CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

LTM	Long Term Memory
JC	Junior Certificate
JSS	Junior Secondary School
ESL	English as a second language
L1	First language or Mother- Tongue
L2	Second language
RNPE	Revised National Policy on Education

CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Botswana is situated in Southern Africa. The Southern African region consists of ten countries namely: Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Botswana, formerly known as the Bechuanaland Protectorate, became independent in 1966. The country was ruled by the British between 1885 and 1965. As a result of her past colonial contact with Britain, English is very important in Botswana. It is an official language in the country and a medium of instruction in schools and institutions of higher learning. It is a major language of communication within the country, the Southern African region of which Botswana is a member, the continent of Africa and globally.

After independence, efforts were made through various education policies to enhance the teaching and learning of the English language in Botswana (Republic of Botswana, 1977, Republic of Botswana, 1994). These documents envisioned the effective preparation of students for life, citizenship and world of work. In addition, modern trends dictate the necessity for highly proficient skills in English which has become a globalized language. Mckay (2004) states that currently in many countries today, there is tremendous pressure to learn English. This has resulted in some previously conservative countries such as China and Japan encouraging their citizens to develop English speaking and writing skills.

In the document, *Long Term Vision for Botswana* (Republic of Botswana, 1997), communication is prioritised as the Batswana (the people of Botswana) are envisioned as an, 'educated and informed nation by the year 2016.' A pertinent paragraph says:

> Botswana will have entered the information age on an equal footing with other nations. The country will have sought and acquired the best available information technology, and have become a regional leader in the production and dissemination of information (Republic of Botswana, 1997:5).

Further, Recommendation 31 of the *Revised National Policy on Education (RNPE)* (Republic of Botswana, 1994) emphasises proficiency in the use of English, as a tool for effective communication, study and work, as well as an important goal of Junior Secondary Certificate curriculum. This being the case, there is tremendous pressure on the students of junior secondary schools to have competency in English language speaking and also develop the skills of writing effectively in the language.

As stated above, the importance of English within the entire school curriculum cannot be over-emphasised. As well as being an official language in Botswana and in most of the countries in the Southern African region, English is also a major language of communication and commerce, not only internally, but regionally and in the wider global context. It has significant importance in the field of education and functions as a medium of instruction across the curriculum. It is also an access language in technology and information services. In addition, it facilitates the acquisition, creation and documentation of knowledge. It is the medium of instruction and the language through which a great deal of learning takes place, and thus has a significant and prominent place in the Botswana education system (Republic of Botswana, 2000).

1.2. Problem Statement

Teachers of English as a second language (ESL) grapple with the problem of students' inability to do extended writing, especially at the junior secondary level in Botswana. The current Junior Certificate (JC) English syllabus (1996) details the objectives and expected outcomes for learners of the English language as follows:

- Communicate accurately, appropriately and effectively in speech and writing, both in and outside school;
- Understand and respond to what they hear, read and experience in a range of situations, settings and media;
- Enjoy reading a range of literature, not only fiction but also general interest works and materials;
- Convey information, and logically order and present facts and ideas based on other subjects of the curriculum; and
- Recognize and use different registers, implicit meaning and non-verbal communication appropriate to the situation (Republic of Botswana, 1996: ii).

The above five outcomes are directly linked to the development of language skills which includes the ability to write effectively. The Junior Secondary Syllabus in English (Republic of Botswana, 1996) states in part, that, ' the work involved enables pupils to gain further practice in the key areas of listening, speaking, reading and writing, consolidating these skills in interesting and communicative ways that enrich pupils' day to day language'(p. ii).

Literature and experience of the researcher indicate that both teachers and students face problems in the teaching and learning of English composition writing at the junior secondary level, and that the difficulties have been persistent over the years. In fact, there is continued noticeable poor performance of students in written English as highlighted by various government documents. The annual report of the Junior Certificate (JC) English Examination in 2001, recommended among other measures, that:

i)   Teachers expose learners to varied reading materials and topics in order to enhance their creativity, develop vocabulary and generally enhance language acquisition and learning.

ii)   Teachers equip the learners with all the sub-skills of writing, giving lots of practice (Ministry of Education, 2001).

Again, a survey project report of the learning achievement of Standard Four Pupils produced by the Botswana Ministry of Education (2001) indicates that, even at the primary school level, only 21.9% of the pupils tested reached the competency level in literacy in English domains. Actually, for composition writing, the percentage competence was 7.2%. Furthermore, the Botswana Ministry of Education Report of the Junior Certificate for English Paper 2 (2005), which consists of composition and letter writing, notes that some centres attained a pass rate of just below 50% and that there were persistent errors arising from the problem of limited vocabulary; and presumably lack of exposure to wider reading. As a result, the following were recommended for composition writing:

i.   Candidates be exposed to varieties of writing such as narrative, descriptive, persuasive and argumentative, to cite a few examples.

ii.   There is also a need to equip candidates with adequate skills and training in the area of continuous writing.

iii. Other intervention strategies may include language games, essay competitions, debates, vocabulary log books etc. (Ministry of Education, 2005; 2001).

In addition, from the researcher's experience as a junior secondary school teacher, there was constant discussion of frustration on the part of teachers at the students' lack of adequate progress in the area of English composition writing.

Another important factor in students' inadequate writing ability is the entry-level competence of Standard Seven School leavers admitted to form one of junior secondary schools. Arthur (1993) cited in Mooko (1996) in one ethnographic study which pertains

to the type of writing practice that Standard Six pupils received in two primary schools in Botswana, observed that most of the writing was confined to copying notes from the board. Other activities involved guided writing in which students did cloze exercises and sentence completion. Arthur further argues that students' writing tended to vary only with respect to surface level accuracy, otherwise, students' work tended to be quite homogenous as students stick to teacher controlled form and content. In a related statement, Rowell (1991) points out that teachers and administrators in Botswana have made frequent references to inadequacies of students' written English by the time they enter form one of junior secondary school. It is believed that the inability of students to develop the skill of composition writing at the earliest stages of education, has contributed in no small measure to poor performance in writing through junior secondary school, and consequently, beyond that level.

Mooko (1996) elaborates on the problems encountered in the ways composition writing is taught in schools in Botswana, and the fact that students are not given enough writing practice. Fuller and Snyder (1990) observe in their classrooms study of writing in Botswana that, only one percent (1%) of the time allocated to English in primary and secondary classrooms was devoted to writing essays. They also noted that although teachers consistently assigned written work, only a small proportion was devoted to writing short essays in class. Rowell (1991) again deduces that junior secondary students are not given adequate instruction on composition writing. She further reports that her study revealed that instances where students were given the opportunity to write paragraphs and compositions were quite rare as teachers felt that students were not capable of performing such tasks.

This situation has contributed a great deal to the difficulties students are having in the learning of composition writing in schools. Besson-Molosiwa (1990) suggests that the reason why few writing exercises are assigned is because there are too many students in each class. It is also observed that many teachers avoid giving students compositions to write, citing class size as an excuse. It can be deduced that teachers are discouraged by the amount of assessment that they will have to do if they were to give more written

work. As a result of this, teachers restrict the amount of continuous/extended writing that students do and avoid doing a lot of marking or grading.

The issue of class size in most government owned public schools is real and needs to be addressed. However, the use of the traditional approach to composition writing may be accountable for this situation as it emphasizes mistakes in marking, as opposed to the process approach to composition writing that eliminates mistakes/errors in the process of writing, and thereby eliminates any tedious assessments that the teachers may have to do.

In addition to the various challenges encountered in the teaching of composition writing, especially at the junior secondary level, is the factor of the teaching and learning of English as a second language (L2) which has always been a challenge to teachers. As a result of all these constraints, it becomes important that educators find ways of exploring the difficulties of teaching and learning of English composition writing in junior secondary schools in Botswana, with a view to coming up with solutions that would help to improve students' performance in that aspect of English language education.

1.3. Aim of Study

This study aims to examine the approaches to the teaching of English composition writing in Botswana junior secondary classrooms and seeks to produce models that might enhance the teaching of composition writing at the junior secondary level. It is already established that teachers and students are having difficulties in the teaching and learning of English composition writing at the junior secondary school level in Botswana. Therefore, this study aims at actually identifying the approaches utilized by teachers in the teaching of English composition writing and the difficulties teachers and students face, with a view to proffering models that would help to minimize the challenges of teaching English composition writing, and enhance students' performance at the junior secondary schools in Botswana.

1.4. Research Objectives

1. To find out the approaches utilized by teachers in the teaching of English composition writing in the three classrooms;
2. To identify the challenges or problems posed by the use of such approaches in the teaching and learning of English composition writing in these classrooms;
3. To determine if the approaches used by the teachers inhibit students' performance in composition writing;
4. To propose possible models that would improve the teaching and learning of English composition writing by students at the junior secondary level in Botswana.

1.5. Research Questions

1. What approaches do teachers utilize in the teaching of English composition writing in the three classrooms?
2. What are the challenges or problems associated with the use of the approaches?
3. Are the teachers' approaches to teaching composition writing responsible for the poor writing skills of learners?
4. What possible models would improve the teaching and learning of composition writing by students at the junior secondary level in Botswana?

1.6. Motivation/Rationale for the Research

Teachers of English in Botswana face great challenges in their efforts towards effectiveness in literacy instruction, especially in teaching composition writing to a wide variety of differing ability groups, a common feature in most classrooms in Botswana. The influx of primary school students into the junior secondary schools following the

government's free education programme (Republic of Botswana, 1977), and presently, the token cost recovery measure initiated at the beginning of year 2006 for parents who can afford to pay, have contributed to increased school enrolments. Besides, class size in an English language classroom, arising from the fact that it is a compulsory subject for all students, has always been a contentious issue in teacher and student performance, especially, in L2 classroom contexts. Any measure, therefore, that can improve the challenges against the effective teaching and learning of English composition writing in the type of situation described above, would be very welcome.

Although not much research has been carried out on students' writing ability in Botswana, complaints from parents and the annual official reports by the Ministry of Education, shows a trend of students' weakness in English composition writing at the junior and senior secondary school levels. Further, Adeyemi (2004) carried out an investigation on an aspect of English composition writing at the junior secondary level in Botswana and recommended that problems associated with writing composition in English should be further studied with their attendant remedies. This is an attempt at such further investigation to identify the strategies, challenges or problems encountered in the teaching of English composition writing with a view to suggesting solutions or developing models for effective instruction in composition writing at the junior secondary classrooms in Botswana.

In an effort to facilitate the teaching and learning of English skills, both the Botswana Junior and Senior Secondary English Syllabi emphasize the use of the communicative approach to the teaching and learning of the English language as indicated below:

  i.   For the junior secondary level, the emphasis throughout this syllabus is on a communicative approach where the students learn the language (English) by using it in meaningful interactions, communicative activities and problem solving tasks thereby encouraging more spontaneous and natural discourse (Republic of Botswana, 1996: i).

ii.   For the senior secondary level, the teaching methodology is based on a Communicative Approach (Republic of Botswana, 2000: i).

From the above, it is assumed that a thorough knowledge of the writing process can go a long way in minimising the problems teachers and students experience in English composition writing in schools. Furthermore, the results emanating from this study can provide an understanding of the appropriate techniques or strategies of making students develop interest in writing.

Furthermore, findings from this study can go a long way in providing possible solutions to the difficulties associated with the teaching and learning of composition writing in junior secondary schools. Most importantly, in the teaching of English as L2 and particularly in the area of composition writing, knowledge about the various strategies of imparting the skills of writing is very crucial in the pre-service and in-service education of teachers of English. If the teaching objectives as enunciated in the *Three-Year-English Syllabus* (Republic of Botswana, 1996) for composition writing are to be realized and instruction improved upon, then it becomes important to identify the challenges faced by teachers and students in this aspect of language instruction, with a view to exploring models for improvement.

Also, this study is important to curriculum developers and teacher educators in English language. Some of the recommendations of this study can be used by the Department of Curriculum and Evaluation to re-design any area found wanting in the English Language syllabus at the junior secondary level. The new knowledge from this study is capable of setting in motion other researchers to further investigate creative writing pedagogy in an attempt to improve the teaching and learning of the English Language in secondary schools in general, and at the junior secondary school level in particular. Moreover, the findings from this study can be useful to publishers of English Language textbooks in a manner that will improve the suggested activities and methods in the area of composition writing at the junior secondary level in Botswana, in line with the communicative approach to language instruction.

It is observed that many students in higher institutions of learning lack composing and other associated skills of academic writing as a result of which they find most types of writing at this level difficult and uninteresting. It is the view of this researcher that this attitude is derived from the aversion to writing that students have developed over the years from primary to secondary school that was not adequately addressed. Again, this investigator empathizes with teachers at the secondary level of education who are also frustrated by the lack of progress in the learning of composition writing skills. It is hoped that when teachers are well equipped with the relevant skills to tackle the obstacles to the teaching of English composition writing, most of the problems associated with this aspect of the teaching and learning of English as L2 would be largely solved through some suggested models. Findings emanating from this study may better prepare teachers to assist their students and address their learning needs.

1.7. Literature Reviewed

Mooko (1996) in his investigation of writing in Botswana junior secondary schools notes that the current teaching approaches to composition writing have relegated the exercise to a solitary, lonely and boring activity. Adeyemi (2004) concurs with the view that for most students, writing is still a fearful and unwelcome 'chore'. In order to find out why students continue to have difficulties with extended writing or composition writing, literature is cited extensively.

The literature reviewed include issues of the nature of writing, the problems of ESL writing, the theories of writing, the product and the process approaches to composition instruction including their strengths and weaknesses. These reviews were critically examined with a view to identifying the sources of most students' lack of effective writing skills. Furthermore, the different dimensions to the role of the teacher in the students' writing assessment were discussed in order to determine the most promising or effective form/s of writing instruction or model that might prove effective in addressing

the problems of writing instruction in L2 context, at the junior secondary school level in Botswana. Extensive details on this are given in Chapter Two.

1.8. Research Methods

The study adopted the qualitative research methods. Since the focus of the investigation was to study the approaches, challenges, suitability of approaches used by teachers and the proposal of solutions/models to the problems inhibiting effective composition writing, the investigator observed students and teachers in three classroom settings. In addition, the study employed different research strategies such as observations, interviews, examination of artifacts and document reviews. Details of the research methodology are given in Chapter Three.

1.9. Research Protocols

The following research protocols were used for this study:
(a) Observation Guide for Teachers
(b) Interview Guide for Teachers
(c) Interview Guide for Students
(d) Marking Rubric for Examining Students' Written Work
(e) All available documents in terms of materials used for English Composition writing – textbooks, students' exercise books, marking rubric and other related artifacts on English composition writing in the classroom setting.

1.10. The Sample

Three junior secondary schools in Gaborone were used in this study. The choice of Gaborone, the capital city of Botswana was purposive. The city is the most populated centre in Botswana with different nationalities and cultures. It also has the most

population of students learning English as L2. The choice of Gaborone was necessary to avoid travelling all over the country to minimize costs and inconvenience. There was also the factor of proximity of location to home and workplace that enabled the investigator to spend adequate time on the study, comfortably. In addition, three junior secondary schools were randomly chosen from Gaborone to make up the schools under study. A Form one class was also randomly chosen from each of the three schools to form the three classes under investigation. The student population was made up of students from government owned public primary schools and private primary schools, and were predominantly, bilingual students, studying English as a second language (ESL). The three classes with a total of 121 students, formed the sample of average form one classes experiencing the problem under study. Also, there were three participating teachers who automatically were the teachers of English language in the randomly selected classes in the three schools. Details of the sampling techniques are again, given in Chapter Three.

The Botswana Government policy does not allow streaming of students with respect to their academic ability. Schools are expected to group able and less able students together and this explains the mixed ability nature of the average classroom set-up in Botswana public schools which will be elaborated on in Chapter Three as well.

1.11. Limitations of the Study

The study is limited to three junior secondary schools in Gaborone, the capital city of Botswana and therefore, may not be representative of all the junior secondary schools in the country. However, a characteristic of the qualitative approach to data collection is the use of one or few subjects for an in-depth study, hence the three schools, the three teachers and one classroom used in each of the three schools.

Also, it was difficult getting some teachers to teach composition writing as it turned out to be an infrequent activity in schools. The investigator paid many visits to the three

schools in the study and visited the three teachers many times before they finally agreed to teach composition writing in their various classes.

1.12. Definition of Terms

Teaching Approach: - As opposed to teaching method, this expression suggests a more flexible attitude to teaching, which incorporates: methodology, procedures and techniques into a course, depending on the needs of the learner, and the availability of physical resources (Kilfoil and der Walt, 1997).

Student Performance: - How students do, perform in tasks or achievement. It also refers to, 'the reaching of a specific quantity or quality level by an individual.'

Medium of Instruction: - Language of learning and instruction.

The Product Approach: - It is a traditional method in which students are told to select and write about a topic and hand in the essay (product) at a given time. In this approach, the emphasis is on the end product of writing as opposed to the process of achieving the end product or publishing.

The Process Approach: - It is the notion that explains writing as a process. Here, the focus of writing instruction is shifted from the product to the process of what students do when they write, and how they get to produce, rather than the end production of writing.

Modeling:- **Relating reading to composition** writing as a means of providing students with examples, context, or experience of how to write. This is a situation of exploring the reciprocal relationship between the act of reading and the act of writing to improve students' writing skill.

1.13. Chapter Division

The thesis is divided into five (5) chapters. Chapter One serves as the introduction of the study as it sets the background and context of the study. Chapter Two examines the literature germane to the study. Chapter Three is devoted to the discussion of the

methodology employed in data collection. Chapter Four presents data and the analysis of data. Chapter Five provides the summary, the conclusions and recommendations from the study.

1.14. Summary

This chapter discussed the background to the study by describing the context, the problem statement, and the rationale for the study among other details. It also highlighted the methods of investigation and defined important concepts. The next chapter reviews literature germane to the study.

CHAPTER TWO

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to review literature germane to this study. In so doing, it reviews literature on writing, ESL writing, the problems of writing, approaches to writing, the composing process, theories of the writing process, and other related issues, on which this study is based. It also includes a concluding summary.

One of the goals of Botswana Education Policy (Republic of Botswana, 1994) is to offer individuals, a life-long opportunity to develop and to make their country competitive internationally. This explains why the goal of the education curriculum in the country is to prepare individuals for the world of work, as well as living in a global society, among others (Republic of Botswana, 1994). In order to achieve these goals, the teaching and learning of the English language is of utmost importance.

English is used as an official language as well as the medium of instruction in Botswana and the Commonwealth of Nations of which Botswana is a member. Furthermore, it is a major language of communication and economics, not only internally in Botswana, but regionally, within the continent of Africa and in the wider global context. Moreover, for a multi-lingual society, to which many African countries subscribe, proficiency in English and its varieties provides an enabling environment for communication. The idea of the importance of English in Botswana, as well as other African countries, is further highlighted in Tembe's (2006) submission:

> English language learning in Uganda continues to take centre stage because it is used as medium of instruction in the education system. In everyday life, it is used for official purposes in most transactions. It is

often used as *a lingua franca* among the educated who speak different languages, especially in the urban areas. It is also Uganda's gateway to the international arena' (Tembe, 2006:858).

The above analysis of the role of the English language in Uganda sums up the situation in which English is learned in many Anglophone African countries, including Botswana.

English is of particular importance in the field of education in Botswana. A part of the rationale for English in the Junior Secondary Syllabus (Republic of Botswana, 1996) states:

> English has significant importance in the field of education as it functions as a medium of instruction. It's role as a service subject links it directly to the achievement of all fifteen aims of the Basic Education Programme. Furthermore, English across the curriculum serves to stimulate concepts in other subjects, bringing different insights into their content material (Republic of Botswana, 1996: ii).

As a result of the above, English is used across the curriculum to teach concepts in other subjects to bring a deeper understanding into the teaching and learning of content materials in Botswana schools. Again, the UNESCO (2005) declaration of the United Nations Literacy Decade (2003-2012) defines literacy as the use of written communication which finds its way in every individual's life, alongside other ways of communication.

Against the above background, the importance of the ability to read and be able to write effectively in English is deemed valuable. This chapter, therefore, seeks to review descriptive and research literature on the aspect of the teaching and learning of writing in English. It seeks to examine issues pertaining to writing; ESL writing; language in education in Botswana with particular reference to composition/extended writing. The approaches to the teaching and learning of composition writing, difficulties associated with such approaches on the part of teachers and students, and other related issues are also reviewed. Areas of emphasis will be on writing as a process, the theories and

practices that enhance effective composition writing. The different approaches to writing and their peculiar strengths and weaknesses are examined in order to identify the sources and factors that contribute to the difficulties of imparting writing instruction to students at the junior secondary level in Botswana.

2.2. Writing

Writing involves organizing information and communicating meaning (Spandel, 2005). Bryne (1979:1) defines writing as the production of sentences arranged in a particular order and linked together in certain coherent whole, which is often called a 'text'. Even though not much is known about individual writing methods of composing a text, it is agreed that it is neither an easy nor a spontaneous activity. It requires some conscious mental effort and has to be learned in a formal setting such as schools (Collins 1998; Raimes, 1983). Also, it is by the organization of our sentences into a text, into a coherent whole which is as explicit as possible, and complete in itself, that we are able to communicate successfully with our readers through the medium of writing (King, 2006).

According to Hadfield and Hadfield (1990) and Graham (2005), writing can be considered to be an artificial activity when compared to speaking, in that everyone learns naturally to speak and to listen, whereas far fewer people develop literacy (i.e. are able to read and write). Writing is said to be more dependent on the use of the linguistic resources of a language, resulting in the difficulties experienced by ESL learners, especially at the elementary and secondary levels.

Raimes (1983) identifies the following three reasons for the teaching of writing skills:

- Writing reinforces the vocabulary, structures, functions and notions that the students have been taught;
- It gives the students the opportunity to be adventurous with the language;
- The interaction of eye, hand and brain reinforces the learning of the language by forcing the student to think of new or other ways of saying things; in other words, it develops strategic competence (Raimes, 1983:3).

Beach and Bridwell (1984: 183-184) provide six more functions of writing:

- Writing has special advantages for learning.
- Writing enables students to learn new information.
- Writing makes the integration of old and new information easier.
- Writing teaches pragmatic conventions and audience awareness; both are very important strategies to master when communication in the second language is the purpose of a language course.
- Writing teaches students the ability to critically evaluate the information they are learning.
- Writing can teach students how they perceive their personal experiences.

Spandel (2005) and Harris and Graham (1996) concur with Martlew (1983: 271) who notes that the complex skills and processes, and their integration which have to be developed in writing, may have important implications for cognitive development. He further adds that, for the second language learner, writing in English can help them to come to terms not only with English, but also with the content of other subjects This corroborates with one of the aims of the English language teaching as a subject that enhances the understanding of information in content areas.

Kaplan (1983: 244) observes that, by writing about a specific problem a solution could present itself in the course of the writing process. Writing, he continues, can also act as a stimulus for further ideas on a specific topic. It is as if the very process of writing stimulates further thought. Also, the Communicative Approach to the teaching of extended writing in the Botswana secondary classroom can be linked to the development of communicative competence, which includes the ability to communicate effectively in written form and writing tasks that have functional and social purposes outside the classroom (Kilfoil and van der Walt, 1997:251).

Numerous authors including Cox (2002), Urbanski (2006), Collins (1998), Meriwether (1997) and Jordan (1997) note that there has been a dramatic evolution in the way that writing is being approached in the English language classroom, with the aim of making writing a more personal and satisfying experience for the learner. Also, a greater impetus is being placed on the role of writing in the language classroom. However, writing still

remains one of the most difficult areas for the teacher and learner of English, more especially for the L2 learner. This is evident in the way that writing has been treated poorly in the past. As noted by Baskoff (1990) in Simpson (2006), many writing weaknesses in advanced learners can be traced to lack of systematic practice during the earlier stages of learning.

The above stress the importance of writing in the L2 classroom and the need for teachers to accord writing a prime place in the instructional cycle. The practice whereby students are told to choose a topic and get on with it does not do justice towards the development of writing skills. Teachers will have to take more notice of what their students actually do when they write and take a far more active role in structuring writing activities in their classrooms.

2.3. Problems of ESL Writing

It is generally believed that L1 composing skills – both good and bad – transfer from L1 to L2 (Arndt, 1987). It is also assumed that ESL writers employ the same strategies as native speakers in their composing process. However, in an effort to explain the problems that L2 writers experience in composing in a foreign language, Arndt (1987) notes that, 'it is the constraints of the composing activity or of discourse type which create problems for students writing in L2, and not simply difficulties with the mechanics of the foreign language' (p. 258). Silva (1993) also claims that, L2 composing is more constrained, more difficult and less effective. He feels that writers bring with them knowledge and experience of writing in their L1, while at the same time, bring the limitations of their knowledge of L2 language and rhetorical organization, thereby affirming the view that writing is problematic to ESL learners.

Furthermore, in explaining the difficulties of L2 writing, other authors and psycholinguists have tried to unravel or explain the mysteries in relation to the development of the skills of reading. For example, the schema theory in reading has been

used to understand the reading process. The underlying principle of this theory is that no text carries complete meaning in itself. Rather, 'a text only provides directions for listeners or readers as to how they should retrieve or construct meaning from their own, previously acquired knowledge' (Carrell, 1984:332). Other researchers such as Du Toit, Heese and Orr (1995) and Carrell (1987) note that, 'readers bring to a text, a wide range of experience with the world and with discourse, which they use in constructing a meaningful representation of the text. This theory attaches much importance to learners' background knowledge or 'schema' as it is widely known. This, when applied to writing, suggests that a lack of knowledge regarding cultural and rhetorical (stylistic) conventions in a language can be an impediment and cause learners to become frustrated in learning the second language.

Explaining the role of background information in the development of writing skills, Friedlander (1990) notes that, a relationship exists between the writers' experience and the quality of writing on a particular topic, and the language that the topic was acquired in. In agreement with this view, Tedick (1990: 138) in his investigation concludes that, 'the extent to which ESL writers are familiar with the subject matter of the writing has dramatic influence on their writing performance'. He further suggests that students be assigned writing topics that would enable them to use their prior knowledge.

From the above, it can be deduced that background knowledge or experience is important to the ESL reader, as well as writer. Also, cultural and rhetorical knowledge of the target language is essential. This means that inadequate background information can impede the ESL learner's ability to write effectively on a particular topic. A lack of culturally determined background can pose problems to the ESL writer. For example, Carrell (1984) notes that a particular schema may not exist for an ESL reader because that particular schema is specific to a certain culture and does not exist as part of the reader's background knowledge (Mooko, 1996). As a result of this situation, Kaplan (1987) maintains that the advantage that the native speaker has over the non-native is from the fact that, not only does the native speaker recognizes circumstances in which the various

forms may be used, but the native speaker also recognizes the choice constraints in important ways, in which any text may follow.

Furthermore, Allen and Corder (1974: 177-178) distinguish three stages in the writing process that pose problems for the L2 learner. At the most elementary and secondary levels he notes:

- The first is that of manipulation, which refers to the physical act of writing that becomes a problem when the L1 script differs from that of the L2, and learners have to be taught how to shape the letters of the target language.
- The second stage is that of structuring, where learners have to form sentences and short paragraphs. Many written activities are conducted at this level: grammar exercises usually do not progress beyond the sentence level and answers to reading comprehension and literature questions very seldom require extensive writing.
- The third stage is that of communication, where most of the problems of the L2 learner in writing occur. At this stage, the student has to link sentences and paragraphs, and take their audience into account and pay attention to all the stylistic considerations that make it possible to communicate on paper. These skills do not come naturally, but must be taught intensively.

Linguistically, people grow up learning to speak without much conscious effort or thought and without systematic instruction. Writing on the other hand, is learnt through a process of instruction. The written form of language, with its structure and form, which are sometimes less used in speech or not, but which are equally effective in communication in writing, has to be mastered (Bryne, 1979; Ferris, 1995). Again, psychologically, writing is a task which is usually imposed on us by circumstances. The psychological effect of 'what to say' to an audience that is not physically present, and the best way to put it, may become a hindrance to most when they are obliged to write (van der Bergh and Rijlaarsdam, (1999).

2.4. Foundation Issues in Writing

Carson (1990), in his study of Japanese and Chinese students, points out that by the time students learn to write in the L2, most would have acquired literacy in their L1. He also says that, '--- literacy skills (writing abilities) are clearly transferable from a well developed, prestigious language to a second language studied in an academic context (p.348). In the same way, Friedlander (1990:109) notes that teachers emphasize to students to think in English, with the belief that, '--- if ESL writers do their work in their first language, it will inhibit acquisition of the L2, and will interfere with the generation of L2 structures due to transfer in an incorrect way.

The above view is in keeping with the Contrastive Analysis (CA) theory which hypothesizes on the interference from the L1 in the learning of the L2. Proponents of this theory such as Lado (1957: 2) posit that, 'individuals tend to transfer forms and meanings, and the distribution of forms and meanings of their native language and culture to the foreign language and culture. On this assertion, Krapels (1990) is of the view that the usefulness and influence of the first language when writing in English, is a controversial issue that demands much more research. It is believed that there seems to be much variation in the techniques learners use when they write in a language other than their L1 (Kilfoil and der Walt, 1997:254). Other theorists believe that L1 does not necessarily become a hindrance to ESL compositions. Edelsky (1982: 227) in his study of the relationship between L1 and L2 writing in a bilingual setting, notes "that what a young writer knows about writing in the first language forms the basis of new hypotheses rather than interferes with writing another language." The contrasting views imply that the notion of interference in L2 learning is debatable.

Another interesting outcome of research is that, familiarity with the writing task whether in L1 or L2, has a great effect on the composing process. This view is further supported by Moragne e Silva (1991) that, writers tend to compose with greater ease and with less interruptions when the task is familiar to them, and that the language of the task does not

impede such a process. However, (Massi, 2001; Simpson, 2006; Spandel, 2005; and Rowell, 1991) note that, the inability of students to develop the required writing skills at the earliest stages of education, has contributed in no small measure to poor performance in writing through junior secondary school and beyond.

2.5. Language in Education Policy in Botswana

With respect to the teaching of languages in the primary schools, Setswana is taught as a compulsory subject for citizens of Botswana throughout the public primary school system. The change from Setswana to English as the medium of instruction takes place in Standard Four (Republic of Botswana, 1994). This reflects the Botswana Government's language policy which states that all learners be taught using Setswana as the medium of instruction from Standards One to Three. It also ensures that students take English as a school subject in these classes in order to prepare them to learn in English which becomes the medium of instruction from Standard Four onwards. The 1994 language in education policy, however, amended a clause in the document to indicate that English should be made the medium of instruction from Standard Two as soon as practicable (i.e. in the long term) (Republic of Botswana, 1994:59).

In addition, the statement of language goals for the three-year junior secondary programme states in part that it aims to develop in all children proficiency in the use of Setswana and English as tools for effective communication, study and work. A clause in the Botswana Junior Secondary English Syllabus (Republic of Botswana, 1996: i) notes:

> The background of the (junior secondary) learners is that they will have been taught English as a subject from Standard One to Four. Thereafter, it becomes the medium of instruction as well.

The implication is that prior to the above level, the medium of instruction is Setswana. This is despite the fact that some pupils are non- Setswana speaking. This situation is

believed to have disadvantaged students whose L1 is not Setswana (Nyati, 1987). Nyati (1987) is of the view that Setswana speaking pupils have an advantage over other groups of learners because concepts are presented to them in their own language, whilst the non-Setswana speaking students, have to first master the new language before they can fully utilize it. Honey (2000) also subscribes to this school of thought with respect to the disadvantage posed to the learner of the second, third or fourth language.

It is clear from the above that there does not seem to be a clear-cut policy on language which has prompted Mooko (1996) to point out that Botswana does not have a comprehensive language policy and adds that English has been accorded the status of an official language, whilst Setswana functions as both an official and national language. It is important to add that in order to address the issue of language, both educationally and socially, the National Setswana Language Council which was established in 1986 was re-organized and re-named the National Languages Council (Republic of Botswana, 1994). However, the impact of this council on language issues is yet to be ascertained as the council is yet to be formed.

The present government policy is to use English as the medium of instruction from Standard 2 as soon as practicable (Republic of Botswana, 1994). In practice, the adherence to this policy, in public schools has not been attainable. Also, compliance to the policy as to when English should become the medium of instruction at the primary level, varies from school to school, as well as from rural to urban areas. Another factor is the non-specific clause in the policy, 'as soon as practicable' which implies that the schools can be flexible in implementing the clause. What is clear at this point is that adherence to the policy of making English the medium of instruction from Standard 2 is not the norm. From standard 4 and above, however, learning to write in English becomes an experience which is acquired laboriously by students (Honey, 2000). Adeyemi (2004) and Mooko, (1996) observe that the writing competencies of Standard 7 pupils on entry to junior secondary school, is very inadequate for majority of students. Certain types of writing, particularly those which involve projection into adult-type roles or of the extended type, tend to cause them difficulty.

For instance, Arthur (1993), in one ethnographic study which pertains to the writing practice that standard six pupils received in two primary schools in Botswana, found that writing at that level was confined to copying notes from the board, guided writing, cloze exercises and sentence completion. He argues that students' writing tended to vary only with respect to surface level accuracy. Also, Rowell (1991) points out that teachers and administrators in Botswana have made frequent references to inadequacies of students' written English by the time they enter form one of junior secondary school. As a result, Pongweni (1999: 169-184) concludes that many children simply do not enjoy writing because of:

     a) the assumption that since they are proficient in the mother tongue, they can automatically transfer this to spoken and written language in the second language.
     b) the nature of the task which may have little or no relevance to them.
     c) it is a possibility that students do not write well because of past frustrating efforts at writing in the mother tongue as well as the L2.
     d) again it may be as a result of the method or approach to the teaching of writing that is a hindrance to effective writing.
     e) it may also be as a result of deficiency in other skills that is preventing effective writing such as reading, spelling and so on

In the same way, Muthwii (2001: 10) states:

    Another challenge, typical in many L2 languages learning situations may be the students' poor exposure to English language usage. This happens in situations where students come from backgrounds where they do not have the opportunities to practise using the language outside of the classroom and thereby lack the repertoire of vocabulary needed to write effectively.

Again, it is believed that it is possible to learn a language without learning how to write it, especially where one feels they have the least use for it outside the school environment (Kilfoil and de Walt, 1997). Nevertheless, in Botswana, literacy in English is important as government policy as well as for economic, social and educational purposes. For the individual, the ability to read and write in English is a status- symbol; a requirement for

the procurement of a job or a pre-requisite to offer certain services, hence the importance that it is accorded in the school curriculum.

2.6. ESL Writing in Botswana

Mooko (1996), in his investigation of junior secondary writing notes that, 'The current teaching approaches to composition writing have relegated writing to a solitary, lonely and boring activity.' Adeyemi (2004) in her study agrees that for most students writing is still a fearful and uninteresting activity and that students would try to avoid it as much as possible. Casterton (1986) infers that writing is 'an arduous manual, emotional and intellectual labour.' All the above lend credence to the fact that writing is a most difficult activity for most learners. Again, many researchers see writing as 'problem solving' and accept that students would encounter problems with it (Graves, 1996; Urbansky, 2006).

From the point of view of teachers, the fact that writing is a difficult skill to acquire makes their task more difficult. This means that activities have to be structured in such a way that a writing activity is well prepared in an integrated way to take account of the aims of the communicative approach to language pedagogy as recommended by the Botswana Government.

Another source of difficulty for the teacher is the evaluation of students' writing. Besson-Molosiwa (1990), Adeyemi (2004) allude to class size as one of the reasons teachers find writing a tiresome activity. The sheer volume of marking that essays or compositions entail, is disheartening, and many teachers cut down on teaching writing for this very reason (Kilfoil and van der Walt, 1997). Frederickson (2003:54) notes:

> The process of grading student writing frustrates many dedicated educators. Reading, responding to, and grading student work takes up a large percentage of most teachers' time.

In order to get students to go beyond the sentence exercise level or the first level as pointed out by Allen and Corder (1974), the second structural stage of expressive/extended writing is recommended to enable students to write in order to:

- communicate with a reader;
- express ideas;
- explore a subject, and
- record experiences (Raimes, 1983:4).

Furthermore, secondary school writing demands that students move beyond Allen and Corders' (1974) manipulation and structuring stage, to that of communication. The aim of writing at this stage, especially with reference to extended writing, is to communicate effectively. Effective communication at this stage refers to the ability of the students to:

1. Demonstrate understanding of the composition topic;
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the use of syntax, especially verbs in English;
3. Order information chronologically with complete and correctly formed sentences and
4. Use language conventions (spelling, capitalization, full stops) with considerable accuracy.

Raimes (1985) argues that although there is no one answer to the question of how to teach writing in an ESL classroom, nevertheless, students will not just 'pick up' writing as they learn other skills in the classroom. Writing has to be taught and the ways of teaching it are as many as there are teachers and teaching styles. This is because of the many features, factors and processes that are involved in developing a piece of writing. This is indicated by White and Arndt (1991)'s process writing model which offers teachers a framework to capture the recursive, not linear nature of writing. Such activities require students to:

- Generate ideas (brainstorming) to help writers tap their long-term memory on what to say about the topic.
- Focusing (fast writing) by dealing with the decisions about the purpose of the writing

- Structure in organizing and re-organizing text to take into account the audience/readers and to present text to them in an acceptable manner.
- Draft – This is the transition from writer-based text into reader-based text. Multiple texts are produced at this stage, each influenced by feedback from teacher and/or peers
- Review – This is standing back from the text and looking at it with fresh eyes, and considering if it is right. The overall aim, being to create meaningful and purposeful writing tasks, which develop the writer's skill over several drafts (Furneaux, 1998:2).

Writing activities conducted in this way are usually group oriented and students are allowed to explore ideas together and stimulate one another in the discussions, and revisions, as a result of feedback from teachers and peers. These are the fundamental principles of process writing, together with time factor. It is obvious that this takes more time, than merely asking students to write on a topic and correcting the result, as is the case with product writing.

2.7. Writing Process Theories

Rohman (1965) was among the first people to present a model of cognitive-linguistic writing. Rohman's model contained three stages:
1. Pre - writing (planning).
2. Writing - (composing).
3. Re - writing (editing and revising).

The above model however, was criticized because of its linear orientation. It is thought that writing does not necessarily follow that order. Writing it is thought, can be revised at any point in the process to change ideas, add more detail, revised and so on (White and Arndt, 1991; Flower and Hayes, 1980; 1981). Flower and Hayes (1980: 1981), in their models, tried to take into account the problems detected in Rohman's (1965) model. Flower and Hayes (1981) define writing as a goal–directed behaviour aimed at solving a

problem. According to them, the whole writing process operates under two kinds of information:

- Knowledge in the long –term memory (LTM) including conceptual knowledge which refers to content discourse (text structure, syntax and style), and meta-cognitive knowledge.

- The presentation of the task environment, including the writer's motivation for writing, the topic features that might affect the writing processes, the text in progress and available resources (Sovik, 2003: 50).

The above can be simplified as the LTM, representing the writer's knowledge, that is brought into the task, which includes factors such as the topic, the audience, the stored writing plans, the available resources and the text produced. All these suggest a complex process in the act of writing which some critics are questioning especially with regards to beginning writers.

Rather than focus on the product of writing, Flower & Hayes (1980: 81) emphasize the interactive and recursive nature of writing, and the processes that writers employ throughout writing. It implies that the writing act is a set of thinking processes that writers organize while composing.

Until recently, these writing models were considered the most influential models of the cognitive processes in written composition (Grabe and Kaplan, 1996). They specify the interactive, recursive processes among planning, translating, and reviewing based on the writing process. Their models have since been criticized by many authors as shown below:

- The models are too generalized (they suggest a uniform process for all writers (Furneaux, 1998).
- They have concentrated more on the cognitive and, to some extent, the linguistic aspect of writing, thereby making them subjective to older writers and neglecting the needs of beginning writers on the grounds that thinking aloud while writing interferes with the process (Furneaux, 1998).

- There are many learners who fail to plan, compose and/or review their writing in accordance with their abilities (Sovik, 2003).
- Less skilled writers operate at the level of 'knowledge telling', while more skilled writers are involved in 'knowledge transforming' (as in expository writing) (Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1987).
- They do not adequately explain how or when writers move from one stage to the other, or if all do (Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1987)
- There is the feeling that Flower and Hayes's models neglected the significance of the discourse and product (referring to audience and genre) components of writing, and instead focuses more on process than product (Collins 1998; Harris and Graham 1996; Bereiter and Scardamalia 1987).

2.7.1. Hayes (1996) Models of Writing

Hayes (1996), in his revised version of Flower and Hayes 1980 and 81 models, introduces the task schema theory as components of text production for planning, revising and editing aspects of writing. A task schema would thus contain knowledge, the goals of the task, the choice and the sequence of processes to reach the goals, and the evaluation criteria of the result of the goals. The retrieving and the releasing of the task schemas will operate as a whole, on the basis of the environment information processing and through a reflective analysis throughout the course of the writing activity. The following can be concluded from the Flower and Hayes (1980, 1981) and Hayes (1996) models:

1) Cognitive knowledge domain is the repository of ideas, strategies, procedures required in performing different kinds of tasks and can be recalled (LTM) for use when the need arises.

2) The model relies on a probabilistic idea about the functioning of writing processes, on the premise that the implementation of a given activity increases the realization of the next activity.

3) Furthermore, it implies that every part of the writing process may have some functional relationship with other parts, that is to say planning leads to writing, revising, back to re-writing and so on (Sovik, 2003:71).

Critics of the theories such as Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987), Collins (1998), and Harris and Graham (1996) argue that the models do not adequately specify or explain how the activities are monitored while they are going on. Furthermore, they do not explain how the interpretation of environment information can affect the processing components of planning, revising and editing.

Children and/or novices are thought to have much more difficulty with the writing process as they cannot coordinate different types of knowledge easily, spend much more time on each segment of the text than the experts, and perceive each part of the composition process as more effortful (Massi 2001; Scardamalia, 1981; Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1987). Bereiter (1980) also implies that children/novices have not yet acquired the knowledge or strategies that allow automatic access to many essential components of the writing tasks as suggested by Flower and Hayes (1980; 1981) and Hayes (1996).

In spite of the criticisms, many authors seem to agree on the recursive nature of writing that allows ideas to be reviewed, cancelled if inappropriate, additions or subtractions made in order to come up with the finished product. What several authors agree on, regarding the writing process can be summarized as follows: (**needs adjustment**)

- The writing process can be explained as involving personal behaviour or traits, the environment and processes (Zimmerman, 1989; Altano, 2003; Hayes, 1996; and Graham, 2005).

- Readiness, exposure and the process approach can combine to develop good writing skill (Reid, 1989; King, 2006).

- It is important that students are mentally and psychologically ready to write. Exposure to a variety of materials both visual and verbal, together with modern approaches to writing can be utilized to develop and improve students' ability to write (Berninger, 1996; Norton, 1985; Calkins, 1994).

31

- As much as possible students should be assigned functional writing tasks because of the conception that writing is a problem – solving activity (Urbansky, 2006).
- It is important that students are exposed to problems or tasks representing different levels of intellectual demands (Kress, 1994; Kellogg, 2001).

It has been argued largely in this study that writing is considered a problem-solving activity and that planning, drafting, reviewing are central components of the writing process which ends in the product of writing or publishing. It is also noted that intellectual functions such as related knowledge, exposure, readiness and skills are also decisive factors in the process and for the quality of the product.

2.7.2. The Product Approach to Writing

Traditional approaches to writing instruction focus on written products. Teachers evaluate the written product, judge its form and content, according to set criteria. It was also traditionally believed that writing was something that teachers expected learners to do in class without giving any prior thought to the meaning of the finished product (Meriwether, 1997).

Williams (2003: 2) argues, 'Mindless, repetitive, anti-intellectual - The product paradigm can arguably be accused of being all of these ---.Again, Escholz (1980:24) says that, 'The approach merely resulted in 'mindless copies of a particular organizational plan or style.' Silva (1993) dubs it as, 'an exercise in habit formation.' All these assertions on the product paradigm is rooted in the Behavourist Theory which sees language as a system of structurally related elements for the coding of meaning, and the product of language learning being the mastery of elements of this system (Richards and Rodgers, 1995:17). This view probably accounts for the pre-occupation with 'form' and 'correctness' inherent in the product approach.

Hairston (1982) details some further flaws in the product paradigm as she states that, 'proponents of the product approach apparently viewed the composing process as linear,

proceeding 'systematically from prewriting to writing to rewriting' (p.78). She continues by stating the composing process of writers and analyzing what goes on while they compose as opposed to the popular linear orientation of the product proponents:

> Writing is messy, recursive, convoluted, and uneven. Writers write, plan, revise, anticipate, and review throughout the writing process, moving back and forth among the different operations involved in writing without any apparent plan (Hairston, 1982:85).

It is believed that the product approach limits the writers to a single production of text as opposed to the multiple rewrites allowed in process writing, and while allowing for a certain amount of revision; product writing seriously underestimates the importance of rewriting generally. Johnston (1987) says that in the product classroom, the teacher is not only pre-occupied with grammatical accuracy, but also acts as a judge of students' writing rather than a facilitator.

In the traditional product classroom, writing was relegated to the status of 'homework' due to pressure of time and syllabus requirement (Hedge, 1988:301), thus nullifying the possibility of teacher guidance. Furthermore, writing was viewed as a tool for the practice and reinforcement of specific grammatical and lexical patterns; accuracy being all important and content and self expression given little or no priority. Basically, students were 'writing to learn' and not 'learning to write' (Tribble, 1996:118).

It is noted that in product approach to writing, students' attention focuses on adhering to and duplicating models and, in particular, on correct language. It demands that a student focus on model, form and duplication. Escholz (1980) points out that the product approach encourages students to use the same plan in a multitude of settings, by applying the same form regardless of content, thereby, stultifying and inhibiting writers rather than empowering or liberating them. Also, Nunan (1999) points out that the product approach focuses on writing tasks in which the learner imitates or copies and transforms teacher supplied models. In other words, the approach is viewed to be very restrictive in nature.

Typically, students in classes adopting the product approach would find themselves studying model texts and attempting various exercises aimed towards drawing attention to relevant features of a text. Traditional models of writing focus on parts in relation to the whole. Young (1978:31) comments and describes the characteristics of the paradigm as follows, 'The distinguishing features of the traditional rhetorical paradigm include; the strong concern with usage (syntax, spelling, punctuation) and with style.' Nunan (1999) writes that the primary goal of product writing is an error-free coherent text.'

As stated earlier, traditional language arts programmes support the product approach to writing. This implies sequentially ordered writing skills which include grammar, usage, spelling as well as elements of style and forms of discourse. However, it is believed that the breaking down of written expression into component parts or teachable 'units' does not necessarily translate to the whole product of writing. For example, Hillocks (1987) finds that knowledge of grammatical rules alone does not improve one's writing or communicative skill. It is believed that the product view of writing is the direct result of a skill orientation of the behaviourist school.

The above, unfortunately, is a scenario which is very much part of a product – centred language arts curriculum, which still influences classroom instructions today. Nowadays, however, researchers into writing feel that there is more to writing than the product. The question has shifted into more fundamental cause and effect dimensions. Hayes (1996), Meriwether (1997), Sunflower (2006), Fredrickson (2003), Urbansky (2006) and a host of other authors note that there is now a widespread recognition that, writing is a process, which involves several identifiable steps or stages.

2.7.3. Writing as a Process

Modern understanding now views writing as a process. According to Jordan (1997), the process approach was developed by way of reaction to the confines presented by the product approach. In the past, writing, especially in primary classrooms, was synonymous with copying and handwriting practice in addition to the use of de-

contextualized grammar exercises (Arthur, 1993).The idea that children needed to experience the writing and composing of their own texts was alien to these earlier methods (Wyse and Jones, 2001). There was also a lack of understanding of the ways that all writing is created as part of a process. It is also believed that throughout the history of the teaching of writing, presentational aspects (product) have frequently dominated the curriculum (Collins, 1998).

The notion of teaching writing as a process was developed during the 1970s and 1980s. With this approach, the focus of writing instruction shifted from the product to the process. The process of writing refers to what writers do which Graves (1996) describes as having five stages which are brainstorming/pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing and publishing. Again, a common assumption is that the process approach empowers its students, by enabling them to make decisions about the direction of their writing through discussions, tasks, drafting, feedback and informed choices, thus encouraging them to be responsible for making improvements themselves (Jordan 1997; Urbanski 2006; Frederickson 2003).

Furthermore, with the outcome (product) a secondary concern, the teacher becomes a facilitator in providing formative feedback during the process of each student's composition. Students, also, are encouraged to assume greater responsibility for making their own improvements, as opposed to the mimicking or production of a pre-determined model. An importance of this model is the attempt it makes to highlight the cyclical and recursive nature of writing whereby pre-writing, writing and re-writing go on simultaneously (Hayes, 1996; White and Arndt, 1991; Graves, 1996). Meriwether (1997:2) identifies the basic steps in the writing process as follows:

- Pre-writing (selecting a topic and planning what to say)
- Writing (putting a draught version on paper)
- Revising (making changes to improve writing)
- Evaluation (assessment of the written work)

Kilfoil and van der Walt (1997:257), in citing Trimmer and McCrimmon (1988) and King (2006), identify three stages in the writing process as planning, drafting and revising as highlighted below:

- Planning - described as a series of strategies designed to find and formulate information in writing.

- Drafting - as a series of strategies designed to organize and develop a sustained piece of writing.

- Revision - as a series of strategies designed to re-examine and re-evaluate the choices that have created a piece of writing.

What can be deduced from the above interpretations is the way writing is seen as a process in which students are given time to think about and discuss their ideas on a specific topic, to write a draft or framework of what they want to say, to discuss this again and then to write a more detailed account (Kilfoil and der Walt, 1997:252). This process approach has also been schematized by White and Arndt (1991). Their model shows the cyclical and recursive nature of writing in the process approach alluded to by Flower and Hayes (1980, 1981). All the aforementioned authors suggest an improvement on Rohman's (1965) model. While Rohman identifies 3 stages in the process in a linear order, Grave (1996) identifies 5, Merriwether (1997) lists 4. A common denominating factor in all of the models is the recognition of the basic ideas of writing as a process and the recursive nature of writing.

Terms like brainstorming, drafting, revising, editing and publishing are useful for talking about the parts of the writing process, which do not necessarily occur in a fixed order for individual writers in specific situations (Graves, 1996). Also, in the process approach, the students do not write on a given topic in a restricted time and hand in the composition for the teacher to 'correct' – which usually means to find errors. Rather, they explore a topic through writing, showing the teacher and each other their drafts, and using what they write to read over, think about and move them on to new ideas (Meriwether, 1997). A student should be given the time for the process to work, along with the appropriate feedback from readers such as the teacher or other students. This would enable the

student to discover new ideas, new sentences, and new words as they plan, write a first draft and revise what they have written for a second or subsequent drafts.

Finally, it is believed that the process approach to writing is especially effective for learners of English as L2. It also lends itself to the student-centred learning heralded by the communicative approach to the teaching of English in the Botswana context.

2.7.4. The Composing Process

Collins (1998: 44) argues that in order to compose meaningfully, writers need to have clear audiences and purposes. He highlights the importance of different purposes for writing in the following assertion:

> The purpose of the writing also affects composition, whether it is to entertain, persuade or explain. Purpose influences the linguistic structure of the piece and helps the child consider the language choices to be made.

In composing, therefore, certain distinctions have been drawn from several studies. Myers (1983) highlights that freshmen who engage in pre-writing consisting of dyadic conversation compose better essays. Cox (2002) also says that prior discussion results in writing that is longer, has more subordination, and has fewer common sentence errors. Writing an effective composition requires a search for information, an incubation period during which thoughts can be developed, writing and often re-writing until the composition presents the intended message to the appropriate audience (Grabe and Kaplan 1996; Cox 2002; Collins 1998). Taba, Samuel and Freeman (1964) point out in their work on cognitive development, the necessity for gathering and processing data prior to the final abstraction. This process is also vital to writing: the author needs to search, select and reflect about information, main ideas, supporting information and accurate conclusions or ideas. Skills in structuring sentences, paragraph development, grouping, listing and classifying related ideas, identifying main ideas and logical sequence of ideas, are all important and help students to be effective writers.

As students progress into longer composition writing in junior secondary school, they will find that there are some special requirements for this type of composition writing. They will have to:

- <u>Decide on a subject or topic:</u> Students would be more motivated to write if they consider the subject both interesting and important. General subjects or topics may come from many of the content areas. Often an area closely related to a student's personal interests provides an excellent topic.

- <u>Narrow the topic:</u> Many topics are too broad, technical, and abstract or too far removed from students' experience to be of much use, especially in ESL situations. Asking a student to write about their family vacation overseas, or their recent visit to the beach can be inappropriate or beyond most students' experience in a Botswana classroom, the reason being that, the concept of going on vacation overseas for most students is out of the ordinary, while a visit to the beach is mostly impossible for most students as Botswana is a land-locked country and most will not have the means to visit other countries for that purpose. Moreover, only a few elitist students would derive meaning from such a topic. Norton (1985) opines that the writing activity must be meaningful in the sense that it forms part of the students' world.

- <u>Gather ideas and information:</u> At this stage, students brainstorm, list, and make notes of their ideas, use texts or relevant sources to gather ideas and information.

- <u>Organize ideas:</u> After students have finished gathering information, they are ready to start analyzing, selecting and ordering their information.

- <u>Write and re-write:</u> In teaching composition skills, the teacher is concerned with the student's ability to develop clear ideas and to organize and elaborate on them.

Consequently, teacher feedback, student evaluation of the writing, and any rewriting should focus on the clear development of those ideas (Norton, 1985) outlined above.

Schwartz (1977: 757) defines the rewriting connected with composition in this way:

> Rewriting is not just recopying neatly, minus a few punctuation errors. It is not just fixing what is wrong. Rewriting is finding the best way to give your newly discovered ideas to others; it's a finishing, a polishing up and it should be creative, and satisfying as any job well done.

If teachers interact with students during the entire writing process, students will have both positive feedback and an opportunity to make improvements during each step of the process, instead of having to wait for teacher reaction to the finished product (Adeyemi, 2004). When students write and the teacher reacts, the students can decide on changes before the final writing, so that only minor changes may be necessary at that point. Research by Mills (1970) concludes that both oral and silent re-reading of written compositions help the student evaluate and make necessary changes in the writing.

It is argued by several researchers that children who are learning to write in ESL can benefit greatly from a process approach to writing. Simpson (2006), Meriwether (1997) and Cox (2002) recommend the use of sharing and talking together (conferencing), peer-response groups, cooperative/collaborative learning, dialogues, role-plays, and drawing on prior knowledge and experience in the teaching and learning of process writing.

2.7.5. Criticisms of the Process Approach

It can be seen that the process approach offers many possibilities for fostering and developing the writing skills of second language learners as it has the potential for interactive classroom work. It is equally amenable to use in the communicative approach to the teaching of language favoured by the Botswana education policy. However, the approach is not without its critics. Among the critics of the process is Horowitz (1986), who derides the approach for lacking purpose, and sees it as leaving a lot to chance in the classroom. Young (1978) argues that the approach emphasizes fluency over accuracy. Schmidt (1990, 1994) says that accuracy is a manifestation of conscious language learning that arises from the learner's 'awareness', 'control', and 'attention' to language input. He goes on to say that accuracy implies that language learning is taking place, which is superior to the implicit process of fluency, and contends that a control of

linguistic accuracy enables the learners to appreciate better, the instruction in the L2. If learners are to become communicatively effective, errors should not be allowed to persist under the guise of trying to achieve fluency.

Swales (1990) calls the process approach a 'soft' process which protects students from the rigours of external assessment criteria. Johns (1993) acknowledges the inestimable value of the process approach on L2 classroom work, but cautions that most of us accepted the process movement without questioning its validity for our populations and educational contexts.

An important criticism of the process approach is probably that of Dunn, (1995), Englert, (1995), Harris and Graham, (1996) and Martin (1985). Citing his work with aboriginal migrant students in Australia, he notes that because ESL students generally do not have a fully developed inter-language code system, they find it difficult to participate in discussions during the various stages involved in the process. As a result, they easily acquire the status of 'outsiders' who cannot deal with the challenges and demands of academic discourse or, simply put, classroom discussion. This is a concern that should not be overlooked by teachers using the approach in order not to end up, unknowingly, 'excluding' some students from the learning process because they are unable to take advantages of the communicative opportunities encouraged by the approach or because of other specific learning disabilities(Chimbganda, 2001).

In spite of the various criticisms of the process approach, it is highly recommended for beginners and intermediate learners of English as L2. This is because many studies have been done to determine the effectiveness of the approach, especially in the context of ESL (Hudelson, 1987, Reyes, 1991, Reyes and Halcon, 2000). It is strongly believed that the practice and the process involved would be ingrained in the students at these levels in time for them to develop the academic discipline to help them acquire the skill of fluency that goes with accuracy, which will eventually result in the competency needed for further academic accomplishment.

2.7.6. Writing at Secondary School Level

At secondary school level, there are immediate and long term objectives for writing. Extended writing or composition writing is taught to enable students to develop writing skills to cope with their academic work, as well as develop functional writing skills to manage the type of writing needed both inside and outside the school situation. Writing serves as an important tool for effective participation and functioning of an individual in the society. Students at this level depend to a large degree on extended writing skills in examinations, and the process approach to writing is valuable in most subjects. In the communicative approach to the teaching of English which is recommended and emphasized throughout the junior (Republic of Botswana, 1996) and senior secondary (Republic of Botswana, 2000) English syllabi, writing is seen as a process. Students are guided to plan, draft and revise their writing and are also encouraged to 'learn to write' as opposed to 'writing to learn' (Tribble, 1996).

Writing activities at the above level imply that now students will have to write for examination purposes, as well as for social and economic purposes and graduate on to academic writing of the type they are going to encounter in post-secondary level and in life. All the above factors have the potential to increase students' motivation for writing. Apart from concentrating on forms of writing that have a practical value to students at this stage, their specific needs will be satisfied in areas of creative writing as well.

2.7.7. Assessment of Learners' Writing

Traditionally, language teachers have always been regarded as the teachers with the heaviest marking load, and extended writing is the reason for this. Also, the marking of essays has become the main evidence of the teacher's devotion to duty. For this reason, many teachers regard the idea of not correcting every single, grammatical structure and stylistic error, as heresy (Kilfoil and der Walt, 1997)

Another traditional belief is that the evaluation of extended pieces of writing is concerned mainly with structural or grammatical elements. Mistakes in students' works are 'major'

when there are too many grammar errors, and 'minor' when there are errors of spelling or word order. Content may be considered, but if there are too many 'major' errors the student cannot pass, no matter, how original the idea. Research has, however, shown that the identification and correction of errors, either by the student or the teacher, does not necessarily aid the learning of that rule or develop sensitivity for it (Ferris, 1995, 2004; Huntley, 1992). Moreover, Kaplan (1983) suggests that there is very little correlation between grammatical control and the ability to write extended pieces of prose.

Research also advocates feedback on the student writer's handling of content and organization. There is evidence that such feedback is necessary and does result in student improvement (Fathman and Whalley, 1990; Huntley, 1992). Huntley (1992) maintains that feedback on content and organization should be provided to students while feedback on form should be avoided. He also advocates that L2 teachers incorporate peer reviews and student-teacher conferences in their teaching. Williams (2003), emphasizes that, written feedback is an essential part of any language course that involves a writing element.

Rorabacher and Dunbar (1982) list three aspects that the student has to know before s/he can start writing as mechanical correctness (grammar, spelling and punctuation), content (what they want to say) and organization (how the content is arranged). As a result of this situation, the issue of feedback and the type of feedback to give will sometimes, depend to a large extent, on the teacher as to what to emphasize – form, content, organization, and so on, including the specific or collective needs of the students. At the junior secondary level, where the emphasis is on the communicative approach, the teacher may likely focus more on content than the form.

Leki (1990), talks about the three dimensional role of the teacher as real reader (audience), coach and evaluator. Criticism of the way teachers respond to students' compositions arises from the fact that teachers seem to concentrate more on their role as evaluators and judges and do not coach. This means that teachers are seen to be judging students' written work rather than guiding students through their writing. Hendrickson

(1980:216-217), observes that, '--- from a learner perspective, it is disconcerting to receive a 'corrected' composition with many words crossed out, new words added, and an array of marginal comments – all usually written in blood-red ink'. He indicates that teacher feedback has the potential of being destructive rather than constructive, if not properly given.

Sommers (1982) suggests that teachers often correct students' written work in such a way that the written product ends up not reflecting the learners' meaning, but the teacher's own message. Zamel (1985) and Cohen (1987) are of the view that teacher feedback is often inadequate because it basically deals with surface level issues. In agreement with this view, Cumming (1983) notes that error hunting is the technique most popularly employed by teachers. He points out that it is doubtful whether teacher feedback is of any help to students, apart from leading to cosmetic adjustments to the written product. This probably explains why Garret (1991) suggests that learners be taught to monitor themselves so that they are able to improve their performance.

King (1985: 57) also says that the level of marking can be:

- intensive – marking all major errors as well as commenting on ideas.
- impression – not picking up every error but awarding a mark and making comments based on overall impression.
- response – not giving a literal or numerical grade but written comments, including the teacher's feelings about the piece of writing; and
- focal – singling out particular criteria to check on – from a specific point of structure to style.

In the above case, structure and content are stressed, and depending on the level of students and the purpose of the writing activity, the teacher will pay attention to one or the other. Perhaps, with regards to writing in the above context, written feedback can be an integral part of assessment as suggested by Williams (2003). Overall, the teacher's task will be to provide evaluation that will lead the learner into reflecting on their work, rather than merely copying correction or not studying the evaluation at all (Simpson, 2006). This is where the process approach to the teaching of writing in the communicative context becomes invaluable. Sokmen (1988:5) puts it this way, 'the process approach puts emphasis on work that is developing, on revision instead of on

mistakes'. Through the process most mistakes in form and content would be minimized as students get feedback from teacher, peers and self-monitoring procedure.

In consideration of the above submissions, it needs to be seen whether teachers use the traditional product approach for the sake of convenience or simply because they have no idea of the intricacies inherent in the process approach to writing. Whatever the case, teachers should focus on impression and response as they develop their students' communicative and writing skills.

2.7.8. Self and Peer Evaluation of Writing

Self and peer evaluation are aspects of the process approach to writing and evaluation of such works. The process approach emphasizes the involvement of students in their own work as well as the work of their peers. It is believed that the very nature of writing makes it a controlled and revisable activity (White and Arndt, 1991). Therefore, students must be taught to realize that their writing can be revised and changes made during the process. Also, students need to be guided to look for their own errors. To help students evaluate their own work, the teacher could provide them with a short grid or rubric to use when revising or evaluating their own work (Cox, 2002). Examples of such assessment tools are rubrics, writing checklists, including peer and individual checklists.

2.8. Summary

A lot has been discussed in this chapter pertaining to writing, the writing theories, problems of writing in ESL contexts, and the traditional and current approaches to writing in secondary schools. It has also been noted that in spite of all of the current knowledge about writing, and how composition writing can be taught, the problem of extended writing in junior secondary schools in Botswana, still persists. Several instances, observations and studies have been cited to highlight the problem. Official

government documents have also been highlighted as evidence to show the prevalence of writing problems among students in Botswana junior secondary schools.

As a result, this study seeks to investigate the classroom practices and the approaches utilized by teachers in teaching composition writing in the classrooms, and how they impact on the learners' performance. In line with the objectives of this thesis as spelt out in Chapter One, particular emphasis will be on the challenges posed by such approaches to both students and teachers, and the development of models that would best address the needs of students in developing writing skills that would minimize the problems encountered in the teaching and learning of English composition writing at the junior secondary level in Botswana.

CHAPTER THREE

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter is devoted to the discussion of the methodology employed in this study, including issues pertaining to data collection, and analysis. As stated earlier, this study aimed at identifying the approaches adopted by teachers in the teaching of English composition writing in Botswana junior secondary classrooms, and the difficulties or challenges encountered in doing this in the teaching and learning process. Further, the study aimed to determine whether the approaches utilized by teachers have any inhibitions on the performance of students in English composition writing at the junior secondary level. Also, it sought to proffer solutions or models that would help to minimize the challenges of teaching English composition writing and enhance students' performance in writing. More specifically, this chapter deals with the methodology, research design/conceptual framework, gaining entry, the school settings and the samples, the research instruments, and the procedure for data collection and analysis among other issues.

3.2. Research Methodology

This section describes the research design of this study. The study adopted the qualitative approach. The use of the approach was based on the characteristics of the qualitative tradition as can be deduced from the following discussion of its various paradigms and definitions, thereby justifying its use for the type of educational issues and problems identified in this study.

3.2.1. Qualitative Research

There is ongoing debate on the most appropriate methods of research enquiry in the social sciences in general, and in educational research in particular. The debate mostly centres on the paradigms which guide and inform research in the social sciences, data collection methods and the trustworthiness of the research findings (Magagula, 1996; Cresswell, 1994). The whole debate centres on the nature of reality and how it is perceived. Vulliamy (1990) contends that the debate is mainly a distinction between research techniques or methods on the one hand, and paradigms, methodology, or strategy on the other. The focus of this discussion is on the choice of the qualitative research paradigm and qualitative research techniques. Below are definitions of qualitative research:

Macmillan and Schumacher (2006:315) define qualitative research as:

> Inquiry in which researchers collect data in face-to-face situations by interacting with selected persons in their settings. Qualitative research describes and analyzes people's individual and collective social actions, beliefs, thoughts and perceptions. Qualitative studies are important for theory generation, policy development, improvement of educational practice, illumination of social issues, and action stimulus.

Also, Cresswell (1998:15) in his definition says:

> Qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding, based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting.

Cohen and Manion (2001:317) conclude in their definition that:

> Qualitative research is said to penetrate situations in ways that can establish cause and effect, in real contexts, recognizing

47

that context is a powerful determinant of both causes and effects and thereby, determine the cause and effect.

Relying on the above, it is hoped that the approach would enable the researcher to establish the cause and effect as to why teachers and students are having difficulties in English composition teaching and learning at the junior secondary level of the Botswana education system. As a consequence, the qualitative approach as a method of data collection was extensively utilized. Furthermore, since the focus of this investigation was to explore an educational problem, and to proffer solutions which involve policy and practice ramifications, the use of the qualitative tradition, considering its characteristics outlined above, provides a useful strategy. Further attempts would be made to highlight and justify its use.

Ely, Anzul, Friedman, Garner and Steinmetz (1996) observe that different terms are usually used to define qualitative research, such as, naturalistic enquiry and ethnographic methodologies. Lofland and Lofland (1984: 3) are among many who list a variety of terms for research done within the social sciences and make the following assertion:

> Social science is a terminological jungle where many labels compete, and no single label has been able to command the particular domain before us.

Denzin and Lincoln (1994: 2) describe qualitative research:

> Qualitative research is multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.

Also, Cresswell (1998:15) in his own reflection of qualitative research and its characteristics says:

> Qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explores a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting.

48

The above definitions inform the nature of the methodology employed in my research which stretched over a period of one school term; observing and interviewing students and teachers in their natural classroom setting; processing information from observations and interviews and information from documents and artifacts.

Furthermore, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2005) say that qualitative research lends itself to the kind of concentrated action found in classrooms and schools. This is because, according to Woods (1983: 15-16):

> People are constantly undergoing change in interaction and society is changing through interaction. Interaction implies human beings acting in relation to each other, taking each other into account, acting, perceiving, interpreting - - -. Hence a more dynamic and active human being emerges rather than an actor merely responding to others. The interactive nature of teaching and learning in the classroom setting and the subsequent 'emergence of change in behaviour' that education entails, support the qualitative approach to the study of problems or issues pertaining to education.

3.2.2. The Nature of Qualitative Research

Sherman and Webb (1988), Bogdan and Biklen (1992), Lincoln and Guba (1985), and Lofland and Lofland (1984) claim that qualitative research is perhaps better understood by the characteristics of its methods than by a definition. They present lists of such characteristics. Shermann and Webb (1988: 5-8) analyzed what leading qualitative researchers said about their work in different disciplines. Their analysis produced the following characteristics similar to most types of qualitative research:

- Events can be understood adequately if they are seen in context. Therefore, a qualitative researcher immerses her/himself in the setting.

- The contexts of enquiry are not contrived; they are natural. Nothing is pre-defined or taken for granted.
- Qualitative researchers want those who are studied to speak for themselves, to provide their perspectives in words and other actions. Therefore qualitative research is an interactive process in which the people studied teach the researcher about their lives.
- Qualitative researchers attend to experience as a whole, not as separate variables as the aim of qualitative research is to understand experience as unified

With respect to the views of Shermann and Webb (1988), the investigator recorded the classroom teaching and learning activities; what the subjects did and said, and recorded the information elicited from interviews and other forms of interaction with those being studied. These procedures were used to ensure the validity and reliability of the data germane to the study. It is believed that when knowledge is obtained in a triangulated form, it is capable of ensuring a holistic angle.

Finally, qualitative research is said to be an inquiry that:

- is based on a constructivist philosophy that assumes that reality is a multi-layered, interactive, shared social experience that is interpreted by individuals;
- is concerned with understanding social phenomena from participants' perspectives, which is achieved by analyzing the many contexts of the participants;
- involves the collection of data in face to face situations by interacting with selected people in their settings;
- describes and analyzes people's individual and collective social actions, beliefs, thoughts, and perceptions important for theory generation, policy development, improvement of

educational practice, contributions to policy, social actions and so on (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006: 315-316).

The above methods and characteristics, again, fit in with the type of research undertaken in this study. First, a human problem – students' inability to write effective composition at the junior secondary level was investigated, as identified in Chapter One of this study. Reasons were established as to why this was so. In order to do this the researcher, built a complex, holistic picture of teachers and students in their natural settings, analyzed words, reported detailed views of informants (by face to face interactions and interviews). Also, documents relating to participants daily lives and activities were examined. Furthermore, the researcher also utilized the multi- method focus of the qualitative process of analyzing the individual and collective actions, beliefs and perceptions of the subjects or participants to come up with contribution to practice, educational issues, and a model for practice.

3.3. Research Design

This study was designed to embrace a plan which described the conceptual framework, gaining entrance into the field, the school settings and the sample, and the background of the student participants. Other issues discussed included the students' second language background and the background of the three teachers in the investigation. Finally, the strategies of data collection and analysis in conjunction with the elements mentioned in this section, are believed would help to answer the research questions.

3.3.1. Conceptual Framework/Design of the Study

This study was conceptualized on the basis of the framework shown in Figure 2. The English composition teachers were conceptualized to want to teach the Form One students to write English composition effectively and with greater ease. In doing this, the teachers of English utilized some approaches in teaching the anxious learners to enable

51

them to compose effectively. What are these approaches? The identification of these approaches enabled the investigator to answer Research Question One. In using the approaches during the teaching-learning situations, did these teachers encounter problems or challenges that impinged on the effective teaching and learning of English composition writing in the classroom? Answers to this question have enabled the investigator to answer Research Question Two. Further, did these approaches as used by the teachers constitute inhibitors to effective development of composition writing skills? The answer to this question helped explain Research Question Three. Finally, the suggested solutions or models advanced by the investigator after discovering the 'gaps' in the teaching-learning process that could help to enhance the effective teaching of composition writing in junior secondary schools in Botswana have helped to provide the answers to Research Question Four.

Figure 1: Conceptual framework/design for the study

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                ┌─────────────────────────────┐
       ┌───────▶│    Effective English        │◀───────┐
       │        │  Composition    Writing     │        │
       │        └─────────────────────────────┘        │
       │                      │                         │
       │                      ▼                         │
       │        ┌─────────────────────────────┐        │
       │        │  Identification of Approaches│        │
       │        │       Used By Teachers       │        │
       │        └─────────────────────────────┘        │
       │                      │                         │
       │                      ▼                         │
       │        ┌─────────────────────────────┐        │
       │        │ Problems Encountered by the  │        │
       │        │      use of such approaches  │        │
       │        └─────────────────────────────┘        │
       │                      │                         │
       │                      ▼                         │
       │        ┌─────────────────────────────┐        │
       │        │ Inhibitions to Students'     │        │
       │        │   Effective Composition      │        │
       │        │          Writing             │        │
       │        └─────────────────────────────┘        │
       │                      │                         │
       │                      ▼                         │
       │        ┌─────────────────────────────┐        │
       └────────│       Solutions/Models       │────────┘
                └─────────────────────────────┘
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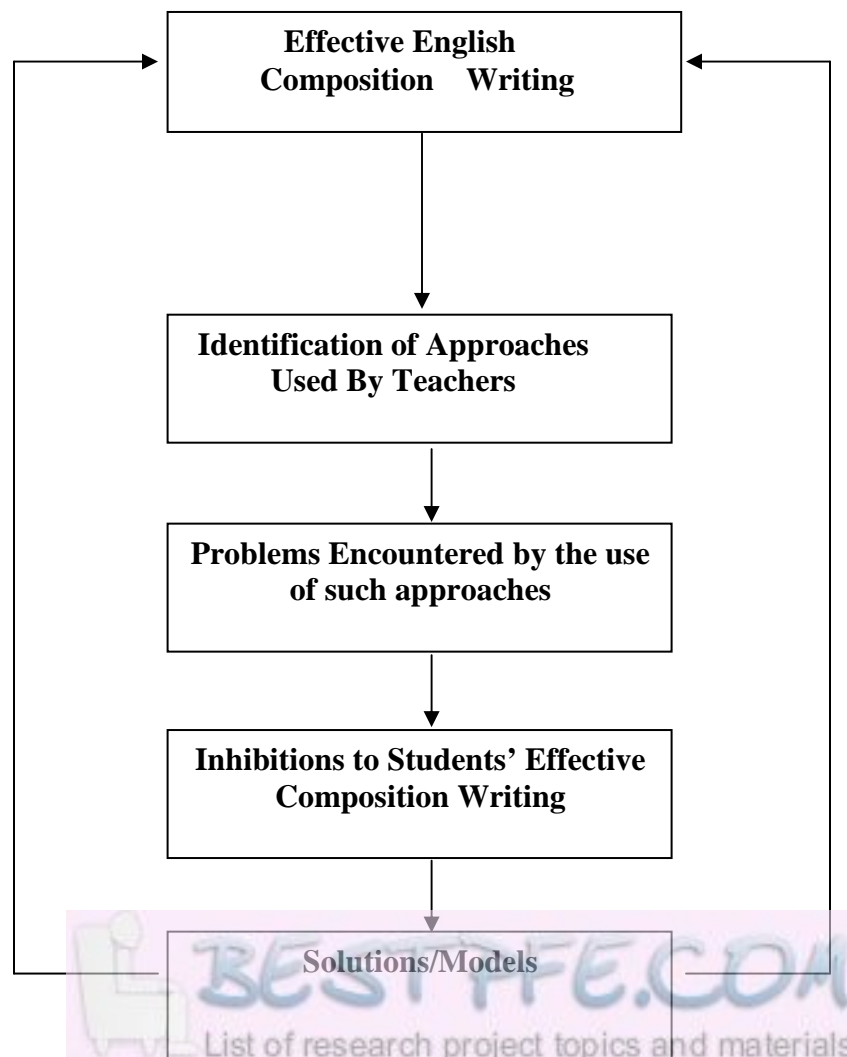
3.3.2. Gaining Entry into the Field

It is important that investigators seek permission of access to the institution or organization where research is to be conducted and acceptance by those whose permission is needed before the study can be carried out. Cohen; Manion and Morrison (2005:53) note:

> Investigators cannot expect access to a nursery, school, college, or factory as a matter of right. They have to demonstrate that they are worthy, as researchers and human beings, of being accorded the facilities needed to carry out their investigation.

In order to gain official permission to carry out the research in the three randomly selected junior secondary schools, personal visits were made to contact the school authorities, specifically, the respective school heads. The purposes and the objectives of the research were explained, after which their assistance were sought in identifying prospective participating teachers. Meetings were arranged with all the teachers of English in Form One of the participating schools, since any of them have the chance of participating if their classes were randomly selected. Explanations were given to the prospective teacher participants, in which the nature of the research was further explained in details as to duration, observation of lessons, and request for interview of participating students and teachers. Finally, the consent of the participating teachers whose classes were selected and who agreed to take part in the study was sought and granted.

3.3.3. The School Settings and the Sample

As specified in Chapter One, Gaborone, the capital city of Botswana was purposively chosen for this study as a location. Gaborone is a city with great diversity in terms of the population of Botswana citizens and foreigners. It is a city in which all ethnic groups within the country, as well as foreigners, are found to co-exist peacefully. In terms of socio-economic background, the city can boast of low, middle and high income groups with schools within any area having students from all socio-economic backgrounds. This is so because junior secondary schools in the city attract students from the immediate

communities or catchment areas, hence the appellation, 'community' junior secondary schools.

According to available statistics, there are thirteen public junior secondary schools in Gaborone (Republic of Botswana, 2006a). The names of the thirteen schools were written on pieces of paper and then shuffled. Three of the papers were then blindly picked from the shuffle. As earlier stated, all the thirteen schools have identical conditions and environment in terms of human and material resources. Almost all the schools are also equidistance to the researcher's place of abode. Moreover, each of the thirteen schools had an equal chance of being selected because any of them would provide the richness of information/data needed for the study. For example, the facilities in terms of human and material resources are almost the same as schools are centrally supplied with materials by the government. This means that the schools have identical physical facilities, same type of human resources, administrative facilities, and student ability distribution or groups. They were also conveniently located to the researcher's place of abode. Furthermore, the schools were similar in the sense that they had same types of students in terms of socio-economic background. Also the schools had same group of teachers in terms of diploma and degree holders in language education. As a result of the similarities in the conditions of the schools, three of the thirteen schools were randomly chosen for this study. The three schools were subsequently labeled Schools A, B and C. Again, it was possible to choose one or two schools for the study, but the investigation assumed three would be necessary for more representations and generalization of the results of the research findings.

A Form One class was chosen randomly from each of the three randomly selected schools to form the three classes under investigation. As earlier stated, the schools and classrooms had almost the same environments and conditions. Any three of them would present the richness of information needed for the research. Since Gaborone as a location was purposively chosen, the three schools and the three classrooms were randomly chosen to further serve the purpose of collecting in-depth data. There were six arms of Form One in each of the three schools. Alphabets A through F were assigned to represent

the six classes in each of the three schools and written on pieces of paper. An alphabet letter was blindly picked from the six shuffled pieces of paper to represent the class chosen from each of the schools under study. It was thus that every Form One class in the selected schools had an equal chance of being included or excluded from the study. The consent of the teachers whose classes were selected was sought. At this stage the teachers of the selected classes could refuse to participate if they so wished. For those teachers who declined, the random sampling procedure was repeated, but without their classes being included. The teachers of English in the selected classes whose teachers were willing to participate were matched to their schools as Teachers A, B and C to correspond with the label ascribed to their schools, and contacted for assistance, after the initial meeting with them at the stage of gaining entry. The refusal of some of the teachers to participate in the study at this stage was noted as a limitation.

Form One is the initial year in the three-year junior secondary education system in Botswana, and comes after seven years of study at primary school level as earlier stated. At this level, students are adjusting to a new school, new teachers and new teaching approaches in their secondary education. Also, students are more open minded and amenable to change. All these factors combined is believed to make it easier for the students to appreciate different teaching methods, techniques and strategies. Finally, there is ample time for students and teachers to experiment with different teaching approaches without the pressure or thought of an impending final examination that characterizes terminal years of schooling. More importantly, it is believed that laying the foundation for effective reading and writing skills should start from as early as possible in education. The junior secondary education runs for three years (Forms 1 through 3). Each of the three participating classes named, 1E, 1F, and 1D had 38, 42 and 41 students respectively, making the total number of subjects, consisting of varying ability groups to one hundred and twenty-one (121).

It is recognized that three (3) teachers, three (3) schools and one hundred and twenty-one (121) students of the public junior secondary school system were used in this study. A limitation of this study would be that the findings of this investigation might not be easily

generalized to the entire junior secondary schools in Botswana. Further, because of the problems of time and the bureaucracy of the system, some factors might limit the ease of data collection.

3.3.4. Background of the Student Participants

The technique used in Botswana to distribute students into form one classes from the primary schools entails an attempt to evenly distribute the different overall grade levels of the Primary School Leavers throughout the classes. The participant students, therefore, are representative of the population of form one students who were admitted for the year 2007. The class allocation system considers equal representations of students who scored grades A, B, C, D, and E in the Primary School Leavers Examination (PSLE). The overall PSLE grades of A, B, C, and D are therefore distributed across the classroom spectrums. This corroborates the assertion that most Botswana junior secondary public classrooms are mixed ability in nature as the students are distributed evenly by their grade of performance at PSLE. For example, class distribution of students was done in such a way that the PSLE grades were represented across the spectrum for the participating classes as follows:

School A	School B	School C
A = 4	A = 9	A = 10
B = 11	B = 13	B = 13
C = 17	C = 15	C = 14
D = 6	D = 4	D = 5
E = 0	E = 0	E = 0
Total = 38	Total = 41	Total = 42

The above showed that all grade groups representing the various ability groups were represented in each of the three classrooms totaling one hundred and twenty one (121) students used in the study. It is important to note that, an overall E grade indicates that

the student has failed. With the Botswana government's offer of the nine-year basic education for all students (Republic of Botswana, 1995), it is not improbable to admit students with such grades in the junior secondary education system. However, in this instance, there were no students with E grades.

3.3.5. Students' Second Language Background

The background of the students is such that they learn English as a second language (L2). This is so because the study was based on the premise that all student participants learn English as L2. It was also found that all the students speak other languages apart from English at home. There were more Setswana speaking students than other languages such as Ikalanga, Sekalaka, which are some of Botswana's minority languages. A few other languages spoken by other nationalities from Botswana were also recorded such as Bemba, Somali, Kikuyu and Korean. This is an indication that all the student respondents learn English in ESL context as there were no students who were recorded as learning English as L1.

Students' scores in English at the PSLE indicated that they were equally distributed in all the ability groups across the classroom setting as follows:

School A	School B	School C
A = 8	A = 15	A = 14
B = 10	B = 13	B = 16
C = 12	C = 12	C =10
D = 8	D =1	D = 2
E = 0	E = 0	E = 0
Total = 38	Total = 41	Total =42

3.3.6. Background of the Teachers

The three English subject teachers for the three selected classes were involved in the study and identified as Teachers A, B, and C to correspond with their schools as stated earlier. These teachers were qualified English teachers judging from their qualifications, and the Performance Evaluation Report (Republic of Botswana, 2006b) of the Curriculum and Evaluation Department of the Botswana Ministry of Education, that notes that English at junior secondary school is mainly taught by trained teachers. The highlighted profiles of the three teachers below attests to this assertion:

3.3.6.1. Teacher A

Teacher A is a graduate teacher of English with a Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE), with five (5) years of teaching experience. Her motivation for specialization in the subject was because she liked fluency in the language and wanted to find out if she could write poems. She added that she was interested in the creative part of the language. She mostly prefers to teach Literature in English because, according to her, and to use her exact words, *'It is the most interesting part of the English language that I like and enjoy teaching.'* On the aspect of English she least preferred to teach, she replied that it is grammar. This is because she feels that it is too rigid and emphasize too many rules. Besides, she said that her students do not enjoy learning grammar at all.

3.3.6.2 Teacher B

Teacher B holds a Diploma in Education with specialization in English and Setswana. She has a teaching experience of ten years. Her motivation for specialization in English was because she had a very good background in English. She had gone to an English Medium School, where the medium of instruction was English, and Setswana was taught only as a subject. Besides that, she had very good teachers who had motivated her. She further said that, she enjoys teaching Literature better than other aspects of English because she enjoys reading and that there is always something to be learned from it. She

added that students also enjoy reading as it helps them to develop vocabulary skills. When asked which aspect of English she least prefers to teach, she said, *'I don't enjoy teaching composition writing and grammar because students find it difficult to write and prefer discussion to writing. Also, it is probably because of their lack of interest in it. I usually get put off by teaching composition writing because of their (students) inability to write in an effective way. I also don't like teaching grammar because it is too rigid and emphasizes rules which students find difficult to grasp and apply.'* She had ten (10) years teaching experience.

3.3.6.3 Teacher C

Teacher C holds a Diploma in Education with specialization in English and Guidance and Counseling, and had been teaching for seven years. Her motivation for teaching English was that, it was her favourite subject at school, and had always excelled in it. She added that she had a good background in English because she had been lucky to have had very good teachers who had motivated her. She prefers to teach Literature in English because it involves the teaching of real life experiences which students can relate to. Also, according to her, literature is easy to teach as it encouraged self expression by students. She added that, students are easily motivated by Literature since it encourages critical thinking. On the aspect of English she least prefers to teach, she said that she does not enjoy teaching Listening Comprehension because it is difficult to get students to take useful notes.

The three participating teachers were prepared to accommodate an observer in their classrooms, and agreed to teach composition topics from the communal scheme of composition topics from their respective schools. This decision posed no difficulties, as the study focused on the approaches used in teaching writing as opposed to pre-occupation with topics. In addition, the participating teachers gave their consent for themselves and their students to be interviewed. They also agreed to have their students' artifacts such as exercise books, textbooks and journals examined. They were also

prepared to allow the researcher examine their lesson plans, scheme books, teaching records and any other documents.

It is important to note that teachers in these schools are hired and administered by the Teaching Service Management Division of the Botswana Ministry of Education.

3.4. The Research Protocols

Cresswell (1998) defines protocols as the use of a predetermined sheet on which one logs information learned during the observation or interview. Lofland and Lofland (1984) put the process as, 'logging data.' Which involves recording information through various forms such as observational field notes, interview write-ups, mapping, collecting and organizing documents and so on (Cresswell, 1998). The protocols in this study stand for such equipments/materials used to collect relevant data for analysis. They include observation guides, interview guides, prescribed textbooks, draft compositions, marking rubrics and other related documents and artifacts which served as mediums of information collection. The protocols used in this research included the following:

- Appendix A - An Observation Guide for Teachers;
- Appendix B - An Interview Guide for Teachers;
- Appendix C - An Interview Guide for Students;
- Appendix D – Marking Rubric for Examining Students' Written Work; and
- All available documents in terms of materials used for English Composition writing – textbooks, students' exercise books and other related artifacts on English composition writing. The protocols as well as their uses are explained as follows:

1. *The Observation Guide for Teachers* enabled the investigator to determine the approaches teachers utilized in teaching English composition as well as what went on in the classroom during the English composition writing lessons, including the stage by stage procedure/process and activities.

60

2. *The Interview Guide for Teachers* was used by the investigator to further clarify or find out more facts from the teachers in terms of the approaches used, the teachers' perspectives and the underlying reasons for what they were doing that could not be obvious to the observer and the problems the teachers were facing while using the approaches.

3. *The Interview Guide for Students* enabled the investigator to cross check the approaches adopted by the teachers and determine whether these approaches were creating problems for the students which were not obvious to the teachers as they taught writing skills to their students. Furthermore, the guide provided the opportunity to cross check the responses of students to the approaches used by the teachers.

4. *The Marking Rubric* (figure 2) was used by the participating teachers for the examination of students' written work and for the grading of the drafts of students' compositions. The same rubric was used to qualitatively examine students' written work by the investigator. This was because it is a standardized score-sheet used by teachers and authorized by the Botswana Ministry of Education.

Figure 2: Composition Marking Rubric

	Symbol	Max. Marks	Very Good	Above Average	Average	Below Av.	Poor
Communication: Overall impression/relevance/own detail/appropriate use of vocabulary/fluency	C	14	14-12	11-9	8-7	6-5	4-0
Grammar: Knowledge of using parts of speech; tense consistency; subject/verb agreement etc.	G	14	14-12	11-9	8-7	6-5	4-0
Mechanics: Spelling/Punctuation	M	6	6-5	4	3	2	1-0
Organization: Paragraphing, sequence of ideas and information, introduction, body and conclusion.	O	6	6-5	4	3	2	1-0
Totals		40	40-34	30-26	22-20	16-14	10-0

Furthermore, it was a rubric that the participating teachers were familiar with, and which it was hoped, would reduce the incidence of bias and subjectivity. Specifically, the rubric in figure 2 was used by the teachers to score students' written work in terms of the number grades shown, and in relation to the elements illustrated in the figure.

Also, various artifacts such as the teachers' reference materials (if any), students' composition writing exercise books, and journals where possible were examined to enable the investigator to qualitatively determine the data relevant to answering the research questions generated in Chapter One.

3.5. Data Collection Methods

The study adopted the qualitative approach, using a variety of methods or triangulation. As earlier noted, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2005) define triangulation as the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour. Triangulation also includes the use of various sources (using more than one stakeholder group or representatives of stakeholder groups, such as teachers, students, curriculum developers, school inspectors and so on).

A qualitative approach, with a variety of methods or triangulation was used in this study. This involved the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of human behaviour. Triangulation by its nature also includes the use of various sources (using more than one stakeholder group or representatives of stakeholder groups, such as teachers and students as reflected in this study). Triangulation in other contexts may also involve the use of different researchers collecting data, such as researcher and different research assistants, as well as the triangulation of theories or paradigms. Specifically, observations, interviews, examination of documents and artifacts were used in this qualitative research as earlier indicated. It is assumed that these would reduce the risk of biased conclusions drawn from using one specific method of data collection, and to ensure validity and reliability.

Again, the use of triangulation or multiple data sources as a way of enhancing the validity and reliability of data is supported by Sells, Smith, and Newfield (1997) who claim that such an approach to data collection further increases the trustworthiness of the research findings. Combining three or more methods of data collection that complement one another minimizes threats to validity. Also, triangulation said to be a powerful way of demonstrating concurrent validity, particularly in qualitative research (Campbell and Fiske, 1959; Smith, 1975; Lin, 1976). In this regard, Cresswell (1998:120) notes the following basic types of information gathering in the qualitative tradition:

> There are four basic types of information to collect: observations (ranging from non-participant to participant), interviews (ranging from semi-structured to open-ended), documents (ranging from private to public) and audio-visual materials including materials such as photographs, compact disks, and video-tapes.

The four basic types of data collection methods above were used in this study such as observations, interviews, review of documents, the examination of students' artifacts and other relevant school and government documents. In addition, both the teachers and students interview accounts were recorded on cassette tapes.

3.5.1. Observation

Patton (1990:203-5) notes:

> Observational data are attractive as they afford the researcher the opportunity to gather 'live' data from 'live' situations, to look at what is taking place 'in situ' rather than at second hand. This enables researchers - - - to be open-ended and inductive, to see things that might otherwise be unconsciously missed, to discover things that participants might not freely talk about in an interview situation, to move beyond perception-based data - - - and to access personal knowledge.

Morrison (1993) sums it all up when he argues that, observations enable the researcher to gather data on: the physical setting, the human setting, the interactional setting and the

programme setting. Patton (1990) goes on to suggest that observational data should enable the researcher to enter and understand the situation that is being described.

LeCompte and Preisle (1993) note that there are degrees of participation in observation such as the participant - observer, non-participant observer or complete observer. In participant observational studies, the researcher, stays with the participants for a substantial period of time, recording what is happening, whilst taking a role in that situation. With the non-participant observer, he or she does not take a role in the situation but merely observes. The model of my observation status was non-participant observer. Participants were aware of my presence but were not affected by it. In this position, I was able to take notes of events, activities, reactions to specific stimuli and experiences as the teachers and students lived it in their natural classroom setting.

Three participant teachers, A, B and C and their students were observed in their natural classroom environments in the teaching and learning of composition writing for a whole term. Two composition lessons were observed with respect to Teacher A, one was observed for Teacher B and two for Teacher C. These were the composition writing lessons taught for the entire term in form one in the three schools. In all, a total of five lessons were observed. Each of the five lessons was taught over a period of eighty (80) minutes, otherwise referred to as a double period. A period usually lasted for forty (40) minutes in the three schools' systems.

3.5.2. Interviews

Kvale (1996) describes interview as an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest. Laing (1967) notes that interviews enable participants – be they interviewers or interviewees – to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view.

The type of interview given or used in any study is frequently dependent on the sources available and can be structured or semi-structured, formal or informal, closed or open-ended and so on.

> Kvale (1996: 126-7) categorizes interviews in the way they differ in the openness of their purpose, their degree of structure, the extent to which they are exploratory or hypothesis testing, whether they seek description or interpretation, whether they are largely cognitive focused or emotion focused.

The semi-structured interview with open ended questions was used as one of the strategies of data collection in this study. This is because, according to Cohen and Manion (1995), including open-ended questions in an interview schedule has the advantage of making the whole exercise flexible. This stance is also supported by Patton (1990) who claims that the flexibility of the semi-structured interview is an advantage in capturing the complexities of the respondents' individual perceptions and experiences. Cohen et al (2005) sum it up, when they say that this form of interview enables the interviewer to follow up ideas, probe responses and investigate motives and feelings. They further argue that the semi-structured interview may be used to follow up unexpected results by going deeper into the motivations of respondents and their reasons for responding as they do.

However, in spite of the advantages of the interview, Kitwood (1977) conceptualizes interview as that of a transaction which inevitably has bias, which is to be recognized and controlled. The control alluded to was addressed by having a range of interviewees (113 students, and three teachers) with different biases responding to the same questions in their own ways, and identifying the main themes and responses in order to arrive at a reliable conclusion.

It is recognized that in interviews, there is the problem of developing a satisfactory method of recording responses during the course of the interview, such as, a break in continuity. This may result in leaving out some salient points or overlooking some

pertinent answers. In an attempt to avoid this problem of a break in continuity during the course of the interview, the interviews were tape-recorded, in addition to transcripts taken of the interviews. Tape recording is believed to have the advantage of increasing the accuracy of data collection as they capture verbatim responses of the people being interviewed (Patton, 1990). Also, tape recorded data can become a permanent record to be consulted in future, if the need arose.

The teachers' interviews were conducted after the observation of their lessons at the schools' libraries for the purposes of privacy and concentration. There were two interview sessions with each of the three teachers. The first interview with each teacher lasted one and a half hours. The second interview sought to clarify issues not elaborated on but which were felt to be important to the study, and lasted for fifty minutes with each of the teachers. There were also a couple of phone calls to each of the teachers for some quick clarifications which lasted about ten minutes each.

The students were also interviewed individually, just like the teachers after the lesson observations. The students' interviews were conducted during the afternoon, after class over a period of three hours in each of the participating schools at different occasions. The times in which the interviews occurred depended on when the lesson observations were concluded in each of the schools. In order to ensure confidentiality, students were called into the guidance and counseling office of each of the schools one after the other from the libraries where they were kept after class hours for the exercise. The subject teachers assisted in this exercise as they stayed with their students in the libraries while they were being called to the interview. In all thirty-six (36) students were interviewed in School A, 39 students in School B and 38 students in School C to arrive at a total of 113 students that were interviewed.

3.5.3. Documents and Artifacts

In addition to the above, students' artifacts were examined for each composition writing lesson using protocol D (See appendix D). The artifacts examined included copies of the students' draft compositions, composition writing exercise books to verify the frequency of composition writing and other details. The pictures brought by the students for one of the lessons including the prescribed textbooks used by both students and teachers were also examined. Copies of the students' artifacts were obtained, and photocopied. Copies of the textbooks used were also obtained. These were noted and recorded for subsequent reference and analysis. Literature and review of research on the process and product approaches to composition writing continued throughout the study. Also, the participating teachers' schemes of work, and lesson preparation notes were examined under their pseudo-identifications, as Teachers A, B and C and matched to their schools respectively.

3.5.4. A summary of the data collection procedure

The strategies employed in ensuring credibility of the research findings included the use of triangulation whereby interviews were conducted with teachers and students. Purposive sampling was used for the choice of schools thereby enabling the advantage of targeting those informants whose information might apply to a majority of similar settings in other locations, in this case, other schools and classes.

Field notes were gathered by conducting an observation of teachers and students in a natural classroom setting in the role of a non-participant observer. One-on-one open ended semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participating teachers and students which were combined with the examination of students' artifacts, such as their draft compositions, mind maps, composition writing exercise books, pictures of different types of homes brought by students, teachers' lesson plans, and prescribed textbooks used by both the teachers and the students in their composition writing lessons. Also, the standard marking rubric used by the teachers to score students' writing was examined. Verbatim quotations from the interviews were included in the text to give more substance

67

to the findings. The researcher's experience as an English language teacher for over two decades also informed the choice of elements to be observed, documents to be checked, observation of students' behaviour during lessons, as well as the interview discussions with both the teachers and the students.

Further, the feeling of collegiality that existed between the researcher and the school teachers, helped to promote the atmosphere of ease in the students and teachers. This enabled the parties to open up during the interviews, and act naturally during the lesson observation sessions. In addition, literature pertaining to L2 composition writing was continuously reviewed. In the stages of data collection such as observation and interview, protocols were designed and used as illustrated in the research protocols shown in the appendices. The data grid shown below summarizes the research objectives, the data needed, the location of data, how to obtain the data, and how to analyze the data as shown below:

Figure 3: Data Grid

Research Objective/Question	Data's Location	How to Obtain Data	Form of Data
Approaches Teachers Use	Teachers Syllabus	Observation Interview Document Analysis	Qualitative Qualitative
Challenges Posed	Teachers Students	As above	As Above
Inhibition/Non-inhibition	Teachers Students	As Above	As Above
Models/Solutions	Teachers Students Researcher	As above	As above

3.6. Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability are very important to effective research. Validity denotes that a particular instrument in fact measures what it purports to measure. Reliability is concerned with precision and accuracy (Cohen, et al, 2005). Validity and reliability can be discussed in quantitative and qualitative terms. The discussion of validity and reliability would be discussed as pertains to the qualitative method used in this study.

3.6.1. Validity

In qualitative data, validity might be addressed through the honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data achieved, the participants approached and the extent of triangulation or objectivity of the researcher. In quantitative data, validity might be improved through careful sampling, appropriate instrumentation and appropriate interpretation of data. Validity then should be seen as a matter of degree rather than as an absolute state (Gronlund, 1981). It is important, therefore, to strive to minimize invalidity and maximize validity.

3.6.2. Reliability

 In qualitative research, reliability can be regarded as a fit between what researchers record as data and what actually occurs in the natural setting that is being researched (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992:48). Referring to this difference, Kvale (1996) suggests that in interviewing, there might be as many different interpretations of the qualitative data as there are researchers. This is why Bell (1993) asserts that whatever procedure for collecting data is selected; it should always be examined critically to assess the extent to which it is likely to be reliable and valid.

As a result of the above, in this study, the validity and the reliability of the interview questions and observation checklist were ascertained in different ways. The lesson observation checklist borrowed from the current model of the University of Botswana Student Teacher Observation Checklist. Also, collegial views and input, as well as the adaptation of Cox's (2002) stages in the writing process were used in drawing up the teacher observation checklist, and teacher and students' interview questions were drawn up with input from colleagues and literature reviews. In addition, drafts of the above mentioned protocols were sent to the study supervisor for comments on relevance, ambiguity, and language, and overall suitability.

In short, the strategies employed in ensuring the credibility and reliability of the research findings consists of the following:

- Triangulation was used, whereby interviews were conducted with teachers and students. Field notes collected during observations and interviews were used in conjunction with the lessons learnt from teachers' and students' artifacts and literature reviews in Chapter Two.

- Purposive sampling for the choice of location had the advantage of targeting those informants who could offer a lot of information for the study because of the specific key characteristics that they possess, and which also apply to a majority of similar settings in other locations, in this case, other schools and classes.

- Verbatim quotations from the interviews were included in the text to give more substance to the findings.

- The researcher's experience as an English language teacher for over a decade also informed the choice of elements to be observed, documents to be checked, observation of students' behaviour during the lessons, as well as the interview discussions with both the teachers and the students.

- The feeling of collegiality that existed between the researcher and the school teachers, helped to promote the atmosphere of ease in the students and teachers. This enabled the parties to open up during the interviews, and act naturally during the lesson observations.

As stated earlier, the protocols used in this study consisted of the following: An Observation Guide for Teachers, An Interview Guide for Teachers, An Interview Guide for Students, and a Marking Rubric for Examining Students' Written Work.

In ensuring validity and reliability, therefore, the protocols designed were shown to English education experts, colleagues in the field of English language education and the promoter of this study for their reactions and inputs as to how valid and reliable the protocols were. This exercise was undertaken to ascertain that the protocols were capable of measuring the needed data pertaining to the objectives of study and that they could

also be used in similar settings elsewhere. The experts recommended some modifications as a result of which the protocols were rewritten to enhance representative-ness of content, relevance of the protocols to the statement of the problem, significance of the protocol items to the research questions, clarity and understanding of the items by the target sample, and the applicability of the protocols in another setting. Going by the recommendations of the 'experts,' some of the items of the protocols were modified before being pre-tested in a school different from the three schools under study.

After the pretest of the protocols in the school referred to above, the investigator again removed one or two items which seemed to be soliciting some responses that did not bear relevance to the study from the respondents. With this refinement, the investigator felt the protocols were ready for use in the three schools under study.

3.7. Data Analysis

This study focused on data in the form of words – that is, language in the form of extended text. The words are based on observation, interviews and documents/artifacts. Wolcott (1992) puts this as watching, asking, or examining. It is believed that these data collection activities are carried out in close proximity to a local setting for a sustained period of time. Atkinson (1998), on the processing of field notes, says that in itself is problematic, because of the different meanings attached to situations and actions by the individuals involved. This is why it is said that the apparent simplicity of qualitative data masks a good deal of complexity, requiring plenty of care and self-awareness on the part of the researcher.

In order to overcome the complexities of the qualitative paradigm noted by Atkinson (1992) that the knowledge of human affairs is irreducibly subjective, Magagula (1996:11) gives the following guidelines:

- The investigator's statements should accurately reflect the respondents' perceptions.

- The findings should be a function of the informants and the conditions of inquiry rather than the biases, motivations, interests, and perceptions of the investigator.
- The results must be transferable to other similar situations.

Miles and Huberman (1994) define data analysis in research as containing three linked sub-processes namely: (a) data reduction (b) data display and (c) conclusion drawing and verification. All the coded data collected were reduced into manageable categories, and this helped to focus the analysis process (Cresswell 1994; Patton 1990). Gay and Airasian (2000) refer to this as data management stage, which is organizing the data and checking them for completeness. During this stage, the researcher examined the field notes made during observations, interviews and other recorded data, and the data were then categorized for analysis in line with the research questions, from which conclusions were drawn.

For this study, data from observations, interviews and artifacts were displayed and reduced into categories that were processed into 'write-ups'. This was achieved by reviewing the database of information that included field notes of lesson observations, teacher and student interviews, examination of students' artifacts, and other relevant documents. The research questions, the conceptual framework and data grid were used extensively to come up with the categories needed to answer each of the four research questions. From the categories, patterns and themes were identified which were matched with the conceptual framework and research questions for interpretation, analysis and drawing conclusions for discussions and recommendations. The main focus was on text as the basic medium, drawing meanings of the categories from the perspective of the participants with verbatim texts where possible.

3.8.Summary

This chapter has highlighted the use of the qualitative approach to research by describing the nature of qualitative inquiry, and its appropriateness for this study. The chapter also discussed in detail, the research methodology and design, and sample. Finally, data collection and analysis strategies were discussed and reasons advanced for choosing them. Details of data presentation and analysis are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. DATA PRESENTATION AND DATA ANALYSIS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the research findings from the observations, interviews and examination of documents and artifacts of three teachers and one hundred and twenty one students described in Chapter Three of the research design. The findings are qualitatively presented in line with the four objectives of the study. In order to do this effectively, the aims, objectives and main research questions are re-stated as a background to the presentation of the qualitative findings. Further, this chapter is divided into two sections represented by data presentation and analysis.

4.1.1. Aim of Study

This study specifically aimed at identifying the approaches utilized by teachers of English composition writing, and the difficulties teachers and students face. The aim was to proffer models that would help to minimize the challenges encountered in teaching English composition writing, and to enhance students' performance at the junior secondary level in Botswana.

4.1.2. Research Objectives

1. To find out the approaches utilized by teachers in the teaching and learning of English composition writing in classrooms;
2. To identify the challenges posed by the use of such approaches in the teaching of English composition writing in these classrooms;

3. To determine if the approaches used by the teachers inhibit students' performance in composition writing;

4. To propose possible models that would improve the teaching and learning of English composition writing by students at the junior secondary level in Botswana.

4.1.3. Research Questions

1. What approaches do teachers utilize in the teaching of English composition writing in the three classrooms?
2. What are the challenges or problems associated with the use of the approaches?
3. Are the teachers' approaches to teaching composition writing responsible for the poor writing skills of learners?
4. What possible models would improve the teaching and learning of composition writing by students at the junior secondary school level in Botswana?

4.2. DATA PRESENTATION

4.2.1. Research Question 1

What are the approaches teachers utilize in the teaching of English composition writing in the three classrooms?

One of the main objectives of this study was to identify the approaches used by teachers in teaching composition writing. Research question 1 was used to determine this. Apart from the observation of teachers at work, both students and teachers were interviewed. The questions and responses, including the classroom observations, are outlined below using protocols A, B and C (See Appendices A, B, C). The main themes are highlighted.

Also, a total of five lessons were observed and outlined for subsequent analysis. In order to present a holistic picture, the presentation of data is done pertaining to the teachers and students in the three schools (A, B and C).

In order to find answers to research question one above, the teachers and students were asked questions which related to approaches to composition writing. The responses in all of the cases reflect the recurring themes. Verbatim reports have been included, where necessary. As stated earlier, in Chapter Three, the teacher interviews were conducted after the observation of their lessons. There were two interview sessions with each of the three teachers. The first interview with each teacher lasted one and a half hour. The second interview sought to clarify issues that were not elaborated on, but which were felt to be important to the study. This, too, lasted for about an hour in each case. Details of these have been given in Chapter Three.

4.2.1.1 Interview with Teachers - (Appendix B)

**Question**: **How do you choose composition topics for students to write on?**

In answer to the question above, the three teachers said they normally pick topics from the students' reading comprehension cycles or they use their discretion to pick topics that are related to the students' everyday lives. At times they chose topics linked to current events in the society. Such topics are those linked to HIV/AIDS, the recent spate of passion killings and the introduction of school fees in public schools. One of the teachers added that even though they are supposed to pick topics from the common scheme topics which they prepare at the beginning of every school term. They added that they have the freedom to choose topics which they consider to be suitable for their students. This was vividly depicted by one of the teachers:

Teacher A: _I choose themes from current events such as Consumer Fairs, the recent spate of passion killings in the country and common interest topics. Even though we have common scheme topics, it is not rigidly followed. The teachers can use their discretion to come up with student interest topics._

The above response was followed by another question to determine the approach/procedure for teaching:

Question: *What procedure/approach do you use in teaching composition writing in your class?*

The common themes in the teachers' responses indicated the steps they followed, in this order:

i.   They usually started with the discussion/explanation of the parts of a composition, such as the introduction, body and conclusion.

ii. This was followed by the introduction and discussion of the topics.

iii. Students then brainstormed on the topics.

iv. The next stage involved students being assigned to work in groups or pairs to write a draft which they edited themselves.

v.   Most often, students did not finish the process in class. So the drafts were submitted as homework for grading.

vi. Students produced final copies from the graded drafts.

One of the teachers, however, admitted that sometimes because of lack of time, students at times wrote the final copies from the drafts without any feedback from her. The procedure was succinctly put by one of the teachers:

Teacher B: *First of all, I introduce the topic, and let students brainstorm on what to include in the introduction, body/development and conclusion. Then they work in groups or pairs to come up with a draft. They read each other's draft to correct their mistakes. If there is time, they write final copies in class; otherwise, they finish up at home and submit for marking. Most often, because of lack of time, after they have written the draft, they proof-read and write final copies for submission.*

To help determine the approach, a follow-up question was asked:

Question: How do you give feedback to the students on their work?

All the teachers answered that they awarded number grades and made comments on their students' performance in their books. They reiterated that, because of the limitation of time, and class size, they were unable to give oral or individual feedback.

The next question sought to establish the time factor in composition writing which is crucial and dependent on the approach used.

Question: How long does a composition writing lesson take?

The three teachers said that they normally taught composition writing in a double period of forty minutes each that adds up to eighty (80) minutes. This, they all agreed, was not enough for the students to do their writing. They said, students who were unable to finish their writing within the allotted time, were usually allowed to take the assignment home to finish it up, and submit the next day.

In an attempt to ascertain the frequency of composition writing, the teachers were asked:

Question: How often do your students write compositions in a term and why?

The common answer to this question was that students wrote compositions twice a term. The three teachers cautioned that because of inadequate time allocation, large class size, and the fact that they also have to teach other skills, it is not uncommon to find that they sometimes manage to make students write only one composition per term. One of the teachers intimated that because of the nature of language teaching, they were prevented from initiating too many composition writing exercises. This is reflected in her response:

Teacher C: *Most often, we write two compositions in a term because of other skills to be taught such as literature, reading, grammar, and so on. Class size also discourages*

frequent composition writing. Also, as a teacher of language, you do a lot of grading everyday.

Teachers were also asked questions to establish their students' reading and writing habits, apart from composition writing, and to establish the accessibility of library facilities to students:

<u>Question</u>: *How often do your students go to the library in trying to enhance their writing ability?*

The consensus was that students in all the three schools have the privilege of visiting the library in a time-tabled period of forty minutes a week. They added, however, that besides the one period of forty minutes, students could visit the library during their own free time in the afternoons, after class. They noted, though, that there are no facilities for students who may want to borrow books to read. They said that this was because the libraries do not have enough materials/resources for the students to do that.

<u>Question</u>: *Do students do book reports whether written or verbally on the books they have read in the library?*

None of the teachers replied in the affirmative to this question. Two of the teachers said they encouraged their students to give oral reports. One admitted that her students did not write book reports because they did not get the chance to read books long enough to be able to write reports. These are her words:

Teacher C: *I don't make my students write book reports because books are not available for them to borrow and read in much detail to enable them to write book reports.*

4.2.1.2   Interview with students (Appendix C):

In order to determine the approaches teachers utilize in teaching composition writing, thirty-six (36) students from School A , thirty-nine (39) from school B, and thirty-eight (38) from School C were interviewed. This brought the total number of students

interviewed to one hundred and thirteen (113). These are the students who were actually available, and present for the interview, compared to the overall number of one hundred and twenty one (121) students in the three schools that participated in the study. The students were also interviewed individually, just like the teachers after the lesson observations. The interviewing of students were conducted during the afternoon study time, after normal class periods, for three in each of the three schools, and with the assistance of the subject teacher. Details of the interview procedures are given in Chapter Three. The following questions were asked, and the main themes of the responses from the students in the three schools were highlighted.

In an effort to establish the students' writing habit and the frequency of extended writing activity, the following question was asked:

Question: *Do you have a journal or notebook for doing reports on books you read at the library?*

The main themes of the students' responses indicated that they were quite unaware and ignorant about such practices. Many of them said they had never really thought about doing that, while some said they did not think it was important. Others said they only read for fun, and not for study, as they understood the term. Another popular response was that they had not been supplied with notebooks for doing that by their teachers. A few of the verbatim responses are indicated:

- *No, I don't have one because I don't think it is that important to me.*
- *No, because I read for fun, not for study.*
- *We read for fun so there is no sense in doing that.*
- *No, because I don't feel it is necessary for me to record stories I have read, and besides, we are not supplied with such books.*

In order to ascertain the approaches used by the three teachers from the students' point of view the following questions were asked in each of the three schools that participated in the study. Only the main themes in their responses are highlighted.

Question: *Describe what you do when writing English composition in class.*

The students' responses corroborated the three teachers' responses in terms of the procedure they described for teaching composition writing. The responses were in line with the teachers' views, which were as follows:

- Students engaged in the discussion of the elements/parts of a composition with the teacher.
- This was followed by the discussion of the topic/s and brainstorming session.
- Students were then set to do group drafting, and completion of the composition writing assignment as homework. A few of the representative responses from the three schools are highlighted for emphasis:

The themes of the students' responses were given as follows:

- *We first discuss the steps that we should follow, for example, writing the introduction, body and conclusion. Then we brainstorm in groups. We write the draft, and then we write the composition.*
- *We discuss about how a composition is written and its parts such as the introduction, body and conclusion. We are then given a topic to write on. We write a draft of the composition and give it to our friends to read and correct where it is wrong. If we aren't able to finish, then we submit the following day.*
- *We discuss the topic in a group and after that we make a draft and correct the mistake in the draft and copy them into our composition notebooks.*
- *You write title. Make a draft. Write a clean copy starting with introduction, development and conclusion. After that I submit to the teacher for marking.*
- *We are given composition topics sometimes in groups and sometimes individually. If we are given one as a group, we first brainstorm; put down the points we have, and come up with a draft composition. After that we write a final copy and submit to the teacher.*

- *We work in groups to do the following:*

Brainstorm

Arrange points

Make a draft

Write the final composition

- *First our teacher discusses the title with the whole class, after that, she gives us a piece of paper to write the draft before writing in our books. And if you are not through, you can do it as homework.*

Question: *What does your teacher do in class to help you when you write compositions? Mention all of the activities.*

On what the teacher actually did to help during a composition writing lesson, the students responded that the teachers introduce the topics, give instructions, brainstorm with them and set them to write a draft of the composition, usually as a group activity. Thereafter, they go around making sure they obey the instruction as highlighted in the recurring themes below:

- *She writes the topic on the board, then she brainstorms with us, thereafter she asks us to write the composition in groups, then we transfer it to our books for marking.*
- *First she introduces the topic. After that, she divides us into groups and checks to see if we are writing the right stuff. After marking the draft she tells us to write the composition in our books.*
- *She only talks about the topic, the way we are supposed to think about it, how we should write, and the way it is going to be marked and when to submit our books for marking.*
- *The teacher gives us the topic and tells us how the composition is written; that it should have an introduction, body and conclusion.*

The next question was asked to determine the type of feedback students got from their teachers, which is part of the element for identifying the approach to composition writing.

Question: What type of feedback do you get from your teacher after your composition was marked?

The students' common response was that they were usually allocated number grades and comments on their mistakes, such as spellings, punctuation, organization and grammar. A few of the students said their teachers commended their efforts. Examples of students' responses across the three schools follow:

- *She gives me number grades and makes comments like, 'you need to work more on your spelling and learn to organize your ideas.*
- *In addition to giving me a number grade, she says, 'Work hard on your grammar.'*
- *The last time the teacher marked my composition, she advised me to put punctuation such as full stop at the end of sentences I write.*
- *She wrote, 'Well written, keep it up.*

The observations above were the recurring themes for all of the students interviewed, who said that they were mainly given number grades and comments on their bad spelling, grammar or punctuation. Only a few said they got comments such as, 'Good, keep it up.'

4.2.1.3 Observation of Teachers and Students

Five composition writing lessons were observed from the three schools. Teachers A and C had two episodes of composition writing lessons of two periods (80 minutes each), while Teacher B had only one lesson of 80 minutes duration. Each of the lessons will be described in detail in this segment in terms of what was heard, seen and done. There will also be comments that, it is hoped, will add more to the understanding of the events that unfolded within the classroom.

As indicated in Chapter Three, Teacher A is a graduate teacher of English with a Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE), and five years of teaching experience. The first lesson observation took place on May 30, 2007.

4.2.1.4   First Observation of Teacher A:

<u>The Lesson</u>

Task: Composition Writing:

Topic: The day I will never forget

Time: 80 Minutes (2 Periods)

Class: 1E

No. of Students: 38

Objective: At the end of the lesson students should be able to discuss and write a first draft of their composition on the topic above.

Introduction: The teacher started the lesson by telling students they were going to write about their experiences of some special or memorable day in their lives. This was how it all went:

Teacher: As I have already told you, we shall be writing about very special days in our lives, but before we do that, let us discuss what we know about composition writing. I want you to tell me about the parts of a composition.

Student: A composition should have a title.

Teacher: What else should a composition have?

Student: It should have an introduction. (Another student cuts in).

Student: It should have the body and conclusion.

Teacher: Good. What should be included in the introduction?

Student: It should say briefly what the composition is about. It should also form the first paragraph.

Teacher: What about the body?

Student: The body should include the details of the composition.

Teacher: What else can you tell me about the body of a composition?

Student: It should be made up of two or more paragraphs.

Teacher: And the conclusion is the concluding or last paragraph of your composition. What information should it contain?

Student: It should say whether you like what happened to you on that day or not.

Teacher: You are correct. It should express your views, feelings or overall thoughts on the topic you have written about.

Teacher: Let us talk about the topic of today's lesson. (She writes the topic on the board). I want someone to read out the topic.

Student: The day I will never forget.

Teacher: What do you understand by the topic, can anyone explain it to us? (Long pause).

Student: I think it indicates a day that something special happened to us. Maybe, it was our birthday, or our relative's birthday, something like that.

Teacher: You are correct but it doesn't apply to birthdays only. It can be a day in which something extraordinary happened to you or in your family and it made a deep impression on you.

Student: What is the meaning of extraordinary?

Teacher: Can someone tell him the meaning?

Student: The dictionary says that it means something unusual, something that doesn't normally happen to you everyday.

Student: Excuse me, teacher. What if something bad happened to you or does it only have to be something good?

Teacher: It can be either good or bad, for as long as it makes a deep impression on you that you can't easily forget.

Teacher: Now you are going to have to work in pairs, and brainstorm on what you are going to write about. (The teacher hands out lined sheets to the students).

*Teacher: We are going to call on each of you to present what you have written to the class, so get to work without wasting time. (*A student puts up his hand*).*

Student: Could you tell us more about brainstorming?

Teacher: It means you are going to talk and write about what you think should be in the composition and write them (your thoughts) down just as they occur to you. Write everything. After that, you arrange your ideas in the way that you think should fit the parts of a composition such as the introduction, the body and the conclusion. This will help you to write the first draft, which will be presented to the class.

*Student: May I ask a question? (*Without waiting for an answer*) About the presentation, is that all we have to do?*

*Teacher: No. You read your first draft to the class and submit a copy of the draft to me for marking. After I have marked your draft, you can then copy it into your composition books. Is that clear to everyone? (*The students answered yes and started their work*).*

Only six students were able to make their presentations to the class. The pronunciation and grammar mistakes in the presentations were corrected orally by the teacher. The other students were still busy when the bell rang and were told by the teacher to finish at their own time and to also submit their drafts for marking.

When I asked the teacher if there was going to be a follow up lesson since many of the students did not finish, she said there was no time to do that. She added that the students only needed to submit the drafts for marking after which they copy the corrected versions of the drafts into their books for grading.

As stated earlier, the Marking Rubric (Appendix D below) was used by the participating teachers to examine students' written work and to the grade the drafts of students' compositions. The rubric is a standardized score-sheet used by teachers and authorized by the Botswana Ministry of Education to assess students' writing. Furthermore, it is a rubric that the participating teachers were familiar with, and which they hoped, would reduce the incidents of bias and subjectivity. Below is the marking rubric:

Composition Marking Rubric (Appendix D)

	Symbol	Max. Marks	Very Good	Above Average	Average	Below Av.	Poor
Communication: Overall impression/relevance/own detail/appropriate use of vocabulary/fluency	C	14	14-12	11-9	8-7	6-5	4-0
Grammar: Knowledge of using parts of speech; tense consistency; subject/verb agreement etc.	G	14	14-12	11-9	8-7	6-5	4-0
Mechanics: Spelling/Punctuation	M	6	6-5	4	3	2	1-0
Organization: Paragraphing, sequence of ideas and information, introduction, body and conclusion.	O	6	6-5	4	3	2	1-0
Totals		40	40-34	30-26	22-20	16-14	10-0

The above indicates the marking rubric (Appendix D), used by the three teachers.

Sample Students' Drafts/Artifacts from Teacher A's First Lesson

 The following are selections of drafts from Teacher A's lesson. Many of the mistakes are underlined. The comments and the feedback from the teacher are in italics and brackets.

1. The day I will never forget (draft1)

It was on the 25th of February, 2007. When I had an accident, (*injury*) playing with my frands (*friends*) at the school football fild. (*field*)
I was at the football fild playing with my frands (*friends*)when I twested (*twisted*) my angle playing football, It was a sunny day, I was ranning (*running*) bihind (*behind*) the boll, (*ball*) one of the playas triped (*tripped*) me and I fall (*fell)* down and I twested my angle, it was very painyfoul, (painful) I could not wolk. (walk) I used a weel (*wheel*) chair to go were ever (wherever) I wated (wanted) to go.
Every one was not happy with me (*for being injured*) having an accident, on the school team. I was the only super star for the school team, the team stated (*started*) to loss (*lose*) with out (*without*) me, because I was the one who was holding the school team, (?) when my injary (*injury*) was healed, I went back to school agen (again) to continue with my leannng (*learning*) and I continue(d) playing for the school team. I was the star ogeng, that is why I say it is the day I will never forget, (.) It was the faist (*first*) accident to happen to me in my life.

Teacher's comments: Do the correction. Work on your spelling and improve your handwriting.

Communication – 7

Grammar – 7

Mechanics – 2

Organization – 2

Grade = 18/40

2. The day I will never forget (draft 2)

They are many days that I will never forget anything I hear by folklore.
I will never forget the folklore that I hear the eleventh of October last year. This folklore about woman, hare, men's girls, lion seamyan a nice game or play and I like it. This was done in kgomokasitwa village.
I will tell you the small words of this for all about sananapo and his dog but I will tell you about hare and other person's I like in paragraphs that says hare you eat my beans that I grow it pay me, the second is woman, you cut my spade pay me

(The teacher did not mark this paper, but rather commented on it).

Teacher's comments: You are not serious, re-write the composition.

4.2.1.5 The Second Observation of Teacher A, 12 July 2007

<u>**The Lesson**</u>

Task: Composition Writing

Topic: Describe a view from your bedroom window

Time: 80 Minutes (2 Periods)

Number of Student: 36

Class: 1E

Objective: Students should be able to (i) List the aspects of a composition. (ii) List steps in composition writing.

Introduction: The teacher started the lesson by asking students questions following from the previous composition writing lesson:

Teacher: What are the parts of a composition?

Students: The title; the introduction; the development or body; the conclusion.

(The teacher writes the responses on the chalkboard as the students give them).

Teacher: I want you to explain more about the parts that you just mentioned.

Student 1: The title must be written clearly and underlined.

Student 2: The introduction should give an idea of what your story is about.

Student 3: Your introduction also has to catch the readers' attention.

Teacher: Do you give details in your introduction? I mean to say, what happens in the introduction part?

Student 4: You have to give a bit of general information in the introduction.

Teacher: Why?

Student 4: Because you want the reader themselves to find out the details.

Teacher: How many sentences are ideal to give in the introduction?

Student 5: About three or more sentences.

Teacher: What is development?

Student 6: In the development, you are giving detailed and specific information.

Teacher: How do you do that?

Student 6: By answering the questions, why? How? When?

Teacher: How many paragraphs do you need for the development?

(At this point, it seems as though the lesson is dominated by a few students who could answer the questions. The rest were like passive onlookers).

Student 4: It depends on the story you are telling. (Another student raises up her hand to answer the same question).

Student 7: Two to three paragraphs.

Teacher: What happens in the conclusion? How do you sum up your story?

Student 2: By telling how the story ended.

Student 6: By giving the moral of the story.

Teacher: You sum up the general idea of the composition. Sometimes, you end up with your own views or expressions. Make sure that you follow the procedures we have discussed when writing your compositions.

(The teacher continues the lesson with more questions as students look on.)

Teacher: What do you do when you are given a topic to write about? How do you start?

Student 8: First you brainstorm.

*Teacher: What follows after that? What do you do when brainstorming? (*No response*).*

Teacher: You jot down the points you want to discuss or whatever comes into your mind.
You come up with as many points as possible in any order, not in a specific way.
*(*Another student offers to volunteer more information*).*

Student: You then arrange or group the ideas to sort out what will be appropriate for
your introduction, development and conclusion.

At this point, the teacher introduces the topic, 'A view from my bedroom window'.

Teacher: Today's composition is going to be done as group work, so I need you to get
into your groups.

Students were clustered round in groups of four, five, and seven. In all there were nine
groups. Some of the students volunteered to do the writing for the groups, while the rest
started to brainstorm for ideas. Some groups were finding it more difficult than others.
Students were still busy trying to sort themselves out, when the bell rang to signal the end
of the lesson. The teacher concluded the lesson by asking students to finish their drafts at
their own time and to submit them for marking before writing the final copy in their
books.

After the lesson, I asked the teacher if there was going to be a follow up or continuation
of the lesson. She gave the same answer as before, that there was not enough time to do
that. As in her first lesson, she said she was only going to check the drafts after which
students would write clean and corrected versions of the composition in their books.

Since the students worked in groups this time around, I asked how she distributed them
into these groups. Her reply was that she put students of a similar ability in the same
group. When asked to explain what she meant, she replied that when same ability
students worked together, they felt more comfortable.

Sample Students' Drafts/Artifacts from Teacher A's Second Lesson

The following are two selections from the students' drafts and the teacher's comments. The mistakes are underlined. The comments and the feedback from the teacher are in italics and brackets.

1. A view from my bedroom window – (group work 1)

Every morning when I woke (*wake*) up I open the window because I want the fresh air, and to see my mather's (*mother's)* garden.

When I open the window I see the different things that make me happy. Things that I see are beautyful (*beautiful)* trees so green in colour. And I see a lot of people passing at (*by*) the road and going to they (*their*) different ways And I see a lot of birds flying on (*in*) the air. It is beautiful to see things like that because you can learn something that can help you in your school work.

I have like the view that my Mother should buy bigger window to see lot of things than that I have seen.   (*Lack of communication*)

I will be happy when my mather would buy a bigger window to see a lot of things than that I have seen. (?)
It is very good to see something like that (?) in our life (*lives*) because person must see something like that. (*Communication?*)

Teacher's comments: Read widely to improve your English. You need to work on your spelling.

Communication - 6

Grammar – 6

Mechanics – 2

Organization – 2   Grade = 16/40

2. A view from my bedroom window – (group work 2).

What a breathtaking view I see from my bedroom window! My brother thinks that I am crazy but what I see from my window is part of what I am looking up to.
My house is located in Phakalane Estate. Since our house is a flat, I am able to see a lot of different (*and*) interesting things. My main concern about making (*waking*) up in the morning is watching aeroplanes that pass by my house almost everyday.

Waking up early in the morning is what makes my brothers think that I am crazy. Someone may wonder why I like watching aeroplanes. Watching aeroplanes has <u>maked</u> (made) me want to be a pilot. There are lots of questions I ask myself about flights and even piloting.

One of the questions is <u>what's</u> (*what is*) nice between piloting at night or <u>on</u> (*at*) day light. I will never have a second (*thought*) about being a pilot. Views can influence people either positively or negatively but the one from my bedroom window is very positive in the <u>sence</u> (*sense*) that I am looking up to something.

I will have to work hard to achieve my goal <u>as</u> (of) being a pilot.

Teacher's comments: Take care of your punctuation. Always proof read your work. Unnecessary mistakes. Are aeroplanes the only things you see through your window?

Communication –8

Grammar – 8

Mechanics – 3

Organization – 3   Grade = 22/40

4.2.1.6 Observation of Teacher B:

Teacher B holds a Diploma in Education with specialization in English and Setswana, but has been teaching English consistently. She has ten years of teaching experience.

<u>The Lesson</u>

Task: Composition Writing

Topic: An April Fool's Joke that went wrong

Class: 1F

No. of Students: 41

Time: 80 Minutes (2 Periods).

Objective: At the end of the lesson students should be able to write a few paragraphs of their experience on the above composition topic.

Introduction: The teacher started the lesson by telling students they were going to do extended writing on that day. She continued as below:

Teacher: Before we discuss today's composition writing, we shall first of all talk about the layout of a composition. What are the main parts of a composition?

Student: The introduction.

Teacher: As the name suggests, it is where you write short information about what the composition is about. It should contain the topic sentence. By the way, what is a topic sentence?

Student: It is the first sentence of your composition and has to be important and interesting and attention grabbing.

Teacher: What comes after the introduction?

Student: The body.

Teacher: What is the body?

Student: The body explains what the composition is about in details. This is where you elaborate your ideas.

Teacher: What comes after the body?

Student: The conclusion.

Teacher: What is the conclusion?

Student: This is where you end your composition, where you talk about feelings or views.

 (At this stage, not all the students were paying attention. Some at the back had their heads on their desks, pretending to write or read. It was also noted that the same students were answering the teacher's questions).

Teacher: Now let us talk about paragraphing. How do we paragraph? (No response).

Teacher: Our paragraphing should be consistent and made up of five to ten lines of statements. Let us try to be consistent in paragraphing our work.

Student (1): What do you mean by consistent paragraphing?

Teacher: I mean that you should not have a paragraph consisting of about four lines and another one consisting of about ten and so on, in one composition. You must make sure the length does not vary too much, so that you don't have very short ones, and then, too long ones.

Student (2): What if we have to write a long composition?

Teacher: It doesn't matter; you can still be consistent with your paragraphing, even if you are writing a long composition.

Student (3): How can we use proverbs in a composition?

Teacher: Proverbs should be relevant to what you are writing and can be used in any composition, if it is applicable.

At this point, the teacher explains the marking rubric to the students and what they are expected to do to earn better grades, such as paying attention to communication, spelling, punctuation, and organization.

The teacher now introduces the topic, which she had written on the chalkboard: 'An April Fool's Joke That Went Wrong'

Teacher: What do you understand by, 'April Fool?' (After a long pause).

Student (4): It is a day on which people play jokes on each other.

Student (5): I remember that was the day I told my friend that the headmaster was calling him when it wasn't true.

Student (4): Sometimes you are punished for playing such jokes.

The teacher notices students with their heads on their desks*:*

Teacher: Some of you are not paying attention to the lesson. You should be more active and not be couch potatoes. Participate in the lesson. (There is general laughter). The teacher continues the lesson.

Teacher: We are going to write about some of the jokes we played that backfired, and you are going to do this in groups.

The teacher hands out lined sheets for students to do their planning and outlining. She asks students to brainstorm and write whatever comes to their minds on the topic. A student signifies to ask a question:

Student 6: But I never learned how to write a draft.

Teacher: Brainstorming is putting your ideas on paper, and if you don't want to do the outlining, you can go straight ahead with your writing.

*Teacher: Make sure you participate in your group to write the composition. Avoid the direct translation syndrome whereby you translate ideas in Setswana to English, as when you say, 'Days do not come the same' which is an example of direct translation. (*The students laugh at this).

The teacher went around checking that students were working. She advised them to write a draft, correct their mistakes and write the final draft for submission. Students were still busy brainstorming when the bell rang for the end of the lesson. None of the groups finished the first draft, so they took the assignment home.

Later, I asked the teacher how she grouped the students. She said there were no definite systems as students worked with their friends. Asked whether there was going to be a follow up to the lesson, she replied that there was no time to do that. Also, Teacher B was only able to teach one composition for the term. She said this was because she was constrained by lack of time and class size.

The following are two selections of the students' drafts and the teacher's comments. The mistakes are underlined. The comments and the feedback from the teacher are in italics and brackets. This seems to be a common practice with the teachers.

Sample Students' Artifacts from Teacher B's Lesson

1. An April fool's joke that got me into trouble (group work 1)

It was on the 1st of April, 2006 everyone was not <u>awar</u> (*aware*) of the event of that day.I joked seriously with my mother because everyone on that day was sharing jokes about foolish people. (*What do you mean?*)

I took my mother to confirm about work at <u>bbs mall</u> (*BBS Mall*) but only to find that there was no job (.) <u>some like to play with mother at April fool because when we for their mother.</u> (*What do you mean?*)

<u>The day are not good to play with my mother because she give me a big punishment</u>. (?) I was not <u>going to play with my mother because it is own me by a play. An April fool. (?)</u>

Teacher's comments: What you have written is difficult to understand. Rewrite.

Communication – 5

Grammar – 5

Mechanics – 2

Organization – 2   **Grade = 14/40**

2. An April fool's joke which got me into trouble (group work 2)

As you know, people <u>we</u> (-) like making jokes of others, but that time the joke did not bring good results, instead it got me into trouble.

It was on the 1st of April, 2006, as usuall (*usual*), it was the April fool day. <u>I have been waiting for it but that time</u> (?)I planned a joke that made me laugh but didn't (did not) bring joy to others. I planned the joke on my friends and told them that the teacher told me that they should go to the garden and bring some <u>leafs (*leaves*) of</u> spinach and <u>bring it at</u> (take it to) the school kitchen. I laughed at them and told them I was joking and they were going to be punished. They did not like the joke, so they reported me <u>at</u> (to) our class teacher and I thought that I was going to win the case but I lost and I was <u>purnished</u> (*punished*) for doing that because <u>we were left with 3 weeks at the garden for our moderation,</u> (?) so it was <u>going to take long for the other spinach to grow and be big as the other ones.</u> (?) I felt sorry for my self for doing that and for my friends for making (playing) a bad joke on them.

This became the day I will never forget because of the <u>things that where done to me</u> (*punishment I got*) and (*an*) example was that I got suspended for a week, and that was my first time <u>been</u> (*to be*) suspended.

Teacher's comments: Mind your spelling. Do corrections.

Communication – 7

Grammar – 8

Mechanics – 3

Organization – 3   **Grade = 21/40**

Teacher C holds a Diploma in Education with specialization in English and Guidance and Counseling, and has been teaching for seven years.

4.2.1.7 First Observation of Teacher C – 28 May, 2007:

<u>**The Lesson**</u>

Task: Composition Writing

Topic: Describe the house that you live in

                    Or

          Describe your ideal house.

Time: 80 Minutes (2 Periods)

Class: 1D

No. of Students: 42

Reference: *English in Action Book* 1 Page 62, 68.

Teaching Aid: Pictures of different types of homes.

Objective: At the end of the lesson, students should be able to write the draft to their composition on the above topic.

Introduction: The teacher started the lesson by asking questions on the previous comprehension lesson:

Teacher: What was said about homes in our previous comprehension lesson?

Student: We talked about traditional and modern homes.

Teacher: I hope you have all brought the pictures of your favourite homes or houses.

(Some took out their pictures while others brought nothing. The teacher told those who brought pictures to share with those who did not have pictures).

*Teacher: I want you to look at the pictures you have brought in pairs. Also, I want you to write a few short sentences about those homes using the adjectives you have learnt on page 62 of your English textbooks (*see ref.*).* The teacher gave the students some time to do this while she went around checking that students were following her instructions.

Teacher: Now I want volunteers to come out in front to show us their pictures and also talk about their homes.

Student 1: This is the picture of my ideal home, (showed it to the class, but it was too tiny for everybody to see) *the structure of the house is rectangular in shape.*

Student 2: (Does the same thing as student 1). The roof of my house is constructed with corrugated iron roof.

(The teacher wrote the expressions as the students said them on the chalkboard).

Student 3: The plan of our house is cross-shaped. The front door is made of glass.

Student 4: The entrance of my house has a circular fountain.

Teacher: Now, I want you to get into groups of five and brainstorm on what you are going to write in order to plan your compositions.

At this stage, the teacher wrote the topics on the chalkboard and instructed students to choose any of the topics they were comfortable with. There was a lot of dragging and

noise making. Students eventually managed to get into their ability groups. Movement around the class at this stage was a bit difficult. Also, noise coming from the discussion among group members disturbed other groups. So, the teacher kept on cautioning students against noise making.

Teacher: I want to refer you to page 68 of your books for more guidelines on how you can plan your composition by drawing a mind map first.

Student: Please teacher, do you want us to write about our real homes or the homes in our pictures?

Teacher: I have already explained to you that you can choose your real house or any other house that you wish to write about. (The student breathed a sigh of relief and looked happier).

Teacher: As I have earlier told you, you can construct a mind map easily by placing the topic of your composition at the centre of the map and what you want to write about, branching from the centre. You can then use the mind map to write the first draft of your composition.

After the students had managed to draw the mind maps, they were instructed to use them to write the first draft of the group composition to be submitted to the teacher for marking before they did the final copy in their books. Sensing that there was not enough time left, the teacher asked the students to finish the drafts at home and submit them for marking.

After the lesson, I asked the teacher to explain the system for grouping her students. She said that she grouped similar ability students together so that they could work at their own pace and not be intimidated by the performance of others.

The following are three selections of the mind mapping constructs, and two selections of the students' drafts, and the teacher's comments. Many of the mistakes in the students' drafts are underlined, and the comments and feedback from the teacher are in italics and brackets in the drafts. The mind maps were not graded.

Sample Students Mind Mapping Artifacts from Teacher C's First Lesson

Mind Mapping (Group A)

Group Work C

Handwritten diagram content:
- My house (center)
- Inside: * divided into 10 rooms, * Stove, * Television, * Electricity
- Outside: Rough grey texture
- Other information: There is a fireplace. The floor is made with tiles
- How it looks like: Size: 38 m length, 14 m width, 10 m height
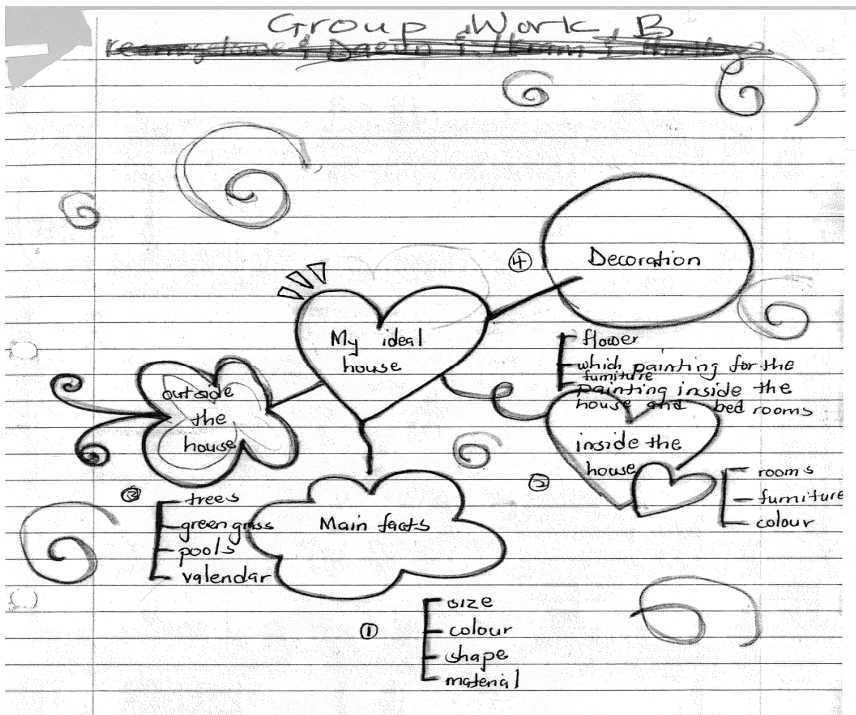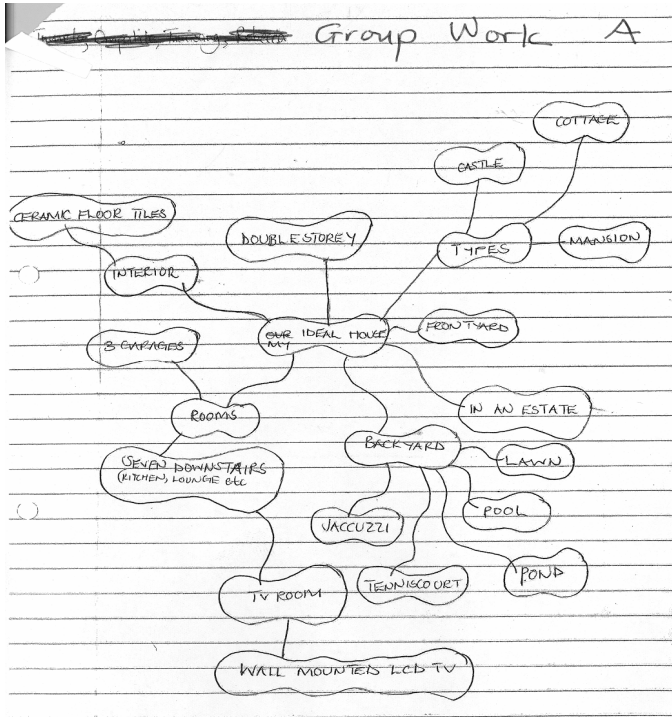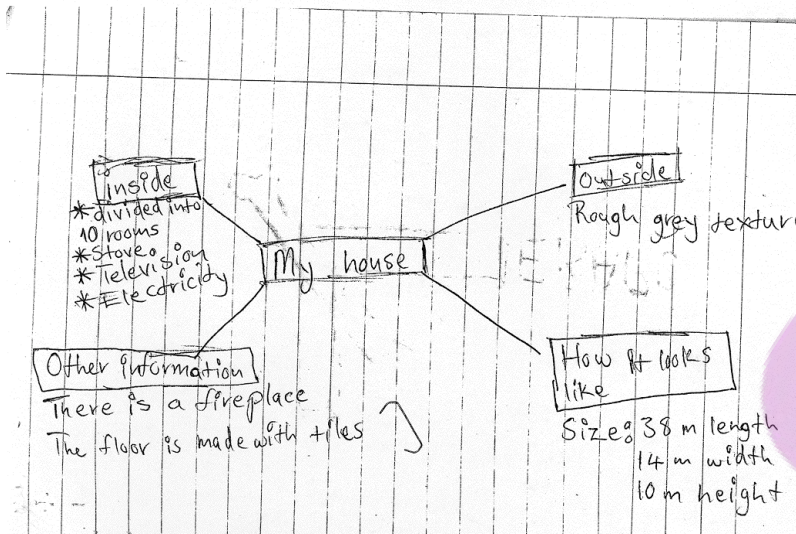
Sample Students' Artefacts from Teacher C's First Lesson

My Ideal House (Group Work A)

I will like my house to be a <u>mordern</u> (*modern*) house, rectangular in shape and <u>triangular at the roofing.</u> (?) I will like to paint my house <u>with a</u> (*yellow*) <u>paint</u> and <u>a red paint at the bottom. (?)</u>

I want my house to have (<u>5</u>) five bed rooms, one (<u>1</u>) dining room, one <u>(1)</u> kitchen, two <u>(2)</u> toilets, two (2) bathrooms and a very big siting.(*sitting*). I want to have six <u>(6)</u> televisions, one (1) <u>on</u> (*in*) each <u>bed room</u> (*bedroom*) and the other one at the <u>siting</u> room. I want to have tow (*two*) <u>fridges</u> at the kitchen and two kitchen units at the kitchen, five room dividers (,) one <u>on</u> (*in)* each bed room, six television stands one <u>on</u> each bed room and the other one at the <u>siting</u> room, twelve chairs and two big tables. I want my house to have six (6) beds one on each bed room at two at my bed room. I will like my house to have other things like a zinc (*sink*) at the kitchen.
I want my house to have (*a*) garden with <u>a</u> lot (*lots*) of flowers. I wish to have such a house.

Teacher's comments: You need to remove all the figures/numbers you have written in your composition. Work more on your spelling and punctuation. You write very long sentences with wrong punctuation.

Communication- 7

Grammar - 7

Mechanics – 2

Organization – 2   Grade = 18/40

My house (Group Work B)

My house is beautiful than anyone elese's (*else's*) house. My material for roofing is
<u>Harvey ridge cap, Harvey roof tiles, roofing membrane, rhino ceiling and face bricks.(?)</u>
It is yellow in colour and it is rectangle (*rectangular*) in shape.

<u>Inside my house</u>/ (*There*)there are two rooms in my house. The furniture is made <u>up </u>of
Jelutong (?) and there is a bathroom, a toilet. I have a pantry in my kitchen and a lounge
with a verandah at the front. It is white inside and the furnitures (*furniture*) <u>are</u> (*is*) brown
in colour. <u>In my</u> (*My*) room <u>I have</u> (*is*) painted <u>it with a</u> pink <u>paint</u>, and everything is pink
colour.

Outside my house(,) there are green trees and <u>a</u> green grass at the front while <u>at</u> the back
of my house <u>I have payved</u> (*is paved*). I have <u>shaped</u> (*trimmed*) <u>my</u> (*the*) trees into many
shapes and there are flowers at the front of my house in the verandah, and everywhere.
People like my (*house*) and others wanted to rent <u>on</u> it but I have told them that I still
love my house. There are two <u>types of</u> (*swimming*) pools in my place <u>e.g the</u> (*one*)pool
for kids and the pool <u>for adult</u> (*adults*) <u>which is shallow</u>.(?)

NB: What I like about my house is in summer it is cool but in winter it is cold.

*Teacher's comments: Some of your sentences lack meaning. You need to work more on
your spelling and grammar.*

Communication –78

Grammar – 8

Mechanics – 2

Organization - 2   Grade = 19/40

4.2.1.8 Second Observation of Teacher C – 05 July, 2007:

<u>**The Lesson**</u>

Task: Composition Writing

Topic: Story Writing: ------ '- - - I could not believe my eyes. That night, I cried myself to sleep.'

Time: 80 Minutes (2 Periods).

Number of students: 40

Reference Book: *Chewing the Bones – Junior Secondary English Literature Anthology.* Pages, 202-208.

Objective: At the end of the lesson, students should be able to correctly answer questions on a previous story and write a similar story based on the above topic (See the reference above).

Introduction: The teacher asked students to get into their groups. (The teacher had already distributed them into their various ability groups before the lesson. There were nine groups of 4, 5, and 7 students). Students were referred to the story in their books, and this was followed by a question and answer session on the previous story that students had read:

Teacher: Which characters in the story, 'The Vegetarian' did you like?

Student: The wife.

Teacher: Which character did you not like?

Student: The husband.

Teacher: Why?

Student: He was abusive, always mean to the wife.

Teacher: We read that the wife was a vegetarian. What does 'vegetarian' mean?

Student: A person who does not eat meat.

Teacher: What qualities did you admire or like in the wife?

Student: She was patient and long suffering.

Teacher: Earlier, you said the husband was mean and abusive. I want you to identify words or expressions from the passage pertaining to abuse.

Students: daft, stomp, swear, slapping, punching, bloody namby-pamby vegetarian etc.

(The teacher copied the words as the students gave them on the chalkboard).

Teacher: Let us now go over the theme/s of the story. What did we say they are?

Students: Abusive relationships, revenge, abusive marriages, insensitiveness etc.

(Again, the teacher writes these on the board).

Teacher: Now, I want you to think about a story around the themes you have identified and write a group composition on it. Work in your groups to brainstorm and come up with the topic and statements for the introduction, body and conclusion of your compositions.

Students worked in their groups to doing the draft. When I went round to check what students were doing, some of the groups came up with topics such as: 'Physical Abuse', 'How Could You', 'The Death of my So-Called Father',' The Painful Ending', and 'Human Abuse'.

Some of the groups were finding it difficult to come up with topics. However, they managed to come up with a paragraph of introduction while thinking about what to do next. Realizing that there was not enough time left to complete the assignment, the teacher instructed the students to complete writing the first draft on their own and to submit it later for marking before writing the final copies in their books for grading.

The following are two selections of the students' drafts and the teacher's comments. Many of the mistakes are underlined. The comments and the feedback from the teacher are in italics and brackets.

Sample Students' Artefacts from Teacher C's Second Lesson

1. HUMAN ABUSE (?) – (Group work 1)

There are lots of abuse in our country <u>that</u> (*and these*) abuses are as follows, physical abuse, child abuse, <u>E</u>motional abuse and others. <u>This</u> (*The*) abuse <u>are</u> (*is*)<u>done</u> (*caused*) by adults.

There was a man called Joseph and <u>her</u> (*his*) wife this man was abusing <u>her</u> wife everyday. <u>When he comes from the job.</u> (?) He always <u>eat the</u> (spends?) money when it is <u>the</u> pay day (.) <u>he go</u> (*He goes*) to the bar to drink alcohol and when the money (*is*) finished he came back home harassing her wife asking her about food, and Her (*his*) wife <u>was not cooked</u> because they (*there*) is no food to cook and her husband said (') I want food and when you don't give me food I will beat you because I come from the job I am hungry.(') <u>This</u> man was abusing her wife everyday (*every time*) when he comes from the job and I could not believe my eyes that night I cried myself to sleep because that man <u>was</u> not <u>gave</u> (*give*) that women (*woman*) money to buy foods that he wanted.

Human (*Wife*) abuse is not good because it can lead to passion killings that (*are*) happening everytime in our life. Some husband (s) <u>almost</u> kill their <u>wifes</u>. (wives)

Teacher's comments: None.

Communication – 7

Grammar – 6

Mechanics – 3

Organization – 3   Grade = 19/40

2. The Death of my Father (Group work 2)

Oh my God I <u>don't</u> (*could not*) believe it, <u>for</u> what happened to my father when I <u>get</u> (*got*) home I found my father running away with another man <u>that</u> man was shouting to people to <u>came</u> (*come*)and see what he want to do <u>today</u>. (*that day*)

That day I could not belive my eyes. That night I cried myself to sleep, because of the accident I found it afternoon. My father died because of the <u>slashers that man cut him in the head,</u> (?) my father shouted to people say 'somebody' help for the several times but no one came to help from neighbours oh God.

(This part is not clear to understand) (I <u>have</u> tried my best to phone the police to help my father, because I was so scared when I found a lot of blood in the house that my father <u>was</u> tried to <u>hired</u> (*hide*) himself in).

Then the police took my father to the hospital then the doctor who attend *(ed)* to <u>us</u> *(him)* told us that he *(was)* gone <u>is</u> *(it was)* too late.

Teacher's comments: Your story is difficult to understand!

Communication – 5

Grammar – 6

Mechanics – 2

Organization – 2   **Grade = 15/40**

The above details reflect the approach used by the teachers in teaching composition writing. The details of the teachers' and students' interview, lesson observation, and sample students' artifacts were presented.

4.2.2. Research Question 2

What are the challenges or problems associated with the use of the approaches?

This section presents the data used to answer Research Question Two. It will reflect the data from the teacher interview, students' artifacts, and document review discussed in Chapter Two to answer the second research question.

4.2.2.1 Interview with Teachers (Appendix B):

In an attempt to establish if teachers were having difficulties in teaching composition writing effectively to their students, they were asked the following questions:

<u>**Question**</u>**: Do your students have problems in composition writing?**

All the three teachers admitted that their students were having problems with writing in general and composition writing in particular. Teacher C articulated the problems:
Teacher C: Yes, of course. Often students enjoy the discussion part of writing, such as brainstorming. The problem is when they have to communicate in writing. That is where they have difficulties.
The teachers were asked to point out the specific problems that they were having with the teaching of composition writing to their students.

Question: What do you think these problems/difficulties are?

The teachers gave a list of problems such as spelling, punctuation, grammar, students' inability to write correct sentences, lack of ideas and organization skills, lack of communication in writing, and mother-tongue interference.

The teachers were requested to identify the most common errors students make in their writing:

Question: What are the most common errors students make in composition writing?

The teachers identified spelling as the most common error, followed by mistakes in the use of grammar, punctuation, faulty construction of sentences, lack of communication of ideas, and mother-tongue interference.

To round up the teacher interview, they were asked the final question in an attempt to probe more into the difficulties they were having as a result of their approach to the teaching of composition writing.

Question: What do you see as the major problems/challenges to the teaching of composition writing to students?

The major challenges to the teaching of composition writing as visualized by the teachers were daunting. Among the challenges mentioned were the following:

- Students' lack of motivation, and negative attitude to writing. For example, some students are known to exhibit aversion to writing in preference for other aspects of language.
- Lack of teacher interest: This is because teachers are discouraged from teaching writing by the students' poor writing skills.
- Large class size: It is not uncommon to have up to forty-five students in a class.

- Quality of students: The teachers referred to many students with low ability being admitted to junior secondary schools from the public primary schools as a result of the government's free education and automatic promotion policies.
- Time limitations: Teachers said that it takes a lot of time to teach composition writing which they cannot afford because they have to cover the syllabus, as well as teach other skills in English.
- Poor reading culture: This was also alluded to as a contributory factor in students' inability to write effectively.
- Lack of parental support: One of the teachers felt that many parents do not support their wards' learning efforts and that they do not take enough interest in their children's learning. Many parents are accused of failing to control or discipline their children, allowing them to watch too much television at the expense of reading, and referring their discipline problems to the schools.

The problems above were vividly highlighted in Teacher C's response:

Teacher C: *Time factor; time for teaching composition writing is little when you have to teach other skills in English. Getting through to students to make them want to write is also a big challenge. It is like hitting a brick wall. Furthermore, there is lack of motivation on the part of students, and lack of interest or apathy by teachers to teach composition writing. The feeling from both sides is mutual. Again, the inability of students to be imaginative and creative, in their writing coupled with poor writing ability, are real problems. Other challenges are lack of student exposure to extensive reading at home and on week-ends. This ill motivates students to write outside the school environment. It is not uncommon to find parents who complain that they are unable to make their children study at home.*

4.2.2.2   The Students' Artifacts

The students' artifacts from the five lessons observed in the three schools have already been highlighted for their quality, and for the purpose of analysis. At the time of the

observation of the lessons, examination of students' exercise books indicated that in schools 'A' and 'B' students wrote personal letters to their friends telling them about their new school. In school 'C', students had not done any form of writing, whether letter writing or composition writing before my observation. This meant that the only composition exercises the students did for the term, and at that point of the school year, were those that I observed in the three schools. Moreover, the interviews with the students were done after the lesson observations. The students' points of reference, then, were the lessons they were taught during my observation. My analysis therefore, was based on the composition writing exercises in which I observed the three teachers their classrooms.

4.2.3. Research Question 3:

Are the teachers' approaches to teaching composition writing responsible for the poor writing skills of learners?

In order to answer Research Question Three, and determine if the use of the approaches were responsible for students poor writing skills, teachers were asked the interview questions below. The interviews took place after the normal class periods in the afternoons. Details of this have been explained earlier in Chapter 3. The data presented in this section reflect the main themes of students' responses from the three schools in this study:

<u>Question</u>: Which aspect of English do you enjoy learning and why?

Students' preferences ranged from reading, literature (especially the reading of novels), listening comprehension to grammar. The least preferred was composition writing. To further prove the result in this case, a direct question was asked:

Question: Which aspect of English do you least enjoy learning and why?

Again the students' responses indicated that many of them chose to learn other skills than composition writing, as they did not express preference for it. Nearly all of the students answered that they did not like composition writing because they felt it was too difficult for them. Instead they preferred other aspects of English. The following are some of the reasons which they said for not enjoying composition writing.

- *The topics are always difficult and I don't know the English words to use.*
- *I think it is difficult and it needs proper English, and I don't manage to pass in it.*
- *Sometimes you are given topics on something you don't know to write about. How do you write about something you have never seen?*
- *Some of the topics need a lot of thinking which is difficult to do.*
- *I find it difficult to think of what to write.*

To round off the interview, students were requested to state other problems of composition writing they have that they had not mentioned.

Question: What other problems do you have with English composition writing?

In their response, students listed other factors inhibiting their performance in writing. These included poor spelling (this was the major theme), lack of adequate vocabulary to express ideas, lack of organization skill, and lack of enough time to do the writing. In some extreme instances, some students expressed outright phobia for composition writing. Samples of the common themes include:

- *Sometimes when I am given a topic to write on, I panic and I am unable to write anything or write wrong things.*
- *Most often, I don't understand the meanings of words to use to write the composition.*
- *Sometimes the problem is the topic we are given. I guess we can be made to choose our own topics.*

- *The problems I have with composition writing are spelling and using of punctuation marks. Another problem is that the topic may be difficult and she will not tell us what the topic requires us to write about.*
- *If only the teacher can tell us how to write compositions in a good way.*
- *Mine is difficult words whose meanings, I don't know.*
- *The problem is that I don't know what to write in the introduction, body and conclusion. I just get things mixed-up.*
- *Thinking too much about what to write makes me have a headache. I'm not able to understand the topic and sometimes get my spellings wrong.*
- *Writing things that you haven't seen or done. It is too abstract for me.*
- *My problem is thinking lots of things about what you are going to write in the composition when you don't understand the topic.*
- *I have problems with writing because of the spelling and because I mix up the ideas, and not arranging the composition well.*
- *When I'm writing compositions, I get some ideas. When I should write it on paper, I usually don't know the English expressions of the ideas that I have.*

The highlighted data above sum up the responses of the students to the interview. They reflect their individual and collective difficulties with composition writing, which must be considered when answering research question three.

4.2.4. Research Question 4

What possible models would improve the learning of composition writing by students at the junior secondary level in Botswana?

In order to answer Research Question Four, the data from research questions one to three were examined. The findings from the analysis were used to answer research question four based on the data obtained from observations, interviews, examination of artifacts and other related documents on the approaches utilized by teachers, the challenges

associated with the use of the approaches, and the problems faced by learners through the use of the approaches in the teaching and learning process. The answer to Research Question Four will, however, be answered in Chapter Five which will suggest a model which as a remedy or solution and which will also form part of the recommendations. As a result, I found it appropriate to move the research question to that where it will fit in neatly and avoid the cluttering of information. In this way, it will provide a better organized and more understandable sequence.

4.3. DATA ANALYSIS

In this section, data are analyzed. The analysis focuses on Research Questions One to Three. Research Question Four will be tackled in Chapter Five because of reasons alluded to above.

4.3.1. Research Question 1

What are the approaches teachers utilize in the teaching of English composition writing in the three schools?

There are different approaches to the practice and teaching of writing skills, depending on whether we want students to focus on the process of writing or its product, and whether we want to encourage creative writing either individually or cooperatively.

When all the observations, interviews and document/artifact examination were done, and put together, it was found that the approaches which the three teachers utilized in teaching composition writing were mainly product oriented. This is because the teachers employed the following procedures:

4.3.1.1 Writing on a given topic

Teachers A and B gave students pre-determined topics to work on. Teacher A gave the topics, 'The day I will never forget' and, 'A view from my bedroom window'. Teacher B gave the topic, 'An April Fool's joke which got me into trouble.' On all these occasions, students were not given any options of the topics to write on, which is a feature of the product approach to writing. Even though this situation may apply to process writing, there is a degree of flexibility that is attached in the process that was lacking in the product. This was reflected in the response of one of the students in the interview who exclaimed, 'If only we are made to choose our own topics!' Apparently, this particular student experienced difficulties right from the onset with the topics. In addition, the data presented indicated students' frustrations with the prescribed topics which they expressed in such comments as:

- *Sometimes, the problem is the topic we are given - - -.*
- *My problem is thinking lots of things to write when you don't understand the topic.*
- *Sometimes when I am given a topic to write on, I panic and I am unable to write anything or write wrong things.*
- *Sometimes the problem is the topic we are given. I guess we can be made to choose our own topics.*
- *Thinking too much about what to write makes me have a headache. I'm not able to understand the topic and sometimes get my spelling wrong.*

For instance Teacher A's topic, 'A view from my bedroom window' may not be helpful to many students who share bedrooms with other siblings and members of the extended family. Besides, the plan of many houses may be such that they open into the yards of other houses or windows. Therefore, there may not be much of a view in such circumstances to provide a context for the students to help their ideas. Again, Teacher B's topic, 'An April Fool's joke that went wrong' may be said to be outside most students' cultural experience as it may be unfamiliar to them, and even elitist. This means that the topic would likely make sense to a few who come from educated families. The

examination of the students' response in their artifacts suggests that, it did not help or enhance their writing.

Teacher C, on the other hand, gave some option of choice of topic to the students. For instance, in the first composition writing lesson, students were given the option of choosing one out of two topics: 'Describe the house that you live in' or 'Describe your ideal house'. Furthermore, in her second lesson, students were given the choice of developing their own themes from the topic, '- - - I could not believe my eyes. That night, I cried myself to sleep.' In spite of the teacher's attempt, however, the second topic proved too abstract and complicated for many of the students at their level. The implications in this situation is that the unique needs, background and the learning styles of the students need to be considered in the development and assignment of tasks in the constructivist tradition (Wertsch, 1997) of using background, experience and practical approaches to effect learning.

4.3.1.2 Lack of adequate supervision of writing

The three teachers assigned the composition writing activity to students as homework after the initial prewriting activities of discussion of topics, brainstorming and mind mapping. This in itself may not be a bad thing to do, but from the difficulties of composing experienced by many of the students, it is apparent that they need more teacher attention and supervision in developing writing skills, than reliance on them to find the way on their own. In this instance, composition writing outside the classroom setting gives the teacher very little opportunity to articulate students' difficulties in order to address them.

4.3.1.3 Non Compliance with Official Policy

The Botswana Government's official policy on the teaching of language emphasizes the communicative approach where students learn the language by using it in meaningful interactions, communicative activities and problem solving tasks (Republic of Botswana, 1996). The three teachers emphasized accuracy, reminding their students to mind their

113

spelling and grammar. Their assessment of students' writing focused on surface level errors at the expense of communication and meaning. Teacher B was more prescriptive in her teaching, telling students to mind their grammar and reminding them about the criteria to be used for the marking of their papers. It was evident that technical details received attention at the expense of communication. Paying attention to accuracy in writing is part of the teaching of writing skills, but it should not be done at the expense of communication. It was obvious from the students' writing that they neither communicated nor were accurate in their writing. The glaring lack of communication in the students' writing needs to be addressed in keeping with official policy and the demands of communicative writing. For instance, Teachers A and C used a greater part of their lessons teaching the parts or layout of the students' composition such as the introduction, the body and the conclusion. Teacher B went even further to allude to the marking requirements to students who were having a hard time even figuring out what to write. At this point, it is more important to help students learn to write to compose than to get fixated on accuracy and form at the expense of communication and meaning. In fact, more extensive oral expression of ideas, debates, expression of opinions and facts should be incorporated into the composition activities at the prewriting stage. This will help students develop both vocabulary and communication skills that will be used in their writing.

4.3.1.4 Modeling

Eggen and Kauchak (2001) define modeling as changes in people that result from observing the actions of others. They add that modeling also examines the processes involved as people learn by observing others until they gradually acquire control over their own behaviour. The primary assumption behind using models in writing instruction is that learners will see how good writers organize, develop, and express their ideas. Models are also supposed to be studied, questions are asked, and answers are debated before students come up with their own writing ideas and forms.

In its simplest definition, modeling in composition writing refers to a situation whereby reading is related to composition writing activity. The reading here is used to start students off in their writing or to provide a context, an example or prior knowledge for the new information or writing that the students need to do. This was what Teacher C did by using modeling in her two composition lessons. Students, on both occasions, had to study models from their textbooks to support their writing effort. Ironically, some authors perceive this strategy as an element of product writing.

4.3.1.5 Composition taught as 'isolated' events

Communicative language teaching demands that language is taught by integrating the skills. Thus while teaching any specific language skill such as reading, writing, listening or speaking, one must try to integrate all four skills. It was evident in this study that not much writing of the extended type was being done as was shown in the students' poor writing skill. It was observed that composition writing was limited to 'isolated' and infrequent activity done once in a while within a specific period of eighty (80) minutes. Moreover, it was taught only once or twice in a term. This gave the impression that composition writing was taught out of context and that it was not an aspect of language skill development that should be taught in a much more integrated manner. Also, the interactive and integrated activities associated with writing were not encouraged long enough for students to benefit from the process. The possibility of students doing writing in the form of a brief narration or description in a reading or listening lesson, or the writing of a speech or conversation in a speaking lesson was not fully exploited. As a result, students dreaded writing lessons. On the other hand, teachers were largely pre-occupied with composition writing so that they could just go through the motions.

4.3.1.6 Time Limitations

It was noted that time was a big factor on the part of both the students and the teachers. On all the occasions in which lessons were observed, students were unable to complete their tasks in class. So, they had to complete their compositions at home. Time is an important element in the teaching of writing in general, and composition writing in

particular. Unfortunately, time was not considered an important commodity that the teachers could spare in their teaching of writing. It takes time for students to go through the writing process, to discuss the topics or brainstorm, produce drafts and publish final drafts in composition writing. Lack of adequate writing time meant that many students were unable to complete their writing within the given period. Equally, lack of time deprived the teachers of the opportunity to identify, articulate and address their students' writing difficulties in order to help them. On the other hand, perhaps, the teachers did not understand the goals of teaching writing effectively. As a result, they did not invest time dealing with the writing skills of their students. Maybe teachers should have considered the long term goals of teaching writing as indicated in the current JC English syllabus (Republic of Botswana, 1996). Its aim is to prepare students to communicate accurately and effectively in speech and writing in and outside the school environment to transfer the writing skill to content areas and to function effectively in the world of work. If they had done so, they might have been willing to invest more time and attention in teaching writing.

The limited time which teachers apportioned to teaching writing is shown in the infrequent episodes of composition writing. As suggested above, composition was taught once or twice a term. Also, the conception that extended writing can be taught in a block period of 80 minutes just to satisfy the syllabus requirement is misplaced. Writing should not be limited to such periods. Students can be taught in small segments in the process of teaching other skills such as reading, listening and speaking. In other words, the teachers failed to realize that if composition writing was taught effectively, it would be reflected in the students' ability to do other genres of writing such as creative writing, and writing across the curriculum in content areas. This is in agreement with the constructivist theory that encourages the development of learners' minds to become flexible enough to handle future problems independently in similar or different situations (Wertsch, 1997). Therefore, the teaching of writing should be a much more frequent exercise than it is at present.

4.3.1.7 Teacher Feedback in Writing

Teacher feedback in writing is closely linked with motivation for learning. Learners need a sense of motivation that should be maintained or sustained. Also, motivation is said to be dependent on the learners' confidence in their potential for learning. Thus a sense of achievement in a previous task enhances the learners' confidence in the potential to solve new problems. Vygotsky (1978) posits that by experiencing the successful completion of challenging tasks, learners gain confidence and motivation to embark on more complex challenges. Feedback is also seen as a two-way process, an interaction between teacher and learner. It has to do with entering into dialogue with the learner in order to find out their current level of performance on any task, and sharing with them possible ways in which that performance might be improved on a subsequent occasion. This means that feedback should be linked to performance, and not separated from it.

The form of teacher feedback observed in this study did little to motivate or enhance the students' confidence in learning to write. Writing 'be serious' or 'mind your spelling' as feedback to the learner, especially a clearly weak learner, does not help that learner. As a result of this situation, it was not surprising that students expressed frustration with writing in the following statements:

- *I don't like composition writing because I always fail it.*
- *I am not good at writing compositions because I am poor at spelling.*
- *I don't think our teacher teaches us well because we do compositions once in a while and we forget.*
- *I take too much time to write compositions and end up not managing to pass.*
- *The last time the teacher marked my composition, she advised me to put punctuation such as full stop at the end of sentences I write.*

4.3.1.8 Assessment of the written product

Holt and Willard (2000) emphasize the concept of dynamic assessment in which the interactive nature of learning is extended to assessment. It was noted in this study that the

assessment of the writing was impersonal and of little help to learners. The teachers mostly emphasized surface level errors or mechanics of spelling, punctuation and grammar as outlined in the official marking rubrics and ignored the areas of content/communication which have to do with making meaningful and effective communication. After all, an important aim of writing is the ability to make meaning and thereby communicating effectively. In addition, the three teachers largely awarded almost meaningless number grades to students' writing. Where the teachers offered comments on students' performance, they were not very helpful. Comments, such as, 'Very good,' and, 'Excellent, keep it up,' sound vague. It should indicate what the student did that was particularly good. It should also indicate what the students could have done better to improve the writing. Awarding number grades and meaningless comments is a traditional form of assessment that does not help learners acquire necessary writing skills. New and more effective trends dictate that learners are respected as unique individuals, and that teachers act as facilitators who promote learning and not act as judges or sole executors. In this way students are perceived as people with feelings and personalities that need to be appreciated and helped. They should not be treated as entities without identity.

4.3.1.9 Elements of Process Writing

The three teachers incorporated the prewriting element of process writing at different stages in their lessons. These included brainstorming and draft composition writing activities. Teacher C went even further by engaging her students in such positive activities as speaking and making presentations. Students in her class talked more about their own ideal houses, generated more sentences which the teacher listed on the board for their use, and even encouraged students to sketch a mind map to help with their writing. However, as in the other two classes, students only succeeded in drawing the mind map when the lesson was ended by the bell.

It was also noted that many of the composition writing activities in the classrooms were done as collaborative activities by all the teachers. What was irregular about this was the fact that not enough supervision was given to the students to carry the exercise to success.

Teacher supervision and intervention is crucial to the success of collaborative activities. This was lacking and resulted in the more able students doing the drafting by themselves, while the less able ones passively looked on. The teachers seemed largely pre-occupied with students producing drafts which they would mark, and thus end the 'torture' of composition teaching.

From the findings above, it is safe to conclude that the three teachers did not strictly follow the process approach in teaching composition writing. Feedback given to students was limited to the prewriting period. In some cases, it went up to draft stage, but not to the completed composition. Assessment focused on the technical aspects of the finished product, while ignoring the content. The planning and drafting processes were not allocated any grades, as the grades were allocated only for the completed product. Therefore, it would be safe to conclude that the approach which the three teachers used to teach composition writing was mainly product oriented. At this point, attention would focus on research question two:

4.3.2. Research Question 2

What are the challenges or problems associated with the use of each of the approaches?

In order to answer the second research question, data from Research Question One were used to identify the approach used by the teachers as product oriented. As a result, the problems or challenges of the identified approach will be discussed with reference to the use of the product oriented approach to teaching composition writing. In an attempt to do this, the lessons observed, the teachers' and students' interviews, the students' artifacts, and documents reviewed in Chapter Two will be used.

4.3.2.1 Product Oriented Approach to Writing

It is believed that traditional approaches to writing focus on written products. Teachers evaluate the written product, judge its form and content according to set criteria, as was done by the teachers in this study, who focused on the evaluation of the finished product, and awarded number grades to them without evaluating any aspects of the process or the various stages of the writing. Furthermore, evidence from the teachers' evaluation suggested that the focus neglected the content/meaning of the students' writing and concentrated on form such as surface level errors of spelling, punctuation and form. A common characteristic of the product oriented paradigm that the teacher is not only pre-occupied with grammatical accuracy, but she also acts as a judge of students' writing rather than a facilitator. This gave rise to teachers making such negative comments as, 'Mind your grammar', 'Pay attention to your spelling' and so on without much encouragement or praise of students' efforts.

Hairston (1982:78) details some further flaws in the product paradigm when she states:

> Proponents of the product approach apparently viewed the composing process as linear, proceeding systematically from prewriting to writing to rewriting.

The view above was picked out from the observation of the three teachers who moved in the order of prewriting, drafting and writing of the final copies. This may not have been intended by the teachers, and they must have assumed the students knew. However, there were no attempts on their part to let students understand that writing is recursive and that they could write as many copies as possible in order to produce an excellent piece of text/product. Even the students when asked what they normally do in a composition writing lesson, responded to indicate a linear view of writing:

- *We discuss the topic in a group and after that we make a draft and correct the mistake in the draft and copy them into our composition notebooks.*

120

- *You write the title. Make a draft. Write a clean copy starting with the introduction, development and conclusion. After that I submit to the teacher for marking.*
- *We are given composition topics sometimes in groups and sometimes individually. If we are given one as a group, we first brainstorm; put down the points we have; and come up with a draft composition. After that we write a final copy and submit to the teacher.*
- *We work in groups to do the following:*

Brainstorm
Arrange points
Make a draft
Write the final composition.

The linear view of composition writing above might be as a result of the flaws highlighted by Hairston (1982). Also, Johnston (1987) notes that the product approach limits writers to a single writing of a text as opposed to the multiple rewrites allowed in process writing, and that while allowing for a certain amount of revision, the product seriously underestimates the importance of rewriting, generally. The idea of writing a draft and then a final copy was vividly displayed in the classrooms and in the students' perceptions.

Furthermore, Teacher C tried to introduce modeling in her writing methodology. It is noted by some authors that the product approach encourages students to focus on model, form and duplication. They see it as restrictive, making learners to become imitators instead of empowering them, thereby stultifying their writing skill development (Escholz, 1980). In this, there is disagreement in some quarters and this will be explained later on in this report.

The details above explain the scenarios that prevailed in the three classrooms studied. The implications of this situation in terms of the challenges or problems in the use of the product orientation will be discussed as follows:

4.3.2.2 Students' Inability to Compose

Evidence of students' artifacts, observation of lessons, and students' and teachers' interviews showed that students had serious problems with composition writing. The type of writing students did was physical, rather than cognitive. Students were mainly 'transcribing' as opposed to composing. This was shown in the students' difficulties with surface level errors such as spelling, punctuation and paragraphing. In fact, students were failing to communicate in any effective ways in writing. It was clear that many of the students lacked understanding of the topics or ideas to express them as alluded to. Besides, students were limited in their usage of words/vocabulary and even substituted with the L1. For instance, in writing about, 'Abuse' a student wrote: 'He always eat the money' meaning, 'He spends the money'. On the topic, 'A view from my bedroom window', a student showed lack of communication when he wrote, 'I have like the view that my Mother should buy bigger window to see lot of things than that I have seen.'

Again, the lack of adequate vocabulary ensured that students wrote paragraphs of a few lines in their compositions. Writing involves students in activities of making meaning and not just participating in the physical effort. It was also noted that the teachers in all the cases failed to help students through those difficulties. They did not offer helpful feedback to the students during the writing to ensure that they produced a meaningful piece of text. The minimal feedback the teachers gave was usually after the writing when it was too late to help the students improve. Furthermore, the feedback given to students focused on surface level features of spelling, punctuation and so on, which did not enhance students' composing skill.

4.3.2.3 Lack of Motivation to Write

The constructivist theory on which this study is based describes how learning should happen and is associated with pedagogic approaches that promote active participation by considering such issues as the nature of the learner, the nature of the learning process and the motivation for learning. Such factors as the unique needs, background and complexity

of the learner should be taken into account in the teaching and learning process. Apparently, these factors were largely ignored in the pedagogical practices pertaining to the teaching of writing. This oversight on the part of the teachers contributed a lot to the apathy and lack of motivation shown by the students in learning composition writing. This was expressed by the students verbally and in their writing. In response to interview questions on the problems which students have with composition writing some said:

- *Sometimes, when I am given a topic to write on, I panic and I am unable to write anything or write wrong things.*
- *Thinking too much about what to write makes me have a headache. I 'm not able to understand the topic and sometimes get my spelling wrong.*
- *Writing about things that you haven't seen or done. It is too abstract for me.*
- *I don't like composition writing because I always fail it.*
- *I get poor marks every time I write a composition.*

The statements above suggest feelings of frustration and helplessness, which are brought on by the inability of the students to achieve success in their writing attempts and the teachers' method that prevented them from articulating the needs and peculiar difficulties of their students. What is worse is when students give up and begin to view themselves as failures because they lack certain writing skills. It is evident that the students had significant problems associated with writing. As a result, they were developing neither good mechanical nor composing skills, in addition to not being able to write effectively.

4.3.2.4 Pre-occupation with Students' Errors/Difficulties

First, the three teachers were unanimous in stating that the most common mistakes students made in their writing were the mechanical surface errors such as spelling and punctuation. They identified the major errors as wrong tense/grammar, faulty sentences, lack of vocabulary, repetition of ideas, lack of organization, and failure to communicate in writing. The examination of students' artifacts indicated surface level errors of spelling, punctuation, and organization, as well as lack of vocabulary that resulted in

123

scanty writing, formation of wrong sentences, poor use of tenses, lack of ideas and failure to understand the topics in some cases. In fact, it was evident that most of the students lacked composing skills.

4.3.2.5 Time Constraints

During the observation of lessons, the teachers and students had problems related to time in writing. It was also evident that the students and teachers were constrained by time in which to do the writing. Students were not given enough time to do composition writing. It was also observed that teachers could have given more time to composition teaching than they did. They were unwilling to do so, however, citing large class size constraints, and the fact that they have to meet other syllabus requirements such as teaching other language skills. Another dimension to the students' difficulties was the perception that taking much time to write a composition was a sign of failure on their part. For example, they always had to complete composition writing assignments at home. On the contrary, adequate time is a feature of the teaching of writing – time to think about the topic, time to research, time to write and re-write, until one becomes satisfied with the final product. Unfortunately, students and teachers equally did not have enough time to enable them to fulfill their tasks satisfactorily. Perhaps, the schools should consider increasing the periods beyond the five a week which they have currently allocated to English Language teaching. If this is not done, teachers will continue to resort to product teaching of writing.

4.3.2.6 Assessment of Students' Work.

Students' work was assessed using the standardized marking rubric (Appendix D). This evaluated content/communication and structure. Ironically, the communication/content aspect of the evaluation was mostly ignored in the comments which teachers made on the students' compositions. Attention was focused on issues of structure such as grammar, spelling, punctuation and the award of number grades, as opposed to constructive comments to improve students' writing.

Furthermore, because of the focus on structure as opposed to content and meaning, the students' compositions were sparse and mostly meaningless, as attested to by the teachers themselves who observed that their students lacked communication, grammar, organization of ideas and vocabulary skills. This lack of vocabulary resulted in the mother tongue interference noted by the teachers in my interview with them. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, there was no feedback. Intentionally or not, the message to the students was that their inability to write effectively was largely due to spelling, punctuation, and grammar errors, rather than the core issues of content, communication and meaning. It was not surprising that students attributed their inability to write effectively to spelling and grammar as in the following interview responses:

- *I have problems with composition writing because of the spelling - - - and not arranging the composition well.*
- *The problems I have with composition writing are spelling and using of punctuation marks.*
- *I have problems with writing because of the spelling and because I mix up the ideas.*

The students' singling out of technical writing skills as writing problems was a result of the teachers' failure to articulate the main goals of teaching writing in general and composition writing in particular. The goals themselves were outlined in the syllabus as mentioned earlier. The expected outcomes of the teaching and learning of the English language in Botswana was to enable junior secondary students to:

- Communicate accurately, appropriately and effectively in speech and writing.
- Convey information and logically order and present facts and ideas based on other subjects of the curriculum.
- Recognize and use different registers, implicit meaning and non-verbal communication appropriate to the situation (Republic of Botswana, 1996: ii).

4.3.3. Research Question 3

Are the teachers' approaches to teaching composition writing responsible for the poor writing skill of learners?

From the data gathered, it was ascertained that students were having major problems with the learning of writing in general, and composition writing in particular. These included poor attitude to composition writing, poor spelling, lack of adequate vocabulary, wrong use of tense, lack of communication in writing, and inability to generate or organize ideas, and so on. It was also ascertained from the poor performance of the students in composition writing in the three different schools that the teachers' use of the product oriented approach in their classes could not effectively address the writing weaknesses of the students. In other words, the teachers' methods did not enhance the development of the writing skills of the students.

4.3.3.1 Students' problems of writing

It was established that the problems students were having with composition writing were many, and that they cut across the three participating schools. This was not surprising because the teachers were using basically the same approach – the product oriented approach. As a result most of the students' difficulties reflected symptoms associated with product writing such as the inability to compose effectively, lack of organization of ideas, lack of vocabulary and communication and the perception that ability to spell correctly, write good grammar and punctuation translates into good writing.

4.3.3.2 Negative attitude and phobia for writing

It was also clear that many of the students were averse to composition writing, as the majority did not express preference for it in the interviews. The students' answers indicated that many of them did not enjoy learning the skill of composition writing because they found it very difficult. The reasons they gave included spelling (nearly all of

them indicated spelling, among other problems), which was followed by difficulties of not understanding the topic, lack of adequate vocabulary to express ideas, not having any ideas to start with, lack of organization skills and lack of time to do the writing. In some extreme instances, students expressed outright phobia for composition writing, as the following themes suggest:

- *Sometimes, when I am given a composition topic to write on, I panic and I am unable to write anything..*
- *Thinking too much about what to write makes me have a headache.*
- *When I write a composition, I become frightened because I don't know how to write it.*

These negative feelings and phobia can be directly linked to product writing in which the students are not helped enough to generate and develop ideas and the vocabulary needed for successful writing. The few able students in the respective classes had no difficulty participating effectively in the brainstorming and discussions of the topics. The majority, however, were made to look like passive recipients or reduced to mere onlookers in the activities that preceded the writing exercise. The students' input in this type of setting was minimal as they were not made responsible for their own learning. For example, they were not given the opportunity to contribute meaningfully, or to make mistakes. Similarly, they were not given feedback to improve on their mistakes and to gain confidence to proceed to the next level. In addition to the views above, the following were also observed to have contributed to the students' poor writing skills.

4.3.3.3 The teaching of composition writing through question and answer method

Composition writing lessons were turned into question and answer sessions, especially by Teachers A and B. These two teachers devoted most of the time to drilling students on the layout of their writing – introduction, body and conclusion - when many of the students had no clue or ideas on the content to put in the layout. While the explanation of the layout of the writing was not bad in itself, it was apparent that students had other and

more pressing difficulties such as getting and developing the ideas, understanding the topic, and poor vocabulary. It is when students are able to get the ideas and information for the writing act that the organization can be taught or reinforced within the writing process. The urgency of which aspects of writing to emphasize can be seen in the following students' comments below:

- *Writing a composition necessitates more information which I don't have.*
- *Most often I don't understand the meanings of words to use to write the composition.*

4.3.3.4 Lack of time to write

The pre-writing activities associated with process writing were not given adequate attention as demanded by the prescribed communicative approach to language teaching. The teachers failed to give adequate time for students to do the writing, to give teacher feedback, and to incorporate the feedback into their work to improve it. Consequently, students ended up not developing the required writing skills expected of them to succeed in English language learning and to extend them across the curriculum.

4.3.3.5 Unsuitable topics

As was noted earlier, the three teachers managed at different points to pick topics which were outside the students' experiences. In her second lesson, Teacher A taught the topic, 'A view from my bedroom window' which most of the students found uninteresting and quite 'dry' from the simple fact that they could not relate to the concept probably because what most of them saw in their shared bedrooms were the roof tops or walls of other buildings. Also, many students did not have the vocabulary or context that was rich enough to tackle the topic. To complicate the matter further, Teachers B came up with, 'An April Fool's joke which got me into trouble' and, 'Teacher C with, 'I could not believe my eyes. That night, I cried myself to sleep'. These, were fairly abstract and beyond the students' immediate experience. It was difficult to imagine what these beginning writers were supposed to do with topics that were beyond their cultural and levels competency.

Piaget (1953)'s constructivist theory suggests that individuals construct new knowledge from their experiences. This is explained to mean that individuals must build a framework of knowledge based on what they already know prior to anything being useful to them. Bearing this in mind, it was not surprising that students were frustrated as shown in these comments:

- *I don't like composition writing because you are given topics on something you don't know to write about. How do you write about something you have never seen?'*
- *I don't like composition writing, but if the topic is within my experience, that's when I enjoy it, as it is easy then.*

Furthermore, the intense integrated activities associated with process writing such as speaking extensively, dramatization, role play, demonstrations, listening, reading, research, and so on were largely ignored, except for the feeble brainstorming activities and the subsequent group work. This made the lessons unattractive. The only exception was Teacher C, who allowed some group presentations, and, 'show and tell' activities with pictures of some houses.

4.3.3.6 Absence of teaching/writing aids

The use of teaching aids such as pictures, objects, writing checklists, editing posters, and other aids that would facilitate students writing were not observed in any of the lessons. Again, the only exception was Teacher C who used the students' textbooks to support her teaching of writing, otherwise referred to as modeling. Unfortunately, this effort was not sustained due to lack of supervision and direction. For instance, the mind mapping activity that followed from the textbook suggestion was not monitored closely enough by the teacher to ensure that students drew meaningful and useful mind maps from the cluttered sketches which many of them produced (See mind mapping under classroom observation).

Further, the teachers failed to use any forms of editing checklists or any other forms of writing checklists to support their students' learning of writing skills. There were no posters in the classrooms to indicate their use, nor were they used in the lessons. This was surprising considering the problems which students were having with writing such as spelling and punctuation, at the most basic levels, and their inability to communicate effectively in writing.

4.3.3.7 Linear view of writing

The worrying fallout for students, as a result of the product approach to writing utilized by the teachers, was the linear view of composition writing. There was no planned effort to highlight the recursive nature of writing and the possibility of writing as many drafts as necessary to produce a good piece of text.

It is widely accepted in current practice that writing is recursive and that it is proper to write as many drafts as possible to achieve the perfect piece. Ironically, this does not apply to composition writing only, but to other forms of writing, including creative writing and content area writing. Writing is said to be re-writing and re-writing. In all the lessons observed, the emphasis was for students to produce a draft in as little time as possible for grading so that they could write final copies in their books to show that the writing exercise was performed.

4.3.3.8 Completion of Composition Writing at Home

This is probably the most important factor in the teaching and learning process in composition writing instruction. It is probably debatable. No matter how this is looked at, it must be judged against the background of the learners and the setting. Without doubt, the setting and background of this study suggests that it is inappropriate to allow students to complete their composition writing as homework. This is because of the serious problems of writing exhibited by the students and their struggles with the L2 language learning context. Perhaps only when students have reached what Vygotsky (1978) refers to as the 'zone of proximal development', when they have experienced the successful

completion of challenging tasks, can they be ready to embark on more complex activity of writing compositions as homework with minimal supervision. For those students who had serious problems of writing, the procedure put them at a disadvantage. Also, the procedure made it difficult for teachers to articulate the problems of writing that the individual students had.

4.3.3.9 Group/collaborative composition writing

It is believed that the learning process is an active and social process where individuals are engaged in social activities. This is because learners make meanings through the interactions with each other and the environment. The collaborative activities reflected in group composition writing activity was desirable. What was out of place was the lack of thorough supervision of group work. It was also noticed that there was no adequate way of accounting for individual contributions in the group activities that the teachers assigned to the students. This was probably why the problems which students were encountering kept recurring. The procedure lacked proper monitoring by the teachers while students were writing in class or when they wrote the pieces as homework. It suggests a situation where the more able students took the assignment home to write and presented it later as a group effort. It is not surprising that students'mistakes kept recurring, as shown in these excerpts:

Student: When I am made to rewrite the composition, I make the same mistakes again. Teacher: - - - I really don't know what to do. After students are corrected for mistakes in their writing, they still make the same mistakes in subsequent episodes of composition writing.

4.3.3.10 Teacher feedback

A lot has already been said on feedback. It was noted that teachers gave their students feedback that were not helpful towards the development of their writing skills. It was evident that teachers mainly employed number grades and a few comments that made little or no sense to the students they were directed at. In the teacher interviews, the three

131

teachers admitted that they gave number grades as well as comments on their students' performance. Ironically, the feedbacks were usually given after the students had written their drafts, when it would no longer help them to improve the writing. It was also ascertained that, the feedback was number criterion oriented, with inadequate comments on performance such as, '*Work hard on your grammar', 'Too many spelling mistakes, try drafting next time' and 'Good, keep it up'*.

The question now is how students were supposed to interpret the above teacher comments above in a way that would improve their writing. This was against the background that teachers' who wished to increase students' ability to write would not rely on marking errors on students' papers and grading them based on those errors. Instead, they would encourage and praise students for their accomplishments, as well as point out further areas in which they could improve. It was also remarked earlier, that feedback would have been more useful while students were in the process of writing than when they had finished the task.

4.3.3.11 Lack of supportive writing habits

It was found that students were not engrained in reading and writing habits that would enhance their writing skills. This was because they spent little time at the library, apart from the single period of forty (40) minutes a week. They were also not encouraged to keep journals or to write about what they had read that made any impressions on them. In fact, many of the students did not see the need for such an exercise. Considering that these activities have been found to contribute to the development of writing skills, it was apparent that the teachers and students in this study did not attach much value or importance to reading in order to develop writing skills.

4.3.3.12 The role of the teacher

It was observed that the teacher was an important factor in the development of effective writing skills. This means that the instructor's beliefs, values and background influence the learners and the tasks they are expected to perform in the shaping of meanings. The

role of the teacher needs to change to that of a facilitator who helps the students to learn and reach their own understanding. With a facilitator, the student becomes the central focus as the roles are reversed. In facilitating learning, the teacher assumes the backstage role to direct the affairs of the students and to provide support and continuous dialogue or feedback or to articulate the students' needs and address those needs. These were not obvious in this study.

It can now be concluded that the lapses in the development of writing skills that the students in this study exhibited was as a result of the product oriented approach to the teaching of writing utilized by the three teachers who handled composition writing in their classrooms. Their methods did not enhance students' writing skills. In short, students were unable to compose sentences or communicate effectively in their writing. Similarly, this method did not help the teachers to impart effective writing skills to the students. This was evident in the persistent writing problems experienced by the students.

 Having identified the approaches and the problems which they posed, attention will now be focused on providing a solution or model to address the challenges. This will be elaborated in Chapter Five because of reasons explained earlier in this report.

4.4.Summary

This chapter presented and analyzed data emanating from the observations, interviews and examination of documents and students' artifacts from the three schools under investigation. The chapter also made efforts to answer three of the research questions in this study by linking the relevant data to each of the research questions for meaningful interpretation. Research Question Four will be answered by providing and discussing a model to improve the problems associated with the answers to the first three questions in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, CONCLUSIONS, and RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. INTRODUCTION

Chapter Five entails the summary of the problem, procedure and findings of the study. In addition, conclusions are formulated based on the findings related to the research questions and limitations of study. In the light of the conclusions made, pertinent recommendations are suggested. This is done relative to the objectives of the study.

5.2. SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH PURPOSE /AIMS

This study focuses on the approaches to teaching English composition writing at junior secondary schools in Botswana and the objectives were:

1. To find out the approaches utilized by teachers in the teaching and learning of English composition writing in classrooms;
2. To identify the challenges posed by the use of such approaches in the teaching of English composition writing in these classrooms;
3. To determine whether the approaches used by teachers inhibit students' performance in composition writing; and
4. To propose possible solutions or models to the challenges in the teaching and learning of English composition writing in the classroom.

The research questions that follow were formulated from the objectives above:

1. What approaches do teachers utilize in the teaching of English composition writing in the three classrooms?
2. What are the challenges or problems associated with the use of the approaches?
3. Are the teachers' approaches to teaching composition writing responsible for the poor writing skills of learners?
4. What possible models would improve the teaching and learning of composition writing by students at the junior secondary level in Botswana?

Based on the interviews, observations, examination of artifacts and records, data were presented and analyzed in Chapter Four which resulted in the findings below.

5.3. FINDINGS

5.3.1. Research Questions 1-3

Analysis of research questions one to three led to the findings that will be discussed in this part of the report. It was found that the approach used by the teachers showed lack of value/importance placed on writing and creativity as a skill. The teachers did not seem to see the future benefits of the development of their students' writing skills. Composition teaching was probably done just to go through the motions. The teachers' lessons were uninspired, as they showed no passion for the activity. These were reflected in the way the teachers handled the teaching of composition writing in their classrooms. The writing instruction process was bland, repetitive and boring. Arising from the overall analysis, these were the findings from the study:

- *Non compliance with official directives and objectives of language teaching;*
- *Lack of Students' Competence in Composition Writing;*
- *Students were assigned to write on topics beyond the level of their experience;*
- *Students were allowed to complete composition writing assignment as homework without the teachers' supervision and assistance;*

- *There was focus on product writing characterized by linear view of writing where emphasis was on the product as opposed to the process;*
- *Composition writing as a non integrated and isolated event;*
- *Composition teaching and learning was restricted by time limitations;*
- *Evidence of lack of formative teacher feedback and other assessment issues;*
- *Little or no use of writing aids in writing instruction;*
- *Teacher and student attitude issues; and*
- *Lack of official, institutional and parental support for the teaching of composition writing.*

5.3.1.1 Non-compliance with the official directives and objectives of language teaching

It is important to refer to the official aims and objectives of the teaching of the English language and, by extension, the teaching of composition writing in order to evaluate the shortfalls and lapses. The recommended approach suggested by the Government of Botswana for both the junior and senior secondary levels of language teaching is the communicative approach where students are expected to learn the language by using it in:
- meaningful interactions;
- communicative activities; and
- problem solving tasks (Republic of Botswana, 1996; 2000).

Furthermore, the current Junior Certificate (JC) English Syllabus articulates the objectives and expected outcomes of the teaching of the English language as follows:

- To communicate accurately, appropriately and effectively in speech and writing, both in the school and outside it.
- To understand and respond to what they hear, read and experience in a range of situations, settings and media.
- To enjoy reading a range of literature, not only fiction but also general interest works and materials.

- To convey information, and logically order and present facts and ideas based on other subjects of the curriculum.
- To recognize and use different registers, implicit meaning and non-verbal communication appropriate to the situation (Republic of Botswana, 1996: ii.)

The objectives above provide the context of this study, and it is yet to be seen how far the ideals and objectives of teaching writing have been met. There is no doubt that the Botswana Government places emphasis on the teaching of language in all its creative forms and in content areas across the curriculum in the five language learning outcomes outlined. It is evident that much importance is attached to the teaching and development of the four language skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking, reflected in the communicative teaching of language.

Secondly, the teaching of English emphasizes the development of creative reading and writing skills if students are to enjoy wide range of literature and respond verbally and in writing to what they hear, read or experience in various settings. Reading and writing are equally extended to the content areas where students are expected to convey information and logically order and present facts and ideas based on other subjects of the curriculum. This means that when teachers deal with any specific aspects of language, they are imparting knowledge to help students achieve overall educational goals of school, learning and life. After, all an important aim of education in Botswana is the effective preparation of students for life, citizenship and the world of work (Republic of Botswana, 1994).

Based on the context above, it is safe to assert that the teachers failed to comply with the communicative approach prescribed by the Government in the language syllabus. It appeared as if the teachers did not see the importance of teaching writing to the students beyond the immediate objective of the lesson or to extend the skill to other areas of the curriculum such as creative writing. As stated earlier, teachers only taught composition writing as a chore which they had to attend to.

5.3.1.2 Lack of Students' Competence in Composition Writing

The students' writing showed very poor competence in English language usage as it was difficult to understand what they were communicating. The teachers also seemed to have a long list of reasons for the students' weaknesses which excluded their own methods. The difficulties that they said they were confronted with included students' poor writing skill, surface level errors as well as students' inability to write correct sentences, lack of ideas, lack of vocabulary to express themselves, lack of organization skills, poor communication in writing, and mother-tongue interference. Other challenges included students' lack of motivation, negative attitude to writing, large class size, poor quality of students, time limitations, students' weak reading culture, and lack of parental support.

5.3.1.3 Assignment of topics beyond the level of students' experience

Students were assigned to write on topics beyond the level of their experience. It was noted that many of the prescribed composition writing topics were beyond the level of the students' mental and immediate environment. This was shown by the students' responses to interview questions where they said that they would prefer to write about topics that they are familiar with. Others lamented the fact that they often, had to deal with topics that they did not understand to start with. On whether students like composition writing, the following responses captured the essence of their feelings:

- *It depends, if the topic is within my experience, that's when I enjoy writing it.*
- *I like when we are writing about something I know because it is then, easy.*
- *Writing about things that you haven't seen or done. It is too abstract for me.*
- *My problem is thinking lots of things about what you are going to write in the composition when you don't understand the topic.*

5.3.1.4 Completing composition writing assignment as homework.

Students were allowed to complete composition writing assignment as homework . The idea of allowing students to complete their writing assignments at home is not new in pedagogy, nor is it out of place in most cases. However, under the present circumstances and considering many of the students' weaknesses in writing, the practice was not helpful to the development of writing skills in this particular setting. Students definitely needed a lot of supervision and the teachers' attention to their writing problems.

5.3.1.5 Focus on product writing

There was focus on product writing characterized by linear view of writing and emphasis on the product as opposed to the process. The product orientation of teaching writing in this study did not emphasize the recursive nature of writing. The view that writing is continuous rewriting until one's objective is achieved was not impressed on the students. This contributed in no small measure to the students' wrong view that writing is a linear process, and that inability to complete the initial drafting and subsequent final product for submission within a particular assigned time indicated failure. This resulted in a sense of despondency.

5.3.1.6 The teaching of composition writing as a non integrated and isolated event

Composition writing was relegated to an exercise undertaken once in a while. The idea that writing could be taught in an integrated way with other skills was not exploited. So, composition writing became isolated or a special event. This was reflected in one of the students' responses:
 - *I don't like composition writing because our teacher teaches us once in a while and we forget.*

5.3.1.7 Composition teaching and learning was restricted by time limitations

Time restriction was observed to be an important factor in the teaching and learning of writing. The teachers and the students never seemed to have enough of it. Perhaps allocating more time-tabled periods to language teaching would be appropriate. However, the teachers did not support the idea. They felt they had enough to deal with in terms of large class size to add on more periods.

5.3.1.8 Evidence of lack of formative teacher feedback and other assessment issues

A lot has been said on this aspect in Chapter Four. It is believed that feedback in writing is most beneficial when it is given during the practical exercise where it enhances students' writing as opposed to the summative feedback that was mostly used by the teachers. This type of feedback failed to help the development of students' writing skill. The feedback students got, apart from not being very helpful, came too late to be of much use to them. It was obvious that the feedback did not have a positive impact on the students' success in writing.

5.3.1.9 Very Little use of writing aids

There was very little or no use of writing aids in writing instruction. It is desirable to employ writing aid for beginner writers such as were identified in this study. It was surprising that, apart from Teacher C who introduced the use of modeling and pictures of different types of houses brought by the students, there were no conscious or deliberate efforts to use any form of writing aids such as checklists that probably would have supported the students attempt at writing. This proved to be a major oversight on the part of the teachers concerned. The peculiar situation of the students in this study demanded for such a measure.

5.3.1.10 Teachers and students' negative attitude to writing

None of the teachers interviewed expressed preference for teaching composition writing because of what they described as students' lack of interest. The feeling on the part of the students was equally negative. In some cases, there were expressions of phobia for writing. It was as if students were really terrified of composition writing as can be seen from their responses to interview questions on the subject. A few are recalled for emphasis:

- *I don't like composition writing because you will have to struggle for points and think about so many things to write.*
- *It makes you think a lot until your head hurts.*
- *Thinking too much about what to write makes me have a headache.*
- *My main problem is spelling and I wish to be intelligent.*

The views above are a few of the cries of desperation by the students. In addition, their teachers complained that in spite of their efforts, students were not developing effective writing skills.

5.3.1.11 Lack of support for the teaching of composition writing

There was a lack of official, institutional and parental support for the teaching of composition writing. There was evidence that the libraries in the three schools lacked the necessary resources to support reading and writing skills that are complementary. Students could not use the library facilities to borrow books to read and the time they spent at the libraries was a mere forty minutes in a five day time table. The use of the library after class was limited by regulations that students should stay in their classrooms for private studies. Besides, none of the teachers in their years of experience had attended any refresher courses or seminars on the teaching of writing in spite of the official recognition of students' inadequate writing skills. Moreover, teachers intimated during the interviews that parents apparently, fail to encourage their children to read at home or do much studying. They said they were tired of parents coming to school to complain

about offences their children committed at home such as watching too much television or playing instead of studying.

The inhibitors to students' poor writing skills have already been attributed to lapses inherent in the teachers' method or approach to the teaching of composition writing. Also, the main lapses identified have been discussed extensively in the analysis section of this report. Based on the findings emanating from research questions one to three above, possible models were developed to enhance the effective teaching and learning of English composition writing in schools as presented below in research question four.

5.4. Research Question 4

What possible model would improve the learning of composition writing by students at the junior secondary level in Botswana?

In order to answer Research Question Four, the data from research questions one to three were examined, analyzed and considered in the preceding sections. The findings from the analysis were used to answer Research Question Four, based on the analysis of the approaches utilized by teachers, the challenges associated with the use of the approach and the way the use of the approach has apparently inhibited the learners' development of effective writing skills. Many of the documents reviewed on the development of composition writing skills have been elaborated on in the literature review in Chapter Two. In an attempt to do this, some modifications have been made to a model adapted from Badger's and White's (2000) writing model entitled, 'A process genre approach to teaching writing'. In the model, they discussed the strengths and weaknesses of product, process and genre approaches to writing and writing development. The modification, I believe, can be used to ease the difficulties of the teaching and learning of L2 English composition writing in the Botswana junior secondary context. The model is built on the assumption that the product and the process orientations in writing are complementary and can be used to achieve improvement in writing instruction in L2 contexts.

5.4.1. The Process/ Modeling Approach

My Suggested Model is called the Process/ Modeling Approach

The process/modeling approach explores the link between reading and writing to enhance or improve students' writing skills. This means that reading can be used to prepare learners for more realistic forms of writing. It is believed that writing activities at this stage can provide a basis for integrated learning through reading and writing. The model can be diagrammatically represented and explained as shown below:

Figure 4: Suggested Model for English Composition Writing
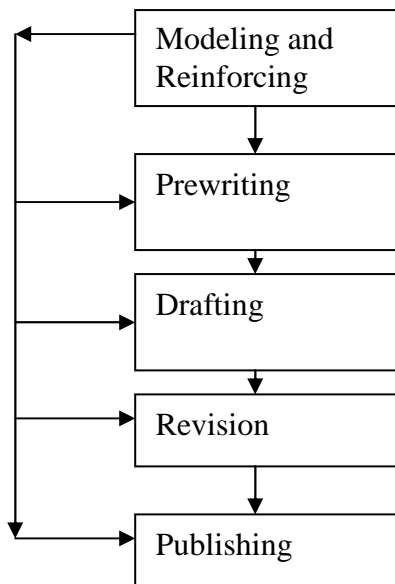
(Adapted from Badger and White, 2000)

1. *Modeling and reinforcing:* The teacher introduces a model in the form of a reading passage from content areas, portions of newspaper clippings, articles from magazines, novels, videos, dramatization and so on, as long as it is something that excites the students' interest. The teacher at this stage lets students discuss important details that would help them to plan their own writing such as the outline, paragraphing, main ideas, and other features that make the writing good or bad.

2. *Prewriting:* Students can now plan their own writing by linking the context to their own experience. They discuss or relate similar experiences and make comparisons, where necessary with what they have read, heard or done. They then brainstorm ideas, making a list, drawing a mind map and (refer to text where necessary to do this). Where necessary, students can be encouraged to do more research on their themes/topics.

3. *Drafting:* Drafting here means that students can put their ideas on paper, focus on meaning and understand that writing can change. They can also engage in group and pair work or collaborative writing.

4. *Revision:* At the revision stage, students can do self and peer editing. The teacher also facilitates and reinforces students' writing by guiding them to do effective revision by giving them editing rubrics and offering individual or group feedback to help students improve their writing. The teacher encourages students to write and rewrite as much as possible, until they are satisfied with what they have written.

5. *Publishing:* Students write final product and incorporate the teacher's correction in such areas as grammar and meaning and so on before submitting their work for assessment.

5.4.2. Important Factors in the Process/Modeling Approach

5.4.2.1 Motivation for writing:

Students can be more motivated to write, if they consider the topic or subject interesting, important and within their experience or cultural background. General subjects or topics may come from many of the content areas. Often, an area closely

related to a student's personal interests provides an excellent topic. Many of the topics teachers pick for their students are most often uninteresting and even difficult for students to understand. Better still teachers can work with their students to pick or select topics. Many topics are most often too broad, technical, abstract, and too far removed from students' experience to be of much use to them. For instance, a student who probably shares a room with other siblings and/or relatives, or who only sees the walls of other houses through the bedroom window, will find it difficult to write about what he or she sees outside his or her bedroom window. In another instance, asking students to write about an, 'April Fool' joke when it is outside their cultural or immediate personal interest seems inappropriate, especially in a setting where they are struggling with the learning of L2. Students love reading stories in literature, magazines and other content areas. Themes or topics could be assigned from those areas to sustain their interest.

5.4.2.2 Gathering and organizing ideas and information:

At this stage students brainstorm, list, and make notes of their ideas, use texts or relevant sources to gather ideas and information. Presently, the way composition writing is taught is like giving students a test to write, or a reading lesson within a time limit for students to complete the exercise, write answers to the questions and submit at a stipulated time. Students need time to plan their writing, time to research and gather information and time to brainstorm, and put their ideas on paper and develop them. After students have finished gathering information, they are ready to start analyzing, selecting and ordering their information. This is a process that is vital to writing reflected in an author's need to search, select and reflect on the main ideas, supporting information and conclusions.

5.4.2.3 Writing and Re-writing:

In teaching composition skills, the teacher is concerned with the student's ability to develop clear ideas and to organize and elaborate on them. At this point, the recursive nature of writing is emphasized and students are encouraged to evaluate and make any necessary changes that will improve the writing, something that was not observed to have

been encouraged as often in this study as it should. It is believed that if teachers interact with students during the entire writing process, students will have positive feedback and an opportunity to make improvements during each step of the process. They would not have to wait for the teacher's reaction to the finished product (Meriwether, 1997). When students write and the teacher reacts, the student can decide on changes before the final writing. As a result, only minor changes may be necessary for them to produce a piece of writing. Also, the situation where teachers complain about the headache of marking errors would be minimized, as most of the errors would have been eliminated during the process.

5.4.2.4 Time Factor:

On the whole, as in process writing, the process/modeling strategy requires that more classroom time is spent on writing. Writing is a complex process as outlined earlier on. It can lead to learner frustration if not carefully handled. It is, therefore, important to provide a supportive environment for the students, and to be patient with them if the process is to be accomplished. From what has been observed in this study, not enough time was spent on writing in the classroom, to the extent that composition writing became a homework exercise.

In addition to the observations above, the students' feedback and assessment should incorporate the following:

5.4.2.5 Feedback:

It is evident that, as in process writing, the process/modeling will take time and effort on the part of students as well as the teachers. As a result, it is fair that students' writing is responded to suitably. Positive comments can go a long way in building students' confidence and in creating good feelings for the next writing class. It is believed that feedback is more useful between drafts, not when it is done at the end of the task, when the students hand in their compositions to be marked. Corrections written on

compositions returned to the students after the process has finished seem to do little to improve their writing as was reflected in this study.

5.4.2.6 Assessment of writing:

For assessment purposes, it is suggested that a portfolio be included in the model. If students are unable to finish their writing at the specified time, the teacher can put them in the student's folder or file, to be continued in the next lesson until the process is completed. The model does not allow students to write compositions from home until they have achieved a certain level of competence to work on their own. It has been discovered that number grades do very little for students' motivation. From the findings in this study, number grades when given, seemed to lower students' morale and make them lose confidence in themselves and in their ability to write, especially if they got low marks. The grade was interpreted simply in terms of success and failure. There was no middle course. Students associated failure with lower marks. Because of this, meaningful comments on performance are preferred in assessing students. This could include, 'Your description of how you feel about your grandmother is very touching. Next time, separate the paragraph on that into two as it was too long.' Such comments on areas of strengths and weaknesses can go a long way in building students' morale in their ability to develop writing skills.

5.4.2.7 The role of the teacher in the process/modeling approach:

The role of the teacher in this case becomes that of a guide, facilitator, reader and provider of helpful feedback. Also, the teacher should be prepared to accommodate any individual differences that may arise in the writing. It also implies that teachers should train students about writing strategies especially in discussing such models as identifying main ideas, paragraphing and outline strategies that are useful in writing. Above all, teachers should integrate the listening, speaking and reading skills in the writing class as this enables students to actively participate in different ways in their learning as they discuss, present, read, list, outline and role play. A combination of approaches, coupled

147

with integration of writing skills, would alleviate many of the difficulties students are facing with writing in general, and composition writing in English in particular.

It is evident from the observations above that the process/modeling approach offers many possibilities for fostering and developing the writing skills of L2 learners because it has the potential for interactive classroom work. An important element of the approach is the meaning which it brings to learners, whose personal connection to the topic allows them to understand the processes they are following. When writing starts with reading, to generate ideas and activate the 'schemata' the experience or world knowledge which a person possesses and which that enables a writer to relate personal experience to the topic and discover everything he or she has to say during prewriting and brainstorming.

The measure above or the model suggested is not quite revolutionary. Rather, it is a way of taking a fresh look at current and older practices and merging or exploiting them to advantage. The popular process paradigm must not be adopted without reflection considering the needs and the nature of the learners and their cultural and social backgrounds and use the information to enhance instruction and learning. The popular belief that writing can be taught effectively, for as long as the process approach is utilized needs a rethink as it might not work in certain contexts. The difficulties encountered in L2 learning in this study attests to this.

Furthermore, the teachers in this study complained about the time needed to teach writing, considering that they had to cope with very large class size. This response is common to many developing Anglophone African countries, of which Botswana is one. Coupled with this is the competency level of the students to be taught in the L2. Evidence from this research indicates a low competency level of many of the students in the English language. This justifies a review of the popular method in order to make workable adjustments to deal with the challenges of teaching writing to such students. It would enable them to write effectively, not only compositions, but also creative writing. They would be competent in using language in content areas and beyond in order to

achieve the broad aims of learning in Botswana and elsewhere where there are similar settings and problems.

5.5. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS AND IMPLICATIONS

It is noted that writing is a generally difficult skill to learn. Some of the causes of the difficulty in writing include what Collins (1998) refers to as writing not being a spontaneous activity, but some conscious mental effort that has to be learned in a formal setting. It is also believed that writing is an involuntary activity, and that people do not just pick it up as they do spoken language, but that it needs to be taught and learned.

In consideration of the nature of writing above, the main objective at this point is to find ways or strategies to minimize the difficulties which students have with writing in general, and to help them overcome their aversion for composition writing in particular. To this end, I will suggest a combination of methods represented by the process/modeling approach. This simply means adapting or combining modeling (a feature of the product orientation), with the process approach.

5.5.1. Modeling.

Authors such as Escholz (1980) argue that the product approach demands that students should focus on model, form and duplication. Simpson (2006) also maintains that students in classes adopting the product approach find themselves studying model texts, and attempting exercises aimed at drawing attention to relevant features of a text. As earlier explained in chapter four, it is a stop gap measure to provide context for L2 learners to develop writing skills by using the reading and writing connection to support the process approach to writing at the junior secondary level in Botswana.

Moreover, some researchers affirm that there is no reason why a writing programme should not contain elements of both approaches. Jordan (1997) says that it will be wrong to assume that the product no longer exists, or that it has no practical value. Besides, modeling in this context can provide the experience or background that L2 learners need in order to write effectively. For example, the evidence from the selections of students' artifacts in this report shows that they would benefit from modeling, as well as relating ideas to their experience. Most of them lack organization skills, content and context, all of which can be provided by modeling, coupled with the process approach to writing.

Considering the outlined benefits of modeling above, the argument in this study is that, because of the peculiar difficulties being experienced by students in this study, as a result of background factors and teacher methods, they would need content, contexts, and motivation to initiate their own writing. It was also found that the reading and writing habits that should support effective writing were not engrained in students. Further, as beginning writers, especially in the L2 context of this study, modeling would help to provide the platform or scaffold for the students to develop effective writing skills.

Again, research claims that ESL children who are learning to write can benefit greatly from a process approach to writing through the use of teacher modeling, mini-lessons in language conventions, sharing and talking together, peer-response groups, dialogues and collaborative activities. Modeling will also enable teachers to identify special areas where students encounter difficulties, and teach them, whether it is organization, language use and vocabulary by connecting skills, something which students seem unable to do in the present setting.

Furthermore, some of the lapses that were observed on inspection of the library facilities in the three schools included inadequate materials. There was also evidence of a poor reading culture and lack of supportive writing habits such as keeping journals for both personal and educative purposes. This was shown by the library reading time that was limited to one period of forty minutes a week for the students. Again, borrowing facilities were non-existent within the three schools' library system. As a result, the opportunities

for the students were limited to the reading they did in the classrooms and the forty minutes reading time a week allocated in the schools' time tables. It is believed that the gap created in the students' learning by this inadequacy can be bridged through modeling. Students should be exposed to the model of a particular topic in their textbooks, content areas, newspapers and magazines which are selected to fit their writing needs. This would go a long way to making the writing real, authentic, useful, and less stressful to both the students and the teachers. In this way, the teachers would have authentic materials to support their teaching.

Some theorists, especially those of the process school, would question or bluntly reject modeling as a feature of the traditional product orientation because they believe that it is too prescriptive and that it limits and encourages unrealistic expectations from students who may think that they will receive models before every assignment. This is not necessarily the case as no one approach is absolute. It is the reality of situations and contexts that should ultimately dictate the choices to be made. Even the best of approaches in the hands of an unskilled teacher can go all wrong. The peculiarity of the present setting demands that in looking for a solution, the best of approaches should be combined to reduce/deal with the poor writing skill development of students.

As earlier explained, modeling is a feature of the product that should be combined with the process to achieve the best results. Modeling in itself, is not the ultimate strategy or method. There are practices associated with the process that particularly benefit L2 language learning. These too should be incorporated into the modeling structure. Various studies suggest that the use of the process for the teaching of writing to beginners and intermediate learners of English as L2 has produced encouraging results. This is because it is strongly believed that the activities inherent in the process favour communicative language teaching recommended for Botswana schools. Through modeling, students would have the opportunity to integrate skills as they read, comment on what they have read, examine styles and organization of ideas and use of words.

It is important at this point to reaffirm that the process approach itself is not absolute as in modeling. Martin (1985), citing his work with Aboriginal and migrant students in Australia, notes that because ESL students generally do not have a fully developed inter-language code system, they find it difficult to participate in discussions during the various stages involved in the process. As a result, they easily become 'outsiders' who cannot deal with the challenges of classroom discussion. Modeling can provide a platform for such students, as it will be a point of reference for them to build on. Therefore, it is suggested that**, modeling should be used in conjunction with the process** approach to writing. By using a combined process/modeling approach, the Botswana Education Policy (Republic of Botswana, 1994) on communicative language teaching would be adhered to, as well as the particular needs of individual students.

In addition**,** the use of arbitrary topics in composition writing instruction would be eliminated through the modeling/process. Words, expressions and usage would be made real for the students. They will see a model to show that what they are required to can be done. The model can also serve as a, 'theme starter' for the students' own writing, elicit their prior knowledge or experience and also help to their thinking or brainstorming. In this way, the situation where students are actually frustrated in learning to write will be remedied.

The theme of writing can be introduced by examining passages, newspaper cuttings, magazines, portions of information from literature books, novels, plays and other sources. After that the process can then take over. The holistic view of developing writing skill encouraged by the process, which allows individual flexibility for writers to explore a topic or topics and to approach the write-up, sharing their writing with other students, and learning to respond to writing as readers and listeners in a positive, rather than negative way. This can be combined with the content and context that modeling provides to aid students' composing skills.

On the balance of teaching structure, meaning and communication as demanded by the prescribed communicative approach, paragraph development, grouping, listing and

classifying related ideas, identifying main ideas and logical sequence of ideas can be explored in reading materials to help students develop effective writing skills through activities promoted by modeling and reinforced by process writing. The problem of getting ideas, organizing, and arranging them in sequence that students find difficult, can be addressed in this combined approach. As a result, students would move from the sentence level writing to write in order to communicate, express ideas, explore a topic, and finally record experiences (Raimes, 1983).

5.6. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE FINDINGS

Pertinent issues arising from the findings are now discussed.

1. One of the findings from this study indicated that the teaching of composition writing did not fully incorporate the process in ways that would enhance students writing. Basically, the teaching was more product oriented. Students wrote on a topic which was usually prescribed by the teacher. They worked mostly in groups to produce a draft that was usually completed at home and submitted to the teacher for marking. This was marked and handed back to the students for final copying into their composition writing exercise books. Some researchers call this procedure a sink- or- swim attitude to the development of writing skills and claim that it results from the view that writing is a product and that evaluation should be done solely on the basis of this product (Kilfoil, 1997). This situation is applicable to what happened in the three classrooms studied. The teachers apparently made little effort to infuse creativity and pragmatism into their teaching in order to ensure that their students gained something positive from their teaching efforts. This may not be deliberate on their part, but there was not much done to negate this view.

2. Most often the topics assigned did not bear any relevance to materials students have been exposed to. Skills learnt from other language areas were not effectively

integrated in the teaching of writing. Comprehension exercises involving the identification of main ideas, paragraphs, organization of ideas and so on, were taught separately in other lessons which were not related to composition writing. The possibility of encouraging students to extend these skills into their writing efforts were largely downplayed or ignored.

3. Question and answer methods of teaching writing: This was noticeable in the lessons of Teachers A and B. Their lessons were mostly a repertoire of questions and answers. In practice, they relied on the few students who could answer the questions to move their lessons forward. As a result, those who did not know the answers became passive onlookers, who were none the wiser by the end of the lessons. It was evident that rhetoric was emphasized at the expense of the writing process itself. Questions and answers are not bad in teaching. However, when they are used in such a way that they replace a writing lesson, they become a problem, as it happened in the lessons observed in this study. This was so because a greater part of the time was spent on asking and answering questions on the mechanics of writing such as the number of sentences in a paragraph, how to divide writing into the introduction, the body and the conclusion. It is important that these elements of writing be considered, but it appeared that students were too concerned problems of vocabulary and content to spend much time on those technical aspects. In most of the cases, the lessons ended without students being able to complete the writing. As a result, they were asked to finish the writing at home.

4. The students' poor composition writing competence was evident from the scanty, unreadable and meaningless writing that many of the students engaged in. O'Dell (2006) notes that it is important for L2 learners to have maximum exposure to the type of teaching that will enable them to develop a repertoire of language and its uses. The difficulties that students had were compounded by a lack of content, as well as context. The assigned topics did not help them as they were too abstract

154

and far removed from their experiences. As a result students could not rely on their background knowledge to help them cope with the writing task.

5. Furthermore, the students lacked content. Content, here refers to the information needed for writing, either through reading or research in the process of information gathering. The lack of context was noticeable in the choice of topics for the students' writing. It is important to acknowledge the efforts of Teacher C who introduced modeling in order to provide content and context in her teaching of composition writing in her procedure, but even this was not properly utilized. The teachers could have used the modeling approach to emphasize details on main ideas, paragraphing and organization of the students' writing. Instead students were mainly oriented towards the recall of the stories or details in the models. Scaffolding procedures strategies were neglected or ignored.

6. Lack of understanding of the objectives of teaching writing. It appeared as if the teachers did not realize the importance of the writing outcomes of language teaching as enunciated in the government's education documents to make them want to 'invest' their time in the teaching of writing. Investment of time in this instance refers to the act of sacrificing one's time or effort for the purpose of creating a stream of wealth for the future. This translates into investment in the future of the students as they learn to meet the outcomes that will enable them to communicate accurately and effectively in speech and writing. Similarly, they are expected to understand and respond to what they hear, read and experience or to convey information, and logically order and present facts and ideas across the curriculum. In this way, they will become functional citizens as well as gain academic success. I would like to assume that most of the teachers in the Botswana public school system are familiar with the process and other approaches to the teaching of writing considering my recent experience as a language teacher educator. It was baffling that the teachers observed failed to utilize the skill adequately enough to help their students. An educated guess might be that

155

teachers were unable to invest the time and effort into teaching writing because of the sheer number of students/classes they had to cope with.

7. Another important aspect to writing in this study is the lack of integration in the teaching of writing skills. As a result of this, composition writing was taught as an 'isolated' event or exercise that is practised once or twice in a term, often separated from other forms of skills such as reading, speaking, paragraphing, identification and organization of ideas. This aspect has also been referred to earlier in Chapter Four. In any case, integrated teaching of writing ensures that there are many opportunities and easier ways to teach or reinforce the teaching of writing skills.

8. The issue of group/collaborative writing: It is accepted that composition writing, and by extension, writing generally is an interactive process. Also, collaborative learning theory points out that cooperative or group learning experiences tend to promote higher achievement than competitive and individualistic learning. Adeyemi (2004) confirmed this in her study of collaborative and individualized composition learning, and concluded that students performed better with the use of the cooperative strategy in teaching composition writing. This is because students benefit from other readers' input such as the teacher and other students.

9. However, assigning struggling students to complete group composition writing at home without proper monitoring or supervision, can only benefit the teacher, and disadvantage the students involved. Group work can only be beneficial in a writing class if the students are monitored, helped, or if they have developed the ability to write to start with, in which case they can contribute equally in the process. Otherwise, it will be a case of those who can write, writing for those who cannot. There are beneficial elements to collaborative activities in writing such as the sharing of ideas and giving feedback. However, when it results in some students writing for those who cannot write, or who do not have the ability to write effectively, it loses its purpose.

156

10. Large Class size: The class with the least number of students in my study had thirty eight (38) students. The other two had forty one (41) and forty two (42). Each of the three teachers had four of such classes to teach, otherwise they would be deemed as being under utilized by the authorities. Class size has always been a contentious issue in L2 language learning. Considering the difficulties of teaching writing effectively to a large class, this creates enormous challenges for the teachers of language. It is a major problem that needs to be addressed for effective writing and language instruction. In addition, large class size leads to congested classrooms as witnessed in this study. Classrooms that are congested do not allow for free movement that is required in writing lessons as well as in the group activities associated with the teaching of writing and other collaborative activities.

11. Frequency of composition writing and teaching: There was the instance of Teacher B who had not done any form of letter writing or composition writing with her class from January to May, when the study started. Eventually, she taught the single composition writing lesson that was observed. This was one of the problematic areas of the study, getting teachers to teach composition writing. It depended on individual teachers to teach whatever number she chose. This resulted in teaching writing in infrequent episodes, sometimes in not teaching it at all for a whole term.

12. The quality of student intakes from the primary education system. The study and its findings elicited questions about the quality of student intakes from the primary education system, judging from the level of competency exhibited in the students' writing efforts. The quality of primary school writing was referred to earlier through the studies done by some researchers. It is recalled that Arthur (1993) in one of his studies of the type of writing practice that Standard Six pupils received in two primary schools in Botswana, noted that most of the writing was confined to copying notes from the board. Other activities that he observed involved guided writing in which students did cloze exercises and sentence

157

completion. Apparently, not much has changed in the level of competence of primary school pupils in the type of writing they still do at that stage of their education. They seemed not to have gone beyond the sentence level. This is apart from the lack of adequate vocabulary to express their ideas, reflected in their writing at secondary school. This is an area that needs some monitoring and study.

5.7. RECOMMENDATIONS

This section is concerned with the recommendations from the findings and conclusions of the study. The recommendations are discussed in the subsections below. The purpose is to enhance the effective teaching and learning of English composition writing in Botswana schools:

5.7.1. Suggested Model of English Composition Writing

The teaching and learning of English as a second language poses many challenges, especially in composition writing, at the junior secondary level in Botswana. The need to explore various options and strategies to overcome the challenges is imperative. A combination of process and modeling approaches (process/modeling) is an option that is worth considering, not only in Botswana, but also in other settings with similar backgrounds or problems. This is because it has been argued that reading has an important role to play in effective writing. As already stated, it can be used as a support or scaffolding technique to help L2 learners in this context to develop their writing skills. It is believed that the vocabulary that students see in their readings usually manages to crop up in their writing and that combining reading with writing provides the writer with the rich potential of the language needed when the situation arises.

5.7.2. Large Class Size

There is need for the reduction of class size in the teaching of English and, by extension, Setswana. Silva (1993) states that writers bring with them, knowledge and experience of writing as well as knowledge of the limitations of their L1, into the learning of L2. This means that some of the difficulties students have may have emanated from the difficulties of their lack of knowledge of writing in the L1. It is believed that reduction in class size will aid effective language instruction as teachers will be left with manageable numbers of students that will facilitate effective instruction. Besides, language teaching advocates have always argued for the reduction of class size. Besson-Molosiwa (1990) in her study alluded to this.

5.7.3. Library Facilities

An examination of the library facilities in the school studied indicated very scanty resources for the teachers and the students. There were no resource books on writing for the teachers, neither were there enough books for students' use. Library facilities and adequate resources will result in the development of reading skills which will aid students' acquisition of vocabulary and expressions in English. This will enable them to cope with their writing tasks. After all, the junior secondary English Syllabus (Republic of Botswana, 1996) emphasizes extended reading in the development of students' language skills, including writing. Many of the students lack reading facilities outside the school environment. Furthermore, research findings suggest that exposure to reading matter is a determining factor in students' success in general, and in writing tasks in particular. Many students come from homes in which the printed word is a luxury. Malefo (1986) states that, in most homes the only literature available is the child's school books, if there are any books at all. Also, Pretorius (1995) suggests a strategy where students are flooded with books in an effort to improve their writing abilities. Consequently, it is only fair that school libraries should be well equipped to offer effective service to learners. Further, the business of equipping libraries should not be left

to school organizations alone, but should involve the government since the schools and their governing bodies seem to be unable to cope.

5.7.4. Resources for Teaching Writing

The prescribed English Course Books at the junior secondary levels (*English in Action Books,* 1, 2 and 3), should be reviewed to incorporate detailed writing instruction pertaining to extended writing, considering the peculiar problems of ESL writing. Moreover, teachers should be made aware of the available resources including creative writing available on line and in the libraries and bookshops. Furthermore, there is abundant material in the areas of research in writing instruction that teachers can use to improve their skills. Teachers should be involved in the selection of textbooks for students' use, unlike at present where officials from outside the teaching play a major role.

5.7.5. Curriculum Improvement in English

The Junior Secondary English Syllabus (Republic of Botswana, 1996) which is in use needs to be revised. Even though it emphasizes the communicative approach in the teaching of language, it does not specify methods to be used. It assumes that teachers will be innovative as they perform their functions. This stance leaves much to chance in the classrooms. Moreover, the language assessment criteria are not development oriented, product oriented. It does not assess work in progress, but the end result. In addition, as pointed out earlier, the JC final examination does not consider the process when evaluating the writing competence of students at the level of terminal examinations. It only considers the end product of writing. This explains why teachers attach little importance to the failure of their students to   develop of writing skills.

It might be worthwhile to consider this aspect of evaluation at the junior level of students' writing skills development. It does not help to assume that students have developed or matured enough in their writing skill to judge them solely by the end product. This is a thought worth considering in language instruction especially in the L2 settings. The Department of Curriculum Development of the Ministry of Education needs to review the syllabus for English language teaching to incorporate the suggestion alluded to. This will improve the teaching of composition writing as a process.

5.7.6. Workshop and Refresher Courses

In-service workshops and seminars need to be periodically organized to update teachers on current developments in writing instruction. It was revealed that there were teachers who had taught for up to ten years and yet they had never attended any workshops or seminars on English composition writing. The issue of students' inability to write effectively is known in educational circles and the Ministry of Education, and it is only fair that refresher courses through seminars and workshops should be organized to create awareness about government education policies and current practices. Taking it for granted that teachers will know what to do about their areas of specialization, without frequent awareness measures, indicate laxity in handling important issues of education. Creating awareness of this nature will translate to the protection of government investment and resources in education. What is mostly happening in the field is that teachers are teaching writing in the same way that they themselves were taught, without regard to the knowledge of their training. It is possible that this trend is not limited to language teaching.

It is suggested that further research be conducted on this phenomenon in the future. On the same issue, there also seems to be a gap in collaboration between the schools and the academia on this score. There should be collaboration in research and the dissemination of information on new trends in educational practices that should be made available

through workshops and other measures. This is because all stakeholders stand to benefit from such a move. Yet, apparently, little is being done in this area.

5.7.7. Teacher Preparation in Language Teaching

The findings of this study have implications for teacher education. In preparing teachers to deal with language as well as other disciplines, it is important to sensitize and make them understand that they should be open to several possibilities in pedagogy and that they should be creative in their choices. It is also important to make them aware that the new thinking in instruction is the realization that no-one approach is considered absolute. Sometimes situations encountered in the field may call for changes in tactics and orientation. The best elements in any approach or methods can be combined to achieve positive results. What counts in the long run should be the interest of the students. There should also be a greater level of collaboration between teacher training institutions and the schools, to the extent that from time to time, specialists can cooperate in providing resources for in-service teachers on new trends and orientations in language teaching and learning.

5.7.8. Remedial Teaching of Writing

It is desirable that remedial teaching of writing be encouraged as an interim measure. The students' deficiencies speak for themselves. As at the time of the study, no such mechanisms existed in the three participating schools. Limiting class size as suggested might facilitate the take-off of such measures.

5.7.9. Portfolio Assessment in Writing:

The possibility of portfolio assessment of students writing should be explored in the assessment. It is important that teachers put in place measures to monitor their students' progress in such a way that composition writing at this crucial stage of development is not compromised. This will stop the general impatience that teachers show in the area of students' writing skill development. Work in progress as well as work completed can be recorded for the individual student to motivate them to put even greater effort. In addition, there should be a monitoring system to ensure that teachers deal with all aspects of what they are supposed to teach, and not leave an important area of skills development.

5.7.10.   Teaching of writing across the curriculum

Halliday, Mcintosh and Stevens (1968) suggest that all teachers need to have an explicit knowledge of linguistics. They argue that such knowledge is essential since it is capable of helping teachers deal with some of the difficulties that may be encountered in the teaching and learning situations. It is believed that an explicit knowledge of linguistics can help them develop pedagogical principles that will make their teaching more effective. This view underlines the argument of this paper, that considering the importance of English as a medium of instruction in our schools, its teaching should be reinforced in all disciplines and content areas across the curriculum. This is necessary because of the importance attached to the learning of the language as a medium of instruction in the country's education system as well as its use as a service subject in content areas. Again, it is suggested that composition writing be taught as part of creative writing that is receiving very little attention at present. The skills of composition writing and creative writing skills are complementary and should be accorded importance in the curriculum. The neglect of one definitely affects the other. This is also an aspect that needs to be looked into by curriculum developers.

5.7.11.   Integrated Teaching of Writing

It is suggested that composition writing be taught in an integrated way to avoid the negativity that is aroused in both teachers and students on the mere mentioning of the exercise. Because of this, teachers must handle composition writing through the medium of what students love the most. A character sketch of their hero or heroine can be used to develop the students' own theme of their favourite person. An exercise in reading comprehension on paragraphing can be developed into extended writing or composition in another lesson. To this end, I recommend that composition writing in different forms and length should be incorporated into the teaching of writing such as note-taking, summary writing, creative writing and other skills in language across the content areas. The separate labeling or entity of composition writing in the curriculum should be eliminated. Thus a particular extended writing exercise can be incorporated into summary writing, paragraph development, description of a character in literature, and story writing within language learning or in content areas such as social studies and moral education. Equally, topics in other subjects would provide context and exposure or prior knowledge to help develop students' writing skills.

5.7.12.   Teacher methods and attitude

Teacher attitude is an important factor in the way students' visualize writing in general and composition writing in particular. Teacher interest, tolerance, innovativeness, competency in subject matter will help to sustain students' interest. When a teacher's disposition at the onset is devoid of enthusiasm and interest, it becomes contagious and easily affects the students. At present, teachers reluctantly deal with composition writing just to satisfy the motions, their action lacks enthusiasm.

In addition, teachers should make students feel special for whatever progress they make in the writing. For example, they should praise students for a good point made that could be expanded, or a suggestion or point of view that they express. On no account should students be ridiculed or made to feel like a laughing stock in any lesson. The role of the teacher as a facilitator should be maintained. It was perceived through this study that there is a need for teachers to change their in order to create an enabling atmosphere to motivate students and make them feel comfortable with themselves and their ability to learn writing. To do this, teachers should have to be creative and flexible in their methods.

5.7.13. Parental Support

Parents are also stake holders in the educational development of their wards. It is important that they support and complement the teachers' efforts in the education of their children. Parents can offer this support where possible by checking their children's school work, helping them to study at home and monitoring the amount of television they watch. Where parents are not educated enough to do this, they can buy their children books, magazines and newspapers to read and try to listen as they read and interpret what they have read to them. There are other forms of support which they can give. For example, they can encourage their children by buying them writing materials such as note books and diaries if the schools are unable to supply them. It is important that parents invest in their children's education, morally and financially.

5.7.14. Gap between Government Policy and Practice

The examination at the end of the three-year junior secondary course does not take into account the process approach that communicative language teaching entails. Students are based on the final product of writing at the end of the three-year course in the junior secondary school (JC) examinations. As a result teachers feel they are not obliged to

pursue the process course. Maybe, if a planning and outlining element is infused into the writing of Paper Two (Composition Writing), and allotted equal marks with the final product, teachers may be motivated to attach the much needed importance to writing instruction.

5.7.15.   Implications for Future Research

This research provides an insight in the teaching of composition writing in the Botswana context. An earlier study done by Mooko (1996) focused on the impact of guided peer feedback and guided self-assessment on the quality of English composition written by secondary school students in Botswana. Another investigation on English composition writing was conducted by the researcher on the relative effectiveness of the individualized and the cooperative learning approaches in teaching composition writing. This study is a step further in the investigation of approaches to teaching composition writing in junior secondary schools. The present attempt was to get to the root of the persistent difficulties of teaching and learning composition writing in Botswana junior secondary schools and provide knowledge on a possibly workable model or strategy for teaching writing in general and composition writing in particular. Furthermore, it was found that the learners in this context lacked the basic skills of language including the use of correct tense, spelling rules, agreement between a subject and predicate and simple sentence structure. This gives rise to questions about the type of English language instruction and writing skills development that students receive at the primary level. It is, therefore, recommended that in future, an investigation of effective methods of teaching writing at foundation phases (primary school level), that would serve as the basis of excellent/good creative writing at secondary school and further, be undertaken. This is in an attempt to come up with effective ways of teaching and helping students to develop competence in writing skills. This will reverse the current situation, where students lack the basic skills to write even a short paragraph.

Finally, it is suggested that the development of creative writing be accorded prime of place at both the primary and secondary school levels because of its ability to enhance expression and thought that are beneficial in developing writing skills. The present system leaves much of this aspect to chance and the teachers' discretion.

5.8.   SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The background to this study was discussed by describing the context, the problem statement and the rationale for the investigation. The methods of research and important concepts were highlighted, and literature germane to the study reviewed. The classroom practices and approaches used to impart the skill of composition writing to students at the junior secondary school level in Botswana were examined and evaluated.

Again, the impacts of the use of the approach/es on the learners' performance, as well as the challenges posed as a result, were identified. Based on the findings and the conclusion that the current methods utilized by the teachers have failed to improve the students' writing skills, a model that will help to improve and minimize the difficulties of the teaching and learning of writing at the level identified, was suggested. The process/modeling approach to writing and by extension creative writing, is proposed as a better alternative to the mainly product orientation of the teachers' methods.

In conclusion, it is the researcher's submission that the teaching and learning of English as a second language poses many challenges, especially in composition writing at the junior secondary school level in Botswana. The need to explore various options and strategies to overcome the challenges is imperative. A combination of the process and modeling approach is an option that is worthy of consideration, not only in Botswana, but also in other settings with similar backgrounds or problems in writing instruction.

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APPENDICES - Research Protocols

APPENDIX A: OBSERVATION GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR STUDENTS

APPENDIX D: MARKING RUBRIC FOR EXAMINING STUDENTS' WRITTEN WORK

Appendix A - Observation Guide for Teachers

Task:

Topic: -

Time: -

Class: -

No. of Students:

Teacher: -

Expectation/Objective:

1. Introduction: (What do I see? How is the lesson introduced?)

2. Development:

COMPOSITION WRITING PROCEDURE NOTES

a) Being motivated to write: (PRE WRITING STAGE)

b) WHILE WRITING /COMPOSING STAGE

Planning and outlining

c) POST WRITING STAGE: i) revising, re-planning, redrafting and editing

ii) Feedback

iii) Publishing

3. Learner Centred Activities observed: -

4. Use of writing checklists/Teaching Aids: -

5. Classroom Organization: -

Appendix B - Interview Guide for Teachers

1. Qualification: Diploma in Education -------   Degree -----

2. Area/areas of Specialization ----------------------------

3. Years of teaching experience ------------------

4. Motivation for specialization in English:

5. How many classes of English do you teach?

6. Which aspects of English do you enjoy teaching?   Why?

7. Which aspect of English do you least prefer to teach? Why?

8. What type of support do you get from your colleagues or the school administration in teaching English composition writing?

9. How often do your students go to the library in your attempt to enhance their writing ability?

10. Do you make your students do book reports on the books they have read at the library or elsewhere? Explain.

11. Have you attended any workshops/seminars on English composition writing recently or in the past as a teacher?

12. How do you choose composition topics for students to write on?

13. Do your students have problems in composition writing?

14. What do you think these problems are?

15. What are the most common errors students make in composition writing?

16. What procedure/approach do you use in teaching composition writing in the class?

17. How do you give feedback to students on their work?

18. How long does a composition writing lesson take

19. What are the major difficulties/challenges you encounter in the teaching of composition writing to students?

Appendix C - Interview Guide for Students

1 Gender: -   Male   Female

2. What languages do you speak at home?

3. In what grade did you pass your PSLE?

4. What symbol/grade did you get in English in PSLE?

5. Which aspects of English do you enjoy learning and why?

7. Which aspect of English do you least enjoy learning and why?

8. Do you read books on English composition writing at the school library?

9. Do you have a notebook or journal for recording stories or notes about books that you have read at the library or elsewhere? Why?

10. How often does your teacher make you write English composition in class in a term?

11. Describe what you do when writing English composition in class.

12. What does your teacher do in class to help you when you write compositions? Mention all of the activities.

14. What type of feedback do you get from your teacher after your composition is marked?

15. What other problems do you have with English composition writing?

Appendix D - Marking Rubric for Examining Students' Written Work

The following marking rubric was used by the researcher and the subject teacher to check the students' written composition:

- *Communication/Content – Overall impression/relevance/own details and fluency;*

- *Organization –Overall ordering of information logically; paragraphing, sequence of ideas in relation to the topic, layout of introduction, body and conclusion;*

- *Grammar – Demonstrates knowledge of verb usage, tense consistency, subject, verb agreement, etc).*

- *Mechanics – Demonstrates knowledge of using language conventions such as spelling, punctuation and use of capital letters.*

The above reflects the main features of the Botswana Ministry of Education's marking rubric for Junior Secondary composition marking/grading shown below:

Composition Marking Rubric

	Symbol	Max. Marks	Very Good	Above Average	Average	Below Av.	Poor
Communication: Overall impression/relevance/own detail/appropriate use of vocabulary/fluency	C	14	14-12	11-9	8-7	6-5	4-0
Grammar: Knowledge of using parts of speech; tense consistency; subject/verb agreement etc.	G	14	14-12	11-9	8-7	6-5	4-0
Mechanics: Spelling/Punctuation	M	6	6-5	4	3	2	1-0
Organization: Paragraphing, sequence of ideas and information, introduction, body and conclusion.	O	6	6-5	4	3	2	1-0
Totals		40	40-34	30-26	22-20	16-14	10-0

As stated earlier, the researcher and the participating teachers used the above marking rubric to examine the first and final drafts of compositions written by the students. This is because it is a standardized score sheet used by teachers and authorized by the Botswana Ministry of Education. Furthermore, it is a rubric that the participating teachers are familiar with, and which it is hoped, will reduce the incidence of bias. However, in examining students' artifacts, emphasis was placed on grading their written work qualitatively, rather than on quantitative or number grades.