, challenge the notion of standard English practices in the writing curricula of schools. They also address issues of class and inequity that are perpetuated when assumptions of homogeneity and mono-culturalism are made in educational settings. In the words of Gramsci (1977), “if literacy is not a need it becomes a torment, something imposed by the wielders of power” (67). The debates outlined above imply that writing and the writer in a classroom are neither about ideas on paper nor about uniform subjects. Hence certain considerations ought to be taken into account in the conceptualisation of writing in schools.

### ***2.3.2 The key concepts in writing***

These arguments described above bring me to a consideration of the concept of writing. In this section I shall present a survey of the key concepts that ought to be considered about writers, and the writing that they are expected to produce. I have relied on the research by Clark and Ivanic (1997), which I found to be relevant to the purpose of this chapter because it addresses issues of race class and society.



Writing is defined as a social practice and not a procedure. Writing is an aspect of literacy, while language used to realise the messages communicated, is a specific semiotic system (10). Certain genres may require research or the organization and presentation of ideas according to the conventions<sup>12</sup> of established practice; therefore writing is a form of social practice (81). As social practice writing is more difficult than speech for the following reasons.

Writing is also different from speech in terms of 'context of situation'.<sup>13</sup> One cannot point to things as in speech, therefore writing has to be explicit, learned and planned. Speech on the other hand is spontaneous. The identity of the writer is another important consideration in what Clark and Ivanic term as the "autobiographical self". This is the impact of the writer's life history on his/her writing. Since not everyone shares the same experiences this affects how people write. This then leads to differentiated access to discourse types because people are immersed in and imbued with the voices and practices of their social circumstance (140).

Barton and Hamilton (2000), take a similar position suggesting that users of written language can be seen as located in particular times and places. Accordingly, literacy practices are cultural ways of utilising written language, which people draw upon in their lives; they involve values, attitudes, and feelings. Writing has intrinsic value for the exploration of ideas and the keeping of records. Society demands that certain tasks be performed in writing and it is a sign of being 'educated' (36, 37). It is evident that those in society who succeed as writers wield power and status, especially playwrights, authors, lawyers and journalists. However, since we do not live in a

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<sup>12</sup> Rules that govern how genres should be structured.

<sup>13</sup> The immediate environment in which a text functions.

homogeneous society, writing is not experienced by all members of society in the same way. Singh (1999) in Thomas and Wareing (1999) makes mention of the Sapir Whorf Hypothesis. This theory of linguistic relativity, explains how different cultures interpret the world in different ways. What encodes the difference is language. According to the theory, perceptions of the world influence language, and the language people use affects their thought processes. Singh maintains that any theory of writing should therefore acknowledge these differences.

M.A.K.Halliday (1978) draws attention to a similar concern. Halliday describes the concept of the 'deficit' theory and its attempt to explain the why children from different cultural backgrounds fail. These children are 'different' and have a restricted language code that prevents them acquiring literacy skills. Hence children fail to meet with the expectations of the teacher and the literacy demands made by conventional English practices. In most schools, the assumption is that non-mother tongue speakers lower standards and teachers become 'gatekeepers' of falling literacy standards (Judith Rothby, 1992). Rothby states that the discourse of the 'other' is controlled and confined within conventions that non-mother tongue speakers do not understand. Their efforts at writing are therefore misunderstood as they become polyphonic and hetroglossic.<sup>14</sup> According to Cummins (1989:12), writing pedagogy should position teachers as "cross cultural brokers" using the difference in class as an advantage to challenge structures that disable learners from competing equally.

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<sup>14</sup> Having more than one voice.

## *2.4 Reflections*

This chapter has located the theoretical perspectives that are used to inform my research project. It acknowledges that the challenge to teachers is to ensure that disadvantaged learners can participate equally in building and transforming societies.

Many learners fail because they come to school unprepared for school language that is explicit and de-contextualised and the language they possess is inexplicit and contextualised (Gee in Cope and Kalantzis, 2000). In ex Model 'C' schools in South Africa, non-mother tongue speakers who can speak properly accented English and write according to standard conventions are valued. Tensions do exist between the 'vernacular' and standard versions with the former viewed by certain teachers as 'disadvantaged' and inferior. Standard English is not considered the dialect of the middle and upper classes... it is the dialect that attracts positive adjectives like good, correct, pure or proper (Thomas, 1999:154).

Education pretends equity, and if learners are not from the same social backgrounds, they will experience school differently, and the outcomes will be different (Cope and Kalantzis, 2000:124). For most learners it is not about leaving behind what they know, but "Negotiating the increasing variability of the languages and discourses one encounters interacting with other languages... using English as lingua franca and making sense of dialects, accents, discourses and registers" (141).

The theories outlined challenge the role of standard English in the writing curriculum as well as the role of educators in nurturing the identities of all learners in class

irrespective of class, or language groupings, by structuring an inclusive curriculum. The linguistic and cultural diversity of the South African school population, has transformed institutions into sites of power and struggle. Cultural and linguistic diversity is not a diversity of equals and the task for educators is not to merely respect the divisions for what they are, but to right the injustices of everyday lack of power for learners (Cope and Kalantzis,1993:12). This study acknowledges that the everyday lack of power in the writing classroom is not the experience of non-mother tongue learners alone. My research is concerned with the value of explicit pedagogy using the genre approach to further improve writing proficiencies of all learners especially in the production of authentic factual texts. Local research into curricular transformation and literacy practices has been undertaken by Motheeram, Reddy, and Govenden (1995) in secondary schools. Research by Balfour (1999) examined an integrated approach to language and literary skills for non-native speakers. Hart's (1999) study investigated writing practices in an African school. Studies abroad directly related to the genre approach by Freedman (1999), Stock (2001), and Osborn (1998) once again focus on second language acquisition. The aforementioned studies are valuable contributions to literacy practices in the post-apartheid English classroom. The focus of this research is the writing of factual genres in the English classroom; an area of study often neglected both in and out of the classroom. This research also defines English teaching according to primary and secondary language acquisition, not second language acquisition.

In the next chapter, I shall discuss the planning of an action research project that was designed to improve the writing practices of learners in a multicultural context. The

chapter describes the planning, design, instruments, and implementation of the project at Park High a secondary school on the Berea in Durban.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE LEAFLET ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT AT PARK HIGH

#### 3.1 Introduction

In Chapter 2, a theoretical overview of functional grammar, post-modern literacy, critical language awareness, and genre theory were described as possibilities for an alternate perspective in the teaching and designing of writing curricula in schools. These theories focus on the heterogeneity and diversity of language, society, and culture, emphasising the need for implicit pedagogy in modern multi-cultural and multi-lingual schools.

What follows in this chapter, is the context within which this research was conducted, the methodological concerns, principles and purposes of action research, the design of the leaflet action research project at Park High, as well as research constraints, data collection, and evaluation.

##### 3.1.1 *Research context*

The leaflet action research project was conducted at Park High, an ex -Model 'C' school situated on the Berea, in Durban, KwaZulu - Natal. Park High has a learner population of over a thousand learners, with an increase of two hundred and fifty since 1996. The 2002 Educational Management Survey, an instrument that assesses the racial composition of learners in schools, reflects a 70% African, 30% Indian and 'Coloured', and 5% White learner intake. This indicates a dramatic trend-reversal. In 1996 Park High had an enrolment of eight hundred and fifty with a 65% white and 35% African, Indian, and 'coloured' intake. Learners of 'colour' were admitted to

Park High since 1994 and came from areas like Overport, Sydenham, Newlands, Reservoir Hills, Avoca, Kwa-Mashu, Ntuzuma, Umlazi, Chesterville, and Amouti.

As educators from the Natal Education Department resigned, educators from House of Delegate schools replaced them.<sup>1</sup> Whilst transformation was inevitable and irreversible, educators were ill prepared for integration, especially in coping with the sudden influx of non-mother tongue speakers of English. Most educators, having qualified during the apartheid years, had little or no training at tertiary level, in second language teaching. Educators attended workshops on writing in the hope of improving classroom practice. They were, however, frustrated by proposals for methodologies based on process writing approaches and implied methods of teaching. Yet, the Language Department, of which I was the Head, was often consulted about strategies to assist non-performing learners in other disciplines.

Despite the challenges that integration posed for both learners and educators, English first language results at matriculation level improved, largely through the concerted efforts of a dedicated team of English language educators at Park High. The Languages Department constantly reviewed areas of concern in learner abilities, especially in writing. Educators attended professional workshops in the hope of improving classroom practice, only to be frustrated by suggestions that emphasised conventional cultural heritage methodologies.

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<sup>1</sup> Prior to 1994 schools were administered according to a racial divide termed 'own affairs'; The Natal Education Department administered white schools, The House of Delegates administered Indian schools, The House of representatives administered 'Coloured' schools, and The department of Education and Training administered African schools.

The challenge to improve skills created interest within the department and educators attended numerous workshops hosted by the professional wing of the Association of Professional Educators (APEK). Current writing practices were rooted in traditional and progressive pedagogies and it was evident that in order to provide equal opportunities for all learners, the hidden curriculum had to be challenged and interrogated. One of the main features of the hidden curriculum was the assumption that all learners had an equal opportunity to learn how to write effectively by assimilating standard English practices. Reading was widely 'prescribed' as a palliative at Park High with vast sums of money expended on the purchase of books for 'slow' learners. Although Park High was the appropriate site for transformation, along democratic principles, the possibility of challenging the writing curriculum only presented itself when I encountered genre theory during my studies in 2001 at the University of Natal. The idea of an action research project was conceived at this point, together with the possibility of critically transforming how writing is taught. In the next section, I will focus on the principles of action research as it applies to my study, as well as aspects of implementation, and change, pertaining to the leaflet project at Park High.

### *3.1.2 Action Research*

According to Cohen and Manion (1996) the justification for the use of action research in the context of the school is improvement of practice. This they claim, is only achieved if educators are able to change their behaviour. Action research has the further advantage of being flexible and adaptable to any situation in schools or classrooms (224). Therefore as practical enquiry action research is more likely to lead to immediate classroom change because it responds to the educators' immediate



needs. By implication this type of research permits experimentation, decision making, and judgements on whether lessons work or not. In the light of these definitions I shall endeavour to discuss with supporting narrative detail, why I began 'thinking' about, and assessing what was happening in my writing classroom.

Through an encounter with genre theory, I realised that perceptions about learners' literacy backgrounds, as well as their socio-cultural contexts, were largely ignored in classroom practice. As I wanted to improve my own practice, action research provided this opportunity. In action research the educator is also the reflective practitioner and practical enquirer, collecting data that can offer insights into practice.

I hoped that the principles of genre theory implemented in the classroom would improve learner skills in text production, and enable me to assess whether such an intervention works in practice. Action research provides a model that views the educator as "an in service trainer", acquiring new skills, and testing new methods and ideas. For me, action research offered the possibility to conduct research in order to improve my own practice and within the confines of my own classroom with learners I teach. It also provided me with an opportunity to skill myself in terms of knowledge about genre and generic conventions that in turn could be taught to the learners.

At the conclusion of the research I hoped to share insights gleaned into classroom practice with colleagues. It was a non-scientific, 'on the spot' method within a realistic and truly democratic social context. This adds a further motivation for the choice of the action research approach. It held out the possibility of influencing

educators at Park High to seek solutions to problems, by examining their own practices. Proponents of action research like Carr and Kemmis (1986) and Cohen and Manion (1996), advocate a collaborative effort with other educators. They argue that educators share common problems and function in a common teaching and learning environment. It was this consideration that resulted in a collaborative planning of the 'leaflet action research project' with a fellow colleague at Park High. In the next section I will discuss briefly the planning of the project with Miss Lo, a senior educator and colleague at the school.

### **3.2 The Planning of the leaflet action research project**

In this section I hope to explain the thinking behind the planning process, as well as the research sample selected, together with the ethical considerations regarding the project. This action research was collaboratively planned with Miss Lo, a senior educator at Park High, who displayed a keen interest in the entire project and assisted with the initial lesson plan and resource location. We met informally on numerous occasions to review cumulative remedial reports from educators, compiled after mid-year and final examinations. These are submissions made by educators on 'weaknesses' experienced by learners in their examinations. We also examined the reports sent by English subject advisors regarding the standard of creative writing from Grade Twelve learners. Since 1996, all schools were expected to submit a range of portfolios for moderation and standardisation. The objective was to ensure that educators from different schools were maintaining standards in their assessments of learner writing at school level.

The features of school-based writing became most evident to me when I became a cluster co-ordinator for a group of four of the best performing schools in the North

Durban region. I observed that the genre most often given as a writing task was the narrative or personal recount model. The topics given to learners were open ended and most learners opted for personal recounts although expositions, descriptions and arguments were included. In most schools there was a preoccupation with the narrative genre. This prompted us to explore the possibility of planning a factual genre as an intervention since it is one of the most powerful sources of information in any society. According to J.R.Martin (1989), children need to be taught the writing of power as early as possible. The sooner they control factual writing of different kinds, the sooner they will be able to challenge the world in which they live (61). The learners at Park High had never attempted a factual genre and we decided that in order to gain mastery they had to be introduced to factual writing in the senior phase (Grade Ten to Twelve). This impacted on the sample selected for the project that is discussed in more detail in the next section.

### *3.2.1 The research sample*

It was decided to implement the project with two groups of Grade Ten learners at Park High for the following reasons. First, Grade Ten is the first year of senior secondary, and it is at this phase that writing is given more serious consideration. Secondly, during this phase, educators prepare learners for the writing portfolio, which is a file consisting of all writing completed, for inclusion and assessment in the matriculation examination in Grade Twelve. Current thinking and perception, at Park High, is that as learners mature their writing skills improve. It is assumed that exposing learners to abstract topics, increases the level of difficulty in writing skills, and improves their practice. Often a 'bank' of topics is handed out to learners at the beginning of the year, and they are expected to complete these during the course of

the year. The educator may spend time discussing how topics can be 'brainstormed' as well as the drafting, proofreading, and editing stages, of process writing. My experiences with Grade Twelve learners over seventeen years, has revealed that most learners choose the narrative genre. These considerations were taken into account in the genre selected for the intervention.

Out of six groups of Grade Ten classes at Park High, Grade Ten 'L' and Grade Ten 'G' was randomly selected for the first and second interventions. Although Grade Ten 'L' consisted of non-mother tongue speakers, and over half of Grade Ten 'G' were mother-tongue speakers, both were mixed ability groups. According to the current language policy at Park High, learners in Grade Ten at Park High, learners are grouped according to their second language choice.<sup>2</sup> The samples selected were considered representative of Park High's school population because English is the first language and the medium of instruction. Furthermore, the majority of the learners in Grade Ten have been at Park High since Grade Eight. Increasingly, Park High's non-mother tongue intake came from other ex-'Model C' or other state schools where the medium of instruction is English.

The selection of sample groups familiar to the researcher and Miss Lo, a collaborative colleague who assisted in the planning of the leaflet action research project, was an advantage, but it also raised some ethical issues. These will be discussed in the following section.

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<sup>2</sup> English as the first language is compulsory at Park High, since 2000 from Grade Ten onwards, a limited number of mainly non-mother tongue learners are permitted the option of isiZulu second language, instead of Afrikaans. Learners are grouped accordingly in order to facilitate effective timetabling.

### 3.2.2 *Ethical considerations*

Hitchcock and Hughes (1989), point out that school-based action research raises concerns that can affect the finding of the research. They maintain that the educator-researcher is a moral agent with views, opinions, values, and attitudes. In this regard, issues of trust, the rights of subjects, and confidentiality had to be considered. At the initial discussion with the Principal of Park High and myself, these concerns were addressed. In granting permission and access, the Principal wanted an assurance that neither the timetable, nor the normal teaching programme would be affected. To this end, Miss Lo and I decided to work within the current framework of our personal time-tables in order to minimise disruption.

Another ethical consideration was the decision to work 'overtly' or 'covertly' with learners. Since school-based research is conducted in a familiar environment, it was decided to retain the 'naturalness' of the classroom environment. This meant that Miss Lo and I would regard the interventions as part of a 'new' approach to the writing curricula, collect data unobtrusively, and inform learners only about the outcome of the project. The interventions would proceed as 'naturally' and 'normally' as possible. Learners were informed that Miss Lo and I were responding to a school based curriculum need and would like their input at the end of the intervention in the form of a questionnaire. The decision not to tell learners was perceived by us, as responding to the transforming and expanding nature of our school. We did not want an artificial classroom environment in which learners would be aware that they are under 'surveillance'.

The classes were informed about a change in the teaching programme but were not told directly that they would be observed. Learners agreed to volunteer information at the end of the cycle. This suggests, on the one hand, that conducting action research with a familiar group allows for freedom from inhibitions within the learning environment, and on the other hand that interaction in the classroom becomes unrestricted optimising learning, and creating a democratic, and participatory, atmosphere. In the next section, I shall discuss the outcomes of the action research leaflet project, and how it was translated into classroom practice.

### **3.2.3 The intended outcomes of the leaflet action research project**

The principle outcome of the project was to teach learners explicitly about genre and relevant generic language conventions, as well as audience, context, and purpose in writing. The following were the specific outcomes I hoped that learners would be able to realise by the end of the project.

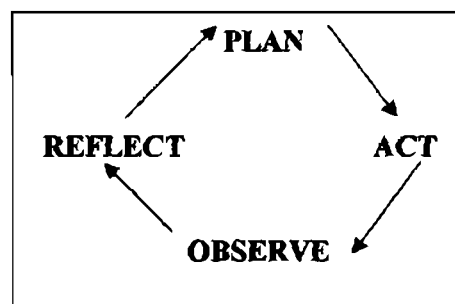
*Figure 3.1 The intended outcomes of the leaflet project*

- Learners make and negotiate meaning and understand how original meaning is created through a personal text.
- Learners understand, know, and apply language structures and conventions in texts.
- Learners use language for learning.
- Learners use appropriate communication strategies for specific purposes and situations by using the appropriate register and tone for the appropriate audience, context, and purpose.

### 3.3 The Leaflet Action Research Project and classroom practice

This section describes how the project was implemented in the classroom situation in three stages. The 'leaflet action research project' was planned over ten lessons constituting one teaching cycle according to the Park High timetable. Each cycle-lesson was fifty minutes in duration. Day one, lesson one would begin on a Monday, and day ten lesson ten, would end on a Friday. Each cycle lesson followed the cyclical action research plan proposed by Hitchcock and Hughes (1989).

Figure 3.2 An action research cycle



Implementing the action research meant that both the Grade Ten classes sampled would lose an entire cycle of 'normal' work. In order to compensate for the loss, it was decided to accelerate the normal teaching programme. Extra homework and assignments were set for both class groups. Initially two interventions were planned. Miss Lo was to conduct the first intervention in Grade Ten 'L', followed by a second intervention conducted by myself in Grade Ten 'G'. The purpose of the first intervention was to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the following action plan. It was meant to allow us to 'look again at a situation from a different perspective' (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1989: 11). The following represents stages of the collaborative planning in the leaflet action research project.

**Figure 3.3**      *The ideal schedule of the leaflet action research project*

Dec. 2001-Feb.2002	Access and permission from the Principal of Park High to conduct the research.
	Collaborative planning with Miss Lo and designing the action plan for both interventions.
	Deciding on the sample range and sourcing suitable curriculum material. Designing the workbook.
March 2002 – June 2002	Miss Lo implements the first intervention with Grade Ten 'L'. Researcher to critically observe and collect data on observation. Collaborative reflection and revised planning.
July 2002 – August 2002	Second implementation by researcher with Grade Ten 'G' and Miss Lo to observe. Data collection by observation and field notes.  Learners to complete the questionnaire on the value of the leaflet project. A formative assessment of the leaflets by a second colleague in the Science Department.
August 2002- Dec.2002	Collation of data and evaluation of the project. The final report writing on the leaflet action research project.

The above figure represents the ideal plan of implementation. However, developments at Park High necessitated a change of plans that were problematic but did not prevent the research from taking place. These will be discussed in the following section as constraints affecting the action research project.



### *3.3.1 Constraints and limitations*

According to Mckernan (1991), in addition to major, minor or moderate constraints, time is often a constraint faced by most researchers (6). Unexpected developments at Park High meant that the first intervention could not be implemented, and that the original time frame had to be revisited. At the end of the first term Miss Lo took up a post at an international school in The United Arab Emirates, and I was offered a post at the end of the second term at an Islamic private school. By the time Miss Lo left the entire curriculum design had been completed. The leaflet project was designed specifically for a multi-cultural and multi-lingual school like Park High hence I could not implement it at my new school, which was a mono-cultural private school. The new developments also implied that only one intervention could be implemented with Grade Ten 'G'.

I considered possible alternatives one of which would be to conduct the research after school. This was not feasible as many learners commute by bus or taxi with fixed departure schedules. Another alternative would have been to choose a school like Park High on the Berea. The only other school in close proximity to Park High was a boys' school, and gaining access could be problematic. As was mentioned earlier, these constraints did not impact directly on the curriculum design (completed in February 2002), but did alter my research design. The preliminary work had been completed, but the collaboration process during the intervention was jeopardised in the absence of a 'critical' observer. In the next section, I shall discuss the thinking that guided the curriculum design of the leaflet action research project.

### 3.3.2 *The design of the leaflet action research project*

The primary objective in the planning of the leaflet action research project was to collaboratively construct a factual genre designed as an informative leaflet for the public, on a specific disease at the end of a cycle of ten lessons. Since little on genre and writing had been taught to the Grade Ten classes, it was decided to introduce the concept in the very first cycle-lesson. The lesson outcomes are reflected in the following table according to Outcomes Based principles of learning.

*Figure 3.4 The intended outcomes of the leaflet project*

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|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the concept of genre as pertains to both literature and writing.</li> <li>• Use factual genres effectively.</li> <li>• Explain the difference between an explanation and instruction genre.</li> <li>• Discuss the generic conventions of narrative, adventure and science fiction genres.</li> <li>• Consider how language is used differently for different audiences and purposes.</li> <li>• Jointly, negotiate and construct a factual leaflet based on a selected topic.</li> <li>• Examine the issues of technology and reproduction in the construction and representation of the leaflet.</li> </ul> |
|---|

Explicit steps had to be planned in the design, to move learners from their current understanding of genre to a new level. The design of the leaflet project was also guided by theoretical concepts and principles, namely 'commonsense' and 'un-commonsense' knowledge (Christie, 1998), Martin's wheel model (1989), and the concept of scaffolding according to the Queensland Department of Education English syllabus (1994). In the paragraph to follow, I shall briefly attempt to discuss each concept as well as the purpose in adapting these to the leaflet project curriculum design.

Christie defines “commonsense knowledge” as that which is familiar, commonplace and observed in the family and community. She explains how the writing experiences of children deal initially with commonsense knowledge that is evident in their immediate home environment. As children mature they encounter un-commonsense, esoteric knowledge, and in writing, this kind of knowledge is effortful, takes time, and requires assistance in its mastery (52, 53).

The second principle that guided the design of the leaflet project is Martin’s wheel model of literacy. According to Martin (1989), literacy development is perceived as being circular rather than a linear. The wheel is divided into three phases, each signalling a process in the acquisition of literacy skills. The first phase is the modelling phase, whereby the learner is exposed to a number of texts exemplifying different genres. The second phase entails the joint construction of a generic text in which learners, guided by the educator, construct a text. The lexical and grammatical features<sup>3</sup> of written texts are considered, as well as the purpose and audience. In the final phase, learners construct their own texts either independently or in groups. Consequently, learners develop familiarity with the conventions of generic texts as well as the functionality of language. In this manner they are constantly moving between the different phases as well as commonsense and un-commonsense knowledge.

The Queensland Department of Education document (1994) was invaluable as a guideline on how to structure the design of the project. I found it useful because it deals with curricula issues using a genre approach in a systematic and explicit

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<sup>3</sup> This means how the texts ‘speaks’ to its audience.

manner. According to the document, learning approaches in the classroom should be supported, scaffolded and monitored (33). The strategies that facilitate this process are demonstration, modelling, discussion, guided listening, reading and viewing and joint construction (32). Whilst most of the above terms are self-explanatory, scaffolding, monitoring, and modelling require further explanation. Scaffolding is aimed at engaging learners in activities so that they gradually achieve independence in the chosen activity. Modelling involves a commentary or explanation by the educator, on how an activity might be undertaken, whilst monitoring is the ongoing assessment of learning using a range of assessment techniques as well as the appropriateness of resources (34, 37).

All of the above principles were adapted and incorporated into the leaflet action research project, to ensure sound pedagogical principles and explicit teaching.

A challenging aspect of the design was the sourcing of information because little was available on genre suitable for use in the classroom. Two books were located and proved to be invaluable. They were *Developing Writing Skills* (Ayres and Dayus: 1999), and *Skills in English* (McNab, Pilgrim, and Slee: 2000). The texts for the leaflet action research project were chosen from these resources. The following figure illustrates how the pedagogic concepts discussed above were adapted for the leaflet-action research project design.

Figure 3.5 The adapted design for the leaflet action research project at Park High

Guided reading of worksheet on genres in literature, prose, poetry, and script. Discussion on conventions and generic character roles. (Scaffolding and modelling).	Un-commonsense
Guided reading of worksheet on an adventure genre. Discussion on language and lexical choices. Ingredients in adventure. (Scaffolding and joint construction).	Un-commonsense Commonsense
Discussion on fantasy and the imaginary world- science fantasy. An exploration of technical terms. (Modelling and demonstration).	Un-commonsense
The narrative genre and recognising narrative detail. Focus on the character of the artful dodger. Character construction in terms of behaviour and appearance.	Un-commonsense
Guided reading and discussion of fiction and non-fiction genres. Similarities and differences between explanation and instruction.	Un-commonsense
Group planning and negotiation of the leaflet information genre. Presentational devices and conventions (modelling).	Commonsense
Research and writing up the leaflet design.	Commonsense
Finalisation of leaflet and filling in the questionnaire.	

Each lesson cycle was meant to conform to the process of action research including cycles of acting, observing, reflecting, planning, and changing. A complete account of the work done throughout the project is beyond the scope of this chapter. However, I will attempt to comment on how learners were moved from their current understandings of genre, to the final written factual leaflet. In the following section, I will discuss the cycle lessons that were planned according to three phases.

Figure 3.6 Lesson Phases in the leaflet project

	Lessons one to three	June 10-13
	Lessons four to seven	June 14-18
	Lessons eight to ten	June 19-21

### 3.3.3 The ten day cycle lessons: Preparing for genre

The introductory lessons (Phase one), focussed on the concept of genre, a term with which certain learners were unfamiliar. For many this was un-commonsense knowledge. Learners were then guided in the reading of the first worksheet on literature genres (*c.f.* Appendix A1). Group demonstrations emphasised the difference between prose, script and poetry as well as situations in which these different writing genres are used. In the next activity the term ‘sub-genre’ was defined followed by a reading, discussion, and oral presentation of the linguistic features of three texts on Adventure, Science fiction, and Science fantasy genres (*c.f.* Appendix A2, 3,4).

In small groups of three learners discussed the conventions of the story and completed a written exercise identifying ‘ingredients’ from a given list. This was followed by discussion on how language created a sense of action and movement in the adventure genre by using verbs (*Treasure Island*, 1883). Activities based on the science fiction text highlighted how language was used to create an imaginary world and fictive setting. An extract from Asimov’s *The Complete Robot* (1950), was read followed by an activity on technical language used in the passage. Learners discussed the possible

meanings of terms like lunar gravity, lunar city, Moonborn, positronic brain, and robot-mutt. Activities for discussion in the science fantasy genre (*The Subtle Knife*, 1960) included a study of language to see how the writer created fantasy and a magical atmosphere. The central character of the daemon in the passage was the focus of discussion as well. Learners had to create their own daemon by orally answering the question, "If you had a daemon what would it be like?" These texts were chosen together with the activities so that in engaging with different genres learners are interacting with the linguistic conventions.

The lexical choices of both adventure and science genres were explored at length in cooperative learning groups. Learners compared the setting, the character roles, and processes involved. This enabled learners to experience the different discourses and textual features of different genres they had encountered thus far (adventure, science fiction and science fantasy). Learners were being inducted into genre discourse, through scaffolded lesson- cycles, and learning through was consolidated through modelled and planned activities.

Phase two comprised the next three lessons. The conventions of the adventure and science genres were revised and learners were introduced to the narrative genre. At this point learners were confidently discussing character roles, functions, setting and commenting on grammatical choices and processes, which they could use in turn when constructing their own texts. The explicit scaffolding of learning different genres was to teach learners to recognise generic conventions as constructs. Another objective was to teach them about language choices made by writers for particular audiences and purposes.

The first activity in phase two was to examine how character roles are defined using lexical choice and how the readers' responses are accordingly shaped. The character of the artful dodger from *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens (1839) was discussed after a reading of an extract from the book ( *c.f.* Appendix A5). The oral activity that followed was based on narrative detail and how it was 'packed' into the sentence construction by the writer. Learners had to discuss how the writer shaped the reader's attitude to the character in the language choices used to describe appearance and behaviour. Thus far the teaching and learning in the classroom focussed upon fiction genres. The emphasis was shifted to genres that give information in the next lesson (*c.f.* Appendix B1).

Learners read and discussed how information can be presented in different forms taking into account the audience and purpose. Leaflets, posters, letters, newspapers, magazines, and e-mails were discussed. In seated pairs, learners discussed how informative genres were more factual by reading and discussing specific linguistic features. For example explanations are less direct or commanding, the reader is not directly addressed, and the passive voice is used. Instruction genres are direct and commanding and the writer speaks from a position of authority or knowledge. In randomly selected groups learners prepared an oral presentation to illustrate their understanding of the differences between an explanation and an instruction.

In phase three and over the next three lessons, the primary objective of the activities was to consolidate and scaffold learning in preparation for the leaflet production by the learners. At this point learners were put into mixed ability groups arranged by



myself to ensure that they had opportunities of interacting with other learners. The reason to change groups was based on my experience in previous tasks where learners chose to pair off with friends from the same race group. There were six groups in total. Two groups (two and five) had four learners and the remaining four groups had five learners each (groups one, three, and four). The task was to negotiate a topic and discuss the conventions of the genre. Each group was handed model copies that were sourced from a doctor's waiting room on *Osteoporosis* and *Hay Fever* (c.f. Appendix C1, 2). Learners had to discuss and note how the leaflet was designed and structured. They examined how it was presented, the information included, the balance between fact and opinion, the language choices, the visual impact as well as the importance attached to such genres. At the end of this session a group activity or task was set. The time frame for the task completion was two cycle lessons.

*Figure 3.7 Group tasks for the leaflet project*

- |  |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discuss and choose a topic suitable for a leaflet presentation.</li> <li>2. Choose a group leader, timekeeper and a scribe for the group.</li> <li>3. Decide on how you will source and research information.</li> <li>4. Decide on the presentation and design, and the use of technology.</li> <li>5. Plan a draft, revise, correct, and edit.</li> <li>6. Discuss who will be responsible for the printing of the leaflet.</li> </ol> |
|--|

To assist learners a worksheet on Presentational devices (c.f. Appendix B2), was handed out. This was intended to assist the learners with aspects regarding headings, sub-headings, captions, and paragraph layout, for the leaflet. Learners also had the leaflets on *Hay Fever* and *Osteoporosis* for use as models for construction.

At this point I had to move from the classroom to the Media Centre so that groups could access information. Learners worked in their groups with support, and assistance on relevant topic choices, from the media educator and myself. Group

discussions became earnest as the learners moved into the written tasks that became more complex and demanding. At this stage learners were working both independently and co-operatively going about their tasks responsibly. As the research was complete, they moved into the next task of planning a draft leaflet. Although I monitored the general progress of all the groups, the task of ensuring that each member was involved was left to the individual group leaders.

The two- week lesson cycle was by no means as effective as is described, but learners were drawn into the process through explicitly guided and structured tasks. Problems like time management, absent group members, and wrangling (addressed in the next chapter), became issues. The final lesson for this phase was scheduled for the group questionnaire (*c.f.* Appendix E).

The planning and design of the leaflet action research project would not be complete without plans for data collection. The following section details the research instruments and the thinking behind the data to be collected.

### **3.4 Data collection and research instruments**

Initially, when the project was planned, it had been decided that only field notes would be compiled since Miss Lo and I were inexperienced. The purpose of the notes was to observe and note classroom interaction between learners, the educator and learners, and the level of learner participation during classroom tasks. However, I succeeded in writing field notes based on my observations only for the first lesson whilst the learners were engaged with an activity. Thereafter, it became extremely difficult. As the educator researcher, I found that I was simultaneously engaged with

numerous tasks. During each lesson, I was constantly moving from teaching, monitoring, guiding, advising, supporting, discussing and answering queries from learner groups. This rendered note-taking almost impossible during lessons. The task was eventually relegated to either the end of the lesson, during a free period, and even a day later in some instances.

In retrospect, writing up field notes after lessons meant that I could have left out important information thus affecting the findings. The field notes were recorded in indirect speech with the use of pseudonyms for learner voices during lessons. An alternative method could have entailed recording the lessons but I felt that it would denaturalise the classroom environment. The objective was to maintain the normality of daily routine in the classroom and to record data as unobtrusively as possible. The field notes including learner interaction were recorded according to the three phases and in reported format.

Since this was an action research project designed to reflect upon my own practice, I did not see the need to engage in any scientific data collection before the intervention. Moreover, the purpose of the intervention was to introduce an innovative method of teaching writing at Park High. The final outcome of the project was a group task that had not been attempted before by Grade Ten 'G'. Previous exercises by learners were individually written narratives and personal recounts assessed mainly for 'creativity'.

The leaflet group task was performance based with a range of criteria that had to be considered in the production of the text. The criteria included presentation, 'factual content', layout, language choices, technical language, visual impact, and tone. To

measure learner performance, a rubric was used which would reflect the four levels contained in the *Curriculum 2005 Assessment Guideline Document* (24). The rubric would measure group achievement as opposed to individual achievement, reflecting on achievable outcomes rather than scores.

Figure 3.8 The standardised OBE (2005) rubric used for the 'leaflet' assessment.

Level 1	Outcomes	Not achieved
Level 2	Outcomes	Partly achieved
Level 3	Outcomes	Achieved
Level 4	Outcomes	Outstanding

(Source: *Curriculum 2002, Assessment Guideline*, and pp.24)

The decision to assess the groups using the rubric was prompted by the fact that the leaflet action research project was a process and skills based task. Therefore, the rubrics administered had a clearly defined purpose. This alternate model of assessment was meant to "...accommodate the learner's functional differences" (*Curriculum 2005 Assessment Guidelines*: 6).

The final instrument used for data collection was the group questionnaire. This was to be administered at the end of the last phase of the intervention. The objective was to provide feedback from the learner groups on perceptions about the genre approach as well as their comments and opinions about the intervention. The questions were open-ended to allow learners an opportunity to respond without feeling intimidated. The group had to appoint a scribe who would write down the collective group responses to each question. The questions were designed to elicit responses about group interaction as well as the intervention.

Figure 3.9 The group questionnaire

1. At this point after having gone through the process, does everyone in the group have a good idea about the differences between an explanation and instruction genre?
2. Comment on the value of the exercise. Was it interesting? Was it 'different'? Was it pointless?
3. Is the writing of factual genres important to learn?
4. Would you prefer to learn the rules of other genres before you are asked to write?
5. How did the task allocation within your group work?
6. What problems were encountered?
7. Is the finished product to your satisfaction?
8. Would you like to share anything else about this exercise?

The first question was intended for a general comment on the evaluation of the ten-day three-phase intervention. The second question was specifically aimed at eliciting a response about factual genres, as the learners had not engaged previously with factual writing. Question 4 was intended to measure the merit of using explicit methods of teaching writing as opposed to the current implicit methods. Questions 5 and 6 were intended to provide feedback about group dynamics, and levels of co-operation or lack thereof. Question 7 was included to gauge whether there was group satisfaction regarding the final outcome. The final question was a general one designed to allow learners to respond to any other issue they deemed important and which I may have deemed irrelevant. It allowed for honest criticism about any aspect of the entire intervention.

In retrospect and despite the careful planning and design of the leaflet action research project, there were areas of concern that could have been circumvented in some instances and in others were unavoidable. In the section that follows I reflect upon some of the important issues affecting the validity of this research.

### *3.4.1 Reflections*

The intervention was implemented in order to assist all learners in a multi-cultural classroom, not only to understand key concepts in genre usage, but also the impact on writing skills development. The intervention had research value since the planning with a colleague was systematic and collaborative. From the outset the interventions were scheduled as normal but 'new' learning within the classroom. This meant that an innovative writing pedagogy would be introduced within the normal lesson cycles. The difference was the explicit planning of each cycle, grounded within a theoretical perspective, and monitored at every stage. The intervention was finally implemented with one of the two classes selected (Grade Ten 'G'). Although this was not a serious problem it meant that any problems encountered could not be adequately rectified in advance and re-trialed.

Another area of concern was the accelerated syllabus coverage prior to the intervention that proved stressful for all involved. The learners complained about the extra homework they were expected to complete so close to the examinations. It also added to my workload, as I had to contend with extra marking. In retrospect I realised that although the pilot study was in jeopardy because Miss Lo left, I could have co-opted another colleague. The pilot would have assisted with problem areas like working groups, the lack of access to computers, and time management. I also felt that the final and most important phase of the project was rushed as learners were trying to meet deadlines for their tasks and prepare for the mid-year examinations. In phase three of the project learner absenteeism was on the increase and often groups had to work without all members present. However, the rapport and level of co-operation was immense and learners continued with the tasks within their respective

groups. However, despite these problems the data gathered and process described in Chapter 4, provides useful insights regarding the application of a genre approach to writing development.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS OF THE LEAFLET PROJECT

#### 4.1 Introduction

This research examined whether an explicit pedagogical approach grounded in the theory of genre would affect learner perceptions and competence in writing at Park High in Durban. In terms of classroom practice the project was planned in three phases with each phase meant to consist of three one- hour lesson plans.

In this Chapter, I shall provide evidence through an analysis of the three lesson phases (*c.f.* Chapter 3) of how learners' knowledge and understanding of genre was influenced through planned and meaningful classroom activities. This chapter also provides an account of the construction by learners of authentic factual texts of surprisingly good quality in terms of language, register, and design. I also analyse findings of the project based on field notes from classroom observations, group questionnaires, and an assessment of the factual leaflets produced by six groups of learners in Grade Ten 'G'. The data analysis intends to indicate how learners shifted in their understanding of genre, how learners worked co-operatively and collaboratively, as well as how they researched, drafted, designed, and produced a group text.

When implementing the intervention, as pedagogic strategy, I was guided by the approaches to the teaching of English in a multicultural classroom as found in *A Guide to Teaching English*, (Queensland Department of Education, 1994). According to the guide when educators embark on the teaching of new knowledge, they should



create a supportive learning environment for language learning. A supportive classroom environment is created by acceptance of the diverse cultural knowledge and abilities of all learners. Furthermore, a collaborative learning environment is attained by providing “opportunities for learners to explore how the context influences language choices” (34), and by “scaffolding, learning, and monitoring performance within a supportive learning environment” (32).<sup>1</sup> These were guiding principles in the implementation of the genre approach to writing in my classroom at Park High.

The analysis of each phase is followed by a reflective component that provides insights into problems encountered within each action research cycle. In the following section I shall discuss the analysis of the first of these cycles. I will describe how each lesson progressed during each phase, the responses of learners to the various tasks and activities, and the pedagogical implications thereof.

#### ***4.1.1 Phase one: shifting learners into genre mode***

The initial lesson in this first phase began by writing the word ‘genre’ boldly on the board and inviting learners to respond to it. According to Gadd (1996) teaching about genre does not begin with the text itself. An educator, he claims, cannot walk into a class and announce that the lesson is about genres. Genre teaching has to be taught in the context of research, discussion, and relevant learning experiences (11). Although aware of this need I, nevertheless, felt that it was necessary to begin with pupils’ understanding of genre. Initially there was confusion amongst learners in the

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<sup>1</sup> Scaffolding describes the kind of support that assists learners to complete learning activities with increasing confidence (*c.f.* Chapter 3).

classroom, and understandably so. I was supposed to begin with the revision programme for the mid-term examinations.

I reassured my learners that the revision programme would be completed as homework and marked daily. I also explained that we had to complete this 'new' section on writing as soon as possible in preparation for writing exercises in the second half of the year. Only then could I draw their attention to the board. I explained once again, that a general definition of the 'genre' word was required.

Responses from a few learners included:

- "A thing?"
- "Never heard of it!"
- "How do you pronounce it? Gen-ree?"
- "What are we doing?"
- "Do we need paper?"
- "Is this for marks?"

My field notes reflected my initial frustration: "I wished they would stop asking me irrelevant questions and get on with the lesson..." (Appendix F: 06/06/02, p2). The class did eventually settle down and attention was focused more directly on the board.

One of the learners made reference to *Scream* (a film) and added it was, "a kind of frightening movie." This provided the point of departure for the input that followed and sudden upswing in interest from the others. I began a list on the board and asked learners to name movie 'kinds' (or genres) they had viewed so that we could categorise them. The following reflects popular choices from learners and their efforts at categorising genre:

hindsight it might have been that they had never thought consciously about what they viewed in films and applying 'theory' and structure was 'uncommon sense' knowledge for them. To facilitate the completion of the task I provided an example.

Although not familiar with many of the films learners had seen, I used the simple example of the fairytale, *Cinderella* to illustrate the following character roles; Cinderella was the poor girl transformed by her virtue into a reward for the prince; the prince is the hero who seeks a suitable wife; the villains are the three jealous stepsisters and the wicked stepmother; the magic property is the glass slipper that will determine who is to wed the prince; the dispatcher is the King who sends invitations for a ball at which his son will find a wife; the helper is the fairy godmother who ensures that Cinderella gets to the ball. The simple analysis helped because by the end of the lesson most learners were quite vocal in their discussion groups. One group was debating whether Julia Roberts as the prostitute in *Pretty Woman* could be the princess! The discussion indicated that certain learners were engaging with character construction in genres and realising that role functions could be challenged.

The next lesson began with a worksheet on literature genres (*c.f.* Appendix A1). The activity intended to make learners aware of the different structure and language of literature genres. Learners in seated pairs were asked to use their creativity and prepare a presentation for younger children. They had to devise how they would teach children the differences between poetry, prose, and script. Since the class did study drama they were afforded the 'liberty' to use any medium (music, song, dance, and mime) in their oral presentations to the class.

The responses were disappointingly stereotypical for example: “We would explain the long sentences in prose, the incomplete sentences in poetry and dialogue in the script.” Two groups, however, had some interesting ideas. Their suggestion was that they would make up separate charts for each genre so that the difference could be noted visually. They would then read a short story, recite a poem and enact a short play. This would emphasise how they ‘sound’. There was also the idea of singing a song and then reciting it as poetry (Appendix F: 07/06/02, p4). It was clear that the two groups had given some thought to audience and register in their suggestions. I pointed this out to the others. I did not want to dwell on this since the lesson was drawing to a close and interest was waning.

In Lesson 2 the first activity was based on and narrative sub-genres. Copies of the extracts from an adventure, science fiction, and fantasy were handed out to learners (Appendix A2, 3,4). They were:

Figure 4.3 Texts for learner activities

	<i>Treasure Island</i>	R.L.Stevenson	1883
	<i>The Complete Robot</i>	I Asimov	1950
	<i>The Subtle Knife</i>	P. Pullman	1960

Each group was expected to first read through the text relevant to the task, discuss the task, and finally prepare an oral discussion for class presentation. The tasks focussed on generic features of adventures, the use of verbs to create action in adventure genres, technical terms in science genres, and character construction in fantasy. The objective was to familiarise learners with a repertoire of genres and features or ‘ingredients’ that typified them. To save time I allocated separate tasks to seven randomly selected groups of four. This meant that each group would focus on a

specific activity. The oral presentations had to be extended over two lessons in order to accommodate all the group discussions.

The first group had to select features of an adventure text from a given list. The responses were: mystery, action, excitement, suspense, danger, violence, and villains. The responses indicated that these learners understood the conventions of an adventure genre and no further discussion was required. The group did agree that their task was relatively 'easy' in comparison to others. Although the task focussed on one genre, it was evident that the learners' perceptions of what conventions constituted adventure genres is socially constructed (*c.f.* Chapter 2).

Group 2 had to identify action verbs from the adventure text. Their responses are represented in the table below.

*Figure 4.4 Learners' action verb responses*

suddenly	A little cloud of pirates
leaped	From the woods
Ran	Straight on the stockade
Opened	From the woods
Sang	A rifle ball through the doorway
Knocked	The doctor's musket
Swarmed	Over the fence
disappeared	Among the trees
shouted	To encourage them

Group 2 justified their choices by discussing how that the words suggested that adventures were "fast moving" and in this case "violent". A learner from another group challenged the idea that adventures were violent. She did not agree that there was any suggestion of violence in the text because guns and action were part of the excitement in adventure genres. I explained that although she was correct there was a

difference between violence and action. It was obvious that the text I chose was 'dated' for these 15 to 16 year olds. Perhaps their impressions were derived from representations of violence in films. In this activity learners may be viewed as learning about language in context, language choice in text construction, and language functionality. This is what Cope and Kalantzis (1993) regard as "being explicit about the way language works to make meaning" (1).

As the lesson ended it was decided to continue with the other group presentations on Monday. Group 3 was the first group and they had to read and discuss setting in *The Complete Robot* (1950). In their discussion with the class the group outlined what they perceived as a credible and realistic setting. Their responses included: "knowing" that the moon has craters, that "people have to wear spacesuits on the moon" and that "people float on the moon" (Appendix F: 10/06/02,p1). The group described the representations of lunar settings from their experiences but failed to describe the atmosphere constructed in the text. Although the learners in this group tended to ignore the text in their discussion, I realised that they were discussing the context, perhaps from science fiction films, or images of space from the media. What this indicated was that the learners recognised that genres were governed by discursive rules peculiar to certain genres. Insofar as my role in class was concerned, I tried as much as possible to displace " a discourse of authoritarian management" ( Cope and Kalantzis,1993:19) by acknowledging the groups contribution although the text was ignored.

Explaining the meanings (without the aid of a dictionary) of technical terminology in *The Complete Robot* was the next activity that Group 4 was allocated. I was

particularly interested in their interpretation of the word 'moonborn'. The group response was that "Jimmy (a character in the narrative), is moonborn because he was not born on earth- had never been there. He is different from his parents." They also explained that 'positronic' could mean a highly developed or a very limited brain because it belonged to a robot (Appendix F: 10/06/02, p2). I definitely could not argue with the definition! Learners had succeeded in what Kress (1995) describes as "meeting language in a text" and using it to interpret meanings in context.

The task that Group 5 had to complete was both written and oral. The group had to complete a comprehension exercise based on *The Complete Robot*. The aim of the exercise was to enable learners to understand that, even though this was a science genre, character construction and role functions still moved the narrative along. One of the questions they had to discuss was what the writer was saying about love and whether they agreed. They agreed that love is based on "people's experiences- what they do together - memories of a happy childhood." They were against Jimmy's father foisting the 'real' earthbound dog on him as a pet. They were of the opinion that Robutt, the robotic dog, was also 'moonborn' and that they therefore belonged together (Appendix F: 10/06/02,p3). I was really impressed with the groups' presentation of the task and complimented them on insights into language and interpretation of meaning. The articulate responses from the group were for me an indication of the postmodern concept of literacy whereby the educator "gives students the space to voice their own interests in their own discourse" (Cope and Kalantzis,1993:5).

One of the most interesting presentations was by Group 6. They had to read the text from *The Subtle Knife* (1961) and discuss what is a daemon and why it is an important part of a human being. They chose to compare Lyra, a character in the narrative, with Sabrina from the television series. From their discussion words from the text like “ferocious” and “snarling” did not connote evil but animal qualities. Sabrina is a teenage witch whose daemon and ‘familiar’ is a black cat called Salem. Though pupils seemed to evade the text, I was nevertheless, pleased that they made the connection between the written genre and the televised series. An interesting discussion followed on witches and films like *The Craft* and *Charmed* (Appendix F: 11/06/02, p4). As we were almost out of time I had to curtail the discussion. The issue of whether witches were good or evil remained unresolved but the group through their ‘restricted’ discussion on a particular genre indicated their understanding of its conventions. It was also significant that learners were looking at language more critically and reflectively (*c.f* Chapter 2).

Group 7 was asked to discuss their idea of a daemon based on the one that possessed Lyra, and to sketch it on paper. Their attempts at drawing evoked the following comment from a fellow learner: “Is it a tokoloshe? It looks so cute ... not frightening... you guys sure it’s evil?” The group made reference to the previous discussion on evil and animals symbolically associated with evil. They chose cats, tigers, and lions, as their favourite animal forms (a part of their task) because they believed these were symbols of power. I reminded them that we were looking for potential symbols of evil and that in certain cultures different symbols represent power and evil. Someone mentioned snakes that are symbols of evil in most cultures but worshipped by Hindus. The learner was making a connection about texts being



constructs from a particular position. This illustrates the point made by Cope and Kalantzis (1993) that genres are social processes and that texts are patterned in predictable ways according to the patterns of social interaction in a particular culture (7). However, despite the seemingly smooth flow of the lessons, my observations in the section to follow reveal that notwithstanding the planned nature of lessons I had to be flexible in my approach during the actual lessons.

#### *4.1.2 Reflections based on Phase one*

Despite the rather chaotic and confused introduction to genre, I was not dissatisfied with the outcomes insofar as learners demonstrated enthusiasm, interest, and participation in the tasks. The learners also accepted the 'new' section and engaged naturally with tasks. I realised that in the absence of a pilot I was not able to pace learning adequately. The result was that certain activities had to be rushed even though they were extremely interesting and enjoyed by the learners. I also 'loaded' lessons with activities with the result that there was too much content to digest for learners. There were occasional protests from certain learners with comments like, "Give us a break" or "Can we take five?" which they knew to be my favourite expression in class. I also chose to focus on oral activities that tended to be more time consuming than written work.

However, the collaborative and co-operative interaction between group members was pleasing. Since most activities were oral discussions the groups tended to be raucous but enthusiastic, and I found that I was constantly monitoring noise for fear of complaints from other educators. My field notes during this period indicate the quandary. "It is not possible to support, control, answer queries, observe, and teach at

once” (Appendix F: 11/06/02, p8). Hereafter, I decided to relegate note taking to after lessons and even during my free periods. Phase two, described in the next section, was originally planned to coincide with lessons four to six but as indicated this was not the case.

#### **4.2 Phase two: from fiction to fact**

In Phase one the emphasis was on enabling learners to engage with a variety of generic texts through programmes in listening, reading, speaking and discussing. The aim of this phase was to assist learners in seeing how language is shaped by choices made by writers. The objective was also to shift learners into thinking about factual writing.

In the first lesson of this phase I tried to complete the worksheet on narrative detail carried over from Phase one. It was an important activity because the aim was for learners to understand how writers used language to influence attitudes to constructed characters. For this reason, and because the first phase extended over four lessons, I decided to include it in this phase. Learners had to work individually and by reading through the text from *Olive Twist* (c.f. Appendix A5). The following activities had to be attempted in ten minutes. Learners were expected to write down words and phrases that conveyed narrative detail, and prepare responses to the writer’s intention in the characterisation of the Dodger. Learner responses to the first question read as follows:

1. The empty street.
2. The sun rising.
3. Oliver’s loneliness.
4. Oliver limping.
5. Not a soul was awake.
6. A lonely boy with bleeding feet.
7. The common faced snub-nosed boy.
8. The Dodger’s dialect.
9. A cold door- step.
10. Closed window shutters.

Although the written responses were appropriate, when questioned about narrative detail, learners were reluctant to respond. They could recognise the language in the text but not verbalise the characteristics of such language. I explained that it was how a writer creates a sense of place by using language like an artist would use a paintbrush.

Learner responses to the next question on the characterisation of the Dodger were interestingly varied and polarised. The purpose of the question was to enable learners to understand how writers used language to influence our attitudes and positions. One group of learners definitely believed that words in the text like “dirty”, “sharp ugly eyes”, “common-faced”, and “juvenile” were meant to evoke dislike. The rival group selected the words “swaggering” and “gentleman” to point out that the reader is meant to admire the Dodger. I reminded them of Propp’s character functions from the previous lesson, but the groups still clung to the hero/villain divide. Some learners ‘read’ him as a survivor, a streetwise victim of circumstances, and others as a criminal and confidence trickster (Appendix F: 12/06/02,p4). What was interesting was that learners were challenging character representations in texts from their personal and cultural perspectives. According to Cope and Kalantzis, it is bringing the ‘hows’ of language into the fore in a classroom by providing historically marginalized groups equitable access to a broad range of social options as possible (8).

I moved on to factual genres in the next lesson (*c.f.* Appendix B1). As an introduction I explained that ‘factual’ genres had a different set of features and conventions from the fiction texts thus far examined. I handed out a worksheet that was based on two factual genres and asked learners to read the texts in their respective groups, as well as

follow the instructions therein. Their attention was drawn to the use of the passive voice in the explanation, and the command in the instruction. I allowed ten minutes for reading after which learners had to begin preparing for the group oral. The topics had to be negotiated and learners could not present on the topic used as an example in the worksheet. The aim was to enable learners to use the passive or command mode according to the requirement of each genre. As it was almost the end of the lesson by the time groups were prepared, it was decided to continue with the work in the next lesson. The following are some of the topics that were eventually presented:

*Figure 4.5 Topics for explanation and instruction genres by learners*

1. How to dress for a rave?
2. How to fry chips?
3. How to make mealie-meal porridge?
4. How to roast a chicken?
5. How to make tea?
6. How to dump your boyfriend?
7. How to make milkshake?
8. How to study for the exams?

The oral presentations for the next lesson, provoked much laughter and amusement especially when learners used the word “thingy” or “what you call it” for colander, and “the spoon with holes” for spatula, and ladle, and even “Magi mix” for a blender. It was obvious that their culinary vocabulary was limited! The group that spoke on the ‘rave’ topic promised a makeup and clothes ‘demo’ to the uninitiated after the examinations. The most interesting presentation was on “How to dump your boyfriend?” The group presented a ‘send up’ although they did confuse the passive voice and command mode at times. The explanation started off something like this: “A boyfriend can be dumped instantly for a cuter guy by introducing him to your best friend.” The Instruction began with: “Invite your best friend to a party for two” (Appendix F: 14/06/02, p3). Although the passive voice proved problematic, learner

efforts were generally pleasing because the model in the worksheet was explicit and structured.

Although most groups succeeded in the switch from passive to active voice in writing, the change to speech proved difficult. The exercise was valuable in that learners realised that writing and speech require different skills. It was interesting to note how learners 'subverted' the generic conventions of factual genres making them 'creative' and funny. Subsequent reflections revealed interesting shifts in my own perceptions concerning learners and learning.

#### **4.2.1 Reflections based on Phase two**

The following entry in my field notes explains what I believe to be a contributing factor in the progress of learning experiences in Grade Ten 'G' during Phase Two. "It's amazing when assessment is removed, the learning environment becomes more meaningful and less intimidating" (Appendix F: 16/06/02, p7). During the course of the intervention learners constantly enquired whether specific tasks were 'for marks'. I had to reassure them that they were not. However, they were informed that I would 'monitor' their progress during the process and only evaluate the final task. This helped in the creation of a less inhibiting learning environment because learners often felt hampered by the culture of continuous assessment. This was a highly motivated group of learners and the competition for class positions was strong, therefore, I could understand their concerns about assessment.

Further, the pace of Phase two was considerably slower than Phase one and I found it less stressful because learners had settled into the new lesson routine. I felt that my

introduction to the factual genre was mediocre. I continued to regulate group behaviour as various tasks were attempted to ensure maximum participation. According to Christie (1997), the regulative register of the educator guides and directs the behaviour of the pedagogic subjects. My purpose was to ensure that learning about genre was made visible to most learners in an explicit manner as suggested by Cope and Kalantzis (*c.f.* Chapter 2).

Although random groups were working well throughout Phase one and two, I noticed that groups were formed along racial lines. The classroom desks were arranged in groups of three with mother tongue learners seated in the middle of the room, and non-mother tongue along the periphery. The groupings appeared natural on account of the usual seating order. However, I decided to re-group learners for Phase three in order to afford them the opportunity to work with different people. I also observed that the preparation of tasks was time consuming although I tried to set time limits. Affinity groups had the tendency to 'talk shop' so the decision to change working groups could overcome the problem. By the end of this phase the class had been through seven lessons. This meant that we had three lessons left for the third and final phase.

#### ***4.3 Phase three: more about factual genre***

The tasks designed for learners in Phases one and two, were planned so that learners, through a series of scaffolded activities, would achieve autonomy in constructing the leaflet text at the end of this final phase. The first lesson in this phase began by changing the seating and grouping of learners. One of the learners commented, "Miss is mixing us". A few others protested at being separated from their friends. Each

group was allotted a number and I recorded names of group members to prevent affinity groups forming again. The following figure represents the composition of groups for the leaflet:

Figure 4.6 Groups for the 'leaflet project'

3	2	5
2	2	4
3	2	5
2	2	4
1	3	4
3	2	5

There were twenty-eight learners in total. Previously groups reflected either mother tongue or non-mother tongue learners. As soon as the class was settled I handed out copies of the model text that they would produce. These were informative leaflets I had sourced from a doctor's waiting room. They were entitled, *Osteoporosis* and *Hay Fever* (c.f. Appendix C1, 2).

The guiding principle in Phase three was the concept of "explicit demonstration". Explicit demonstration can provide learners with an awareness of stages in a genre whereby learners *confirm* their own actions as they participate in an activity using their existing knowledge about language (Cope and Kalantzsis, 1993: 79). In the two previous phases learners had already been through the interrelated processes of discussing, modelling, and scaffolding. The challenge in this final phase was to test whether learners could use their knowledge and independently, discuss, research,

design, draft and produce a factual leaflet. The following instructions were given to the groups:

*Figure 4.7 Instructions for the leaflet task*

1. In your respective groups study the leaflets on *Osteoporosis* and *Hay Fever*.
2. Examine the structure, design, and language
3. Appoint a group leader, scribe, and timekeeper.
4. Negotiate a topic based on a medical condition within your community or Family.
5. Discuss how and where you will research the information.
6. Design a well presented leaflet
7. Make reference to the handout on presentational devices (*c.f.* Appendix B2).
8. Decide who will be responsible for working with the computer.

I realised that the task was onerous and heavily scaffolded but also an opportunity for learners to test their problem solving and co-operative learning skills. I directed groups to designated spaces in the classroom with the instruction to read through the models and decide on a plan of action. I also reminded them that they had half an hour before the lesson ended to negotiate a topic.

Before the end of the lesson I negotiated 'ground rules' for working. We agreed that one lesson would be spent in the Media Centre researching information, I would turn on their favourite music station in exchange for peace and productivity, and that interruptions would be kept to a minimum. This promise, together with the intended visit to the Media Centre, generated tangible excitement. However, by the end of the lesson only one group had decided upon a topic. At this stage I was relieved that the intervention was nearing completion. I invited individual comments and questions on the task to be attempted. Some learners were of the opinion that it was "hard" whilst others expressed surprise at the "different" writing activity. A few asked if "this is English we're doing?" (Appendix F: 17/06/02, p5).



Lesson 2 of Phase three in the Media Centre began chaotically with learners rushing around for resources. To overcome the chaos I asked the group leader to liaise with the Media educator. No sooner were learners settled (in under ten minutes), I was reminded: "Miss you forgot something – the music". The session in Media Centre was pleasant, productive, and peaceful. I only had to assist one group in their final choice of topic. They wanted to research *Albinism* and wanted to know if it was "Okay because Sorisha has it." I was unsure whether it would embarrass the learner or not and asked them to re-think the decision. They decided against it eventually. Certain groups complained about insufficient information and requested permission to use the Internet. The group that researched *Menopause* claimed that they "want to know why their mothers and certain educators behave weird sometimes!" The group that researched *Gonorrhoea* wanted me to approve the visual for their front cover that they thought may be 'rude'; I found it amusing. I was pleased to note that groups had allocated tasks equitably by breaking down the topic into sub-sections and by the end of the lesson had gathered most information.

The final lesson back in class was stressful for all. There were a few learners absent and they were affecting the progress of collating and drafting information. Out of the six groups only four managed to work through the draft. Groups 4 and 6 were still in conflict over who would work in the computer room. They were reluctant to give up the lunch break and that was the only time they could be in the computer room. Since the computer teacher would not allow learners into the venue, I offered to help out. I had utilised the ten days planned for the intervention and could not utilise another lesson on account of the examinations. The groups, however, promised that they

would complete the task if I granted them an extension. In the last ten minutes of the lesson the group questionnaire was handed out to group leaders for completion.

#### **4.3.1 Reflections based on Phase three**

Phase three was characterised by uncertainty and anxiety on my part. My field note entry reflected what I feared. "What if groups affected by absenteeism do not hand in the work?" (Appendix F: 19/06/02,p5). We were a week away from the examinations and learners were staying away to study and it was possible that I would not see some of the learners again. I was also concerned that once the intervention was over learners would become disinterested and submit work of poor quality. However, all the groups eventually did hand in the completed leaflets. Many were unhappy about the lack of access to computers but still managed to complete the task. This final phase of the intervention was by far, for me the most rewarding. I enjoyed the session in the Media Centre because the learner groups were focussed and did not require much assistance or monitoring.

In retrospect the intervention using action research as a method proved to be really useful. I found that even though certain lessons did not follow my ideal plan, I could be flexible in my approach. The empirical nature of action research also facilitated, for me, constant evaluation in the classroom regarding learning and group interaction. During the entire process my intention was to "induct" learners into genres and extend their knowledge about writing conventions (Cope and Kalantzis, 1993:7). To what extent I succeeded will be addressed in the following analysis.

Thus far I have described the classroom interaction during the three phases, and ten lessons for the "leaflet action research project". By the end of the final phase learners

had produced the factual leaflets that constituted the writing task. The leaflets (*c.f.* Appendix D 1-6) produced by the six groups will be analysed in the section to follow. I have decided to analyse them simultaneously with the group questionnaires (*c.f.* Appendix E for collated responses) because both provide useful insights into, and evidence of, learner attitudes and abilities.

#### **4.4 Analysis of questionnaires and leaflets**

The questions (*c.f.* Appendix E for questions and collated responses) in the group questionnaires encompassed three broad themes. They were concerned with attitudes to explicit methodology in writing, knowledge about a wide range of generic conventions, and group dynamics. The responses revealed both divergent and convergent points of view.

In response to Question 1 (Does everyone in the group understand genres?), all six groups admitted that they did but acquiring knowledge was neither automatic nor instantaneous. Group 2 understood genres only after the oral presentation by other groups on factual genres. Group 6 admitted that although they understand genres it was initially "difficult". The learners are accustomed to associating writing with self-reflection and creativity, not writing up factual information in leaflet form. This constituted for them unfamiliar discourse to which they are unaccustomed. The discourses of factual writing are marginalized in the writing curricula of schools, hence the difficulty for learners. This indicates that learning the conventions of different writing genres is a process that requires years of practice to master (Christie, 1989:49). Learner responses also concur with Martin's (1989) view that children can

be taught factual writing and if they are not socialised into writing of this kind they find themselves at a disadvantage (48).

In response to Question 2 (Comment on the value of the process) at least two groups described it as “pointless” and four groups as “interesting”. The former attitude could be prompted by the fact that I was not “giving marks” thus the tasks did not appear to warrant serious consideration. Out of six, four groups commented on the interest factor and appeared to concede that learning about factual writing can indeed be fun. For learners writing is often perceived as a solitary and ‘punitive’ undertaking assessed in terms of what is lacking in their work. The ‘threat’ of scores was absent in the assessment of the leaflets yet learners were motivated enough to produce good work. This indicated that the process was for them as important as the product.

All six groups were in agreement about the need to learn the conventions that govern different genres. { Is it important to learn factual genres? (Question3). Should rules in writing be learned? (Question 4)}. These responses indicate the value learners attached to the explicit pedagogy. Rothery (1985) explains that although educators require structure in learners work, they do not teach it in advance; therefore, the hidden curriculum operates by not letting learners know what we want from them (80). However, despite the disparate responses all groups produced texts that were cohesive and well structured. There was also a sense of pride in the final leaflet produced as was evident in the responses to Question 7 about the final product. Five out of the six groups commented favourably on their personal satisfaction with the completed leaflet.

I 'assessed' the cohesion of the leaflets according to anaphoric and cataphoric criteria (Halliday and Hasan: 1976). Anaphoric texts are texts where the *language succeeds* in co-referencing or pointing back to something, and a text is cataphoric when *language is used to link parts of the text* (my emphasis). Martin describes similar considerations that can be applied to 'test' whether texts 'succeed' in their construction. These are lexical cohesion, schematic structure, conjunction, and theme. Lexical cohesion has to do with relevance and 'staying' on the topic, structure refers to the beginning, middle, and end; conjunction has to do with being logical; and theme is a particular angle in a text (84,87). The following table illustrates how each leaflet was cohesive in every respect (*c.f.* Appendix D1-6)

Figure 4.8 Cohesion in group leaflets

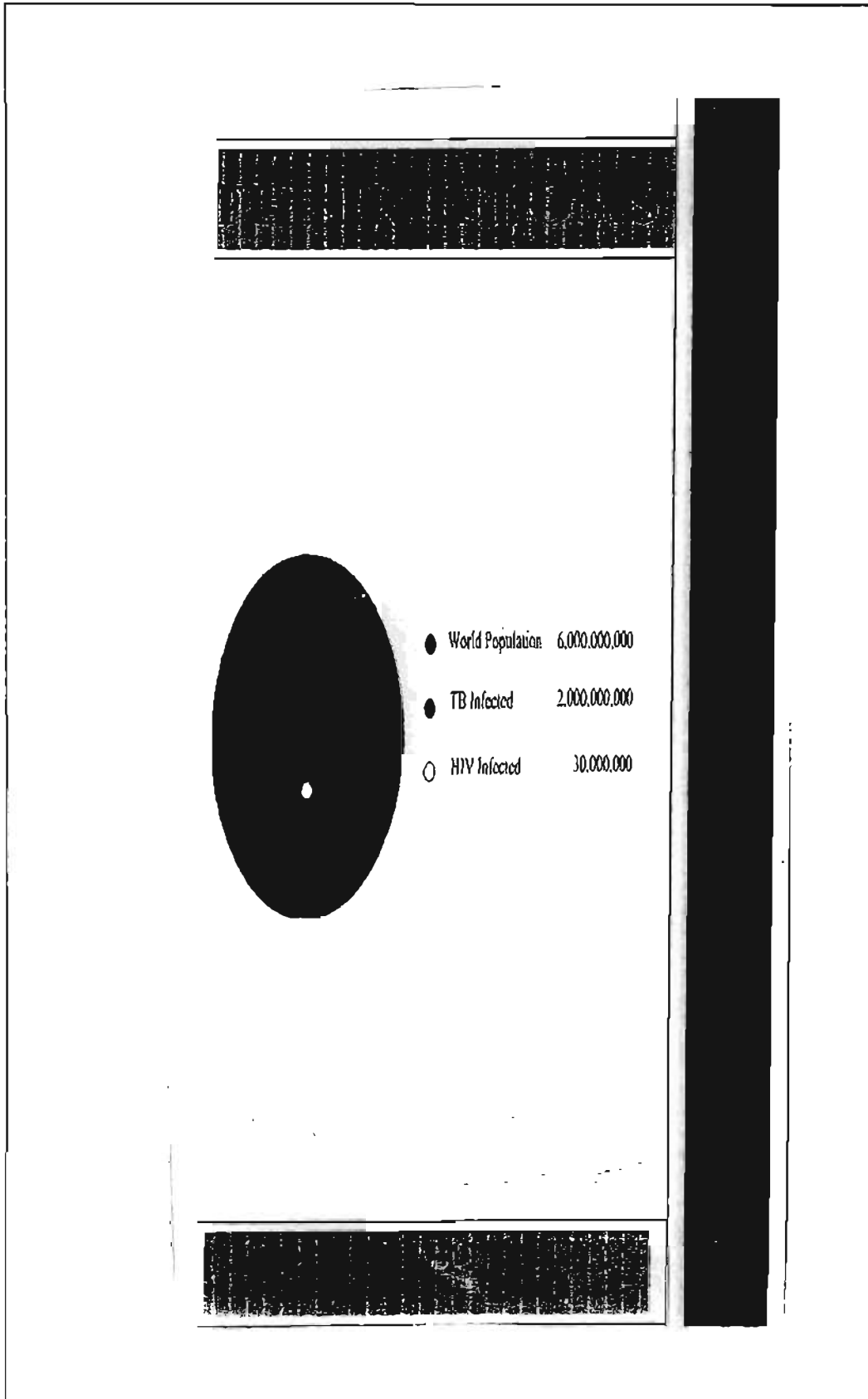
<i>Tuberculosis</i>	What is T.B? What causes T.B? Why is it a problem? Symptoms Prevention Cure
<i>Arthritis</i>	What is Arthritis? Causes of Arthritis How to identify Arthritis? Medication available for sufferers
<i>Menopause</i>	What happens during Menopause? Menstrual change Symptoms Planning for Menopause Managing your Menopause
<i>High Blood Pressure</i>	What is High Blood Pressure? Causes of High Blood Symptoms of High Blood How to live with High Blood Effects of High Blood
<i>Parkinson's Disease</i>	Who gets it? What causes it? Why is it a problem? What are the symptoms? Can it be cured?

	<i>Gonorrhoea</i>	What causes Gonorrhoea? Who gets it? What are the symptoms? Can it be cured?
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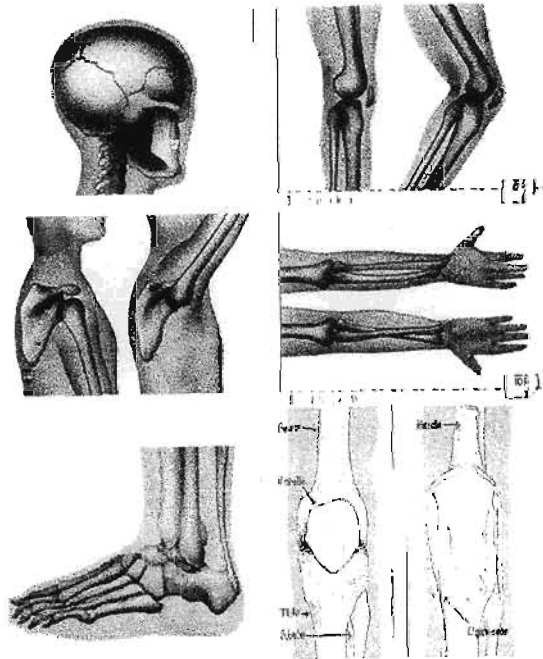
Group responses to collaborative and co-operative learning were mostly positive. The questions were based on how the task allocation worked and whether group members experienced problems (*c.f.* Appendix E: Questions 5, 6). In all six groups learners rated happiness, pleasure, responsibility, compromise, mutual respect and determination as indices of group success.

In addition high levels of group co-operation were clearly evident in the responses from all six groups. This was despite the difficulties experienced regarding research and technology. This indicated an intrinsic desire to produce a text that fulfilled a creative need. Certain learners had perceived the task as boring even before they started. The group comments reveal that even though learners constructed an informative leaflet according to its generic conventions, creative skills could be incorporated. This contradicts the position by Kress (1982) that teaching genres hampers creativity (2). Alternatively, Martin (1989) claims that there are no facts out there against which we can measure the truthfulness or accuracy of a text. Facts are created by language as we speak and because of this factual writing requires all the creativity and imagination if it is to succeed (49). Learners in Grade Ten 'G' went to great lengths to find matching visuals and inserts for their multi-modal leaflets. Groups 5 and 6 even went to the extent of producing a bi-lingual text. The following extracts from the front covers and selected pages from learners' leaflets portray the range of information and creativity groups put into the product.

*Group 1 Tuberculosis*



*Group 2 Arthritis*

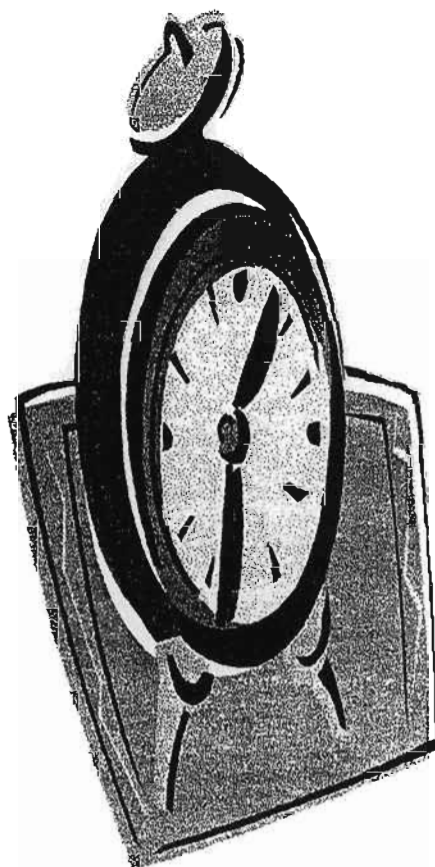


**ARTHRITIS**

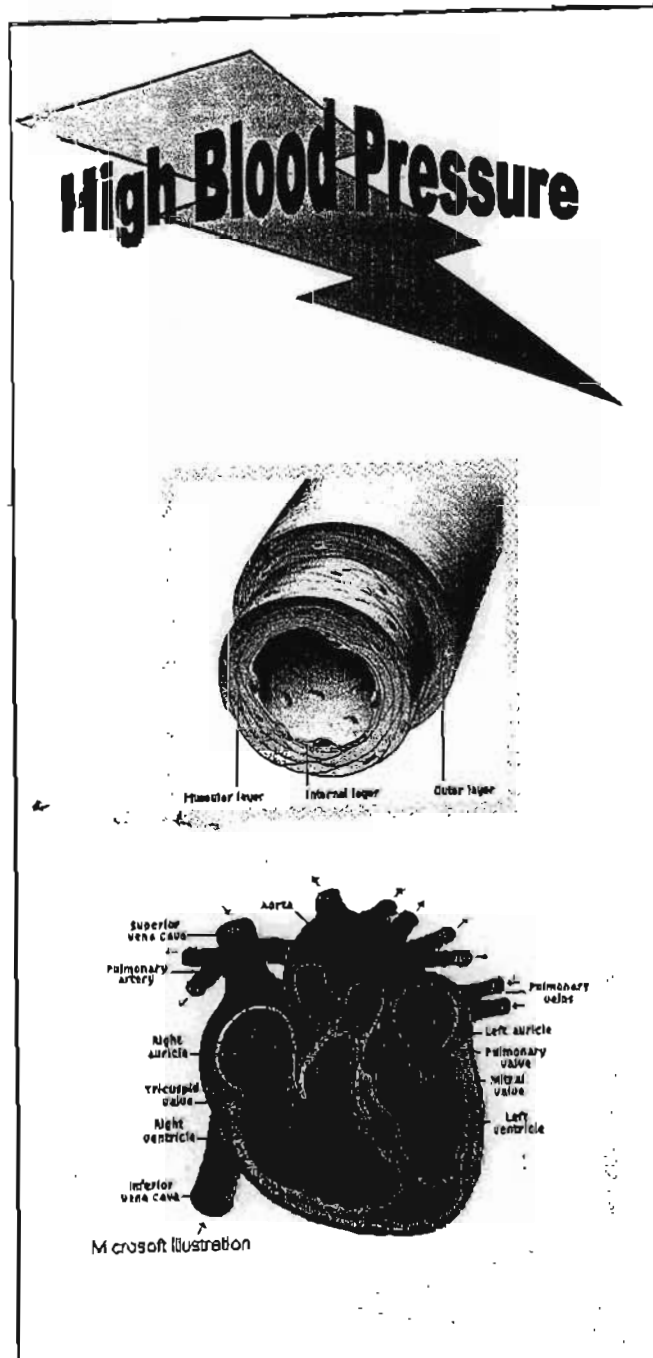


*Group 3 Menopause*

**MENOPAUSE**



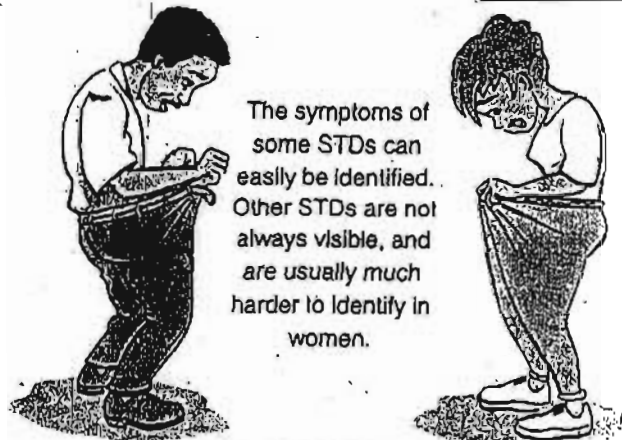
Group 4 High Blood Pressure



*Group 5 Parkinson's disease*



**Iyini I-Parkinson's**  
*Isifo esibangwa*  
*ukukhukazeka kwengqondo.*  
*Enaphisa ukusebenza*  
*kwemisipha.*

*Group 6 Gonorrhoea***WHAT IS GONORRHOEA**

**Gonorrhoea is one of sexually transmitted diseases-(std`s). It can be transmitted through sexual contact.**

**Gonorrhoea Helpline  
0800 123 777**

It is interesting to note how Group 1 quoted statistics on the front cover as a device to attract attention to the serious threat of Tuberculosis. Also worthy of note are the appropriate visuals by Groups 2 and 4 to focus on their topics on Arthritis and High Blood Pressure. The symbol of the ticking biological clock was used by Group 3 to convey information on the natural process of Menopause. Group 6 used humour effectively to focus attention on a serious issue of sexually transmitted diseases. The final illustration of learner efforts in creativity is apparent in the bi-lingual leaflet produced by Group 5. They chose to write the information on Parkinson's in both isiZulu and English. Generally the quality of the leaflets was rather pleasing and indicated that learners were considering issues of audience and register in the text construction. The following reflections reveal more insights into learner participation.

#### **4.5 Reflections**

The "leaflet project" was researched with a group of twenty-eight learners of which thirteen were non-mother tongue learners. The findings appear to suggest that learners generally were positive in their perceptions about a genre approach to learning about writing. In Phases one to three, I have been able to show that learners were inducted explicitly through staged processes into the linguistic conventions peculiar to different genres. Although learners' responses were sometimes ambivalent the general attitudes indicate a shift in perceptions, growing confidence, real knowledge using authentic tasks, a yearning to further explore genres, and pleasure in classroom interaction. However, this research was not without its limitations. These will be discussed together with the strengths, and recommendations in the final chapter.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

#### 5.1 An overview of the “leaflet action research project”

The leaflet action research project at Park High examined whether an explicit ten-day intervention, integrating a focus on language, and the insights gained from genre theory, would influence learners’ perceptions about writing. In this chapter I discuss the findings based on collected data, the limitations that affect the project, the strengths that made the findings valuable, and recommendations for classroom practice in English. What follows is an explanation of the thesis in its entirety.

Problems pertaining to writing skills encountered at Park High by educators of English are addressed in Chapter 1 of this thesis. The chapter also traced the transforming learner demographics at the school after 1994 and its effect on teaching methods. Further, the chapter described how the leaflet project, prompted by an interest in the promotion of collaborative and democratic learning practices, was planned at Park High to extend learner abilities in writing.

Chapter 2 provided the theoretical framework that informs this thesis together with current debates concerning literacy practices. The compatibility of genre theory with theories of language, society and culture was explored to suggest that a conventional approach to English favoured a cultural heritage paradigm and consequently disempowered certain learners (*c.f.* Chapter 2). Also explored in Chapter 2 was the influence of developments in English education and the concomitant effect on literacy education in South Africa. In Chapter 3, I described the planning, methodology, and

implementation of the leaflet project and its integration into the normal timetable of Grade Ten 'G' at Park High. The intended outcomes of the project, as well as considerations regarding school-based action research, were also dealt with in this chapter. In addition, Chapter 3 describes how learners were introduced to genre in the classroom, together with structured tasks designed as for learning about language and generic conventions. In the following section, selected aspects of the findings of the "leaflet action research project" are discussed.

### **5.1.1 Findings of the leaflet action research project**

The methodology and project was designed to ascertain the effect of the intervention in terms of,

1. Learner perceptions regarding the genre approach to learning about writing.
2. Whether the factual leaflet produced would conform to the conventions of an explanation genre.
3. The degree of co-operation between group members.
4. The level of participation by learners in classroom activities.
5. The use of technology in the construction of the leaflet.

The findings, based on observation of classroom interaction and supported by group questionnaires, indicate that learners came to value explicit methodologies in writing by participating in a genre approach to the eventual development of a scientific text. Most learners responded positively to the learning of factual genres describing them as 'different', but also interesting and 'fun' to do. However, certain learners also acknowledged that the participation in the construction of, and learning about, different genres was by no means an easy undertaking.

Baynham (1995) articulates this concern by stating that the teaching and learning about writing has different "angles". The three main "angles" are, writing a process, writing as text, and the writer who constructs the message (208). Furthermore writing

as a process examines writing as social practice. This involves the various “angles” of writer subjectivity, audience and purpose, the text as a product, the power of the genre, and the source of that power (209). Learners may have possibly experienced difficulty because acquiring skills in writing is about the realisation of ‘angles’ which itself is a process over time.

In general, learner responses to writing in collaborative groups revealed insights about the value placed on sharing skills, knowledge, and resources in multicultural classroom contexts. These findings indicate that writing in English does not have to be a solitary, daunting, and intimidating event for those who are disadvantaged or who are not mother tongue speakers. Co-operative group writing allows for the possibility for greater participation by those who might otherwise appear marginalized in problem solving activities.

The findings also describe a learning environment in which the acquisition of knowledge became a shared process with learners willing to collaborate with the educator- researcher and other learners. Camilli (1992) states that schools are competition based and that competition inhibits learning. In the “ leaflet project”, individual competition was diffused within a group-learning environment. According to Kohn (1986), learners who learn co-operatively retain their knowledge longer than those who compete (30).

The observation of learners in a report back activity (*c.f.* Chapter 4) on the explanation genre indicated how they chose to subvert generic conventions. Instead of an explanation on how something is done, they chose to satirise the process adding



humour and creativity. This revealed that learners were not passive recipients in the learning process, but active agents resisting and questioning genres as ideological constructs. Kress (1995) uses the term 'polarised' to describe a curriculum based on the theory of genre. He states that there exists a tension "between constraining authority of convention and rule, and the dynamic of individual desire" (65). Kress supports this argument by stating that text production occurs with differing aims of the participants. Language should therefore, be viewed as diverse, dynamic, and not as fixed or subject to inflexible conventions (65). The findings of my research acknowledge that learning about genres can be viewed as explicit pedagogy. Within an explicit approach however, there is room for critical strategies of deconstruction, critique, and subversion.

However, according to Macken-Horarik (1998) "It is not fair to invite students to critique texts before they have learned to analyse them" (78). The learner group that attempted the genre subversion had by the end of Phase Three of the project, acquired sufficient knowledge about genres and could therefore be critical. Macken-Horarik also asserts that there is no way into critical practices but through the mainstream (78).<sup>1</sup> Critical literacy practices are therefore dependent on mainstream literacy practices.

An analysis of the texts produced by my learners at Park High, indicated how they not only took advantage of technology but also produced multi-modal texts (c.f. Chapter 4). According to Cope and Kalantzis (2000) multi-modal texts display multiple ways of conveying meaning (14). The leaflets also provide evidence of

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<sup>1</sup> Macken-Horarik defines mainstream literacy as that which is taught within school but also specialised in that learners would produce and interpret epistemic texts.

digital literacy in that learners “packaged information” in a non-linear manner (Cope and Kalantzis, 2000:232). The texts also showed evidence of linguistic variety whereby certain groups used a dual lingual approach (isiZulu and Afrikaans). Such evidence of innovation refutes the misconception that factual genres lack creativity. The factual leaflets produced by Grade Ten ‘G’ reveal that factual genres can be handled with great skill by learners, thereby demystifying the process by which the writing is configured. These selected findings provide positive comment on the salient aspects of the “leaflet project” such as learner perceptions, participation, and leaflet construction. The “leaflet project” was not without its limitations or strengths that will be discussed in the next section.

## **5.2 Limitations and strengths**

The leaflet project using the genre approach offered insights into learner attitudes; it also influenced my own practice in the teaching of writing. As such the use of the genre approach can be seen to respond to the particular needs of a specific school. Although the data is valuable for the purposes of this research it is difficult to generalise it to a large population. First, the sample size was too small for generalisation; second, the demographics and democratic ethos of Park High are not characteristic of all schools. Such an intervention may not be possible in a school with a performance based ethos or an autocratic learning environment.

The research was also limited on account of the fact that the intervention could not be trialled. Thus problems that arose regarding time management, modification of group questionnaires, and effective observation, would have required further trialling.

A major constraint was time. Since I could not trial the project (*c.f.* Chapter 2), I tended to 'pack' lessons because of my added concern about mid-year examinations. Although learners participated enthusiastically, certain groups did not get the opportunity to report back on some activities. The result was that there was no way of assessing by means of a test, for example, whether learners had a clear understanding of genre and generic conventions. Moreover, most activities were grouped and my observations focussed upon group interaction and behaviour, making it difficult to get an impression of individual learners. An ideal research plan might have included an exploration with learners into their prior learning. The learners in Grade Ten 'G' were an eclectic mix from various primary schools in and out of the inner city area. A history of writing practices at primary school level would have added value to the research.

However, despite the limitations, the research changed my pedagogy in the writing classroom. Action research is about an inquiry into own practice and is thus different from that conducted by an outside or 'objective' researcher. It has the potential to lead to immediate change and to encourage critical self-reflectivity. Furthermore, the research has created added interest in functional linguistics and meta-language awareness. I acknowledge that educators need to empower themselves first and learn the meta-language of genres as it is not 'commonsense' knowledge. Unfortunately, the lack of support from education departments, together with suspension of study leave options, make it difficult for educators to professionally develop which itself is a limitation to school innovation.

The strength of the research lies in the realisation that learners can be explicitly taught the genres of power in society. The learners in Grade Ten 'G' in questionnaire responses mentioned the importance of 'facts' in constructing texts. However knowledge about different genres should be the subject of a properly planned curriculum responding to the specific needs of learners in a school. According to Macken-Horarik (1998) "explicitness is an important component of a visible pedagogy...this extends not only to knowledge about registers and genres but to knowledge about the relative value these are accorded in different institutions" (81,82).

The findings in general do support the fact that learners attitudes were affected and that their understandings of different genres influenced positively the construction of independent texts. In the following section I shall attempt to describe the implications of this project for writing in the English classroom.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

The uncertainty and constant changes in education policy decisions in South Africa have led to recently, a 'drain' of qualified educators. Large classes and the unequal resources are some of the concerns that frustrate South African educators. The quality of educator training constitutes an important resource base in any school. Educators who leave (mainly to the United Kingdom) are language educators who take with them the skills needed in our classrooms. However, with diminishing resources, the real agent of change is, and has always been, the educator in the classroom. The educator in the South African school needs to become self reflective in order to intervene directly in how and what learners learn. Educators might adopt a collegial

approach at school level assisting each other with continuous research in regarding problematic aspects of the curriculum. Insofar as writing is concerned, the need for a theory of writing is important because a theoretical framework enables the practitioner to reflect and focus more sensitively on practice.

One of the many challenges in the present day English classroom is that the construction of narrative genres and sub-genres are taught implicitly. Current practice assumes that learners have inherent knowledge of how narratives are constructed. Learners who are unfamiliar with the discursive rules that regulate these genres are likely to write poorly. If these 'conventions' become transparent the possibilities of improving writing skills, even in the narrative genres, is greater.

In the wake of a post-apartheid and post-modern world, how learners learn also has to be reconceptualised. Increasingly learners in our classrooms are becoming consumers of other forms of literacy practices. Should they not, therefore, become producers of other forms of literacy as well? The responsibility lies with the educator to adopt an integrative approach to technology in a rapidly transforming world. This does not mean rendering mainstream practices obsolete but expanding the craft of produced texts in multi-modal formats. Kress (1995) is of the opinion that writing in a post-modern world is losing its importance, and is moving into more speech like forms (148). Clark and Ivanic (1997) suggest an alternative perspective. They maintain that being able to write is perceived as a sign of being educated, and that the ability to master dominant conventions is important. The mastery of dominant conventions provides the disadvantaged "a writing space" (40). This is an overriding concern for educators in heterogeneous learning environments. The dilemma is how to create

writing space or voice for diverse linguistic and cultural groups. Using the genre approach to learning about writing may well provide the answer.

Insofar as tertiary institutions are concerned, teacher training should include both 'what' to teach and 'how' to do it within theoretical frameworks. Furthermore, research undertaken by educator-researchers should be made available to a wider audience instead of remaining as academic inquiries accessed by mainly academics. A closer partnership between educators in the classroom and tertiary institutions needs be undertaken, in an effort to jointly solve problems as well as research issues in education.

A recent report in the *Daily News* (09/12/02) conveyed the concern of local and international experts in education that many African countries will fail to meet literacy targets set by the United Nations. Although the report was about adult literacy, it made mention of the lack of resources in poor and disadvantaged communities as hampering literacy development. The only opportunities for redress lie in equal opportunities for access provided for learners from such backgrounds, who enrol at well- resourced schools. As educators we need to take cognisance of such inequities and address them in a direct way within the curriculum, and through classroom pedagogy that is inclusive of differences. As educators we also need to become aware of the ideologies that inform our own teaching insofar as pedagogical practices are concerned. The emphasis on the teaching of narrative genres has become entrenched at most schools and accepted as 'natural'. Such practices disempower learners in that narratives are socially constructed and can, and should be challenged if writing in the curriculum is to be redressed.

An additional problem is the teacher- pupil ratio even in ex Model 'C' schools like Park High. Language educators find themselves burdened by marking on account of large groups. Co-operative writing in groups can be a partial solution to this problem. The current practice is to assess all writing according to a common rubric and to treat all writing according to the process approach (*c.f.* Chapters 1, 2). However, different genres realise different registers, linguistic features, and purposes. Thus, a common assessment rubric cannot be applied evenly to all writing, as has previously been the case (*c.f.* Chapter 1, 2). Furthermore, the practice of assessment in terms of scores, based on what is deficient in the writing, also needs to be examined. Genre based pedagogy invites criterion referenced assessment practices; in other words, texts are assessed in terms of the extent to which a genre conforms to the model text regarding design, lexis, and semantics.

Structured and explicit teaching, as with the genre approach, does foreground the authority of the educator. Gultig (1999) argues for a "reconceptualised undertaking of theory and teacher authority (which) are the legs of good, progressive education" (57). This premise is the foundation of my research because learners cannot learn about genres by themselves and educators cannot teach about genre without theory. Gultig states further that teacher education is not currently focused on building a curriculum and pedagogy that integrates theory, practice, knowledge, and skills (59). Instead teacher education emphasises skills and neglects theoretical knowledge. He cites Outcomes Based Education as being 'suspicious' of teacher authority in its focus on learner centeredness (64). However, the educator is also a learner in this context because teaching about genre is not only covering content but also exploring a

repertoire of genres. Clark and Ivanic (1997) suggest that, "...there is no right route through the physical procedures and mental processes involved in writing and no right set of practices, but routes and practices are affected by the context in which the writer is operating" (81).

By implication educators cannot ignore that the process of writing occurs in culture bound contexts. This brings me to the concluding section of this chapter.

#### **5.4 Conclusion**

The debate about the failure of non-mother tongue learners to acquire first language proficiency in English has not been considered for the purposes of this research. As a non-mother tongue educator teaching in a multicultural school, I made a conscious choice like the learners at Park High to acquire the cultural capital of the English language. This thesis represents an effort to address the needs of such learners and educators, to acquire further competency and cultural capital in English. However, this is especially difficult when conventions of hegemonic genres at school, and tertiary level are implied within a 'hidden curriculum'. Most schools and tertiary institutions have an increasing enrolment of non-mother tongue learners schooled at English medium institutions. They graduate from secondary and tertiary institutions, expected to 'know' generic conventions. For all these learners a structured, explicit curriculum that combines theory with practice may well improve proficiencies not only in English but other learning areas as well.

My thesis acknowledges the work educators do to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the writing classroom. My thesis also acknowledges, and explores the challenges that multicultural education poses to educators whose training might not



have prepared them adequately for the demands of the English classroom in post-apartheid South Africa.

**END**

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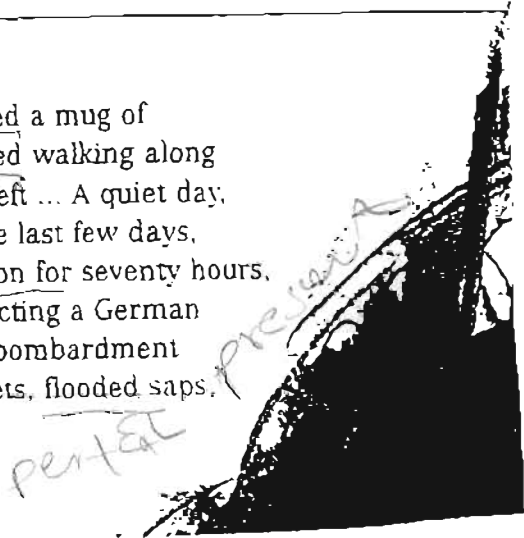
# Genres

There are three main types of writing in literature: prose, script and poetry. Each of these is a distinct genre. They are easy to tell apart because they actually look different on the page:

## Prose

He had first trench watch. He gulped a mug of chlorine-tasting tea, and then started walking along to the outermost position on their left ... A quiet day, he thought, walking on. Not like the last few days, when the bombardment had gone on for seventy hours, and they'd stood to five times expecting a German counter-attack. Damage from that bombardment was everywhere: crumbling parapets, flooded saps, dugouts with gagged mouths.

from *Regeneration* by Pat Barker



## Script

*A dark figure stands out against the pale sky; comes hurrying down the steps - a PRIVATE SOLDIER, out of breath and excited.*

STANHOPE: Yes?

SOLDIER: Message from Mr Trotter, sir. Shells falling mostly behind support line. Minnies along front line.

STANHOPE: Who's just been hit?

SOLDIER: Corporal Ross, I think it was, sir. Minnie dropped in the trench at the corner - just as I come away.

*The Sergeant-Major comes down the steps, very much out of breath.*

STANHOPE: (to the SOLDIER) All right, thanks.

*The SOLDIER salutes, and goes up the steps slower than he came.*

from *Journey's End* by R. C. Sherriff

This type of writing is used for plays.

Handwritten notes: 'narrative perfect present' written in a cursive script.

### Activity 1

You need to explain to younger children the difference between prose, script and poetry. What would you tell them about:

- ◆ how they look different on the page
  - ◆ In what situations you might use the different types of writing?
- Talk about these points in pairs or as a group before writing your explanation.



Handwritten notes: 'action present on film' written in a cursive script.

## Poetry

Four days the earth was rent and torn  
By bursting steel,  
The houses fell about us;  
Three nights we dared not sleep,  
5 Sweating and listening for the imminent crash  
Which meant our death.  
The fourth night every man,  
Nerve-tortured, racked to exhaustion,  
Slept, muttering and twitching.  
10 While the shells crashed overhead.

from *Bombardment* by Richard Aldington

## Word bank

**Minnie** - soldiers' slang for a type of bomb  
**imminent** - about to happen



## A Boy's Best Friend

Mr Anderson said, 'Where's Jimmy, dear?'

'Out on the crater,' said Mrs Anderson. 'He'll be all right. Robutt is with him. Did he arrive?'

'Yes. He's at the rocket station, going through the tests. Actually, I can hardly wait to see him myself. I haven't really seen one since I left Earth 15 years ago. You can't count films.'

'Jimmy has never seen one,' said Mrs Anderson.

'Because he's Moonborn and can't visit Earth. That's why I'm bringing one here. I think it's the first one ever on the Moon.'

10 'It cost enough,' said Mrs Anderson, with a small sigh.

'Maintaining Robutt isn't cheap, either,' said Mr Anderson.

Jimmy was out on the crater, as his mother had said. By Earth standards, he was spindly, but rather tall for a 10-year-old. His arms and legs were long and agile. He looked thicker and stubbier with his spacesuit on, but 15 he could handle the lunar gravity as no Earthborn human being could. His father couldn't begin to keep up with him when Jimmy stretched his legs and went into the kangaroo hop.

The outer side of the crater sloped southward and the Earth, which was slow in the southern sky (where it always was, as seen from Lunar City), 20 was nearly full, so that the entire crater-slope was brightly lit.

The slope was a gentle one and even the weight of the spacesuit couldn't keep Jimmy from racing up it in a floating hop that made the gravity seem nonexistent.

'Come on, Robutt,' he shouted.

Robutt, who could hear him by radio, squeaked and bounded after

Jimmy, expert though he was, couldn't outrace Robutt, who didn't need a spacesuit and had four legs and tendons of steel. Robutt sailed over Jimmy ahead, somersaulting and landing almost under his feet.

'Don't show off, Robutt,' said Jimmy, 'and stay in sight.'

Robutt squeaked again, the special squeak that meant 'Yes.'

'I don't trust you, you faker,' shouted Jimmy, and up he went in one last bound that carried him over the curved upper edge of the crater wall and down onto the inner slope.

35 The Earth sank below the top of the crater wall and at once it was pitch-dark around him. A warm, friendly darkness that wiped out the difference between ground and sky except for the glitter of stars.

40 Actually, Jimmy wasn't supposed to exercise along the dark side of the crater wall. The grownups said it was dangerous, but that was because they were never there. The ground was smooth and crunchy and Jimmy knew the exact location of every one of the few rocks.

Besides, how could it be dangerous racing through the dark when Robutt was right there with him, bouncing around and squeaking and glowing? Even without the glow, Robutt could tell where he was, and where Jimmy was, by radar. Jimmy couldn't go wrong while Robutt was around, 45 tripping him when he was too near a rock, or jumping on him to show how much he loved him, or circling around and squeaking low and scared when Jimmy hid behind a rock, when all the time Robutt knew well enough where he was. Once Jimmy had lain still and pretended he was hurt and Robutt had sounded the radio alarm and people from Lunar City 50 got there in a hurry. Jimmy's father had let him hear about that little trick and Jimmy never tried it again.

Just as he was remembering that, he heard his father's voice on his private wavelength. 'Jimmy, come back. I have something to tell you.'

Jimmy was out of his spacesuit now and washed up. You always had to wash up  
 55 after coming in from outside. Even Robutt had to be sprayed, but he loved it. He  
 stood there on all fours, his little foot-long body quivering and glowing just a tiny  
 bit, and his small head, with no mouth, with two large glassed-in eyes, and with a  
 bump where his brain was. He squeaked until Mr Anderson said, 'Quiet, Robutt.'

Mr Anderson was smiling. 'We have something for you, Jimmy. It's at the rocket  
 60 station now, but we'll have it tomorrow after all the tests are over. I thought I'd tell  
 you now.'

'From Earth, Dad?'

'A dog from Earth, son. A real dog. A Scotch terrier puppy. The first dog on the  
 Moon. You won't need Robutt any more. We can't keep them both, you know, and  
 65 some other boy or girl will have Robutt.' He seemed to be waiting for Jimmy to say  
 something, then he said, 'You know what a dog is, Jimmy. It's the real thing.  
 Robutt's only a mechanical imitation, a robot-mutt. That's how he got his name.'

Jimmy frowned. 'Robutt isn't an imitation, Dad. He's my dog.'

'Not a real one, Jimmy. Robutt's just steel and wiring and a simple  
 70 positronic brain. It's not alive.'

'He does everything I want him to do, Dad. He understands me. Sure,  
 he's alive.'

'No, son. Robutt is just a machine. It's just programmed to act the  
 way it does. A dog is alive. You won't want Robutt after you have  
 75 the dog.'

'The dog will need a spacesuit, won't he?'

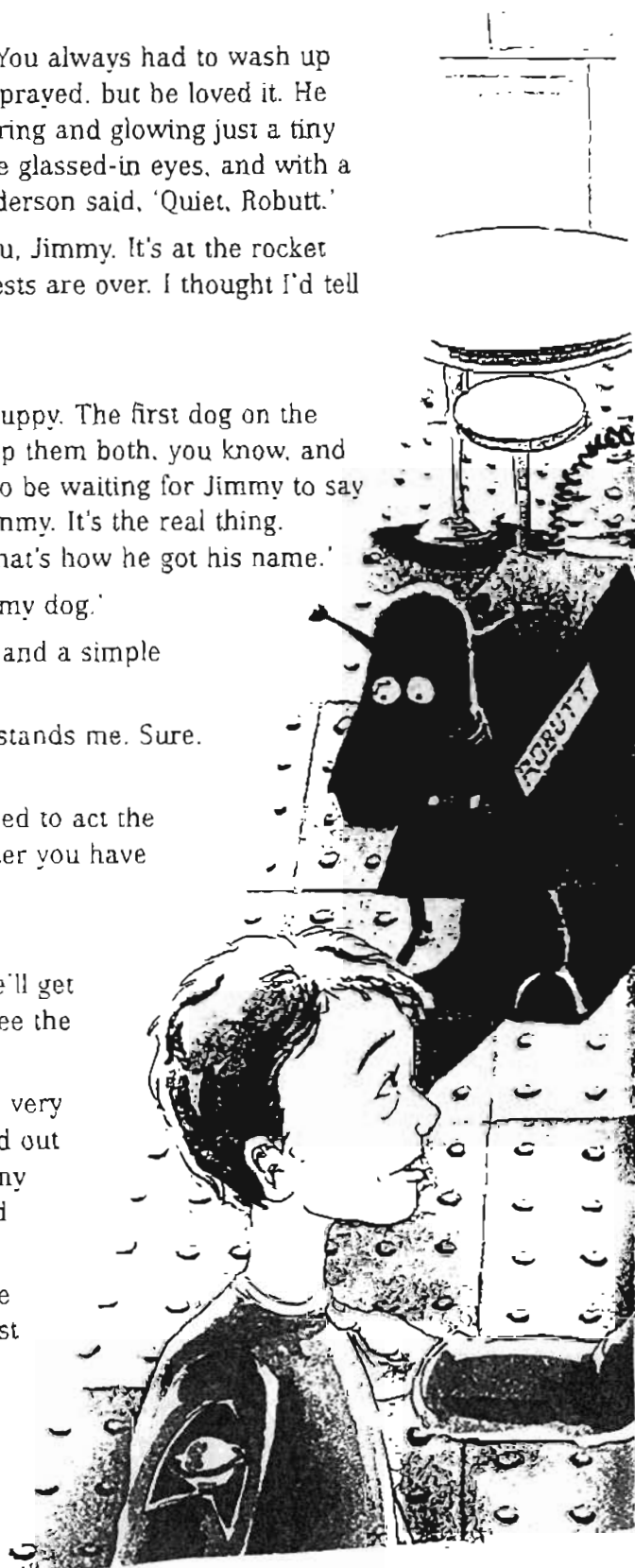
'Yes, of course. But it will be worth the money and he'll get  
 used to it. And he won't need one in the City. You'll see the  
 difference once he gets here.'

80 Jimmy looked at Robutt, who was squeaking again, a very  
 low, slow squeak, that seemed frightened. Jimmy held out  
 his arms and Robutt was in them in one bound. Jimmy  
 said, 'What will the difference be between Robutt and  
 the dog?'

85 'It's hard to explain,' said Mr Anderson, 'but it will be  
 easy to see. The dog will *really* love you. Robutt is just  
 adjusted to act as though it loves you.'

'But, Dad, we don't know what's inside the dog, or  
 what his feelings are. Maybe it's just acting, too.'

90 Mr Anderson frowned. 'Jimmy, you'll *know* the  
 difference when you experience the love of a  
 living thing.'



Jimmy held Robutt tightly. He was frowning, too, and the desperate look on his face  
 meant that he wouldn't change his mind. He said, 'But what's the difference how *they*  
 95 act? How about how *I* feel? I love Robutt and *that's* what counts.'

And the little robot-mutt, which had never been held so tightly in all its existence,  
 squeaked high and rapid squeaks - happy squeaks.

from *The Complete Robot* by Isaac Asimov

Another distinctive feature of science fiction writing is its use of technical vocabulary. Two  
 examples of words that help you to identify this as a science fiction story are *rocket station* and  
*crater*. These are words that we often link with space travel and the surface of the Moon.

Activity 4 

One distinctive feature of science fiction is the setting, in other words, the surroundings in which the action takes place.

This science fiction story is set on the Moon. What have you learnt so far about:

- ◆ the appearance of the Moon's surface
- ◆ what life is like on the Moon?



## Activity 5

Find the following words in the extract. What do you think they mean? How would they help you to know that this was a science fiction story?

- |                              |                                  |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ◆ Moonborn (line 8)          | ◆ private wavelength (line 53)   |
| ◆ lunar gravity (line 15)    | ◆ robot-mutt (line 67)           |
| ◆ Lunar City (line 19)       | ◆ positronic brain (lines 69–70) |
| ◆ tendons of steel (line 27) |                                  |

Activity 6 

Science fiction often makes us question the way we think about things. Think about and write the answers to these questions:

- 1 How does the writer show us the close bond between Jimmy and Robutt in the first section of the story?
- 2 Look at line 65 in the second section of the story. What do you think his father expected Jimmy to say?
- 3 Read lines 73–95. What reasons does Jimmy's father give for having a real dog? What reasons does Jimmy give for not wanting to lose Robutt?
- 4 Read lines 80–85. How does the writer use the actions of Robutt and Jimmy to show us the close bond between them?
- 5 What is Jimmy's final reason for keeping Robutt? Do you think this is a good reason?
- 6 What does the writer seem to be saying about love? Do you agree with him?

## Science fantasy

Science fiction is based on the possible. It uses the scientific knowledge of the day to show the way things could be. In science fantasy, writers create worlds where magical and wonderful things can happen. As with science fiction, it often makes us question our own world and our ideas about it.

In the following extract, Will meets Lyra and her *dæmon*, Pantalaimon, for the first time. They are from different worlds and meet in a third world that is new to both of them.

### Lyra's Dæmon

Something made his skin prickle before he opened the last door. His heart raced. He wasn't sure if he'd heard a sound from inside, but something told him that the room wasn't empty. He thought how odd it was that this day had begun with someone outside a darkened room, and himself waiting inside; and now the positions were reversed –

And as he stood wondering, the door burst open and something came hurtling at him like a wild beast.

But his memory had warned him, and he wasn't standing quite close enough to be knocked over. He fought hard: knee, head, fist, and the strength of his arms against it, him, her –

A girl about his own age, ferocious, snarling, with ragged dirty clothes and thin bare limbs.

She realised what he was at the same moment, and snatched herself away from his bare chest, to crouch in the corner of the dark landing like a cat at bay. And there was a cat beside her, to his astonishment: a large wildcat, as tall as his knee, fur on end, teeth bared, tail erect.

She put her hand on the cat's back and licked her dry lips, watching his every movement.

Will stood up slowly.

20 'Who are you?'

'Lyra Silvertongue,' she said.

'Do you live here?'

'No,' she said vehemently.

'When what is this place? This city?'

'I don't know.'

'Where do you come from?'

'From my world. It's joined on. Where's your *dæmon*?'

His eyes widened. Then he saw something extraordinary happen to the cat: it leapt into her arms, and when it got there, it had changed shape. Now it was a red-brown stoat with a cream throat and belly, and it gazed at him as ferociously as the girl herself. But then another shift in things took place, because he realised that they were both, girl and stoat, profoundly afraid of him, as much as if he'd been a ghost.

35 'I haven't got a demon,' he said. 'I don't know what you mean.' Then: 'Is that your demon?'

She stood up slowly. The stoat curled himself around her neck and his dark eyes never left Will's face.

'But you're *alive*,' she said, half-disbelievingly. 'You can't . . . You can't be dead.'

40 'My name's Will Parry,' he said. 'I don't know what you mean about demons. In my world demon means . . . It means devil, something evil.'

She relaxed a little, but she still watched him intensely, and he stayed calm and quiet as if she were a strange cat he was making friends with.

'Haven't you eaten anything?' he said, and opened the fridge.

Lyra came to look.

45 'I didn't know this was here,' she said. 'Oh! It's cold . . .'

Her *dæmon* had changed again, and become a huge brightly-coloured butterfly, which fluttered into the fridge briefly and out again at once.

50 to settle on her shoulder.

### Word bank

**ferocious** – fierce

**vehemently** – very strongly

**profoundly** – deeply

'Where is your world? How did you get here?'

She shrugged. 'I walked,' she said. 'It was all foggy. I didn't know where I was going. At least I knew I was going out of *my* world. But I couldn't see this one till the fog cleared. Then I found myself here.'

55 'What did you say about dust?'

'Dust, yeah. I'm going to find out about it. But this world seems to be empty. There's no one here to ask. I've been here for ... I dunno, three days, maybe four. And there's no one here.'

'But why do you want to find out about dust?'

60 'Special Dust,' she said shortly. 'Not ordinary dust, obviously.'

The *dæmon* changed again. He did so in the flick of an eye, and from a goldfinch he became a rat, a powerful pitch-black rat with red eyes. Will looked at him with wide wary eyes, and the girl saw his glance.

'You *have* got a *dæmon*,' she said decisively. 'Inside you.'

65 He didn't know what to say.

'You have,' she went on. 'You wouldn't be human else. You'd be ... half-dead. We seen a kid with his *dæmon* cut away. You en't like that. Even if you don't know you've got a *dæmon*, you have. We was scared at first when we saw you. Like you was a night-ghost or something. But then

70 we saw you weren't like that at all.'

'We?'

'Me and Pantalaimon. Us. Your *dæmon* en't *separate* from you. It's you. A part of you. You're part of each other. En't there *anyone* in your world like us? Are they all like you, with their *dæmons* all hidden away?'

75 Will looked at the two of them, the skinny pale-eyed girl with her black rat-*dæmon* now sitting in her arms, and felt profoundly lonely.

from *The Subtle Knife* by Philip Pullman

## ACTIVITY 7

One of the things that seems very unusual about this fantasy world is Lyra's *dæmon*.

- 1 What different forms does Lyra's *dæmon* take?
- 2 When does the *dæmon* change from:
  - ◆ a wildcat to a stoat
  - ◆ a stoat to a butterfly?
- 3 Why do you think these changes take place?
- 4 Read lines 32–38. Why are Lyra and her *dæmon* so afraid of Will?

## Activity 8

The idea of a *dæmon* is central to this story. When Lyra says to Will: 'You *have* got a *dæmon*. Inside you ... You wouldn't be human else,' the writer is asking the reader to think about what a *dæmon* is and why it's an important part of a human being.

Think about:

- ◆ what Lyra means when she says these words
- ◆ what a *daemon* is
- ◆ other words you might use to explain what a *dæmon* is.

Now write out your explanation of:

- ◆ what you think a *dæmon* is
- ◆ why it's an important part of a human being.

## Activity 9

Lyra's *dæmon*, Pantalaimon, is always with her. It reflects the kind of person she is and changes its animal form when her moods change. When she becomes an adult it will take on a fixed animal form and will not change again.

If you had a *dæmon* what would it be like? Think about the kind of person you are. Which animal would most closely match you?

- 1 Describe it carefully. Think about its size, shape, colouring and temperament. If you like, you can also draw a picture of it.
- 2 Give at least five clear reasons why you think your animal would be like this. Your reasons should link the kind of person you are to the animal you have chosen.

## Recognising narrative detail

A good story, well written, will survive and be enjoyed for many years and even centuries. So it is with the stories written by the 19th-century novelist Charles Dickens. One of the most famous of these is *Oliver Twist*, which was first published in 1837–8. In the following extract from the novel, Oliver meets one of the story's best-known characters, the Artful Dodger. As you are reading, pay careful attention to the detail Dickens gives you about the place and the people. This is called **narrative detail**.

### Meeting the Artful Dodger

Early on the seventh morning after he had left his native place, Oliver limped slowly into the little town of Barnet. The window-shutters were closed; the street was empty; not a soul had awakened to the business of the day. The sun was rising in all his splendid beauty; but the light only served to shew the boy his own lonesomeness, as he sat, with bleeding feet and covered with dust, upon a cold door-step.

He had been crouching on the step for some time when he was roused by observing that a boy, who had passed him carelessly some minutes before had returned, and was now surveying him most earnestly from the opposite side of the way. Oliver raised his head, and returned his steady look. Upon this, the boy crossed over; and, walking close up to Oliver, said,

'Hullo, my covey, what's the row?'

The boy was about his own age: but one of the queerest-looking boys that Oliver had ever seen. He was a snub-nosed, flat-browed, common-faced boy enough; and as dirty a juvenile as one would wish to see; but he had about him all the airs and manners of a man. He was short of his age: with rather bow-legs, and little, sharp, ugly eyes. His hat was stuck on the top of his head so lightly, that it threatened to fall off every moment – an accident which would have done so, very often, if the wearer had not had a knack of every now and then giving his head a sudden twitch: which brought it back to its old place again. He wore a man's coat, which reached nearly to his heels. He had turned the cuffs back, halfway up his arm, to get his hands out of the sleeves: apparently with the ultimate view of thrusting

25 them into the pockets of his corduroy trousers; for there he kept them. He was, altogether, as swaggering a young gentleman as ever stood four feet six, or something less, in his bluchers.

'Hullo, my covey, what's the row?' said this strange young gentleman to Oliver.

30 'I am very hungry and tired,' replied Oliver: the tears standing in his eyes as he spoke. 'I have walked a long way. I have been walking these seven days.'

'Walking for sivin days!' said the young gentleman. 'Oh, I see. Beak's order, eh? But,' he added, noticing Oliver's look of surprise, 'I suppose you 35 don't know what a beak is, my flash com-pan-i-on?'

Oliver mildly replied, that he had always heard a bird's mouth described by the term in question.

'My eyes, how green!' exclaimed the young gentleman. 'Why, a beak's a madgst'rate; and when you walk by a beak's order, it's not straight forerd, but always a-going up, and nivr a coming down agin. Was you never on the mill?'

40 'What mill?' inquired Oliver.

'What mill – why, *the* mill – the treadmill. But come,' said the young gentleman; 'you want grub, and you shall have it.'

### Word bank

- covey – a form of 'cove' meaning fellow
- juvenile – a young person
- swaggering – to behave in an arrogant manner, full of himself
- bluchers – a high laced shoe or half boot
- green – naïve and inexperienced
- madgst'rate – meaning 'magistrate', a judge in a local court
- treadmill – a wheel enclosed in a cage. Working the treadmill was a common form of punishment in Victorian England.

Activity 1 

In this extract Dickens uses narrative detail to tell us about the place and the people.

- 1 Re-read the opening paragraph, lines 1–6, in which he sets the scene:

Look at how much detail Dickens packs into the three sentences. What do you learn about:

- ◆ the place
- ◆ Oliver
- ◆ the way Oliver is feeling?

- 2 Now read lines 14–27. What do these lines tell you about the Dodger's:

- ◆ appearance
- ◆ behaviour?

- 3 What other things do you learn about the Dodger from the rest of the passage?

- 4 Dickens wants us to think about what kind of boy the Dodger is. What kind of boy do you think would look and act like this?

Assisting Oliver to rise, the young gentleman took him to a nearby shop, where he purchased a sufficiency of ready-dressed ham and a half loaf: or, as he himself expressed it, a 'fourpenny bran'. Taking the bread under his arm, the young gentleman turned into a small public-house; and led the way to a tap-room in the rear of the premises. Here, a pot of beer was brought in, by direction of the mysterious youth; and Oliver made a long and hearty meal; during the progress of which, the strange boy eyed him from time to time with great attention.

'Going to London?' said the strange boy, when Oliver had at length concluded.

'Yes.'

60 'Got any lodgings?'

'No.'

'Money?'

'No.'



The strange boy whistled; and put his arms into his pockets, as far as the big coat-sleeves would let them go.

'Do you live in London?' inquired Oliver.

'Yes. I do, when I'm at home,' replied the boy. 'I suppose you want some place to sleep in to-night, don't you?'

'I do indeed,' answered Oliver. 'I have not slept under a roof since I left the country.'

'Don't fret your eyelids on that score,' said the young gentleman. 'I've got to be in London to-night; and I know a 'spectable old gentelman as lives there, wot'll give you lodgings for nothink, and never ask for the change; that is, if any gentelman he knows interduces you. And don't he know me? Oh, no! Not in the least! By no means. Certainly not!'

This unexpected offer of shelter was too tempting to be resisted.

Oliver discovered that his new friend's name was Jack Dawkins and that among his intimate friends he was better known as 'the Artful Dodger'.

As Jack Dawkins objected to their entering London before nightfall, it was nearly eleven o'clock when they reached the turnpike at Islington.

## Similarities and differences

There are many similarities between explanations and instructions. The boxes below show some of their similarities and differences.

### Explanations

- each piece of information is carefully sequenced and developed
- generally longer, more complex sentences
- sub-headings can be used
- factual descriptions
- reader not addressed directly – passive voice often used
- technical terms defined.

Example: *how to boil an egg.*

An egg can be boiled by placing it in a pan, half-filled with cold water. The pan is then placed on a source of heat and the heat is turned on. The water is boiled for four minutes (a timer should be used to help in this process). When four minutes have elapsed, the pan is removed from the heat and the egg is taken from the pan with a spoon. Finally, the egg is placed in an egg-cup.

### Instructions

- very ordered structure – clear and simple
- short, simple sentences often in note form
- sometimes numbered (but not always!)
- factual descriptions
- directives/commands used – address readers directly and tell them what to do.

Example: *how to boil an egg.*

- 1 Half-fill a pan with cold water.
- 2 Place egg in pan.
- 3 Put pan on heat source.
- 4 Turn heat on.
- 5 When water starts to boil, start timing.
- 6 After four minutes, remove pan from heat.
- 7 Remove egg from pan with a spoon.
- 8 Place egg in egg-cup.

### Activity

Study the information above, and then write a set of instructions and an explanation for each of the following:

- how to make a cheese sandwich
- how to record your favourite TV programme.



## Presentation devices

The presentation of a text, especially in a leaflet, poster or advice sheet can help to attract and maintain a reader's attention. You should consider using some or all of the following when you write to instruct or explain:

Headings should stand out and grab the reader's attention. They may be bigger than the words in the main part of the text, or they may be in bold type or in a different colour or in CAPITAL LETTERS.

Caption to highlight what is shown in the photograph, diagram or illustration.

Sub-headings serve a similar purpose to headings, they help to break up the text and summarize what information is in the following text.

Paragraphs are often relatively short, interesting and to the point.

Photographs, diagrams and illustrations add variety and give the reader's eyes a rest from reading the text. They are often clearer and easier to understand than a written explanation.

The leaflet is titled "TACTICS AND TEAMWORK" and "GROUP 2 / CARD 29". The main heading is "Short passing".

**Text blocks:**

- Introduction:** "Good footballing sides always play a short passing game. It demands patience, great technique, constant movement off the ball and good communication plus, more importantly, excellent ball control."
  - A good short pass is one that allows the receiver to control the ball effortlessly. This usually means playing to feet rather than into space, keeping the ball on the ground and making sure the pass is weighted correctly.
- Making space:** "Short passing is not just about keeping possession of the ball for its own sake. The short pass is very effective in creating space for other players to run into. If two or three players are playing keep-ball using short passes, defenders can lose patience and dive in to the tackle, leaving gaps in their defence."
  - Players with the confidence to play a close-passing game can usually spot the chance to release a sudden decisive splitting pass, which can then lead to a shot at goal.
- Tactics in action Liverpool - the pass masters:** "Liverpool are known as one of the best passing sides in the Premiership. Their short game is very effective - particularly when midfielders, McManis, Ince and Rushmore are involved. Liverpool's patient ballplay left defenders with a false sense of security, and then suddenly a telling pass is made into space - usually for striker Alan Riddie Fowler to run on to and shoot for goal. Midfielders with accuracy and a good first touch, such as Jamie Redknapp, are at the hub of much a movement; they can complete several passes before the decisive ball is played. Jamie Redknapp looks forward, ready to pass to a Liverpool teammate."
  - Use the video on your feet to see how to make a short pass.
- Short and sharp Skills check:** A list of skills to be practiced.
- Coach says:** A list of coaching points.
- Or video 3:** A reference to a video resource.

**Image:** A photograph of a footballer in a Liverpool kit, with the name "SHARP" on the back of his jersey.

**Diagram:** A diagram of a football pitch showing player positions and movement arrows.

Bold type or colour - again, making important points stand out. Different colour - headings or sub-headings.

Bullet points help to draw attention to key points.

*q. Who gets osteoporosis?*

a. Although both men and women get it, it occurs more commonly in one in four First World women who:

- Are post menopausal, thin and small framed and Caucasian
- Advanced in age
- Have a family history of osteoporosis
- Smoke or drink alcohol heavily
- Have a diet low in calcium or lacking vitamin D
- Have medical problems such as diabetes or take medications such as cortisone.
- Live a sedentary life style and do no weight bearing exercise.
- Have practiced long-term dieting

*q. What causes it ?*

a. Osteoporosis is caused by an imbalance in the body's natural bone-building mechanism, where the amount of newly formed bone is insufficient to replace bone lost.

After menopause, bone loss is accelerated by low oestrogen levels.

*q. Why is osteoporosis a problem?*

a. Osteoporosis results in fractures because the bones are brittle and break under very little pressure or the smallest impact.

In severe cases, bones can break due to your everyday activities. Lying in bed, a gentle lug stumble or the lightest pressure could break :

*q. Where do bones break ?*

a. Most fractures occur in the spinal vertebrae, wrist or arm.

*q. What are the symptoms ?*

a. Most frequent are pain in the back and deformity of the spine. Pain usually results from the collapse of the vertebral bodies, especially in the lower dorsal and upper lumbar regions. The pain is acute in onset and may radiate around the flank to other parts of the abdomen.

*q. Can it be cured ?*

a. Osteoporosis can be treated so that the bone strength and quality improves to prevent more fractures. Because medication can impact on your lifestyle and your health, you need to ask your Doctor or Pharmacist about the convenient, osteoporotic Nasal Spray that treats postmenopausal osteoporosis and is easy to use anywhere, anytime.



*Osteoporosis what is it?*

Osteoporosis is a disabling disease in which the amount and quality of bone tissue diminishes, leading to a weakened skeleton that fractures easily.



## WHAT IS HAY FEVER ?

Hay fever is an allergic reaction to the pollens of grasses, trees and weeds, as well as the spores of mould. Pollens and spores are carried on the wind, often for long distances, and when they enter the nose or eyes of an allergic person the body reacts by releasing certain chemicals, including one called histamine. This in turn causes sneezing; itchy, watery eyes; itchy, runny nose and other symptoms.

It's interesting to note that garden plants rarely cause hay fever, as they are pollinated by birds and insects.

## WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF HAY FEVER ?

Hay fever sufferers may experience a wide range of symptoms:

- Sneezing
- Itching or tickling in the nose
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Red, watery or itchy eyes
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Tight chest
- Feelings of fullness and buzzing in the ears
- Partial loss of senses of hearing, smell and taste
- General tiredness

## URTICARIA

In some people the allergy takes the form of a skin reaction called urticaria. The skin may erupt in hives or weals, which can be itchy and inflamed. The problem may occur all over the body, including eyelids which may be swollen and itchy. Telfast® 180 is effective for the treatment of the symptoms of chronic idiopathic urticaria <sup>(2)</sup>.

## HOW CAN YOU TELL IF YOU HAVE HAY FEVER ?

Pollens tend to be in the air at around the same time each year, and hay fever sufferers get to know their symptoms.

Those who have not been diagnosed as having hay fever may confuse the symptoms with those of a cold. Where the symptoms re-occur frequently, hay fever should be suspected.

When the membrane of the nose becomes irritated by allergy, it is easier for germs and viruses to invade. So it is not uncommon to have both hay fever and an infection.

In general, hay fever sufferers are more likely to have recurring respiratory, sinus and ear infections.

## HAY FEVER IN CHILDREN

Children with hay fever often have dark circles under the eyes. The mouth may be open continually to assist breathing, and the child may develop a habit of pushing the nose up with the palm of the hand to relieve itchiness.

## HOW DO YOU TREAT HAY FEVER ?

Avoiding the substances one is allergic to is the logical solution. But with pollen in the very air we breathe, this is generally not practical, so reducing exposure is the best you can do.

- Reduce outdoor activities between 5 and 10 a.m. when the pollen count is higher
- Keep doors and windows closed
- Use air conditioning where possible as this helps to filter out pollens

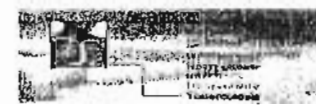
These measures may help to control symptoms. When they do not, medical treatment may be the answer.

**Telfast® 120**  
fexofenadine HCl 120 mg

**Telfast® 180**  
fexofenadine HCl 180 mg

## SYMPTOMS

- A sufferer of tuberculosis has a persistent cough.
- Is continuously tired and weak.
- Loses weight drastically.
- Loses their appetite.
- Has night sweats even when it is cold.
- Has a pain in the chest.
- Has blood-stained sputum or coughs up blood.
- Is breathless.



## PREVENTION

- There are different tests to determine whether a person has TB – through either having a sputum test done, or through a X-Ray test.
- All newborn babies should get a BCG vaccination against TB.
- Children must get another BCG vaccination (which are completely safe) at school entry.
- All BCG vaccinations are provided free of charge at clinics.

## CURE

- Early and correct diagnosis of TB means successful treatment.
- TB can be treated with different injections and tablets.
- Only regular treatment can cure TB.
- The treatment takes 6 months and even when it is completed, the patient must report to the clinic immediately if any of the other symptoms start again.
- The full-prescribed course of tablets must be taken to get better.

## WHAT IS TB?

- Tuberculosis (TB) is an infectious disease that mainly affects the lungs, but can also involve other organs.

## WHAT CAUSES TB?

- A germ known as tubercle bacilli causes Tuberculosis.
- A person usually becomes infected with tubercle bacilli by inhaling tiny droplets of moisture that contain the tubercle bacilli.
- Infection can also result from eating food contaminated with bacteria or from drinking milk from cattle infected with bacteria.
- Some bacilli settle into the layer of mucus that lines most of the nasal passages.
- Bacilli trapped in the mucus layer move up towards the throat, mouth and nose.
- The bacilli may then be sneezed, spat, coughed or blown out.

## WHY IS IT A SERIOUS PROBLEM?

- In the lungs, where it is warm and moist, germs multiply rapidly.
- There is a race between the power of the cells to engulf the germs and the ability of the germs to multiply and escape.
- Often the cells win, but not always.
- The fighting power of the cells decreases and some germs escape.

- World Population 6,000,000,000
- TB Infected 2,000,000,000
- HIV Infected 30,000,000

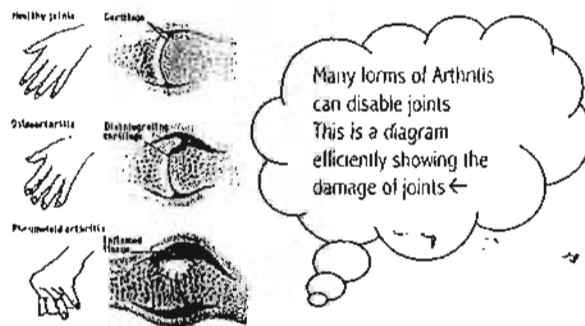
Why is it so good  
for lack interest!

## What is Arthritis?

- ❖ There are 180 kinds of Arthritis. The two most common types are osteoarthritis and rheumatoid.
- ❖ Arthritis is a disease of inflammation of the joints, and can occur in an acute or chronic manner.
- ❖ As it is a disease of the joints, the cartilage between the bones, commonly the hips, knees and feet, wears down and may wear away altogether.
- ❖ As a result instead of the joints smoothly gliding against each other as they move, the bones grate together and slightest movement can be painful.
- ❖ Rheumatoid Arthritis can occur as early as in ones teens. This is caused in teens when the immune system attacks the body, destroying cartilage.

## Causes of Arthritis

- ✗ Arthritis has an extremely variable course and results sometimes in deformity.
- ✗ There are no specific causes for Arthritis, although mostly occurs in cold damp climates in a cold temperature zone.
- ✗ It is believed that the 'streptococcus bacteria' are responsible in some cases of Arthritis, are other relative causes are when an individual holds a 'focus of infection' theory, when they insist on having damaged teeth and tonsils removed.
- ✗ Many cases also prove solemnly that fatigue, shock and allergies are possible.
- ✗ Twice as many women, than men, adapt rheumatoid Arthritis usually within the age group of 30 to 40 years old.
- ✗ Unfortunately arthritis is possible to occur in children that have just turned a few years old.
- ✗ It has not been adequately established whether the disease is hereditary.
- ✗ Arthritis is caused through most teens that suffer from it due to the fact that their immune system attacks the body, destroying cartilage between the bones, and inflaming the joints around tissues.



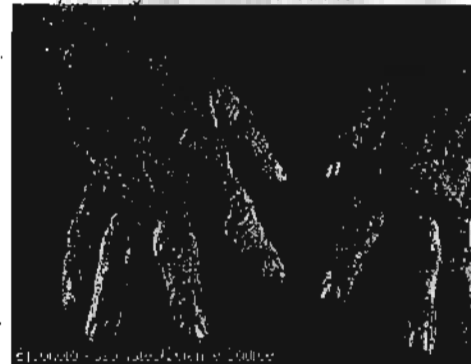
## How to identify Arthritis

- ☞ The characteristics of the disease vary greatly.
- ☞ Some patients have fevers, severe inflammation of joints and develop deformities rapidly.
- ☞ The earliest symptoms is when the individual experiences mild fever and growing discomfort.
- ☞ Patients can show signs of their bones and cartilage wearing away if they find difficulty in walking and practicing general exercise.
- ☞ An individual with Arthritis will generally experience stiffness in their joints in the mornings of when it is cold.
- ☞ Occasionally there may be changes with regard to the persons Lymph Glands and eyes.
- ☞ 15% of people that have Arthritis develop firm nodes under their skin.

## These are few types of medication available to patients that have Arthritis →

- ☞ Veltex
- ☞ Brexecam
- ☞ Adco Indomethacin
- ☞ Myproflam

Lady Suffering from Rheumatoid Arthritis →



## General Warnings!!!

- ☛ Fine skeletal muscle tremors and peripheral vasodilatation.
- ☛ Tachycardia and palpitations.
- ☛ Headache, Central Nervous System effects a simulation, and nausea and vomiting. In susceptible person's, hallucinations can develop, particularly in children.
- ☛ A rise in blood glucose, changes in blood lipids and a fall in serum potassium.

## Can I control my Arthritis?

"Yes! Don't let Arthritis take over your life"

### Self Treatment →

- ☉ Being overweight puts excess stress on the hips, lower back and knees, and these are prime areas for Arthritis to be at it's peak. Try to loose a few kilograms.
- ☉ Take long hot baths and add salts to the water.
- ☉ Gently massage the area surrounding the joint in the direction of the heart.
- ☉ Ice- cold compresses will draw the heat of inflammation out of the joint.
- ☉ Stress aggravates Arthritis so take long, warm baths to help relax. Add a few drops of Juniper, grapefruit or cypress oil to encourage your body to release toxins that may be irritating your joints.

## WHAT HAPPENS DURING MENOPAUSE

As the supply of eggs in a woman's ovaries dwindles, the two hormones oestrogen & progesterone fluctuate and then begin to decline. This produces the hallmark of menopause - the end of menstrual periods - but it also has manifold effects on the rest of the body. Menopausal symptoms are felt largely because of oestrogen withdrawal; if this deficiency is counteracted with HRT, a good diet, & proper exercise, bones will remain strong, hair & skin will stay healthy, & you will keep your shape, & have a positive attitude to life.

## MIDLIFE MENSTRUAL CHANGE

1. The hypothalamus in the brain releases a substance called gonadotrophin releasing hormone (GnRh) which passes down to the pituitary gland.
2. The pituitary gland responds to GnRh by secreting follicle stimulating hormone (FSH) & a lesser amount of luteinizing hormone (LH).
3. FSH causes several egg follicles to develop. One follicle becomes dominant & releases an egg. This follicle produces oestrogen.
4. The rising level of oestrogen exerts what is called negative feedback on the hypothalamus & the pituitary gland, which responds by producing a smaller amount of FSH.
5. When the level of oestrogen peaks near midcycle, the hypothalamus & the pituitary gland respond with a large secretion of LH.
6. The surge of LH makes the ripening egg follicle rupture & release the ovum into the Fallopian tube.
7. After rupturing, the egg follicle develops into a structure called a corpus luteum, which produces large amounts of progesterone.
8. If the ovum is not fertilized, oestrogen & progesterone levels fall, a period occurs, & the falling oestrogen levels stimulate gonadotrophin hormones to begin the whole cycle again.

## SYMPTOMS OF MENOPAUSE

Some women experience no menopausal symptoms, slight discomfort, while other women may be incapacitated by symptoms that affect them not only physically, but also emotionally & intellectually. Although the two symptoms classically associated with the menopause are hot flushes & night sweats, there are other symptoms that you should be prepared for.

## THE RANGE OF SYMPTOMS

### SYMPTOMS DEALING WITH THE MIND & HEAD

- Anxiety & low self-esteem
- Depressed mood
- Dry hair, eyes & mouth
- Feeling of pessimism
- Forgetfulness
- Headaches
- Hot flushes
- Inability to concentrate
- Increase in facial hair
- Insomnia
- Irritability & tearfulness
- Mood swings & PMS

### SYMPTOMS DEALING WITH THE UPPER BODY

- Back pain
- Breast soreness
- Chest pain
- Itchy skin
- Night sweats

### SYMPTOMS DEALING WITH LOWER BODY

- Bloating abdomen
- Constipation
- Dry vagina
- Heavy/irregular periods
- Loss bladder control
- Slower sexual arousal & lubrication.
- Frequent urination
- Painful sex

## PLANNING FOR MENOPAUSE

- Being well informed & prepared for menopause: you deal effectively with symptoms.
- You deserve sympathy & understanding from partner & family as much as you did at other times in life.
- The speed of ageing does not suddenly accelerate at menopause.
- You can take steps to maintain & even improve the quality of your sex life even though there is less oestrogen in your body.
- Menopause is not the beginning of the end, it is the beginning of the rest of your life.

## The difference between menopause & climacteric

### MENOPAUSE

- Comparable to menarche, a single biological event.
- Cessation of periods.
- Occurs at any one time, usually between ages 48-52.

### CLIMATERIC

- Comparable to puberty, a series of hormonal changes.
- Transitional phase when ovarian function declines, usually spans the age 40-60.

## WHAT IS HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE?

- High blood pressure is also known as Hypertension.
- Blood pressure readings are taken to learn the force with which blood is pressing on artery walls.
- The heart exerts highest pressure (systole phase) when it is pumping a fresh supply of blood, and the lowest pressure (diastole phase) when it phases between beats to fill with blood.
- When readings are repeatedly above a specific systole and impaired, the person is classified Hypertensive.



## THE CAUSES OF HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE.

- ⊗ High blood pressure is caused by a number of factors especially nervous tensions.
- ⊗ It has also been clarified hereditary.
- ⊗ Anaemia, Hyperthyroid disease, chronic kidney disease and Brain tumours are a few rare causes.
- ⊗ The consumption of too much salt and lack of exercise contributes to the causes.

## THE SYMPTOMS OF HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE.

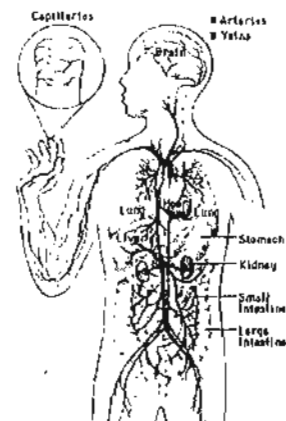
- Dull-pounding headaches over the back of the head.
- Nervousness
- Dizziness
- Weakness or fatigue
- On rare occasions hypertension develops rapidly and recessively, with mild attacks, headaches, visual disturbances, vomiting, coma and convulsions.

## HOW TO LIVE WITH HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

- ❖ High blood pressure is a chronic disease and must but treated forever.
- ❖ It is important to relax and follow a prescribed daily routine →
- ❖ Take the necessary medication
- ❖ Stick to a well balanced diet
- ❖ Get enough sleep
- ❖ Exercise regularly
- ❖ And go for check-ups to have your blood pressure taken.

Many people of all age groups suffer from hypertension. About 20% of the people living in the U.S have the disease. The Percentage of black Americans suffering from High blood pressure is twice than that of White Americans

## Diagram showing Arteries and Veins in the human body →



## EFFECTS OF HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

- ☒ High blood pressure is a huge cause of arteries in the brain to be bust. This often leads to a stroke.
- ☒ Hypertension causes the heart to work harder, pumping harder, causing a heart attack.
- ☒ High blood pressure can cause kidney failure by reducing the flow of blood to the kidneys.
- ☒ High blood pressure is a major cause of Arteriosclerosis (Harding of the Arteries.)



## **Parkinson's disease, what is it?**

*Parkinson's Disease is a disorder of the brain that reduces muscle control.*

### **Who gets Parkinson's disease?**

- *People between the ages of 50 and 70yrs*
- *Slightly more men than women*

### **What causes it?**

- *Scientists know what goes wrong in the brain of a Parkinson's disease patient but they do not know why it goes wrong. Although it is believed that environmental toxins such as pesticides may play a role in the cause.*

### **Why is Parkinson's disease a problem?**

- *It affects proper movement and causes balance difficulties.*

*It also reduces muscle control and causes uncontrollable shaking. This disease can also cripple a person, but rarely causes death.*

### **What are the symptoms?**

- *Trembling hands*
- *Rigid muscles*
- *Slow movement*
- *Balance difficulties*

### **Can it be cured?**

- *Parkinson's disease cannot be cured, but can be treated by replacing the lost dopamine with a drug known as Levodopa. However long-term use of this drug can lead to complications.*

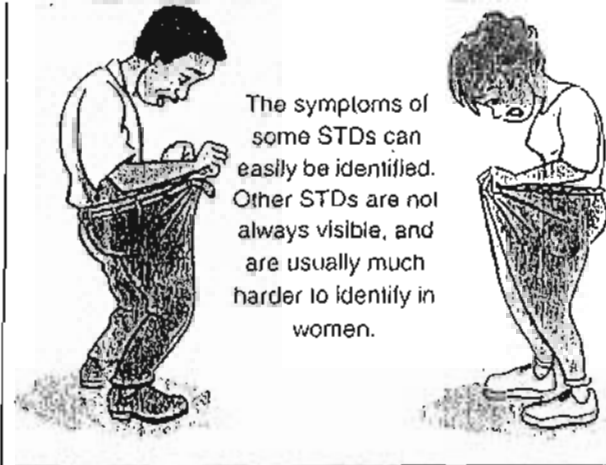


## WHAT CAUSES GONORRHOEA

## WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS

## Yini iGonorrhoea

APPENDIX D 6  
Group 6 leaflet

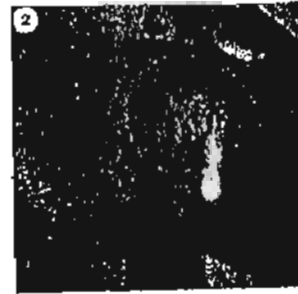
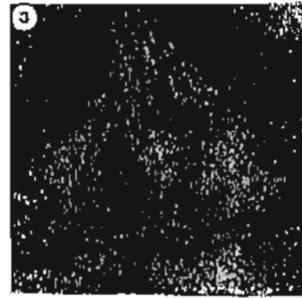


The symptoms of some STDs can easily be identified. Other STDs are not always visible, and are usually much harder to identify in women.

iGonorrhoea eyezinye izifo ezithathe ngokulalan. Itholakala ngokulala nomunthu onayo.

Usizo lwe Gonorrhoea  
0800 123 777

In men, the most common point of infection is inside the tip of the penis. Most men + women develop a discharge from the genitals, and a burning sensation when passing urine. In women, the infection usually starts in the cervix, the lower part of the womb. Half of all infected women develop no symptoms.



## CAN IT BE CURED?

If treated in the early stages, Gonorrhoea can be cured with injections of penicillin. If neglected, the disease is very difficult to cure.

The commonest of the venereal diseases, caused by infection of the urethra and genital track by Gonococcus

The disease is almost always acquired by sexual intercourse with an infected person. Two other possible sources of infection are:-

- 1-of the eyes of babies during passage through birth canals of infected mothers.
- 2-of female children through contamination with infected material. {eg} a lavatory used only minutes before an infected person.

## WHO GETS IT?

Both men + women who engage in casual sex & prostitution used to be regarded as the main spread of this disease and it still has this reputation.

## APPENDIX E

### Group questionnaire ; questions and responses

Question	Group	Responses
1. Does everyone in the group understand genres ?	1	Yes, we understand now-between explanation and instruction too.
	2	We do after the classroom exercises.
	3	The actual work has made us differentiate.
	4	We have taken heed of the differences of explanation and instruction.
	5	We first had a problem then we understood.
	6	After completing the leaflet we now know.
2. Comment on the value of the entire process.	1	It was interesting, different, we learned group dynamics.
	2	It was both interesting and different and fun.
	3	At first it was pointless then we gained knowledge about each other and produced a fantastic end product.
	4	It was pointless we all knew how to write in paragraph and point form.
	5	It was interesting and different.
	6	Interesting we don't do health topics in English. It was intricate and difficult – we never worked on a leaflet before.
3. Is it important to learn factual genres?	1	Yes, you can't educate people based on opinion. There are different rules for different genres.
	2	Everyone agrees it is important and informative.
	3	Yes facts are important.
	4	As journalists we have to give facts so its important.
	5	You learn more if you know the facts.
	6	You cannot expect respect if work is not based on facts.
4. Should rules in writing be learned?	1	Yes different rules apply and if you don't understand you can't write.
	2	The better we know the genre the better we write.
	3	Yes we learn to be versatile.
	4	Yes it gives us guidelines to identify different genres.
	5	If you know the rules you can plan and understand what you do.
	6	Yes.
5. How did the task allocation within the group	1	We all had equal responsibility no one felt pressured.

work?		
	2	Everyone worked well and gave it their best.
	3	We were all determined to do our share of work.
	4	We had to find people in the group who had the resources for the tasks.
	5	Everyone was allocated duties. We worked to the best of our ability.
	6	Everyone volunteered to do what was needed.
6. What problems were encountered?	1	Access to computers.
	2	To print, get computers and time.
	3	No problems we had a single mindset to get the work done.
	4	Printing and the design of the leaflet.
	5	Time.
	6	Access to computers.
7. Is the leaflet to your satisfaction?	1	No response.
	2	Yes after hard work.
	3	Yes thanks to our committed team.
	4	Yes, we are pleased.
	5	Most definitely.
	6	We are proud of it.
8. Would you like to share anything else about this project?	1	It was fun.
	2	It was not what we expected but it worked out well.
	3	It has been a pleasure working together.
	4	No response.
	5	We learned that men also go through menopause.
	6	As a group we learned to compromise, respect, understand , and contribute.

**APPENDIX F**  
**AB FIELD NOTES**

**PHASE ONE**

Lesson 1 06/06/02

1. I came to class 10 minutes early to ensure everything is in order. I wait as usual at the door and greet learners as they come in. A few are late because of 'traffic' from the Maths lesson.
2. Anisa sees the word on the board and she and Gugu are trying to pronounce it. Twenty questions follow, What we doing? Paper? Exam revisions? I reassure them that the revision will be covered in homework exercises. Hands shoot up for more questions. I wished that they would trust me and stop asking questions so we could get on with the lesson. I'm thinking of what I read by Gadd.
3. I get more attention and point to the 'new' section on the board. Gugu asks whether the word means 'kinda something.'
4. Avril shouts out something about *Scream* a scary movie- frightening - is this what the word means?
5. I seize the moment as a launch into the lesson and probe further about kinds of films they have seen. We devise a blackboard list ( *E.T.* , *Pretty Woman*, *Legally Blonde* etc.). I am clueless about these 'teen flicks' but it has created interest 'their' interest.
6. Nox wants to discuss *Generations* but its not a 'movie'. I introduce Propp and list the character functions. I explain the task linked to the films and character functions to be attempted in small groups of two as they are seated.
7. I walk around 'listening in'. Isvari and Zama are debating whether Julia Roberts is the princess or prostitute! Saki's group are still discussing *Generations*.
8. I'm pleased that they are participating even though they do not know where this is going.
9. Lisa hails me for my opinion on *E.T.* – they think he is a cute hero- I'm forced to agree because I am not familiar with the film. I only remember the triangular head!

Lesson 2 07/06/02

1. The class is more settled today. The usual Friday 'syndrome' of absentees is evident. I did not want a repeat of yesterday's slow start so I passed out the worksheet on literature genres.
2. Natasha had to ask if the work was for marks. After reassuring her and the class that none of the activities were for marks, the group work began.
3. For students who studied drama the report back was poor. I remembered it was

*APPENDIX F continued*

Friday usually declared 'fun day'. Maybe that's why they were subdued.

4. Mandis's group did very well with interesting ideas on song and dance.
5. It's not going very well so I try to revive spirits with an explanation of audience and purpose. I got a choral response to acknowledge they understood.
6. I decide to pass out the worksheets on the other genres together with instructions for group tasks. There's renewed interest for a while.
6. Ash and Tash volunteer for group 1 and 2. Appears to be interesting. Halfway the bell goes. I remind them that we will continue with group presentations on Monday.
7. I feel burdened by the marking of essays on 'Twelfth Night' and anxious about the lessons to follow.

Lessons 3 and 4 10/06/02 and 11/06/02

1. The learners are livelier although I feel tired after the 'hectic' marking schedule. Group 3 is given a few minutes to get their 'act together'. They recreated the atmosphere on the moon rather adequately (moondust, spacewalks, spacesuits, battleships, floating around in darkness). Much seemed to be from media representations. I did not think they consulted the text. At least the lesson promises to be better.
2. Batho led the discussion for group 4. Definitions seem fine. Nice explanation on positronic and moonborn, of or on the moon? A little help from her friends? She is coming out of her shell.
3. Melish's group really bowled me over! Gugu ragged her about Raw-butt. Ideas on childhood relationships and love were excellent.
4. Anisa and company obviously did not read the text. Everyone was so absorbed in the link with *Sabrina* then 'The Craft', then *Charmed*. Gugu's drawing was really funny but I dare not laugh! It did look like a tokoloshe- they did not let her live it down. Gugu presented it to me for the class wall. Nompums thinks it's 'sucking up' For what?
5. Some restlessness but learners are really into the group work and having fun too! Request to 'take five' have a break.
6. I wonder about the preoccupation with all the witch films and good and bad witches. I do inhabit another world!
7. On the whole a good conclusion after the shaky start. The word genre is more familiar. We used up an extra lesson. Can I catch up?

*APPENDIX F continued*

8. Impossible to take notes, control and answer queries. Have to be done after lessons in future.

**AB FIELD NOTES**

**PHASE TWO**

Lesson 5 12/06/02

1. Midweek crisis. The comprehension revision exercise is not done yet. Carryover from phase one has to be completed as well.
2. Noisy start this morning. I hastily pass out the worksheet on narrative detail and allocate tasks. Learners are given time to read and prepare silently.
3. Melish is spokesperson again. The time frame helped. Responses are good.
4. What else did I expect from Isvari and Sine? They are obviously thinking about how differently one can perceive characters. Sine's opinion is that the Dodger is like the street children a victim. They do come from different worlds so they won't agree.
5. I reviewed the purpose of narrative detail to conclude the section on fiction genres.

Lesson 6 13/06/02

1. Time management appears fine. Today the factual genre was introduced. It was done in a rather uninteresting manner. I should have given it more thought. But learners were attentive.
2. I do hope they understood passive and command, highlighters were busy!
3. Isvari the spokesperson complained about the workload. We negotiated a 'deal'. They would have the entire lesson to prepare the next task. I walked around and noted some rather mundane topics. Are they bored or just not 'with it'!!!
4. Most groups worked quietly and sincerely- even Anisa is subdued.
5. I had to explain to Sine again what was required although the instructions in the worksheet were clear.
6. I reminded learners about presentations for the next day- Friday. They promised that they would be prepared.

Lesson 7 14/06/02

*APPENDIX F continued*

1. It's Friday again and I'm anticipating good responses. Ash volunteered to be first. Many learners identified with the rave culture. Those who were 'clueless' were promised a 'demo' after the exams- something to look forward to
2. Such laughter when Noms forgot to explain when the tea bag goes into the cup! Natasha explained that English tea was different from Indian tea – everything had to be boiled.
3. Anisa the clown had everyone laughing about dumping your boyfriend. I was asked my opinion about boyfriends because someone mentioned that Grade Ten was too early for boyfriends. I declined to comment because I was aware that a few learners had boyfriends.
4. Laughter again when the 'chicken' and 'chips' group presented their oral explanation and instruction together.
5. Another weekend and more marking. The comprehension was handed in at last. I am looking forward to the last phase.
6. I have to change groups for the final task. People are too comfortable with each other and I do know that otherwise they would not mix. Artificial but worth a try!
7. The 'no marks' culture is taking root, amazing how meaningful and less intimidating learning has become – and fun. They are not talking 'continuous assessment'
8. The big BOSS has not summoned me yet to the office about the revision programme. Perhaps there are manufactured complaints. Learners are having more fun without the boring revision routine-so am I!!!

**AB FIELD NOTES****PHASE THREE**

Lesson 8 17/06/02

1. A few upsets with the changing of groups. Nox knew why .Mrs B was MIXING everyone (I knew she meant Blacks and Indians).
2. They all appeared to be 'dragging' their feet. I had to appeal to their good sense. Nox again explained that she wanted to work with others and was tired of her group. That settled issues.

*APPENDIX F continued*

3. At last- after 10 minutes some semblance of a lesson. The worksheets on factual models were handed out and clear instructions for all on the board.
4. I requested that the work begin immediately as we were running out of time. I asked each leader to inform me about topic choices and plan of action before the end of the lesson.
5. Samkali wanted me to explain the task because the group was unsure of what was to be done. Was I sure this was English and not Biology? The others appeared to be fine and were apparently busy. The new groups certainly helped with the noise.
6. In the last five minutes I discussed some ground rules because I had booked the media centre in advance for the research. The promise of music on their favourite music station further motivated them.
7. By lesson end only two groups had approached me.

Lesson 9 18/06/02

1. What a pleasant change from the confines of the classroom
2. Mrs S was annoyed by the rush for books but helped out to settle the class.
3. I deliberately forgot about the music but was reminded!
4. I did not believe the independence and seriousness with which everyone worked. The leaders had really taken charge and allocated tasks quite equitably because no one was idle. Even Mrs S was impressed.
5. Some interesting topics have surfaced. Noms wants to do *Albinism* (Sorisha has it in class) I left the decision to them.
6. Some amusing visuals especially for the topic on *Gonorrhoea*.
7. I am almost sad that the lessons are coming to an end. At least the time worked out well eventually, although a bit rushed.
8. Two groups were still undecided about their topics. I made them aware of the time constraints but they had made arrangements with the Media teacher to come in during the break. That was really noble!

Lesson 10 19/06/02

1. The last lesson and I have mixed feelings.



*APPENDIX F continued*

2. There are quite a few absentees today. I suppose the exam fever and the fact that we are over with the 'new' section.
3. Groups in the process on finalising their leaflets were given time to work on collation, design layout and whatever needed attention.
4. Quite a few are unhappy about the computer room being out of bounds. I volunteered to assist by accepting responsibility for the venue. I could have planned a 1 session for all but there was insufficient time.
5. Avril and Melish informed me that they would complete the leaflets on their home computers. Concerned about absentees and handing in of leaflets.
6. I thought it fair to grant an extension. My concern was the absentees but I was assured by the group members that the leaflets would be ready.
7. I was surprised that the group questionnaires were filled in without questions. As a reward what else but music?
8. I have not told them as yet that I am leaving.