AUTHOR:

Dr Nomalungelo Ngubane[1] (iD)

AFFILIATION:

[1]Nelson Mandela University, South Africa

THE USE OF THE PROCESS APPROACH IN SOUTH AFRICAN ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS: A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

ABSTRACT

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement suggests that enhanced cognitive and metacognitive writing skills are achieved when the process approach is used to teach writing (DoE, 2012). This paper presents findings on the process approach instruction used in selected South African English first additional language writing classrooms. It examines how teachers used the process approach to teach writing in selected further education and training (FET) phase writing classrooms in the Pinetown district in KwaZulu-Natal South Africa. Underpinned by socio-cultural learning theory, the study observed 15 writing lessons using a video camera. Classroom discourse analysis was used to analyse data. The findings reveal teachers' knowledge of the process approach curriculum they are expected to implement. Time constraints in the FET phase writing curriculum hinder teachers' in-depth facilitation of the stages of the process approach to writing. Traditional teaching strategies were prevalent in the process approach writing classrooms. I argue for a socio-cultural scaffolding model of writing that embraces activity-based writing strategies when dealing with writing development in the FET phase since this moves beyond formal accuracy and discrete aspects of language and situates writing within meaningful contexts and authentic purposes and, thus, prepares learners for post-school writing practices.

1. INTRODUCTION

Writing remains one of the most critical academic skills for learners to acquire. Effective writing may help learners express their ideas and thoughts eloquently and proficiently and, thus, succeed in learning (Akinyenye, 2013; Dornbrack & Atwood, 2019; Hyland, 2019). Research on writing shows that writing skill is one of the best predictors of whether learners will succeed within increasingly demanding learning environments (Klimova, 2013; Silva & Matsuda,

2012). Demanding academic environments require learners to move beyond making ideas explicit and arrange these ideas into coherent meaningful paragraphs by employing strategies such as editing (Dornbrack & Dixon, 2014). According to Klimova,

> effective writing entails that learners employ metacognitive skills such as setting goals for their writing, planning carefully for their writing, thinking over the appropriate layout and logical structure and then revising their texts (2013: 147).

This makes writing a complex skill. However, researchers have observed that many South African English first additional language (EFAL) learners struggle to express their thoughts and ideas in a clear and eloquent manner that will captivate the reader (Akinyenye & Pluddemann, 2016; Mpiti, 2016). Mpiti (2016) argues that EFAL learners often produce texts that indicate lack of thought processing such as brainstorming of ideas and planning for writing whereas effective writing involves multifaceted strategies that engage thinking processes and careful selection of vocabulary, grammar, layout, organisation and production of the intended message for a suitable audience (Pineteh, 2013). Even though a number of factors may contribute to EFAL learners' poor writing skills, these may be exacerbated by inadequate teaching of writing (Allen, 2015; Julius, 2014), use of inappropriate writing approaches (Pineteh, 2014), limited writing practice and writing in a second language in which learners are not competent and confident (Akinyenye & Pluddemann, 2016).

Current research continues to indicate positive effects of process approach instruction that exposes learners to various writing processes such as planning, drafting, revising, editing and publishing (Hung & Zang, 2020; Hyland, 2019; Mohani, Mohtar & Kepo, 2020; Selvaraj & Aziz, 2019) as opposed to traditional product-approach instruction that sees writing as a once-off activity and emphasises grammatical correctness, coherence and accurate structure of learners' texts with little opportunities for writers' creativity, innovation or self-expression (Hyland, 2019). Allen (2015) observed little scaffolding of writing in many EFAL writing classrooms. She (2015) also noticed that many teachers did not understand process approach instruction that the Department of Education (DoE), through its official document, Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS, 2012) expected them to implement for the teaching of writing. It is against this backdrop that this study sought to investigate process approach instruction in which teachers are expected to systematically take learners through writing processes or stages of writing such as pre-writing or planning, drafting, revising and editing before their texts can be published. This approach to teaching writing is called process approach instruction (Badger & White, 2000; Selvaraj & Aziz, 2019). It requires teachers to provide learners with ample time to generate ideas before they engage with their writing tasks (Klimova, 2013). So far, there is paucity of research that has examined how teachers implement the process approach when teaching learners how to write. Most research conducted in South African EFAL classrooms focuses on the teaching of writing in general (Allen, 2015; DeLange, Dippenaar & Anker, 2018; Dornbrack & Dixon, 2014; Julius, 2013) which clouds the significance of how teachers effect process approach to writing as an important aspect of the writing curriculum (CAPS, 2012), and attempt to improve learners' writing skills. This paper, therefore, presents an analysis of the nature of process approach instruction among EFAL FET learners. First, the paper presents a literature review, in which I highlight the significance of the process approach used to teach learners in the FET phase. Then, I present the theoretical framework guiding this study. Lastly, I draw from writing lessons observed to show how teachers used process approach instruction to develop the writing

skills of learners. The study focused on teachers in selected EFAL FET writing classrooms in the Pinetown district, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

2. RELATED LITERATURE

Process writing approach involves several stages that proficient writers go through when they write (Badger & White, 2000; Hyland, 2019). These stages involve brainstorming or pre-writing, writing, revising, editing and publishing (Badger & White, 2000). In other words, in a process approach classroom, the focus is on teaching learners to think before they write. This helps them to set objectives for their writing, plan their writing carefully, consider the layout and logical structure of their texts and revise their texts before publishing them (Hyland, 2019). In process approach instruction teachers inform learners that they should go through the writing stages of deciding and choosing a topic for their writing, brainstorming, getting started, writing their draft, which requires ample time, getting feedback from the teacher, revising their texts while incorporating ideas from the teacher or peers and editing the final draft to remove linguistic errors until the text is ready for the reader (Klimova, 2013; Mohani, Mohtar & Kepol, 2020).

Currently, little is known about the writing pedagogy in South African classroom contexts, especially the pedagogy that seeks to address the use of process approach in second-language classrooms. According to Mpiti (2016), there is limited documented research on writing practices focusing on second-language teachers and learners in these contexts. The teaching of writing is often embedded in the teaching of second-language skills such as reading and writing in general (Pineteh, 2013). This clouds the importance of scaffolding of writing as a critical academic skill, especially among FET learners. Nevertheless, it is important that learners are well equipped and exposed to processes of writing to help them become effective writers and to help them cope with the writing demands across their high school curriculum (Keaster, 2014; Selvaraj & Aziz, 2019). Research shows that for learners to become better writers, they must practise the writing processes in the classroom (Ortmeier-Hooper, 2017). Scholars such as Mohani, Mohtar and Kepol (2020) also contend that learners who are given ample writing opportunities and constructive feedback to address their weaknesses eventually develop good writing skills. Therefore, teachers must give learners ample writing opportunities and time to improve their writing. It also means that teachers should attend to what learners write and provide feedback so that learners understand what needs to be improved in their texts before reaching the final stage (Dornbrack & Atwood, 2019).

Process approach instruction is highly favoured for the development of writing at secondary-school level because it produces independent writers (Dornbrack & Dixon, 2014; Keaster, 2014). "The process approach focuses on the learners' independent ability to produce coherent texts after going through writing activities in stages" (Tribble, 1996: 220). This suggests that once learners grasp the writing processes they learn to be in control of their writing while the teachers play the role of supporting the development of writing. Research in South Africa indicates that there is minimum scaffolding of writing in lower grades of schools and this is the main reason for poor writing skills in secondary schools (Allen, 2015). For example, in the Western Cape, Allen (2015) observed writing instruction in three second-language intermediate phase classrooms after noticing poor writing skills among intermediate phase learners. Her study made three important findings: firstly, there is a gap in teachers' knowledge of the CAPS writing curriculum and this has a negative impact on effective implementation. Secondly, writing instruction in the school drew more from product approaches to writing that

emphasised grammar rules more than textual meaning. Lastly, the study found that teachers were more concerned about the overloaded writing curriculum that compelled them to spend less time on the scaffolding of writing (Allen, 2015). Similarly, in the Eastern Cape, Julius (2013) observed the teaching and learning of writing in Grade 5 classrooms in two schools. The study found that the teaching of writing is also affected by lack of professional development support. Teachers were not provided with much support to enhance their writing instruction. After many years of teaching, teachers still use traditional approaches to teach writing. Furthermore, the study found that demands of learners' assessments marks by administrators pressured writing teachers to focus on teaching for assessment. As a result, writing instruction focused on ensuring that learners complete the written tasks and that marks are recorded on time, instead of engaging the learners in the processes of writing such as brainstorming, drafting, revising and so on, as the CAPS curriculum suggests (Julius, 2013).

There is little research in South Africa that has attempted to examine process approach instruction in the FET phase. Nevertheless, the above studies clearly indicate a need to spend time on the teaching of the writing process for learners to improve their writing. While CAPS advocates for the use of the process approach to teach writing, it is clear from the above studies that teachers need more training on how to implement the writing curriculum effectively.

3.　THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is framed by socio development learning theory (Vygotsky, 1978). Although much of the work on socio-cultural theory emanates from the ideas of the Russian philosopher, Lev Vygotsky (1986-1934), scholars (Barton & Hall, 2000; Wertsch, 1991; Zamel, 1992) have extended, elaborated and refined the theory over decades. The socio-cultural learning concept came about after Vygotsky noticed that individual's cognitive development can be traced not only to his social environment but specifically to his interactions with knowledgeable others within his social context. Interactions with others in the learning environment help learners develop new constructs of their world and of their culture. Relating writing to Vygotsky's socio-cultural perspective, scholars such as Barton and Hall (2000) and Zamel (1992) view writing as a social practice. Social practices refer to everyday practices and the way these are typically performed in society (Barton & Hall, 2000). For example, what learners write, how they write and why they write are largely defined by their social participation within a particular social society, a school. It is therefore within this social context that learners, through interaction with knowledgeable others, teachers and peers, develop skills of writing. Later, Wertsch (1991) noticed that interaction itself is not, however, actually developmental: it is the well-structured interactive activities that result in mental development and which set in motion the development processes that would have been impossible without learning. In other words, it is well-thought and organised learning activities that lead to learners' cognitive development and this connects learning to development (Zamel, 1992). In support of these notions, Vygotsky (1978) developed a concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD). The concept of the ZPD refers to the difference between what learners can do without help of adults or knowledgeable peers and what they cannot do. It is associated with "pedagogical approaches that explicitly provide support for the performance of tasks to be performed without assistance later" (Carstens, 2009: 69). This implies that in a writing classroom it is actually the teachers' careful selection and use of effective instructional approaches and teaching strategies that support and move learners progressively towards stronger cognition and comprehension of writing processes and, ultimately, to more independence in their learning process (Carstens,

2009). A socio-cultural theory was adopted for this study to understand the facilitation of writing processes in EFAL FET writing classrooms that could support learners' cognition of the stages of writing resulting in deeper understanding of the writing process and help them improve their writing skills.

4. THE STUDY

The study used a qualitative framework. Classroom observation was used to collect data.

4.1 Research design

The study used a qualitative multi-case study design. Baxter and Jack (2008) explain that multi-case studies allow researchers to analyse the data collected from different sites about a common phenomenon, which increases validity. Similarly, Baxter and Jack (2008) explain that multi-case studies afford researchers an opportunity to understand the similarities and differences between cases being studied, and they add to understanding of important influences. The use of multi-case design in this study provided me with a wider exploration of theoretical underpinnings and research questions across different situations under investigation. Although Baxter and Jack (2008) caution that multi-case studies can be time consuming and often expensive for researchers, the advantages of using multi-case design in this study outweighed the disadvantages.

4.2 Population and sampling

Five schools in Pinetown District, KwaZulu-Natal were selected to participate in this study. Out of 184 secondary schools in the district, the five schools were purposively selected based on their offering of EFAL, their close proximity to the researcher's work for convenience during the data-collection phase and their willingness to participate in the study. Only FET (grades 10, 11 and 12) learners and teachers were selected to participate.

4.3 Data collection

Classroom observations were used to collect data. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018) describe classroom observations as a systematic way of "looking" and noting people, events, behaviours, settings and so on. As a research tool, observation offered me an opportunity to gather "live" data from naturally occurring social situations, the EFAL FET writing classrooms. It enabled me to look directly at what was happening in the EFAL FET classroom in time, thus, collecting first-hand data (Cohen *et al.,* 2018). As a researcher, I assumed the role of a non-participant observer which meant that I was not involved in the classroom activities that were being observed (Cohen *et al.,* 2018). In total, 15 writing lessons were observed and recorded using a video camera. For the sake of this paper, five lessons, one from each school, will be presented. Each lesson lasted 60 minutes. All lessons were transcribed verbatim and analysed using classroom discourse analysis.

4.4 Classroom discourse analysis

Writing lessons were analysed using Sinclair and Coulthard's (1992) model of classroom discourse. Classroom discourse is structured into transactions or exchanges. Exchanges are in turn made up of moves. The moves are then made up of one or more acts. Sinclair and Coulthard (1992) also noted that a typical classroom exchange will consist of three moves: Initiation (I), Response (R) and Feedback/Follow-up (F). The initiation moves are made by

the teacher. This includes directives, elicitation, information, acknowledgement and so on. All these moves could be in the form of questions, comments or statements. The response move, on the other hand, is made by learners. It includes replying to the teacher's elicitation, directives and so on. Learners' responses could be verbal or non-verbal. Feedback/follow-up is made by the teacher. It involves accepting, evaluating or commenting on the learner's response (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1992). The IRF moves consist of turn-taking acts such as a cue where the teacher indicates that learners must raise their hands if they want to be nominated; bidding where the learners compete for the floor by raising their hands for the teacher's attention and nomination where the teacher nominates the learner to speak.

4.5 Analysis of writing lessons

This section presents data from classroom observations across the five schools. In total, 15 lessons were observed and recorded across the five schools that participated, however, due to the word limit of this paper, only five of the 15 lessons are analysed and presented below. Only lesson extracts that show how teachers taught the process approach in the five schools have been selected. To protect participants, pseudonyms of School A, School B, School C, School D and School E are used to represent the five schools. Lesson extract from School A is presented and analysed first.

Extract 1: Lesson 1, School A

TEACHER: Good. Now [*frame*], let us move on to the stages of writing. [*directive*] What is the first stage of writing? [*elicitation*]

LEARNERS: Free writing

TEACHER: Free writing and?

LEARNERS: Free writing and planning

TEACHER: Second stage?

LEARNERS: Drafting

TEACHER: Third stage?

LEARNERS: Revision

TEACHER: Fourth stage?

LEARNERS: Editing

TEACHER: Editing and the last one?

LEARNERS: Publishing

In the above extract, the teacher uses the frame "now" to indicate the move to the next stage of the lesson. The teacher uses a technique of elicitation to invite learner participation (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1992). The learners' responses are short, for example, "free writing", "drafting" and "revision". This implies that learners only spoke to respond to the teacher's questions. Only the teacher-initiated interaction through question-and-answer technique. Limited learner-learner interaction was observed, implying a teacher-centred process approach to instruction. All learners were seated in pairs facing the teacher in the front of the class. Nevertheless, focus of the lesson is on the stages of writing and the learners seemed to know these stages

as they named them when the teacher elicited them. For example, learners responded to the teacher's questions with "planning", "drafting", "revision", "editing" and "publishing". This could mean that learners have learnt the stages of writing prior to the lesson observed. Little writing practise by learners in this lesson was observed. Nevertheless, the CAPS curriculum suggests that teachers use the process approach to teach writing. The teacher in this lesson, therefore, seems to be following the curriculum.

Extract 2: School B, Lesson 2

TEACHER: And then free writing, what did we say we gonna do when we write the essay? Yes X?

LEARNER: You decide on the purpose of the text and audience you are writing to.

TEACHER: Yes you decide on the purpose of the text and audience. And then on the next stage what do you do?

LEARNER: Use the flow chart or listing ideas to brainstorm your ideas

TEACHER: Ok, let's use a flowchart to brainstorm your ideas. You don't use listing your ideas, you write a sign and then you write the ideas that come to your mind.

In this lesson extract from School B, the teacher used a technique of brainstorming the topic in class to teach writing. All the ideas were written on the board. Like in School A, the teacher invited learner participation through the question-and-answer method. Learners sometimes waited for the nomination to respond but most of the time they responded without a cue. This implies that learners were actively involved in the lesson. From observation, they also seemed to enjoy the lesson. Like in School A, this process approach lesson was centred around how much of the stages of the process approach learners could remember. The teachers seldom attempted to move the lesson from question and answer to writing activities by learners (Allen, 2015).

Lesson 3, School C

TEACHER: After the topic, what else must you think about?

LEARNER: Planning, Sir

TEACHER: So how do you do the planning for your essay?

LEARNER: You brainstorm the topic, Sir

TEACHER: Yes you can brainstorm the topic, generate ideas or do a mind map, a flow chart or float lines. Now, why is planning important when you doing a narrative essay? So when you are going to do an essay you should have a planning, a planning is going to serve as a guide as to how you going to go about presenting your story to us. It helps you with presenting to us these ideas in a coherent manner.

In the above lesson extract the teacher elicited the most important aspect learners should consider when writing their essays. The teacher stressed that the topic of the essay is the most important aspect of writing the essay as it shapes their thinking. This implies that the teacher is well informed about the writing process that he is using to teach writing in his class. The teacher then solicited the learners' understanding of the stages of writing through the question-and-answer method. The learners responded that planning is important and so is brainstorming. This shows that learners are well informed about the stages of writing as

suggested by the process approach. It also implies that School C follows the process approach to writing as recommended by the curriculum. In this lesson, the teacher led the brainstorming of the writing topic and modelled how learners are expected to plan for the writing. It could be said that to some extent, the lesson provided scaffolding of the writing process (Zamel, 1992).

Extract 4: Lesson 4, School D

TEACHER: What is the first step of writing an essay? Anyone who knows? Yes, over there?

LEARNER: We brainstorm the topic

TEACHER: No. I said the first step. You were not listening. Anyone?

LEARNER: We first choose a topic

TEACHER: Yes, we choose a topic for writing. What else?

LEARNER: We brainstorm the topic

TEACHER: Yes, we brainstorm the topic. What do we mean by brainstorming?

LEARNERS: We do the planning for the essay.

In the above lesson from School D, the teacher, through elicitations, invited learners' participation in the discussion of the stages of the writing process beginning with choosing the topic. The teacher emphasised that when brainstorming the topic, learners can use a spider diagram to generate ideas for the introduction, body and conclusion. This classroom discourse implies the use of the process approach to teach writing. Assuming the writer already has the topic, then brainstorming or planning becomes the first stage of the writing process followed by drafting, revising, editing and publishing (Badger & White, 2000). From learners' responses it is clear that they understand the stages of the process approach. For example, when the teacher asks what they mean by brainstorming, they responded "*We do the planning*" meaning that they understand that brainstorming involves planning for the writing (Badger & White, 2000). In this lesson, the teacher gave learners three topics and asked them to choose one and use a spider diagram as a way of brainstorming their selected topics. Learners worked as individuals to complete the task. There was little interaction and collaboration between learners and between the teacher and learners during the activity. This implies an individual learning approach to instruction.

Lesson 5, School E

TEACHER: Remember that brainstorming comes before writing your essay. I want to see your planning. We mostly use spider diagram to show our planning, right?

LEARNERS: Right

TEACHER: Good. Brainstorming is thinking about ideas for your writing. Yes you can use a spider-diagram, you can list your points down or you free write your ideas. To free-write is to write all the ideas that you think of in your mind about the topic, right?

LEARNERS: Yes Sir.

In the extract above, the teacher provided learners with time to generate ideas for their writing before they began writing their essays (Mohtar, Mohtar & Kepol, 2020). The teacher also explained that he would check their ideas to provide feedback on whether the ideas are in line with the topics chosen by the learners. By providing feedback on the learners' ideas,

it could be said that the teacher understands writing as a social practice (Casterns, 1992; Vygotsky, 1978). That is, the teacher understands his role of providing guidance and support as the knowledgeable adult in the classroom. This classroom discourse further confirms the implementation of the process approach in the writing classroom. In the next stage of the lesson the teacher instructs learners to start writing the introductions.

All in all, the above lesson extracts from the five schools show the nature of process approach instruction in different classrooms. From the classroom discourse, the teachers and learners seemed to understand the different stages of the process approach. The teachers solicited knowledge of different stages of the process approach and the learners' responses showed that they know the different stages of the writing process. In all five schools the teachers used the whole-class method where all learners sit in the desks facing the teacher at the front of class. This implied little use of collaborative classroom methods in the process approach instruction in all five schools. Little learner-learner interaction was observed. Teachers in all five schools adopted a teacher-centred method. Teachers provided more talking in the writing classrooms. In four schools (A, B, C and D) there was limited writing practise by learners. In one lesson, Lesson E, the teacher provided time for the learners to implement the process approach in their writing. Furthermore, the teacher also provided time for feedback and guidance on the learners' ideas which indicates that the classroom, to some extent, is underpinned by social learning theory. However, limited interaction between learners was observed. Mostly, learners responded to the teachers' questions. Findings from the analysis of the writing lessons can be summarised into three themes: teacher-centred process approach to instruction; teachers' knowledge of the process approach; and limited scaffolding of writing stages.

5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Teacher-centred process approach to instruction

Findings from the analyses of the writing lessons indicate the teachers mostly used a question-and-answer method to teach the process approach in the five schools. This method entails teachers controlling interactions in the classrooms through nomination-response cycle. Without teacher nomination, the learners remain passive. On the flip side, I observed that the teachers used this method to invite participation from different learners in the classroom. However, I found that the types of questions that the teachers asked solicited short responses. This meant that learners' second language production remained limited. The study also found limited interactions between learners in the writing classrooms. Even though the learners were seated in pairs, the classroom pedagogy did not promote learner-learner interaction which is mostly favoured for second-language writing classrooms as it provides learners an opportunity to learn together and to help each other. Vygotsky's (1978) socio-cultural learning theory connects learning and social interaction. He argues that in a learning context where learners work together in joint activities, they embrace the effects of working together and develop new constructs of their world and of their culture. In a writing classroom, peer learning supports writing development as the knowledgeable peer may provide feedback on the writing tasks and enable learning that was not otherwise possible for the individual. Limited peer learning in the writing classroom could mean that the teachers are unaware of the socio-cultural learning theory and the learning benefits of peer learning for the development of writing skills.

5.2 Teachers' knowledge of the process approach

Findings from the analyses of writing lessons indicate that the teachers in the five schools used process approach instruction to develop writing skills in their classrooms. This was evident in the teachers' mentioning of different process approach writing stages such as planning/pre-writing (selecting a topic, brainstorming and planning what to say); drafting/writing (putting a draft version on paper); revising (making changes to improve writing); editing/proofreading (evaluation of written work for refinement and improvement) and publishing (presenting the work for the reader) (Badger & White, 2000). For example, in lesson 1, the teacher asks learners "*Editing and the last one?*" and in lesson 3, the teacher asks learners "*So how do you do the planning for your essay?*". These findings imply that teachers understand the process approach they are expected to implement.

Analyses of the lessons also show that the teachers, in most cases, did not implement all the writing stages in their lessons. However, they selected the stages they wanted to teach in that particular lesson. In that way, the study did not observe the use of all the stages of the writing process by learners in all five schools. These findings are at odds with earlier findings on South African teachers and their implementation of writing curriculum. For example, Julius (2013) found that many teachers in Eastern Cape intermediate phase classrooms do not understand the writing approaches they are expected to implement in their writing classrooms. Julius (2013) found that for this reason, teachers paid less attention to writing activities. Nevertheless, teachers in this study seemed to understand the process approach. Learners' responses also showed that they did not struggle with different stages of the writing process. For example, the teacher from Lesson 4 asked learners what they meant by brainstorming and they responded that they are generating ideas for writing and planning for the essay. This suggests that learners are familiar with the stages of the writing process.

5.3 Limited Scaffolding of Writing Stages

Even though findings indicate teachers' general understanding of their writing curriculum, classroom discourse of the writing lessons also revealed limited scaffolding of the writing processes. In School A, B and C, for example, the teachers explained to learners how they should approach their own writing by brainstorming their topics to generate the ideas for writing. Although the teacher emphasised the use of a mind map or a flow chart diagram for the planning stage, he made little attempt to scaffold the use of a mind map or flow chart of ideas as a means of modelling the skills (Akinyenye & Pluddemann, 2016). Teachers also stressed that the planning would help learners to produce ideas coherently. Here again, there was less scaffolding of what a coherent paragraph would look like so that learners could improve their writing. Dornbrack and Atwood (2019) noticed limited scaffolding of writing in many second-language writing classrooms in South Africa. In fact, these scholars argue that many teachers still rely on the question-and-answer method of teaching writing instead of creating activities that will take learners through the stages of the process.

5.4 A need for a learner–centred process approach to instruction

Contrary to teacher-centred instruction in a process approach, a learner-centred writing pedagogy is central to socio-cultural theory. In a learner-centred writing classroom, teachers perceive writing as a social process in which learners are guided and encouraged to construct meaningful texts through interactive activities that promote understanding of the writing process (Badger & White, 2000). Furthermore, learner-centred classrooms promote

active instead of passive learning. In a learner-centred writing classroom, the teacher takes the peripheral role of guiding the writing processes while learners are actively engaged in the writing processes in a peer supportive environment. Learner-centred teachers provide a classroom environment that is conducive to the learning of writing. They achieve this by creating a context where learners have supportive relationships and can learn from and with each other in a safe and trusting learning environment (Carsten, 2009). Carstens (2009) argues that in a learner-centred writing classroom, teachers cultivate peer support and this diffuses teacher-learner power relations. In a learner-centred pedagogy, learners become active partners in knowledge creation, thus minimising teacher domination of the learning process. Learners are given autonomy to suggest topics for writing to which they can relate (Silva & Matsuda, 2012) as opposed to the teacher-centred classroom where the teacher decides on the writing topics and imposes them (Badger & White, 2000). Learner-centred pedagogy, therefore, empowers learners to take ownership of the writing processes and their writing development.

5.5 Implications of a socio-cultural writing environment

According to Vygotsky (1978), the ZPD is an area of learning that occurs when a learner in the social context, such as a classroom or any collaborative context, is assisted by a teacher or a peer with a higher set of skills. Some learners cannot complete a task without the teacher or a peer's assistance. The role of the teacher or peers will then be to help the learner achieve the skill that the learner is trying to master.

The teacher or peers provide support until the learner can perform the task unassisted (Vygotsky, 1978). For a complete developmental maturation within the learner's ZPD, Vygotsky argues that teachers must consider the types of support; the sequence in which the types of help are offered and the flexibility or rigour of previously formed structures and how willingly the learners collaborate. Such contextual factors can impact the level of potential development (Vygotsky, 1978). Collaborative learning activities, therefore, enable learners to work together to produce a text through practising the stages of the writing process such as choosing the topic, brainstorming, drafting, revising and editing (Badger & White, 2000). Furthermore, collaborative writing activities help learners to develop not only writing skills but also social and cognitive skills. This study suggests that teachers should encourage learners to work collaboratively with one another. Teachers must also promote interaction in their writing classroom, especially in the target language, as discussions and debates in the second language have been found to help learners practise the second language skills as well (Hyland, 2019).

6. CONCLUSION

This study explored the nature of process approach instruction in selected EFAL FET phase classrooms in the Pinetown District, South Africa. The study found that teachers follow their CAPS (2012) writing curriculum. Findings from discourse analysis of writing lessons across the selected schools indicated that teachers understand the process approach they are expected to implement. The study found traditional teacher-centred instruction of process approach prevalent in these EFAL FET classrooms. Teachers' limited understanding of writing as a socio-cultural practice led to minimal peer collaborative writing opportunities. Time constraints in the FET phase writing curriculum hinder teachers' in-depth facilitation of stages of the process approach to writing. The researcher argues for a socio-cultural scaffolding

model of writing which embraces activity-based writing strategies when dealing with writing development in the FET phase since this moves beyond formal accuracy and discrete aspects of language but situates writing within meaningful contexts and authentic purposes and, thus, prepares learners for post-school writing practices. This study concludes that the success or limitations of process approach instruction depend on numerous factors. Firstly, it depends on the teachers' knowledge and understanding of the approach. Secondly, it depends on a teaching environment in which writing is perceived as a social process in which learners are guided and encouraged to construct meaningful texts through interactive activities that promote understanding of the writing process. This study, therefore, suggests continuous teacher development on learner-centred writing pedagogies to improve process approach instruction in EFAL FET classrooms.

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