A Process-Genre Approach to Teaching Argumentative Writing to Grade Nine Learners

A Half-thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION
(English Language Teaching)

RHODES UNIVERSITY

Jillian Margaret Elson
December 2011

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the following people without whom, this thesis would not have been made possible:

Firstly, to my loving family and dedicated fiance whose unwavering support, encouragement, and help ensured that I persevered to complete my thesis - a huge thank you!

To my good friend Raydene, who assisted me in the rather daunting statistical analysis of my data - thank you for your invaluable input.

To my supervisor, Sarah Murray - thank you for your patience and guidance throughout the last two years; this would not have been possible without your keen interest taken in revising my work and your provision of valuable feedback.

To my friends Ericha and Pam - thank you for your moral support, as my 'study buddies.' and for pushing me to not give up.

Declaration

I, Jillian Elson, have read and understand the University's policy on plagiarism. This is my own work and, where I have drawn on the work of others, I have referenced appropriately. This work has not been submitted to fulfil the requirements of a degree at any other university.

09 December 2011

....

(Signature and Date)

610E7052

....

(Student Number)

Contents

ABSTRACT

This action research study aimed to improve teaching and learning of argumentative writing through a process-genre approach. Learners were carefully guided through the processes of writing the argumentative genre, with the focus being on teaching of the genre and on the structural conventions of writing arguments. Participants were a class of grade nine learners who speak English as a first language. They were chosen for this study as Grade Nine is a crucial year for writing development before learners enter the senior phase and are met with heightened expectations in the curriculum, that often they struggle to meet, as their writing has not been sufficiently developed to an academic level. The focus of writing in Grade Nine is on narrative and prose, so this writing intervention, in which a teaching module was developed in collaboration with the learners, aimed to broaden their writing skills and provide them with a head start in learning the fine art of argumentation, as this is a useful skill to acquire for purposes even beyond the classroom.

Genre theorists advocate the importance of teaching genres to learners at a young age, as it allows them access into different communities of discourse, as they become aware and understand the conventions held by a particular community, and realize the purpose of different styles of writing for effectively communicating, which prepares them to meet the expectations of their audience. Teaching the structures of different genres therefore allows the writer, and the audience, a framework for understanding the text. The process approach has been widely used by educators as it focuses on explicit teaching of writing processes that are fundamental to learners' development in writing. Learners need to be carefully guided from the initial stages, to the more complex stages (especially in argumentative writing which has been deemed the most complex genre for learners to master) in order to understand the complexities of constructing an essay in a cohesive way, as they need to consider multiple aspects of writing, such as the linguistic features, rhetorical features and structural features of the genre and unify them into a sound argument. This takes time, practice and revision, and extensive feedback is required.

The process-genre approach proved to be successful in this study, as learners showed remarkable improvements in their writing from the initial stages of writing to the final

drafts of their essays. The findings revealed that explicit teaching of genres and structural elements of writing is vital for ensuring learners' development. Learners require modelling of the genre, scaffolding and careful guidance through step-by-step processes in order to build confidence and express their ideas effectively in written text. The findings indicate the relevance of using the process-genre approach for teaching and learning and that teaching and learning writing is indeed a process that needs more time and practice that is currently allocated in the curriculum.

Introduction

CHAPTER 1:

This chapter provides an overview of the thesis and the motivation behind the research. Firstly, I shall provide a personal narrative that explains the driving-force behind my research. Thereafter, I shall outline the broader context of the research, which moved me to pursue my chosen study, and will discuss some key aspects surrounding the research. I will discuss my research goals and the methods chosen to apply to the study. Finally, I will outline the structure of the thesis.

1.1. Personal Narrative

What made me interested in my research topic was a personal observation made during my years of teaching English to first language and second language English speakers. Before undertaking my Masters in Education, I taught Grades Eight to Twelve at various high schools in East London. During this time, I noticed a recurring 'problem' in the standards achieved by learners in the field of writing from Grade Nine to Grade Ten. Learners seemed to struggle with the demands placed on them in the senior phase in terms of the curriculum requirements for writing. It appeared as though not enough preparation was done for writing in Grade Nine in terms of academic writing - specifically argumentative writing. Learners grasped the genres of narrative and poetry, but did not fully comprehend the art of argumentation and how to effectively structure an argumentative text. They were used to being told what to write, but were often not aware of the meaning behind their writing as they did not possess an adequate knowledge of the various genres and different purposes for writing texts. This prompted me to work with my group of Grade Nine learners to try to improve the teaching and learning of genres to better inform my own teaching practice.

1.2. Broader Context

Judging from research into the field of writing, specifically argumentative writing, the problem of learners being underexposed to various writing genres seems to be

widespread. Research shows that learners from a young age are capable of quite elaborate reasoning; however, they are not taught how to channel their ideas into a comprehensive, cohesive text that accurately reflects their reasoning. Across the board, learners seem to struggle with the skill of argumentation, even at tertiary level. This is detrimental to them as it is an important life-skill and is used across learning areas and even extends into everyday life. My aim was to improve my teaching of this important genre of argumentative writing, to adequately equip learners with vital skills for senior phase learning and later life.

1.3. Research Goals

The research question for this study was:
In alignment with the National Curriculum requirements and relevant writing theories, how can I bring about improvements in learners' writing practice?

My goal was to improve my teaching of argumentative writing.

1.4. Methods

This research aimed to increase the effectiveness of my teaching practice by implementing a writing module for students to learn how to construct an argumentative essay. The study was based on action research. It included both qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis. The process-genre approach to teaching and learning was implemented for the study, as theory advocates the use of this approach in modern education, and the current South African curriculum has adopted the approach.

The participants included 30 of my own grade nine learners from a former model-C high school based in East London, South Africa. Grade Nine learners were chosen as participants for the study as Grade Nine is a crucial year for developing writing skills. It marks the transition from the Senior Phase to Grade Ten when learners are suddenly overwhelmed by the leap in expectations placed upon them in terms of what they are meant to be able to produce, such as elaborated argumentative texts. For this reason, I chose to do the study on my class as my research would ultimately have an impact on

them, which was my immediate goal, and in this authentic learning situation of working with my own learners, I would be able to most effectively try to improve my teaching practice.

Of the 30 participants, 12 students' work was used for my study, as only 12 students submitted a complete set of documents for analysis. The data used for the analysis were: 1) the transcript of a class discussion, which was held before the writing process began in order to determine learners' knowledge of debates and their familiarity with the processes of argumentative writing, 2) the scores and content of the three sets of essays (preliminary, first draft and final draft) which were analysed according to Toulmin's model of argumentative analysis and Knudson's model of analysis. These models provided a theoretical framework to analyse the data. Both holistic scoring and analytic scoring was used to analyse data, based on various categories of analysis.

3) A research journal was kept of the entire process, and observations were recorded and discussed. 4) Lastly, learners' feedback/reflections on the writing course were discussed, to judge whether this was indeed a worthwhile undertaking.

The students were assigned the task of ultimately producing an argumentative essay based on a topic that was chosen by the class: Should the age at which a driver's licence is obtained in South Africa be reduced to 16 years? After much discussion, oral debates, modelling, scaffolding and extensive feedback at each step-by-step process of the writing course, learner produced three essays each: a preliminary essay, a first draft and a final draft. The essays were revised at each stage after the learners were provided with feedback.

The analysis of the two discussions revealed that the course had benefited the learners. In the first instance, (the initial discussion), learners were unsure of the argumentative writing processes, as they had not written formal argumentative essays before in their school career. They had a fair knowledge of what oral debates entailed, but were not too confident about translating this to written text. The final discussion at the end of the writing course revealed a heightened confidence in the learners who

had indeed made significant improvements in their writing from the start to the end of the intervention.

The scores from the data analysis of the three sets of essays revealed improvements in learners' writing from the preliminary stages to the final drafting stage. The quality of their essays was assessed based on various aspects of argumentative writing. It was assessed for the overall quality (holistically) and at paragraph level (looking more in detail at the structuring of the essay and linguistic components).

The process-genre based model that was used for teaching this writing course was effective, with learners ultimately showing improvements in their writing.

1.5. Overview of Thesis

Chapter one has given a brief overview of the goals, motivation and context of the research.

Chapter two will provide an in-depth review of the literature relevant to the study. The review is structured as follows: Firstly, the curriculum specifications for writing in Grade Nine are discussed. International and national research is looked at to access the universality of the issue - to compare various methods of teaching used to discover why learners in certain learning contexts, struggle with writing. After framing the issue, a review of the relevant theories is provided to explain possible reasons for the situation. The three main approaches to teaching and learning - product, functional and genre - are compared and their effectiveness in different contexts debated. Thereafter, theories on argumentative writing are looked at specifically. Finally, chapter two discusses whether the curriculum requirements for writing in Grade Nine, in South Africa, have been met and what the best teaching practice seems to be for teaching argumentative writing.

Chapter three is the methodology chapter which considers the research goals and the methods used to achieve the goal (improve teaching practice). The various research approaches and the methodology are discussed and issues of validity, ethics and limitations to research are examined.

Chapter four looks at the data analysis. It provides insight into the exact steps taken to interpret the gathered data in a meaningful way, while chapter five relates the findings of the study.

Finally, chapter five concludes and discusses the findings to reveal their significance and consider the relevance of the study.

Chapter 2

Literature review

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter I outline the theoretical basis for this thesis and the relevance of theory in understanding my research. There is much debate over the ways in which argumentative writing should be taught - I discuss these controversies. I refer to current research, global and local, that indicates strengths and weaknesses of certain approaches in teaching writing. The chapter also considers different views and experiences of writing and presents an argument for what constitutes best teaching/learning practice, in light of theoretical explanations, current research and personal teaching experience.

2.1.1. Curriculum Specifications for Writing Requirements

In the National Curriculum (South Africa. Ministry of Basic Education (2010). *National Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements,* RSA), extended writing is an essential part of the syllabus at grade nine level, yet in my experience, and as research in South Africa suggests, little time is allocated and limited practice is undertaken in preparing students for Grade Ten. In the National Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), referring to English Home Language, it states that:

> 'Listening, speaking and language usage skills will further be developed and
> refined, but the emphasis at this level will be on developing the learners'
> reading and writing skills.'
> (South Africa [S.A.], Ministry of Basic Education [MBE], 2010, p. 5)

In the CAPS, which is to be introduced in Grade Ten in 2012, it is stated that writing and presenting are powerful instruments for the construction and communication of messages and that writing should be reflexive, for learning purposes, but should also be used for communicative purposes. Writing is essential for further education and employment and is a mode for assessing learners (S.A., MBE, 2010, p. 5). Learners

are expected to explore how language is used so that they can evaluate their own, and other, texts critically in terms of meaning and accuracy. Therefore, exposure to different types of texts is vital in providing them with a basis of knowledge from which to construct their own interpretations and meanings from texts. It is stated in the CAPS that the focus is not *only* on extracting meaning from texts, but on learning the *structures* of texts (S.A., MBE, 2010, p. 5). Learners are to be made aware of how changes in language over time and across cultures influence texts to change in terms of structure and meaning (S.A., MBE, 2010, p.5). In order to develop learners' critical language awareness, it is essential that they be exposed to a range of genres and construct a variety of text types themselves that reflect the different purposes of their writing. Learners need critical language awareness in order to understand the importance of structuring language to effect their purpose; mastering this will enable them to construct a logical, coherent argument that is persuasive.

2.1.2. International Research on the Development of Argumentative Writing Ability

Developmental research in children reveals that children, as they age, show progression in their argumentative writing abilities as they learn how to apply rules of argumentation and transfer these to writing practice (Corier & Golder, 1993).

The translation process from conceptualization (generating and organizing ideas) to linearizing (the process of expressing a cognitive representation in a sensible sequence of information) needs to be mastered when composing an elaborated argument text (EAT). This marks the progression from immature to mature argumentation (Coirier, Andriessen & Chanquoy, 1997, p. 31). The translation process will be further discussed later on in this chapter.

Researchers, such as Levelt (1981) and Bock (1982), attribute problematic argumentative writing to poor linearizing. A study was conducted by Marchand (1993) that tests this hypothesis. She required her participants to place, in order, eight arguments or premises that she provided. The test was done to observe the learners' ability to achieve coherence through logical structure and use of connectives (which they were encouraged to use). Their production of an ordered argument made evident

their conceptualization, expressed in their writing. Basically, Marchand observed the *four typical processes in argumentative writing*: the learners' ability to 1. *reason* (make logical connections), to 2. *argue* (which involves choosing an appropriate hierarchal ordering of ideas) and to 3. *linearize* (which involves sequencing of information). She also looked at their 4. *linguistic coding* ability (their knowledge and use of language to accurately express their thoughts, eg. the use of appropriate connectives). She found that these processes are interrelated; her data revealed that learners struggled to 1) infer relationships between the arguments and 2) draw upon linguistic processes to organize the arguments. Her data confirms the interdependence between conceptualization and linguistic coding in composing a sound argument. Her participants were younger than 12 which reveals that, before this age, children do not necessarily have the linguistic expertise or structural knowledge to produce an elaborated argumentative text (Coirier, Andriessen & Chanquoy, 1997, p. 34).

A study conducted by Marchand, Coirier and Dellerman illustrated the ability of older learners (aged 12-18) to more successfully integrate conceptual and linguistic devices, revealing an increased mastery of a multitude of textual devices used in argumentative writing, such as correct use of connectives, more complex syntax and logical structuring of ideas. This mastery allows for effective production of EAT (Marchand, Coirier & Dellerman, 1996, 35).

From this research, it is clear that the more linguistically competent learners are, the better they are at writing what is considered to be the most complex of genres - argumentative texts. The production of EAT therefore requires explicit teaching of the processes involved in bridging the gap between conceptualization and linearization, guiding learners through their thought processes in a systematic way that requires extensive planning of a topic, hierarchal ordering of ideas, combined with the mastery of linguistic and textual devices to ensure coherence of the text. It is a step-by-step process that requires exposure to the genre and much practice.

The processes described in various writing models to achieve mastery of argumentative writing have been criticised for being to vague; however, there is a

consensus amongst theorists and researchers that the role of language is what is greatly underestimated, as the linearization process, translating thoughts to writing, ultimately hinges on the learner's linguistic competence (Marchand, Coirier & Dellerman, 1996, 47).

2.1.3. Current Research on Writing in South Africa

However, despite the need for learners' writing skills to be developed, in conjunction with the strongly specified requirements of the National Curriculum, research in South Africa reveals that young adults entering tertiary education are ill-equipped with fundamental writing skills, which is detrimental to their coping at tertiary institutions. In a research project conducted at Stellenbosch University, it was apparent that low levels of academic literacy (engaging in academic discourse through reading, writing) was responsible for failure rates amongst undergraduate students who were high-potential candidates in their fields of study (van Dyk, T. et.al., 2010, p. 333). A writing module was introduced as part of a bridging course for first-year students and proved to be successful in improving their academic performance, as they learned skills of thought-processing and how to effectively structure essays to produce a sound, logical argument or case (van Dyk, T. et.al., 2010, p.342). These skills need to be nurtured at a younger age, in Grade Nine, so that enough opportunity is provided to practise and perfect the art of writing in order to equip learners for the world outside of school.

Further research is discussed later in this chapter under 2.3.1.

2.2.1. Review of Theories of Writing

Writing a text is the most difficult skill to accomplish for most students, whether they are first or second language speakers of English. Writing requires complex, integrated processes in order to compose a logical, coherent text suited for its purposes (Yan, 2011, p. 5).

Nunan describes it as an 'enormous challenge' to produce an elaborated text (1999, p. 271). This is due to the rhetorical conventions of English texts - structure, style and

organization - that prove to be quite a challenge for learners to grasp. Yan (2011, p. 1.) points out that in most countries, the focus of writing is for test/exam purposes - purely to convey subject knowledge. This, she argues, diminishes learners' interest in the writing process, as it is viewed as a means to an end, rather than a meaningful, extended process of development. Writing thus becomes decontextualized and 'irrelevant' to learners, who have no sense of purpose or real audience (Yan, 2011, p. 1).

Various approaches to writing have been adopted through the years by teachers but these days they tend towards a more integrated approach to writing, which incorporates credible features from the mainstream approaches to teaching writing - process and genre approach. Three approaches will be described here: product approach, process approach and genre approach, and considerations for best teaching practice, according to researchers and educators, will be put forth (Yan, 2011, p. 1).

2.2.1.1. Product Approach

The product approach to writing focuses on the end product or final text which is then marked according to a rigid set of criteria of vocabulary, grammar, spelling and punctuation, as well as mechanical aspects of the text, taking into consideration its organization and content (Brown, 1994, p. 320). The learners are assigned a topic and are asked to produce a final product, without guidance during the composition process, which is then marked and given back for revision. This approach has been criticised for not involving the critical processes of writing to achieve a meaningful text, which entails negotiation over the topic/collaborated efforts by learners and the teacher. Learners cannot be expected, at the early stages of writing, to produce an elaborated text independently. The only positive aspect of this approach is perhaps its focus on grammatical and technical accuracy, which is in itself debatable (Brown, 1994, p. 320).

2.2.1.2. Functional Approach

Theorist Champaud (1994) characterizes argumentation as a range between two positions. The first position involves providing evidence to support a conclusion, for which

logic and sound reasoning are required. The second position views argumentation as a way of adapting the beliefs of an audience, which relies on psychosocial aspects of the communicative situation to determine whether the goals of the person presenting the argument will be achieved.

This provides a clear definition of argumentation and considers the multiple aspects involved in effectively conveying an argument.

The functional approach to writing considers what Champaud highlights - the interaction between the situation the participant is in, the participant's communicative goals, and how he/she can translate and realize these goals in his/her writing (Coirier, Andriessen & Chanquoy, 2007, p. 7).

Basically, the functional approach involves considerations of the following questions:

> To what extent is the knowledge of the topic familiar amongst the audience?
>
> How will the participant convince the audience?
>
> Is the content factual or ideological?
>
> Is content logically structured?
>
> Is content coherent and reliable?

<div align="right">(Bonckart, 1985)</div>

Creating a sound argument not only requires knowledge of the topic, but the employment of various strategies to convey this knowledge *convincingly*. Effective argumentative writing relies on coherence of reasoning, plausibility of claims and quality of knowledge and the opinions of the writer. The functional approach seeks to link communicative goals and textual organization. This approach has relevance, but is largely disregarded as a basis for a model of writing, as it does not focus enough on the specific writing processes, but rather focuses on pragmatics, which is insufficient in explaining or accounting for the development of learners' writing (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987).

2.2.1.3. Process Approach

In the 1970s and 1980s, the 'Progressive Process Approach' to writing emphasized the importance of meaning above form, based on the belief that children learn to write most effectively when they are encouraged to use their own language expressively (Gibbons, 2002, p. 57). However, since then, educators have realized the importance of explicit teaching of writing, whereby forms of the different genres are formally taught by the teacher (Gibbons, 2002, p.57). In order for a learner to be assimilated into the target culture, they need to be told explicitly the rules of that culture so that they can access power more easily (Gibbons, 2002, p.57). Thus, after the popularity of the Process Approach, educators adopted the Genre Approach as a more widely accepted theory.

2.2.1.4. Genre Approach

The genre approach has been more widely adopted as a basis for writing models, as it not *only* focuses on the communicative aspect of argumentation - whereby the success of the argument is based on the situation and, in the case of a verbal debate, the interaction of the interlocutors that determines the outcome of the debate.
The strength of an argument, according to genre approach, lies *mainly* in its structure - logical ordering and connection of ideas in such a way that achieves a specific purpose.

Genres refer to different forms of writing. The term 'genre' encompasses a broad range of texts, from transactional writing, to narrative, descriptive, expository, procedural and argumentative writing. Each genre has characteristics that distinguish it from other genres. It has a specific purpose, overall structure and linguistic features that are recognized by members of a specific culture (Gibbons, 2002, p. 53). In the case of the argumentative essay, this would be a culture that values logical reasoning.

The French term, *Genre*, means 'class' (Allen, 1989, p. 44). Genre refers to the classification of content and form of a text, in other words, genres are defined according to their textual properties (Stam, 2000, p. 14). Neale (1980, p. 51) describes genre as a 'process of systematizations', forever changing according to contemporary

theories, therefore consistently being re-negotiated to fulfil different cultural and social needs.

Kress stresses the importance of genres in positioning the reader/writer (participant) in a text, implying different possibilities for action (1998, p. 107). He points to the social nature of genre as being a kind of text that derives from frequented social occasions whereby the participants characterize the text to suit their purposes (Kress, 1998, p. 183).

McQuail argues that the reason for this production of genres within society is that genres are 'practical devices' for helping people produce texts that are consistent and relative to a particular need/situation, in a way that meets the audience's expectations. This means that the text will be more widely understood, as it is bound by conventions (McQuail, 1987, p. 200).

Gledhill reinforces this idea, noting that 'differences between genres meant different audiences could be identified and catered to… This made it easier to standardize and stabilize production' (1985, 58). Thus, authors are governed by genre conventions if they expect their message to be meaningful within society. Hartley alludes to the social values embedded in text, arguing that 'genres are agents of ideological closure' (in O'Sullivan et.al, 1994, p. 128). Texts differ in language style and form in terms of what is appropriate for their specific purposes and for their different audiences, as deemed by society. Hodge and Kress (1998, p. 7) note how both the writer's and the reader's behaviours and thought processes are controlled by the generic expectations of genre. They are bonded by genre which makes communication more efficient (Fowler, 1989, p. 215) as a frame of reference for understanding and interpreting is implemented in the text (Leymore, 1975, ix).

Sonia Livingstone sums up the above arguments, saying that:

> Different genres specify different 'contracts' to be negotiated between the text and the reader…which set up expectations on each side for the form of the communication…, its functions…, its epistemology…, and the communicative frame (eg. The

participants, the power of the viewer, the openness of the text, and the role of the reader).

(Livingstone, 1994, p. 253)

The above theorists have emphasized the importance of genre in society. Genres position people - the writer's message is understood in terms of the way in which it is carefully constructed; it is the conventions of genre that lead the reader to a particular interpretation of the text. Hence genre is a powerful tool for the writer to break the 'social code' (the values bound to the various genres), to construct a text in such a way that it 'speaks to' social ideology, and can therefore be merited. Overall, a good understanding of genres allows people to negotiate their positions in society and their relationships to others, which is what learners need to be enabled to do. It is essential for effective communication and empowerment within society. Argumentative writing is a particularly useful genre for learners to master, as it is a life-skill to be able to present a sound argument.

Thus, Genre theory advocates the teaching of structures of different styles of writing. This view opposes the 'naturalist view' whereby some educators believe that, with enough exposure to various genres, learners will naturally acquire the skills to write using different styles (Gibbons, 2002, p. 57). Proponents of the genre approach recognize the importance of explicit teaching of form, to achieve coherence in writing.

2.2.2. Discussion of the Approaches

Genre-based approaches to teaching have become increasingly popular in English Language teaching. These approaches have various theoretical underpinnings in linguistics, but all share the following features: Teaching is holistic/learners work through units that integrate writing and language skills in a meaningful way. These approaches are concerned with the social aspects of language (socio-macro purposes) and texts are designed to adhere to different genre conventions to meet a specific purpose (Lin, 2006, p.2). This holistic approach to text production requires high level use of language/meta-cognitive skills that enable the writer to structure a coherent and cohesive text. The goal of developing this meta-language is to create critical

22

thinkers/writers who can deconstruct discourse (understand social conventions) and construct their own, effectively (through correct structuring and use of language), to produce texts that meet the audience's expectations and hence be active members of the English discourse community (Lin, 2006, p.3).

There is vast theoretical support for the early teaching of styles of writing, or genres, to learners (Freedman, 1993, p. 222). It is not enough that learners be exposed to different texts; they need to undergo the process of having the structure of the text modelled to them, after which they undertake their own writing which involves: planning, drafting, revising, editing and presenting their writing in order to produce texts that are structurally accurate and that appropriately reflect the purpose of their writing (S.A., MBE, 2010, p.9). Writing needs to be viewed as an integral part of their language learning in order to be meaningful for learners.

Proponents of the genre approach emphasize the importance of writing for means beyond the classroom. The aim is to enable learners to perform a range of social purposes for writing (Lin, 2006, p. 3). The curriculum cycle, derived from the genre approach, is rooted in Vygotskian principles of socio-cultural learning. Prior to the popularity of the genre approach, cognitivists (who adopted the process approach to teaching and learning writing) focused on learner-autonomy from a psychological perspective. This is a Piagetian view which values individual expression in writing practice, not taking into account the social dynamics of language (Lin, 2006, p.4).

Martin (in Chappell, 2004) defines the teaching of genres as a goal-orientated process that is conducted through stages which are each characterised by purposeful activities that ultimately allow learners to become engaging members of the target discourse community. The Curriculum Cycle, born out of the 'genre movement' in Australia in the early 1980s/1990s, proposes four stages by the end of which genres will be made explicit to learners (Gibbons, 2002, p.61). These I believe to be fundamental to the learners' writing development. The curriculum cycle is a thus a genre-based approach to teaching and learning that functions like a cycle. The cycle consists of stages which contain certain objectives that are achieved through step-by-step processes (Gee, in Chappell, 2004).

Derewianka (in Chappell, 2004) proposes a fixed sequence of four stages of the curriculum cycle that are vital for developing learners' writing of specific genres. These are: 1) Building the field, 2) Modelling the text type, 3) Joint Construction and 4) Independent writing. These stages will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

In favour of the genre approach, Vygotsky's social perspective of teaching and learning inverts Piagetian theory, looking rather at how society influences the individual. He viewed learning as both social and psychological: The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), theorised by Vygotsky, refers to the zone between what the learner is able to do independently (actual development) and what he/she is able to learn in the future, with help from others (potential development) (Derewianka ,in Chappell, 2004, p. 5). The knowledge already possessed by the learner is psychological. Further learning, tending towards social knowledge, begins with what is termed 'object-regulation', referring to the role of the environment in learning. It is the signs and social events in one's everyday life that mediate learning. Furthermore, with the influence of others through social interactions, one becomes tuned to the social regulations that govern one's life. This knowledge gained is built into the existing schemata and the learner becomes capable of 'self-regulation' (appropriating their own belief/value system based on this incorporated knowledge). At this stage, the learner can work independently (Derewianka ,in Chappell, 2004, p.5).

This process of development is crucial for understanding how learners acquire writing skills. It underpins the Curriculum Cycle created by systemic-functional linguists that has been adopted for teaching in countries such as Wales, Australia and Singapore (Derewianka ,in Chappell, 2004, p.6).

The Curriculum cycle proposes 4 stages by the end of which learners develop into competent writers:

1) Building the field: This initial stage involves pre-activities, such as discussions or readings on the writing topic to generate ideas.

2) Modelling the text type: The teacher exposes the learners to the genre required to produce the text, discussing the purposes of the genre, the linguistic implications, and modelling the structures to best compose the text to achieve this purpose.

3) <u>Joint construction of text</u>: Learners make use of the knowledge gained to collaborate with their teacher and/or peers to produce a first draft based on their understanding of the text-type.

4) <u>Independent writing</u>: Learners compose a text independently, which marks the stage of 'self-regulation', whereby they are able to adapt ideas and make them their own. This is a cyclical process - further revision is encouraged after having had extensive feedback provided by the teacher and peers, to improve writing.

(Yin, 2006, p. 7)

Many theorists support the view that learning aspects of language is futile if this is not incorporated into practical knowledge, i.e. - learning how to use rules of language in effective communication through the medium of written text (Skehan, 2001, p. 81). This involves learners identifying the different writing genres that reflect societal values (Gibbons, 2002, p. 57). Being able to critically assess discourse is crucial to their empowerment in society - learners access the ideas and values held within texts and critically reflect on this knowledge, enabling them to formulate their own opinions (Janks, 2009, p. 237). This is a good argument for the discussion of text types with learners, in order for them to realise how writing informs, and is informed by, society.

Deborah Dean (cited in Fox, 2009) supports genre theory as providing a platform for best practice for teaching and learning. Her view is that understanding genre supports participation in lessons. She argues that genre theory 'fattens' the process approach, which is often uninteresting and flat in the way it is taught (Fox, 2009, p. 1). She says that genre deepens understanding of *why* people write as they do, exploring beyond merely *what* is written (Fox, 2009, p. 2). Studying genre, Dean believes, is important for seeing how people relate to one another in society (Fox, 2009, p. 2). Learning genre is essentially learning to take action; this involves learners becoming critical thinkers as it challenges them to delve into the social ideologies contained in texts. Once they begin to ask questions about the purpose of writing for a particular audience, this awareness of intention will allow them access the social codes of their communities so that they can become active members of society (Fox, 2009, p. 2).

The more exposure learners have to argumentative writing structures, and the more they engage with the processes of argument construction themselves, the better. The curriculum demands that learners should be able to comprehend a range of texts and execute a range of writing tasks, for the purposes of the various learning areas. Mastery of these basic skills will allow them to concentrate on the subject knowledge, rather than on the structures of the language, thus freeing them to explore the *subject* more meaningfully (Nel and Swanepoel, 2009). Writing has the power to transcend inner speech, to revise one's thoughts into a 'neat' and 'solid' expression that can be

considered more objectively (Cazden, 1994, p. 173). Written work is therefore a valuable indication of the student's knowledge.

Theorist Hyland describes genre as: 'abstract, socially recognized ways of using language' (Hyland, 2003, p. 21). Effective communication within a community relies on an understanding of the social discourse and hence meeting the expectations of the community by adhering to these social discourse conventions (Hyland, 2003, p. 21). In order to understand the social discourse, learners need to be explicitly taught the processes of writing, of structuring, texts of various genres. Teachers need to make learners aware of the differences in genre conventions amongst different cultures and social settings (Flowerdew, 1993; Johns, 1997).

Below is a table that illustrates the differences and commonalities between the process and genre approach. Hyland advocates that learners should be taught language explicitly, through processes that feed into the final product of writing. Learners should be thoroughly aware of the genre in which they are writing, of the rhetorical features, and of the specific processes and structures that the genre entails (Hyland, 2003b).

Table 1

Genre Approach and Process Approach- A Comparison

Attribute	Process	Genre
Main Idea	Writing is a thought process Concerned with the writing process	Writing is a social activity Concerned with the final product
Teaching Focus	Emphasis is on learner's individual expressions	Emphasis is on audience's expectations and the end product
Advantages	Explicitly teaches writing processes	Focuses on teaching textual conventions of writing Contextualizes writing for the audience to meet a specific purpose
Disadvantages	Does not differentiate between specific writing processes of various genres	Can ignore the step-by-step processes of writing production as focus is on end product.

Based on comparison made by Hyland (2003a, p.24)

Hyland's teaching-learning cycle model shows how genre can be effectively modelled to learners by the teacher. It includes stages of modelling, joint construction and independent construction of a text (Hyland, 2003, p. 22)
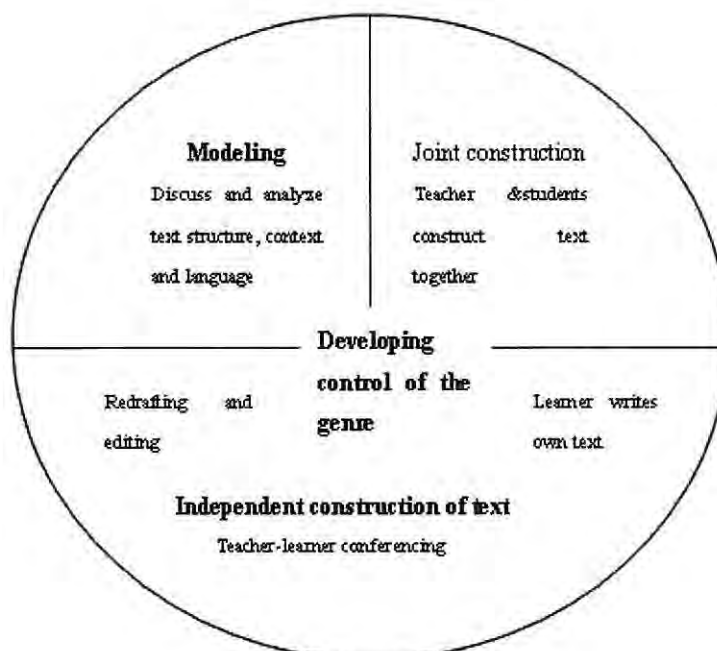
Figure 1: The teaching learning cycle (Hyland, 2003a, p. 21)

Firstly, the genre is modelled to learners. The teacher instructs the learners on the conventions of the particular genre, on its textual features and structure. Once the topic at hand has been discussed and learners are knowledgeable about the subject, they embark on a collaborative construction of a text, with guidance from the teacher. The final stage involves independent text construction - applying their knowledge. This model is helpful to learners as it entails step-by-step processes that are carefully guided and at the same time provides them with understanding of not only HOW people write, but WHY people write (the genre aspect of the approach) (Hyland, 2003a, p.22).

2.2.3. Theories on Argumentative Writing

2.2.3.1. The specificity of argumentative writing

Argumentative writing is considered the most difficult genre for learners to master. Oral argumentation comes naturally as a daily form of communication; however, developing an elaborated argument that is justified, in written form, proves problematic especially amongst younger children as their frame of reference (schemata) and organization skills are not fully developed (Voss et. al., 1983).

A prerequisite for argumentation is that a disagreement over the chosen topic is recognized (Antaki & Leudar, 1990; Stein and Miller, 1993; van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1984). Furthermore, it requires the participant to consider opposing beliefs on the topic. From age 5 onwards, children are able to take other people's opinions into consideration as they develop the ability to make moral justifications (Stein & Trabasso, 1982). Their reasoning abilities at this age are in fact similar to adults. In light of this, it seems that the difficulties in writing arguments experienced by older children cannot be attributed to undeveloped reasoning processes.

Debatability of the topic is another prerequisite for argumentation. This is reliant partially on cognitive and partially on social development. In some societies, some topics are non-debatable - the societies have very strict moral codes in place that are accepted as the norm, thus the success of an argument can depend on the context in which it is presented (Stein & Miller, 1993).

Lastly, in order for a learner to present a sound argument, the instructions need to be clearly explained to them. They need to know explicitly what is required of them. The teacher needs to ensure that the way in which the topic is given is age appropriate. For example, the following topic and level of wording would be more suited to an older learner, as being asked to discuss a statement is a relatively advanced instruction, which requires the participant to choose an opinion and support his/her claim):

> *Current legislature states that the age at which a driver's licence can be obtained be reduced to 16.* Discuss whether or not you agree with this statement.

On the other hand, the following topic would be more appropriate for younger children as it merely asks them to explain; they do not have to elaborate and use argumentation wording such as 'I think' or 'In my opinion':

> *People should not be able to drive before they are 18.* Explain why.

In order for learners to produce elaborated argumentative texts (EAT), there are eight constraints that need to be considered for the planning and production of such an argument. They are as follows:

1) The topic must be controversial (Stein et al., 1993b; van Eemeren et. al., 1984).
2) Thus, the topic must be debatable (Charolles, 1980; Golder, 1996)
3) Learners must perceive possible solutions for conflict surrounding the topic (Stein et. al, 1995).
4) They must be able to use language to solve this conflict (Charolles, 1980; Perelman et. al., 1988).
5) Thereafter, they must assert an opinion (Stein et. al., 1993)

6) Their claims need to be supported with evidence (Adam, 1992).

7) They must attribute some credibility to opposing arguments (Grize, 1992)

8) They must rebut these arguments/counter-argue (Adam, 1992).

After these steps have been undertaken, the learner can embark on the writing process of an EAT. This marks the translation process from conceptualization to linearization (ordering of ideas to achieve coherence).

Firstly, learners need to generate ideas, drawing upon their schemata, as well as from other resources (readings, peer/teacher discussions) and negotiate these ideas. They then need to express these ideas with appropriate wording. For this, they need to employ certain strategies and adhere to conventions pertaining to the nature of the topic. Basically, they need to understand what they are *doing* with the topic - which in the case of argumentation, is defending a position. Thus, use of connectives to link paragraphs (to achieve coherence), is vital to master. The reasoning processes have to be guided, backed up by structural guidance for the learner to effectively express these reasons. It is important to realize that it is not so much the amount of information the learner has to bring to the table that determines the success of his/her argument, but the quality of the information - how he/she presents it (Hayes, 1996).

Secondly, it has been found that learners respond best to reasoning in favour of the chosen topic (Vos, Perkins and Segal, 1991). Learners also tend to make moral justifications surrounding topics in terms of the repercussions for holding such a belief (as proposed in the topic) (Stein et. al., 1995). If learners argue a well-known topic, they are more inclined to structure their argument appropriately (De Bernardi and Antolini, 1996). Taking this research into consideration, the teacher has to think carefully about the topics chosen at the early stages of learning to write argumentative texts, so as to ease learners into the process.

2.2.3.2. Toulmin's Model - Argumentative Writing

Toulmin developed a model for accessing argumentative writing. His belief is that arguments should ultimately be judged according to the strength of their claims and the way in which the content and the essay's format is structured to evidence these

claims and provide a logical argument. Below is a summary of terms on which Toulmin's model is based:

Claim: The claim of an argument refers to the assertion that one makes about the issue at hand (Toulmin, 2003, p. 92). **E.g.** If given the topic: *Should corporal punishment be re-instated at schools*, one might make the claim: **Corporal punishment should not be re-instated at schools**.

Data: Data is defined as reasons that are provided as evidential support of claims. **E.g. Corporal punishment should not occur as it is against children's constitutional rights.**

Warrant: Provision of data is insufficient to support a claim (Toulmin, 2003, p. 92). A warrant is used to connect the claim to the data: it 'legitimizes', or further justifies, the data and provides implicit information related to the claim. **E.g. All children should be protected against what some would regard as a form of abuse - corporal punishment, as official reports reveal multiple cases of injuries and deaths to learners as a result of corporal punishment.**

Warrants are closely linked to qualifiers (information that qualifies or supports the claim), backings (which further strengthen/justify the claim) and rebuttals (which provide evidence against a claim).

Toulmin's model of argumentation, as well as that of Knudson's guide for holistic scoring of argumentation (Knudson, 1992), will be discussed in the methodology and data analysis chapters.

2.3.1. Are the Curriculum Requirements Being Met? And:
The importance of teaching argumentative writing in South Africa

Relative to other countries, little research has been done on writing in South Africa at grade nine level. Although research has been carried out at various institutions, discussed in this chapter, most research has been done with learners who speak English as a second language, and as far as I am aware, no research has been done on grade nine learners specifically.

Monica Hendricks (2008a) carried out research on grade seven learners from a well-resourced, multilingual school in South Africa. Her findings were that in terms of Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS), learners' competencies in writing were mainly conversational. Little development was evident in terms of learners' abilities to construct more academic texts, such as argumentative texts - meaning that they had less Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) (Cummins, 1984).

Hendricks recognizes a need for learners to become more developed in their writing of academic-based genres as they are senior phase learners in Grade Seven. At this stage, it is stated by the Department of Education that learners should achieve Learning Outcome Five, which states that 'the learner will be able to use language to think and reason, as well as access, process and use information for learning' (DoE, 2002).

A further study carried out by Hendricks (2008b) looks at grade seven learners' English writing in the classroom. Findings again revealed that learners were not at the expected level of competence of writing ability for their grade. The Department of Education's aim, discussed in Hendricks's article, is to make learners 'life-long learners who are confident and independent, literate, numerate, multi-skilled and compassionate with a respect for the environment and the ability to participate in society as a critical and active citizen' (DoE, 2002, p. 3). It appears that there is a concerning gap between expectations of learners and what they are actually able to produce in their writing, based on these research findings.

Kapp and Bangeni did research on a group of students from the University of Cape Town who were in their early twenties, English second language speakers. They found that generally, students found the academic discourse at university to be challenging (Kapp & Bangeni, 2005, p. 109). They claimed to struggle to analyse discourse and consider multiple viewpoints to construct a sound argument. Basically, the students related this to the fact that they were not adequately instructed in academic discourses and genres at school level, as their classroom situations in the South African context during the time of their schooling was more teacher-orientated and oral-based (Kapp & Bangeni, 2005, p. 109). This research relates the issue of

writing incompetence or inadequate proficiency to a lack of explicit teaching of genres in schools, which affects learners negatively later in life.

In Kapp and Bangeni (2005, p. 3), Gee highlights the importance of learning genres for students to effectively express themselves and navigate through society as critical members of a discourse community. This entails re-training learners' thought processes by having them engage in new ways of using language that are meaningful, and that allow them a sense of independence and a sense of understanding of various discourse communities. This is crucial for learners to become engaged in the target community.

Paul Webb's article on scientific literacy (Webb, 2008) describes research findings of a study conducted in science classrooms in the Eastern Cape, looking at various reasons accounting for difficulties experienced by learners in acquiring scientific literacy and writing skills.

Webb considers the fact that children in South Africa have in the past achieved amongst the lowest scores in the world in mathematics and science (Human Sciences Research Council, 2006). Studies performed in rural Eastern Cape schools involved the introduction of a more integrated approach to teaching in the sciences. Results suggested improvements in general literacy skills. Amongst these mixed methods were techniques introduced to promote discussions and argumentative writing (Webb, 2009, p.316).

Without elaborating on the findings of the above study, it is clear that the integrated approach to teaching and learning, which is the core of genre theory, seemed to be successful in cases where it was adopted. Research reveals (as already discussed in this chapter) that curriculum requirements are not being met in South Africa.

 The common factor in these studies is learners' inabilities to reason in written English, which is a crucial skill - hence the importance of teaching argumentative writing. They may possess oral linguistic skills, but when it comes to writing performance, they lack skills (as is evidenced in their formal assessments). The problem seems to lie in the gap between theory (specified requirements in the

National Curriculum) and practice (teachers' lack of knowledge/how they carry-out these requirements in an ad-hoc manner). Thus the curriculum requirements in South Africa are not being met. Serious intervention is needed to develop writing skills at all levels. Understanding of the philosophies discussed in this chapter is vital for teachers, so that they can confidently exercise best practice through explicit teaching.

2.3.2. What is the Best Teaching and Learning Practice According to the Theories?

Based on the theories and research mentioned in this chapter, it is clear that a combination of approaches is best to achieve the desired results in terms of students writing. Badger and White (2000) propose the 'process genre model' for teaching and learning. This successfully integrates the step-by-step processes of the process approach (planning, drafting, revising and editing) with the structural aspects of writing (adhering to genre conventions of form) to produce a text that is well thought out, coherent and convincing to achieve its purpose in meeting the expectations of the audience.

Application of this model involves the following:

Teachers need to carefully guide learners through the various processes, providing assistance and extensive feedback. Learners need to be motivated to write, which requires a well-chosen topic by the teacher/learner, suited to the learner's interests (Yan, 2011, p.3).

Teachers need to help learners develop writing strategies, starting with ordering of ideas and how to translate these into written text, so that learners can employ these strategies in the future, as independent writers, rather than being expected to merely imitate a modelled draft of the immediate topic.

Thirdly, an integrative approach is necessary: writing must not be an isolated exercise, but rather, it must be built into a lesson that involves all aspects of language - reading, speaking, listening, so that it seems meaningful to the learner and overall language competence is developed (Goodman, 1986).

2.4. Summary of Chapter

Thus, explicit teaching of styles of writing is *crucial* to the success of learners, which is the assumption upon which my research is based. In light of strong theoretical support for explicit teaching of writing structures and in consideration of the curriculum requirements for Grade Nine, English Home Language teaching (with CAPS upholding the genre approach which is text-based), I believe that more attention needs to be given to developing learners' writing skills. I have specifically chosen to focus on argumentative writing, as being able to construct discussions in a logical and coherent way is empowering in the classroom, as well as in broader society.

Chapter 3
Methodology

3.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to navigate the reader through the research process, giving a step-by-step account of how I went about rigorously testing learners' prior knowledge, implementing plans and recording information for my study. This chapter will therefore situate my study within an appropriate research paradigm, discuss the methodology employed - which is action research, and provide a detailed discussion of data collection techniques and analysis.

My research involved collaboration between myself and my learners. Data collection included a range of sources from their work samples and class discussions, to my own reflective writing, in order to get a holistic idea of the effectiveness of the research process for them, but also for my own benefit, to answer my research question of: How can I, in alignment with the National Curriculum requirements and relevant writing theories, bring about improvements in learners' writing practice?

3.2. Research goal

My research goal was: To improve my teaching of argumentative writing.

3.3. Research Approach

The nature of this study is qualitative. It deals with concepts: people's attitudes, values and beliefs that construct reality, rather than with measurable entities. In this respect, the study has much in common with interpretative research whereby the researcher seeks to comprehend phenomena not on the basis of the researcher's perspective and categories, but from those of the participants in the situations studied (Boheman, 1991; Headland, Pike, & Harris, 1990). However, action research moves beyond interpretivism. The research paradigm in which action research is situated is that of 'praxis'. Praxis is a term used by Aristotle and refers to the art of acting upon the conditions one faces in order to change them. Aristotle believed that knowledge is derived from practice, and that practice is informed by knowledge - hence, it is an ongoing, cyclical process (O'Brien, 2001, p. 6).

3.4. Methodology
Research Methods, site selection and participants

For this study, I used my own class of grade nine learners as participants. We worked together to create a module to facilitate teaching and learning of 'argumentative writing' and the resulting data informed my study.

For this study, I employed action research methods. Action research was appropriate for answering my research questions as it involves practical interventions to improve teaching and learner practice.

Kurt Lewin coined the term 'action research' based on the notion that 'the investigation of a problem cannot be separated from the action needed to solve that problem' (McFarland & Stansell, 1993, p. 14). The focus of action research is on

practical gain. The research is based on the question: What do I need to do as a practitioner in order to improve *my* teaching practice and learning opportunities in the classroom? (McKernan, 2008, p. 123). This concern is echoed by theorists, Carr and Kemmis, who define action research as:

> ...a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which the practices are carried out.
>
> (1986: 162)

This definition highlights the nature of this inquiry as being self-reflective whereby participants - the researcher and the learners in this study - think critically about the current practices in question, engaging with each other, with the aim of collectively formulating ideas and creating change.

To extend this idea, Borg stresses that the primary goal of action research is the 'in-service training and development of the teacher rather than the acquisition of general knowledge in the field of education' (Borg, 1981, p. 313). Watts states that action research is based on the assumption that teachers become more effective when encouraged to examine and assess their *own* work and then consider ways of working differently (Watts, 1985, p. 118). Action research involves people working to improve their skills; it is all about how people can change their instruction to impact learners (Ferrance, 2000, p. 1).

In my case, I recognized the need for more extensive writing practice in Grade Nine, as, judging from my teaching experience, learners generally lack understanding of the differentiated style of argumentative writing, which is not explicitly taught to them at this stage. However, in Grade Ten, they are suddenly expected to construct an argumentative essay, with insufficient preparation. Not only is this type of essay beneficial in the English class, it is useful across learning areas and therefore needs to be mastered earlier on. From this concern grew my motivation for this thesis. I wanted to research something of practical value for my learners, but above all, for my professional gain and heightened understanding so that I can improve my practice. I

devised suitable goals and plans of action to hopefully enable me to answer my research question. This type of insider research - action research - was best suited to my needs, as it focuses on improving practice (McNiff, 1996, p. 10).

Steps of Action Research

In accordance with the four basic themes of action research: empowerment of the participants, collaboration through participation, acquisition of knowledge, and social change, I employed the following steps in conducting research:

1. gathering of data
2. interpretation of data
3. action based on findings/implementation of a plan
4. evaluation of results

(Ferrance, 2000, p. 10)

These steps were followed in my research and will be discussed in detail below. Because of the time limitations of a coursework research project, I completed the research after one cycle. However, in Chapter 5, I do suggest how I would take the research forward into a further cycle of action research.

3.5. Methods of data collection

My methods of data collection included discussions and analysis of students' work samples and notes, a video recording, as well as journal entries made by learners and myself, as the researcher. Data was collected from 12 learners, out of a class of 30, as some learners were absent from lessons for extended periods of time, which would have rendered incomplete data sets. However, 29 learners participated in the intervention. Steps leading up to the actual process of writing were as follows:

The oral debate... (Step 1- ongoing throughout research)

3.5.1. Discussion

Learners, as a class, discussed their knowledge of oral debates – indicating their knowledge of argument construction. This was recorded and transcribed (see appendix 7). Learners selected a topic to debate which was discussed as a class.

3.5.2. Engaging in the preparations - Note taking/presentations

Collective brainstorming

Brainstorming and mapping ideas was done on the board. A simple process of structuring an oral debate was taught to learners (see appendix 1: students' notes). where after they were divided into two groups and prepared their arguments.

Presentation of argument (oral)

The two teams presented their arguments.

Feedback

Feedback was provided throughout, by myself (the teacher), and the other learners - the strengths and weaknesses of the debate and the debate structure were discussed.

Modelling

Thereafter, a more elaborated debate structure was modelled on the board. These processes were recorded by learners as part of their reference notes (see appendix 1).

This concluded the oral debate, which was to lead to the first steps of constructing an argumentative essay.

The writing process… (Step 2- implementation of plan)

3.5.3. Notes/Work samples

Discussion

Learners were asked about their knowledge of writing argumentative essays, so as to indicate whether they were familiar with the features and structures of this genre. This class discussion was recorded and transcribed (refer to appendix 7).

Preliminary assessment

Learners underwent a preliminary assessment of their ability to write an argumentative essay before the intervention (the introduction of the module). No notes were provided for assistance; learners based their writing on ideas gathered from the oral debate and structured their argument purely according to their own knowledge. The essays were marked by me, as the researcher, according to Toulmin's model of analysis for argumentation and Knudson's model of analysis for argumentation (See appendices 5 & 6).

Collaborative feedback

Thereafter, the class read and discussed their efforts. After feedback from me and the other learners, the step-by-step processes of argumentative writing were modelled to the learners on the board. Learners participated - from mapping their ideas, selection of appropriate points, to linking the general argument presented on the board using connectives, trying to achieve coherence. Once the format was presented, learners were asked to assess each others' essays according to a simple marking rubric or checklist. This was very rudimentary at this stage, so as to gradually build learners' confidence.

Drafting of first essay

After the peer assessment, learners began drafting their first essay on their own. At this stage, they were provided with notes (the intervention module). These notes clearly explained requirements for argumentative writing, the formats to follow, as well as information on assessment. The notes reflected learners' own ideas, which were generally discussed, and were moulded into a comprehensive set of formal instructions. Learners were also given a clearly defined list of criteria (a marking rubric - See appendix 2), so that they knew what was expected of them. This rubric

was based on a combination of Toulmin's and Knudson's models of analysis for argumentative essays and acted as a guideline for learners. Learners were given the opportunity to edit each others' writing, after which they submitted their work to me for assessment. The essays were also marked by me, as the researcher, according to Toulmin's model of analysis for argumentation and Knudson's model of analysis for argumentation (See appendices 5 & 6).

Assessment and feedback, writing of final essay

Learners work was marked and they were given extensive written feedback on their essays. Learners were able to discuss their work with me and ask for clarification. Once they were aware of how to improve their writing, they began to write their final essays. Judging from learners' responses, general areas of weaknesses in the learners' writing were recognized and these were discussed and revised.

Final assessment

Learners' essays were marked according to two rubrics based on Toulmin's model of argumentation and Knudson's adapted model of argumentation for the final assessment.
(See appendices 5 & 6)

Learners' progress was tracked against a list of criteria, before the onset of research, during the course of intervention and after the intervention, and from there I was able to assess the usefulness of my intervention (explicit teaching of the genre of argumentative writing).

3.5.4. Document-analysis
Document analysis was done on learners' work samples at each stage of the research process. Toulmin's model of argumentation was used to assess learners' work at three stages of their writing: 1) Preliminary essays, 2) First Drafts and 3) Final Drafts. Analytic scoring (Toulmin), which assesses various categories at paragraph level, as well as holistic scoring, which was done to get an overall assessment of the quality of learners' arguments (based on a 0-5 point scale devised by Knudson), were both done

to gauge the strengths and weaknesses of the learners and to diagnose general areas of confusion amongst learners. The scores for the three essays were compared for each student, as well as between learners, by working out the correlation co-efficient to reveal the relationship between findings, which would then indicate whether improvement occurred or whether learners' writing remained of the same quality from the onset of research. These methods will be further discussed in the data analysis chapter. (See appendix 11&12: a learner's complete document of the writing course with analytic and holistic assessment.)

Reflections... (Step 3- Evaluation)

3.5.5. Log and Research journals

A log was kept to record 'surface' descriptions of events (See appendix 13: schedule of lesson activities). A log is important in providing evidence for lesson planning. It is a means of 'answering to others' (Elliot, 1991, p. 8).

A research journal was kept to record day-to-day findings, as part of my reflective practice, in order to provide useful insights into the teaching and learning situation. (See appendix 14: extract from research journal).

3.5.6. Learners' feedback/reflections - class discussion

Due to time constraints, learners were not able to fit in an in depth review of the study in their journals (as it was at the end of the term and classes were interrupted by administrative procedures and other urgencies). To compensate for this, I asked the class a few questions about the writing 'course' and jotted down their responses. Their answers were paraphrased and the most frequent points that were raised were selected to include in the chapter 4. (See appendix 10 for notes on the discussion.)

3.6. Data analysis

3.6.1. Introduction to Data Analysis

After the data was collected in various forms, it was carefully organised and stored, and information was extracted and described in a meaningful way that was representative of the process as it actually occurred, flaws included. From here onwards, the final analysis was done, although analysis in action research is really an on-going process (as mentioned earlier).

When analysing data, it is important to eliminate bias from the analysis. Koshy describes being able to 'step back and critically analyse situations, to recognise and avoid bias to obtain valid and reliable data and to think abstractly' (Koshy, 2005, 114). To ensure that my findings honestly and accurately reflected what was going on, I used different methods to collect information (a form of triangulation) so that sources could verify or discredit each other, which would strengthen the validity of the study. Thereafter, I could make tentative claims, providing triangulated data as evidence.

This chapter will discuss the methods of analysis used in the study. Various methods were used to analyse the different sets of data obtained throughout the study, which included:

    3.6.1.1. learners' responses during a class discussion

    3.6.1.2. learners' writing scores for their 3 sets of essays

    3.6.1.3. learner observations and insights captured in research journal

    3.6.1.4. learners' feedback on the writing course/reflections

3.6.1.1. Analysis of learners' responses during class discussion

Learners took part in a visual and audio-recorded class discussion before the onset of writing their preliminary essay. The recording was transcribed. Themes were highlighted from the transcription, according to the number of times they occurred in the discussion, and these main points were discussed in the findings chapter. The learners then began the process of writing.

3.6.1.2. Learners' writing scores for their 3 sets of essays

Learners first wrote a preliminary essay without any scaffolding. Thereafter, feedback was provided and they took on the challenge of writing their first draft essay. After more feedback, they wrote their final essay. The 3 essays of each learner were used in the data analysis:

For analysing the data generated by learners' work samples, both quantitative and qualitative methods were used. Holistic and analytic scores were obtained for each learner, based on reputable models of analysis for argumentative writing by Toulmin and Knudson (Knudson, 1992). Below is an overview of what these two types of scoring entail:

Holistic Scoring Overview

Holistic scoring is done in order to get a general impression of learners' work. This type of scoring is based on Knudson's five-point scale ranging from 0 - (low) to 5 - (high). White (1984, as cited in Weigle, 2002) advocates holistic scoring as it is a form of positive scoring whereby learners' work it judged according to its strengths - its overall quality. It considers the learner's individuality and the validity of the text is based on the holistic meaning that is created.
(See appendix 5: model of analysis)

Comparison of Scores

The preliminary essays, first drafts and the final essays were rated according to this scoring model and descriptive statistics were applied to gather the mean scores and standard deviations between these 3 essays. These scores were totalled and tabulated to show a comparison of the characteristics of the learner's essays at the 3 stages.

Analytic Scoring Overview

This method of scoring involves a more in-depth analysis of the technicalities of learners' writing. It looks at several aspects of writing including: content, structure - how this achieves cohesion, grammar and style. It is widely used by educators as it provides a detailed diagnosis of learners' strengths and weaknesses so that these may be focused on specifically in the revision process (Weigle, 2002). In the case of argumentative writing, aspects to be judged would be the quality of the introduction, body and conclusion and how the learner ties these paragraphs together to achieve cohesion, as well the individual paragraphs in terms of how they are worded to relate back to the topic and whether claims dealt with in each paragraph have been supported by evidence and have been logically argued.

Comparison of Scores

Toulmin's model of analysis has been adopted to score learners' writing as Toulmin focuses on evaluating the strengths/weaknesses of an argument. Thus, the marker will look for the quality of claims made and of the supporting data and how these connect to the topic (Connor, 1990).

Toulmin's model was used to analyse the essays. Descriptive statistics were applied to show the mean scores and standard deviations of learners' work. Descriptive statistics are used to describe basic features of data in a study to produce a summary of findings (Trochim, 2006). In this study, the performances of learners in their writing, through a guided process, is described. Descriptive statistics are useful in enabling comparisons of learners' writing at various stages in order to determine the usefulness of the intervention plan (the writing module) in facilitating learners' writing.

The results, based on Toulmin's model, were calculated and recorded to reveal characteristics of learners' writing at the 3 stages (preliminary, first draft, final essay) which were described.

Quantitative Data Analysis

Data analysis was done for the preliminary essays, first drafts and final drafts for the 13 learners. Holistic scoring, based on Knudson's model (Knudson, 1992, p. 176)

indicated the learners scores on a 5 point scale, ranging from 0 (low score) to 5 (high score). The score revealed the overall quality of the essay. Analytic scoring was also applied to the preliminary essays, first drafts and final drafts, based on Toulmin's model of argumentative analysis (Toulmin, 1958).

Holistic Scoring

The method of analysis was as follows:

- The three sets of scores from the essays were analysed according to Knudson's Holistic Scoring Guide and descriptive statistics were used to determine the mean scores (M) and standard deviations (S.D.) for the preliminary, first and final drafts.

- The gained scores and mean gains from the preliminary, first and final drafts were calculated.

- The differences between the mean scores from the preliminary, first and final drafts were determined to show learners' improvement from stage 1-3.

Analytic Scoring

The preliminary, first and final drafts of learners were scored against Toulmin's scoring guide for argumentation.

The method of analysis was as follows:
- The three sets of scores from the essays were analysed according to Toulmin's Scoring Guide and descriptive statistics were used to determine the mean scores (M) and standard deviations (S.D.) for the preliminary, first and final drafts.

- The gained scores and mean gains from the preliminary, first and final drafts were calculated.

- Data was analysed based on the quality of the elements of learners' writing which included: <u>Claims, Data, Opposition and Refutations</u>, and the mean scores and standard deviations from the data were calculated.

- The gained scores and mean gains for each of the elements above were calculated for the preliminary essay to the first draft to the final draft.

- The differences between the mean scores for each element, from preliminary to final draft stage, were calculated to show learners' progress from stages 1-3.

- The correlation coefficients were calculated for both the holistic data, and the analytic data (separately), to reveal the correlation between the scores derived from these two types of data at each of the stages: preliminary essays to first drafts to final drafts.

Qualitative Data Analysis

- The preliminary essays, first drafts and final drafts were marked by me, as the researcher, and characteristics of the learner's writing between these three stages were studied, looking at similarities and discrepancies between essays. Points of analysis that were considered were writing elements of overall quality, rhetorical features, and language control.

- These elements of writing were each marked on a scale of 1-5 (based on Knudson's model of analysis), with 0 being the lowest score and 5 being the highest score, for the preliminary essays, first drafts and final drafts.

- The table was studied to establish the differences between the preliminary essays, first drafts and final drafts, and descriptive statistics were applied to describe the differences, which were determined by calculating the correlation coefficient (see next chapter for details).

3.6.1.3. Observations and insights captured in the research journal

Learners were observed during their group activities and formal class discussions. A research journal was kept by me, the researcher, to record my findings.

3.6.1.4. Learners' feedback on the course/reflections

Learners, at the end of the course, were encouraged to share their feelings about the writing course. This was done as a class discussion, due to time constraints, and was recorded by me, the researcher, as a set of notes highlighting the most relevant issues that arose from the discussion.

3.6.2. Summary of data analysis

The data analysis part of this chapter navigated the reader through the data analysis processes. It included methods of analysis for the class discussion transcript (descriptive statistics), of the analytic and holistic scoring methods used on learners' essays (based on Toulmin and Knudson), of the learner observations (analysis of the research journal using descriptive statistics), and of the feedback discussion/learners' reflections (analysis of the transcript using descriptive statistics).

3.7. Validity threats

In qualitative research, rigour is reliant on the quality of observations and of the methods used by the researcher (Patton, 1980, p. 480). The credibility of research findings hinges on the trustworthiness of the researcher - whether they have given a fair representation of the experience (Patton, 1980, p.481). Brinberg and McGrath's notion of validity is that it is reliant on the integrity, character and quality of research, to be assessed relative to the purposes and circumstances (Brinberg & McGrath 1985, p. 13).

The aim of action research, which employs qualitative and quantitative methods, is to develop the immediate learning situation and the teacher's practice rather than

generate general knowledge (Todd, 2005, p. 1). In this case, research is valid if findings are produced that address the research topic (Todd, 2005, p. 1). Cunningham reinforces this notion, stating that the test for validity in action research is 'whether or not the problem in the action context is solved and locally valid' (Cunningham, 1983, p. 405).

Kvale, (1987, p. 65), coined the term 'pragmatic validation' to explain the practical approach to validity issues in action research: Pragmatic validation means that the perspective gained from the research findings is judged by its relevance to, and use by, those involved in the research, taking into account the perspectives and actions of participants and the researcher (Kvale, 1987, p. 65). Thus, validity depends on how data is used by the researcher and participants: have changes in practice occurred and has practice improved? If the answer to the above question is yes, the action has been effective (Patton, 1980, p. 484).

In light of these considerations, the learners were tested on their writing skills prior to the undertaking of the research, during the research process and after the implementation of the writing module. Through this gradual process, and through my own reflective practice, their development was traced, evidenced by the quality of their writing at the various stages of the entire process. The raw scores were based on my subjective evaluation of the learners' writing.

Overall, the main component in eliminating validity threats in this study was triangulation - a strategy for collecting data that involves obtaining as many perspectives and sources of information as possible (Elliot, 1991, p. 1). This ensures a more holistic, objective view of the study and acts as a 'cross-reference' for one's findings.

This research was valid in terms of my professional growth, as working through the processes of teaching argumentative writing, receiving input from learners, deepened my understanding of my own strengths and weaknesses as a teacher. This has been insightful and helpful in developing my own practice in order to teach my learners more effectively, as ultimately my goal is to improve my teaching. Their progress and

positive feedback was testimony to an improvement in teaching, thus validating my research.

3.8. Ethics

As recommended by Jean McNiff (1996, p. 35), I followed the appropriate procedures in attaining permission for my study:

I acquired informed consent from the principal (see appendix 3), which was confirmed by the school governing body who advised me of the necessary ethical considerations for the learners who would be participants in the study. Informed consent from learners was obtained (see appendix 4). Anonymity was guaranteed – neither the school's name nor learners' names were exposed. Right of withdrawal from the study was also allowed. One learner out of 30 learners opted not to participate.

The principal was presented with a copy of my research proposal and the implications of my research were explained to him. Learners were told exactly what the research entailed and that it was voluntary as well as confidential. They were kept informed on the progress of the research and were encouraged to ask questions or raise concerns regarding the study. The research did not in any way detract from learners being taught the syllabus, as it was done during the last week of school and first week back at school when formal lessons had ceased after the test period. In this way, it was naturally integrated into their term work as 'extra' lessons of interest, of learning something new, which they seemed to enjoy.

3.9. Limitations of Research

Generally, things ran smoothly, as scheduled. They main limitation was the video recording device that was used as a back-up plan. I had taken a very advanced digital Nikon camera to record a discussion at a crucial stage of my research. To my dismay, the batteries were flat and after scrounging around for batteries, being unsuccessful

and pressed for time, and not wanting to delay the learners' anticipation further, I was forced to compromise the Nikon for one of my learners' blackberry camera. She was the only girl in the class who had refused to participate in the study, so on the bright side, this was her contribution to the study as she volunteered to record the discussion. Despite her convincing me about the fine quality of camera phone recordings, unfortunately, the audio on the recording was dulled, which made transcription quite difficult. However, I could not repeat the event, as it would have influenced the results a second-time round and would have agitated the learners, so I had to make do. From the 30 participants, only 12 participants' work was used for analysis as only 12 learners had complete sets of data (being the end of term, there was a high rate of absenteeism and a low rate of enthusiasm amongst some learners.) However, for the requirements of this thesis, 12 x 3 drafts (learners wrote 3 essays each) proved to provide more than enough data to make a sound analysis. These scripts were those of the more motivated learners in the class, which may have influenced the outcomes of the research.

The results of this study are limited to the use of my class at this stage. Should other language teachers at my school be interested in utilizing the devised writing module, they can do so, but generalization is not the focus of my research.

3.10. Summary of Chapter

In this chapter, I have described my research methodology and the surrounding issues, such as validity and ethical concerns. I explained my research approach, action research, and how this shaped my study. I discussed my data collection techniques and gave an over-view of the data analysis process (which will be focused on in chapter 4). I provided step-by-step plans and details of lesson activities and events, and discussed how information was extracted from these events and recorded in a reliable fashion. Finally, the limitations of the study were highlighted.

Chapter 4
Findings

4.1. Introduction

This chapter will present the results of the study. The study involved explicit teaching of the processes of argumentative writing and aimed to access the effectiveness of the process-genre teaching and learning approach to writing. First, findings of the class discussion before the onset of writing essays will be discussed, as this was a precursor to the writing process in terms of assessing learners' knowledge of debates/familiarity with argumentative writing.

Thereafter, the actual scores of the learners' writing - their preliminary essays, first drafts and final drafts, will be presented and interpreted, to ultimately show the variance between the three stages of writing to get an indication as to whether learners improved or not by the end of the final draft.

My feelings (as the researcher) about the two week long process of teaching and learning will be conveyed, based on my observations and insights into discussions and group activities, as well as individual responses, that weren't formally recorded but that were written down in my research journal.

Lastly, the short discussion that was had after the completion of the final draft/ at the end of the study will be discussed to reveal the feelings of the learners towards the study and the teaching/learning process.

4.2. Analysis of class discussion (before the writing process)

The entire class of 30 learners engaged in a discussion over debates and argumentative writing. This was just after they had done a debate in class, having discussed the basic rules of debating. They were asked about their knowledge and

feelings about oral debates and how to translate this into written arguments. The recording was transcribed (see appendix 7), themes were drawn from the transcription and these will be discussed in terms of the frequency of their emergence throughout the discussion:

The discussion revealed that learners were mostly concerned over the structures of a debate. This arose most frequently during the discussion. They pointed to the need for structure in an oral debate and that a debate is similar to writing an essay in terms of structure - 'it must start with the topic and move on to the main points' (Learner 3). This point was reiterated and learner 3 was aware that the definition of the topic and the main point are the starting block for an argument, with learner 4 saying that the main point then needs to be supported by smaller arguments. When asked about argumentative writing, learner 2 emphasised the need for an introduction, body and conclusion in an essay and explained what each entailed.

Secondly, learners seemed to be aware of the persuasive nature of arguments. This theme was second highest in terms of frequency. Learner 2 stated twice that the importance of an argument is getting a point across, and learner 1 also pointed to the need for the speaker to convince the audience.

Learners also recognised the usefulness of argumentation in life in general; Learner 5 said that debating skills would be useful in the business world but did not elaborate. Learner 6 said that it is useful to consider more than one point of view.

Lastly, there was a single reference made to the pragmatics of argumentation, which could be significant in that it relates to the rules of turn-taking, which is a form of structure in an argument whereby one states one's argument, a rebuttal occurs, and one has to further defend one's position.

The findings of this discussion indicated that more than half of the learners had a moderate awareness of what oral debates involve, and claimed to be confident in the writing process, as they recognized the similarities between the two in terms of basic structuring of ideas.

4.3. Analytic and Holistic Scoring of essays

Learners' written work was accessed at the various stages - preliminary essays (stage 1), first drafts (stage 2) and final drafts (stage 3) of their essays were assessed, based on Toulmin's model of argumentation (1958), simplified by Knudson (1992). Learners' scores were calculated at the three stages and the resulting data was analysed using various methods of analysis, which will be explained. Holistic and analytic scoring was done for each of the essays which were then compared to reveal the differences in the learners' writing at each stage.

4.3.1. Improvement in quality of essay from preliminary essay to first draft and to final drafts

The differences between the preliminary essays, first drafts and final drafts were assessed based on Toulmin's model of argumentation. This provided the analytic scores for each learner. Knudson's model was applied to gather the holistic ratings of the learners' essays at each stage. The analytic and holistic scores were analysed separately and a comparison was made between the preliminary essays and the first drafts of the 12 learners by working out the correlation coefficient of the two sets of data, and then between the first drafts and final drafts. Guilford's scale of interpretations of coefficients (cited in Tredoux & Durrheim, p.184, 2002) was used to interpret the scores in order to show the variance between the preliminary essays, first drafts and final drafts.

4.3.1.1. Comparison of holistic ratings of learners' preliminary essays, first drafts and final drafts

A five-point scale, based on Knudson's model, was used to assess the learners' essays. O represents the lowest score; 5 represents the highest score. The categories that were assessed on this scale were: 1) Overall quality, 2) Rhetorical Features, and 3) Language Control (totalling 15 marks).
The scale represents the following:
   1- poor/ 2- adequate/ 3- fairly good/ 4- good/ 5- meets all the requirements.
Each of the three categories was rated out of 5.

(See appendix 5)

Using the raw scores gathered using the above scale, the means were calculated for learners' preliminary essays, first drafts and final drafts. This revealed the average score attained at each stage of writing for the 12 learners.

Table 1
Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of the Students' Preliminary, First Drafts and Final Drafts (Holistic Scores).

Students' essays	N	Mean	S.D.
Preliminary	12	6.46	1.85
First Draft	12	6.58	1.5
Final Draft	12	7.54	1.8

*The mean scores, shown in Table 1, indicate an improvement made by learners from preliminary stage to the final draft, with the biggest improvement being from the first draft to the final draft.

After the mean scores were calculated, the standard deviations of the learners' essays were calculated to show how far the scores lie from the means.

Table 2
Mean Scores and Standard Deviations and Mean Gains of students' Essays (Holistic Scores)

Students' essays	N	Mean	S.D.	Mean Gain
Preliminary	12	6.46	1.85	0
First Draft	12	6.58	1.5	0.12
Final Draft	12	7.54	1.8	0.96

*The standard deviations, shown in Table 2, indicate that the average of the first drafts lay closest to the mean, which means that learners were most consistent in writing their first drafts, did well at their final drafts, but were least consistent with

writing their preliminary essays. The mean gain was high from the preliminary essay to the first draft and was even higher from the first draft to the final draft, which reveals a general improvement in the quality of learners' essays from stage 1-3.

4.3.1.2. Comparison of analytic ratings of learners' preliminary essays, first drafts and final drafts

This process, of working out the means and standard deviations for the scores, was then repeated using the analytic scores obtained from Toulmin's model of assessment totalled out of 30 which was categorised as follows:

1) Quality of claims/ 2) Quality of Grounds/ 3) Quality of Warrants/

4) Quality of Backings/ 5) Quality of Rebuttals

Each category was out of a total of 6 marks, with 0 being the lowest score and 6 being the highest.

(See appendix 6)

For each of the argumentative components listed above (1-5), the means and standard deviations were calculated for the preliminary essays, first drafts and final drafts.

Table 3

Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of Students' Essays (Analytic Scores)

Argumentative Components	Preliminary		First Draft		Final Draft	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Claim	2.25	0.86	2.58	0.88	2.83	1.16
Grounds	1.83	1.03	2.08	1.08	2.5	1.5
Warrants	1.75	1.05	1.92	1.08	2.5	1.67
Backings	1.25	0.94	1.5	1.16	1.75	1.29
Rebuttals	0	0	0.17	0	0.17	0

*The highest mean for the preliminary essay was 'claims', which indicates that learners' did best at making claims for their arguments, and were least successful with making rebuttals. The standard deviations of the preliminary essay categories indicated that learners were most consistent in making claims - this was generally the strength of the group of learners, while the biggest weakness was in making rebuttals, as the results indicated no improvement by the final draft stage.

The highest mean for the first drafts was 'claims', once again. The lowest deviation from the means was in claims, where, once again, learners were most consistent. Only one learner included a rebuttal in his essay, but still, a null hypothesis was concluded.

In the final drafts, learners were still most successful and most consistent in making claims.

After the means and standard deviations for the analytic scores were calculated, the mean gains were determined between the preliminary essays, first drafts and final drafts in each of the 5 categories or argumentative components. This was done in order to establish how, or whether, learners had progressed from stage 1-3.

Table 4

Mean Scores and Standard Deviations and Mean Gains of Students' Essays (Analytic Scores)

Students' Essays (N=12)	Claim		Gain	Grounds		Gain	Warrants		Gain	Backings		Gain	Rebuttals		Gain
	Mean	S.D.		Mean	S.D.		Mean	S.D.		Mean	S.D.		Mean	S.D.	
Preliminary	2.25	0.86	0	1.83	1.03	0	1.75	1.05	0	1.25	0.94	0	0	0	0
First Draft	2.58	0.88	0.33	2.08	1.08	0.25	1.92	1.08	0.17	1.5	1.16	0.25	0.17	0	0.17
Final Draft	2.83	1.16	0.25	2.6	1.5	0.42	2.5	1.67	0.58	1.75	1.29	0.25	0.17	0	0

*Table 4 reveals the mean gains in each category: In 'claims', learners generally improved from their preliminary essays to first drafts, however, their scores declined in the final drafts. Other than this, all categories revealed an improvement through the stages, except in 'rebuttals', where a null-hypothesis was concluded.

4.4. Calculating the correlation coefficients between the preliminary essays, first drafts and final drafts

Lastly, the correlation coefficients ® were determined for the holistic scores, and separately, for the analytic scores. This was to show the variation between stages 1, 2 and 3. The higher the variance, the bigger the improvement from one stage to the next would be.

Guilford's scale was used to interpret the scores:

Guilford's Informal Interpretations of the magnitude of ®

Value of ® (+ or -)	Informal Interpretation
<0.2	Slight, almost no relationship
0.2 – 0.4	Low correlation; definite but small relationship
0.4 – 0.7	Moderate correlation; substantial relationship
0.7 – 0.9	High correlation; strong relationship
0.9 – 1.0	Very high correlation; very dependable relationship

4.4.1. Correlation coefficients of the analytic scores

Table 5

Correlation Coefficient ® between Preliminary Essays and First Drafts (Analytic Scores)

Student Number	(x)Preliminary Essay		(y)First Draft	xy
1	8		8	40
2	12		14	168
3	9		9	81
4	9		15	135
5	7		6	42
6	10		11	110
7	4		5	20
8	7		7	49
9	1		5	5
10	5		3	15
11	9		12	108
12	4		4	16
Sum	85		99	789
S.D.	2.81		3.75	

*Correlation Coefficient= <u>0.76</u>

*Table 5 revealed a correlation coefficient of 0.76 for the analytic scores between the preliminary essays and the first drafts which indicated a high correlation/strong relationship between the two. This means that learners made a significant improvement from their preliminary essays to their first drafts.

Table 6
Correlation Coefficient ® between First Drafts and Final Drafts
(Analytic Scores)

Student Number	(x)First Draft	(y)Final Draft	xy
1	8	9	72
2	14	14	196
3	9	20	180
4	15	15	225
5	6	6	36
6	11	15	165
7	5	5	25
8	7	4	28
9	5	6	30
10	3	7	21
11	12	13	156
12	4	2	8
Sum	99	116	1142
S.D.	3.75	5.01	

*Correlation Coefficient= 0.9

*Table 6 revealed a correlation coefficient of 0.9 for the analytic scores between the first drafts to the final drafts which indicated a very high correlation/very dependable relationship between the two. This means that an even bigger improvement was made in their final essays.

4.4.2. Correlation coefficients of the holistic scores

Table 7

Correlation Coefficient ® between First and Final Drafts (Holistic Covariance)

Student Number	(x)First Draft	(y)Final Draft	Xy
1	7	7	49
2	9	9	81
3	8.5	8.5	72.25
4	8	9	72
5	6.5	4.5	29.25
6	8.5	7.5	63.75
7	5	6	30
8	5	5.5	27.5
9	3	5	15
10	7	6	42
11	4.5	6.5	29.25
12	5.5	4.5	24.75
Sum	77.5	79	535.75
S.D.	1.85	1.5	

*Correlation Coefficient = 0.84

Table 8

Correlation Coefficient ® between First and Final Drafts (Holistic Covariance)

Student Number	(x)First Draft	(y)Final Draft	Xy
1	7	8.5	59.5
2	9	9.5	85.5
3	8.5	9.5	80.75
4	9	10	90
5	4.5	6	27
6	7.5	9	67.5
7	6	6	36
8	5.5	5	27.5
9	5	5	25
10	6	8.5	51
11	6.5	8.5	55.25
12	4.5	5	22.5
Sum	79	90.5	627.5
S.D.	1.5	1.8	

*Correlation Coefficient = 1.07

Table 9
Holistic Ratings of Students' Essays - Correlation Coefficient ® (summary of tables 7&8)

Preliminary	r	First Draft	R	Final Draft	R
(N=12)	0	(N=12)	0.84	(N=12)	1.07

*Table 9 revealed a correlation coefficient of 0.84 for the holistic scores between the preliminary essays and the first drafts which indicated a high correlation/strong relationship between the two. This means that learners improved significantly from their preliminary essays to their first drafts.

A correlation coefficient of 1.07 was obtained between the first drafts and final drafts which indicates an exceptionally high correlation/very high relationship between the first drafts and the final drafts which means that learners made considerable improvements in the overall quality of their final drafts.

(See appendix 8 for individual results contained in rubric)

4.5. Observations of learners (research journal)

The observations of learners throughout the study were recorded in my research journal. The findings were as follows:

Friday, 25 March 2011

Learners discussed the points that arose from the debate that had just taken place. The debate went off fine, however, the structure was flawed and the most important points were not made the focus of the debate. Learners presented their points sporadically, including points of little significance that were not substantiated (eg. How reducing the age at which a licence should be obtained to 16 years would result in more drivers on the road that would increase the carbon footprint.) Learners also tended to stray from the topic of: Should the age at which a driver's licence be obtained be reduced to 16 years? The participants got quite emotional about the topic and shouted out their opinions that were somewhat random and poorly argued.

Tuesday, 29 March

Afterwards, we discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the two groups of debaters and the audience managed to quite successfully pin-point some of the flaws and strengths of each argument. The participants (speakers) however were quite defensive of their positions and adamant that their points had merit. When asked to further explain their points, some learners realized that in fact, some of their points had little

relevance to the topic. At this point, the class discussion (which was discussed earlier in this chapter) took place. They then began writing their preliminary essays.

Monday, 11 April

When asked to write a preliminary essay, 20 of the learners claimed to be quite confident that they could translate their knowledge of debates to a written argument. However, their preliminary essays were generally poorly structured, and learners typically bullet-pointed their claims in non-sentences, without developing their points in a cohesive paragraph. After extensive feedback and peer-assessment, a couple of the more well-structured essays were read out to the class and learners were generally confident that they then knew how to go forward with their first drafts.

Tuesday - Friday, 12 - 15 March

The first drafts were significantly better than the preliminary essays in terms of structure, in general. Learners clearly recognized the need to elaborate their points and confine each point to a separate paragraph. However, these paragraphs did not successfully link in most cases. After feedback, learners were surprised by the number of criticisms and suggestions I had made. Overhearing their discussions amongst themselves, it was clear that they felt discouraged and had not realized the complexity involved in constructing a cohesive essay. They discussed their essays with each other, after reading my comments, having a general discussion and individual consultations, and they seemed reluctant to move on to the final draft. Many were seen trying to copy each other, and some confidently embraced the challenge. They appeared nervous and took more time than was expected to work on their final drafts, constantly seeking reassurance from friends and myself. It obviously was a difficult process for them, as they have not done formal argumentative writing before. Ten learners that I spoke to could verbalise their ideas to me in a way that made sense and was ordered, but they struggled when they had to put their thoughts onto paper.

All in all, the learners were very attentive and did a good job at trying to meet the challenge of learning this new skill. The final lesson when learners finished off their drafts was a very productive lesson. They responded well to hearing some of the essays read out at the various stages of completion, as the more modelling they had, the more they grew in confidence.

What was particularly interesting was how one learner struggled greatly to debate a topic he did not agree with. He was on the opposition team which advocated for maintaining the driver's age of 18 years. The groups were randomly assigned their topic, so he was forced to argue against his will. I realized the difficulty that learners had in placing themselves in this position - this may explain why learners hardly included rebuttals in their essays, as they are unable or unwilling to include any information that does not support their position in their argument.

4.6. Learners' feedback (notes taken of a brief class discussion)

Learners' responses from the discussion were summarized to include the most frequently stated points. The answers in the transcription, from the notes I took of learners' responses while they spoke one at a time, are paraphrased and based on general consensus. They accurately reflect the learners' actual responses. There was not enough time at the end of the term to plan and record the actual discussion. (See appendix 10)

From the discussion after the study, learners were asked to give feedback on the writing lessons. The feedback was generally positive. All the learners felt as though they were well guided through the various processes and that they were fairly confident at each stage due to the discussions, modelling on the board, feedback from myself and from their peers. They felt as though it was a worthwhile process and that they had made improvements at each stage, some greater than others. They conveyed their difficulties which mostly lay in the structuring of a debate or an argumentative essay. The easiest part of the process they found to be generating ideas and fitting these into the framework of the debate structure provided to them. However, when it

came to linking ideas, backing up their claims and making rebuttals, this proved to be more of a challenge. This could be because high demands are made on learners' language competence. There are many factors involved in learners' mastery of elaborated arguments, as discussed in the literature review. Basically, rebuttals involve a higher level of reasoning, for which younger learners need time and practice to develop. To see things from a point of view other than your own takes maturity of thought; the more learners are exposed to multiple view-points, they will learn to consider alternative points of view. Unfortunately, time limitations for this study did not allow for such developments, and perhaps this would make an interesting study for further research, as will be discussed in the final chapter.

Interestingly, throughout the writing stages, learners tended to make moral justifications surrounding topics in terms of the repercussions for holding such a belief (as proposed in the topic), a point highlighted by Stein (Stein et. al., 1995) that is common in younger debaters. They were slightly less subjective towards the final stage of their essays, but certainly some of the learners wove their opinions and stereotypes into their writing throughout the process. It certainly appears that learners are indeed better at arguing familiar or favoured topics, as stated by Voss & Segal (1991), which means learners should be given the opportunity to choose their position on a topic at the early stages of learning about argumentation, in order for them to become confident in arguments, before taking the next, more complex step, of arguing against their own opinion.

Generally, learners were happy with the way the module was taught and with their improvements, and said that they would feel confident to write an argumentative essay in the future. They found the entire process to be useful.
(See appendix 11&12 for sample of learner's work and marking done on essay using the analytic and holistic rubrics).

My personal opinion on the success of this study is that my teaching practice seemed to improve. In the past, lesson plans were not thought of holistically; rather, I would envision the bigger picture of a writing task, but plan daily and often fade the exercise out after a few days. This was the first time that I actually planned a writing course. It

was well thought out, researched (for the purposes of this study) and structured in a comprehensible way for learners.

I have usually compiled sets of notes for learners independently, and this was also the first time that learners had an input into the compilation of their writing module, which ultimately consisted of the ideas generated by them in class discussions. It was useful for me to ask their opinions, and perceived strengths and weaknesses in their writing, as what I thought would be 'easy' for them to accomplish, was not necessarily the case (like rebuttals). I don't think that I was ever truly aware of learners' needs when it came to writing in general, as still, it was apparent that some learners did not entirely understand what constitutes an introduction or conclusion! It taught me that I cannot take for granted that learners should be at a certain level of competence or understanding because they are in a certain grade. Even the basic skills of writing (like what to include in a conclusion), must repeatedly be revised with learners. So, we started at the rudimentary stages of writing with this course, first discussing the basic aspects of writing, and then fine-tuning this to meet the requirements of argumentative writing.

I believe this approach was effective, as it took learners back to ground level so that they could all 'launch off' this task together. Their involvement in the study, generally, was very satisfactory. They showed keenness and the more dedicated learners tried hard to not only do well, but to make improvements at each step. I am glad that I undertook this study with my learners as I think our familiarity definitely made things easier and to my advantage; I knew the levels at which the learners were with their writing. I feel this writing course was beneficial to learners, as they can utilise their acquired skills in their daily lives and in their senior phase of schooling, and they learnt something new. I learnt a lot from the course myself, in terms of how learners think about things in ways that are completely strange to me (in terms of their reasoning processes and their difficulty with considering multiple view points). Extensive nurturing is required for them to develop skills which they informally possess (as naturally argumentative human beings), yet cannot formally present (in terms of structuring of arguments to achieve logic and coherence). This gap between conceptualization to linearization, as discussed in the literature review whereby learners move beyond thinking or conceptualizing to actually presenting, writing

down, their thoughts, is what needs to be bridged, which is the whole point of an intervention like this.

Now knowing the complexities and difficulties learners have in learning the argumentative writing genre, I hope to someday take this study forward and spend more time on learners' writing, accessing their work in more detail, and developing their writing in those areas.

What I could have done better, and what I have subsequently thought about, is taking more extensive notes in my research journal. I think that as a first-time researcher, it is a bit overwhelming to coordinate all the aspects of the study, and record details, whilst trying to conduct a lesson and strategize the next step. I realized that my journal, at the end of the study, looked more like a log book. I had mostly recorded my strategies and discussed my lesson plans, but had not written down my insights and feelings of the process in detail. I definitely think that research the next time round would run more smoothly. Besides that, the order of events and activities ran rather smoothly and I was very systematic in planning the lessons, which paid off in the end when I gathered all my data in time and without much trouble.

4.7. Summary of Chapter

This chapter has summarised the findings from the study. It includes the results obtained from the various methods of data collection: from class discussions, holistic and analytic scoring of learners' essays, to learner observations recorded in the research journal and learners' reflections on the study, in the form of paraphrased notes from a class discussion. The next chapter will discuss the significance of these findings.

Chapter 5

Discussion of Findings and Conclusion

5.1. Introduction

This action research study aimed to improve my own teaching of argumentative writing through the development of a writing module which would be used to facilitate teaching of this complex genre of writing. This chapter will present the discussion of the study, and in particular, of the results that were gathered. It will include the limitations of the study as well as recommendations for further studies.

The study involved teaching of argumentative writing based on the process-genre approach to teaching and learning. The process-genre approach effectively combines the explicit teaching of step-by-step processes of writing alongside the social role of writing, whereby learners are taught how to access the social discourses of a particular community through learning the conventions of different genres, and how to go about, as writers, meeting the expectations held by a community (the writers' audience).

The learners were ultimately working towards producing a cohesive argumentative essay. To get to the finish line (the completion of this essay), many steps were undertaken to guide learners gradually through the process of developing a sound argument, to steps of writing up an argument and structuring it in a way that is logical, cohesive and convincing. The stages of writing included: writing of preliminary essays, first drafts and final drafts.

Before the preliminary draft was started, learners engaged in discussions about oral debates and participated in an actual debate. From there, they recognized some of the elements of argumentation and the link between this and a written argumentative essay was discussed. Learners then used a topic (chosen by the class) to be demonstrated on the board. A basic argumentative structure was modelled to them and they were instructed on how to go about mapping out their argument. Thereafter, they wrote a preliminary essay, just based on the fundamental teachings of argumentation. These were peer-assessed, their work was marked by me, as the researcher, and feedback was provided. A more elaborated argument structure was then modelled on the board, and learners used their initial ideas on which they expanded and linked to other ideas, trying to structure the argument appropriately. With a set of notes that were provided to learners, including all the instructions and requirements for argumentative writing, learners wrote the first draft of their essays. This was marked by me and feedback was provided. After another discussion on the strengths and weaknesses of their first drafts, learners embarked on writing their final essays independently.

Of the 29 learners that took part in the study, only 12 participants' work was used for data analysis as not all students produced a complete set of data, which would have lefts gaps in the findings from the data analysis. The work of these 12 learners was assessed holistically and analytically using the scoring guides of Toulmin and Knudson. The mean scores of the preliminary essays and first drafts were compared, the standard deviations were calculated and the mean gains between the sets of data were determined. Thereafter, the correlation coefficients were worked out for the holistic and analytic scores to determine the covariance between the preliminary essays, first drafts and final drafts. This revealed whether the learners had made improvements in their writing from the first stages to the final stage, which they did.

5.2 Findings

The findings of the study were as follows:

The process-genre based method of teaching and learning proved to be effective. Those learners who completed the activity in its entirety showed a good improvement

from their preliminary essays, before explicit instruction, to the first draft stage, after step-by-step instruction, modelling, joint-construction of essays with peers and with me, the researcher, and with the help of the notes provided to them on argumentative writing. An even greater improvement was made in the final drafts - learners really seem to grasp the concept of argumentation and quite successfully structured their arguments in a logical way, including various elements of an elaborated argumentative text.

5.3. Discussion of findings

5.3.1. Improvement from Preliminary Essays to First Drafts and Final Drafts

According to the results of the holistic scoring, learners showed a great improvement in the quality of their arguments from the first stages to the final stage of writing. The preliminary essays, in many cases, achieved similar scores to the first drafts in terms of the holistic quality of the learners' arguments. From the beginning, learners could successfully make claims and even back them up, to a reasonable degree, which seems to be a general ability. Learners, without sometimes knowing it, engage in arguments everyday - with their parents, friends and teachers. They have built up a very basic frame for argumentation in their schemata, from years of experience, but have never really been asked to formally present an argument. This could explain their 'natural' ability to recognise and relate to arguments, which was apparent by the 'bare threads' of argument included in their preliminary essays. However, at this stage, they could not effectively construct the argument in a way that was well-structured and cohesive, according to the genre conventions.

The analytic scores, which were based on the elements of argumentation: claims, grounds, warrants, backings and rebuttals, revealed a similar situation. Learners were most successful at making claims, yet less successful at backing them up and providing warrants for their data. They battled to grasp the concept of rebuttals, with only one learner having included a rebuttal in her argument. Nevertheless, great improvements were shown by the final draft stage, especially with linking of ideas, using connectives, to achieve cohesion.

5.3.1.1. Comparison of Preliminary Essays and First Drafts

The analytic scores revealed an overall improvement in the learners' writing, in all categories: claims, grounds, warrants, backings and rebuttals. The highest mean gains were for claims, and secondly, for grounds and backings. These were the areas in which learners made the biggest improvements. Least improvements were made in supplying warrants and making rebuttals, at this stage. The correlation coefficient for the analytic scores from the preliminary essay to the first draft was 0.76, which indicated a strong relationship between the two sets of scores, which means a good improvement was made (analysed according to Guilford's scale of interpretation).

The holistic scores revealed similar results, but this scoring was based on the overall quality of learners' essays, without too much emphasis on the technicalities of writing. The correlation coefficient of the scores was 0.84, which indicated a remarkable improvement in the quality of learners' arguments.

5.3.1.2. Comparison of First Drafts to Final Drafts

The analytic scores for the first drafts and second drafts revealed an even higher improvement than from the preliminary essays to the first drafts. A considerable improvement was made in that learners used warrants in their final drafts - the mean gain from the first draft to the final draft, for warrants, was 0.58, which is a high result. Learners also improved greatly with providing grounds for their arguments and with backing up their claims. However, they made less of an improvement in making claims in their final drafts than they did from the preliminary stage to the first draft stage. They did not improve at all in making rebuttals. This could be due to the age of these learners, who perhaps do not have vast experience in considering others' viewpoints, but are rather more inclined to defend their own position, as they really struggled with grasping the concept of inserting conflicting information into their argument and having to refute it. (Perhaps this would make for an interesting expansion of this study, whereby learners would be forced to argue a view that they are opposed to, and see whether they are able to successfully remain objective and rely on the strength of the construction their argument to convince the audience.)

The correlation coefficient for the analytic scores between the first drafts and the final drafts was 0.9. This indicated a marked improvement in the learners' writing.

The holistic scores indicated a considerable improvement in the overall quality of learners' writing, with a correlation coefficient between the first drafts and final drafts calculated at 1.07, which is higher than the highest score of the Guilford Scale, which indicates a great improvement in learners' final drafts.

5.4. General Characteristics of Learners' Writing

Preliminary Essays

All, except one, learners' preliminary essays lacked structure. An introduction and conclusion (in some cases) were included, but these were not appropriately written - non-sentences were used and opinions were expressed subjectively and emotively, for example, one learner wrote: 'I think that teenagers should not drive at 16, because they are irresponsible and chaotic'. Learners frequently inserted their opinions in the definition of the topic and throughout the essays, and especially in the conclusion which revealed some very passionate thoughts on the matter!

The body of the essays also lacked structure, with most learners writing claims in bullet-points. Once again, non-sentences were used, and the claims therefore did not make sense. The claims were very rarely backed up substantially, and very little use was made of connectives and opening sentences that attempted to link paragraphs and ideas. The preliminary essays suggested that learners knew what they were talking about, but could not effectively express thought in writing (the process of translation was not mastered.)

First Drafts

The first drafts revealed an improvement from the preliminary essays in terms of structure. More attention was paid to trying to substantiate the argument with statistics and facts; learners were clearly trying to implement the structure of a debate. A few connectives crept into learners' essays, and generally, the paragraphs were written in

full sentences in a relatively logical way. However, learners were still unsure about how to structure their content - in what order of importance to place their ideas, in a way that they all linked and supported the main idea. Points were randomly made in certain cases, and essays were quite disjointed in some cases, with learners moving back and forth with their points. Some of the claims made were totally irrelevant and not warranted at all, but just randomly asserted.

Final Drafts

The final drafts were a vast improvement from the first drafts. Learners employed structure, logic (backings and warrants), and in some cases, essays reflected the characteristics of a relatively advanced argumentative style. Introductions were done well at this stage, with much of the subjectivity having been removed from the essay, and conclusions were much improved, providing only a brief summary of the content and restating the topic. Some learners went so far as to use the terms: 'I restate the point that....'. or. 'I maintain that...'. or. 'I re-iterate...' in their conclusions, when referring back to the topic, which showed a maturity in their writing.

The bodies of the essays were improved. More than half of the learners used connectives and structured each paragraph in its entirety (starting with a claim, backing it up, providing a warrant and relating it back to the topic), before linking it to the next idea. Generally, learners logically ordered their points in terms of their importance to the topic, but occasionally neglected to provide backings and warrants for the minor points.

Overall, this was a very successful task.

5.5. Discussions with Learners and Learner Observations

From the discussions had with the learners, at the initial stages of the study, and again at the end, it was evident that most learners had grown in confidence in their ability to write an argumentative essay and all learners made improvements in their writing by the final stage of the process. At the beginning of the study, learners obviously were not too familiar with the processes of writing. They spoke about introductions, bodies

and conclusions in their writing, but this was because they knew this is the standard structure of writing any essay. They discussed their confidence in doing oral debates, but were less responsive when asked about the criteria for written debates.

The discussion, of which notes were taken, at the end of the study was an opportunity for learners to reflect on the writing lessons and the experience of the study as a whole. Most of the learners seemed much more confident in their argumentative writing abilities and had seen the fruits of their success in the feedback of their essays. They seemed to have enjoyed the process, and had learnt something new and interesting which they had great fun with in the discussions, and especially when debating against each other. All learners, except three who usually do not participate in class, were very responsive and really tried to make the most of the opportunity. They found the step-by-step processes of instruction and implementation, as well as the scaffolding, (which they needed up until the final stages to lead them in the right direction) very helpful.

This study proved to be worthwhile in the end and has been a huge learning curve for me, as a teacher, as I have realized the complexity of teaching a genre - that it cannot be done in a day, but that it requires careful building up of learners' knowledge and confidence, and also requires ingenuity to capture learners' interest and keep them motivated throughout the process, as it takes time and patience for them, as well as the teacher, to master the multiple aspects of argumentative writing.

5.6. Implications of the Study

The findings of this study indicated the success of teaching and learning using a process-genre approach. However, since data from only twelve learners was used for this study, the findings are not necessarily enough to draw a conclusion about writing of Grade Nine learners in general. These findings pertain to this particular class involved in the study. From these findings, it is apparent that:

1. Learners need to be explicitly taught the structures for the different genres.
2. Learners' knowledge of text construction should not be assumed because they can verbalise their ideas fluently; they need to practice and revise their writing, and the need for extensive feedback cannot be underestimated.

3. Teaching of genres is very important in preparing learners for the world at large, as it allows them to understand different social discourses and gains them access into communities using these discourses.

4. An integrated approach to teaching and learning is extremely effective and should be incorporated into other aspects of learning at schools.

5.7. Limitations of the Study

The findings of this study are confined to a small group of participants, which is appropriate for the nature of action research, with the concern being to have an immediate impact on one's own teaching environment, however, these results cannot be generalized on a large scale.

Time restrictions and trying to coincide the writing course with the grade nine syllabus meant that not as much time, as would have been preferred, was allowed to conduct the study.

5.8. Recommendations for Further Studies

In light of the above, perhaps this study could be prolonged to include other interesting aspects of argumentation in the research, as I have mentioned earlier on in the discussion.

The study could be done on a much larger scale to obtain more general findings. Perhaps various methods of teaching could be explored, in comparison to this approach, to discover whether it is more effective to teach argumentative essays from another angle.

Perhaps further research could be done on how learners argue a view point opposing their own view on an issue. This study revealed that learners were quite egocentric when it came to the argument and they were allowed to choose their position. It would be interesting to see whether, if forced to take a certain position, they would be able to argue their point as effectively as if they truly believed in what they were saying. After all, this is the art of argumentation - it is only mastered, I believe, if learners can

detach from their emotions and provide facts in favour of, or in opposition to, the point being argued that are logical and convincing, separate from their personal opinion.

This extends to rebuttals as well. The learners, in this study, generally did not fully grasp the concept of arguing against the position they had taken in order to strengthen their points. To them, it would seem to weaken their argument, but they need more practice in presenting opposing view points and refuting them, which would make for an interesting study, as this marks the maturity-level of a debater.

Thus, possible research questions for a next cycle of research could be:

- To what extent are learners able to construct an argument effectively that is in opposition to their personal beliefs on the topic?
- What is an effective method to teach young learners of argumentation how to effectively make rebuttals in their arguments?

References

Adam, J. M. (1992). *Les texts: types et prototypes – Recit, description, argumentation et dialogue* [Texts: types and prototypes – Narration, description, argumentation and dialogue]. Paris: Nathan

Allen, Robert (1989): 'Bursting bubbles: "Soap opera" audiences and the limits of genre'. In Ellen Seiter, Hans Borchers, Gabriele Kreutzner & Eva-Maria Warth (Eds.): *Remote Control: Television, Audiences and Cultural Power*. London: Routledge, pp. 44-55

Antaki, C., &Leudar, I. (1990). Claim-backing and other explanatory genres in talk. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 9, 279-292.

Badger, R. G., & White, G. (2000). A process approach to teaching writing. *ELT Journal*, 54 (2): 153- 160.

Bereiter, C., & Scardamalia, M. (1987). *The psychology of written composition*. Hillsdale N. J.: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Boheman, J. (1991). *New philosophy of social science*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Bonckart, J. P., Bain, D., Schneuwly, B., Davaud, C., & Pasquier, A. (1985). Le fontionnement du discourse. [The functioning of discourse]. Neuchatel: Delachaux et Niestle.

Borg, W. (1981). *Applying educational research: A practical guide for teachers*. New York: Longman.

Brinberg, D,. & McGrath, J. E. (1985). *Validity and the research process*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Brown, H. D. (1994). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall Regents.

Carr, W. and Kemmis, S. (1986). *Becoming Critical: Education, Knowledge and Action Research*. Basingstoke: Falmer Press.

Cazden, C. B. (1994). Language, Cognition, and ESL Literacy. Vygotsky and ESL Literacy Teaching. *TESOL Quarterly, 28*(1), 172-176.

Champaud, C. (1994). L'argumentation [The argumentation]. *Psychologie Francaise*, 39 (2), 193-203.

Chappell, P. (2004). A Genre-based Approach to Developing Oral Skills in an Adult Thai EFL Context. In *Language Teaching at FEELTA*. Fifth Pan-Asian Conference. University of Wollongong, Australia AUA Language Centre. Vladistock, Russia, June.

Charolles, M. (1980). Les formes directes de l'argumentation [Direct and indirect forms of argumentation]. *Pratiques*, 28, 7-43.

Coirier, P. (1992). *The textual setting of natural reasoning: explanation or argumentation operations?* Vth conference of the European Society for Cognitive Psychology, Paris, 12-16 September.

Coirier, P., Andriessen, J., Chanquoy, L., & Bernardi, B. de (1997). *Argumentative text writing: From planning to translating.* Paper presented at the Vth European Congress of Psychology: Invited Symposium on 'Psychology and the study of written text production', Dublin (Ireland). July, 6th-11th.

Coirier, P., & Golder, C. (1993). Writing argumentative text: a developmental study of the acquisition of supporting structures. *European Journal of Psychology of Education, 2,* 169-181.

Connor, U. (1990). Linguistic/rhetorical measures for international persuasive student writing. *Research in the teaching of English*, 24 (1), 67-87.

Cummins, J. (1984). *Bilingualism and special education: Issues in the assessment and pedagogy.* Clevedon, U.K: Multilingual Matters.

Cunningham, J. B. (1983). Gathering data in a changing organization. *Human Relations*, 36 (5), 403-420.

Department of Education. (2002). *Revised national curriculum statement grades R-9 (schools) policy.* Pretoria: Government Printer.

Elliot, J. (1991). Action Research for Educational Change. Open University Press: Milton Keyes & Philidelphia, UK.

Ferrance, E. (2000). Themes in Education. *Action Research, LAB- The Education Alliance*: Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island.

Flowerdew, J. (1993). An educational, or process, approach to the teaching of professional genres. *ELT Journal, 47*, 305-316.

Fowler, Alastair (1989): 'Genre'. In Erik Barnouw (Ed.): *International Encyclopedia of Communications*, Vol. 2. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 215-7

Fox, T. (2009). Book Review: Genre Theory: Teaching, Writing, and Being by Deborah Dean. *National Writing Project*. California State University.

Freedman, A, Show or Tell? The Role of Explicit Teaching in the Learning of New Genres. Research in the teaching of English. *National Council of Teachers of English*, 27 (3), (October 1993), pp. 222-251.

Gibbons, P. (2002). *Scaffolding language, scaffolding learning: Teaching second language learners in the mainstream classroom.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Gledhill, Christine (1985): 'Genre'. In Pam Cook (Ed.): *The Cinema Book*. London: British Film Institute

Goodman, K. (1986). *What's whole in whole language?* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books.

Grize, J.B. (1982). *De la logique à l'argumentation*, [From logic to argumentation] Genève: Droz.

Hayes, J.R. (1996).A new framework for understanding cognition and affect in writing. In C.M. Levy & S. Ransdell (Eds.), *The Science of Writing* (pp.1-27). Mahwah, New Jersey: Erlbaum

Headland, T. N., Pike, K. L., & Harris, M. (Eds.). (1990). *Emics and etics: The insider/outsider debate*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Hendricks, M. (2008a). 'Capitalising on the dullness of the data': A linguistic analysis of a Grade 7 learner's writing. In *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies 2008*, 26 (1): 27-42. South Africa.

Hendricks, M. (2008b). Grade-appropriate literacy and South African Grade 7 learners' classroom writing in English. In *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies 2008*, 26 (1). South Africa.

Hodge, Robert & Gunther Kress (1998): *Social Semiotics*. Cambridge: Polity

Human Sciences Research Council. (2006). *Mathematics and Science achievement at South African Schools in TIMMS 2003*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Hyland, K. (2003a). Genre-based pedagogies: A social response to process. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 12, 17-29.

Hyland, K. (2003b). *Second language writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Janks, H. (2006). Critical Language Awareness: Teaching the relationship between language and power. In: A. Ferreira [Ed.]. Language Teaching (pp. 237-250). Northlands, Gauteng: Macmillan.

Kapp, R. & Bangeni, B. "I Was Just Never Exposed to this Argument Thing: Using a Genre Approach to Teach Academic Writing to ESL Students in the Humanities." *Genre Across the Curriculum*. Ed. Anne Harrington and Charles Moran. Logan: Utah State University Press, 2005. 109-27.

Knudson, R. (1992). Analysis of Argumentative Writing at Two Grade Levels. *Journal of Educational Research*, 85 (3), 169- 179.

Koshy, V. (2005). *Action research for improving practice*. London: Paul Chapman.

Kress, Gunther (1988): *Communication and Culture: An Introduction*. Kensington, NSW: New South Wales University Press

Kvale, S. (1987). Validity in Qualitative Research Interview. *Methods*, Vol. 1, No. 2.

Langholz Leymore, Varda (1975): *Hidden Myth: Structure and Symbolism is Advertising*. New York: Basic Books

Lin, B. (2006). Genre-based Teaching and Vygostskian Principles in EFL: The Case of a University Writing Course. *Asian EFL Journal*, Vol. 8. No. 3. Article 2.

Livingstone, Sonia M (1994): 'The rise and fall of audience research: an old story with a new ending'. In Mark R Levy & Michael Gurevitch (Eds.) *Defining Media Studies: Reflectiions on the Future of the Field*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 247-54

Marchand, E. (1993). *Le développement des compétences textuelles et argumentatives de 11 à 17 ans*. [The development of textual and argumentative competence between 11 and 17 years] Mémoire de recherche de DEA. Université de Poitiers, Juin.

Marchand, E., Coirier, P., & Dellerman, P. (1996). Textualization and polyphony in argumentative composition. In G. Rijlaarsdam, H. van den Bergh, & M. Couzijn (Eds.), *Theories, models, and methodology in writing research* (pp. 366-380). Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Maxwell, J. A. (1992). Understanding and validity in qualitative research. *Harvard Educational Review*. Vol. 62, No. 3.

McFarland, K. P., & Stansell, J. C. (1993). Historical Perspectives. In L. Patterson, C. M. Santa, C. G. Short, & K. Smith (Eds). *Teachers are researchers: Reflection and action*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

McKernan, J. (2008). *Curriculum and Imagination: Process theory, pedagogy and Action research*. Routledge, London.

McNiff, J. (1996). *You and your action research project*. London: Routledge.

McQuail, Denis (1987): *Mass Communication Theory: An Introduction* (2nd Edn.). London: Sage

Mosala, B. (1992b, July). [Talk presented at the Bread Loaf School of English]. Middlebury, VT.

Neale, Stephen (1980): *Genre*. London: British Film Institute [solely concerned with film]; an extract can be found in Tony Bennett, Susan Boyd-Bowman, Colin Mercer & Janet Woollacott (Eds.) (1981): *Popular Television and Film*. London: British Film Institute/Open University Press

Nel, N. & Swanepoel, E. 2009. The influence on ESL student teachers' English proficiency on learners in South African schools. Unpublished paper delivered at Ninth international conference on diversity in nations, societies and organisations, held from July 16-19 July 2009, in Riga, Latvia.

Nunan, D. (1999). *Second Language Teaching and Learning*. Boston: Heinle and Heinle Publishers.

O'Brien, R. (2001). An overview of the methodological approach to action research. In Roberto Richardson (Ed.), *Theory and practice of action research*. Joao Pessoa, Brazil.

O'Sullivan, Tim, John Hartley, Danny Saunders, Martin Montgomery & John Fiske (1994): *Key Concepts in Communication and Cultural Studies*. London: Routledge

Patton, M.Q. (2nd Ed.). (1980). *Qualitative and Evaluation Research Methods.*. Sage Publications, Inc., London.

Perelman, C., & Olbrechts-Tyteca, L. (1958/1988). *Traité de l'argumentation. La nouvelle rhétorique*. [Study of argumentation. The new rhetoric] Bruxelles, Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles.

Skehan, P. (2001). Comprehension and production strategies. In C.N. Candlin & N. Mercer (Eds.), English language in its social context: A Reader (pp.75-89). London & New York: Routledge.

South Africa. Ministry of Basic Education (2010). Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements. RSA, NIED.

Stam, Robert (2000): *Film Theory*. Oxford: Blackwell

Stein, N., Bernas, R.S., Calicchia, D.J., & Wright, A. (1995). Understanding and Resolving Arguments: The Dynamics of Negotiation. In B. Britton & A.G. Graesser (Eds.), *Models of Understanding* (pp.257-286). Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Stein, N., & Miller, C.A. (1993a). The development of memory and reasoning skill in argumentative contexts: evaluating, explaining, and generating evidence. In R. Glaser (Ed.), *Advances in instructional psychology, Vol. 4* (pp. 285-235). Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Stein, N., & Miller, C.A. (1993b). A theory of argumentative understanding: relationships among position preference, judgments of goodness, memory and reasoning. *Argumentation, 7,* 183-204..

Stein, N., & Trabasso, T. (1982). Children's understanding of stories: a basis for moral judgment and dilemna resolution. In C. Brainerd & M. Pressley (Eds.), *Verbal processes in children: progress in cognitive development research*. New York: Springer Verlag.

Todd, R.W. (2005). Why do Action Research? Thonburi: King Mongkut's University of Technology.

Toulmin, S. E. (1958). *The Uses of Argument*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Toulmin, S. E. (2003). *The Uses of Argument (Updated Edition)*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Tredoux, C., & Durrheim, K. (2002). *Numbers, Hypotheses and Conclusions. A Course in Statistics for Social Sciences*. UCT Press, Cape Town.

Trochim, William M. The Research Methods Knowledge Base, 2nd Edition. Internet WWW page, at URL: <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/> (version current as of   ).

Van Dyk, T., Zybrands, H., Cillie, K. and Coetzee, M. (2010). On being reflexive practitioners: the evaluation of a writing module for first-year students in the Health Sciences. *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies*, 27(3), 333-344.

Van Eemeren, F.H., & Grootendorst, R. (1984). *Speech Acts in Argumentative Discusssions: A Theoretical Model for the Analysis of Discussions Directed Towards Solving conflicts of Opinion*. Dordrecht: Foris.

Voss, J.F., Green, J.R., Post, T.A., & Penner, B.C. (1983). Problem-solving skills in the social sciences. In G.H. Bower (Ed.), *The psychology of learning and motivation: Advances in research theory* (pp.165-213). New York: Academic Press.

Voss, J.; Perkins, D. N. & Segal, J. W. (Eds.). (1991). *Informal reasoning and education*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Watts, H. (1985). When teachers are researchers, teaching improves. *Journal of Staff Development, 6*(2), 118-127.

Webb, P., Williams, Y., & Meiring, L. (2008). Concept cartoons and writing frames: Developing argumentation in South African science classrooms? *African Journal of Research in Mathematics, Science and Technology Education*, 12 (1), 4- 17.

Weigle, S. (2002). *Assessing Writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Yan, G. (2011). A Process Genre model for Teaching Writing. Burea of Educational and Cultural Affairs Office of English Language Programmes. *English Teaching Forum*. Vol. 43, No. 3.

APPENDICES

DEBATING AND ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING- GRADE NINE

In this module, we will be learning about debating: what does it involve? Why is it important in our everyday lives? How do we go about structuring a debate?

Thereafter, we will learn how to write an argumentative essay, based on the notion of debating.

Firstly, what is a debate?

- Debates are well-structured arguments that are meant to persuade the audience to buy into a particular 'truth' of the matter being discussed.
- The aim of debating is for each side (the person/team **proposing** the debate topic and the person/team **opposing** the topic) to present their argument and **state their premises** (main points/reasons), **supporting these points** with some sort of evidence in order to strengthen their case.
- Debating is an important skill to learn for our everyday lives as we are often called upon to defend our viewpoints and to try convince people of a certain 'truth'. Lawyers, for example, require debating skills as the success of their case rests upon the **logic and coherence** of their argument.
- To debate effectively, an argument needs to be **properly structured**: the audience must be carefully led through the thought processes of the debating team in order to understand and accept the team's viewpoint.

So, how do we construct an argument?

- **Gather** information about the topic that is truthful and relevant.
- Use this to **build** a sound argument. This means that the main points must be of importance and must lead to a strong conclusion.
- The way in which we **present** our points is crucial.
    *Start with the most convincing point. This must be fully developed:
        -Make a claim.
        -Support the claim with evidence.
    *State the next point.
        -Provide support.
    Remember that each point must be contained in a separate paragraph. These paragraphs must flow logically into one another. Use connectives to link your ideas: however, in light of the above, furthermore, in addition to, it is also a fact that, relating to the above argument, it is therefore clear that... (these are just a few examples.)

The process of essay writing:

When writing an argumentative essay, it is important that you follow these steps:

1. **Brainstorm** ideas (mind-map/spider-diagram)
2. Write a **rough draft** of your essay (this is the basic framework of your essay that need not include all the details, but at least should offer the main points of each paragraph so the 'puzzle can begin to be pieced together'.)
3. **Edit** your rough draft (correct mistakes, re-structure your points if necessary, 'polish up' on your style of writing and get a friend to double-check for errors or confusions in your writing.)
4. Once you are happy with the new and improved version of your essay, re-write it in neat for your **final draft** (the one which will be handed in.)

How do we structure an argumentative essay?

Introduction- How can we 'hook' the audience?
    *Questions
    *Statistics
    *Quote
    *Challenge
    *Startling statement

Body- What do we want the audience to understand?
Are we trying to:
    *Inform
    *Inspire
    *Persuade
    *Motivate?
How do we go about doing this?
    *Give causes and effects.
    *State problems and provide solutions.
What can we offer as support for our argument?
    *Facts
    *Statistics
    *Stories

- Write each idea in a new paragraph.

Conclusion- So what is the point?

- Briefly sum-up the main points you have mentioned.
- Re-state your argument.

Appendix 2

WRITING AN ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY

An argumentative essay is a <u>formal</u> piece of writing that aims to <u>persuade</u> the reader to a particular point of view.

An argumentative piece <u>MUST</u> have the following:
- an <u>introduction</u> to the topic at hand in which you indicate your <u>approach</u> to it.
- a <u>body</u> of a number of <u>paragraphs</u> (the number depends on how many key points you have and the length of your piece). **Each new point** on the subject should start a **new paragraph** and have a few **supporting sentences**.
  You may even research **statistics** and use them to corroborate your views.
- A <u>conclusion</u>, in which you sum up your view of the topic at hand.

CASS ASSIGNMENT:

Choose one of the topics debated by members of your class. Use the points raised in the debate as well as any other information you acquire during research to write an argumentative essay in which you try to persuade your reader to your way of thinking.

□ --

Argumentative Essay Rubric (Detach and <u>attach to your essay</u>)

	1	2	3	4
Argument	Misunderstood purpose of essay – no argument	Fair attempt made but not very convincing	Good argument	Excellent – clear, convincing and thought provoking
Logical presentation of viewpoint	Poor thought progression – no evidence of planning	Evidence of planning but lacks clear thought progression	Good. Logical essay. Viewpoint makes sense.	Excellent. Cohesive logic that exceeds expectations
Style and handling of topic	Lacks understanding of topic – poorly presented	Lacks depth. Biased, narrow perspective presented.	A mature essay. Topic understood and attitude fair. Examples are used to illustrate viewpoint.	Excellent. A mature mind at work. Clearly understands both sides but is clear on own view. Argument well substantiated.
Conclusion	No obvious conclusion or clichéd	Attempted conclusion, but to no real effect.	Good conclusion. Evidence of thought and effort.	Excellent. Powerful. Thought provoking. Recognisable by shock or delight.
Grammar and Spelling	Largely unintelligible.	Poor. Numerous careless errors.	Errors few and of minor consequence.	Almost flawless.

NAME: _____   TOTAL: ____ /20

218 Moya B
Triple Point
Beacon Bay
East London
5257
30 March 2011

East London
5257

Dear

I am registered as a part time student at Rhodes University, Grahamstown (student number (610E7052). As part of my Master's degree in English Language Teaching, I am required to conduct research for my thesis. I would be most grateful if you would allow me to use Stirling High School as my site of research.
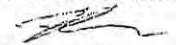
My research is on extended writing practice in Grade Nine. I have chosen this topic as there is not enough emphasis placed on writing in this grade; learners experience difficulty with the writing task requirements in subsequent grades as they are not adequately taught these essential writing skills early on. I am focusing on argumentative writing, as this is a crucial skill to master for many learning areas, as well as for social purposes. Learners need to explicitly be taught the processes of writing for maximum development of these skills.

Thus, I have proposed, as part of my action research, to devise a module on writing, in conjunction with the specified curriculum requirements for Grade Nine, based on 'constructing an argumentative essay.' I wish to work with my Grade 9/2 class, who will all be participants, unless they object. (I ask that you inform me of the necessary steps in obtaining learners' or parents' consent). The lessons given will not interfere with the syllabus; the module will develop language skills, comprehension skills and writing skills, which can only benefit the learners.

The learners will be assured of anonymity in the final research report and will be invited to proofread drafts of the report to ensure the details are accurately recorded and reported. The school's name will not be mentioned in the thesis and the thesis will be openly available to be read before it is submitted. Neither the school, nor the learners, will be harmed in anyway. The point of this research is to improve my own teaching practice; findings are exclusive to my own practice and I aim to use this research to benefit my own learners in the process.

I ask that you please consider my request. Attached is a copy of my thesis proposal. Should you have any concerns or questions regarding my request, please feel free to object or ask for clarification.

Yours faithfully

Miss J.M Elson

EAST LONDON

85

"I hereby consent to a video recording being taken of the class discussion and am aware that anonymity of work samples is guaranteed.

Name /Surname	Signature
	(signature)
	(signature)
	(signature)
	(signature)
	(signature)
	(signature)
	(signature)
	(signature)
	(signature)
	(signature)
	(signature)
	(signature)
	(signature)
	(signature)
	(signature)
	(signature)
	(signature)
	(signature)

APPENDIX A

Holistic Scoring Guide for Persuasive Writing
This scoring guide is adapted from Knudson (1992, p.176-177)

Score Point	Rhetorical and Language Control

0	Papers that attempt to address the topic but are general and vague. In general, they are not fluent, do not list or discuss reasons for any argument, and contain many errors in form. They are characterized by some of the following:
	
	• Responses that are persuasive but are unsuccessful in their presentation because of the following types of limitations:
	  o Sparse responses, so that the reader is able to obtain only a vague impression of responding to the task
	  o No more than a brief unelaborated argument
	  o Lists of words or phrases
	• Responses that attend briefly to the task but do not remain on the topic
	• Responses that exhibit a lack of control of written discourse so that communication is impaired

1	Papers that respond to the task with some argument(s) and exhibit some development of logical reasoning. They are characterized by some of the following: • Responses that contain somewhat elaborated arguments • Responses characterized by limited control of written language - the word choice may be limited; errors in usage may occur; sentence structure may be simplistic; and responses may be awkward.

2	Papers that represent good attempts at developing a persuasive argument. The reader has no difficulty understanding the student's view point. These papers are characterized by some of the following:
	• Arguments that are moderately well developed. The development of the argument may be accomplished in several ways:
	  o By stating a reason to convince the audience of a point of view and then developing that reason
	  o By stating several reasons that are not elaborated to support a point of view
	• Responses that contain several reasons to convince the audience of a point of view but have no apparent organizational strategy. The reasons presented, however, are not contradictory.
	• Responses that are only somewhat elaborated but are organized. Those responses present an overall argument.

Score Point	Rhetorical and Language Control
2	• Responses that exhibit a control of written language characterized by clarity of expression, some effectiveness in word choice, and correctness of punctuation so that the reader does not have to insert or delete punctuation to understand the point(s) made
3	Papers that represent good attempts at developing a persuasive argument. The reader has no difficulty understanding the student's view point. They are characterized by some of the following: • Arguments are moderately well developed. The development of the argument is frequently accomplished by stating a reason to convince the audience of a point of view, developing that reason, and stating several reasons that are not elaborated upon to support the point of view. • Responses are well organized. • Responses state a point of view, support reason(s) for that point of view, and may state or develop the opposite point of view.
4	Papers that respond to the task with developed and substantiated reasons/appeals. These papers ware well organized, fluent, and function as a unified piece of persuasion. They are characterized by some of the following: • Responses that are organized such that they operate as a unified piece of persuasion—they tend to have openings, to state and develop a thesis, and to have a closing. • Responses that are highly persuasive by developing and substantiating and appeal • Responses that are fluent, contain moderate/few mechanical errors, and show evidence of effective word choice
5	Papers that address the topic, state and elaborate arguments, and exhibit logical thought. These papers are outstanding. • Responses are well organized and fluent. The word choice is effective. - The organization is excellent. Punctuation is very good. Either mechanical errors do not interfere with reading the paper of there are few mechanical errors. • Responses may develop and argument to support a point of view and may list, develop, or elaborate multiple points of view.

APPENDIX B

Scoring Guide for Toulmin's Criteria for Argumentation
This scoring guide is adapted from Knudson (1992, p.177).

Element and Rating	Description
Claim	
6	Clear, complete generalizations related to the proposition are stated.
4	The reader must infer the writer's intent from information given by the writer, but enough information is given so that generalizations are related to the proposition or topic.
2	The writer's assertions are unclear and lack specificity although the generalizations are related to the proposition or topic.
0	There is no claim related to the proposition or topic.
Data	
6	The writer gives supporting data that is complete, accurate, and related to the proposition.
4	The writer gives supporting data that is related to the proposition, but not complete. The reader must infer much from the data.
2	The writer offers weak, inaccurate, or incomplete data.
0	The writer either offers no data or offers data having no relevance to the claim.
Opposition	
6	There is a systematic identification of the opposition.
4	There is an identification of opposing arguments, but these arguments are not specific.
2	There is some offering of opposition, but it is not specific.
0	There is no recognition of opposition offered.
Refutation	
6	There is systematic identification of the opposition and the opposing arguments.
4	Counterarguments are present, but the reader must provide the link between the counterarguments and the specific opposition.
2	There is a vague reference to implied opposition or a weak denial of opposition claims.
0	There is no offering of response to counter arguments.

12

Table 1 ☐ Rubrics for assessing quality of argumentation in student essays

Claims	
Quality	*Criteria*
6	The writer states generalizations that are related to the proposition and which are clear and complete.
4	The writer states generalizations that are related to the propositions, but the assertions are not complete. Enough information is available to figure out the writer's intent, but much is left to the reader to determine.
2	The writer makes generalizations that are related to the proposition, but the assertions lack specificity or offer unclear referents. The writer leaves much for the reader to infer in order to determine the impact of the claim.
0	No claim related to the proposition or unclear assertions.

Grounds	
Quality	*Criteria*
6	The supporting data are compete, accurate, and relevant to the claim.
4	The data offered are relevant but not complete. The writer leaves much for the reader to infer from the data. The writer may have offered the data without the complete citation, which would allow the reader to determine the reliability of the data as evidence. The writer may offer data, which are not complete enough to allow the reader to determine their significance.
2	The data or evidence are weak, inaccurate, or incomplete. E.g. a) an attempt at using a general principle without establishing the truth of the principle; b) the use of examples from personal experience which are not generalizable; c) the citation of data when no source is identified; and d) the use of obviously biased or outdated material.
0	No supporting data are offered or the data are not related to the claim.

Warrants	
Quality	*Criteria*
6	The writer explains the data in such a way that it is clear how they support the claim.
4	The writer explains the data in some way, but the explanation is not linked specifically to the claim.
2	The writer recognizes a need to connect the data to the claim and states some elaboration of data, but the writer fails to make the connection. Or most rules and principles are not valid or relevant.
0	No rules and principles are offered.

Backings	
Quality	*Criteria*
6	The writer states correct, relevant, and specific sources of warrants.
4	The writer states correct, relevant sources of warrants but the sources are very general, not specific.
2	The writer states incorrect, irrelevant sources of warrants.
0	No sources of warrants are given.

Rebuttals	
Quality	*Criteria*
6	The writer states complete and systematic identification of constraints of solutions.
4	The writer identifies constraints of solutions but the constraints are not sufficient.
2	The writer offers few constraints of solutions but the constraints are not elaborated.
0	No recognition of constraints of solutions.

Note. Based on Toulmin's model of argument (Toulmin, Rieke, & Janik, 1984).

Transcription of class discussion on debates and argumentative writing.

Me: Ok, so we have been learning about debating. For a week we have been discussing how to structure an argument/debate. What is a debate? How to debate…and now you are going to get onto the process of writing an argumentative essay.
So, let me ask you…What do you know about debating? What did you learn from what we've done on the board and discussed in class?
(silence)
What do we need to have a good debate?

L1: we need to have structure

Me: Good. What do you mean by structure?

L2: No shouting out.

Me: OK, no shouting out…
So with a debate, it's important to take turns. Why is it important to listen to what other people want to say?

L2: To get across their argument.

Me: So, we have to listen. The audience, in the meantime, needs to take notes and make rebuttals. Besides that, what structures do we need to have? How would you go about structuring your argument? Is it important to have structure? Keisha? How does it work?

L3: It's like writing an essay- you start with your topic and you move to the main points.

Me: Good, so you produce a topic. Alright, and with the topic we did on the board, how did we go about debating it? How did we choose what points we were going to use for the debate?

L3: We started with the main points.

Me: We started with the strongest points- the main reason why we say that driver's licences should not be reduced from age 18 to 16 for example.
Right, we chose our main reason for arguing this point and then we did what? Did we just state the reasons and leave it at that? What did we do once we stated the main reasons?

L4: We defined the topic.

Me: Ok, after we defined the topic, what did we do?

L4: We broke it down into smaller arguments.

Me: Good, so we used other arguments to support our main argument.

How did you feel you did with the debate? (Speaking to one of the debaters.)

L1: Good

Me: What were the strengths/what was good about the debate? (repeat) What did that group do well?

L1: They were convincing.

Me: Confidence? Ja!

L1: No, they were CONVINCING.

L2: It was well structured.

Me: Oh, sorry. Good. So a good argument rests on structure and that is why that group was chosen by you as having the best argument. It's also about convincing the audience. You're right. You mustn't leave any room for negotiation. You can use facts, statistics and expert opinions to back up your argument.
So, debating then…Do you think you would use it elsewhere other than in the classroom? Do you think it's a useful skill?

L5: Yes.

Me: Do you? Why do you say it's a useful skill to have?

L5: For in the business world.

Me: OK, maybe in the business world you need to do marketing, sell products, persuade people to buy things…ja…

L6: It teaches you to consider both points of view.

Me: Right, so considering others' points of view helps to expand your perception of the topic and not just defend your own topic. And debating improves these skills. How useful do you think it is to be able to write and argumentative essay? What is an argumentative essay?

L2: Getting your point across.

Me: OK, getting your point across. It's basically like a debate but you are writing out your argument.
Now, how much do you know about argumentative writing in terms of structure/how to write it? Not the content- not which ideas we should include- but how to put these ideas in order/structure them?

L2: It must also have and introduction, body and conclusion. The introduction has the topic and the body contains the points and the conclusion sums them up.

Me: Good. So in the introduction you state your topic; the body includes your main points and the conclusion summarises what you've already said.
Do you think you would be able to do your own argumentative essay?

L6: Yes.

Me: Yes? Alright. Um, we are going to give it a try and then see how we do. Then after we've done that we're going to have another discussion and we're going to see how you found that process, what you did and what you discovered, and then discuss how we can improve our writing.
Any questions? (no response)
Ok, discussion closed. Thank you very much!

Holistic Scoring Rubric				
			Student's Essay - 1	
Assessment Category=	Total	Preliminary	First Draft	Final Draft
Overall Quality	5	1	1	2
Rhetorical features	5	3	3	3
Language Control	5	3	3	3.5
	15	7	7	8.5

*1- poor
2- adequate
3- fairly good
4- good
5- meets all the requirements

Holistic Scoring Rubric				
			Student's Essay - 2	
Assessment Category=	Total	Preliminary	First Draft	Final Draft
Overall Quality	5	2.5	2.5	2.5
Rhetorical features	5	3.5	3.5	3.5
Language Control	5	3	3	3.5
	15	9	9	9.5

*1- poor
2- adequate
3- fairly good
4- good
5- meets all the requirements

Holistic Scoring Rubric				
			Student's Essay - 3	
Assessment Category=	Total	Preliminary	First Draft	Final Draft
Overall Quality	5	2.5	2.5	3
Rhetorical features	5	3.5	3.5	3
Language Control	5	2.5	2.5	3.5
	15	8.5	8.5	9.5

*1- poor
2- adequate
3- fairly good
4- good
5- meets all the requirements

Holistic Scoring Rubric				
			Student's Essay - 4	
ssessment Category=	Total	Preliminary	First Draft	Final Draft
Overall Quality	5	2	2.5	3.5
Rhetorical features	5	3	3	3
Language Control	5	3	3.5	3.5
	15	8	9	10

- poor
2- adequate
3- fairly good
good
meets all the requirements

Holistic Scoring Rubric				
			Student's Essay - 5	
Assessment Category=	Total	Preliminary	First Draft	Final Draft
Overall Quality	5	1.5	1	1.5
Rhetorical features	5	2.5	2.5	2.5
Language Control	5	2.5	1	2
	15	6.5	4.5	6

*1- poor

2- adequate

3- fairly good

4- good

5- meets all the requirements

Holistic Scoring Rubric				
			Student's Essay - 6	
Assessment Category=	Total	Preliminary	First Draft	Final Draft
Overall Quality	5	2.5	2.5	3
Rhetorical features	5	2.5	2.5	2.5
Language Control	5	3.5	2.5	3.5
	15	8.5	7.5	9

*1- poor

2- adequate

3- fairly good

4- good

5- meets all the requirements

Holistic Scoring Rubric				
			Student's Essay - 7	
Assessment Category=	Total	Preliminary	First Draft	Final Draft
Overall Quality	5	1	1	1
Rhetorical features	5	3	3	3
Language Control	5	1	2	2
	15	5	6	6

*1- poor

2- adequate

3- fairly good

4- good

5- meets all the requirements

Holistic Scoring Rubric				
			Student's Essay - 8	
Assessment Category=	Total	Preliminary	First Draft	Final Draft
Overall Quality	5	1	1.5	1
Rhetorical features	5	3	3	3
Language Control	5	1	1	1
	15	5	5.5	5

*1- poor

2- adequate

3- fairly good

4- good

5- meets all the requirements

Holistic Scoring Rubric		Student's Essay - 9		
Assessment Category=	Total	Preliminary	First Draft	Final Draft
Overall Quality	5	1	1	1
Rhetorical features	5	1	3	2
Language Control	5	1	1	2
	15	3	5	5

*1- poor

2- adequate

3- fairly good

4- good

5- meets all the requirements

Holistic Scoring Rubric		Student's Essay - 10		
Assessment Category=	Total	Preliminary	First Draft	Final Draft
Overall Quality	5	1	1	1.5
Rhetorical features	5	3	2	4
Language Control	5	3	3	3
	15	7	6	8.5

*1- poor

2- adequate

3- fairly good

4- good

5- meets all the requirements

Holistic Scoring Rubric		Student's Essay - 11		
Assessment Category=	Total	Preliminary	First Draft	Final Draft
Overall Quality	5	1	2	2.5
Rhetorical features	5	2	3	3
Language Control	5	1.5	1.5	3
	15	4.5	6.5	8.5

*1- poor

2- adequate

3- fairly good

4- good

5- meets all the requirements

Holistic Scoring Rubric		Student's Essay - 12		
Assessment Category=	Total	Preliminary	First Draft	Final Draft
Overall Quality	5	1	1	1
Rhetorical features	5	2	1	3
Language Control	5	2.5	2.5	1
	15	5.5	4.5	5

*1- poor

2- adequate

3- fairly good

4- good

5- meets all the requirements

Analytic Scores

(handwritten left margin: Preliminary Essays / First draft / Final draft)

12

Table 1 ☐ Rubrics for assessing quality of argumentation in student essays

Claims

Quality	Criteria
6	The writer states generalizations that are related to the proposition and which are clear and complete.
4	The writer states generalizations that are related to the propositions, but the assertions are not complete. Enough information is available to figure out the writer's intent, but much is left to the reader to determine.
2	The writer makes generalizations that are related to the proposition, but the assertions lack specificity or offer unclear referents. The writer leaves much for the reader to infer in order to determine the impact of the claim.
0	No claim related to the proposition or unclear assertions.

Grounds

Quality	Criteria
6	The supporting data are compete, accurate, and relevant to the claim.
4	The data offered are relevant but not complete. The writer leaves much for the reader to infer from the data. The writer may have offered the data without the complete citation, which would allow the reader to determine the reliability of the data as evidence. The writer may offer data, which are not complete enough to allow the reader to determine their significance.
2	The data or evidence are weak, inaccurate, or incomplete. E.g. a) an attempt at using a general principle without establishing the truth of the principle; b) the use of examples from personal experience which are not generalizable; c) the citation of data when no source is identified; and d) the use of obviously biased or outdated material.
0	No supporting data are offered or the data are not related to the claim.

Warrants

Quality	Criteria
6	The writer explains the data in such a way that it is clear how they support the claim.
4	The writer explains the data in some way, but the explanation is not linked specifically to the claim.
2	The writer recognizes a need to connect the data to the claim and states some elaboration of data, but the writer fails to make the connection. Or most rules and principles are not valid or relevant.
0	No rules and principles are offered.

Backings

Quality	Criteria
6	The writer states correct, relevant, and specific sources of warrants.
4	The writer states correct, relevant sources of warrants but the sources are very general, not specific.
2	The writer states incorrect, irrelevant sources of warrants.
0	No sources of warrants are given.

Rebuttals

Quality	Criteria
6	The writer states complete and systematic identification of constraints of solutions.
4	The writer identifies constraints of solutions but the constraints are not sufficient.
2	The writer offers few constraints of solutions but the constraints are not elaborated.
0	No recognition of constraints of solutions.

Note. Based on Toulmin's model of argument (Toulmin, Rieke, & Janik, 1984).

Learners' feedback (notes taken of a brief class discussion)

*The responses are summarized to include the most poignant parts of the discussion/the general consensus, and the dialogue has been paraphrased, but accurately reflects learners' opinions.

Q.1. : How do you feel about the entire debating and writing process over the last few weeks? What did you find difficult or easy to do?

A: Difficulty (the highest three points of difficulty in debates)
- deciding which points were relevant to the topic
- where to place the points within the debate (order of importance)
- to defend a position that they did not themselves agree with.

(the most difficult aspects of argumentative writing)
- Structuring of the debate
- Wording paragraphs effectively to link ideas
- REBUTTALS!

Easy (concepts they perceive they have mastered in debating)
- The brainstorming process/gathering ideas
- Defending their positions

(concepts they perceive they have mastered in their written arguments)
- Making good claims
- Using statistics and expert opinion to back-up claims
- Definitions of topic/stating a position

Q.2.: Do you think it helped to have the argument placed on the board and being taught exactly how to structure the debate?

A: Yes, definitely (general consensus)
Seeing the structure makes it easier to grasp what needs to be done/ it's like a writing 'pattern'.

Q.3.: Was it useful to have the notes provided to you at each stage of writing or would you have preferred the detailed notes at the beginning of the study?

A: It was better to have notes explained simply at first, and then more complicated to get used to the basics before trying to write a complicated argument. Step-by-step preferred, at various stages of difficulty, to 'break up' the challenge.

Q.4.: Do you think you have learnt something from this? Did you make improvements in your writing?

A: Yes, we understood it better at each stage of writing.

Q.5.: Will this be of any use to you in other subjects, and anytime outside of school?

A: Yes, argumentation is a valuable skill that's needed many a time, such as in the social science class.

Q.6.: Do you feel confident to write another argumentative essay on your own based on what you've learnt?

A: Yes, but we may get stuck at times- then assistance will be required, but we know the basics.

Learner Work (6)
Sample.

Structure of a Simple debate

Topic : (any topic)

Step 1 : state / define topic

Step 2 : statistic / fact / quote

Step 3 : reason (main support)

Step 4 : conclude (re - state argument)

* <u>Preliminary Essay</u>

This essay will argue against the age at which you can obtain a drivers licence being dropped to 16. There are a lot of reasons as to why the age should not be dropped. These particular reasons are:

1. Teenagers at the age of 16 are not mature enough to handle the responsability. They are not old enough to be able to make good and valid decisions about their safety and the safety and the safety of other drivers around them.

2. At the age of 16, a teenagers brain has not fully developed. This affects their ability to reason on the roads. This is a <u>scientifically proven fact</u>. <u>It is also</u> the cause of many accidents

    <u>what is.</u> be specific

3. Teenagers are very self-concious so their urge to show off and impress is hazzardous. Activities like drag racing take place as they wish to show how fast their car is ... relate to topic

I conclude by saying that teenagers are not yet ready to drive and therefore the age at which a drivers lisence should not be dropped. More experience is required.

Structure of Debate

* Introduction — how can you hook your audience?

questions
date of statistic
quote
challenge
starting statement

* Body — what do you want the audience to understand?

inform   → cause + effect
inspire   problems + solutions
persuade   ↓
motivate   support → facts
                          statistics
                          stories

* Conclusion — Why does this argument matter to you?

→ send your message
challenge audience
call them to act

Argumentative essay   1 draft

This essay will argue against the age at which you can obtain a drivers licence being dropped to 16. There are (a)lot of reasons why (this) shouldn't be dropped. The reasons are:

①X At the age of 16, teenagers are not fully matured and they are not old enough to make their own good and valid decisions. It is scientifically proven that its also the cause of many accidents

→ last sentence doesn't make sense.

②X At the age of 16, a teenagers brain has not fully developed which means they are unable to make sound judge- capable of doing stupid things on the road, that can cause accidents. This is also scientifically proven; its another cause of major accidents.

→ What is, exactly.

③X Furthermore,
teenagers are very self-concious which can cause them to show off and want to impress other people on the streets. Peer-pressure also leads to drag racing, where they want to show off how fast their cars are, This results in accidents that may cause injury or death.

In conclusion, I recommend that the age at wh of you obtaining a driver's licence shouldn't be reduced as it will cause major car accidents; for all the above maintain reasons

6

The link between your ideas is unclear. You need to fully explain each point, being precise about what you are saying.

Essay needs development and re-wording in some places. See changes I have made.

5

104

Argumentative essay   — FINAL

This essay will argue against the age at which you can obtain a drivers lisence being dropped to 16. There are a lot of reasons why the age shouldn't be drop. The reasons are:

At the age of 16, teenagers are not fully mature and they are not old enough to make their own decisions.

At the age of 16, a teenagers brain has not fully developed which means they are unable to make solid judgements. This is also scientifically proven that the brain of teenager at the age of 16 is not fully developed.

Furthermore, good teenagers are very self-concious which can cause them to show off and want to impress other people on the streets. Per-pressure also leads to drag racing, where the want to show off how fast their cars are. This results in accidents that may cause injuries or deaths.

In conclusion, I maintain that the age at which you obtain a drivers lisence shouldn't be reduced it will cause major car accidents, for all the above reasons.

Essays

Preliminary *first draft* *Final drafts*

Analytic Scores

(6)

Appendix 12

12

Table 1 ☐ Rubrics for assessing quality of argumentation in student essays

Preliminary	First draft	Final drafts	
3	3	4	**Claims** — Quality / Criteria

6 The writer states generalizations that are related to the proposition and which are clear and complete.
4 The writer states generalizations that are related to the propositions, but the assertions are not complete. Enough information is available to figure out the writer's intent, but much is left to the reader to determine.
2 The writer makes generalizations that are related to the proposition, but the assertions lack specificity or offer unclear referents. The writer leaves much for the reader to infer in order to determine the impact of the claim.
0 No claim related to the proposition or unclear assertions.

| 3 | 3 | 4 | **Grounds** — Quality / Criteria |

6 The supporting data are compete, accurate, and relevant to the claim.
4 The data offered are relevant but not complete. The writer leaves much for the reader to infer from the data. The writer may have offered the data without the complete citation, which would allow the reader to determine the reliability of the data as evidence. The writer may offer data, which are not complete enough to allow the reader to determine their significance.
2 The data or evidence are weak, inaccurate, or incomplete. E.g. a) an attempt at using a general principle without establishing the truth of the principle; b) the use of examples from personal experience which are not generalizable; c) the citation of data when no source is identified; and d) the use of obviously biased or outdated material.
0 No supporting data are offered or the data are not related to the claim.

| 2 | 2 | 4 | **Warrants** — Quality / Criteria |

6 The writer explains the data in such a way that it is clear how they support the claim.
4 The writer explains the data in some way, but the explanation is not linked specifically to the claim.
2 The writer recognizes a need to connect the data to the claim and states some elaboration of data, but the writer fails to make the connection. Or most rules and principles are not valid or relevant.
0 No rules and principles are offered.

| 2 | 3 | 3 | **Backings** — Quality / Criteria |

6 The writer states correct, relevant, and specific sources of warrants.
4 The writer states correct, relevant sources of warrants but the sources are very general, not specific.
2 The writer states incorrect, irrelevant sources of warrants.
0 No sources of warrants are given.

| 0 | 0 | 0 | **Rebuttals** — Quality / Criteria |

6 The writer states complete and systematic identification of constraints of solutions.
4 The writer identifies constraints of solutions but the constraints are not sufficient.
2 The writer offers few constraints of solutions but the constraints are not elaborated.
0 No recognition of constraints of solutions.

Note. Based on Toulmin's model of argument (Toulmin, Rieke, & Janik, 1984).

10 11 15

30

Holistic Scoring Rubric				
		Student's Essay - 6		
Assessment Category=	Total	Preliminary	First Draft	Final Draft
Overall Quality	5	2.5	2.5	3
Rhetorical features	5	2.5	2.5	2.5
Language Control	5	3.5	2.5	3.5
	15	8.5	7.5	9

*1- poor
2- adequate
3- fairly good
4- good
5- meets all the requirements

106

Lesson activities

Date Schedule

... 9/2)   23/3 (Mon.)

\# Debate discussion — Points ect gord debate (brainstorm on board).
  --- taught simple structure (on board)
  -- chose topic to debate grouped into 2 teams.

\# Presented debate 25/3 (Fri).
  - discussed strengths.
  - gave feedback.

* Video recorded 29/3 (Tu.).
  discussion. How much do you know:
  ① — what is an argumentative essay?
  you could write essay.
  ② — What makes a good argumentative essay?
  ③ — How important do you think argumentative writing is?

        30/3 (April)

* Ran assessment of preliminary essay – mark acd. to checklist (Tc)

- Learn proper structure A
  distribute module
  /model in broad group
  C/hrl.
  Start individual writing task

* Holidays (1 – 11 Apr) (given notes).
  Complete 1st draft of essay.

✗ Complete 1st draft 11/4 (Mon)

✗ peer editing submit draft 13/4 (Wed)

✗ Hand essays back to learners with feedback. /Discussion 15/4 (Fri)

✗ write final draft + submit on 20/4 18/4 (Mon)

week
1.3
                    23/:

we had
a day project on active
debate with (the principle of laws)
we discussed points at a speci-
debate, decided on a topic
wrote the steps in the book.
A prop. + opp. team was chosen
arguing: 'Should the next
at which often ... debates
... be arranged to 16?'
we discussed the roles of both
teams, and of the various
speakers, and they had to
come up with 1 main + 3 sub
ideas per team.
structure was done more
simplistically than in a real
debate, to ease them into
the art of speaking (without
worrying too much about
strict conventions at this stage)

Simple structure:

<u>Topic</u> : Should the age at which you obtain a driver's licence be dropped to 16?

<u>Step 1</u> : State topic
/ What your team is arguing
← Proposing team — for
← Opposing team — against

<u>Step 2</u> : Grab attention
— Use interesting fact / statistic / quote to open your argument.

<u>Step 3</u> : Points / Reasons

|- Main point (provide support)
|- Sub points ("   "   )
/ Use t'
(argue against other team's point

to strengthen your own argument

<u>Step 4</u> : Conclude
/ (Re-state argument offer alternative soluti perhaps.)

- The class was given a lesson to plan the debate, being split into 2 teams.
- Tomorrow they will practice, before presenting the debate

Friday.   5 /

- Learners discussed the points that arose from a debate they had today.
- The debate went fine, the structure was flawed and the most important points were not made the focus

there was much straying from the topic. I provided feedback to the teams, as did the audience.

Tues 29/3

Today we discussed what they (the learners) know about constructing an argumentative essay (after having discussed and practiced a verbal debate). This was recorded (video) and will be transcribed. Thereafter they started with a preliminary exercise – writing up the essay based on the debate (1st draft) Notes provided 11/4.

Learners were asked to work on their essays during the holiday. Today they completed their 1st draft of essays. Learners were fairly confident with their writing and were provided notes to facilitate them. Before they began, their memories were refreshed with a recap discussion of how they should be structuring the essay, with reference to their essays being made.

Peer-editing & submit draft. 13/4
                            15/4
Fri

First drafts of essays were marked & feedback provided to learners along with their essays. Individual discussion about general weaknesses & strengths of

2c/4

used.

Learners worked on completing the final draft & submitted.

---

their writing and a couple of essays were read to the class — two very good ones, and one which had good points and a well-strung argument, but lacked structure.

Learners recognized the importance of structure after seeing the script — made difficult to read by lack of paragraphs, introduction and a weak conclusion. Learners had a chance to discuss their essays with other learners, refer to their notes (& feedback) and ask me for help before starting on the final draft. It helped for them to hear an example of a well-constructed, coherent essay. It was a very productive lesson.