

**A GENRE - BASED ASSESSMENT OF THE APPROACHES USED BY
SELECTED TEACHERS IN THE TEACHING OF THE LITERARY
ESSAY IN THE HIGH SCHOOL**

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates issues around the teaching of the literary essay in the high school. The purpose of the study is to explore the instructional approaches used by selected high school teachers in respect of the literary essay, and to gain an insight into teacher and student perceptions of the essay and its place in the English syllabus. This study also examines the effect of the genre-based process on student argumentative writing at the senior certificate level. A review and theoretical consideration of principles and approaches to teaching the essay is included. The sample comprised two groups. The first was made up of six teachers from schools in the Northdale/Raisethorpe area, Pietermaritzburg, and the second of a class of eighteen standard ten students at a high school in the same area. Data drawn from a survey of the teachers, a content analysis of the students' essays and a Pre-process questionnaire was synthesized with information from relevant literature to formulate the genre-based writing process to which the students were subsequently exposed. The findings revealed that current methodologies and perceptions of the essay are product centred with minimal focus on the writing process itself and on specific genre requirements. They indicate that there is a need for teachers and students to develop an awareness of writing as a process of refinement which involves their collaborative effort. It was concluded that the genre-based process is an appropriate methodology for instruction in literary essay writing.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The writing classroom has often been described as a source of frustration to both language learners and their teachers. Various reasons have been suggested for this phenomenon. One possible explanation according to Pica (1986) is that students dislike writing because they are "...required by the conventions of written language to express themselves at a far more precise level of grammatical accuracy and rhetorical organization in their written expression than in their spoken language" (p. 6).

Two significant points which relate to writing instruction have been raised by Pica (1986) in this statement. The first is the stress on grammatical accuracy, and the second is on the importance of rhetorical organization in writing. Applebee (1982) claims that writing curricula do cater for aspects such as style, syntax, and paragraphing but tend to neglect an important area of language, i.e., the skills needed to effectively produce particular kinds of written discourse structure. In traditional syllabi, according to Varble (1990), "...to ensure that children acquire the necessary basic writing skills, researchers have identified lists of skills, taught by teachers, and learned by children. These skill lists are usually accompanied by record-keeping systems and mandated tested programmes" (p. 245).

She criticises such an approach on the grounds that teachers and children are so caught up in record keeping, completing worksheets, and testing, that little time is left for instruction. She cites Holdaway (1985) in claiming that the traditional writing method stresses the visible aspects of language and assumes that by isolating skills used in writing the child will learn more easily and quickly (p. 245). Writers like King and Rentel, 1979, argue that children learn to talk through social contexts rather than isolated skills. It is believed that one way to improve the quality of students' writing is to spend more time on composing and less time on practising isolated skills.

Martin (1989) claims that most people have a misconception about writing, in that, "they think of learning to write as learning to write down what we would otherwise say" (p. 53).

He regards this as an intransitive view of writing as he feels that writing, in fact, involves more than mere transcription. He states that learning to write involves learning new genres and new ways of using grammar as well. It seems important, therefore, to recognise the complexity of the processes involved in writing.

According to Rothery (1989), the distance between the writer and the events and facts that he/she is writing about, and the distance between the writer and the reader, exerts a pressure on our language to include more information in our text to ensure that it can be as well understood as possible. Vähäpassi (1988), in describing the text as a "bridge" between the writer and the reader, asserts that "...what the text will look like is influenced by his/her personal schemata and by individual but commonly understood linguistic and rhetorical resources. With these utterances the writer must make a transition from utterance to text, from "writer meaning" to explicit meaning, in order to produce, for example a narrative, expository, argumentative, or instructive text that is appropriate to the communicative goal" (p. 16).

Vähäpassi (1988) also stresses that there must be some degree of overlap between the writer's and the reader's schemata, and between their linguistic and rhetorical resources. In order to convey an idea to the reader, the writer must be able to structure information into a coherent whole. The task is a difficult one especially for school writers who write for a teacher who has either shared the experience they write about, or is more of an expert in it than they are. It is obvious that explicit guidance is required by students to make them successful writers. The teacher needs to point out to writers, by reference to successful texts, what is needed in their writing if it is to successfully re-create an experience for someone who did not share it.

The above comments are directly relevant to the literary essay. Cohen (1973) emphasises that the critical essay has its own shape or design which enables the writer to present his/her views coherently to the reader. He states that "the interpreter of literature" has to provide his readers with logical patterns of organization which require meticulous attention to the relationship between the parts of and the details in an essay.

Generally, in literary studies in the high school, such responses are argumentative in nature.

It is necessary, therefore, to indicate clearly what we mean by argumentation or exposition in this study. Martin (1989) distinguishes between Hortatory exposition, i.e., Exposition that "persuades to", and analytical exposition, which "persuades that". The latter is more typical of examination answers and essay writing and tends to be written. The function of Analytical exposition is to persuade people that some judgement is correct, thus, in the interests of objectivity, it tends to be impersonal. Martin (1989) illustrates the difference between Analytical and Hortatory exposition by referring to traditional perceptions of a letter. He claims that a letter refers to a mode of writing and is not a genre. Letters are written for many different reasons: job applications, party invitations, personal letters to friends and so on. As a channel, letters can be used to transmit all kinds of different genres. He states that "...this distinction between the purpose of a text (genre) and the way in which it is transmitted (mode) is an important one because so many of linguistic-folk terms confuse mode and genre. Letters to the editor, for example, are usually Hortatory Expositions sent through the mail and have much more in common with sermons and political speeches than with other types of letter. But the everyday term for the genre (i.e. letter to the editor) tends to obscure these similarities and differences" (p. 17).

The literary essay may therefore be perceived as a "channel" for analytical exposition, in which the writer aims to convince the reader that his thesis is justified. The content for the essay (i.e., what students write about), is derived from the network and the students' interpretation of it. Patterns of organization of the text, however, are non-subjective and culturally determined. According to Rothery (1989), text structure is a sociocultural phenomenon. She states that our language use in speech and writing is structured to achieve specific goals which are social in origin and are part of our sociocultural learning. It seems, therefore, that students who have not learnt the structure of the text which they are writing would experience problems in this regard. Rothery (1989) suggests that the extent to which a student reads will affect his/her familiarity with the structure of the different texts. In the case of the literary essay the patterns of organization are rooted in the argumentative genre, which is particularly significant for any individual's survival in society.

In this respect Martin (1989) claims that schools encourage the types of writing which emphasise the powerlessness of children in society. He argues that analytical exposition,

which allows them to explore and interpret their world, is denied to them for as long as possible. He states further that if children received explicit instruction in writing many more children would learn to write effectively, thus increasing their chances of success in education. In claiming that writing is not being taught, Martin (1989) argues that children from working class homes do not learn to write effectively as their homes do not provide them with models of writing. He states further that "...bright, middle-class children learn by osmosis what has to be learned" (p. 61). Knudson (1992) reinforces this view. He states that teachers criticise students' essays without considering the possibility that such students cannot learn the rules of those genres without specific instruction.

These questions are important as argument is a complex activity that frequently incorporates many of the writing tasks stressed in a composition course. McCann (1989) asserts that "...in a narrow sense, argument is an important tool for students who face the task of writing papers; in a broader sense, argument is an essential instrument for a free society that deliberates about political, and ethical issues" (Knudson, 1992, p. 170).

It seems, however, that the development of argumentative writing competence is not being accorded the attention that it deserves. McCann (1989) found that elementary school curricula avoid argumentative and persuasive writing tasks and that secondary school textbook series typically avoid argument until the 11th grade. Martin (1989) expresses his concern in this respect by claiming that "Ten years of narrative/expressive writing and two years of literary criticism in no way prepare one for the writing demands of the diverse faculties in universities" (p. 53). It is clear that there is need for explicit instruction in the argumentative genre. Rothery (1989) argues that instruction in argumentative writing empowers students by enabling them to make their meanings explicit.

One way of realising this goal is through genre analysis, which Hyland (1992) describes as the study of how language is used in a particular context. He points out that "...genres differ in that each has a different goal and they are structured differently to achieve those goals. Most of these have written and spoken variants that must be mastered" (p. 15). Knudson (1992) cites the findings of Applebee, Langer, and Muillis, 1986, that the explicit teaching of these genres receives little attention in the curriculum although there is evidence that most

students do not master the specialised genres, especially the written ones (p. 169). He therefore emphasises that "...regardless of why a few students grasp the rules of formal genres whereas others do not, the mastery of something as essential as formal genres needs to be ensured for all students regardless of the degree to which their language backgrounds are consistent with schools' expectations" (p. 169).

Such concerns as those expressed above with reference to genre deficit are especially significant in the current situation in South Africa. The school population is becoming increasingly diverse, and this means that teachers encounter students who have problems with standard English, who are from cultures with ways of knowing and communicating that are different from those of the mainstream. According to De Klerk (1992) "...current socio-political changes have highlighted the need to confront language-related issues in our complex multi-lingual country...by far the majority of learners in South africa are L2 learners. With our newly (ethnically) integrated schools, teachers trained as first-language teachers are finding themselves teaching increasing numbers of such L2 learners" (p. 12).

De Klerk (1992) claims that second language learners do not have intuitive mastery of the L2 grammatical and semantic systems and that teachers have to teach them the elements of such systems. This problem, however, does not concern L2 learners only. It seems relevant to the students involved in this study, as many children in schools supervised by the House of Delegates are from working class homes and many of them are also poor readers. Therefore, they also need explicit guidance in genre conventions. This was one of my reasons for conducting the research at schools administered by the House of Delegates. Genre related problems are evident in the difficulties that these students experience in writing the literary essay. The literary essay (generally belonging to the Argumentative genre) poses a formidable problem to students in the senior secondary phase. Of concern to teachers and students in this phase, is the fact that one essay is compulsory in the literature question paper in the Senior Certificate Examination. Approximately 40% of the marks allocated for English are assigned to essay writing (Composition and Letter writing, and the literary essay in the literature question paper). Pupils, also, have to write out their speeches for the Oral Examination. Thus essay writing forms a significant component of the examination. Ironically, however, essay writing, especially Argumentative writing, does not seem to be

accorded the attention that it deserves.

Examiners' have identified weaknesses in student essay writing which reveal that they do need explicit guidance. They have stated, quite clearly, that students reveal a good knowledge of the content of their networks in their essays. The problem of underachievement with regard to the literary essay, therefore, seems to stem from the nature of the essay itself - more especially, the extent to which students are sensitised to the conventions and structures of the argumentative genre.

Research on the effectiveness of instruction to improve students' competence with argumentation has not resulted (Knudson, 1988, 1991) in definitive answers to the issue of instruction in argument. This study, therefore, was directed at determining the impact of a synthesis of two approaches to writing instruction -the process approach and the genre-based approach. These concepts are explained towards the end of this chapter and in chapter two.

In the light of the above observations, this study will endeavour:

- To explore the instructional approaches used by selected high school teachers with reference to the literary essay,
- To gain an insight into teacher and pupil perceptions of the Literary Essay and its place in the English syllabus, and
- To investigate the effect of the Genre-based process on student argumentative writing at the Senior Certificate level.

A study of teacher and student perceptions of the literary essay, of its relevance to the English Syllabus and of the approaches to teaching the essay, should assist teachers to better understand underachievement in the writing of the essay. Further, the study may be useful:

- in illuminating the strengths and weaknesses in current practices of writing instruction.

- in revealing student and teacher perceptions and knowledge of the conventions of the argumentative genre.
- in developing an awareness of the "hard-process" advocated by Swales (1990), (This approach is explained in chapter two).
- in inspiring teachers to look afresh at and reconceptualise the issues raised in the study, and to consider incorporating at least some of the suggestions about addressing the present inadequacies.

It is anticipated that if the study leads to the reconceptualisation of writing in the interests of improved practice then the research will be justified.

It is necessary at this point to define three concepts which will be used in this dissertation: the literary essay, genre, and the process approach. Students in the senior secondary school have to answer one essay question in the literature question paper. This essay is termed the "literary essay" as it requires a response (generally an argument) to one of the prescribed books. Genre analysis is a study of how language is used in a particular context. Each genre has a specific goal and is structured differently to achieve this goal. According to Hyland (1992), "A genre has a particular schematic structure: a distinctive beginning, middle and end" (p. 15). The Argumentative genre comprises of a thesis, an argument and a conclusion. Hyland (1992) stresses that a student must be aware of the formal patterns that shape a text if he is to write successfully in a particular genre. A process approach to writing emphasises the writing process, as opposed to the written product. It treats writing as a creative and communicative process in which students are explicitly assisted to "...develop the cognitive, affective, and verbal abilities that underlie effective writing and speaking" (Coe, 1986, p. 292).

Finally, it is intended that the study will proceed in accordance with the following structure: The second chapter consists of an analysis of and a brief description of the nature of writing and approaches to writing instruction. The third chapter describes the methodology adopted in the study, i.e., the action research process. The fourth chapter will present the Pre-process

data which was obtained from three sources: a survey of six teachers in the Northdale/Raisethorpe area, a content analysis of essays written by students involved in the research and from student responses to a pre-writing questionnaire. The fifth chapter describes the writing process which was formulated by synthesising ideas gleaned from the readings and from the Pre-process data. The sixth chapter will analyse the overall findings based on the feedback from the writing process and other procedures in the research. In the final chapter, i.e., chapter seven, the researcher will discuss the conclusions from the readings and the findings, and will look at proposals arising from the research for writing instruction.

CHAPTER TWO

INSIGHTS FROM THE READINGS

This chapter will look at issues in the teaching and learning of writing in schools in general, and on the writing of literary essays in particular. It focuses on developing insights about appropriate methodology for the literary essay. A number of the key issues are related to the claim made by Joan Rothery (1989), that teachers of writing are operating within what she calls a "hidden curriculum". She states that as writing teachers have an implicit understanding of schematic structure they are unable to explicitly state the criteria they use to judge students' essays. One reason for this is the fact that information on the distinctive organizational features of different texts, including the argumentative genre, is not readily available. This means, consequently, that students are often handicapped by an inadequate understanding of how to organize their written assignments to meet the expectations of their teachers as they are unfamiliar with the structural conventions of the various text types they have to produce. Readings seem to indicate that pupils have a very limited experience of argumentative literary writing and are given very little explicit guidance about such writing. Generally, the writing of the literary essay is a "one-off" exercise in which the essay is regarded as a final product that has to be corrected and assessed. This chapter critiques the view that it is an essential aspect of the teacher's role to help students acquire an understanding of the formal structures which govern argumentative writing. In doing this it explores the issues surrounding a methodology which involves a combination of the process approach and genre analysis. Such a methodology views the writing of the essay as a process in which students are explicitly sensitized to genre conventions and one in which peer evaluation plays a vital role. Swales (1990) distinguishes between a "soft process" and a "hard process". In the "soft process" there is no or very little concern with outside constraints on writing, including genre constraints. Such writing includes dialogues, journals and freewriting. In the "hard process" there is a focus on the demands and the constraints of the genre that is being composed. The approach that is being investigated in this study is associated with the "hard process".

The development of the skills associated with Analytical exposition are vital to a student for

a number of reasons. While some writers have stressed the significance of argument in the school curriculum, others have emphasised more universal concerns. Argument plays an important part in a student's secondary education; in the different subjects and in the examinations. Rothery (1989) claims that "...it is no exaggeration to say that a student's success in school will depend to a great extent on his mastery of these [Hortatory and Analytical] and some other varieties of writing (Martin, p. 71). Connor, Gorman and Vähäpassi (1988) emphasise that training in the written and oral uses of argument is perhaps the most important part of education, particularly at the upper secondary and tertiary levels of education. Such a claim may seem to be rather strong, but if the goal of education includes the preparation of citizens to think and reflect upon various issues independently, then it is in these two stages that such aspirations are realized. Of significance to teachers of writing is the fact that children have difficulty with both oral and written arguments (Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1982). According to Knudson (1992), Prater and Padia (1983) found that persuasive writing tasks are the most difficult type for most subgroups when compared with expressive and explanatory tasks. Erftmier's (1985) conclusion (as cited by Knudson, 1992, p. 170) that children cannot simply transfer persuasive strategies used in oral dialogue to written monologues has important implications for writing instruction. He also claims that children do not have a well-developed schema for written persuasion. Results of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) (Applebee, Langer, and Mullis, 1986, as cited by Knudson, 1992, p. 170) indicate that student performance in persuasive writing tasks is poor.

In the senior secondary phase (Department of Education and Culture - ex-House of Delegates), nine lessons per week are allocated for the study of English. Teachers are advised (by the superintendents of English) to spend one period per week on the teaching of writing. This makes up 11% of the total time allocated for the study of English. The literary essay (often the only exercise in Argumentative writing) is discussed over a three week period - one lesson for discussion of the essay (with the emphasis generally being on the content), one lesson for peer evaluation and one period for "Correction and Remedial work." In the last period the essays are returned to students so that they could correct any grammatical errors or problems associated with the content. "Remedial work" is based upon the identification and "remediation" of weaknesses which appear in a number of essays. This

may include problems related to the content, the organization and presentation of the content and expression, i.e., grammatical errors. Sometimes the teacher may "re-teach" aspects of the essay which he/she feels needs to be re-presented in class. There is no major revision or rewriting of the essays or parts of the essays.

In my experience I have found that students seem to prefer to answer contextual questions and, in fact, have a very negative attitude towards writing the literary essay. Examiners' comments in this regard emphasize weaknesses such as the following:

incorrect structure,

little or no evidence of any attempt by the candidate to analyse the question in the introduction,

inability to take a point of view in regard to salient issues, develop a convincing argument, and reinforce the discussion with a suitable conclusion (House of Delegates, Examiner's report, 1993).

The examiners have noted in the same report that students generally revealed a good knowledge of the content of their networks in their essays. It should be noted that the syllabus for the senior secondary phase (ex- House of Delegates, 1986) does stipulate that instruction should allow the student to gain insight "into the demands, styles, conventions, technicalities and language of various kinds of writing" (p. 16) and "into the writing conventions, forms and techniques appropriate to different situations" (p. 18). Further direction is provided in the Objectives for English, 1981 (Department of Internal Affairs - Division of Indian Education) which states that "the pupil should be able to write argumentative essays, stating and justifying his opinions on a given topic and giving reasons in support of his viewpoints" (p. 9).

Nunan (1991) makes an interesting observation in this regard. He claims that the "failure to provide links between goals, content, and learning activities can lead to a situation in which the desired outcomes of a programme are contradicted at the classroom level (p. 96). This

discrepancy is important and could possibly account for the weaknesses that are evident in the literary essays.

Another possible reason for students' poor performance in argumentative tasks has been suggested by Rothery (1989). She states that many students in our schools are not familiar with the structures that are essential for the retrieval of and the presentation of information because of their unfamiliarity with the conventions of the English language. According to Rothery (1989) "Our language use in speech and writing is structured to achieve specific goals...Native speakers learn the structure of various exchanges during childhood. If we understand the socio-cultural basis of the organization of different types of texts we realise these structures are learned. They are not a reflection or manifestation of some innate ability; they are part of our socio-cultural learning" (Martin, p. 72).

Painter (1986, p. 90) has found some evidence to support Rothery's (1989) claim that children acquire some genre skills quite early. He states that this is so as children are able to internalize models of language of genres which have been provided through repeated conversational interaction. The development of genre skills thereafter, however, is neglected and this could be the reason why the students have a problem with writing. Although many students in our schools regard English as their first language, they are not true "native speakers" of the language. It is possible, therefore, that they may not have learned essential genre skills during their childhood. Martin states that "bright middle-class children learn by osmosis what has to be learned" (p. 61). Of relevance to this study is his claim, also, that the homes of working-class children do not provide them with models of writing and that they don't have the ability to learn these conventions independently. Consequently they do not learn to write effectively. Many of the children in our schools are from working-class homes. The implications of Martin's (1989) observations for these children are serious. He states that one of the functions of education is "to reproduce the social order existing in our community" (Martin, 1989, p. 61). He claims that one way of maintaining the differences between ruling and working classes is "to make as unclear as possible what exactly it is that has to be learned to succeed. If children received explicit instruction in writing, for example, including models and direct teaching making use of knowledge about language, many more children would learn to write effectively than at present. And success in education depends

on writing. But at present writing is not taught" (p. 61).

Teachers frequently fault students' essays for "poor organization" or "lack of logical development". It is possible that such students cannot learn the rules of the genre without specific instruction. A few others do seem to grasp the rules, without any instruction. The latter students are mainly those who have the advantage of speaking and using language in ways familiar to and desired by schools (Loban, 1963). Many researchers, including Heath (1983), according to Knudson (1992), are of the opinion "...that differences in language use across communities result in differential access to school experiences, providing some students with advantages in mastering specialised genres especially written ones, while denying access to other students or providing them with another set of school experiences that disadvantages them" (p. 169). Included in the latter group, according to Rothery (1989), are children learning English as a second language, children whose families are from a different culture, children who are poor readers, and children from certain socio-economic groups in the community. If these children do not receive instruction in writing then they are being denied the opportunity for success in the education system.

The explicit teaching of the various genres, however, receives little attention in the curriculum. It seems that educators have assumed that explicit teaching may not be necessary for genres learned and used in daily oral interchanges, including narration and description, because the evidence suggests that most students master them (Lemke, 1988 ; McCann, 1989). The consequences, according to Rothery (1989) are serious "...for those students who are able to handle the stages of different varieties of writing successfully the rewards come in high examination marks and university placements. For students who do not master the organization of different varieties there is no success forthcoming in the education system. They receive low marks yet they are given little opportunity to master the structures of different texts" (Martin, p. 80).

Coe (1986) has identified another reason as to why children may not be aware of essential genre skills. He refers to the trend, during the 1960's, toward "creative" self-expression as the predominant genre of student writing. He feels that while focusing on the joys of "creativity", teachers did not teach students how to structure their writings to meet the needs

and expectations of readers. Thus analytic writing was neglected. Consequently, student writing often remained subjective self-expression rather than becoming communicative. Too many students did not learn to do the types of writing that are required in universities or for many, the types that were necessary for survival. This seems to be the current situation in our schools as the focus is on narrative and descriptive writing instead of on the more empowering genres like argument. The literary essay is a compulsory question in the English Higher grade literature question paper in the Senior secondary phase, i.e., standards 8, 9 and 10. Instruction on the argumentative genre and on the literary essay appears to be delayed till standard nine and standard ten. It is obvious that this is too late in the schooling career of children to develop such complex abilities. Martin (1989), thus emphasises that "...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 understand and challenge the world in which we live. And they need to be taught to write; only a few of them can learn it on their own (p. 61).

Writing instruction has evolved radically over the last four decades. Three methods have been chosen for discussion: the basic skills approach, the process approach and the genre-based method. These have been chosen with the intention of tracing the evolution of writing instruction to the point where it is felt that the genre-based method could possibly supplement the process approach.

Writing instruction in the traditional or the basic skills method begins with the basic units - words, phrases, clauses and sentences - and gradually combines them to build larger structures such as paragraphs and essays. Grammatical mistakes are highlighted, and structural correctness takes precedence over content. Improvement in writing ability is associated with hard work so that students can establish the right habits or basic skills. The essay is generally perceived as a "finished product," consequently, revision of the essay is minimal with the focus on surface errors. The writing of the essay follows a linear pattern, i.e., students are assigned a topic which is discussed in class; the essay is written, marked and then corrected.

Rivers (1987) criticises the basic skills approach as he claims that it "...is theoretically

untenable because it defines the nature of writing structurally. The relationship between thought and writing is seen as linear, one which occurs in a form described by Zoellner (1969) as "think write" (p. 22).

Judy and Judy (1981) support this rejection of the traditional approach on the grounds that a "structuralist view of writing and the acquisition of writing is both simplistic and inadequate" (cited by Rivers, 1987, p. 23). Hillock's (1987) also rejects this approach as he claims that it does not influence the writer's purpose, plans, content and style, because of its obsession with structural correctness. Coe (1986) claims further that traditional curricula emphasized formal essay writing and did not allow students to transfer writing abilities developed while composing essays, to other writing occasions. He states that the traditional pedagogies may have been adequate for the traditional curricula and the "best" students, but they are not adequate for what needs to be done today as " ...we need pedagogies that put more emphasis on writing as a communicative ability" (p. 291).

Coe (1986) suggests the process approach as an alternative to the basic skills approach as it meets these needs and because "...it pulls together a variety of methods and techniques, old and new, under a unifying and coherent instructional philosophy" (p. 292). He does emphasise that the process approach is not new to teachers as it includes methods and techniques that English teachers have been using for a long time.

The process approach is characterised by three broad principles. Firstly, writing is regarded as a communicative process in which writers consider purpose, audience and occasion. Their goal is to communicate and to accomplish their purposes with their intended readers. Writing is viewed as a creative and a communicative process, and for the teacher, writing instruction means guiding students through the writing process, not just evaluating their written work. Secondly, the approach identifies which underlying abilities are required before instruction is initiated, so that the writing process should include activities to develop the cognitive, affective and verbal abilities necessary for performing certain writing tasks. Thirdly, the approach stresses the necessity of guiding the creative process. Proponents of the process approach state that students should be guided through the various phases of the writing process. This means that because of the intensive writing involved fewer assignments are

completed.

Six stages have been identified by Coe (1986) in the writing process. The first stage involves motivating students to write. This can be done through the traditional methods such as rewards and punishments in the form of grades, praise and criticism. Advocates of the process approach suggest the publication of articles that have been written by students. Motivation can be intrinsic, also, as students are able to enjoy the fruits of their own progress.

Secondly, students should be taught techniques for generating ideas. Coe (1986) suggests techniques such as free writing, brainstorming, and keeping a journal. He also discusses the use of the "heuristic" which is a set of questions for generating information. In addition to generating subject matter, writers must also generate communicative strategies. Coe (1986) suggests that writers should ask three questions in this regard:

1. What am I trying to accomplish with this writing? (Purpose)
2. With whom am I trying to accomplish it? (Audience)
3. In what situation and using what genre am I trying to accomplish it? (Occasion)

The answers to these questions should serve as guidelines for identifying and selecting the relevant strategies for writing the essay.

The third stage in the process is Drafting, which according to Coe (1986) "...involves focusing, distinguishing relevant from irrelevant material, developing structure, and generating additional material as needed" (p. 300).

Proponents of the process approach stress the importance of acquainting students with a variety of forms and structures and the need to practice the basic patterns of organization. Students should also learn how to develop their ideas in an essay and how to use these basic patterns and orders of development within specific genres. It is important at this point to note that the process approach does stress the significance of recognising and working within the conventions of the various genres.

The benefits of the fourth stage, i.e., revision, have been emphasised by the advocates of this approach. Coe (1986) identifies two phases in this stage: major revision or reformulation and editing. He advises that instead of grading essays written by students we should use techniques such as questions to focus the attention of students on areas that need to be rewritten or revised. According to Butturff and Somers (1980) students must "...be made to understand that texts evolve, that revision is to be taken literally as a process of re-seeing one's text, and that this re-seeing is an integral and recursive aspect of writing" (Zamel, 1985, p. 95).

The fifth stage in the writing process involves editing for style and ensuring that the conventions of the relevant genre have been adhered to. "Surface errors" such as grammar, spelling and punctuation are identified and corrected in this stage.

The role of the teacher in the writing process is described by Sommer (1989) as one in which the "...authority is shifted; emphasis is placed on the student writer rather than on the teacher's prominence in the classroom" (p. 14). Coe (1986) equates the teacher's role to that of an editor or supervisor, who estimates the probable effectiveness of a piece of writing before allowing it to be published or otherwise distributed. This is a major change from the teacher's traditional role as a critic and judge. He states that the teachers' responses have to be constructive, thus he suggests the following guidelines that teachers could use to respond to students writing:

1. Locate the errors and weaknesses.
2. Name the problem for the student.
3. Form a hypothesis about why the problem occurs.
4. Find or devise a strategy for solving the problem (p. 308).

Such an approach rejects the traditional linear view of writing that sees the writer as working directly from an outline to a draft, to a final product. A further advantage is that within the process there seems to be some sort of global planning or monitoring of how the pace is progressing as a whole. The writer also has to move back and forth between his/her own developing ideas and his/her sense of how these ideas might come across to an audience.

Such revision of the text will certainly contribute to improving the quality of student writing. In fact, the process approach certainly has much to contribute towards facilitating the study of and the teaching of the literary essay. The advantages for the literary essay, as far as methodological considerations are concerned, are numerous. One advantage relates to the development of an awareness of writing as a process of refinement, which implies a constant re-viewing of student knowledge of the setwork. Another concerns the creation of a collaborative relationship between students and the teacher in which the student is seen as a student writer rather than a candidate presenting another essay for marking. It seems that such an approach has great potential in the type of multi-cultural classroom that is evident in South Africa today.

A number of writers have criticised the process approach. Of relevance to this study is Hyland's (1992) claim that the process approach focuses exclusively on the process of writing and denies the value of teaching explicit knowledge of language. Martin (1989) also criticises "...its reluctance to intervene positively and constructively during conferencing, and its complete mystification of what has to be learned for children to produce effective written products" (p. 61). In response to such criticism Hyland (1992) argues that genre analysis is directly relevant to the writing classroom and illuminates a neglected area in our teaching methods and materials. He claims that it emphasises the crucial importance of rhetorical text structure, therefore it is essential as it describes the structures and processes involved in text analysis and creation. Genre theory stresses that knowledge of language conventions is a crucial aspect of effective communication.

According to Hyland (1992) research in cognitive psychology has emphasised the importance of organized background knowledge in text processing. In this regard, many studies have recognised the importance of pre-established categories of knowledge called schemata (e.g., de Beaugrande and Dressler 1981, Kintsch 1982, as cited by Hyland 1992, p. 14). Swales (1990, p. 83) states that many studies in both L1 and L2 contexts that have shown that human beings consistently overlay schemata on events to align those events with previously established patterns of experience, knowledge and belief (Sanford and Garrod, 1981; Carrel, Devine and Eskeyy, 1988). Swales (1990) also cites Carrel's (1983) distinction between "content schemata" which refers to general background knowledge of the world, and "formal

schemata," which are concerned with the rhetorical structure of language. According to Hyland (1992) formal Schemata constitute knowledge about text types which provide the reader with powerful "genre-specific problem solving strategies which identify, locate and organize the incoming information in accordance with our general knowledge about the structure of a particular genre "(p. 14). Effective understanding is therefore seen as being dependant on the reader's ability to relate the structure of a text to a familiar conventional pattern. Moreover, these formal schemata are culturally specific, and are vital for the production of communicatively appropriate texts. It is clear that as writers have to be aware of the formal patterns that shape a text, it is incumbent upon teachers to familiarise students with the schemata associated with the particular genres they will require.

The concept of genre, according to Swales (1990) is difficult to define as it remains " fuzzy". He defines genre as "...a distinctive category of discourse of any type, spoken or written, with or without literary aspirations" (p. 33) and adds that it is the communicative purpose which distinguishes one genre from another. Another definition of genre has been offered by Bhatia (1993) who views it as "...A recognizable communicative event characterised by a set of communicative purpose (s) identified and mutually understood by members of the...community in which it regularly occurs. Most often it is highly structured and conventionalized with constraints on allowance contributions in terms of their intent, positioning, form and functional value. These constraints, however,are often exploited by the expert members of the discourse community to achieve private intentions within the framework of socially recognized purpose (s) (p. 13).

These two definitions indicate that student writers have to understand and become familiar with the conventions and constraints of the different genres so that they will be able to communicate their ideas to their readers.

According to Hyland (1992) the concept of genre is familiar to teachers but what is new is that the organizational stages of each variety can be individually characterised, i.e., "A genre has a particular structure: a distinctive beginning, middle and end" (p. 15).

Genre description has already been used to help students consciously structure their texts and

develop effective control over different writing tasks. It is important to note that much of the impetus for the approach has come from Australia where it has been pioneered successfully in first-language classrooms (e.g., Martin 1986, Rothery 1986, Christie 1984, as cited by Hyland 1992, p. 15). This is significant to this study as the literary essay is compulsory for all students who study English as a first language on the higher grade in standard ten, at schools supervised by the ex-House of Delegates. Many of these students, however, are likely to need explicit guidance in understanding and using the conventions of the various genres as they may come from working class homes, or could possibly be poor readers, thus restricting their knowledge of the genres.

Hyland (1992) has identified a number of key ways in which a teacher "...armed with the structural insights of a genre description, can use an explicit knowledge of texts to provide guidance and constructive input" (p. 16). The first of these is the use of rhetorical models. Hyland (1992) has advised that good examples of the genre may be used as models to illustrate the cultural context of a text and to draw attention to its purpose. Thereafter, "particular stages or moves can be identified explicitly and presented with exercises to illustrate how ideas and meanings are typically conveyed" (p. 16).

A variation of the models approach has been suggested by Pica (1982). Instead of beginning with perfect models to guide students' writing she suggests that the students' own work should be used for hypothesis testing, error correction and revision. This activity can focus on text structure, content deficiencies or on any other area of concern.

Rivers (1987) identifies two weaknesses in the models approach. He claims, firstly, that it presents the idea that writing is learned by simple imitation. Secondly, as the student only sees the final draft of a piece of writing created by a professional writer he is led to believe that one can produce such writing in one attempt if one sufficiently controls the structure of the mode. These criticisms, however, can be obviated by making it clear to students that the models have not been written at one sitting and, also, that they are merely illustrations. Students must also be made aware of the fact that the models are structured along the conventions which are determined by society. These are there to be "worked on" and not merely imitated.

Hyland's (1992) second suggestion is that there should be joint composition of the genre under consideration, with the teacher guiding writing by questions and comments that highlight the particular purpose of each section. Zamel (1985) also advises that teachers should ensure that "one reads and interacts with the text instead of evaluating it" (p. 92). According to Zamel (1985), Schwarz 1983, Brannon and Knoblach 1982, Siegel 1982, have suggested that teachers need to develop more appropriate responses for commenting on student writing. They need to facilitate revision by responding to writing as work in progress rather than judging it as a finished product so that students can better understand how to revise their writing. These writers also suggest that vague commentary and references to abstract rules and principles should be replaced with text-specific strategies, directions, guidelines and recommendations which can be derived from genre analysis.

The merits of indirect and direct feedback were investigated by Robb, Ross and Shortreed (1988). The results suggest that highly detailed feedback on sentence-level mechanics may not be worth the instructors' time and effort even if, as Cohen (1973) suggests, students claim to need and use it. They advise that teachers can respond to student writing with comments that require students to return to the initial stages of composing. Sommers (1982) refers to this stage as the "chaos", to which students return for reshaping and restructuring their meaning. The genre-based approach does provide the necessary vocabulary and concepts to explicitly guide students in this process. These are discussed later in this chapter where comments are made on the argumentative essay.

The Genre-based approach, according to Hyland (1992), allows for constructive assessment of the literary essay as genre descriptions provide the objective criteria needed for precise and constructive evaluation. In the writing process, assessment is regarded as part of the teaching process and is thus more than merely marking essays. This perception of the marking process is very important as it involves identifying weaknesses and the needs of students in the writing process. Thus Hyland (1992) claims that "Positive feedback and informed discussion at each stage of the essay become possible as more information is available on the features of different genres" (p. 17). This statement seems to suggest strategies that are similar to those advocated by Swales in his "hard process." In Argumentative writing, for instance, Applebee states that instead of stressing the accuracy of the information that has been

presented, teachers should focus on how arguments can be built up by using that information.

The genre-based approach offers specific criteria for assessing essays. Purves, Gorman and Takala (1988) suggest three types of scoring scheme for large scale assessment. It must be stressed that these schemes can be used for "one-off" assessments or for ongoing evaluation in the writing process, depending on the reason for the assessment. The schemes are the General Impression scheme, the Primary Trait scheme and the Analytic scheme. In General Impression Marking, raters are guided by "standards" set according to a selected set of compositions that illustrate the points on a scale. In assessing a composition a variety of aspects are considered including the discourse and aspects of the text. In Primary Trait Marking a text is judged only on the degree to which it fulfills its prescribed function. The problem with this particular scheme is that it focuses on organization and tends to minimise the quality of the content.

Analytic Assessment is that system which seeks to define certain characteristics or aspects of performance in composition and have the scorers rate each aspect separately. These are related to "...text-producing skill and the ability to produce meaningful discourse ... in terms of content, style and tone, and organisation, each of which is so defined to allow for appropriate variation within the limits of the conventions set for the type of text called for by the task assignment" (Gorman, Purves and Takala, 1988, p. 46).

Any one of the three schemes may be used in the marking of essays, depending on the purpose of the exercise. The analytic assessment seems to be more appropriate in a study like this where essays are to be marked during the writing process, because its comprehensive nature can be exploited to foster student understanding of the concept of genre. The procedure is described in chapter five.

The final principle that Hyland (1992) suggests is that of collaboration. He claims that using a genre-based approach promotes a more collaborative relationship between the teacher and the students as the genre-specific information about text organization serves as a base for consultation. Students do need guidance in assessing the quality of each others' essays. According to Flannigan (1986) "research on the revision process (Beach, 1976; Perl, 1979)

indicates that many students either don't know how to revise or have a very limited view of it, frequently confusing revision with matters left to the proof-reading stage" (p. 313). Hyland (1992) claims that this may be due to the fact that instead of allocating responsibility to the students for their texts, teachers play the major role in the revision of the essays. Pica (1986) suggests that teachers should provide students with guidelines that they can use as a basis for feedback about each others' work. Proponents of the genre-based approach stress that peer evaluation is an integral part of the writing process. The benefits as identified by Katstra, Tollefson and Gilbert (1987) include increased motivation and more positive attitudes towards writing the essay.

Finally, critics of the genre-based approach have raised the issue of originality in the writing of essays. In this regard Swales (1990) cites Lemke (1985) in acknowledging that the "...advocacy of varied genre-based instruction does raise the potential danger of formulaic and ideological indoctrination" (p. 91). He states, however, that the danger is diminishable by allowing students to critique the various genres and the options that are available for each.

It has been argued that the process approach and the genre-based approach (i.e. the hard process"), could assist students to write the literary essay. Procedures with regard to teaching strategies have been discussed and it has been mentioned that students have to be sensitised to the conventions of genres that empower them in society. The concept of assessment with a particular focus on peer evaluation has also been explored. The remainder of this discussion will focus on the conventions of the argumentative genre.

According to Andrasick (1990) "The critical analysis paper should be an argument for an interpretation supported by evidence from the text" (p. x). The goal of such an argument, as perceived Joan Rothery (1989), is to convince the reader of the truth or "rightness" of a proposition. As has been pointed out, each genre derives from a specific linguistic system. According to Martin (1989), the argumentative system is made up of four elements which he identifies as lexical cohesion, schematic structure, conjunction and theme.

He states that "lexical cohesion" has to do with relevance in a text, i.e., being relevant means staying on the topic and moving from one idea to the next. To achieve this, writers make

use of expectancies readers have about what kinds of words go together. The technical term for these probabilities of co-occurrence is "collocation" (Martin, 1989, p. 85). In literary essay writing these words may be derived from the question. Other writers have referred to them as key words, topic words and "echo words". They are strings of related words that are found throughout the essay or they may be clustered in paragraphs where a particular aspect of the topic is being discussed.

"Schematic structure" refers to the beginning, middle, and end structure of texts. All texts have some kind of beginning, middle, and end though the exact nature of this organization depends on genre. Hyland (1992, p.16) has analysed the structure of the argumentative genre and has identified the following elements for each stage:

GENRE OF THE ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY

<u>STAGE</u>	<u>MOVE</u>
THESIS	(Gambit) controversial or dramatic statement (Information) background material (Proposition) states writer's position and delimits topic (Evaluation) brief support of proposition (Marker) introduces and/or identifies a list
.....	
ARGUMENT	(Marker) signals the claim and relates it to the text (Restatement) rephrasing or repetition of proposition (Claim) reason for acceptance of the proposition. Either

- a. strength of perceived shared assumptions, or
- b. generalization based on data or evidence, or
- c. force of conviction

(Support)

grounds that underpin the claim. Either

- a. assumptions used to make claim, or
- b. data or references

.....

CONCLUSION (Marker)

signals conclusion boundary

(Consolidation)

relates argument to the proposition

(Affirmation)

restates proposition

(Close)

widens context or perspective of proposition

.....

One of the most important parts of the essay is the thesis statement. In the case of the literary essay the thesis or proposition is derived from the question that students have to answer either in an examination or in an assignment. In emphasising the importance of the thesis statement Cohen (1973) draws attention to its function of limiting and defining the purpose of the essay. He states further that "any failure to develop a coherent and meaningful thesis can have a detrimental effect upon both the content and organization of an essay" (p. 94). It is clear that the thesis statement and its role in the argumentative essay has to be accorded special attention in the pedagogic process.

"Conjunction" according to Martin (1989) has to do with being logical, in the natural language sense of the term. "This involves relating clauses to each other in terms of time, cause, comparison, or addition" (Martin, 1989, p. 90). Of importance to exposition are "consequent relations," which are established through words such as "because", "if",

"although", "so that", "therefore", etc. and can be classified as causal, conditional, concessive, and purposive. According to Martin (1989) conjunction can be fairly straightforwardly analysed in a "good" essay but is difficult to identify in a poor essay.

"Theme", according to Martin (1989), has to do with the particular angle one takes on the content of a text in its development. Theme is realised in English by putting the clause constituent which takes part in this development first. Thus "the 'point of departure' of English clauses reflects discourse patterns relevant to the structure of paragraphs and essays as a whole" (Martin, 1989, p. 93).

In English text, according to Martin (1989), where the text is reflective, constructing experience, clauses commonly begin with a Textual theme relating the clause conjunctively with what has gone before. This may be followed by an Interpersonal theme expressing the writer's attitude to what he is saying. Then follows a topical theme realising that aspect of the field of the text which has been selected as its method of development. Martin (1989) uses the following sentence to illustrate these concepts:

But frankly such training is often irrelevant to the needs of teachers in the classroom, *but* is the Textual Theme; *frankly*, the Interpersonal theme; and *such training*, the Topical Theme (p. 94).

"Cohesion" in the essay is realised through the combination of these four elements. Paragraphs tend to reflect the schematic structure of a text and are inter-related by the interaction of conjunction, lexical cohesion, and theme.

These elements of the essay are important and students should be sensitised to their presence and their potential in realising the purpose of the argumentative genre. In this regard Kinneavy (1971) has warned that "the ultimate danger, the Achilles heel of classical rhetoric, is to insist on a rigid formula which must be adhered to" (p. 265). In expressing the same concern over originality, Andrasick (1990) suggests that personal reactions to a setwork should be exploited to overcome the limiting effect of set conventions.

A number of significant points have been revealed by this study of the relevant literature. It is important to remember that the study of argumentative writing is exploratory in nature, as has been emphasised by Knudson (1992): "Research on the effectiveness of instruction to improve student's competence with argumentation has not resulted (Knudson, 1988, 1991) in definitive answers to the question: What works in teaching argument? Nor have the various qualities that constitute good argument been identified within the essay" (p. 169).

Therefore, it would be presumptuous to maintain that there is only one single correct response to a typical writing assignment. A characteristic typical of all composition tasks, not only in mother tongue instruction but in many other subjects as well, is that there are several acceptable approaches and several acceptable products. Nevertheless, the evidence on the genre-based approach seems to suggest that there is great potential in using the approach successfully to teach the literary essay. It is obvious that we must work towards making the implicit knowledge explicit if we are to break out of the "hidden curriculum" we now work within. Swales (1990) asserts that "Davies (1988) is surely right when she observes that a crucial condition for success in writing courses is that the students' will need a working environment in which they can be confident that their efforts will be respected. It does not follow, however, that such respect is only possible in strongly humanistic environments or when the students are protected from the exigencies of external criteria for evaluating their written products (i.e. in 'soft' process). And if that is so, a process orientation needs to pay at least equal attention to the external determinants of composing (Horowitz, 1986; Widdowson, 1983) for here the emphasis is less on the cognitive relationship between the writer and the writer's internal world and more on the relationship between the writer and on his or her ways of anticipating and countenancing the reactions of the intended readership (i.e. 'hard' process)" (p. 220).

In conclusion, it would seem that a combination of the elements of the process approach and the genre-based approach should form a feasible methodology for the literary essay. This means that students will be offered explicit guidance in learning the conventions of the argumentative genre. This will be realised through the use of modelling, collaborative learning and peer evaluation.

CHAPTER 3

THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Several strands in current research on writing have been identified by Takala (1988). One of these descriptions has relevance to this study as it has a pedagogical orientation which looks at what writing is taught in schools, how the curriculum is organized, and what teaching practices seem to be effective (Gorman, Purves and Degenhart, 1988, p. 7). In this study, these areas are explored, specifically, with reference to the argumentative literary essay. This chapter, which describes the research design and methodology, is made up of four parts. Part one explores the nature of the problem; part two explains why the qualitative research paradigm was adopted for this study; part three explains the procedure that was followed in this study and part four comments on the limitations of the study.

The immediate problem on which this study is based is the difficulty experienced by high school students in writing the literary essay. This is reflected in the aims of the study which focuses on the experiences of six teachers and a class of standard ten students based at schools which are administered by the former House of Delegates in the Northdale/Raisethorpe area:

- (a) To explore the instructional approaches used by selected High school teachers with reference to the literary essay,
- (b) To gain an insight into teacher and pupil perceptions of the Literary Essay and its place in the English syllabus, and
- (c) To investigate the effect of the Genre-based process on student argumentative writing at the Senior Certificate level.

Traditional writing instruction method, according to Holdaway (1985) stresses the visible aspects of language and assumes that by isolating skills used in writing, the child will learn more easily and quickly (Varble, 1990, p. 245). Such an approach has been criticized for its superficiality in ignoring other important factors in writing. This study explores the

impact of a writing process which focuses on the explicit teaching of the conventions of the argumentative genre. The function of Exposition (or Argumentation), however, cannot be appreciated without taking the ideology of a culture into account. Martin (1989) states that "Ideology and genre are intimately related in any culture, from the perspective of latent ideology" (p. 37). In like vein, Fairclough (1989) stresses that linguistic phenomena are social in the sense that whenever people speak or listen or write or read, they do so in ways which are determined socially and have social effects. The conventions of writing, therefore, are socially determined and for a student to write in a particular genre he/she must be aware of the formal patterns that shape a text. Hyland (1992) states that "Genres are culturally formulated activities and represent how language is used to achieve particular goals in our society" (p. 17).

It has been pointed out in chapter two that the problems being experienced by many children with writing the literary essay may be due to their unfamiliarity with the argumentative genre and its conventions. The reasons have been discussed. What is significant here is that these reasons are not obvious and need to be "unearthed". Thus this study requires a research design that is holistic in its approach and one which allows for the consideration of methodological issues, the "actors" in the situation and the context in which these issues are to be considered.

According to Nunan (1992) there are two alternative conceptions of the nature of research. He cites Chalmers' (1990) explanation: "The first view is that external truths exist 'out there' somewhere. According to this view, the function of research is to uncover these truths. The second view is that truth is a negotiable commodity contingent upon the historical context within which phenomena are observed and interpreted" (p. xii). These two conceptions of research have led to two main paradigms that are used in researching educational problems. Cohen and Manion (1989) state that two generic terms are conventionally used to describe these two paradigms: normative and interpretative. The normative paradigm is driven by two key ideas, i.e., that human behaviour is essentially governed by rules and that it should be investigated by the methods of natural science. This paradigm is synonymous with quantitative research. According to Nunan (1992) "Those who draw a distinction suggest that quantitative research is obtrusive and controlled, objective, generalisable, outcome-oriented,

and assumes the existence of 'facts' which are somehow external to and independent of the observer or researcher" (p. 3).

He claims further that there exists some scepticism about using the quantitative method for researching language learning. This is due to the fact that the relationship between instruction and learning is extremely complex and also because there is no direct relationship between teaching and learning. "Experimental research can therefore only provide us with an understanding of individual pieces of the language learning jigsaw, but not the whole puzzle" (Nunan, 1992, p. 52). In the case of this study it was felt that such an approach would be inappropriate because of the multifarious character of the area that was being investigated.

Therefore, it was decided that the interpretative paradigm (or the qualitative approach) would be more relevant as "...it is characterised by a concern for the individual...the central endeavour in the context of the interpretive paradigm is to understand the subjective world of human experience. To retain the integrity of the phenomena being investigated, efforts are made to get inside the person and to understand from within" (Cohen and Manion, 1989, p. 39). This type of research is concerned with understanding human behaviour "from the actor's own frame of reference" (Nunan, 1992, p. 4), of which genre is a significant part. As qualitative research views experience holistically, it is obvious that the cultural origins of genre and its impact on essay writing would be an integral part of the study. Kincheloe (1991) also emphasises that "...as individuals explore human situations they must attend to the variety of factors that shape them" (p. 145). This includes the underlying complexities of school experience.

In this regard Wilson (1982) refers to the "qualitative-phenomenological hypothesis" (Nunan, 1992, p. 54). This principle questions the belief that there is an objective reality which is independent of the subjective perceptions of researchers and their subjects. It emphasises that human behaviour cannot be understood without incorporating into the research the subjective perceptions and belief systems of those involved in the research, both as researchers and subjects. Nunan (1992) stresses the importance of the element of subjectivity by citing LeCompte and Goetz, (1982) who state that "By admitting into the research frame the subjective experiences of both participants and investigator, ethnography may provide a depth

of understanding lacking in other approaches to investigation" (p. 54).

According to Nunan (1992) interpretive research is "research based on discursive rather than statistical analysis" (p. 231). This means that the data is not merely described - it is also analysed, interpreted and explained. Thus in the analysis of the data cognisance has been taken of the responses of the individuals under investigation and the context in which they occurred. In this study an attempt was made also to take into account all the factors which could have affected the responses of the teachers who responded to the questionnaire and the students who were involved in the writing process. It was felt, therefore, that such investigation would allow the researcher to view the literary essay holistically.

Another feature of qualitative research that makes it suitable for this study is that it encourages naturalistic and uncontrolled observation. Kincheloe (1991) stresses that human experience is shaped in particular contexts and cannot be understood if removed from these contexts: "Research must take place in the normal, everyday context of the researched" (p. 144). This point is also emphasised by Nunan (1992) who cites Wilson's "naturalistic-ecological" hypothesis. This has, as its central tenet, the belief that the context in which the behaviour occurs has a significant influence on that behaviour. It follows that if we want to find out about issues concerning writing, we need to investigate it in the natural contexts in which it occurs, rather than in the experimental laboratory. Thus it was decided that research on the genre-based approach to teaching the literary essay should be conducted in a "real" classroom in a "real" school as qualitative research gives central importance to the context in which the variables occur, and emphasises the interplay amongst them.

The nature of the research process in this study was to a great extent influenced by the fact that the researcher is a practising teacher. Procedures have been determined by the principles underpinning what has been termed "Action Research", which has been defined by Kemmis (1983) as a "form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social (including educational) situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of (a) their own social or educational practices, (b) their understanding of these practices, and (c) the situations in which these practices are carried out" (Keeves, 1988, p. 42).

To facilitate analysis and comment, the four broad stages of action research identified by Alrichter, Posch and Somekh (1993) will be used to describe the procedure followed in this study. These are: finding a starting point, clarifying the situation, developing action strategies and putting them into practice, and making teachers' knowledge public.

The "starting point" for this particular study was based on my personal interest in the problems experienced by students in writing the literary essay. This issue is important as the literary essay is a compulsory question in the literature examination. It was noted, also, that students experienced great difficulty in presenting their opinions on the networks in class and also for their oral examinations. It was felt, therefore, that the issue needed investigation in the local context.

Permission had to be obtained from the House of Delegates before the research could be conducted at the schools under its jurisdiction. The letter of consent stipulated a number of conditions including the fact that "...all information pertaining to pupils and teachers is treated confidentially and used for academic purposes only".

It was decided that the name of the school and the teachers would remain anonymous. This consideration did seem to have a positive impact on student and teacher participation as they reacted favourably to the idea of anonymity. Principals of the schools at which the teacher-respondents were stationed were informed about the survey and all granted the necessary permission to interview the teachers. The purpose and the nature of the research was explained to the principals, the respondents to the teachers' survey and the teacher whose class was involved in the writing process. As there was "a reasonable amount of congruence between the setting and the programme to be initiated" (Cohen and Manion, 1989, p. 227), the researcher was able to elicit the willing co-operation of the teachers and the students who took part in the study. The sample of teachers and the standard ten class in which the writing process was implemented are described later in the chapter. The research programme, created by the researcher, slotted into the established time-table for the class in which the writing programme was effected. Teachers and students also co-operated willingly as they seemed to favour the area of investigation. It appeared as if they regarded the literary essay as a "problem" part of the English syllabus.

The second stage of the action research cycle according to Alrichter, Posch and Somekh (1993) is concerned with clarifying the situation. They state that during this stage "the researcher tries to get access to additional knowledge and to use it for reflection" and "linked to this, and often at the same time, the first impression or initial formulation of the starting point is questioned by this additional knowledge and refined, extended or changed" (p. 48).

They advise that one possible way of testing our knowledge of a situation we want to improve and develop, is to obtain additional information - perhaps by carrying out an observation or by interviewing other people involved. This stage of the research process, therefore, was made up of two parts. The first was a cross-sectional survey of a sample of teachers and the second part was based on a content analysis of essays that had been written by students in the standard 10B class. The following comments on the survey are relevant to all three questionnaires that were used in the study.

Borg (1983) states that "In the cross-sectional survey, standard information is collected from a sample drawn from a pre-determined population...the information is collected at one point in time (p. 514). Such a survey was conducted in this study and aimed "to describe what is going on; to obtain all the relevant facts about" the teaching of and perceptions of the literary essay and "to try to identify areas where problems occur" with reference to the essay (Moore, 1987, p. 20). It has to be acknowledged that given the time constraints, the institutional limitations and the various other uncontrollable factors "survey research tends to produce information that is less detailed, but which we can be fairly confident applies over a broad area" (Giddens, 1993, p. 671). Nevertheless, these limitations have to be considered when the data is being interpreted.

With reference to the questionnaire, Moore (1987) states that "They are most effective when used to survey a relatively small group of people who are used to expressing themselves in writing, who have a particular interest in the subject of the survey and who are likely to have reasonably similar opinions on the matter" (p. 19).

In this survey, the six teachers who responded to the questionnaire were teaching English to high school students who had to write at least one literary essay in their final examination.

The questionnaires were mainly open-ended so that respondents were afforded the opportunity to express their views in their own words. Where it was deemed necessary, open questions followed closed questions to ensure that the views presented were substantiated, hopefully with evidence drawn from the respondent's personal experience. The questionnaire was used in the survey because of its flexibility and the degree of anonymity it afforded the respondents. This impersonality obviates some of the problems which can develop between an interviewer and a respondent during an interview. The Teacher's questionnaire allowed the respondent to complete the questionnaire at his/her own pace and time.

A survey of six teachers based at Department of Education and Culture (Ex-HOD) schools in the Northdale/Raisethorpe area was conducted to determine teacher perceptions of the literary essay and aspects related to it. Questionnaires were distributed personally to the respondents at the end of July 1994 and collected during August 1994. The teachers were requested to forward their questionnaires to me as soon as they were ready. In choosing a sample of teachers, every attempt was made to ensure that it did "represent, or have the same characteristics of the overall population" (Moore, 1987, p. 34). Five of the schools are in Northdale and one in Raisethorpe. These schools were chosen because English is studied as a first language on the Higher Grade. English is also regarded as one of the high status subjects because it is necessary for an Exemption pass, which is required for university entrance.

Various criteria were used to identify respondents. Teachers who were chosen are at present teaching standard ten and have taught standard ten classes previously. Relevant Senior Certificate marking experience was also a qualifying factor. Finally, the Principal was requested to identify volunteer respondents who were interested in and concerned about the field of study.

Questions for the Teacher's questionnaire were arranged in the following sequence:

- The teachers' background and attitude towards the essay,
- Methods used to teach the essay,
- Criteria used to assess the essay and

- Teachers' perceptions of pupils' skills and attitudes.

A copy of the questionnaire has been included in Appendix A.

This survey was followed by a content analysis of essays written by students in the "experimental class". Borg and Gall (1983) state that content analyses can be used to produce descriptive information. In this phase of the study information was sought on the students' knowledge of the conventions of argumentative literary essay writing.

The school in which the research was conducted is typical of the House of Delegates schools in the area, in terms of its size, and population. The writing process was conducted in a standard 10 class. Both grades (English Higher Grade and English Standard Grade) were represented in the class. This served to ensure that the sample consisted of both high and low ability level students in the subject. It was noted that students of various subject grouping such as the Science and General directions were present in the sample. This was significant as the researcher was interested in determining whether the genre-based process would impact on essay writing in other subjects. This issue was to be investigated during the post-writing interviews.

A standard ten class was selected because it was assumed that the students in the class would already have received instruction in literary essay writing from standard seven, and in the process would have been exposed to the teaching styles of a number of teachers. This factor would have expanded the scope of the information on the approaches used to teach the literary essay. The class was made up of eighteen students.

The third stage of the action research process has been described as the development of action strategies and their implementation. This stage is guided by the principle that "Action research is research by practioners, undertaken to improve practice. For practioners it is not enough to develop theories about a situation: they also want to change the situation, as a result of their new knowledge, to improve the working and learning conditions for themselves and their students" (Altrichter, Posch, and Somekh, 1993, p. 155).

Developing action strategies in practice, however, means more than just making practical use of research results. It is itself a part of the research process. Altrichter, Posch and Somekh (1993) cite Elliott's (1984) claim that the implementation and evaluation of action strategies is a form of hypothesis testing in which teacher-researchers design their action strategies in the context of their practical theory.

Action strategies according to Altrichter, Posch and Somekh (1993) are:

- a. ...actions which are planned and put into practice by the teacher-researcher in order to improve the situation or its context.
- b. ...are typically tightly linked to theories developed from practice as a result of action research into the situation.
- c. ...can be thought of as preliminary answers to the researcher's questions or "experimental" solutions to the problems he or she is investigating. In this way, they are always relevant to the theory because the process of carrying them out throws light on the practical theory of the situation (p. 158).

The sources of the action strategies are varied and may include our new understanding gained from an analysis of the situation, from the actual process of data collection, our own aims, objectives and values as teachers and external sources such as books and colleagues. In this study all these sources were used to formulate a genre-based approach to writing instruction with reference to the literary essay. These include the readings (Chapter two), the Teacher's survey, the content analysis of essays written by students in the "experimental class" and the Pre-writing questionnaire (Chapter four).

Interviews were conducted at the end of the writing process as, according to Bell (1987) "...the interview can yield rich material and can often put flesh on the bones of questionnaire responses" (p. 71). To minimize the effects of one of the disadvantages of the questionnaire, i.e., "the lack of qualitative depth to the answers and the resulting superficiality" (Moore, 1987, p. 20), it was decided to include interviews of the students after the writing process

had been completed. It was felt that with the use of interviews it would be possible to probe beneath initially superficial responses. This was done to obtain a greater insight into the impact of the genre-based instructional strategies on the ability of the students to write the literary essay.

Bell cites Moser and Kalton (1971) in describing the survey interview as "...a conversation between interviewer and respondent with the purpose of eliciting certain information from the respondent (p. 8). A "guided or focused interview", based on seven questions was used. It was felt that such an interview with a pre-determined framework would facilitate analysis after the interviews had been completed. This framework focused on the writing process and included the following questions:

- a. Did you experience any problems during the writing process?
- b. Have you benefitted in any way from engaging in the writing process? Please include your observations with regard to other subjects.
- c. Do you think that there are any disadvantages in using the genre-based approach?
- d. Will such an approach work in a class like yours?
- e. Are weaker students disadvantaged by such a approach?
- f. Will this method help you to answer contextual questions?
- g. How would you define genre?

The fourth stage of the action research cycle according to Altrichter, Posch and Somekh (1993) involves making teacher's knowledge public. In this case this would be realized through the publication of this dissertation.

The parameters of this study were governed by the constraints arising from the context of the

study, the limited time available for the research and the nature of the research itself. Pupils were involved in preparations for their final oral and practical examinations, while teachers were concerned about completing the syllabuses in the various subjects. These factors did affect pupil participation in the writing process.

Thus the findings of this study must be interpreted cautiously, as they could have been affected by numerous factors such as those associated with the pupils, the teacher, and the worksheet structure. These are extraneous variables which are beyond the control of a researcher. In this study, for instance, the attendance of the pupils could not be controlled. One of the problems experienced by the researcher was the irregular attendance of some of the students. It was impossible to determine the effect of this factor on the performance of the students involved in the research process.

CHAPTER 4

THE PRE-PROCESS DATA

This chapter explores the data obtained from the survey of teachers, the analysis of the essays written by the students (standard 10B), and the Pre-process questionnaire. The intention of such an exercise was to utilise this input, and that suggested by the readings, to design and implement the genre-based writing process which has been discussed in the following chapter. The chapter is concluded by a discussion of the overall strategies that have been suggested by all these sources.

Responses have been identified alphabetically to facilitate discussion, wherever more than one response has been quoted.

4.1. THE SURVEY OF THE TEACHERS (See Appendix A, p 98)

Six teachers responded to the questionnaire. The first six questions sought information on the respondent's qualifications, teaching experience and in-service development with regard to the literary essay.

All the respondents indicated that they have been teaching for over ten years, with the average teaching experience being 13,5 years. Three of the respondents indicated that they have taught the literary essay in both junior and senior secondary classes. All the respondents are highly qualified in the subject as five of them have majored in English while one respondent has obtained an Honours degree in the subject. None of the teachers have received any formal training in teaching essay writing. In-service training in this regard has been limited to workshops and orientation courses which have been arranged by the superintendents from the Education Department and the local branch of the South African Democratic Teachers Union. None of these workshops were focused on the Process approach or the Genre-based approach to writing instruction.

The necessity for explicit teaching of the skills involved was acknowledged by the

respondents, as is evident in the following answers to question eight which asked whether the respondent found that teaching the literary essay was more challenging than teaching other aspects of the writing syllabus:

- a. The literary essay always demands more than a mere narration of the plot - sophisticated skills such as analysis, synthesis, logical structuring and presentation of argument are required.
- b. At least three periods are needed to teach the pupil the skills involved in writing the essay. Thereafter putting those skills into practice needs more lessons.
- c. Writing a literary essay involves learning a skill. Once the skill is taught to the pupil, it is now up to the pupil to practice that skill and better himself at it.

The second response does reflect a simplistic notion of the writing process. The student, it appears, is expected to grasp the concepts as soon as they have been discussed in class. The essay is regarded as a final product as there are no references to revising and rewriting the essays. It is clear, also, that the teacher is expected to assume a traditional authoritarian role in the classroom, whose purpose is to teach skills and to test whether these skills have been learnt.

Three major problem areas identified (Question 21) were the poor interpretation of the topic, the absence of the skills required for writing the argumentative essay and the lack of "critical insight". Typical comments include the following:

- a. Inadequate essay writing skills.
- b. Failure to develop and sustain logical arguments.
- c. Poor introduction and conclusion.

- d. Among average or below average pupils this definitely is a problem as such pupils haven't established a set pattern of analysis to tackle the literary essay.
- e. Inability to formulate effective topic sentences.

A number of explanations, such as the following, have been suggested by the respondents for these weaknesses:

To get pupils to understand the techniques of essay writing is difficult. Even though pupils are taught the difference between narration and critical discussion, many still narrate plot details without critical thought.

These problems seem to be genre related. The tendency to narrate may possibly be ascribed to the fact that students are more au fait with the conventions of the narrative genre than with those of the argumentative genre. The weaknesses mentioned by the respondents seem to reveal that students are aware of the three stages of the argumentative essays but need guidance in developing the compulsory and optional "moves" and aspects such as the specific coherence associated with the argumentative genre.

The answers to question twenty which enquired after pupil attitudes towards the literary essay, revealed that teachers felt that students were not favourably disposed towards the essay. The following responses reveal this negativity:

- a. Generally pupils are averse to writing essays. It is not taken seriously and in most cases done shabbily.
- b. Would rather not write an essay if given the choice.
- c. In most cases negative. Pupils are often intimidated by essay topics. They view essay writing as a painful, time-consuming task.

Reasons for such an unfavourable attitude were varied. For two respondents it was a matter

of expediency:

- a. Laziness - pupils prefer contextual/short answers.
- b. Feel that they can obtain a better mark in the contextual-type question.

Another reason was more personal in that pupils were found to be:
lacking in self-motivation.

The following comment is significant as it suggests a possible explanation for the negative attitude that the majority of the students have towards the literary essay:

Those pupils who enjoy writing compositions take to the literary essay while the others (the majority) appear to be intimidated by such an exercise.

According to Martin (1989), writing is not being taught in schools today. He claims that middle class children who are able to, learn to write through being exposed to the conventions of the various genres. He states that the homes of working class children do not provide them with models of writing, thus they do not learn how to write effectively. This explanation seems to be true of the schools in which the respondents are based. It is possible that the majority of our students do need to be explicitly instructed in the conventions of writing so that they would not be intimidated by the literary essay.

The following response (Question 9) indicates the typical linear approach used by the respondents in the teaching of the essay:

Firstly, I will discuss the steps one needs to follow when writing a literary essay. Secondly, together with the pupils we will go through the various steps using an example topic. Thirdly, pupils will work on an effort. Lastly, feedback after marking (the) efforts by pupils.

Such an approach is based on the traditional or basic skills method. This approach has been

rejected for a number of reasons. These have been discussed in chapter two. It is necessary to highlight two major weaknesses in this approach which relate directly to the literary essay. Examiners have indicated that students tend to narrate in their essays. This approach may identify the problem for students but does not inform them on how to present an argument. Secondly, it tends to focus on grammatical correctness at the expense of developing student abilities in the argumentative genre through a process of writing.

Questions eighteen and nineteen asked whether respondents got their students to evaluate each others' writing and whether their students engaged in rewriting their essays. Responses indicated that rewriting was not viewed positively. Three of the respondents stated that they did not encourage their students to rewrite their essays. The type of "rewriting" that was encouraged is reflected in the following statements:

- a. No - They may rectify specific paragraphs, in pencil, that is, paragraphs that I have demarcated and expressed my comment.
- b. Pupils don't rewrite but their flaws are pointed out.
- c. No rewriting : This isn't as productive as setting a remedial essay question, where they are expected to implement what they have learnt in a corrective exercise on the original essay.
- d. Sometimes: if off the topic then they rewrite.
- e. Yes - optional for "very serious students."

Ironically, in referring to the better ability students ("very serious students") the last respondent has identified a major flaw in the traditional instructional approach. This relates to getting students to rewrite their essays. It seems necessary that the weaker students should be encouraged to rewrite in order that they may improve their essays, but this is not being done.

All the respondents did engage students in "Correction" and "Remedial Work". This was explained by the respondents as follows:

- a. After pupils have handed in an effort and the efforts have been marked, I will focus on the common problem areas. Sometimes it may mean re-teaching skills. Other times certain aspects will be focused on e.g. introduction, the use of quotes.
- b. A very good and a very weak essay are generally used for remediation. If an essay is off the topic - key words are examined and a comprehensive plan is drawn up.

The first extract suggests that "re-teaching" will solve the problems being experienced by students. None of the respondents indicated whether pupils engage in a process of writing in which the essays are revised or rewritten or whether any aspects of the argumentative genre are included in the discussions.

Questions fourteen and fifteen were based on the goals of marking and the criteria that respondents used for assessing the literary essay. For some of the respondents writing has been used as a way of testing to make sure that students have done their reading or have been listening to the teacher in class. This was illustrated in the following responses:

- a. Whether skills taught learnt.
- b. Diagnose weaknesses and plan remedial measures.
- c. Provide individual guidance.

Zamel's (1985) claim that teachers' comments often reflect the application of a single ideal standard rather than criteria that take into account how composing constraints can affect writing performance is illustrated in the following goals (of marking) identified by respondents in this survey:

- a. Showing an in-depth, mature understanding of the life skills inherent in that genre.
- b. To appraise or merit.
- c. To establish standards (which will motivate pupils to aspire towards these).

The criteria used in assessing the essays indicated that the essay was always perceived as a "finished product" by the teachers:

- a. The overall impression.
- b. How the argument was developed.
- c. The interpretation of the topic.
- d. The use of relevant quotations.
- e. Whether the pupil observed the conventions of writing.
- f. The use of language.

These criteria seem to suggest that teachers expect students to observe the "conventions of writing" when essays are assessed. It appears, however, that these conventions are not being made explicit to students before they write their essays.

Two views were observed with regard to the role of comments in the assessment process. Four of the respondents felt that comments are useful especially for "interested" pupils. The views of the respondents are included below:

- a. To dedicated, motivated pupils who take heed and invariably improve subsequent essays.

- b. The above average tend to take heed of the comments.
- c. There is generally an upgrading of the literary essay by the final examination.
- d. Some pupils do take cognisance of such comments and usually there is some kind of improvement in a follow-up exercise. N.B. This doesn't work out at all times.

It was noted , however, that:

Average pupils seem to continue making the same mistakes,

And that comments did not assist:

pupils who lack interest in their studies.

There seems to be a serious problem with regard to comments in the above responses. Weak students do need to be taken through an explicit process where the comments impact significantly on their writing. It appears that comments are taken more seriously by the "interested" or "above average" student. No reasons were presented for this phenomenon. Some examples stated by the respondents are included below:

Avoid narration, Padding, Misinterpretation of question, Essay lacks cohesion, Poor arrangement of information, Weak introduction and Narration of plot detail.

Rothery's criticism (1989) that "we are still bedevilled by an approach to essay writing which comments on the student's writing in terms of deficit" (p. 81), does seem relevant to the above comments as well.

Another problem related to the contradictory nature of the comments made by the respondents. In this regard Zamel (1985) claims that "...because teachers often address both minor infelicities and larger issues of rhetoric and content in the same version of a text, their

responses are frequently contradictory...while interlinear comments address the text as a finished product to be edited, marginal comments view the text as still developing and evolving" (p. 82).

It is obvious that students who receive mixed messages of this kind may be confused because they have no way of knowing whether to focus on meaning-level changes suggested or the local problems pinpointed. The following are examples of such comments indicated by respondents in this survey:

- a. A relevant argument presented but lacking in this/that aspect.
- b. Quality of thought commendable but failure to express them.

Finally, it was noted that respondents seem to favour the use of models and group work in the teaching of the essay.

4.2. A STUDY OF ESSAYS WRITTEN BY THE STUDENTS

A study was made of literary essays that the students in the standard 10B class had written in the Final Examination (1993) when they were in standard Nine. Extracts from these essays have been included in this discussion to illustrate the points that have been raised. In the interests of clarity, spelling errors have been corrected in these extracts.

The purpose of such a study was threefold. Firstly, the study aimed at developing a perspective of the literary essay writing ability of the students in the std 10B class. Secondly, it attempted to assess the extent to which the students were familiar with the conventions of argumentative writing, and, thirdly, it aimed at identifying the major weaknesses in the literary essay writing ability of the students with the intention of exploiting them for strategies which could be used in a four-week writing programme that I intended implementing with the class.

The examination was written during November 1993. Three essays (20 marks each) were

set, one on each of the respective networks. One essay was compulsory for students writing on the higher grade. This study is based on an analysis of two essays as the third question involved a comparison. The topics are provided below:

TOPIC ONE: The Nowhere Man : K. Makandaya

The novel is about what it means for someone to live in a country that propagates the values of "white supremacy".

Discuss this statement in relation to Srinivas's life in:

- i. India
- ii. England

N.B. Length of essay - 2 pages.

TOPIC TWO: Twelfth Night : Shakespeare

"Love takes a strong hold of most of the characters in TWELFTH NIGHT - be it real or romantic love, requited or unrequited love or self-love."

In an essay of about 2 pages in length illustrate this statement by showing how it affects each of the following characters:

- i. Olivia
- ii. Viola
- iii. Malvolio
- iv. Orsino
- v. Sebastian

A number of interesting observations were made which are significant to this study. Fourteen of the students in the class (of 18 students) chose to write the essay on the play, i.e., "Twelfth Night". These pupils scored higher marks than those who wrote on the novel. Various reasons can be suggested for this phenomenon including the fact that they seemed to reveal a better knowledge of the content of the network than the those who wrote on the novel. Another reason could be related to the type of question that was set on the play.

Students may have felt more comfortable with the question on "Twelfth Night" as it required narration.

It was noted that students seemed to have experienced a problem with the manner in which the questions were framed. The first part of question one of the examination requires the writer to assume a controversial position to defend logically. It suggests that the writer adopts a single view with regard to whether the novel "is about" or whether it is not about "what it means for someone to live in a country that propagates the values of white supremacy". The question continues, however, with the word "discuss", which requires that the student presents more than a single assertion on the controversial statement. This duality could have presented problems to the students is illustrated in the following introduction which does not have a thesis statement:

I would like to discuss the two types of lives Srinivas had in two countries. One in India and the other England. Firstly his life in India.

To this student the word "discuss" seems to mean "tell about" as his essay was more narrative and descriptive in character than argumentative.

A similar problem seems to have affected the quality of the essays written in response to the second topic in the examination. Here the stipulation of character names in the question led to a "catalogue" type of arrangement of the paragraphs in the essay. The quotation in the second question implied that the student respond in the argumentative genre, but the immense scope of the content area suggested did create some difficulty for the students.

The observations above were discussed because it was felt that they could have influenced the responses of the students. The discussion that follows focuses on specific areas of weakness identified in the analysis of the students' essays. As the emphasis in this study is on genre-analysis the emphasis in the following discussion will be on the organization and presentation of the content. A few brief comments will be made on the quality and scope of the content. This refers to two particular aspects of the essay: the clarity of what is said, i.e., whether the problem is clear to the reader and the quality of the argumentation, i.e., the depth to which

the writer explores the problem.

In some instances the soundness of the content was affected by the fact that pupils had not really read their networks. It appeared that pupils had familiarised themselves with the plot instead of making a detailed study of the text. Consequently some pupils had a poor knowledge of the network. This was reflected in the evidence students quoted from the text to substantiate their points of view. In some cases where the students were able to draw excellent conclusions and relate them to the thesis, they failed to develop them by citing and analyzing the details on which they were based. Such an instance follows:

Despite her (Viola's) strong feelings for Orsino, she is able to carry out her duties as page quite effectively. Her loyalty and love is manifested when she says "yet a barful strife, who'er I woo, myself would be his wife."

The quotation, although relevant, has not been analysed effectively but used merely as a conclusion to the paragraph. It seems as if the student is expecting the teacher to credit such a reference, although the argument has not been completed in the paragraph.

Similarly some students tended to summarize the story at the expense of interpretative comments. In the following example the interpretative comment is "lost" in the framework of the plot summary:

Secondly we see that Orsino is in love with love. He had only seen Olivia once and hadn't even spoken to her but he was in love with her. He sends messengers to woo her for him but each time is rejected. Orsino's love is unrequited.

If the student had been aware of the structure of a paragraph in the argumentative stage he would have presented his information more coherently. One of the weaknesses of the paragraph is revealed in the first sentence. This sentence should signal the claim and then relate it to the text. This student has claimed that Orsino is "in love with love" but he has not related this claim to the thesis. Such a weakness may be prevented if students are made aware of the conventions of argumentative writing.

Discussion with regard to the organization and presentation of content will focus on two aspects: the organization of the whole text and the organization of the paragraphs.

Generally, the essays revealed that pupils had a poor knowledge of the structure of the argumentative genre. They seemed to be aware of the three stages of the argumentative genre but did not utilise the compulsory and optional moves that were available to them in this genre. A common problem was the use of the narrative structure instead of that suitable for argumentation.

It was noted that three students had used quotations as pivots for discussion in their essays. These were placed at the beginning of the paragraph and were then discussed. The following paragraphs have been quoted from an essay written by one of the students in the examination:

- a. "Disguise thou art a wickedness." Viola's disguise leads her into a tough situation, because she can't be in love with Olivia as she is a woman . "I am not that I claim," she tries to let them know that she isn't really who she poses to be. " 'Tis a barful strife, whoe'er I woo, I would be his wife." The man that Viola loves i.e. Orsino, doesn't know that she's a woman. Viola is found in a tough situation...
- b. "Born of the hour," Sebastian and Viola were twins and had great love for one another. Olivia asks him, "Would thou'dst be rul'd by me?" Sebastian replies....

These two paragraphs from the Argumentative stage of the essay reveal another flaw. The writer has not signalled the claim (the idea in support of his/her point of view). The topic sentence has been replaced by the quotation which therefore tends to disturb the coherence of the essay. It is evident also that the writer has not developed any arguments to support his/her point of view but has merely proceeded to another quotation, followed by explanation. The facts are not turned into arguments as they have not been related back to the thesis statement. The writer, obviously has the information necessary for his/her purpose but is not exploiting the argumentative genre to its maximum to convince the readers.

A major flaw was the absence of ,or, if present, weak thesis statements. This resulted in essays that were generalized or lacking in substance. The following introduction is an example:

I would like to discuss the two types of lives Srinivas had in two countries. One in India and the other England.

This statement is too vague and so vast that it cannot really assist the author to create a well-structured essay. Such a problem, according to Cohen (1973), can sometimes occur because the writer merely puts into his own words the subject the teacher has suggested. The resulting structure tends to be narrative instead of argumentative.

Finally a number of problem areas were identified with reference to the sequencing and unity of paragraph content. These include the fact that titles were used to identify paragraphs, that paragraphs were often too long (in one instance 1 ¼ pages) or too short. This was due to a failure to link related thoughts and details into one solid unit.

4.3. THE PRE-WRITING QUESTIONNAIRE (See Appendix B, p 102)

The purpose of this questionnaire was to study the perceptions of the literary essay of the students in the standard 10B class with reference to the following points:

- a. How they felt about writing the literary essay,
- b. How they perceived the teaching process, the assessment of their essays, and
- c. What their experiences of writing the literary essay were.

To facilitate discussion the responses have been analysed thematically. The questionnaire was completed by seventeen students in the standard 10B class (described in Chapter Three) as one student was absent when the questionnaire was issued.

Question one enquired about the feelings of students towards writing the literary essay. The responses revealed that the writing of the essay was not viewed favourably. Only one student indicated that he/she was "excited" about writing the essay. Fifteen students expressed negative attitudes towards writing the literary essay. Some of the responses are listed below:

- a. Bored and confused - Don't have a good way of expressing things, don't know where to start.
- b. I don't know how to start off the essay...90% of the time I end up going off the topic.
- c. I am not aware of the strategy of an essay.
- d. At times there is so much to write or so little to write that the different ideas are mixed.
- e. I really don't know how to approach this kind of essay.

These comments are indeed a cause for concern as these students have been studying literature and essay writing in literature since standard six. It seems as if a number of these problems are related to their unfamiliarity with the conventions of argumentative writing and uncertainty about the task demands.

Responses to question three, which was on the structure of the argumentative essay seemed to confirm this idea. Generally, the students revealed an awareness of the three parts of the argumentative essay - the introduction, the argumentative stage and the conclusion. Most of them, however, had vague perceptions of the purpose and specific structure of each part. Typical explanations by the student were vague:

- a. Introduction: You introduce the topic.
Body : Here you take out parts of the question and discuss it. You have a few parts and paragraphs.

Conclusion : You conclude the topic you are doing.

- b. Introduction: Discussing the question and characters.
Body: Analysing the questions and characters.
- c. We firstly would have to acquire our points which we would discuss. These points have to be the central idea throughout the essay as we would be basically writing the argumentative essay based on these points. These points would basically hold the essay together. The points could be written in paragraphs.

Hyland (1992) has suggested the compulsory and optional "moves" that characterise each stage of the argumentative essay (see chapter two). The explanations above reveal that these students are unaware of these "moves" and could benefit if they are sensitized to the conventions of the argumentative genre.

Question four enquired after problems that the students experienced while writing the essay. The tendency to narrate was acknowledged as a weakness and a problem to eradicate:

- a. You are not required to tell the story and I find it difficult to develop my ideas without telling the story. My paragraphs don't have one main idea but rather many ideas which are irrelevant.
- b. It tends to be a problem that sometimes I tend to tell a story which is not supposed to happen in a literary essay.

Martin (1989) claims such a problem is due to the fact that student writing experience is limited to the narrative/expressive genre for most of their time at school. It appears then students do need to be familiarised, as early as possible, with the conventions of the argumentative genre in order to eradicate the problems of narration.

A study of the responses to question five revealed that all the students followed a linear

approach to the writing of the literary essay. This is illustrated in the following response:

Analyse the questions and ring the key words. Draw up a table with the headings i.e. Introduction, columns for the various points and conclusion. Then jot down the points which you are to discuss. Plan your introduction and finally the conclusion. Then take each point and discuss and write it down in your book that's to be handed in.

The same basic writing procedure was followed for assignments and in the examinations. The main differences identified were the limited time available in the examination and the use of the network to identify quotations when assignments were being written.

The responses to question six revealed the need for a process that would allow students the time and opportunity to explore their ideas and revise their presentation of these ideas. Question six asked whether students have an idea of what they want to say before they get started or whether they find out what they want to say as they write. Eight students stated that although they may have begun with an idea of what they were going to say, they discovered new ideas while they were engaged in the process of writing:

- a. I find out what I want to say as I write. When I have the start of the essay then as I write I get more thoughts I write what I need.
- b. I have a good idea of what I want to say before I get started. So I proceed with the essay, but sometimes I find that I get more and more ideas when I am half-way through my essay. Therefore I bring those ideas as well.

The above responses strongly suggest the necessity for process-oriented approaches which would make students aware of the need for and the advantages of "revisiting" their ideas. A further case in favour of the process approach is evident in the following responses to question seven which asked whether students found the methods used by their teachers, to teach the literary essay to be effective:

- a. Yes. They explained to us what was really needed for an essay and how we should go about answering the various questions. But I still don't get the idea of how to write a literary essay which is excellent.
- b. But now I have constantly managed to attain the same or slightly different mark. Not higher.
- c. No. I am a student who is slightly below average and I think that the teacher should go into the essay in a little more detail so I can understand.
- d. I've found it helpful but I've been exposed to things like the Alan Paton Competition. There I discovered just what goes into a literary essay, so I guess I've had extra help. The method taught by the teacher isn't entirely effective because I discovered basically by trial and error what really should be my style in writing an essay.

The last two responses are significant as they seem to verify Martin's (1989) claim that middle class children are able to learn "by osmosis what has to be learned" (p. 61) while working class children "whose homes do not provide them with models of writing, and who don't have the coding orientation...to read between the lines and see what is implicitly demanded, do not learn to write effectively" (p. 61). These responses do indicate the need to need to consider the explicit teaching of the conventions of the argumentative essay.

Question eleven investigated whether students read the comments made by their teachers and whether they implemented their suggestions. All the students except one stated that they read the comments made by the teacher. The exception indicated that he/she read the comments " Sometimes - only in some cases."

Ten students indicated that they were able to apply the suggestions made in the comments. The one student who replied in the negative responded in the following way:

Sometimes it is difficult to apply a comment. Although you know what you should

be doing, you don't know how to do it.

Similar thoughts are echoed in the responses of the six students who replied that they are sometimes able to apply the comments. One of these students stated that the comments "...don't always make sense to me." The following responses have important implications for writing instruction:

- a. I don't understand what my mistakes are and I get bored and I leave it
- b. I do find them (*comments*) useful but I don't understand what they are saying most of the times.
- c. No. Because the teacher don't really explain what it really means or if they do it is hard to understand.
- d. These comments help me set my work out better for next time. E.g. Quotations shouldn't be written at the end of a paragraph. I only realised this recently when my teacher had written it on my essay.

The majority of the students acknowledge the benefits of the teacher's comments. Their responses, however, have made two points clear. Firstly, that comments made by the teachers have to be text-specific so that students can understand them and implement them. Secondly, that students need time to allow them to "digest" the comments and then the opportunity to implement them so that they can appreciate the effect of strategies and ideas suggested by the teacher. It seems that the process approach and the genre-based approach to writing instruction will afford the students the chance to do this.

The responses to question twelve on the usefulness of peer evaluation of essays seemed to follow the same pattern as those to question eleven. The majority of the students (12) indicated that Peer Evaluation was a valuable exercise. Their reasons included the benefits of the idea of co-operative learning, the sense of fellowship between peers as a motivating force and because "it is easier to accept criticism from your friends. I understand them and

the message they try to convey much better." The two students who replied negatively did so for the following reason:

No! peers tend to try and make you happy and tell you that the essay is good but when marked by the teacher you see your true worth.

Another student offered a different reason as to why he/she felt that peer evaluation was not useful:

No. I sometimes find it embarrassing because people tend to not really bother about checking out my facts or "mistakes" because they seem to believe that I will get a good mark for the essay. I feel as if I get a biased report ... because of past essays that I've done well at.

It seems as if students felt that peer evaluation can be useful only if it is goal-directed and structured along specific guidelines which are meaningful to the readers and the writers.

The responses to question nine on whether students rewrite their essays after they have been corrected revealed that students had a narrow view of the concept of rewriting:

- a. Yes, I think that to get marks you have to try to have the most concise, correct essay possible. Neatness, presentation plays a role in the writing of the essay.
- b. Only if have found the topic difficult or if I had difficulty understanding/ interpreting the question. I then find it necessary to have a second opinion to ensure that I have answered the question aptly.
- c. Yes and No. Should there be too much errors then we should rewrite the essay. On the other hand, should there be a few mistakes then you can correct it on your original essay.

- d. No! There is virtually no error in my essay, except lack of information.

It is clear that although fifteen of the respondents stated that they found rewriting the essay useful, they had conceived of rewriting as merely improving the content of the essay and correcting surface errors. Little reference was made to major revision strategies, including that of the organization and structure of the essay. It is obvious that these students have to be made aware of the necessity of revising and rewriting their essays.

4.4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This section of the chapter identifies strategies suggested by the findings of the two surveys, the content analysis and the readings in chapter two for the writing process that is described in chapter five.

One problem that was identified concerns the formal training received by teachers in writing instruction. The respondents indicated that they had received no formal pre-service or in-service training in writing instruction. This issue and the problem of the limited time available to teach the literary essay are important. They have been discussed in chapter seven in more detail.

Rothery's claim (1989) that writing instruction should focus on student needs must be heeded for a writing programme to be successful. Every effort must be made to assist student writers to gain control of the structure of the argumentative genre so that they can write the literary essay.

To do this perceptions of the essay must change. It should not be regarded as a "finished product". Pupils must "...be made to understand that texts evolve, that revision is to be taken literally as a process of re-seeing one's text, and that this re-seeing is an integral and recursive aspect of writing. Thus rather than responding to texts as fixed and final products, we should be leading students through the 'cycles of revision'" (Zamel, 1985, p. 95).

Teachers have to intervene actively in the writing development of their students. There is a need for the explicit teaching of the relevant skills in literary essay writing, to ensure that students know what the requirements of the task are and how to cope with them successfully. Thus students have to be explicitly taught the conventions of the argumentative genre. Areas that need special attention include the writing of thesis statements and the use of evidence from the networks to substantiate points of view presented in the essay. Good examples of the genre can be selected from a variety of sources as models. Rothery (1989) states that "we must make use of our knowledge of text structures to make a positive assessment of students' writing wherever possible" (p. 81). She suggests that we should look at writing in terms of the extent to which the text approximates the mature model of this variety so that we can be positive and constructive in the comments we make. Comments should be text-specific, i.e., they should specify improvements for the individual texts. Peer evaluation should be an integral part of the writing process. Finally, if we make explicit what is involved in different types of writing we can plan to work on these in stages.

The process approach, it appears, provides the means for realising these goals, while the genre-based approach provides the necessary vocabulary and concepts to explicitly guide students in this process.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE WRITING PROCESS

This chapter follows a narrative sequence as it traces the process throughout its implementation over a four-week cycle. The first part of the chapter is devoted to a description of the preparatory arrangements for the writing process. The remaining four parts each focus on a specific phase of the process. Each part explains what was done for the week and then discusses observations regarding the impact of the procedures that were used in the teaching process.

The writing process, which was conducted over sixteen lessons, was implemented during the month of August. The English teacher was invited to participate in the programme but she chose to observe for two lessons. A copy of the programme for the four weeks was displayed on the notice board in the classroom. This was brought to the attention of the students to ensure that they were informed of the various stages throughout the process. The principles underpinning the process have been derived from the process approach and the genre-based approach. These have been explained in chapter two to clarify the procedures that have been implemented. It must be remembered that the research was conducted during an important term of the school year for senior certificate students. The students were involved in the final preparations for their oral and practical examinations. Every effort was made to ensure that the research programme was conducted as unobtrusively as possible. Generally, however, it was well received as both students and teachers seemed to acknowledge the importance of the literary essay in the curriculum.

An attempt was made to follow the six phases in the writing process identified by Coe (1986): Motivation, Generation of material and communicative strategies, Selection and composition of that material into a unified and sensible Draft, based on the structure of an appropriate genre, Reformulation of that draft to make it more effective, Editing for style and conformity with appropriate conventions of genre, usage, grammar, punctuation, spelling, etc., "Publication" (i.e., delivery to readers) (p. 297). Coe (1986) acknowledges that "real writers work more chaotically and recursively, but for pedagogical purposes we divide the

writing process into six phases" (p. 297). This observation did ring true for the process as various adjustments had to be made because of time constraints. These have been discussed during the relevant phases.

The writing process was completed over the first three weeks of the programme. The first week was devoted to the teaching of genre, the second to drafting, peer evaluation and the first copy for marking and the third week to revision, rewriting and the final assessment. It must be noted that there was no distinct separation of the various phases as is suggested by this description.

Part of the first lesson was spent on motivating the students. The importance of the literary essay and its role in the curriculum was discussed. To a great extent the motivation of the students was driven by their concern about the examination, in which the literary essay was a compulsory question. They did acknowledge, however, that writing the essay was a "problem" to them. Some of the weaknesses that were identified in the analysis of their examination essays were discussed. Students were impressed by the fact that such an analysis had been made and seemed to become more involved in the lesson as a result of this. A strong appeal was made for their full co-operation in the process. They were informed that the process entailed more "homework" in the form of studying the notes and writing the essays.

The latter half of the second lesson was used to introduce students to the writing programme. The nature of the Process and the Genre-based approaches to writing instruction was explained to them. This entailed a brief criticism of traditional approaches to writing instruction with the emphasis on their product-centredness. The role of the researcher as "editor" or "supervisor" was explained with the expectation that the students take full responsibility for the quality of their texts. The concept of joint composition and collaboration was discussed to clarify the roles of the various "actors" in the process. The idea of "guided assistance" was emphasised. Students were allowed to form their own groups with the stipulation that no group was to have more than five members. Four groups were formed in the class.

It was decided at the outset to present the students with a choice of topics. One lesson was spent on analyzing the topic on which pupils decided to write. Pupils voted to write on the following topic as they felt that it would benefit them to concentrate on acquiring the skills for writing the essay rather than "waste time on the content" (as stated by one of the students in the class).

"The weird sisters and Lady Macbeth have this in common: that they both present themselves to Macbeth as spurs to crime; but the influence of the latter, however, is greater."

In a balanced, well-substantiated essay, evaluate this statement.

According to the programme plan, one lesson was to be devoted to the analysis of the question. The identification of the genre, the importance of the thesis statement and the connotations of the word "evaluate" were discussed. General directions with regard to the content were also explored. This included relevant quotations and incidents from the play. It was found, however, that the time allocated for the discussion was insufficient. This was pointed out to students who agreed to analyse and consolidate what had been discussed in class, at home, and to raise any points that needed elucidation on the following day. Students also agreed to study the notes on the literary essay as preparation for the following lesson.

Two lessons were spent on discussing the two sets of notes on the argumentative genre and the literary essay (Appendix C and D). One set focused on the general nature of the argumentative essay and the other suggested and illustrated how the essay should be written. One lesson was spent on modelling which was based on an analysis of two essays, one from a study aid on Macbeth and the other from "Crux" (Appendix E and F). The students were asked to comment on the quality of the content and the manner in which information was used by the writers to support their arguments. Students were reminded about using the notes that they had received on the argumentative literary essay as a basis for providing informed comment on the two essays. Thereafter students compared the essays and presented the group opinion of which essay they felt was of better quality.

It was pleasing to note that comments and observations made by the students revealed that they had familiarised themselves with the information on the worksheet as they used some of the technical vocabulary from the notes during the discussion. Pupils were requested to plan the essay over the weekend to facilitate discussion in class. Students were specifically requested to use the guidelines on the argumentative genre in creating their essays.

A number of observations were made during the first week. It was noted that as the play had already been discussed during the first and second terms, student knowledge of the play was not as good as it was hoped to be. Students were advised to revise the play before writing the essay, so that they could concentrate on developing their argumentative writing ability. The idea of issuing the notes a day before discussion proved to be prudent as most of the students did read them at home as preparation. It was noted that some groups did not function as effectively as the others. This was due to the absence of some students and the fact that others had not done their homework. A further observation with regard to the groups was that they tended to be homogenous in character. The "bright" students, for example, tended to work together. This seemed to disturb the balance in the class as these two groups tended to outpace the other two in completing the tasks assigned to them. It seems as if it is advisable for the teacher to play a more active role in creating mixed-ability groups.

The emphasis during the second week was on drafting and peer evaluation. The students were informed that the first "neat" drafts of their essays were to be handed in by the end of the week. Two lessons were devoted to preparing the first draft of the essay in class. I assisted those pupils who asked for assistance in this regard and provided the necessary information for those who had been absent during the previous week. One favourable observation was that all those students who had been present had completed their first drafts.

The following two lessons were spent on peer evaluation of the essays. Text-based comments were made with the intention of improving the content and the structure of the essays. These proved to be more meaningful as the students were aware of the requirements of the argumentative genre. Pica's (1982) suggestion in this regard was also implemented, i.e., that there should be written input on the essays from the teacher and other students. She also

advises that "Teachers should provide students with guidelines they can use as a basis for feedback about each others work" (p. 9). This suggestion was realised through the Evaluation sheets which were handed out to students. (Appendix G)

Finally, pupils were informed that the second draft (neatly written) had to be handed in for marking two days later. The rewritten essays were collected and marked over the weekend. The assessment of the first and second drafts was based on the assumption that the essays were not to be viewed as "the final product". Peer evaluation and the first marking by the researcher were purely for revision and corrective purposes. No form of assessment besides text-based comments were written on the scripts. The aim of such a procedure was "to establish a collaborative relationship with our students, drawing attention to problems, offering alternatives, and suggesting possibilities" (Zamel, 1985, p. 97). The students and the teacher were guided by the principle of flexibility with the comment depending upon the aspect that was being scrutinised. A copy of the marking scheme has been included. (Appendix H)

It became obvious during the second week that the time available for drafting and peer evaluation was insufficient. Students seemed to need more time to consolidate their understanding of the concepts introduced during the previous week. A number of interesting questions were asked about the content and structure of the essay. One student queried whether the thesis statement could be used as an introduction in itself. This opportunity to re-explain the structure of the introduction was exploited to clarify the distinction between "compulsory" and "optional" moves. The strategic importance of both were emphasised. A number of queries arose about the use of quotations in the essay, including whether the essay could be started with a quotation. One student questioned the necessity of following the structure that had been explained in the notes. This led to an interesting discussion of the cultural origins of the various genre and the necessity of using the appropriate structure in specific types of writing. Concerns about "going off the topic" were also expressed. Strategies for analysing the question and formulating the thesis statement were revised. Finally, an interesting suggestion was made by one student, i.e., that different colours be used to highlight parts of the essay including the thesis statement and the topic sentence for each paragraph. This idea was implemented by the class.

The marking process was underpinned by the idea that the essays were not the final product but in the process of being written. The focus was on whether the pupils had attempted to implement the suggestions made during the teaching process, especially with regard to the Argumentative genre. Attempts were made to provide "text-specific" comments and to provide clear and explicit strategies for improving the text. The following are examples of such comments:

- a. Quotations: Please discuss them and then relate them to the thesis. Example: Even the mere thought of killing Duncan "smothers" him - he is "shaken"....
- b. Does this conclusion follow on what you have said in this paragraph or would it be better to say that: They did influence him but he needed to be persuaded?
- c. Have you set the boundaries of the topic? Example: In the first two paragraphs the influence of the witches will be discussed...
- d. Paragraph 2 : Have you stated your claim clearly? I could not identify it.
- e. What is the purpose of this sentence? Shouldn't it be in a paragraph where you intend to show how they resort to equivocation to...

A first reading of the essays was made to obtain a global impression of how they had been written. It was observed that a conscious attempt was made by most of the students to implement suggestions made in the notes. This included the use of connectives and the necessary linking devices and also the implementation of the compulsory and optional "moves" suggested with regard to the structure of the essay. A number of "High Frequency Errors" were noticed including the inadequate development of paragraphs and the poor handling of quotations. I decided to use a "Remedial sheet" (Appendix I) to identify examples of such errors and to discuss them in class.

Generally, however, the students did reveal a good grasp of the structure of the argumentative genre. The quality and scope of the content, however, was poor. Unfortunately, this

complex problem could not receive the attention that it deserved. Pupils were advised about the importance of this aspect of essay writing which depended upon a careful reading of the text.

The third week of the programme focused on revision and rewriting. The essays which had been marked were returned to the students. Two lessons were spent on discussing the essays. This was prefaced by an exposition of the writing process in which the necessity for revision was emphasised. The "High frequency errors" such as examples of poor introductions and paragraphs from student essays were presented on a worksheet and were collaboratively analysed and discussed. This idea was implemented in the present study as an attempt to identify "High Frequency Errors" or errors and weaknesses common to a number of students in the class. (Appendix I)

Thereafter, students were asked to study the comments made by the teacher and make the necessary corrections and improvements. This was done with the assistance of the teacher and their groups. After the essays had been rewritten, they were remarked and returned to the students.

A final assessment in the form of a symbol together with the necessary comments were indicated on the scripts. The students requested that a symbol be provided to indicate the researcher's opinion of "the value of the essay in the examination". The experience of the researcher as a sub-examiner was utilised to provide as "realistic" an assessment as possible.

The idea of discussing the "High Frequency Errors" collaboratively did seem to clarify some key issues to students. One problematical issue was raised by students who claimed that they had been advised to begin each paragraph with a quotation. It was explained that the quotation had to be contextualised within the structure of the argumentative paragraph to make it relevant to the thesis statement. Pupils did express more confidence in writing the essay as they felt that they now had a "framework" with which to work.

The remarking of the essays illustrated a number of points. The most significant was that the students had only made adjustments suggested by the teacher. Two students, who had written

good essays did not make any attempt to improve the quality of the language used in the essay, although this had been mentioned in the previous discussion. An example of such an error in one of the essays was identified for the student to illustrate the negative effect of such errors:

...from now on *he's taken for a ride* by both the witches and Lady Macbeth.

It is possible, however, that such errors were the result of the students' focus on perfecting the structure of the essay. This illustrates the need for more time in developing the skills necessary for writing the essay. Some improvement was noted, however, in the essays written by the "weaker" students.

During the fourth week, one lesson was spent on an evaluation of the process. Students indicated that they had found the process enjoyable but challenging. They felt that they needed more time "to digest the notes" and to practise the skills involved. They also felt that some new concepts needed more explanation. The benefits of having a framework, such as the one provided for the argumentative essay, was enthusiastically acknowledged.

The final questionnaire was completed in the last two periods of the programme. Finally, interviews were conducted with three students during pre-arranged times. The findings of the interviews and the questionnaires will be discussed later in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6

FINDINGS

The findings of this study seem to indicate that there is a major problem concerning the literary essay in the high school. Issues in this regard centre around the syllabus, the teachers and the students. Matters that are of concern include student and teacher perceptions and knowledge of the conventions and structure of the essay, instructional methods, evaluation procedures and how the essay is written. This chapter presents the findings of the teachers' survey, the analysis of essays written by the students prior to and during the process and, finally, student responses to the pre-and post-writing questionnaires and interviews.

The teachers' survey has revealed that although the six respondents in the survey were highly qualified in the subject, they had received no formal training in writing instruction. Consequently, knowledge of the conventions and structure of the essay was limited. The respondents seemed to be familiar with the three stages of the argumentative genre, but lacked a knowledge of other key aspects of the essay. A possible explanation for this phenomenon has been offered by Hyland (1992) who states that "We ask learners to submit essays and reward those we recognize as being appropriately structured, but we are often unable to explicitly state the criteria we use to judge this...Research on the distinctive organizational features of different text types, has been slow to appear, and so our understanding of schematic structure is largely implicit" (p. 14). It seems, therefore, that the features of the argumentative genre need to be made explicit so that teachers and students would be able to use this information in the writing of the essays.

Problems seem to be related to the product-oriented syllabus as well. Such a syllabus according to Nunan (1991) "focuses on things that learners should know or be able to do as a result of instruction" (p. 11). This conception of the syllabus seems to have affected the teachers in various ways. Thus all indicated that the literary essay involves the need for explicit teaching of the skills involved. These "skills", however, were not identified by the respondents who, also, did not explain how they should be taught. A simplistic view of teaching the essay, for instance, was revealed by one teacher who claimed that the skills

associated with writing the essay could be taught in "three periods". The skills-based approach seems to have been propagated by the department as is indicated by the objectives from the syllabus that has been discussed in chapter two. An orientation course was held by the same department on the teaching of literature in 1990. Here the emphasis was on skills as well. According to Nunan (1991) the assumption behind such a syllabus is that "Language consists of a finite set of rules which can be combined in various ways to make meaning. It is further assumed that these rules can be learned one by one, in an additive fashion, each item being mastered on its own before being incorporated into the learner's pre-existing stock of knowledge" (p. 29).

Such a syllabus regards the teacher as the authority in the classroom who has sole responsibility for the writing process. This is explicitly stipulated in the Syllabus for Higher Grade English (House of Delegates, 1986): "the teacher is the key factor in motivating and guiding the pupils to master the skills involved in effective listening, speaking, reading and writing" (p. 1).

It seems, consequently, that teacher perceptions of the essay are also limited. The essay appears to be viewed as "a finished product" even in the drafting stage instead of an essay that is in the process of being composed. Such a perception of the essay seems to have affected the methodology in writing instruction as teachers in the survey indicated that they followed a linear method in teaching the essay. This entailed presenting and discussing the topic, writing the essay, peer group evaluation (which generally involved correction of grammatical errors and such) and the marking of the essay, followed by "correction and Remedial work". No allowance was made for reformulation. Views on revising and rewriting ranged from outright rejection to selective rewriting. Ironically, it seemed as the respondents felt that only the better ability students should be encouraged to rewrite as they were more interested in their work. Rewriting was compulsory for students who had "gone off the topic". All the respondents engaged in "Remedial work" which is an attempt to improve pupil ability in areas "that needed attention". The general opinion was that such an exercise was fruitful in remedying weaknesses. It was also felt that skills could be improved by reteaching.

No specific revision strategies were advocated by the syllabus with reference to genre. The syllabus advises that:

The pupil should be able to demonstrate how his draft can be appreciably improved by undertaking the following tasks:

- a. interesting the reader by writing a more arresting introduction;
- b. replacing weak sentences by emphatic sentences;
- c. replacing indifferently chosen words with more exact words;
- d. introducing variety and rhythm in sentences; and
- e. correcting lapses in language and spelling (p. 11).

Such revision strategies seem to be too generalized. Criteria offered by genre analysis can be more effective as they are more specific and goal-oriented.

Martin's (1989) claim that, "analytical exposition is mainly used to demonstrate that content has been learned" (p. 33) seems to be true of the purposes of evaluation as identified by the respondents. Evaluation is conceived of as a "one-off" process which aims at testing whether skills had been learnt by the students or to diagnose weaknesses. The criteria for evaluation that were identified by the respondents are based on a single ideal standard, which seems to be derived from the marking memorandum for the senior certificate examination.

Two significant observations were made in connection with the respondents' views on the use of comments. Firstly, they seem to feel that comments were useful to interested pupils only as they felt that students tended to ignore comments as they were not really interested in essay writing. Secondly, the nature of the comments made by the respondents seemed to be contradictory in nature. Examples have been discussed in chapter four.

Teachers in this study indicated that their students were not favourably disposed towards writing the essay. Reasons offered included claims that students were lazy, or lacked self-motivation, or seemed to prefer the contextual question. Martin (1989), however, disputes these claims. He states that some students are unable to write the essay because they are not familiar with the conventions of the genre. Rothery (1989) also states that "we are likely to

judge students' written texts that are inadequate in this respect as evidence of an intellectual failure of some kind" (p. 73). It seems possible that students have a negative attitude towards the essay because they need explicit guidance on how to construct the essay.

The teachers survey seems to indicate that there is need to change perceptions of the essay. According to Martin (1989), most people have an intransitive view of writing as " They think of learning to write as learning to write down what we would otherwise say" (p. 53). He rejects this view by claiming that "learning to write involves learning new genres and new ways of using grammar as well" (p. 53). These claims are important as they tend to show up the weaknesses revealed by the survey.

The second part of this chapter focuses on an analysis of the essays written by three students during the writing process. Such an analysis with reference to the findings was decided upon because of the qualitative nature of the "results" of the writing process. The impact of the genre-based approach to the teaching of the literary essay, on student ability to write the literary essay, is difficult to quantify. Another problem is evident in the subjectivity of the assessment of the essays, although genre-based criteria were used to assess them.

It was decided, therefore, to first identify the most significant weaknesses evident in the essays written by three students from the standard 10B class, at the end of their standard nine year in their final examination. Five areas are to be focused on in identifying these weaknesses. These were traced through the writing process in all three essays. In doing this it was hoped that some information could be gleaned about the impact of the writing process on pupil ability to write the essay. The five areas which constituted the framework for analysing the first draft and the final essay are:

- a. The overall presentation of ideas (i.e. whether students narrated instead of argued): At the beginning of the writing process students were advised on two ways of arranging their ideas in the argumentative essay - the climatic or the anti- climatic presentation. This was done after it was noted in the analysis of the examination essays that they tended to present ideas according to their narrative sequence in the network instead of using them argumentatively.

- b. The quality of the argument, i.e., the quality of the facts chosen to support the thesis statement or the topic ideas in each paragraph: This was found to be quite a serious problem as it seemed as if students did not carefully consider the choice of evidence.
- c. The quality of the thesis statements: It was noted that the thesis statements were vague and did not provide any direction for the writer. Some students seemed to regard the thesis statement as the introduction to the essay.
- d. The quality of the paragraphs in the argumentative stage: Paragraphs written in the examination were not structured in accordance with the compulsory and optional moves available to the writer in the argumentative stage. These have been discussed in chapter two.
- e. Coherence: This area was focused on because it was noticed that the coherence of the examination essays was severely affected by the absence of "conjunction" and "lexical cohesion". Both concepts have been explained in chapter two.

One essay from each category was chosen - Excellent, Average and Very Weak. A number of criteria determined the choice of the essays. The most important requisite was that the students revealed a good knowledge of the setwork but had lost marks because of problems in presenting a sound argument. The emphasis on this criterion was due to the focus of the study being on the use of genre analysis to teach the literary essay. Other considerations included the level of motivation of the student and the interest that was displayed in the process.

Some interesting developments were noted in the scores for the essays. Student A's score (A+) for the standard nine examination was repeated for the first draft and for the final essay. It must be noted, however, that there was some improvement in the quality of the essay during the writing process. This has been discussed later in this chapter. Student B's score improved from a "D" in the standard nine examination to a "C" for the first draft and

a "B" in the final essay. Such improvement was noted for Student C as well. The symbols were a "G" for the standard nine examination, a "D" for the first draft and a "D+" for the final essay. Reasons for such improvement have been discussed hereafter. Copies of the first and second drafts have been included. (Appendix J, K, and L). Symbols allocated for the essays written during the writing process are in accordance with the scoring scheme presented in Appendix H.

It is essential prior to the discussion of the essays written by the three students to identify some factors which could possibly have affected the findings. It has to be acknowledged, firstly, that the writing process took place in circumstances that could not be strictly controlled. The researcher was obliged to "fit the process into the circumstances". Time was limited and the ideal envisaged by proponents of the process approach with reference to rewriting and revision and also the time needed to allow for the consolidation of the concepts presented to the students during the process, could not be realized in the circumstances.

Student A did reveal a good awareness of the conventions of the argumentative genre in the examination essay. One aspect of the essay, however, that did need to be improved was the analysis and discussion of the quotations. The student did attempt to utilize quotations to support the ideas presented in the essay. Very little attempt was made, however, to analyse and relate these quotations to the thesis statement. It seems as if the student had assumed that the reader would appreciate the significance of the quotation in the context. The following paragraph from the essay written by this student in the standard nine examination illustrates this problem:

Viola reveals to us the true sense of real love. Her love for Orsino is loyal and faithful. "I'll do my best to woo your lady!" Although she loves Orsino , his happiness.....

(No reference is made to the quotation thereafter).

This problem was identified in the student's first draft in the writing process. The following paragraph is from the first draft:

In the beginning Macbeth has a strong grasp of moral order but this gradually disintegrates with once again the help of Lady Macbeth. She compares his manhood with 'dashing a baby brains out. 'plucked my nipple from its boneless gums and dashed the brains out'. In this she uses a calculated tactic to influence him. It's unmanly not to perform one's promises good or bad. Macbeth understands her entirely when he cries 'bring forth men-children only.' Lady Macbeth here contrasts her womanhood to his manhood to embarrass him by throwing doubt on his manhood which eventually leads to crime viz. Duncan's murder.

This problem was identified and discussed with the student during the writing process. In the final essay the paragraph was presented in the following way:

At the beginning Macbeth has a strong grasp of moral order but this disintegrates with Lady Macbeth's help. She once again compares him with herself by showing his cowardice. If she could wickedly murder a child: 'plucked my nipple from its boneless gums and dashed the brains out' then he should be able to murder Duncan. The word 'dashed' shows us her cruelty and harshness in her determination to get her husband 'his' crown. Therefore this shows us her calculated tactics to influence him. Lady Macbeth here contrasts her womanhood to his manhood, thus embarrassing him. This eventually leads to his killing Duncan, obviously revealing her influence is greater than that of the witches.

Although there are flaws in this paragraph, it is better than the previous one. It is more structured in that the topic sentence (sentence one) claims that Lady Macbeth destroys Macbeth's sense of moral rightness. Support for the claim is provided in the quotation which has been discussed and related to the thesis. The concluding sentence relates the claims made in this paragraph to the topic.

Another problem identified in student A's examination essay had to do with coherence. There seems to have been a problem in the students ability to use the technique of "conjunction" identified by Martin (1989). This has been explained in chapter two. The following extract from the first draft illustrates the absence of the words which create

cohesion by indicating "consequent relations". These words (italicised) were included in the final draft:

When Macbeth is made Thane of Cawdor we immediately see he is thrilled at the quick fulfillment of at least one of the prophecies, 'the greatest is behind' - these words illustrate that his hope to become king now seems to be a clear possibility since they prophesied him to be Thane first then king hence the word 'greatest'. *(However)* The witches mentioned earlier that Banquo's sons shall be kings 'Thou shalt get kings'. *(Therefore)* And when Macbeth has usurped the crown Banquo stands as a great threat. 'Our fears of Banquo stick deep....

The two problems identified in the examination essay written by student A seem to have been solved to a certain extent through the writing process.

The first problem identified in the examination essay written by student B is related to the weak introduction, in that, there was no definite thesis statement. This flaw was also identified in the first draft:

Macbeth at the outset has encouragement to commit crime and this is by the witches when he meets them on the hearth and they reply, "all hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter." But what influences him to a great extent is Lady Macbeth who constantly plays on his conscience. He indeed succumbs to crime mainly because of Lady Macbeth.

This introduction was changed by the final draft to:

Macbeth at the outset was encouraged by the witches to commit crime. Their first words to him are "all hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter", implying that he will indeed be king actually cultivates the evil within him. However, Lady Macbeth is the dominating character that influences him to a greater extent and this is achieved by her constantly playing on Macbeth's manhood. He indeed succumbs to crime, mainly because of Lady Macbeth's influence.

This introduction does display the elements that are necessary for argumentative purposes. It states the writer's point of view and does give the reader an idea of what is going to be discussed in the following paragraphs, although no details have been provided on how the topic will be handled.

Another weakness was found with regard to the paragraph structure in the argumentative stage. The student tended to merely present relevant information instead of using it argumentatively. The second paragraph in the essay illustrates this weakness:

The witches have the ability to foresee the future, however, they cannot change what is going to happen. They merely plant the seeds of evil into Macbeth by prophesying that he will be king. Macbeth showed signs of urgency to speed up the process in becoming king. He uses their prophecy as a foundation to kill Duncan.

The final paragraph was:

The witches play their role in encouraging Macbeth to commit crime by merely planting the seeds of evil and allowing them to germinate. They achieve this by prophesying that he will be king. Macbeth believes in the witches and shows signs of urgency to speed up the process of becoming king. His hastiness to become king together with his ambition and the encouragement of the witches influences him to commit the evil crime.

The length of this student's essay increased from one and a half pages for the first draft to three and a quarter pages for the final effort.

Student C's introduction for his examination essay was vague and lacked a thesis statement. No reference was made to the examination question which has been included in chapter four:

India a place where most of the Indians are found. Srinivas was brought up in India, but spent most of his life in England.

This lack of direction was revealed in Student C's introduction to the first essay for the writing process:

Macbeth could be evil but in the play we see the weird sisters and Lady Macbeth have an influence on him to commit crime.

In the second draft an improvement was noted:

In the play we see that the weird sisters and Lady Macbeth have an influence on Macbeth. Actually Lady Macbeth has a greater influence on Macbeth. His mind is corrupted by Lady Macbeth with the deed to do evil.

Finally the introduction was presented as follows:

In the play we see that the weird sisters and Lady Macbeth have an influence on Macbeth. But Lady Macbeth has a greater influence. His mind is corrupted by Lady Macbeth with the deed to do evil.

The conclusion for Student C's essay also improved. In the first draft the conclusion was:

In the play we see who had the greatest influence on Macbeth to do the evil.

In the final essay this changed to:

Through Lady Macbeth's influence Macbeth kills Duncan and then he starts killing innocent people to remain king of Scotland.

Although the conclusion in the latter instance is not as comprehensive as it could be, it is definitely an improvement as it clearly relates to the thesis statement of the essay. Both the introduction and conclusion of Student C's essay (discussed above) reveal the importance of "lexical cohesion". According to Martin (1989) this has to do with 'relevance' in a text. He states that to achieve this, writers make use of expectancies readers have about what kinds

of words that go together. In the literary essay these words may be derived from the question and are sometimes referred to as key words, topic words and "echo words". It seems as if these parts of Student C's essay have become more meaningful as words associated with the influence of Lady Macbeth are 'clustered together' to relate the conclusion to the thesis of the essay, i.e., that Lady Macbeth had a greater influence on Macbeth's evil-doing in the play.

Another problem with regard to Student C's essay was the poor quality of the argumentative paragraphs in the examination. Some of the same weaknesses in the structure were noted even after the writing process. These included the absence of a clear topic sentence and concluding sentence and the failure to discuss the relevance of the quotation. The third paragraph in the final essay reveals these deficiencies:

When we meet Lady Macbeth, she is the dominating character in the marriage. "Leave all the rest to me." Macbeth doesn't want to kill Duncan but Lady Macbeth tells him to leave all the "rest" to her. She will do anything to eliminate Duncan.

Here the claim made by the student, i.e., that "she is the dominating character in the marriage", is not related to the thesis of the essay. These observations seem to suggest that students in the lower ability groups do need to engage in a process that will foster their understanding of the structure and conventions of the argumentative genre.

The comments above are specific in that they refer to the essays written by three students. Observations with regard to essays written by the other students in the class were equally informative. It was found that there was no significant change in some areas of the essays that were written during the writing process. This included the quality of the language itself. An example has been discussed in the description of the writing process.

It was noted that greater revision occurred from the first draft to the second than from the second to the third. One possible reason for this phenomenon was the fact that the students only had two days in which to rewrite the essay. The observation here, however, does seem to emphasise the need for more time in the writing process than that which was available for this exercise.

Another intriguing observation was made about the examination essays and the first drafts. Students tended to begin paragraphs with quotations which were intended to serve as "pivots" in the discussion. After having engaged in the writing process many pupils seemed to have accepted the importance of contextualising the quotations as is illustrated in the following paragraphs from the first and the second drafts respectively, written by one student:

'Leave all the rest to me.' We are shown how much influence Lady Macbeth exerts over Macbeth by the few words uttered by her. She is the one making all the plans. Her words sound like a command and it is obvious to the audience that Macbeth will not disobey her 'command'.

The unacceptability of this structure was discussed with the student who re-presented the information in the following manner:

Lady Macbeth's tremendous influence over Macbeth is clearly depicted in the last line of Scene 5, when we see her in the position of control. We see Lady Macbeth 'pulling all the strings', i.e., she is the one making all the plans. Her words, "Leave all the rest to me," are spoken with tremendous power. "Leave" is evidently a command and we are aware that Macbeth will not disobey. "All the rest" shows us her influence over Macbeth. She is the one making all the moves; formulating the plans and Macbeth is merely going along with her, with no question. Here we can see that Lady Macbeth is holding more influence than the weird sisters for she is able to prompt Macbeth into 'making plans' for the murder.

It seems as if sensitising the student to the conventions of the argumentative genre did pay dividends. The student has utilised the "moves" suggested in the notes on the argumentative essay. The first sentence claims that Lady Macbeth has dominated Macbeth, then relates this claim to the thesis statement. The second sentence restates the writer's point of view and the analysis of the quotations thereafter provide the necessary evidence that support the claims. The final sentence "brings all the evidence together" by relating it directly to the thesis statement. The paragraph definitely reads more smoothly than previously.

The third part of this chapter focuses on the final questionnaire. The questionnaire was completed by eighteen students at the end of the writing process. Students were advised to be objective and truthful in their answers. The responses have been discussed thematically.

Seventeen of the students indicated that they were more favourably disposed towards writing the essay. The one student who replied in the negative made the following comment:

No. Don't like writing essays. Only write it because I'm forced to write.

Seven students subscribed to the following view:

I now enjoy and look forward to writing the literary essay, knowing exactly what is expected of me.

In the pre-writing questionnaire students did indicate that their attitude towards the essay had been affected by their uncertainty about the task demands. Thus it seems that Hyland's (1992) contention that students are more amenable towards writing if they are au fait with the conventions of the genre seems to have been borne out by these findings.

The general attitude towards what was learned in the writing process is revealed in the following comment:

The most important thing that I learnt was the structure of the essay i.e. the different phases and what each phase consists of. Secondly the type of language...that should be used in an argumentative literary essay.

Other comments revealed that students who generally write good essays also gained some insights from the process:

I don't believe that I will ever stray from the topic now that I understand how to analyze the question. I have learnt a new method of fine-tuning my style in writing the essay.

These claims were verified in the responses to questions four and eleven which tested student knowledge of the conventions of argumentative writing. In their responses the students emphasised the structure and the conventions of the argumentative genre both in the writing of the essay and in evaluating the work of their peers. It was noted, however, that the emphasis on revision during the teaching process had not made the impact that was intended. Responses to question four (how the literary essay should be written) revealed that students were still following a linear approach as was illustrated in the following response:

Read question and instruction - sieve out necessary guidelines - write down relevant argument and relevant quotations - base/structure the essay(draft) - read draft carefully for grammatical errors - enter in neat copy.

The rewriting process, it seems, still means only the correction of surface errors. Students, therefore, need more exposure to rewriting strategies.

Question three investigated whether students had experienced any problems during the writing process. It seems that not many problems were experienced by the students although some reservations were expressed about the limited time available "to digest the notes" and "learning to adapt to the new process". The latter problem arose because a number of students had been structuring their paragraphs by beginning with a quotation and then discussing it. The following response did confirm my concern about the amount of information presented to the students in the notes:

There were too many concepts to go over and some were hard to understand.

This claim has important implications for future efforts in this area of research with regard to the volume and nature of information that can be presented to students in such programmes.

Seventeen students stated that they had found the teaching methods, which were used during the writing process, to be effective. One student indicated that most of the methods used were effective but that the notes could have been explained in greater detail. All students

indicated that they had benefitted from the use of models and the notes that had been issued to them. Various reasons were presented for the usefulness of the models. These included the guidelines that were implicit in them. Models were regarded as "examples" of "how different writers write and think and also how they approach the topic that they are given". Four students, however, expressed reservations about the use of models. Two of the responses follow:

- a. I don't know what is happening in those models.
- b. I just read through them and filed them.

A final word of warning was expressed by one of the respondents about the choice of models:

I realised that they could not be called 'models' because they themselves lacked the essentials of an essay. Therefore 'models' can often mislead a person.

The truth of this observation has to be acknowledged because some flaws were identified in the two essays that had been presented as models. It seems, however, that these flaws could be discussed to raise awareness of such problems.

An interesting comment was made on the notes that had been used in the programme:

Everything was given to us. We just had to read, understand and follow the steps and write.

The structure of the notes were conceived with this principle in mind. Whether such an ideal was realized, however, is questionable as such a comment seems to suggest that the notes could have been structured in such way that they could have elicited more engagement from the learner.

The pre-writing questionnaire indicated that students did not favour rewriting their essays. This opinion seems to have changed as the general opinion in the post-writing questionnaire

was that rewriting the essay certainly improved its quality. Advantages identified included the following:

- a. New ideas could be found while other ideas could be deleted.
- b. You yourself can see the difference in your writing.
- c. You actually learn from your mistakes.

One student felt that it is not necessary to rewrite the essay. The reason offered was that:

... if someone else corrected it and by them putting in more information it isn't helping you to understand the question/essay. Using someone else's ideas and not yours.

This response seems to criticise the nature of the comments that were made during the evaluation process by the students. Zamel's (1985) observations on the nature of comments seem relevant here. He stresses that comments should be text-based so that students are engaged actively in the evaluation process. This specificity is important as one student acknowledges that:

My essay at first did not have any structure/sequence in it. My teacher noted it down in the essay and explained the structure.

Responses to question 8 revealed that "Correction and Remedial work" was still associated with the correction of surface errors. This could be because students still view the writing process as a three-week linear process, which has been discussed in chapter four.

Three of the eighteen students felt that the "Peer evaluation" of essays was not useful. One respondent stated that the exercise does not work as the group cannot function effectively because:

We were friends and you can't do serious work because you will joke and talk about something else.

Another student questioned the quality of the evaluation:

Although it was corrected by my peers it was mostly grammatical or quoting.

Thus the strategies used in the evaluation of the essays have to be carefully structured to ensure that the activities are meaningful to all the students. This means that the abilities of peer evaluators need to be built up over a period of time to ensure that the process is constructive.

The final section of this chapter discusses the findings of the interviews. Three students were interviewed after the writing process had been completed. The aim of such an exercise was to elicit personal responses on aspects of the writing process and to answer questions on issues that had not been included in the questionnaires. Nunan (1992) describes the type of interview that was used as the semi-structured interview in which "the interviewer has a general idea of where he or she wants the interview to go, and what should come out of it" (p. 149). Nunan (1992) states that this type of interview is preferred by researchers who are working in the interpretive research tradition because of its flexibility.

I approached the class for volunteers, explaining that the interviews were aimed at discovering any additional information that the students wanted to bring to my notice. I indicated that there were two students that I did wish to speak to. One student was chosen as her essays for the writing process had been analysed and I wished to probe some of her responses. This student had obtained an "A+" symbol in all the essays. The other student that I wished to interview was chosen for certain reasons including the fact that he was studying English on the standard grade. An improvement was noted in the quality of his essays and he seemed to be very enthusiastic about the writing process. He agreed to be interviewed. Only one other student agreed. She had also scored an "A+" in all her essays.

Prior to a discussion of the interviews it is important to emphasise that the interview "...at

its best only brings to light what the interviewee thinks - his or her interpretations at the time and under the circumstances of an interview" (Altrichter, Posch and Somekh, 1993, p. 101). The observations that are made with regard to the students responses have been guided by this important factor, i.e., they are presented as the opinions of these students. The responses have been discussed thematically.

To initiate discussion, the students were asked to identify and explain any problems that they had experienced during the writing process. Both "high-fliers" indicated that they generally enjoyed writing but sometimes tended to be afraid of going off the topic in answering essay questions in literature. The third student indicated that he experienced problems with the manner in which he expressed his ideas. He stated that he felt that he was experiencing problems in writing because he had not "read enough" in Primary school. The same student also stated that the quality of his essays that he had written during the writing process, had been adversely affected by his "poor knowledge" of the play.

The students were asked to explain whether they had learnt anything by engaging in the writing process. All three students felt that the exercise had been of use to them. They stressed that what was important was their feeling of confidence in manipulating the concepts that they had learnt as and when they needed them. The thesis statement was identified as the most useful concept learnt in the exercise, by all the interviewees. One student claimed that "it allowed you to focus" and pointed out that this was being done constantly in the interview situation.

Two advantages were identified in learning the structure of the argumentative genre. One student indicated that it was easier to write the essay as "we have a structure to work with". This finding agrees with Hyland's (1992) claim that, "students simply require more information on the features that constitute good texts in order to improve their writing skills" (p. 16). The other advantage identified was that learning the structure of the argumentative essay had seemed to enable her to be more selective in the material that she could use in writing the essay.

Students were asked to comment on how the writing process had impacted on their

performance in the other subjects. One student stated that genre analysis has assisted him in Biology as he is now able to identify key ideas in his notes, and when he answers questions. He suggested that "we look for structure in everything we read". The same student stated that he had used the "method taught" during the writing process, i.e., genre-analysis to answer "similar style" questions in a geography test and that he had done "better" in the short note questions.

The students were asked whether the genre-based approach could help them to answer contextual questions in literature. All three felt the technique could be used to their advantage especially in the writing of the short essays.

Students were questioned on whether they felt that a genre-based process approach to writing instruction would work in a mixed-ability class like theirs. All three interviewees felt that it would because they had "solid grounds" on which to write the essay. It seems that they felt that such an approach would be successful because it offered them a framework with which to structure their essays and also because the implementation of the process entailed collaborative writing, i.e., the assistance of their peers and their teacher. It was stressed, however, that students had to be thoroughly au fait with the various concepts and that time must be allowed for them to digest the relevant material. It was felt that peer evaluation and the teacher's comments were important in identifying and correcting individual errors and weaknesses.

Finally, the students were asked to indicate whether the writing process could have been improved in any way. Two suggestions were made. One student suggested that model essays should be presented to students with the different parts identified by respective colours. This technique could be used to familiarise students with the conventions of the various genres. The second suggestion was particularly significant to the genre based approach to writing instruction. The words of the student are quoted:

When I have to do something myself it's easier for me to remember.

This statement emphasises the need to ensure that the students are fully involved in the

process of creating essays through their active involvement in guided, meaningful activities.

The above analyses have revealed that there does exist a problem with regard to the teaching and the learning of the literary essay in the high school. Despite its limitations, there are strong indications in this study that a "hard" process is an appropriate method of response to the problem. This will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this study two approaches to writing instruction have been synthesised - the process approach and the genre-based approach - to create a methodology for instruction with reference to the literary essay. The elements of each approach have been explored in chapter two. The aims of such an exercise were:

- a. To explore the instructional approaches used by selected high school teachers with reference to the literary essay,
- b. To gain an insight into teacher and pupil perceptions of the literary essay and its place in the English syllabus, and
- c. To investigate the effect of the Genre-based process on student argumentative writing at the Senior Certificate level.

This final chapter focuses on the conclusions and recommendations which emanate from this study. Firstly, some of the limitations of the study are considered. Secondly, implications for writing instruction with reference to the literary essay are presented. Thirdly, some of the areas which warrant further research will be discussed.

The findings of this study indicate strongly that the "hard process" approach to writing instruction for the literary essay is an appropriate response to the problems synonymous with traditional methods. Despite the limitations of the study, evidence has been found that the process implemented in this study did have positive effects.

However, it must be noted that any conclusions which have been reached in this study on the genre-based approach to the teaching of writing are tentative, since they are based solely on the study of a limited sample of teachers and students in the Northdale/Raisethorpe area. The first constraint, therefore, pertains to the generalizability of the findings. Pupils in the study

attended a school under the jurisdiction of the House of Delegates and were from middle and working class backgrounds. Teachers who responded to the questionnaire were based at similar schools in the same area. The findings of the study must therefore be considered to be pertinent mainly to these participants and comparisons with pupils and teachers from different backgrounds must be made cautiously. Further, the sample of teachers utilized in this study was very small (6). It needs to be pointed out also that the writing process was implemented in only one class of eighteen students.

Despite the limitations of the study, however, it is noted that the findings are generally consistent with those of the researchers identified in chapter two. In spite of the limitations that have been imposed with regard to generalising to other samples, this study does have value to the population under investigation.

Findings indicate that there is a major problem around current methodology used in instruction for the literary essay. To a certain extent these problems seem to stem from the nature of the syllabus. Coe (1986) has emphasised that "Traditional pedagogies may have been adequate for the traditional curricula, they are not adequate for what needs to be done today" (p. 291). The syllabus prescribed by the House of Delegates is of the basic skills type, which has been described in chapter two. The findings have revealed that because of the emphasis on skills, the process of writing itself has been glossed over. Such a syllabus is product-centred, where, in fact, the product becomes the end itself. This is revealed in the objectives of the syllabus which have been discussed in chapter two and in chapter six. Nunan (1991) stresses, however, that "...objectives can be useful, not only in the selection of structures, functions, notions, tasks, and so on, but also to provide a sharper focus for teachers, to give learners a clear idea of what they can expect from a language programme, to help in developing means of assessment and evaluation, and so on (p. 61). The usefulness of objectives, therefore, cannot be denied. What seems to be required with regard to writing instruction in the context of this study, however, is the specification of both process and product objectives. According to Nunan (1991) "Process objectives differ from product objectives in that they describe, not what learners will do as a result of instruction, but the experiences that the learner will undergo in the classroom (p. 70). The findings do indicate that there should be greater emphasis on the learning experiences themselves. Nunan (1991)

maintains further that the specification of process and product objectives are not necessarily mutually exclusive as the "one type specifies the means, the other ends" (p. 71). It could be argued that any comprehensive syllabus needs to specify both process and product objectives.

A further point needs to be made about the syllabus. Findings seem to indicate that the needs of the learners have not been considered in the writing programme. The literary essay is regarded as a part of the syllabus which has to be completed in three weeks. Such a perception of the essay seems to emphasise the discrepancy between the "teacher's syllabus" and the "learner's syllabus". It seems as if needs analyses conducted prior to instruction in the various genres should benefit teachers and students. This may be realised in two ways. Firstly, information from learners can be used in the selection of content and activities, and, secondly, such information can be used to motivate learners by providing them with information about goals and other aspects of writing.

Hyland's (1992) claim that writing curricula neglect, "the skills needed to effectively produce particular kinds of written discourse structure" (p. 14) are confirmed by the findings of this study. He argues that it is essential for teachers to assist their students to acquire an understanding of the formal structures of the various genres. Although reference is made to genre in the syllabus, no great emphasis is placed on explicitly making students aware of the conventions of the important genres, including the argumentative genre. The findings do indicate that students have been handicapped by an inadequate understanding of how to organize their writing assignments successfully as they are not familiar with the structural conventions of the argumentative text. Genre analysis offers organizational stages for the various genres. The findings of this study indicate that teachers are aware of genre, but they need more information in order to make students explicitly aware of the conventions of each. According to Hyland (1992), genre analysis can provide the vocabulary and concepts to explicitly teach the text structures we would like our students to produce. This study confirms the need to include such information in the syllabus so that our students are able to cope with their writing demands.

The findings have revealed two main point about teachers in the study. Firstly the data has confirmed the claim by Kutz and Rosskelly (1991) that "...nothing in the preparation of most

teachers will help them design the work of the classroom in ways that support the development of readers of literature and writers of essays, to connect the reading of literature and the writing of essays with other acts of reading and writing and speaking, to create a coherent pedagogy for their teaching of English" (p. 9). None of the respondents had received any formal training in writing instruction. The findings indicated that writing instruction is driven by the basic skills approach with no evidence being found of knowledge of current trends in writing instruction, including the process and genre-based approaches. There seems to be a dire need for pre- and in-service training in writing pedagogy. A viable alternative in this regard would be action research as it is reflective and enquiry oriented. Issues such as the content of the syllabus, methodology and the assumptions that underpin it, and evaluation, need to be scrutinised, to develop effective programmes for writing instruction.

Rothery's (1989) claim that "if we teach a student to handle the stages of Exposition...we are helping her to make her meanings effective" (p. 80) was confirmed by this study. Responses to the post-writing questionnaire seemed to indicate that student attitudes towards the literary essay were more positive after they had engaged in the writing process. They claimed that having a knowledge of the structure of the argumentative genre had provided them with "a structure to work with in writing the essay". A number of improvements were noted in the essays. The quality of the argumentation was of a better standard. The paragraphs in the argumentative stage of the essays written by all three students improved. Paragraphs were characterised by definite topic statements with claims that were well substantiated. Quotations were analysed and related to the thesis statements. It must be pointed out that the most significant improvement was noted in the structuring of the essay.

One of the findings of this study was that although the student writers made claims, presented data, and linked both to the proposition, much of the inference on how they were related was left to the reader. In this regard, Knudson stresses that educators need to define clearly the criteria for "good" argument. "The teaching of argument must include a clear distinction between data and claims and a clear understanding of how they are linked together. The understanding of what they are, must be developed to the point that students comprehend how data and claims work together to support the proposition" (p. 176).

Further implications are that there should be intensive teaching of genre. Such instruction should cover as many different genres as possible and should begin as early as possible. When this should be done is the subject of much conjecture, but no definite answers have been suggested.

The findings of this study indicate that students need time and practice to consolidate their experiences of genre. Swales (1990) has identified this important factor in writing instruction. He claims that "Knowledge of the conventions of a genre (and their rationale) is likely to be much greater in those who routinely or professionally operate within the genre rather than those who become involved in it only occasionally. In consequence, active discourse community members tend to have the greatest genre-specific expertise - as we often see in interaction between members of a profession and their client public" (p. 54). The pedagogic implications here are important. It is essential that students engage in writing exercises involving the various genres to ensure that they obtain the necessary "genre-specific expertise". Respondents in the survey indicated that they found it difficult to "complete the syllabus". Strategies need to be devised around this problem. A possible focus could be on quality, i.e., more intensive writing with fewer units, than quantity with less development in student writing abilities. Another possibility in this regard is genre-based instruction in the reading of the networks. Students could be taught how to retrieve information by analysing whatever they read according to the relevant genre structure.

Coe (1986) has suggested that writing should proceed along six stages. These have been explained in chapter two. An attempt was made in this study to follow these stages. It seems, however, that students found it difficult to adapt to this process as they still followed a linear approach to writing the essay. One reason for this disparity could be the limited time that was available for the implementation of the writing process. Two points need to be highlighted here. Firstly, that it is necessary to make students aware of the purpose of and what has to be accomplished in each part of the process. Secondly, any research utilising the process approach has to ensure that sufficient time is available for realising the aims of each stage.

Hyland's (1992) suggestion that "particular stages or moves can be identified explicitly and

presented with exercises to illustrate how ideas and meanings are typically conveyed" (p. 16), proved to be effective in the context of this study. Models were introduced after the students had been exposed to information about genre, but before they had written their first drafts. All the students in the class indicated that they had benefitted from the use of models. Their reasons included the idea that models provided guidelines on what was expected for the literary essay and were thus perceived as good examples. It seems, however, that some caution needs to be exercised in the use of models. Four students in the writing group in this study expressed reservations about the use of the models in the process. While one student claimed that he/she could not understand the essays, the other three criticised aspects of the two essays. It was interesting to note that the criticism concerned the structuring of the essay and the lengthy use of quotations. Grounds for their criticism were based on the notes on the argumentative genre that were issued to the students in the class. It seems necessary, therefore, to ensure that the model essays satisfy the requirements of the genre which they are illustrating if they are to serve the purpose for which they have been chosen.

Hyland's (1992) claim that "a genre-based approach promotes a more collaborative emphasis in writing development" (p. 17), was confirmed to a certain extent in this study. With regard to peer group evaluation, joint composition and collaboration was realised through the use of groups formed by the students in the class. It was found that this led to an imbalance in the class as homogenous groups comprising higher ability or lower ability groups were created. It seems, therefore, that there is need for the teacher to play a more active role in the formation of groups for collaborative learning.

Three of the eighteen students who took part in the writing process felt that "peer evaluation" of the essay was not useful. Their reasons included the claim that their friendship seemed to hinder the process and that the evaluation itself was not done properly. Thus the process of peer evaluation needs to be structured carefully to ensure that it is a rewarding exercise for the students. It must be realised, also, that students need explicit guidance and practice to develop the skills that are essential for them to function effectively during the analysis of the essays.

It was found that students tended to perceive the teacher "traditionally" - in the sense of being

the supreme authority in class, although the role of the teacher as "editor" or "supervisor" was discussed at the beginning of the writing process. Such perceptions of the teacher in the class may be due to the students' previous experience of teacher-dominated lessons. The implication is that if students are to assume responsibility for their own writing then they need to be trained to regard the teacher as one of the influences in their writing. It was noted, however, that the principle of collaboration worked well in the collaborative correction of common errors. This was realised through the use of "High Frequency Error" sheets where examples of poor introductions etc. were discussed. A copy has been included in Appendix I.

Coe's (1986) claim that we need to help our students "to do major revision, to reformulate as well as simply edit" (p. 297), are confirmed by the findings of this study. These have revealed that rewriting to the teachers and students in the study still means editing for surface errors. Students do seem to need more exposure to rewriting strategies, especially the art of reformulating their work. This was borne out by the fact that more changes were made in student essays from the first to the second drafts than from the second to the final draft. This could possibly be due to the fact that students had only two days in which to make changes for the final essay.

Several important implications for teachers, as well as questions for future investigation, follow from this study. Hyland (1992) has stated that "Genre-based approaches are new, and the most effective techniques for exploiting genre models at different ability levels are still unknown" (p.17). Therefore a great deal of research needs to be done in this area. With regard to the genre-based approach to the teaching of the literary essay, areas that do need investigation include the techniques that are used to create coherence and the improvement of the language used in the essay itself.

The lack of generalizability of the findings suggest that further investigation in this area needs to be carried out among the different school populations in South Africa. It is suggested that such research be conducted at all levels in our schools including the Primary and the High school.

It is recommended that future researchers design their investigations such that they are more sensitive to the effect of students' backgrounds on their writing ability. In this respect procedures have to be formulated to collect more biographical information on the students to determine the impact of their backgrounds on their knowledge of the different genres.

This study was limited to a three week writing cycle. It became obvious during the process that the time allowed for writing was insufficient. It seems that future research endeavours in the same area conducted over longer periods of time would be able to provide valuable information on the impact of time on the development of student abilities in essay writing. Cognisance must be taken of the time that is required by students to learn to adapt to any new process.

Another area of concern emanated from the anxiety of the higher ability members of the class about "going off the topic". This study seems to indicate a need to investigate the framing of questions in literature study. In a study of literature question papers (Higher Grade) in South Africa, Van Der Mescht (1993) observed that "Examiners are inclined to force their opinions onto candidates, and then expect candidates to justify them; instructional words used often imply one correct answer, such as "Show" and "Explain"; there is often an unnecessary focus on jargon; examiners enjoy using "mystifying" examiners' language, such as "Comment on its effectiveness", or misleading language, such as "Discuss the reasons..." when they mean "Give the reasons..." (p. 33). These claims need to be investigated.

Finally it seems that the genre-based procedures described in this study may provide a way to facilitate student learning with reference to the literary essay and with argumentative writing in general. Further research testing the appropriateness of this teaching/learning process with both junior and senior high school students would be worthwhile.

In summary, the findings of this study strongly suggest that the "hard process" is an effective response to the problems encountered in the teaching of the literary essay. With regard to genre analysis, Hyland (1992) does emphasise that "while the methodology may be unclear, the value of explicit text knowledge to an effective writing programme is not" (p. 17). It must be stressed also that a genre-based approach does not suffocate innovation and personal

expression, and can provide a methodological environment that develops writing skills and encourages creativity. Given access to information about genre analysis teachers can figure out how best to apply such information with particular groups of students.

It would be impertinent for the present writer, however, to imply that definitive answers are to be found in this short contribution to the lengthy and continuing consideration of how best to teach the literary essay. There is no simple strategy, no sequence of steps or set of practices that will help all learners in all circumstances to develop as writers. Teachers who know some of the theory that has been discussed in this chapter, who are sensitive to their students and the contexts of their students' lives, will still have to discover their own ways to work with the writers in their classes.

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS OF ENGLISH ON THE LITERARY ESSAY

This questionnaire intends to explore perceptions of and approaches to the teaching of the Literary Essay. Your answers to the questions below would therefore be much appreciated.

Everything you write will be treated confidentially. Your answers may help to broaden the scope of current knowledge of the teaching of the Literary Essay in the High School.

P G Naidoo

(Student - University of Natal)

1. Teaching experience:

a. Total number of years : _____

b. Teaching of the Literary Essay (please state standards taught):

2. Highest Qualification in English: _____

3. Senior Certificate Marking Experience : _____

4. Standards being taught this year : _____

5. Have you received any specialised training for teaching essay writing?

a. Yes/No : _____

b. Please explain your answer:

6. Have you attended any workshops specifically directed at the Literary Essay?

a. Yes/No : _____

b. If Yes, please describe the nature of these workshops :

7. Do you feel that sufficient time is available to teach the Literary Essay?

a. Yes/No : _____

b. Kindly explain your answer :

8. Do you find teaching the Literary Essay more challenging than teaching other aspects of the writing syllabus?
- a. Yes/No : _____
- b. Please explain your answer:
- _____
- _____
- _____
9. Briefly describe the procedure you follow when teaching the Literary Essay :
- _____
- _____
- _____
10. Are Assignment topics analyzed in detail in class ?
- a. Yes/No : _____
- b. Kindly explain how topics are presented in class :
- _____
- _____
- _____
11. Please explain how aspects such as structure, style etc. are discussed in class :
- _____
- _____
- _____
12. Please describe any Resources (Worksheets, Models etc.) which you use in teaching the Literary Essay :
- _____
- _____
- _____
13. Please explain what procedures you follow with regard to Correction and Remedial work for assignments on the Literary Essay. (e.g. lesson structure, aspects focused on, etc.)
- _____
- _____
- _____
14. What goals do you hope to realise through the process of marking essays that have been written by your students:
- _____
- _____
- _____
15. Briefly describe the criteria that you use when assessing essays written by your students.
- _____
- _____
- _____
16. Kindly explain the nature of the written comments that you make on the literary essays presented by your students :
- _____
- _____

17. Do these comments have the impact you intend them to have?

a. Yes/No : _____

b. Kindly explain your answer :

18. Do your pupils evaluate each others' work?

a. Yes/No : _____

b. If yes, please explain the procedure followed in class :

19. Do your pupils engage in rewriting their essays :

a. Yes/No : _____

b. Please explain your answer :

20. a. How would you describe the attitude of pupils towards the literary essay?

b. Why, in your opinion, do they have such an attitude?

21. The following include some of the major weaknesses identified by Examiners in the Senior Certificate Examination (English - Paper One). Briefly discuss those experienced by your students :

Poor interpretation of topic
Inadequate essay writing skills
Superficial knowledge of the Prescribed books

22. Do you feel that pupils get sufficient practice in literary essay writing?

a. Yes/No : _____

b. Please explain :

23. Can you suggest any improvements with regard to the way in which the literary essay is taught:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE LITERARY ESSAY

Please answer each of the following questions as frankly as you can. Do not write your name or the name of any of your teachers on this form.

1. Write down the word (or words) from the following list which best expresses your feelings about writing the Literary Essay, then explain why you feel this way:

Excited
Bored
Anxious

Confident
Confused
Insecure

2. Discuss your opinion of the claim, by educationists, that a student benefits personally in studying the literary essay.

3. Briefly describe the structure of the Argumentative essay. (In your answer explain the purpose of each part of the essay).

4. Briefly explain the problems you experience when you are required to write the literary essay.

5. Explain how you go about writing the Literary Essay (From the time you have been allocated the task to when it is handed in for marking) :

5.1. As an Assignment in class

5.2. In the examination

6. When you write a literary essay, do you know just what you want to say before you get started or do you find out what you want to say as you write. Please explain your answer.

7. Have you found the methods used by your teachers, to teach the Literary Essay, effective? Please explain your answer.

8. Do you think that you would benefit in any way if the teacher used models (Examples of essays) to teach the Literary Essay?

9. Do you rewrite your essay after you or someone else has corrected it? Please explain your answer.

10. Corrective and Remedial work is usually done after an essay has been marked. Do you find such exercises useful? Kindly explain your answer.

11. Generally, teachers make comments on aspects of an essay while they are marking.

11.1. Do you read these comments? Yes / No / Sometimes
(Please tick the appropriate answer)

11.2. Please explain whether you find them useful :

11.3. Are you able to apply them? Yes / No / Sometimes
Please explain your answer:

12. Do you find Peer Evaluation of your essays useful? Kindly explain your answer.

13. Please explain how you evaluate essays written by students in your class (During Peer Evaluation).

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION

APPENDIX C

THE ARGUMENTATIVE LITERARY ESSAY

AIM:

To use language to get the reader to believe or accept whatever the writer is saying.

AUDIENCE

Writers need to have a strong sense of audience - "Who am I writing this for ?" The clearer the answer to this question the easier it is for the writer to direct the language at the readers so that they grasp what the writer wants them to.

THE FOUR METHODS OF PERSUASION

1. **Those deriving from the influence of the speaker.**
The writer must come across as a person who knows the issue, is confident in his grasp of it and believes firmly in whatever he has to say.
2. **Those deriving from the subject matter under consideration.**
3. **Those deriving from the appeals to the emotions of the audience** e.g. Minimise facts that could do disservice to a cause.
4. **Those based upon the stylistic techniques of the speaker.**

COHERENCE

The reader must be led fluently and logically from one point to another. Thus coherence must exist in your writing itself as well as in the various methods you may use in structuring the material in your essay. There are various ways of achieving this:

1. Consistent Grammar - One tense etc.
2. Pronouns as links to their antecedents, the nouns whose places the pronouns take.
3. Chronological ordering of content in sentences.
4. Transition words and phrases which function solely to point out connections, additions and alternatives : however, furthermore, nevertheless, for example, on the other hand, etc.
5. Echo words: key words and phrases directly repeated or reworded.
6. Transitional paragraphs: short paragraphs which summarize what has gone before and which look ahead to the next phase of an essay.

SOLIDITY OF CONTENT

1. Analysis as opposed to generalizations.
2. Plot details must not overshadow interpretative comments. Example :

- 2.1. The witches meet Macbeth in the cave to mislead him.
- 2.2. When the witches meet Macbeth in the cave we realise that they intended speeding up his destruction by.....
3. Quotations must not become the main content of the essay.
4. Careful reading of the literary work - Close correlation between how a student reads and the success of his essay.
5. Must strive to go beyond routine, oversimplified development of theme statements.
6. Do not follow the literary work paragraph by paragraph.
7. The allotment of space in an essay to ideas and details will depend upon their importance. (Must be proportional)

THE STRUCTURE OF THE ESSAY (Three are suggested)

STRUCTURE ONE

1. ENTRANCE: introducing the topic
2. NARRATION: recital of the circumstances that are required to understand the points at issue
3. PROPOSITION: specifically stating the speaker's stand on the issue
4. DIVISION: means outlining the points that the speaker is going to prove
5. CONFIRMATION: the body of proofs for the speaker's thesis
6. CONFUTATION: the destruction of the opponents arguments
7. CONCLUSION: review and emphasise the importance of the proofs

STRUCTURE TWO

Arguments for and against the thesis can be presented in a **CLIMACTIC ORDER** - weak arguments first then strongest one.

STRUCTURE THREE

Arguments for and against can be presented in a **ANTI-CLIMACTIC ORDER** - most important ideas are presented first, least important at end of sequence.

APPENDIX D

THE PROCESS OF ESSAY WRITING

THE STRUCTURE OF AN ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY

The structure of an argument has Three stages : the Introductory or Thesis stage, the Development of Argument stage; and the Conclusion stage.

A.THE INTRODUCTORY OR THESIS PHASE

In the Introductory or Thesis stage, the central purpose is to state, at the beginning, the writer's point of view (thesis) about the topic and give the reader an idea of the boundaries of the topic. Thus the reader gets an idea at this stage what the writer thinks and how he is going to tackle the topic. While stating the writer's point of view is essential (compulsory), there are a number of choices (options) open to the writer in developing the introductory stage. The conventional order, possible options and compulsory aspects are as follows :

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <u>Optional</u> | - Controversial or dramatic statement
AND/OR |
| <u>Optional</u> | - background information. |
| <u>Compulsory</u> | - Statement of writer's point of view and setting of boundaries of the topic.
(Thesis statement)
AND/OR |
| <u>Optional</u> | - Provide brief support of writer's point of view
AND/OR |
| | - state exactly what will be discussed and in what order. |

The Thesis Statement

This states the central purpose of the essay. It should be in the first paragraph and should **control all the information in the essay**. If the topic is complex, it can consist of a number of sentences which should be developed in the first few paragraphs.

Example of a Thesis Statement

ESSAY : Analyzing Macbeth's Character

1. **The purpose of this essay is to present a character study of Macbeth.** (Repeating the assigned topic, this vague statement implies that everything about his character will be covered.)
2. **Macbeth, the chief character in the play is an evil person.** (Although Macbeth may be evil, this thesis is indefinite because it does not specify or define clearly the nature of his evilness.)
3. **Although Macbeth, the chief character in the play is portrayed as cold and resolute in his evil doing, he is, ironically, alive with a painful consciousness of guilt.** (This statement defines clearly enough a seeming contradiction in his character and at the same time provides a built-in, two-part organization for the essay : his coldness and his strong guilty conscience.)

Example of an Introduction:

Question:

"Macbeth's murderous ambition is not injected into him by the witches; it is part of his 'nature' and given encouragement it becomes the whole of it."

Critically evaluate the validity of this statement by referring to and discussing relevant extracts from the play.

Introduction:

(1) The "tragic hero" in Shakespearean tragedy is characterised by a fatal flaw, common to every man in less tragic proportions, that leads to his downfall. (2) In Macbeth's case this was his "vaulting" ambition which was not, "injected by the witches" but certainly encouraged by them. (3) Eventually this consuming ambition totally dominates his 'nature' and leads to his disastrous end.

After the introductory stage, the next stage of the argumentative essay is to Develop the Argument and support the writer's point of view in detail. Thus each paragraph is likely to present and discuss an idea that supports the writer's point of view. It is obvious that in each paragraph it would be compulsory for a writer to present some idea in support of the writer's point of view and some evidence from the text to show that the idea is valid. The following represents the compulsory and optional aspects of a paragraph in an argumentative essay:

B. DEVELOPMENT OF ARGUMENTATIVE STAGE

Compulsory - Something that signals the claim and relates it to the topic. Usually the first sentence of the paragraph (Topic Sentence)

Optional - A restatement or rephrasing of the writer's point of view.

Compulsory - Stating reasons and grounds for the claim. This means providing support for a claim that develops the writer's overall argument. (including quotations)

Compulsory - Closing Sentence: Let the reader know you have finished with the subject of this paragraph. Bring all the information together.

Example of a paragraph from the Argumentative stage

The fact that Macbeth intended to become king is revealed in the different reactions of Macbeth and Banquo to the words of the witches at their first meeting. Banquo notices the traumatic effect of their words on Macbeth: "Why, good sir, do you seem to fear things that do sound so fair?" It seems as if they have echoed his innermost thoughts - his clandestine ambition. Although the witches have prophesied equally promisingly for Banquo, he is unaffected by them and is more concerned about Macbeth's reaction to them, who aggressively commands them to reveal more: "Stay you imperfect speakers!" It is important to note also Macbeth's reference to the words of the witches as a "prophetic greeting". This incident makes it quite clear that Macbeth's ambition was part of his "nature" already. The witches are aware of it and they exploit his thoughts to further their evil work.

C. CONCLUSION STAGE

The final stage in an argumentative essay is the Conclusion stage. The compulsory and optional aspects of a conclusion are as follows :

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <u>Optional</u> | - Something that signals that a conclusion is being started. |
| <u>Compulsory</u> | - Relating the whole argument to the author's point of view. This would mean summing up briefly all the major points stated in the argument |
| | AND/OR |
| <u>Optional</u> | - Restating and relating the author's point of view |
| | AND/OR |
| <u>Optional</u> | - Relating the author's point of view to wider issues. |

Example of a conclusion

Throughout this essay it has been illustrated that Macbeth's ambition was part of his "nature" and not "Injected" into him by the witches. His desire to become king is revealed in his initial meeting with the witches and subsequently in the murderous means he uses to realise his ambition and secure his position thereafter. The role of the witches was merely to nurture the seed that was in him, which out of its own will, broke free and consumed all of Macbeth so that he thought of nothing else.

In conclusion, we can put all the stages together to create a guideline or scheme for the structuring of an argumentative essay. This scheme can give a range of compulsory and optional 'moves'. This can be explained by thinking about a soccer game. For a player there are a number of compulsory and optional moves depending on where he is on the field. If he is on his own half, we might say it would be compulsory for him to kick the ball. But there are a number of optional moves open to him. He may dribble or pass forwards, left, right, or back. This is in accordance with the rules of the game. In the same way, literary argumentative essay writing, as in other forms of writing, there are certain rules or conventions that have developed over time. There are different stages in the development of the essay and each stage has its own compulsory and optional moves. If you understand these, you have a guideline you can follow when writing an essay with certain appropriate choices open to you.

APPENDIX E

MODEL 1

MACBETH - A TRAGEDY OF WASTE

The tragedy of *Macbeth* is a record of opportunities lost and potential happiness destroyed.

The play graphically illustrates the terrible force of ambition and lust for power. The depths of bestiality to which Macbeth sinks might seem absurd to twentieth-century readers of the play, were it not for the fact that what Shakespeare imagined became a reality in Hitler.

In the second scene of Act I, the Sergeant reporting on the battle speaks of Macbeth as "*brave*", and describes his heroic efforts on the battlefield. Duncan says, "*O valiant cousin! worthy gentleman!*" (Act I Scene II line 24). In the same scene Macbeth is granted the title of Thane of Cawdor. Act I, therefore, portrays Macbeth as a honourable man, fighting for his king, devoted to his country.

Act I Scene III develops the theme of Macbeth's loyalty and Duncan's gratitude, where Ross says that the reports issuing from the battlefield to the king "*... did bear thy praises in his kingdom's great defence*" (line 97). In the midst of the praise and honour being poured upon him, Macbeth (urged by the prophecies of the witches) allows his imagination to set foot upon the terrible path which will lead him ever more deeply into ghastly dishonour and murderous carnage. The tragedy of this first foray by Macbeth into areas of thought and desire best left untouched is that he perversely allows himself to contemplate the horrible temptation to murder Duncan:

*"... Why do I yield to that suggestion
Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair,
And make my seated heart knock at my ribs
Against the use of nature? Present fears
Are less than horrible imaginings.
My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,
Shakes so my single state of man,
That function is smother'd in surmise,
And nothing is but what is not."
(Act I Scene III lines 133-141.)*

In this passage lies the starting point of the destruction and carnage that follow. Here the seed-thought has been sown, which will later flourish as terrible actions. And the tragedy of it is that Macbeth is freely allowing himself to think about the murder of Duncan, at the very moment when the present is filled with praise and honour, and the future glows with the possibility of great achievements and lasting fame. At this point in the play, Macbeth stands at the crossroads of choice, and willingly chooses evil. Instead of forcing himself to abandon the murderous temptation that has entered his mind, Macbeth recognizes that he may have to force fate, by saying that he hopes there will not be cause for him to act. But ultimately, by the very fact that he has entertained the idea of killing Duncan, he has set the course for his future actions. His aside, "*Come what come may, time and the hour runs through the roughest day.*" (Act I Scene III lines 146-147), shows that he is prepared to act out his desire should circumstances allow or warrant it. The very fact that he lies when he says in his reply to Banquo, "*Give me your favour: my dull brain was wrought with things forgotten*" (lines 149-150), shows that he is already moving in the direction of his temptation. The lie indicates that the rot has begun - at the very moment when peace and honour are within his grasp.

The age-old reality of men is portrayed in Macbeth's temptation, namely, that both good and evil exist within all people, and the eternal struggle is to overcome the evil tendencies in human nature.

Macbeth has within his grasp great honour, but he throws it aside for the sake of an evil ambition. The dilemma portrayed by his inward struggle is an echo of the cry of St. Paul in his letter to the Romans, Chapter 7 verses 18 to 20: "*For though the will to do what is good is in me, the performance is not, with the result that instead of doing the good things I want to do, I carry out the sinful things I do not want.*"

Macbeth's original fascination with his evil intentions becomes more articulated, more fully entrenched, when he learns that Malcolm is to become the Prince of Cumberland and thus is placed next in succession to the throne. The idea which at first frightened him becomes a desire in these fateful lines:

*"The Prince of Cumberland! That is a step
On which I must fall down, or else o'er-leap,
For in my way it lies. Stars, hide your fires,
Let not light see my black and deep desires
The eye wink at the hand; yet let that be
Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see."
(Act I Scene IV lines 49-54)*

This speech clearly portrays the tragic waste of a great mind, a noble person, a dutiful prince. The fact that it is freely done, that he wilfully decides to follow his thoughts, adds a sense of shamefulness, hopelessness and a terrible waste that permeates the play and becomes more pronounced as the tragedy unfolds. Macbeth has changed, and the honourable man praised by all for his courage and duty, and granted honours by the king, has now become, by his own choice, a man of "*black and deep desires*", a man who wishes to cloak himself in darkness, who has allowed darkness to enter his soul.

Act I Scene IV shows that the tide of darkness released by Macbeth has spread, and has filled Lady Macbeth with a determination to assist her husband in his evil intentions. She wilfully decides to fall in with her husband's desires;

*"Hie thee hither,
That I may pour my spirits in thine ear,
And chastise with the valour of my tongue
All that impedes thee from the golden round,
Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem
To have thee crown'd withall."
(Act I Scene V lines 23-28)*

These words show that she has decided to urge Macbeth forward in his desire. This passage indicates that she loves her husband; however, this love is now to be wasted, even perverted, by being used to urge Macbeth to murder Duncan: The evil released by Macbeth is spreading rapidly. Lady Macbeth identifies herself with the night Macbeth has entered, with this final cry of her frightening soliloquy.

*"Come, thick night
And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,
Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark
To cry, "Hold, hold!"
(lines 48-52)*

The die is cast - two people, poised on the brink of success, fling themselves in the black chasms of murder and destruction.

Act 1 Scene VII portrays Macbeth soliloquizing on the planned murder. The evil has struck deep roots, so that Macbeth admits to himself that it is simply ambition which drives him onward.

However, for a brief moment, Macbeth becomes painfully aware of the happiness he is so easily throwing aside, and wavers:

*"We will proceed no further in this business
He hath honoured me of late; and I have bought
Golden opinions from all sorts of people,
Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,
Not cast aside so soon."
(Act I Scene VII lines 31-35)*

But Lady Macbeth is determined to continue, and berates her husband. The murder of the king is in itself an act of terrible carnage and wanton destruction, giving rise to more murder and national unrest through civil war.

The progress of the tragedy after the murder of Duncan is a catalogue of Macbeth's descent into bestiality and merciless tyranny.

The war in which Duncan had achieved victory at the beginning of the play seemed to ensure a peaceful, prosperous future for Scotland. His horrible death shattered that, and Macduff articulates the resultant disorder in the these lines:

*"Let us rather
Hold fast the mortal sword; and like good men
Bestride our down-fallen birthdom. Each new morn,
New widows howl, new orphans cry, new sorrows
Strike heaven on the face, that it resounds
As if it felt with Scotland, and yelled out
Like syllable of dolour."
(Act IV Scene III lines 3-8)*

In the last Act of the tragedy, Macbeth, a trail of waste and destruction behind him, is painfully, sadly aware, of the happiness and honour that he has irrevocably forfeited for ambition:

*"I have lived long enough; my way of life
Is fallen into the sere, the yellow leaf;
And that which should accompany old age,
As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,
I must not look to have; but, in their stead,
Curses, not loud, but deep, mouth-honour, breath,
Which the poor heart would fain deny, and dare not.
(Act V Scene III lines 22-28)*

On hearing of the death of his wife, Macbeth realizes that his "*vaulting ambition*" has finally destroyed the person who meant so much to him, the one person who understood him and loved him.

He realizes that he is isolated, abandoned, that all he has striven for has crumbled beneath his feet. He finally admits to himself that his life has become a futile gesture of wasted talents and opportunities, that his devotion to his wife was a forlorn rag of the love and joy he could have experienced had he remained faithful to his king.

He finally understands that his desires have transformed his life into a lifeless, infinite, ravaged desert waste:

*"Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow.
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time,
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more. It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing."
(Act V Scene V lines 10-28)*

The transformation is complete from a man showered with praise and faced with glory, to a shattered, miserable tyrant. From a proud husband, to a morose, despairing widower. From an honourable, much loved man, to a bestial murderer. And in the process, a noble king has been cruelly murdered, innocent lives have been taken, national peace has been shattered, civil war has ravaged the land. Macbeth has destroyed his life, bathed himself in innocent blood and blindly smashed a promising career, for the sake of one dark, deadly temptation. Macbeth is indeed a tragedy of waste.

E.C. Bucceri

APPENDIX F

MODEL 2

QUESTION

"Macbeth would have remained a good and loyal subject were it not for the influence of the witches and Lady Macbeth".

Outline the contribution the witches make towards Macbeth's murder of Duncan and the contribution Lady Macbeth makes. Do you agree with this statement?

ANSWER

Firstly, it must be established whether or not Macbeth was free from any ambition to become king before he met the witches. There is evidence to suggest that he was not entirely innocent of that ambition. Certainly his actions on the battlefield in defence of Duncan's throne would seem to suggest that he is the most loyal of subjects; but if there is one thing that the play illustrates, it is that what seems to be so is by no means always to be trusted.

For example, Banquo asks him, "Good Sir, why do you start, and seem to fear/Things that do sound so fair?" after the witches have prophesied that he will be king. It is possible that Macbeth already had secret and treacherous thoughts of becoming king.

We are also told by Lady Macbeth that Macbeth "wouldst be great" and is "not without ambition". Let us assume, then, that Macbeth did harbour secret ambitions to become king. However, that does not necessarily mean that, if left to himself, he would have gone to the extreme of murdering Duncan in order to fulfil that ambition. We may rather say that when he first encountered the witches, he had elements of both good and evil, both "fair" and "foul", in him and that it was the evil in him which both the witches and Lady Macbeth exploited - the witches, because it is their nature and their function to do so in the eternal conflict between good and evil; Lady Macbeth because she is impatient "To catch the nearest way" to the throne.

In any event, whether or not Macbeth already possessed a latent capacity for evil, the encounter with the witches certainly excites hope and expectancy within him with their "All hail, Macbeth! that shall be King hereafter". As soon as he is informed that he has been granted the additional rank of Thane of Cawdor, which would seem to establish the truth of the witches' prophesy, he disregards Banquo's warning that the spirits of evil cannot be fully trusted and says that their words are "happy prologues to the swelling act/of the imperial theme" (i.e. the possibility of becoming King). However, this soaring hope is checked by the realization that in order to become King he will have to commit murder. The thought fills him with horror and fear - a state of being which is alien and strange, for it is not in his nature to be afraid. He is not naturally attracted by evil. It so confuses him that he knows that the horrifying image of murdering Duncan would prevent him from committing the act itself. Somewhat weakly, he expresses the hope that chance will crown him King without his having to do anything about it himself. However, as we shall see, Lady Macbeth knows otherwise and she will take it upon herself to rid Macbeth of his fear and moral scruples.

The contributions of the witches, therefore, cannot be considered separately from the contribution of Lady Macbeth. They "enkindle" in him, as Banquo puts it, the ambition to become king. But by doing so, they expose him to a world of moral horror, revealed through the power of his imagination, of such intensity that this once dauntless man of action is paralysed with fear which is against his nature. Consequently, Lady Macbeth's task is twofold: firstly, she has to further and entrench the work done by the witches by keeping Macbeth's ambition alive; and, secondly, she

has to undo their effect on Macbeth in the sense that she has to restore his courage and allay his moral scruples. This she does by convincing him that only by killing Duncan will he prove himself to be a man of courage: If he does not, she argues, he would "live a coward in his own esteem" - which, as Lady Macbeth well knows, would be intolerable for him. Thus are her tactics extraordinarily astute. But the tragedy is, of course, that he would really have been "so much more the man" and obeyed his conscience and his true nature by not murdering Duncan.

FROM: Guidelines

APPENDIX G

EVALUATION OF THE LITERARY ESSAY

A. INTERPRETATION OF THE QUESTION

1. Has the writer used the quotation offered in the question as the point of departure?
2. Is there a central topic (thesis) presented in this essay?
3. Have all parts of the question been answered?

B. INTRODUCTION

4. What does the introduction pre-reveal to the reader.
Does it reveal the writer's argument (**THESIS STATEMENT**) and the organization which the argument will follow?

C. DEVELOPMENT OF ARGUMENT STAGE

5. Identify the **topic sentence** of each paragraph.
6. Has each claim/point been supported by evidence from the text?
7. Has each paragraph been concluded by reference to the topic?

D. THE CONCLUSION

- 8.1. Does it effectively restate the central idea (thesis) or summarize the main points?
- 8.2. Does it present insightful conclusions and/or implications (if applicable to the topic)?
- 8.3. Does it introduce new information not previously discussed?

E. COHERENCE

9. Have the topic ideas been arranged logically throughout the essay?
10. How did the author link sentences within the paragraphs?
11. How did the author link the paragraphs?
12. Is the argument pursued relentlessly or are there gaps and vacancies in its consistency? Is the essay marred by digression or is the argument lost in vague generalisations (i.e. No careful analysis of the text).

F. REFERENCES TO THE TEXT

13. Are references to the text, to critical views etc. used judiciously to advance the argument and to enrich a point of view or are they used to impress the reader?

G. THE WRITER

14. Does the response suggest a deep personal conviction or a rehash of other critical views and enforced perspectives obtained from commercially produced notes?

H. THE READER

15. How do you think the ideas, and the way they are presented in the essay, would affect the proposed reader of the essay? Do any changes need to be made on this basis?

APPENDIX H

SCORING GUIDE FOR THE LITERARY ESSAY

The criteria used in the following scheme have been extracted from Toulmin's (1958) criteria for argumentation (Knudson, 1992, p. 177), Knudson's Guide for holistic scoring for persuasive writing (p. 176), and the Marking Memorandum for the Literary essay (Senior Certificate Examination, House of Delegates).

CATEGORY A : EXCELLENT

Truly outstanding.

A central topic or thesis presented. All parts of question answered. Essay that addresses the topic, states and elaborates arguments, and exhibits logical thought.

Responses are well organized and fluent. The organization is excellent. Clear, complete generalisations related to the thesis are stated. Cogency of argument and good command of language. Few mechanical errors.

The writer gives supporting data that are complete, accurate, and related to the thesis. The data is presented in such a way that it is clear how they support the claim. References to text and quotations are analysed and used judiciously to advance the argument.

Unusual maturity of thought. Deep personal conviction. Overall persuasive impact on reader.

CATEGORY B : GOOD

A fluent, interesting essay with a well-presented reasoned argument.

Well organized, fluent, and functions as a unified piece of persuasion - has opening, states and develops a thesis and has a closing.

Careful selection of material. Shows insight into the text.

CATEGORY C : ABOVE AVERAGE

Good attempt at developing a persuasive argument. Better organized than the essay in the "D" category. Arguments are moderately well-developed.

Substantiates point of view. Relevant information selected and used to give a direct answer to the question.

CATEGORY D : AVERAGE

Displays no particular flair for the literary. Shows that the text has been read and understood.

Argument is moderately well developed.

Essay contains several reasons to convince the audience of a point of view but has no apparent organizational strategy. The reasons presented, however, are not contradictory. Makes an honest attempt to answer parts of the question.

Control of written language characterized by clarity of expression. Some faults in expression, but language competently handled in general.

CATEGORY E : BELOW AVERAGE

Shows that the text has been read.

Not much success in giving a clear, well-argued, direct answer to the question. Some development of logical reasoning.

Language usage is fair but more fluent than essay in "F" category. Limited control of written language. Errors in usage may occur; sentence structure may be simplistic.

CATEGORY F : WEAK

Poor command of language.

Makes little or no attempt to answer the question. General and vague. Offers weak, inaccurate, or incomplete data.

No idea of the structure of an essay.

Does not remain on the topic.

APPENDIX I

COMMON WEAKNESSES

1. Macbeth at the outset has encouragement to commit crime and that is by the witches.
2. To conclude, I would like to emphasize the fact that...
3. Introduction: The witches, as well as, Lady Macbeth lead Macbeth to eventually murdering Duncan but as the play progresses, we see that Lady Macbeth has more influence on Macbeth's decision to murder the king.
4. Argumentative stage: But Macbeth realises that unless he murdered his relative and elder, he could not become king. He becomes filled with wicked thoughts but then discards these, and realises that committing murder wasn't the best solution. In any event, Macbeth is fascinated by the horror and enhancement, proposed by the witches, but Lady Macbeth's influence is more superior.
5. Conclusion: The above evidence should substantiate my belief that Lady Macbeth had more influence and control over Macbeth, in comparison to the witches who just prophesied. Lady Macbeth knew her husband very well and therefore worked on his weakness just so that he could become king and she the loyal wife who do anything, absolutely anything for her husband, would become queen.

N.B. :

1. For good introductions see Mary, Shanti and Raji.
2. For chronological sequence see Raji's essay.

APPENDIX J

STUDENT A: FIRST DRAFT

Macbeth has against his judgement plunged into a career of destruction. He does so by embracing himself with disorder and identifying himself with evil represented by the 'weird sisters' who influence him in his crimes. As a husband he allows his wife to over-rule him for an evil purpose. It's due to these two forces the latter being more influential that leads to his damnation.

Macbeth threw his lot to the witches and it's this that gives them allowance to add wood to fire and cause Macbeth's ambition to flare up. 'All Hail Macbeth! Hail thee Thane of Cawdor'. These words are stamped in his mind and from this moment begins his downfall. They use the word 'hail' - saluting him - 'Stay you imperfect speakers, tell me more'. This illustrates that Macbeth has engrossed with their prophecy. The word 'stay' shows us that he has become trapped in their web of evil because he insists they tell him more. We realise he is full of excitement and his intellectual forces are stimulated by their prenatal address. This indicates that they merely planted the seed and gave his ambition a boost but it's Lady Macbeth who really influences him in his crimes.

Macbeth is made 'Thane of Cawdor' we immediately see he is thrilled at the quick fulfillment of at least one of the prophecies, 'the greatest is behind' - these words illustrate that his hope to become king now seems to be a clear possibility since they prophesied him to be Thane first then king hence the word 'greatest'. The witches mentioned earlier that Banquo's sons shall be kings 'thou shalt get kings'. And when Macbeth has usurped the crown Banquo stands as a great threat. 'Our fears of Banquo stick deep'. Due to the witches prophecy he feels insecure and turns to unlawful deeds 'fears' and 'stick deep' show us that he is really afraid of losing 'his' crown. the words 'stick deep' - could also imply Macbeth's determination to murder Banquo sticking the knife deep into him. Had it not been for the witches prophecies his ambition would not have become active but, had it not been for Lady Macbeth he wouldn't have turned to these actions: the mere incarnation of evil.

The witches speak in equivocations. It's this point that Macbeth overlooks. What appears to be the truth is often in reality just the opposite. 'Macbeth shall never be vanquished until great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane shall come against him.' This last meeting with them really put him on the griddle because now he becomes insanely confident that these forces will never boomerang. The words 'never be vanquished' give him all hope that he is 'invincible' and therefore lull him into a false sense of security. This prophecy assists in his damnation but it's Lady Macbeth to a large extent leads him to the crime. The witches played an important role in enkindling his ambition and his moves towards crime but Lady Macbeth was the greater of influences. It's she who motivates Macbeth into killing Duncan. 'We shall proceed no further in this business' As we see although after the witches prophecies he decides not to kill Duncan to obtain his ends. But she's determined to goad him to quiet realization of his kingship. So we see that had a greater influence in Macbeth's crimes.

Lady Macbeth recognises the cloudiness in her husband's motivation when she concedes only grudgingly that he is 'not without ambition'. She fully understands that her husband shall have scruples about his actions. 'Too full the milk of human kindness'. From her words we learn that there is a gentle side to his character and he would achieve his goal 'holily'. She knows how to go about convincing her husband. She does so by taunting him with not being a man "when you durst do it, then you were a man' saying a man would seize a crown.

In the beginning Macbeth has a strong grasp of moral order but this gradually disintegrates with once again the help of Lady Macbeth. She compares his manhood with dashing a baby's brains out. 'Plucked my nipple from its boneless gums and dashed the brains out'. In this she uses a calculated tactic to influence him. It's unmanly not to perform one's promises good or bad. Macbeth understands her entirely when he cries 'Bring forth men children only'. Lady Macbeth here contrasts her womanhood to his manhood to embarrass him by throwing doubt on his manhood which eventually leads to crime viz. Duncan's murder.

Lady Macbeth's determination to see her husband become king is seen in her plan. 'Your hand, your tongue. look like the innocent flower But be the serpent under't. This reveals that Lady Macbeth is prepared to impose her will on Macbeth whose fears might ruin their enterprises. Lady Macbeth masterminds the plan and lures Macbeth into it - causing him to fall into the ambitious trap and murder Duncan. We once again see her great influence assists in him being damned.

Macbeth was lulled by Lady Macbeth and the witches to commit a terrible crime. Macbeth's fault is his ambition, the witches see this and assist the process. Lady Macbeth uses her iron will and challenges his manhood resulting in him committing terrible deeds. Macbeth was a doomed man even before he committed the crime. What he did not know was that he will commit countless terrible crimes and suffer unendurably.

STUDENT A: FINAL ESSAY

Macbeth has against his judgement plunged into a career of destruction. He does so by embracing himself with disorder and identifying himself with evil represented by the 'weird sisters' who influence him in his crimes. As a husband he allows his wife to over-rule him for an evil purpose. It's due to these two forces, the latter being more influential that leads to his damnation.

Macbeth threw his lot in with the witches. This gave them the opportunity to enkindle the ambition in Macbeth causing it to flare up, leading him to commit crimes. 'All hail Macbeth! Hail the Thane of Cawdor'. These words become stamped in his brain and from this moment onwards begins his downfall. The word 'hail' is used to salute someone of high regard. Therefore this gives him a sense of authority and he becomes caught up. 'Stay you imperfect speakers, tell me more'. These words illustrate that Macbeth has become engrossed in their prophecies. Furthermore the word 'stay' shows us that he's trapped in their web and wants to know more. He does not ask them but 'tells' them to do so. This indicates that they merely planted the seed and gave his ambition a boost. But it will be illustrated that Lady Macbeth gave this seed room for germination.

We begin to realise that Macbeth is full of excitement and his intellectual forces are stimulated by their prenatal address. from now on he's taken for a ride by both the witches and Lady Macbeth. The latter making it 'bumpy'. When Macbeth is made the Thane of Cawdor we immediately see he is thrilled at the quick fulfillment of at least one of the prophecies. 'The greatest is behind.' These words illustrate that his hope to become king now seems to be a clear possibility since they predicted his being the Thane first then king hence the word 'greatest'. However the witches mentioned earlier that Banquo's sons shall be kings, 'Thou shalt get Kings'. Therefore when Macbeth usurps the crown Banquo stands as a great threat. 'Our fears of Banquo stick deep.' Due to the witches prophecy he feels insecure and turns to an unlawful deed. The words 'fears' and 'stick deep' explains that he is afraid of losing 'his' crown. 'Stick deep', could also imply his determination to murder Banquo, by sticking the knife into him. Had it not been for the witches prophecies his ambition would not have become active, but, were it not for Lady Macbeth he wouldn't have turned to these crimes: the both being the mere incarnation of evil.

The witches speak in equivocations and by doing so expose him to a world of moral horror, revealed through their power of such intensity that leads him to believe he's invincible but this 'dauntless' man becomes a 'terror struck' figure who turns to crime.

The equivocatory language used by the witches is overlooked by Macbeth. What appears to be the truth is often in reality just the opposite. 'Macbeth shall never be vanquished until Great Birnham Wood to high Dunsinane hill shall come against him.' The words 'never be vanquished', give him hope that he's 'invincible' and therefore lull him into false hope and a false sense of security leaving him to commit unlawful crimes. Therefore his last meeting with them really put him on the griddle because he now becomes insanely confident that these forces will never boomerang. So we see

this prophecy also assists in him turning to crime, finally leading to his death. However Lady Macbeth spurs him on to a greater extent.

As we see Shakespeare reveals that the contribution of the witches can't be considered separately from Lady Macbeth. However she entrenches the work by them being a greater influence to his terrible actions.

We now shall see that Lady Macbeth the 'loving' wife is the greater of the influences. It's she who motivates Macbeth into killing Duncan. 'We shall proceed no further in this business' - 'no further', shows us that even after the witches prophecies he decides not to kill Duncan to obtain his ends. But she's determined to goad him to quick realisation of kingship. This proves that she has a greater influence in Macbeth's crimes.

Lady Macbeth recognises the 'cloudiness' in her husband's motivation but 'she' turns it to 'cloudlessness'. She does so by conceding only grudgingly that he's 'not without ambition', hereby revealing she will take ample opportunity of his ambition and ensure he does become king. she fully understands that her husband shall have scruples about his actions, 'Too full the milk of human kindness'. From these words 'human kindness' we learn that there's a gentle side to his character. She realises this and knows how to go about convincing him. She does so by taunting him with not being a man. 'When you durst do it, then you were a man', saying a 'man' would seize a crown, by appealing to his manhood. Therefore she lures him to killing Duncan and in doing so she becomes the greater influence.

At the beginning Macbeth has a strong grasp of moral order but this gradually disintegrates with Lady Macbeth's help. She once again compares him with herself by showing his cowardice. If she could wickedly murder a child: 'plucked my nipple from it's boneless gums and dashed the brains 'out', then he should be able to kill Duncan. The word 'dashed' shows us her cruelty and harshness in her determination to get her husband 'his' crown. Therefore this shows us her calculated tactics to influence him. Lady Macbeth here contrasts her womanhood to his manhood, thus embarrassing him. This eventually leads to his killing Duncan, obviously revealing her great influence is greater than that of witches.

Lady Macbeth's determination to see Macbeth become king is seen in her plan. 'Look like the' innocent flower, But be the serpent under't. She is prepared to impose her will on him, which she eventually does. The word 'serpent', reveals the stinging and harsh nature of the deed that's to come. Lady Macbeth masterminds the plan and lures him deeper into it, finally murdering Duncan by seeming 'innocent'. Therefore he is also lulled by Lady Macbeth. Lady Macbeth decides that Duncan shall be murdered and therefore influences Macbeth more than the witches do.

Finally the witches enkindle in Macbeth the evil ambition while Lady Macbeth keeps his ambition alive. She resolves to rid him of any moral compunction and in doing so she spurs him on more than the witches do, using her ruthlessness to play on his flaws.

APPENDIX K

STUDENT B: FIRST DRAFT

Macbeth at the outset has encouragement to commit crime and this is by the witches when he meets them on the hearth and they reply "all hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter." But what influences to a greater extent is Lady Macbeth who consistently plays on his conscience. He indeed succumbs to crime mainly because of Lady Macbeth.

The witches have the ability to foresee the future however they cannot change what is going to happen. They merely plant the seeds of evil into Macbeth by prophesying that he will be king. Macbeth showed signs of urgency to speed up the process in becoming king. He uses their prophesy as a foundation to kill Duncan, the present king.

The witches also reassure Macbeth that he will only be killed by a man born of unnatural birth and if Birnam wood moves to Dunsinane. With these two equivocations he is very content that even if he does commit crime he will have nothing to fear. This influences him more to do the crime.

However, Lady Macbeth must be considered the key to the killing of Duncan. It is through her words of unfeminism and great patience that causes Macbeth to commit crime. She plays on his conscience and tempts him on numerous occasions to kill Duncan. Due to Lady Macbeth, Macbeth feels the power of evil so strongly that he is able to project it into the world around him. His murderous feelings are personified as "withered murder" who accompanied by the wolf moves like a ghost to his victim.

Lady Macbeth goes to the extent of influencing Macbeth to appear to be what really is not "Your hand, your tongue, look like the innocent flower but be the serpent underneath." This reveals signs of deceit and evil. She further explains how she would be removed of her feminine nature in order to kill Duncan.

She intends this by calling upon the spirits to unsex her. She would become so merciless that she would "Have plucked my nipple from his boneless gums and dashed the brains out, had I so sworn as you have done to this." With this she shows him the extent to which she will go to kill Duncan. Also shows us how determined she is about killing Duncan.

Furthermore she uses emotional tact on him "So green and pale" is reference to him being a coward.

STUDENT B: FINAL ESSAY

Macbeth at the outset was encouraged by the witches to commit crime. Their first words to him are "all hail Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter" implying that he will indeed be king actually cultivates the evil within him. However Lady Macbeth is the dominating character that influences him to a greater extent and this is achieved by constantly playing on Macbeth's manhood. He indeed succumbs to crime, mainly because of Lady Macbeth's influence.

The witches play their role in encouraging Macbeth to commit crime by merely planting the seeds of evil and allowing it to germinate. They achieve this by prophesying that he will be king. Macbeth believes in the witches and shows signs of urgency to speed up the process of becoming king. His hastiness to become king together with his ambition and the encouragement of the witches influences him to commit the crime.

Furthermore the equivocations of the witches is another attempt to encourage Macbeth to commit crime. The first equivocation stating that "The power of man; for none born of woman shall harm

Macbeth." Since Macbeth realises that no man can be born from an unnatural birth he has no fear of being convicted of his crimes. The second equivocation being "Great Birnham wood to high Dunsinane hill shall come against him" once again Macbeth realizes this is impossible and that no forest will ever move this supports his intention to commit crime. These equivocations support Macbeth in his attempts to commit crime.

Since Lady Macbeth is seen as the superior character who influences Macbeth to commit crime she must possess greater potent character traits than the weird sisters. She persuades Macbeth to appear to be good and charming but really is not. She accomplishes this by replying to him, "Your hand, your tongue, look like the innocent flower but be the serpent underneath he indeed listens to her and puts on a facade when king Duncan arrives by appearing to be "the innocent flower" by being a good host and also being concerned about the Kings safety, but he really is not concerned about the king since "he is the serpent" as he has intentions of killing Duncan. It is noticed that in her persuasion for him to be deceitful in appearing to be what he isn't she succeeds to a great extent than the witches to influence him to commit crime.

Lady Macbeth taunts both Macbeth's emotions and manhood since she realizes Macbeth's fickle character and knows that with her strong persuasion he will indeed eventually succumb to her suggestions to commit crime. She achieves this by calling him a coward "and wakes it now, to look so green and pale." She persuades him to commit crime not by talking of Duncan at all, but rather about themselves, their hope and love and most importantly his fear of personally killing Duncan. She tells him he would live a coward's life if he could not bring himself to kill Duncan. Lady Macbeth is aware that by goading Macbeth she will be rewarded by influencing him to commit crime which is more than what the witches could achieve.

In spite of the witches prophecies Lady Macbeth continues to be the controlling factor that influences Macbeth in committing crime. She shows Macbeth how merciless he must be in order to commit crime. She achieves this by telling how merciless she would be had she promised to commit crime as he has done in saying "How tender tis to love the babe that milks me. I would, while it was smiling in my face, Have plucked my nipple from his boneless gums, and dashed the brains out had I sworn as you have to this." She would be merciless and remove a harmless new born from her nipples and furthermore have the baby brutally killed. She will show no signs of compassion by replying "dashed the brains out". In her intended actions to become totally "cold" and merciless she provokes Macbeth to be just as merciless and in being so she will most certainly commit crime just as she has intended to. There is no evidence of the witches being so influential over Macbeth and it can thus be said that Lady Macbeth is indeed the greater influence.

Lady Macbeth accepts total responsibility for planning Macbeth's intended crimes when she says "and leave all the rest to me." She is totally in command and knows that since she is the dominating character Macbeth will abide by her commands. She pretends herself as a powerful character when she decides the actions of the intended crime by mentioning "the rest" in the sense of total responsibility. With her ambitious mind she dominates the witches and therefore gains influence over Macbeth.

It is evident enough that Macbeth was influenced mainly by Lady Macbeth rather than the witches. The supernatural forces of the witches could not overcome the greater potency of Macbeth and yet because of her influence he succumbs to crime. He eventually commits so much of crime that he lead himself to his own destruction and this stems from Lady Macbeth's dominant character.

APPENDIX L

STUDENT C: FIRST DRAFT

Macbeth could be evil but in the play we see the weird sisters and Lady Macbeth have an influence on him to commit crime.

Macbeth is an ambitious person. He is a loyal soldier to his king and has no intention to kill his king. His character changes when he meets the witches.

When we meet the witches Macbeth is coming from the war. They greet him as Thane of Cawdor. "All hail Macbeth shalt be king thereafter. Macbeth knows he is thane of Glamis, but he is shock when they call him than of Cawdor. He know he has a chance at the throne but unlikely due to Duncans sons. If he dies they will sit on the throne.

Macbeth feels strength of desire to kingship. Macbeth is pressed with the question of doing evil over good. He takes evil. Macbeth knew that Duncan will at his house and it was the only chance of eliminating him.

Lady Macbeth has no fear of killing Duncan so that she sit next to the throne.

Lady Macbeth will do anything for her husband to become king. She know he hasn't got the courage to kill Duncan but she convince him to do the deed.

In the play we see who had the greatest influence on Macbeth to do evil.

STUDENT C: FINAL ESSAY

In the play we see that the weird sisters and Lady Macbeth have an influence on Macbeth. But Lady Macbeth has a greater influence on him. His mind is corrupted by Lady Macbeth with the deed to do evil.

After the witches hail him "Thane of Cordor" and then "King thereafter" we see Macbeth is shocked. The weird sisters prophecy that he will be thane of Cordor. They boost his ambition by telling him he is Thane of Cordor. They meet Macbeth and realise their role will corrupt him to do evil.

When we meet Lady Macbeth, she is the dorminating character in the marriage. "Leave all the rest to me". Macbeth doesn't want to kill Duncan but Lady Macbeth tells him to leave all the "rest" to her. She will do anything to eliminate Duncan.

Macbeth was tormented by doubts about the means of forfulling his ambition to be king. Lady Macbeth would seem to free him from any such doubts. She regards them as weakness and she wants to forfill her goals. "Hie thee hither that I may pour out of my spirit in thine ear". She says after voicing her fears about Macbeth's reservations. Those spirits which she intended installed in Macbeth are also to say the least somewhat chilling in their ruthless and one feels, would have a close and natural afinity with those spirit of evil and cruelty which she evokes to rid her of any womanly feelings or remorse.

But we have an impression that were it not for Lady Macbeth, Macbeth would have been able to contain his ambition. Lady Macbeth knows Macbeth doesn't have the degree of evil. Lady Macbeth will seduce him to do evil. "Present fear are less than horrible imagine my thought of murder is yet to be fantastical shaken so my state of man, then function is smothered in sumised and nothing is but what is not.

Lady Macbeth, however succeeds in persuading him that only by killing Duncan that he will be a man.

Through Lady Macbeth, Macbeth kills Duncan and then he starts killing innocent people to remain King of Scotland.

APPENDIX M

THE LITERARY ESSAY - FINAL QUESTIONNAIRE

You have now been through the process of writing the Argumentative Literary Essay. Please answer each of the following questions as frankly as you can. Do not write your name on this form.

1. What do you feel about writing the Literary Essay as a result of the process you have experienced ?

2. What, do you feel, were the most important things you learned about Literary Essay writing from this process ?

3. Briefly describe the problems you encountered while going through the process of writing the essay. (i.e. with regard to understanding the concepts, the time available for studying the essay, etc.)

4. Explain the procedure you would follow in writing the literary essay :
 - a. In an examination:

 - b. As an assignment:

5. Did you find the methods used by the teacher to teach the essay effective? Please explain your answer.

6. Do you think that you have benefitted in any way from the use of the Models in the programme? Please explain.

7. Do you feel that it is necessary to rewrite an essay after it has been corrected by you or someone else? Please explain.

8. Did you find the procedures used in Corrective and Remedial Work meaningful? Explain your answer.

9. Explain whether you found the comments, that were made with reference to your essay, informative and useful. Please explain.

10. Did you find Peer Evaluation of your essay useful? Explain.

11. Please explain how you would go about evaluating an essay written by one of your colleagues.

12. Did you find the notes, presented during the process, useful? Kindly explain your answer.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION

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