Teaching Writing in Theory and Practice

A Study of Ways of Working with Writing in the

9th Grade

Emelie Ahlsén and Nathalie Lundh

LÄRARHÖGSKOLAN · STOCKHOLM

Teaching Writing in Theory and Practice

A Study of Ways of Working with Writing in the 9th Grade

Emelie Ahlsén and Nathalie Lundh

Abstract

The main purpose of this study is to take a closer look at how teachers work with writing and to examine some theories on the teaching of writing. Five teachers in two schools are included in order to get an insight in teachers' practical work with EFL writing. This has been done through classroom observations and interviews. The results show that all teachers seem to use aspects from several theories. The results also show that the teachers' level of awareness of theories on teaching writing varies.

Keywords

Compulsory school, EFL (English as a Foreign Language), Genre Writing, Process Writing Writing assignments, Writing theory

Table of Contents

Table of Appendices

1. Introduction

We are two students, Emelie Ahlsén and Nathalie Lundh, studying the advanced course in English with educational application, including degree project, at the Stockholm Institute of Education. During the introductory seminar for the C-essay and Field Studies course, the two of us had a conversation about our experiences from English[1] language classrooms, both from our own school years and from our Field Studies. We have experienced that many teachers use a rather monotonous way of working with writing. Students are often left on their own with a blank piece of paper and a pencil without many guidelines, inspiration or a defined purpose. Sadly, the writing assignments we remember from compulsory school are book reports, papers on holiday-memories and story-writing. Neither do we remember being presented with a purpose for the given assignments. This is also acknowledged by Hedge who refers to Jerre Parquette's article "The daily record", where a student comments on writing in school: "In school we write… not to anyone…we just give information. Not to someone… we just write information down on paper" (2005: 20).

Our hope is that there are other, more creative, ways of working with writing where students learn to understand and appreciate varied forms of writing and the purpose of these. This has triggered us to conduct this study.

Brown brings up the complexity of teaching writing: "Just as there are non-swimmers, poor swimmers and excellent swimmers, so it is for writers. Why isn't everyone an excellent writer?" (2001:334) This is a relevant question for us to ask since we hope to meet ways of working with writing that can take the poor writers to the next level; the opposite to some of our experiences of writing in school that has restrained students' development in writing.

---

[1] There are two contexts that English teaching can appear in, except teaching it to native speakers of English; English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL). ESL is taught to students "who are living in the target language community and need English to function in that community on a day-to-day basis", while EFL is taught to students from/in communities where English is not spoken (Harmer, 2004:39). The difference is further discussed by Brown, who states that in the ESL classroom, "the target language is readily out there", and that students in the EFL classroom "do not have ready made contexts for communication outside the classroom" (2001: 116).

We have chosen to regard the English language classrooms in Sweden to be EFL classrooms, but since English appears a lot in media in Sweden today (2007), we have not fully excluded ESL theories.

The focus of this study is the teaching of writing in EFL Classrooms at the senior level of compulsory school[2], 9th grade. Our research data has been collected at two schools, through interviews with teachers and observations in classrooms.

This essay is divided into different chapters: introduction, purpose, research questions, theoretical perspectives/review of literature, methods, results, analysis and discussion. The disposition of this essay is based on Hartman's guide for writing essays and reports (2005).

The essay has been written by the two of us together. However, Nathalie has focused more on the research of Process Writing whilst Emelie has been responsible for Genre Writing. We have composed the text together in order to create a sense of one voice. Regarding the typing we took turns and Emelie has been responsible for the layout. We have had responsibility for one school each regarding contacts with the principals and teachers. In the chapter 'theoretical perspectives and review of literature' we open up by presenting some general aspects on teaching writing. Further, we present two theories that we have found to be dominating the reviewed literature. In the methods chapter we present the structure and theory for the research methods that we have chosen to use (observations and interviews). We also introduce our informants in this chapter. Moreover, we present and summarize the results of our conducted research and move on by analysing it. Finally, we reflect and bring up some discussion points regarding our study.

---

[2] Definition translated from Swedish word "högstadium" in Nordstedts Stora Engelska Ordbok, computer version "WordFinder".

2. Purpose

The main purpose of this study is to look at how teachers work with writing in two Swedish EFL classrooms, 9th grade of compulsory school[3]. Are there traces of theory in their teaching of writing? By conducting this study we hope to gain a more optimistic view of how teachers are working with writing. We hope to meet teachers that use a wide range of purposeful assignments. Moreover, we hope to get in touch with some theories for working with writing that could be of use in our future practice as teachers.

3. Research Questions

I: How do teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) work with writing in the 9th grade?

II: To what extent can one find traces of Process Writing and/or Genre Writing in EFL-teachers' work with writing?

III: What are EFL teachers' views on these two theories for teaching writing?

4. Theoretical Perspectives and Review of Literature

Our study strives to find out how EFL-teachers work with writing and to find out whether they base there teaching on theory. When revising and consulting current literature about writing pedagogy we found that two theories seem to be dominating: the process approach to teaching writing and the genre approach to teaching writing. Considering this, the theory of Process Writing and the theory of Genre Writing will form the basis of our theoretical perspectives; hence we will separately present each theory followed by a chapter on how these theories might conflict and/or supplement each other. However, before putting the magnifying glass on each theory we have chosen to look at aspects of teaching writing generally. We will also look at writing as a

---

[3] The Compulsory School in Sweden: you are obliged to attend school from the age of seven to the age of 16, which involves nine grades (years). The senior level includes grade 7-9. (Skollagen chapter 3 §7 and §10)

social and cultural phenomenon as well as briefly highlight writing as a cognitive activity.

4.1 Teaching Writing

"A simplistic view of writing would assume that written language is simply the graphic representation of spoken language…" (Brown, 2001:335). Writing is more complex than this; hence writing pedagogy is important, as Brown states by claiming that writing is "as different from speaking as swimming is from walking" (2001:335).
This is supported and developed by Hedge, who states that writing is more than producing accurate and complete sentences and phrases. She states that writing is about guiding students to: "produce whole pieces of communication, to link and develop information, ideas, or arguments for a particular reader or a group of readers…" (2005:10). Therefore effective writing requires several things: a high degree of organization regarding the development and structuring of ideas, information and arguments. Furthermore, Hedge mentions features such as: a high degree of accuracy, complex grammar devices, a careful choice of vocabulary and sentence structures in order to create style, tone and information appropriate for the readers of one's written text (2005:7). All these points make the teaching of writing a complex matter, since all this should be taken into consideration for efficient learning of writing strategies.

Cushing Weigle looks at the writing ability from several perspectives. For instance, she views it as a social and cultural phenomenon and as a cognitive activity (2002:14). These two aspects are briefly presented below.

4.1.1 Writing as a social and cultural phenomenon

Our lives involve all kinds of writing. Notes on the fridge, journalistic writing, greeting cards, to mention a few – all fill the purpose of communicating and bringing messages across. This is one of the criteria for writing being a social and cultural phenomenon. Cushing Weigle refers to Hayes: "Writing is also social because it is a social artefact and is carried out in a social setting. What we write, how we write and who we write to is shaped by social convention and… …social interaction" (2002:19).
Something to bear in mind regarding the cultural aspect of teaching writing in the EFL classroom is that there could be cultural differences when it comes to structure and

discourse. As an example of this, Brown brings up Kaplan's study, which he sums up by claiming that learners of English have predispositions that come from their native languages, when it comes to structuring their writing (2001:338). Cushing Weigle brings up the same study as an example of writing as a cultural phenomenon (2002:20-21).

4.1.2 The cognitive aspect

Throughout the years, many researchers have suggested models for writing as processes of cognitive activities. What is going on mentally when a writer creates a piece of text, a paragraph? What are the thoughts?

Cushing Wiegle writes that research has been done in order to "gain insight into the mental activity and decision-making process of the writer as he or she carries out a writing task" (2002:22). Moreover, Cushing Weigle writes that this line of research shows that writers spend a lot of time planning and editing their work for both organization and content, as well as taking the audience into consideration (2002:22-23).

Strömquist refers to "Hayes-Flower model"[4] from 1981, *"A Cognitive Process Theory of Writing",* and writes that different stages that a writer goes through when writing is controlled by an over-arching factor; a component within the writer's writing ability, through which the different thought processes in the writing takes place (2007:32, own translation).

Brown connects writing and thinking in a very basic way: "Written products are often the result of thinking" (2001:335). In his chapter on teaching writing (2001:334-360) it is evident that it is this specific view-point that forms the basis for his principles for designing writing techniques. To mention a few, he brings up that it is important to "balance process and product", "account for cultural/literary backgrounds" and "provide as much authentic writing as possible" (2001:347).

---

[4] Expression used by Cushing Weigle (2002:24). We have chosen to use this expression when referring to this model.

4.2 The Process Approach

When working with Process writing the focus lies in the various steps that a writer goes through when producing text. Strömquist writes that traditional schooling of writing mainly has been focusing on the evaluation of error-less written products. Writing in terms of "psychological text producing processes" has, according to Strömquist, been a relatively untouched research area for many years. However, she claims that a lot of research has been conducted lately (2007:17-19, own translation).

Several literary sources about writing methodology that are used in this study (Cushing Weigle, Graham, Harmer, Hedge, Strömquist and Unger & Fleischman) bring up the Hayes-Flower model from 1981 "A Cognitive Process Theory of Writing" as a model that the theory of process writing has sprung from. The model was further developed and updated by Hayes in 1996. It is rather complex containing many components, therefore it is only the model's central ideas that are brought forward in this text. Unger and Fleischman choose to explain process writing by referring to Hayes and Flower in a quotation: "This approach emerged from researchers' study of the steps that accomplished writers engage in as they write: planning and organizing ideas, translating ideas into text and reviewing and revising the result" (2004: 90). Cushing Weigle writes that it is the individual that is the central focus in the Hayes-Flower model, not the task and that the individual parts of writing engage "interactions among four components: working memory, motivation and affect, cognitive processes and long-term memory" (2002:25). Cushing Weigle's claim that the Hayes-Flower model of process writing is based on first-language writing but that it suits second-language writing as well (2002:24).

Another author that has written about process writing, named Strömquist, explains that writing includes different phases that a writer must go through. She further writes that the level of awareness regarding when and how these phases occur can differ. It is this specific insight that forms the basis of the writing pedagogy that goes under the name; process writing (2007:20).

In order to explain process writing as a method for teaching writing in a more concrete and operative way, it is suitable to present some schemes for how to structure process writing (appendix 1). We have chosen to show three of these in order to point out that there are slightly different interpretations regarding terminology and activities. However, they are coherent when it comes to the main idea; writing is a process that goes through different stages/phases. Moreover, a general structure with pre-writing, drafting and revising, leading to a final product is true for them all. One of these schemes is written by Strömquist, who is Swedish, and it is therefore presented in both the original language and translated into English by us (Ahlsén & Lundh). The other two schemes are written by English-speaking authors (Hedge and Graham). Graham (2003) writes that process writing generally requires quite a lot of classroom time. Furthermore, he writes about the importance of feedback regarding process writing since "it takes a lot of time and effort…, and so it is only fair that the student's writing is responded to suitably" (www.teachingenglish.org.uk).

Strömquist claims that the process of writing is more complicated than a scheme with pedagogical steps, but from a didactical-pedagogical view it is meaningful to stick to the division of stages and phases (2007:33). One might think that the various stages of a writing process schemata flow into each other and that they can be difficult to treat as separate parts. Strömquist writes that the "arrows do not go in one direction - from pre-writing to revising", they move both ways which indicates a dynamic course of events (2007:32, own translation). A process oriented viewpoint when it comes to writing, sheds light on the complexity of writing (i.e. drafting, revising, reflecting). Strömquist expresses that process writing gives students the opportunity to use both expressive writing and to use writing as a tool for learning and thinking - "Let the students think with a pen in their hand" (2007:38). Strömquist further states that process writing is not solely a method, she writes that "engaging in teaching with process writing involves accepting an approach – a basic attitude towards writing in its own. Writing is perceived as a complicated and complex process and it is this specific insight that leaves traces in the teaching" (2007:41, own translation).

Hedge raises the question whether we can presuppose that "writing skills learnt in first language will transfer successfully to a second language?" (2005:55). She discusses that

EFL students are in need of linguistic assistance such as syntax and grammar but that they also need to learn how to organize their texts and ideas, "since conventions for this can differ from one language to another" (2005:55). Brown is another author that suggests process writing in the EFL classroom; in his chapter "Research on Second Language Writing", he mentions process writing as an efficient method in language teaching (2001:335-337).

4.3 The Genre Approach

Genre-based approaches to teaching writing started to appear in the late 1980s. The ideas started in Australia and are now prominent in English teaching in Australia, New Zealand and countries nearby. This approach-model is situated away from naturalistic ways of learning language, theory-wise. It is more of a functionalistic approach; "genre-based approaches to writing are based on a functional model of language; that is, a theoretical perspective that emphasises the social constructedness of language" (Knapp & Watkins, 2005:9). Text is seen as a social process (2005:13). This is further supported by Unger and Fleishman, who bring up a quote from Sperling and Freedman: "We now see writing not just as a process taking place inside an author's head, but as a collaborative act influenced by complex and interrelated social factors" (2004: 90).

This is an approach to teaching writing which focuses on creating authentic writing in school. Hyland writes that "Genre is a term for grouping texts together, representing how writers typically use language to respond to recurring situations" (2004:4). He explains that "Genre adherents argue that people don't just *write*, they write *something* to achieve some *purpose* (2004:5). The genre approach is more than just teaching writing in order to practice grammar or learning structure, it also focuses on context and audience. Hyland claims that "The concept of genre enables teachers to look beyond content, composing processes, and textual forms to see writing as an attempt to communicate with readers – to better understand the ways that language patterns are used to accomplish coherent, purposeful prose" (2004:5).

This point of view is supported by Knapp and Watkins, who write about the aim of this approach in terms of providing "students with the ability to use the codes of writing… effectively and efficiently. Without these codes the process of writing can be a

frustrating and unproductive process." (2005:17). These codes are the different genres; "processes such as describing and arguing…" (Knapp & Watkins, 2005:21).

The proponents of this theory often claim that genre-writing is the most efficient and modern way of teaching writing, since it creates awareness of both culture and ways of writing. The structure of a text is partly linked to the culture it is produced in; "…genre teaching as a means of helping learners to gain access to the dominant genres of our culture…" (Hyland, 2004:18). Besides this, the genre approach usually is presented with advantages such as being systematic, empowering and consciousness-raising.
It is systematic since it "incorporates both discourse and contextual aspects of language use" (Hyland, 2004:12) and makes the student aware of audience, textual variation and structuring of writing. The teaching is therefore "based on the ways language is actually used". It is not just a matter of training students in reproducing forms of texts, but offering students "a way of seeing how different texts are created in distinct and recognizable ways in terms of their purpose, audience and message" (Hyland, 2004:12),
The genre approach is empowering because it provides EFL learners with "knowledge of the typical patterns and possibilities of variation" and allows them to "gain access to the powerful genres of mainstream culture, revealing *why* writers make certain linguistic and rhetorical choices and *how* to use these genres effectively" (Hyland, 2005:14).
The consciousness-raising advantage of genre-writing is referred to by Hyland as follows: "genre approaches also have the potential for aiding students to reflect on and critique the ways that knowledge and information are organized and constructed in written English texts" (2004:15).

Knapp and Watkins are in line with this, and move on by talking about the 'Genre as Social Process-Model' (2005:24), developed by Kress, and very much in line with Cushing Weigle's view upon language as a social phenomenon. This model means that "forms of text (genres) are the result of processes of social production" and that "knowledge of the characteristics of texts and of their social place and power can and should form a part of any curriculum…" (2005:24). This is another way of using genre in the teaching of writing, more closely linked to process writing (presented in 4.2) than the genre-approach presented earlier in this chapter (this being a systemic-functional genre-approach).

4. 4 Comparing the Process- and the Genre Approach

The most evident difference between the two theories is the true focus of a writing task. As stated above, process writing focuses on the different stages of text-producing that a writer goes through whilst the genre approach is more focused on how and what to write in order to reach the intended reader. Hyland, as a spokesman of the genre approach, critiques the process approach for making learners focus on writing strategies more than focusing on different texts and language patterns (within English) (2004:8). Proponents for process writing, on the other hand, question the genre approach for its reproductive elements which impede students' creativity and self-expression. Presenting this argument, Hyland refers to Dixon who writes that "genres might be taught as molds into which content is poured, rather than ways of making meanings" (2004:19).

Another point of critique regarding process writing is of a more practical viewpoint; Graham (2003) claims that process writing is time consuming due to the focus on the various stages of text production (drafting and rewriting). He further writes that "students may also react negatively to reworking the same material" (www.teachingenglish.uk.org).

Hyland suggests that there is no need of a conflict; he even claims that the genre approach and the process approach "can usefully be seen as supplementing and rounding each other out" (2004:20). He explains this claim by saying that "Writing is a sociocognitive activity that involves skills in planning and drafting, as well as knowledge of language, contexts and audiences" (2004:20).

5. Research Methods

This study has been completed with a qualitative approach, which has allowed us to work with more than one data-collecting method. McDonough and McDonough contrast the qualitative method to normative research: "Whereas normative research requires a numerical evaluation, qualitative research usually gathers observations, interviews, field data records…" (1997:53). We have chosen to use interviews and classroom observations, complementing each other, in order to gather data. The reason for this is argued in chapter 5.2.

Cohen, Manion and Morrison mention Kurt Lewin's action research methodology (2007:297). McDonough and McDonough further interpret this phenomenon as: "a research methodology based on people's real-world experience that he (Lewin) felt experimental methods were unable to address" (1997:26). This is in line with our study because of its focus; observing real classroom-activities together with interviewing practicing teachers. According to McDonough and McDonough our study is "medium-scale research" and can therefore have use of more than one method (1997:222). As mentioned above, we will mix two research methods which are equally important for our analysis.

5.1 Informants

In this study we have included teachers practising in two schools of the senior level of compulsory school for our gathering of data. When planning the research for this study we chose to turn to the schools that we are involved in through our Field Studies-placements in the Teacher's Degree Program. McDonough and McDonough bring up the ethical dimension that requires confidentiality and privacy (1997:185) that is important when dealing with a qualitative study and personal data. Because of this, we have chosen to use fictive names for both our interviewees and the schools where they practice (see table 1).

School A is located in a municipality approximately 70 kilometres outside of Stockholm and school B is situated in a municipality close to Stockholm. Our study has a teacher focus and the informants differ in age and years of teaching. Moreover, we had the

opportunity to include one teacher with English as his mother tongue, which we found to be a resource considering our ambition of variation in informants.

Table 1: Participating teachers

Name	Age	Education	Teaching experience	Subjects certified for	School
Lena	33	4-9[5]	8 years	English/Swedish	A
Eva	61	4-9	25 years	English/Maths	A
Kalle	29	1-7 + 4-9	1 ½ years	English/Swedish	B
Ron	30	New Zeeland[6]	6 years	English/French	B
Mia	33	4-9	9 years	English/Swedish	B

The informants were involved in this study through our VFU-contact at each school, who asked the EFL teachers in the 9th grade if they were interested in participating in our study. The teachers presented in table 1 are the ones that agreed. We presented to them the main purpose of our study (looking at EFL writing) as well as explained their role in it, hence observing them during classroom-teaching and interviewing them. Originally we asked for three teachers from each school. Later on it turned out that one of the teachers in School A was not a certified teacher which led to the decision of excluding him from our study. The reason for this is the fact that he might lack a theoretical foundation and didactic competence – which we value as a crucial requirement in order to function as an interviewee in this study. This decision was supported by our tutor Lars-Åke Käll[7].

Due to time limitation we were not able to observe and follow our informants during a longer time-span – meaning: we were not able to wait around for writing assignments to occur. Instead we visited lessons where the informants specifically worked with writing assignments. We are aware of the fact that this might have influenced the informants' outlining of their lessons. However, we made sure that we did not give the informants any details about our study – they only knew that we were looking at EFL writing in general.

---

[5] Year 4-9 of Swedish Compulsory School.

[6] Interviewee educated in New Zealand; BA in Language with one year additional studies – Diploma in Teaching for age-group 12-18 years.

[7] Lars-Åke Käll, tutor of C-essays within the didactic field, HT2007, The Institute of Education, Stockholm.

5.2 Research Methods

5.2.1 Classroom Observation

Guidance and inspiration regarding this research method is collected from two literary sources on research methods for language teachers and language learning circumstances (McDonough & McDonough and Nunan).

5.2.1.1 Theory: Classroom Observation

Observation as a research method is quite complex; there is much to take into consideration and it requires much preparation. McDonough and McDonough use the words: "observation is multifaced" (1997:103). They illustrate this by presenting a brief overview of some of the key parameters for observation:

> "There are, then, at least three key parameters that need to be clarified. These are (1) the observer, (2) the goals of the observation, and (3) the procedures; in other words who? why? and how?, which will in turn be determined by the nature of the setting in which the observation is taken place". (1997:102)

For each of the three headings, McDonough and McDonough list a few possible starting points. For example; under 'observer' one can find course director, colleague and trainee. Under the heading 'goals' two examples are personal development and improvement in methodology. Finally, under the heading 'procedures' one can find checklists, notes, logs, audio recordings as examples of course of actions. The authors claim that having these starting points clear is a way of narrowing down and overlooking one's observation and the role of it (1997:103).

An important aspect of this study is that it is limited to five teachers in only two schools and this study can therefore only be regarded as an indication for what is going on with writing in the EFL classrooms in Swedish schools today. We have prepared a checklist (appendix 2) in order to have the same focus when observing the two different schools and their teachers. Nunan writes about such preparation as using a "systematic observation schedule" in order to "provide a sharper focus for our data collection" (1992:98).

He further states that there are many ways of organizing and designing a "systematic observation schedule" and highlights the model by Patrick Allen (1983):

> "One such sophisticated scheme is the Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT) ….The COLT consists of two parts. Part A focuses on the description of classroom, activities and consists of five major parts: the activity type, the participant organization, the content, the student modality, and the materials. Part B relates to communicative features..." (1992:97)

McDonough and McDonough also write about preparation before conducting observations and claim that it is necessary for finding patterns, clearing out important and specific events from the large collection of data. This can help and make it easier to interpret what has been observed (1997:111).

5.2.1.2 Procedure: Classroom Observations

Our observations were based on a systematic approach in order to use what McDonough and McDonough refer to as a preplanned 'systematic observation schedule' (1997:105). We designed a schedule which will be referred to as an "observation checklist" (appendix 2) in this study. Its structure and design is inspired by the main features of part A of the COLT scheme (Nunan 1992:99). Through the use of the observation checklist we were able to stay within the framework of the planned observation.

The observations were structured to focus on one writing assignment per teacher (appendix 4-8). In some cases this resulted in observing just one lesson and in other cases one assignment stretched over two lessons. We had planned beforehand that all the observed lessons were to have a focus on writing, which we had explained to the participating teachers. Hence, we asked them to invite us when they originally had planned to work with writing. Since the observations took place in the presence of students, we chose to introduce ourselves and our reason for visiting their lesson and made sure to emphasize that they were not the focus of our observation. While observing, we took notes within the framework of the observation-checklist. This way

we had the same focus although carrying out the observations in different schools. These notes were handwritten and therefore transcribed into a computer document for easier reading.

5.2.2 Interviews

McDonough and McDonough write about interviews in chapter 11: "asking questions" (1997:171-188). Here they define similarities and differences between questionnaires and interviews. They are both "rather specialized forms of conversation" (171). We considered questionnaires as a research method in this study, but decided that interviews were better for our purpose. The reason for this was that interviews are mentioned to be optimal in classroom research "to focus on a specific aspect of classroom life in detail" (181), which is exactly what this study is about.

5.2.2.1 Theory: Interviews

McDonough and McDonough write that "interviewing is a very basic research tool in social science" (1997:182) and explains further that there are different kinds of interviews to use in research; structured, semi-structured and unstructured. Cohen, Manion and Morrison present a different categorization, using Patton's (1980) interview types: Informal Conversational Interview, Interview Guide Approach, Standardized Open-ended Interviews and Closed Qualitative Interviews. (2007: 235)
The semi-structured interview allows for more flexibility than the structured one, but is easier to analyse than the unstructured interview. Therefore the semi-structured interview is our chosen method. Furthermore, using the terminology of Patton (1980; see above), this method is a mix of the Interview Guide Approach and the Standardized Open-ended Interviews. The questions in our interviews were designed and structured in advance although there was room for follow-up questions depending on the interviewee's answers (appendix 3).

McDonough and McDonough bring up some issues to consider when using interviews as a research method:
Ethics and Power; since interviews deal with personal data one has to take ethical questions into consideration, such as access, confidentiality and privacy.

Furthermore, there are questions of power to consider (such as age, experience, ranking and the interview-language). (1997:185)

Recording; three main reliable ways of recording an interview are referred to. One can do a "write-up" after the interview, record the interview on tape or take notes. The theory on the "write-up" is that "data written up within a few hours can best capture the meaning and the innuendo of ongoing conversation". The best forum for audio recording is mentioned to be language learner-interviews, because it captures details of the learners' speech as well as what they are interviewed about. The negative aspects are that a recorder "may be intrusive" and that the transcription of the data is very time-consuming. Taking notes during the interview is said to cause problems when it comes to the interviewer's focus and attention (1997:186).

5.2.2.2 Procedure: Interviews

For the interview part of this study we chose to work with semi-structured questions in order to collect data of a qualitative nature; explanations rather than yes- and no answers. Through this way of interviewing we hoped to have a rich collection of answers to analyse.

Regarding the recording of our interviews, we decided to take notes but as McDonough and McDonough state, this could disturb the interview (see 5.2.2.1) and therefore both of us participated in the interviews. One of us functioned as the interviewer and the other took notes. Considering interview-language, we asked each interviewee which language (s)he wanted to use; Swedish or English. In order to keep our summary of the interviews as accurate as possible, we sat down immediately after each interview and used the "write-up" technique; the answers were transcribed as accurately as possible into a computer document. It turned out that four out of five interviewees preferred to use Swedish as the interview-language, thus we have translated their answers into English (appendix 4-8).

Our pre-planned interview guide formed the basis of the interview, which lasted for approximately 40 minutes – however, the order of the questions was sometimes changed in order to keep the interview close to a natural conversation. It was clarified to the interviewees that all questions in the interview referred to their experiences from the EFL-classroom and to them as teachers of EFL. Where it felt needed we added follow-

up questions in order to clarify the original questions or to make sure that we had understood the answer correctly. Moreover, before asking question seven[8], the interviewer explained the two theories briefly in order to make sure that the interviewees had gained the knowledge they needed for answering the question.

6. Results

In this chapter we will present the data collected from the observations and interviews. We have divided this chapter by sorting the information under each informant's name as sub-chapters. The information given in the sub-chapters is a summary of the most relevant data for our study and the observation and interview are summarized separately in each sub-chapter. The results are summarized in coherent text since the tangible data consists of notes that were written down when conducting observations and interviews. These notes have been computer typed and the data collection in its whole can be found in Appendix 4 through 8 – one appendix per teacher.

6.1 Lena (Appendix 4)
6.1.1 Observation

Lena used this first lesson to work with a text in the textbook Wings. The text included a lot of descriptive language. Lena first instructed the class to read the text individually, in silence, and then she played a recording of the text. After this, she talked to the students about the text in terms of how the author had used language to describe people. She asked them to re-read the text, underlining words that could be of use when describing someone. The last part of the lesson was spent on discussing these words as a full-class activity and before leaving the classroom the students were asked to answer some questions about the text and its descriptive language as homework for the following lesson.

---

[8] Q7: Are you familiar with these theories: Process Writing and Genre Writing?

The second lesson was opened by Lena reminding her students of the work they did last time. Then she told them that they were going to write a personal description of their own during this forty-minute lesson. They were asked to consider what they had talked about regarding how people are described in the text, and to divide their text into paragraphs. For the rest of the lesson, Lena's students worked individually with their texts, sometimes asking each other or Lena for help with vocabulary. When asked, Lena encouraged her students to use the dictionaries as little as possible and try to use the words they knew already. She also sat down with some students that found this assignment hard and tried to help them by guiding them to use adjectives for rich descriptions. By the end of the lesson, all students handed in their texts.

6.1.2 Interview

Lena talks about the importance of teaching writing in the EFL classroom; she thinks that it is important to work a lot with writing in order to help the students write for different purposes and audiences. Moreover, she emphasizes the importance of pointing out the difference between spoken and written language.

Further, Lena explains that she presents all writing assignments within some kind of context. She wants her students to know from the start what she expects from them, and to have a clear purpose for their writing assignments. She mentions that her over-arching purpose most often is the practicing of one's writing tools and also to learn how to express oneself in a comprehensible and effective way. She says that this purpose is too wide to be presented for every single writing assignment. Instead she mentions 'smaller' purposes such as considering the implied reader, the structure of the writing or the different kinds of language used in different texts.

When it comes to the 'hands-on' writing assignments, Lena mentions writing factual texts, argumentative letters and articles, descriptions and essays to be found in the National Tests[9].

---

[9] Tests that all students in the 9th grade take in Swedish, English and Maths (www.skolverket.se)

Lena is familiar with Process Writing. She uses it in both her English and Swedish classrooms. She says that its biggest advantage is that it works well, and that the students can see their progress through it. According to her experience, students learn more about their own writing by using process writing. Although Lena claims that Process Writing requires too much time and energy in order to be used all the time. She has not heard of Genre Writing, but recognises the explanation of the theory in much that she does in her teaching of Swedish.

When creating writing assignments, Lena often uses the help of her colleagues. She likes the idea of working with English in theme-form, mixing it with other subjects. The reason for this is that she sees a need of reality-based assignments; the students need to see the use of what they are doing.

6.2 Eva (Appendix 5)

6.2.1 Observation

Eva started the lesson by a short introduction of the writing assignment. She asked the students to write a presentation of an organisation, and gave an example by referring to a page in the students' textbooks (Wings) about Greenpeace. There, the students were able to read a presentation and were given some guidelines of what to think about when writing such a text. It seemed as if it was an assignment of writing a factual text. After this, the students were asked to begin writing. They were free to choose whether they wanted to work by themselves or in small groups. The time limit was three forty-minute lessons. During the rest of the observed lesson Eva circulated in the class to make sure that all students had chosen a topic. At some points students asked for help with vocabulary, and every time Eva stated that the most important thing was that they should use English expressions, not just translate Swedish ones word by word. One group asked if they could interpret some lyrics instead of doing the given assignment. They wanted to do it orally. Eva agreed to this and explained this to the observer by referring to her teaching philosophy; encourage the students' creativity and their own ideas at all times. The assignment originally given did not seem to matter anymore.

6.2.2 Interview

Many times throughout the interview Eva comes back to what she finds to be the most important thing when it comes to teaching writing; she wants her students to find the fun in writing and she strives to stimulate their imagination through her assignments. She believes that writing in the 9th grade should be free and that the most important thing for the students is to learn how to use their best English, with as few Swedish expressions as possible. Eva mentions that she presents writing assignments by giving the students short instructions for each assignment. She writes them down on the white-board and gives examples from the textbook. She explains that she does not want to give too many instructions because then the students might focus too much on what the purpose is. To Eva the most important thing in teaching writing is that the students find the 'flow' in their writing. The structure and the grammar come later, according to Eva.

The actual writing assignments that Eva uses are varied: essays, retelling stories, descriptions and presentations are some of the activities that she mentions. She wants the assignment to have a multiple purpose; on the one hand it should give the students the opportunity to practice their grammar and vocabulary, and on the other hand it should give opportunities to self-reflection and self-awareness. Whatever the assignment is, Eva believes that it is important to present it within some kind of a context. Sometimes she shows a film, and other times the class reads a text before starting the writing, in order to create understanding for the assignment among the students.

When asked about theories, Eva makes it clear that she does not believe much in theories. She mentions that she has heard of process writing, but that she would not like to use it herself. She has not heard of genre writing before, and when the interviewer explains the theory to her, she says that she might use it if she was to teach English at Upper Secondary School and that she feels that it will be too early to introduce it in 9th grade. She comes back to her earlier claim that writing should be free and adds that one should not provide students with too narrow frames in writing assignments. She believes in the students' inner strength and creativity rather than sticking to frameworks and reproducing sample texts. Eva says that all assignments are good for the students, as long as they have fun.

6.3 Kalle (Appendix 6)

6.3.1 Observation

For a period of one week, Kalle and his class had been working with the death penalty as a topic. During the previous lesson Kalle had told his students that they should dedicate the two following lessons to writing argumentative essays. He had told the students to prepare for this by bringing newspaper articles they had read.

The first lesson that we observed was opened by Kalle announcing that this lesson and the next they would write an argumentative essay in which they would take a standpoint and argue either for or against death penalty. Kalle went through some formalities such as, page limit, computer typing and time limit and he responded to questions raised by the students. He continued by handing out a Study Guide which consisted of two pages. On one of the pages it said 'Sequence of work'. Here, the students could read guidelines regarding how to structure their argumentative essays. The second page of the Study Guide showed a sample essay of an argumentative essay. Kalle moved ahead by going through the Study Guide and the 'sequence of work', part by part. While reading out from the Study Guide, Kalle also used the whiteboard where he sketched a disposition. He clarified the use of arguments in order to prove a thesis. Some students expressed that they found it difficult to understand what a thesis was and Kalle had the students look at the sample essay and explained what a thesis statement was by referring to the sample essay. When Kalle had gone through the Study Guide together with the class he instructed the students to use the rest of the lesson to make a draft, using the Study Guide, the sample essay and their articles on the death penalty. The students engaged in their drafting together with Kalle's coaching. He ended the lesson by collecting the drafts.

The following lesson, Kalle had booked the computer room in order for the students to have access to word processing software when they felt ready to start writing their final drafts. He opened the lesson by letting the class ask questions they might have from the previous lesson. While handing back the students' drafts, Kalle instructed them to continue their drafting until they felt ready to start writing the final version on the computer. The lesson went on with the students working individually, both using the computer or drafting with a pen and paper, while Kalle walked around helping the students that needed assistance. Dictionaries were allowed and the students were also allowed to consult their drafts and their articles on the death penalty while writing.

6.3.2 Interview

Kalle speaks of today's society and the important role of written communication. He stresses the ability to express oneself through written language for different purposes. Kalle believes that there are different kinds of writing that we learn in school. He separates essay writing and chronicles from fairytales and poems in terms of structure and content.

Kalle explains that he usually works with themes or topics in his English classes and for each topic he tries to fit in: reading, listening, speaking and writing. He finds that the textbook Wings that they use in class has a lot of interesting subjects to write about and he tends to use the textbook's writing assignments quite a lot. However, sometimes he comes up with his own ideas for writing assignments.

Since the writing assignments are linked to a theme or a topic they are working with, Kalle makes sure that, before introducing the actual writing assignment, each student brings to class whatever material or information they have from previous lessons regarding the topic. "Through this, they have a bank of information and inspiration to use in their writing", Kalle explains. Further, he presents the assignment and shows a sample essay that is structured in a way that Kalle wants his class to learn from. Sometimes they go through the grading criteria before they start writing. The writing always takes place in the classroom since Kalle wants to eliminate plagiarism.

Kalle lists argumentative essays, book-reports and topics from old National Tests as some of the writing assignments that his class has worked with. He explains the writing procedure as follows: "I have them write a sketch or a draft in class which I collect, go through and give feedback to. Next time we meet, we go through the feedback and corrections". Without revealing the author, Kalle usually reads out a few of the students' texts to explain what each grading level requires. The following lesson the final writing takes place before the essay is handed in.

Kalle is not familiar with process writing and genre writing. He briefly remembers the term process writing from his teacher training but he cannot quite recall what it is.

When the theories are briefly explained to Kalle, he expresses that "It sounds like I have some process writing in my way of teaching writing, but I do value the actual product as well". He further emphasizes the importance of outlining and drafting. Moreover, Kalle believes in providing students with a certain framework when he hands out assignments, frames such as clear instructions, sample essays and grading guidelines.

6.4 Ron (Appendix 7)

6.4.1 Observation

Ron opened the first lesson by introducing the lesson's topic; looking at tools to use when writing stories with a rich language - tools such as figurative language and metaphors. He called this 'creative writing' and moved on by showing examples from the students' textbook and further asked them to do a few excersises from the book to practice and learn about the use of metaphors, similes and imagery. Ron moved on by passing out a hand-out with the heading 'Creative Writing: choose one of the following topics to write about'. On this hand-out, the students were given four themes for stories to write about. The students engaged in their individual writing for the rest of the lesson.

The second lesson on creative writing began by Ron emphasising figurative language as a useful tool in creative writing. He quickly summarised the content of the former lesson while distributing a hand-out with three instructions together with an example-essay written by a student during the former lesson. The first instruction was to read the student text. The second instruction was to "identify imagery" in this essay and evaluate it. The final instruction was to write one's own ending of the story, using figurative language. It was an individual task but the students were allowed and recommended to use the course literature and their fellow students for help and inspiration. The rest of the lesson was spent on this task.

6.4.2 Interview

Ron emphasises two aspects of writing that he believes are important to teach to students. On the one hand, he sees a functional and formal aspect of writing where the focus is writing for a certain purpose using different structures. On the other hand, there is expressive writing where Ron wants the students to learn how to feel comfortable when conveying their inner thoughts and ideas through writing.

The Internet is a resource to Ron, both when he is looking for information and when he is searching for information on writing structures and different dispositions. When it comes to working with different writing assignments, Ron brings up informative writing, argumentative writing and creative writing as examples. Ron explains that when he introduces new writing assignments he usually starts out by giving his students hands-on instructions, or tools and codes as he calls them. He moves on by explaining what his goal in teaching writing is: learning how to analyse texts. He claims that if one provides students with analytical tools and codes for analysing text they are likely to use them in their own writing. When asked to explain these tools and codes, Ron starts by explaining that first one can analyse texts in order to raise awareness of different text types (short stories, plays, poems etc.). The second analytical tool is to understand that texts can show different points of views and have different audiences. Further, one can look at codes in the language, such as the use of vocabulary and imagery. The actual writing usually takes place in the classroom.

Ron is familiar with the theory of process writing and has picked up a few things that he explicitly uses in his teaching of writing. He asks his students to write drafts to hand in for his feedback, in order to later revise and write a final version. Ron is not familiar with the theory of genre writing.

6.5 Mia (Appendix 8)
6.5.1 Observation

When the students entered Mia's classroom the lights were switched off and she asked her students to enter the room silently, take off their jackets and sit down and wait for her instructions. Mia had placed a pen and two sheets of paper on each table. She told her students that they were not allowed to speak to each other or ask any questions. They were only allowed to listen to her and follow her instructions. Mia placed a picture

on the overhead and she instructed the class to closely look at the picture silently. It was an authentic picture from the Warsaw ghetto during the Second World War - a picture of children playing in a very sad surrounding and with a child lying dead in the corner of the picture. After a couple of minutes she told her students to take one of the two pieces of paper and divide it into three columns. Further, Mia told them to write a heading for each column. The first column should say; *what do you see in the picture*, the heading for the second column; *what do you hear when looking at the picture* and the heading for the third column; *what do you feel when you look at the picture*. She moved on by instructing them to answer the questions at their own pace while looking at the picture. The students began to put down words and phrases in their columns.

After approximately 15 minutes, Mia switched on the lights with the picture still on display. Then she asked the students to take the other (empty) sheet of paper and she told them that on this they were supposed to write a poem that would go with the picture on the overhead. Further, she told them that the sheet with the columns, which they had just filled in, could work as a source of words and phrases that they could use in their poem. During the rest of the lesson the students wrote their poems individually while Mia walked around helping the students that asked for help. Mia explained that the following lesson would be dedicated to reading English poetry and that this lesson served the purpose of showing the students that poetry is not necessarily difficult to write or read.

6.5.2 Interview

Mia speaks about the ability to communicate and reach out to others through writing. She speaks about writing as a means of expression, where reflection and inner thoughts are central. She weighs this against formal writing; articles, essays where the importance lies in structure. Mia enjoys brainstorming with colleagues when it comes to planning what kind of formal writing to include. Guidelines regarding structure and content, she sometimes finds in textbooks and teaching aid material. Moving over to writing assignments of a more expressive and creative character, Mia explains that she can find inspiration for topics to write about from just about anywhere; TV, the radio while driving to school or from friends. Later, she sits down by her desk and structures her ideas and decides on what the actual written product should be and what the purpose

is. She emphasizes the importance of having a purpose for each assignment. From here, she decides on a pedagogic lesson plan.

Mia strongly believes in "providing students with as many ideas and information as possible before asking them to produce a text". Pre-writing activities such as looking at pictures, listening to music and mini-discussions are some examples of how Mia introduces writing assignments. Furthermore, she believes in being very clear when instructing her students and she shows them sample essays and gives them thorough guidelines.

Most of the writing takes place in Mia's classroom. It depends on the purpose of the assignment. If the purpose is to evaluate the quality of the students' writing – definitely in-class writing. When Mia's students are researching or writing answers to things that they have gone through in class, they can do it as homework.

Mia mentions poetry, creative/narrative writing, argumentative writing and informative writing as examples of different kinds of writing that she and her year nine students have worked with.

The theory of Process Writing is something that Mia has come across in her other subject, which is Swedish. She is familiar with this method of teaching writing and she explains that she appreciates parts of it. As mentioned earlier, Mia sees a great value in pre-writing activities and throughout the writing lessons Mia uses "pit-stops", as she calls them. During the "pit-stops", the students momentarily stop their writing in order to go through what they have accomplished and to check what they might have missed out on as well as helping each other. However, Mia highlights that it is not the process and the pit-stops that she evaluates or grade, it is the actual written product that is of interest to her. She exemplifies it as follows: "A student makes a beautiful chair with neatly done carpentry. Still, he fails the assignment since I asked for a stool, not a chair".

Mia explains that she is not too keen on Process Writing, even though she states that she sees advantages with it. She describes that she believes in focusing on the actual product and working with the many styles and types of texts that are out there. When Genre

Writing is briefly introduced, Mia expresses that it sounds as something quite close to her way of teaching writing, where the focus lies in the product.

7. Analysis

In this chapter our ambition is to seek answers to our earlier stated research questions by linking the results of our study to the theoretical perspectives in the reviewed literature (chapter 4). The research questions are presented here again;

I: How do teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) work with writing with students in the 9th grade?

II: To what extent can one find traces of Process Writing and/or Genre Writing in EFL-teachers' work with writing?

III: What are EFL teachers' views on these two theories for teaching writing?

We have chosen to structure this analysis in two sub-chapters, corresponding with the research questions. Sub-chapter 7.1 deals with the first research question and 7.2 deals with research question II. We have chosen to include the results from research question III in 7.2.

7.1 Working with Writing

All teachers involved in this study seem to agree with Brown (4.1) when he states that written language is more complex than spoken language, hence they stress the importance of teaching writing in the EFL classroom. They seem to be in line with Hedge (4.1), who states that writing is about guiding students to "produce whole pieces of communication". So far, the five teachers appear to be in agreement, however one can trace differences in their views regarding the purpose of writing. The teacher that stands out the most is Eva, who takes a stand against structured writing assignments – she gives the students the freedom to work without frames and guidelines. The other four teachers clearly work with structured writing assignments that have a specified goal and that are presented with visible frames; the students are given tools and guidelines for how to structure their writing. This way of working with writing corresponds to

what Hedge calls "effective writing", meaning a high degree of organisation when it comes to developing and structuring ideas, information and arguments." (4.1)

Many of the writing assignments the teachers work with indicate that the teachers have an underlying thought of preparing students for future studies and work. Two examples of this are Kalle, who chooses to teach how to develop a thesis statement in an argumentative essay, and Lena, who clearly states in her interview that the students need a well-developed written language for their future careers. One can also see connections to writing being a social phenomenon which is brought up in chapter 4.1.1; learning how to write in order to bring messages across through understanding how to structure your writing. Another aspect of writing being a social phenomenon that we have observed in this study is that the teachers all want their students to write texts that are not solely connected to the classroom – their goal is real writing for real purposes. This seems to agree with Cushing Weigle (4.1.1), who refers to Hayes when stating that writing is a social artefact that is affected by a social setting, social conventions and social interaction. The majority of the writing assignments mentioned could be tasks that the students would have use of in a real social setting; for work or future studies.

As mentioned in 4.1.1, writing can also be seen as a cultural phenomenon. This is evident in Eva's urge to encourage her students to use proper English expressions and phrases – avoid translating Swedish expressions word by word. It is reasonable to assume that this is what Kaplan wants to point out in the study referred to by both Brown and Cushing Weigle (4.1.1), when he argues that learners of English bring with them certain dispositions from their native language into the EFL classroom, when it comes to the choice of words and the structuring of their writing.

Brown's way of connecting writing to thinking (4.1.2) is a simple way of describing writing as a cognitive activity, something that we can see traces of in Mia's poetry lesson. He further states that "written products are often the result of thinking" and since Mia deliberately has her students write down their thoughts that later form the basis of a written product, their actual thoughts being the written raw material.

When it comes to teaching writing, Brown claims that it is important to "balance process and product" (4.1.2). We have seen indications that the informants tend to lean towards one direction more than the other. These two sides reflect our two main theories on writing which will be analysed in 7.2.

7.2 Traces of Process Writing and Genre Writing

It is impossible to distinguish whether an observed writing assignment has sprung from either Process Writing or Genre Writing, or if it simply happens to resemble parts from these theories. Instead, we have found elements in the observations and interviews that one can trace to one or both of the two theories. Although these are our interpretations; we do not want to label either the informants or their assignments as belonging to one or the other theory.

Three of our informants, Lena, Kalle and Ron use methods that resemble Process Writing schemes (4.2 and appendix 1) in their teaching of writing. Kalle and Ron describe in their interviews that they usually ask their students to write drafts during class which they collect and read in order to give feedback so that the students can revise and rewrite their texts. Lena claims in her interview that Process Writing is useful for students since they get to see their progress and that they get to learn about their writing. On the other hand, she means that this method is very time consuming, which is in agreement with Graham (4.4) who critiques Process Writing for being too repetitive. Kalle is the one informant whose observed lessons show examples of certain parts of Process Writing; he asks his students to draft their essays in order to structure their ideas before writing their final versions on the computer. This is in line with Unger and Fleishman (4.2 and appendix 1) who refer two Hayes and Flower who describe that the Process approach is based on the steps that a writer is "…engaged in as they write: planning and organizing ideas, translating ideas into text and reviewing and revising the result".

The different schemes that present the working methods for Process Writing (4.2 and appendix 1) all share the same main idea: "that writing goes through different stages/phases". Mia uses, what she calls, "pit-stops" where the students stop their writing and go through what they have accomplished, check if everything is understood and help each other. Although, she explains in her interview that she is generally not too keen on Process Writing as a method for working with writing and when she evaluates a student's written performance it is the result and product that is of interest – "not the process and the pit-stops".

Cushing Weigle (4.2) claims that "it is the individual who is the central focus…not the task" in Process Writing and they mention motivation as one component in the interaction between the individual and writing. One can connect this to Eva's teaching philosophy which was explained during the observation; "encourage the students' creativity and own ideas at all times". This is further emphasized in her interview where she explains that the most important thing in teaching writing is to have her students "find the fun in writing and strive to stimulate their imagination through her assignments".

Strömquist (4.2) states that process writing is useful for expressive writing and is a writing tool for learning and thinking – "Let the students think with a pen in their hand" (own translation). One can trace this reasoning to Mia's writing assignment (writing a poem) where the students were instructed to look at a picture and express their feelings through putting down words in columns on a sheet of paper. The same reasoning can also be traced to Kalle's observed lesson where the students had to plan and think about their essays, thesis statements and arguments through drafting an outline.

All informants engaged their students in some kind of awareness-raising activity – whether it was working with a textbook, write down thoughts on a blank piece of paper or even work with sample essays, it was a way for the teacher to introduce a writing assignment to the students. Pre-writing activities such as these are traceable in both Process Writing and Genre Writing – it is the actual writing assignment and its purpose and focus that determines which theory it would be supported by.
Using the textbook and looking at sample-essays bare traces of Process Writing since this theory emphasises the different stages a writer goes through before the actual writing takes place (4.2). From the Process point-of-view, the pre-writing seems to be focused on building the foundation for structuring a text by brainstorming about the parts that should be included (4.2 and appendix 1). One example of this is Lena's observed lesson; looking at a text and discussing the descriptive language.
This kind of pre-writing activities (using sample essays) can also be looked at from the Genre point-of-view; Hyland speaks about the consciousness-raising traits of the Genre Approach (4.3). Students are challenged to reflect on how language is structured in different kinds of texts, according to this claim. One example of this is Ron's observed

lesson where the pre-writing activity focused on learning to recognise certain features of language before using them in their own writing.

When Mia in her interview claims that her focus lies on the product by giving the example of the chair and the stool, one can connect this to Genre Writing. This focus is very much in line with Hyland's claim (4.3) that the Genre approach teaches students to see how different genres of texts part from each other. This product-orientation is something that one can conclude to be an important aspect of Genre Writing.

One can also find traces of Genre Writing in the observation on Mia's lesson. Hyland makes a statement about this theory as being empowering (4.3), and this can be exemplified by Mia's presented purpose for the poetry writing; showing the students that it is not necessarily hard to write a poem – she reveals to them the key to poetry writing, thus provides them with knowledge of this genre's patterns.

Another aspect of Genre Writing that can be traced in some of the data collected from our informants is that it helps students to become aware of language patterns, which agrees with the quote from Hyland (4.3). Both Ron and Kalle give their students sample essays and other instruction materials as guidelines in order to create an understanding for language patterns – right in line with this aspect of Genre Writing. It is important to keep in mind that neither Kalle nor Ron does this consciously, since none of them had either heard of this theory before, or recognised the explanation of it in their own teaching. Both Kalle and Ron also claim that they believe in improving the students' writing through drafting and feedback which are two steps of the different process schemes (appendix 1 and 4.2).

The use of sample essays can also be traced to another one of Hyland's claims: that Genre Writing focuses on how to use the different genres effectively (4.3) - the sample essay almost works as a framework for how to structure one's own writing when it comes to rhetorical choices and different language patterns. Eva claims that there is a risk in giving students too narrow frameworks: "I do not want the students to 'copy' a sample text" (appendix 5 and 6.2). Hyland also mentions this as a risk with Genre Writing (4.4).

In his interview Ron also mentions that his goal for the students in teaching them writing is "learning how to analyse texts" (6.4.2) in order to become aware of different texts and audiences, which one can interpret and translate into Knapp and Watkins's claim that Genre Writing provides "students with the ability to use (these) codes for writing effectively" (4.3). In other words, Ron's main focus when teaching writing is similar to one of the key elements of the Genre approach.

In both observations with Lena, especially the second one, many parts of the lesson carry elements of Genre Writing; her focus seems to lie on audience and language patterns used in personal descriptions. Also, in her interview she talks about creating meaningful, reality-based writing; putting the writing assignments in a context. All this rhymes well with what is said in the beginning of the Genre Approach chapter (4.3) about authentic writing and a clear focus on context and audience. Even though Lena was not familiar with this theory, her teaching and ideas about teaching writing seem to lean towards the same direction as the Genre Approach.

As this chapter has shown, none of the informants work with either Process Writing or Genre Writing solely. It seems like most of the informants' teaching methods are to some extent in agreement with the ideas of Genre Writing. However, none of these teachers claim to recognise the theory of Genre Writing in their own teaching. Process Writing, on the other hand, is the theory that most informants in this study have heard of and more or less consciously use. The results of our study show that the informants use parts of both theories in their teaching of writing, whether aware of it or not, which is in line with Hyland's (4.4) claim that the genre approach and the process approach can function alongside each other without conflict.

8. Discussion

Due to the fact that this is a rather small study including only five informants in two schools, it is important to point out that one can not draw conclusions of general character from our results. However, our results and analysis can provide an insight in EFL teaching of writing as well as they might function as a source of ideas about teaching writing.

Our data-collection is certainly rich of both examples and ideas on the topic writing and it has appeared to be an asset as well as an obstacle; even though the gathered data are interesting, it has been harder to analyse than we thought. It has been difficult to separate the research questions from each other at times. Furthermore, it has been time consuming to sort out the key elements of each informant's result. In retrospect, we could have narrowed the questions and perhaps have had less focus points when observing and interviewing.

Something that has facilitated our study is the fact that we chose to use two theories parallelly instead of choosing between them when analysing the results. However, the fact that the theory of Process Writing and Genre Writing do not contradict each other has made parts of the analysis somewhat difficult. The example of pre-writing activity is one case where it has been hard to distinguish whether it leans towards Process or Genre. Both theories emphasize the importance of consciousness-raising activities before writing assignments but they motivate them slightly differently.

One might find our first interview-question; "Why is teaching writing important, according to you?", to be slightly leading – presupposing that all our interviewees view writing as something important. However, we chose to use this question since we assume that teachers value writing in their EFL teaching.

Our reading of the theory on Process Writing and Genre Writing leads us to the same conclusion as Hyland (4.4); it seems like they could easily be combined in the classroom. One can use an assignment with a clear genre approach, for example assigning writing a newspaper-article using journalistic language features and then

include Process Writing in order to help the students to develop their writing from idea to final draft.

We also see advantages in combining the two theories since they can make good use of each other and help each other to develop further; adding Genre-thinking into a Process way of working can make the writing more qualitative and nuanced. Also, one of the biggest advantages that we see in this combination is that the stages of the writing process and the final product are equally important.

If one adapts a more critical view of the Genre Approach, one risk could be that if taken too literally it might impede students' own creativity since there is a risk of them being too focused on the sample essays and on reproducing content and structures. Our critique of the Process Approach is in line with Graham's statement (4.4); a Process method of working with a text seems time consuming due to the revising and drafting aspect, and might carry a risk of students becoming tired of reworking texts. In order to avoid these traps we believe that teachers should strive to have an open mind to new theories but remain critical and realistic when applying theory to reality: What would work with my students?

Furthermore, one needs to try out which elements works best for oneself: How do I combine this theory with my own teaching style? In order for this to work, we believe that constant evaluation is needed – both with students and oneself.

When it comes to the actual writing assignments in the EFL-classroom, the rather dull and grey picture that we had in the beginning of this study has become brighter. We have witnessed engaged and motivating teachers and mostly purposeful assignments – all our informants spoke of learning to write for life, with future studies and careers in mind. They saw beyond giving assignments just to fill the lesson-plan.

Working with this essay has given us a theoretical foundation for our future teaching of writing as well as an opportunity to enter deeply into two dominating theories within this field. Both theories are interesting and useful and we believe that having a theoretical background when working with writing in school can be beneficial in order to have the right focus when both instructing and assessing. We question whether our informants' level of knowledge about writing theory could be improved? What did they learn about writing theories during their teacher training? Is it a matter of personal

interest? Or is this a question of money? We have understood that research on reading goes further back in time and that writing research is viewed as quite new. However, we have come across a lot of valuable research with many different viewpoints that we believe EFL teachers can gain a lot from. With this said, we are happy to have gained this theoretical background since we believe that this will help us in making our teaching of writing both purposeful and varied.

9. List of References

9.1 Printed Sources

Brown, H. D. (2001). *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy – 2ⁿᵈ Edition.* New York: Longman.

Cohen, L, Manion, L, Morrison, K. (2007). *Research Methods in Education – 6ᵗʰ Edition.* London: Routledge.

Cope, B. & Kalantzis, M. (1993). *The Powers of Literacy: A Genre Approach to Teaching Writing.* Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

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

Harmer, J. (2004). *How to Teach Writing.* Essex: Pearson Education Limited (Longman).

Hartman, S. (2005). *Skrivhandledning för examensarbeten och rapporter.* Falun: Natur och Kultur.

Hedge, T. (2005). *Writing.* Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press.

Hyland, K. (2004). *Genre and Second Language Writing.* Michigan: The University of Michigan Press.

Knapp, P. & Watkins, M. (2005). *Genre, Text, Grammar: Technologies for Teaching and Assessing Writing.* Sidney: UNSW Press Ltd.

McDonough, J & McDonough, S. (1997). *Research methods for English language teachers.* London: Arnold.

Nunan, D. (1992). *Research Methods in Language Learning.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Strömquist, S. (2007). *Skrivprocessen: Teori och Tillämpning, 3rd Edition.* Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Unger.J. & Fleischman.S. (2004). *Is Process Writing the "Write Stuff" – Research Matters.* Printed in Educational Leadership, issue: October 2004, pages 90-91.

9.2 Internet Sources

Allen. P. (1983) *COLT*:
<http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/custom/portlets/recordDetails/detailmini.jsp?_nfpb=true&_&ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=ED275155&ERICExtSearch_SearchType_0=no&accno=ED275155> (2008-02-08)

Graham.S. (2003) *Approaches to process writing.* British Council Teaching English.
<http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/write/process_write.shtml> (2007-10-30)

Skollagen:
<http://www.riksdagen.se/webbnav/index.aspx?nid=3911&dok_id=SFS1985:1100&rm=1985&bet=1985:1100> (2007-11-17)

Skolverket: *Information about Compulsory School.*
<http://www.skolverket.se/sb/d/663> (2007-11-17)

Appendix 1: Schemes for Process Writing

Strömquist (2007:26)

Förstadiet

- Analys av skrivuppgiften (vad skall jag skriva om? för vem? i vilket syfte?)

- Stoffsamling (samla material)

- Sovring/fokusering (vad skall jag ta med av materialet, vad skall jag koncentrera mig på?)

- Strukturering/Planering (i vilken ordning ska jag presentera materialet?)

Skrivstadiet

- Formulering (översätta tankar till skrift)

Efterstadiet

- Bearbetning (från utkast till färdig text)

- Utskrift

- Korrekturläsning

- Publicering/ev tryckning

Strömquist (2007:26) Same as above but translated by Ahlsén & Lundh

Pre-writing

- Analysing the writing assignment (what am I writing about? for who? for what purpose?)

- Collecting material/information

- Sorting out/Focusing (what parts of the material am I focusing on?)

- Structuring/Planning (In which order shall I present the material/information?)

Writing

- Wording (translating thoughts to writing)

Post-writing

- Revising (from draft to finial version)

- Printing/making a fair copy

- Proof-reading

- Prob. Publishing (text meets reader)

Graham (2003: www.teachingenglish.org.uk)

Prewriting

- Brainstorming
- Planning
- Generating ideas
- Questioning
- Discussion and debate

Focusing ideas

- Fast writing
- Group compositions

Evaluating, Structuring and Editing

- Ordering
- Peer Editing and proof-reading
- Self-editing

Hedge (2005:51)

- Being motivated to write
- Getting ideas together
- Planning and Outlining
- Making notes
- Making a first draft
- Revising, Replanning, Redrafting
- Editing and getting ready for publication

Appendix 2: Observation checklist

Activity Type

Describe the activity

(Own comments in Italics)

How is the writing assignment introduced?
- Instructions?

In what context does the writing assignment appear?
- individual/separate assignm.?
- part of something else ("TEMA")?

Other comments

Participant Organisation

- Individual assignment?
- Group assignment?
    - peer reviewing activities?

Other comments

The Content and Purpose

Prewriting activities?

What kind of writing is assigned? (argumentative, narrative, poetry etc.)

Presented Purpose?
- Writing for writing or a focus on practicing linguistic features (grammar, vocabulary etc.)?

Other comments

Teacher – Student Interaction

Is the teacher aware of the students' understanding of the assignment?

Student Influence
- Questions?
- Ideas?

Other comments

Appendix 3: Interview Questions

Q1: Why is teaching writing important, according to you?

Q2: How do you come up with writing assignments?
Theory-models? Tips from colleagues or others? Internet?[10]

Q3: How do you present writing assignments? Why?

Q4: Are the students involved in any way?

Q5: Where does the writing take place?

Q6: What different kinds of writing have you used/plan to use with your ninth graders this school year?
Poetry, Argumentative, Narrative…

Q7: Are you familiar with these theories: Process- and Genre Writing? Do you use any other theories when constructing writing assignments?

Q8: How do you feel about this way of working with writing?
Theories talked about in Q7. Advantages? Disadvantages? Thoughts…

Q9: Which aspects of writing do you feel work best for you? Why?

Q10: Would you like to teach writing in any other way than you do? Why (not)?

---

[10] Comments in Italics are meant for us as interviewers as support if the interviewee needed clarifications in order to understand the questions. We did not include these comments in the original questions because we wanted to avoid leading questions.

Appendix 4: Lena

Observation

Activity Type

Describe the activity

1) Reading a text. Listening to it. Talking about how people are described. Homework: Questions about the text.

2) Writing a personal description.

How is the writing assignment introduced?
- Instructions?

1) "Today we are going to work with this text. Next time we are going to continue by doing a writing activity linked to this text.

2)"You're going to describe a person, anyone. Remember the personal descriptions in the texts that we read last time in the textbook.. Try to use similes such as 'his eyes are as blue as the sky on a beautiful summer's day' instead of just writing 'he has blue eyes'. Remember to include more than just looks, and to be nice if you choose to write about someone real that you know."

Also: Divide your text into paragraphs. Write just one page. Students only have this lesson (40 mins).

In what context does the writing assignment appear?
- individual/separate assignm.?
- part of something else ("TEMA")?

Traditional textbook work. Separate assignment.

Other comments

The book used is 'Wings 9' (2005) – 1st Edition, 4th print.

NB! Two lessons observed.

Participant Organisation

- Individual assignment?
- Group assignment?
       - peer reviewing activities

Individual assignment, although students are encouraged to help each other out.

The Content and Purpose

Prewriting activities?

1) Listening to a text, reading it both in silence and aloud. Class-discussion on how people in the text are described. Homework: Questions about the personal descriptions in the text.

2)Actual writing assignment. No pre-writing this lesson.

What kind of writing is assigned? (argumentative, narrative, poetry etc.)

Descriptive text.

Presented Purpose?
- Writing for writing or a focus on practicing linguistic features (grammar, vocabulary etc.)?

1) "Make sure that you think about how people are described. A description of a person that is more than just 'he is tall and has dark hair' makes people interested in reading it.
2) "Think about all the adjectives that you know."

Other comments

Purpose seems to be practicing descriptive language. Grammar (Adjectives) is mentioned as help in this, but not as the most important thing.
NB! This is my interpretation. No clear purpose was presented.

Teacher – Student Interaction

Is the teacher aware of the students' understanding of the assignment?

Yes. She walks around in the class during the writing activity and makes sure that students have understood. Also helps out with some vocabulary and grammar.

Student Influence
- Questions?
- Ideas?

Students are free to ask anything, and their ideas are welcomed: one boy wanted to describe his pet. As long as the students wrote a description of someone, and made sure to include personality-descriptions as well as describing looks, they were free to choose the 'object' of their descriptions.

Other comments

Lena is prepared and knows what she wants. She makes fast decisions and is aware of the students at all times.

Interview
Original interview language: Swedish

Q1: Why is teaching writing important, according to you?
Because writing is what they have the least experience of. They practice the other parts of English-teaching anyway, through chatting online, watching TV and playing videogames. They don't use writing in their free-time, and they don't have the patience

to practice. When they write they use spoken language and to me that is not the same thing as written language. The students need to know how to write more formally for their future. I assume, when I work with writing, that those in the class who will need English in their future work, will need to know how to write well. I also think that writing is important because this is the forum where students can see their own progress most clearly.

Q2: How do you come up with writing assignments?

Talking to colleagues and by reviewing textbooks gives me ideas to create new assignments. I meet two other English-teachers once a month and discuss assignments and cooperation-projects.

Q3: How do you present writing assignments? Why?

I start off by presenting the whole idea of what we are going to do. Maybe my plan is first to read a text, then discuss it and after that write something linked to the theme of the text – well, then I tell the students the whole plan from the start. I think it is important for the students to know the structure.

Q3.1: Do you use any pre-writing activities?

Yes. I try to work with Process Writing as much as possible. I think it is important that the students are presented with a context for each assignment; before writing a personal description we read one and talk about the characteristics of this kind of a text.

Q7: Are you familiar with any of these theories: Process- and Genre Writing? Do you use any other theories when constructing writing assignments?

Process is the theory that I like. I can't remember having heard of Genre Writing, but from what I understand from your explanation, I think I use it to some extent in the teaching of Swedish, but I didn't know that it had its own theory behind it.

Q8: How do you feel about this way of working with writing?

I like process writing very much, simply because it works. The students improve and don't even have to think about the grammar. It just comes naturally when they are confident in their writing.

The negative aspect of Process Writing is that it takes a lot of time and energy from me as a teacher. You can't use this method for every writing assignment – there isn't enough time!

Q4: Are the students involved in any way?

In the 9th grade, I try to involve the students quite a lot. I want them to make suggestions of essay-topics and content of lessons. I can ask them what they think they need to practice, or what they would like to do and they give me good suggestions. I often try to involve them in the writing process as well, encouraging them to peer-review each other's writing.

Q5: Where does the writing take place?

I prefer it if they do their writing in the classroom. Most assignments that I give are to be written within a time-limit (for example three 40-minute lessons). I don't want them to take the texts home to finish, because I know that some of my students will cheat and I don't want to suspect anyone of that. If they write in the classroom, I know that they have used their own language.

Q6: What different kinds of writing have you used/plan to use with your ninth graders this school year?

I use everything, except short stories. In the 9th grade, students are capable of more than writing narrative stories with a simple plot. When they are at this age I give them assignments such as writing factual texts, argumentative articles, descriptions, letters of different kinds, essays of the same kind as the National Tests.

The reason for these kinds of assignments is that they need it for their future; Upper Secondary School[11], and later their careers. They also need these assignments to learn to structure their writing, and to become aware of differences between different kinds of writing.

Q6.1: Do you present the purpose of the assignments to the students?

Maybe not to its full extent, but I try to always present some kind of a purpose, or something particular to think about – for example considering who the implied reader is. The over-arching purpose – practicing one's writing tools and learn how to express oneself in a good way – is not a purpose in one assignment, and therefore harder to present in a good way, but before bigger assignment I speak of this awareness of using different language in different texts and of being aware of how they write and what their strengths and weaknesses are.

Q9: Which aspects of writing do you feel work best for you? Why?

My approach to writing is that every student is different, and have different ways of interpreting assignments. Considering that, I always try to come up with writing-topics that could speak to many students; I want to avoid assignments that are too narrow which some students feel that they have nothing to say about.

Q10: Would you like to teach writing in any other way than you do? Why (not)?

I would like to learn new ways of working. I like to work together with other students, in theme-form, mixing school subjects in order to create a more understandable and reality-based context. In order to work in new ways I need further training. The problem is that the school doesn't have the money to offer me that.

Before you can apply new ways of working, you need to feel confident in your role as a teacher. I feel comfortable now, but the first five years, it was enough just trying to follow the plan. New theories demand a lot of you as a teacher.

---

[11] The school-form following the senior level of Compulsory School.

Appendix 5: Eva

Observation

Activity Type

Describe the activity

Write a presentation of an organisation.

How is the writing assignment introduced?
- Instructions?

Read the instructions in the textbook.

Eva points out questions to bear in mind that should be answered through the text: When?, How?, What?, Where?

Example of a text is given from the textbook.

In what context does the writing assignment appear?
- individual/separate assignm.?
- part of something else ("TEMA")?

Separate assignment.

Other comments

When a student asks how much time they have for this, Eva tells the class that they have 3 lessons (1 lesson is 40 minutes). They are allowed to put more time into it outside classroom time.

Participant Organisation

 - Individual assignment?
 - Group assignment?
                 - peer reviewing activities

The choice is free. Some students work individually, some in pairs and others in groups of four students. No assigned peer-review.

The Content and Purpose

Prewriting activities?

Not during this lesson. I ask Eva if they have discussed the example-text before this lesson. She tells me that they have read it and worked with the vocabulary, but not talked about it.

What kind of writing is assigned? (argumentative, narrative, poetry etc.)
*From what I can understand from the introduction, and from reading the instructions in the book, the students are asked to write a **factual text** that should fit a pamphlet or something similar.*

Presented Purpose? - Writing for writing or a focus on practicing linguistic features (grammar, vocabulary etc.)?
Nothing presented, but from Eva's comments when walking around in the classroom, it seems like they should write for their own sake and not think too much about grammar – the only thing she emphasizes is to think about "Swengish"… meaning that they should not just translate Swedish expressions into English.

Teacher – Student Interaction

Is the teacher aware of the students' understanding of the assignment?
She circulates the classroom checking that all students have chosen a topic.

Student Influence - Questions? - Ideas?
Students are more than welcome to bring in their own ideas into this. *One group wants to do a lyric interpretation, and are allowed to.* *Eva comments this to me: "I love it when students have own ideas. Some people might think that I am too 'free' when in comes to letting the students decide. I think that the most important thing is to encourage the students' creativity."*

Other comments
The fact that this group of students that interpret lyrics are doing that as an oral assignment, although the original assignment was to write, does not seem to be an issue to Eva.

Interview
Original interview language: Swedish

Q1: Why is teaching writing important, according to you?
It is important because of so many things; writing is everything! This is a very strange question, to me it is self-evident that one needs to practice writing. It is very important to learn and practice how to express one's thoughts in writing, as well as practicing spelling and grammar.

Q2: How do you come up with writing assignments?

When I'm outside, taking a walk in the forest. I also get inspiration from conversations I've had, and sometimes I find good assignments in the textbooks that we have here in school.

Q3: How do you present writing assignments? Why?

I usually keep the presentations short. I tell the students what I want them to do and I also write the instructions on the white-board. When it is a book-based assignment, I ask the students to read the instructions there as well. I don't want to spend a lot of time on presenting an assignment, I prefer giving the students most of the lesson-time for the actual writing.

Q3.1: Do you use any pre-writing activities?

I always try to link the writing to some activity beforehand, for example discussions, reading texts, watching a film or a part of a film. The important thing is to create some kind of understanding for the assignment.

Q4: Are the students involved in any way?

Yes, that is very important to me. I always value their opinions highly and welcome them to make suggestions on assignments. If a student has a personal idea on what (s)he wants to write about, I let him/her do that, even if it is quite far from the original assignment. The most important thing at this stage is to make the students find the fun in writing. I also believe that you do things better if it is something you very much want to do!

I know that some people find this point of view too free; people have opinions that students should follow the given assignment. The reason why this isn't that important to me might be some kind of protest to my own schooling, where I failed essays because I brought in my own ideas.

Q5: Where does the writing take place?

I want the students to write both in-class and as homework. Normally, the students start a writing assignment in the classroom and then they are allowed to bring it home to finish if they feel that they didn't have enough time during the assignment's time-limit.

Q6: What different kinds of writing have you used/plan to use with your ninth graders this school year?

I use presentations, descriptions, short stories, essays, retelling of stories and a lot more. In all the assignments I give I want the focus to be multiple; the assignment should give grammar-practice and writing-flow as well as opportunities for self-reflection and awareness of your own language. I strive to make the students aware of their use of English, in order to get away from the "swenglish"[12] that is very common among Swedish students of English.

Q6.1: Do you present the purpose of the assignments to the students?

---

[12] Meaning the English where you just translate Swedish expressions into English, often also spoken with Swedish intonation.

No, because I want them to write freely, and use the best language they can. That should be their focus. If I tell them that we are going to write a text to practice grammar, for example, they will be too focused on the grammar in order to produce a good text.

Q7: Are you familiar with any of these theories: Process- and Genre Writing? Do you use any other theories when constructing writing assignments?

I have heard of teachers of Swedish using Process writing, but I don't know much of it, and don't use it. What is genre writing? I haven't heard of it…hmm… It sounds as something I might use if I taught Upper Secondary School. I don't know if it's a theory that I use, but I use something called "relay writing[13]" that means that one person starts writing an introduction to a story, and then the next students continues from there, and so on.

Q8: How do you feel about this way of working with writing?

I don't like theories that much. I think they are limiting. I know that Process Writing is used in the teaching of Swedish, but I don't think I would like to use it in English. Genre Writing might be a good thing to bring into the Swedish subject, but that it is too limiting for 9th graders. I do not want the students to "copy" a sample text; I want the writing to be free. Instead of theories like this, I believe in the students' inner strength and creativity. I want to stimulate their imagination and make them aware of who they are through writing.

Q9: Which aspects of writing do you feel work best for you? Why?

I strive to put the student's mind in focus. I want to create an inspiring environment that encourages students to express themselves. The main focus has to be the joy of writing. If you don't like what you're doing, you won't learn. My strength is that I listen and adjust to my students.

Q10: Would you like to teach writing in any other way than you do? Why (not)?

No, because if I come up with a way of teaching that I don't use, I try it right away. I don't want to get stuck in one way of teaching; I need to try new things in order to have fun. Why would I walk around wishing I could teach in a different way? If I did, I would have to do something in order to change that. You can't walk around unsatisfied. Writing is an interesting process that needs renewal from time to time. Writing should be fun!

---

[13] Swedish word 'Stafettskrivning'.

Appendix 6: Kalle

Observation

Activity Type

Describe the activity

1) Make a draft of an Argumentative Essay. Learn how to structure an argumentative essay with: introduction, thesis statement, mainbody with arguments (for or against death penalty) and conclusion. Drafts are handed in at the end of the lesson.

2) The drafts from the previous lesson are handed back. Now the writing of the final version of the argumentative essay takes place (in the computer room using the computers). Final essays are printed and handed in at the end of the lesson.

How is the writing assignment introduced?
- Instructions?

1) "Today we are going to learn how to structure an argumentative essay. You are either going to be for or against death penalty. I'm going to give you a Study Guide and handout that says "Sequence of work" which we will go through together. Using the Study Guide and the articles on death penalty, which you have read earlier, you are going to make a draft of the essay today and when we meet next time you will write the final version on computer".

2)"This lesson you will be writing your final essays on the computer. I will hand you your drafts from the previous lesson, read them through, add things if you like and when you are ready you can sit by the computer and write your argumentative essays"

In what context does the writing assignment appear?
- individual/separate assignm.?
- part of something else ("TEMA")?

The writing assignment is a part of a topic/theme that the class has worked with for approx. 2 weeks. The teacher explained to me that before the writing assignment they have done oral presentations, reading activities and watched a film within the same theme/topic

Other comments

The teacher brings up issues and rules regarding page limit, time limit, computer use quite early in the introduction of the assignment.

Participant Organisation

- Individual assignment?
- Group assignment?
          - peer reviewing activities

Individual assignment. Whenever the teacher has gone through the Study Guide and "Sequence of Work" together with the whole class, each individual student is supposed to write their drafts and final essays individually.

The Content and Purpose

Prewriting activities?

1) The teacher goes through the Study Guide and the "Sequence of work" part by part and answers what ever questions the students have. In the Study Guide there is a sample essay of an argumentative essay (of another topic), which the teacher goes through as well. He tells the students that they can consult this sample essay for ideas for structure. In order to clarify the written guidelines in the Study Guide the teacher also uses the board to sketch an outline that he wants the students use.

 2) Teacher responds to questions the student might have from the previous lesson.

What kind of writing is assigned? (argumentative, narrative, poetry etc.)

Argumentative essay – a draft and a final computer written essay

---

Presented Purpose?
- Writing for writing or a focus on practicing linguistic features (grammar, vocabulary etc.)?

1) +2) "Make sure that you structure your essay as shown in the Study Guide and look at the sample essay for help. Make sure that you have a thesis statement and that you have 3-4 arguments to support it. This is how an argumentative essay should be structured".

Other comments

The students are allowed to use dictionaries and the articles on death penalty (form previous lessons with reading activities) when writing their essays.

Teacher – Student Interaction

Is the teacher aware of the students' understanding of the assignment?

Yes, the teacher seems to move around in the classroom to make sure that each student has understood the assignment and the instructions.

Student Influence

The actual assignment is a "finished-planned" assignment by the teacher. There are rules and structures to follow, but the students' questions are very welcomed. For instance, the students seem to have a hard time grasping and understanding what a thesis statement is and the teacher thoroughly explains what it is, he gives examples and uses the sample essay to clarify.

Interview

Original interview language: Swedish

Q1: Why is teaching writing important, according to you?

In today's society communication and the ability to express oneself through written language plays a huge role. That is how we establish and maintain useful contacts. There are different types of writing as well. Formal writing such as C-essays, chronicles, articles are very much different from writing stories, fairytales and poems, where interpretations and feelings are the focus.

Q2: How do you come up with writing assignments?

I try to work with small projects or themes, one could say. Within these themes I try to fit all the basics of language teaching; some listening, some reading, some speaking and some writing. For the moment we are working with the death penalty, looking at laws etc. Here, I try to teach my students argumentative writing and speaking.

Q2.1: How do you come up with ideas for the different themes, where do you find inspiration?

Usually the textbook. It is called Time and it has great themes and subjects to work with. I tend to pick topics from the book and sometime I adjust them slightly or come up with my own topics and ideas. But I think it's good to have the students work with the texts and assignments in the book as well. The texts are quite good actually

Q3: How do you present writing assignments? Why?

Most of the time my writing assignments are linked to the theme or topic that we are working with for the moment. If that's the case I ask my students to bring all the material and work they have from earlier lessons.Through this, they have a bank of information and inspiration to use in their writing. Then I usually show them a sample essay. We go through the bits and pieces that I want them to use in their texts. I try to be as clear as I can be concerning how I want my students to structure their texts. I often show them the criteria for each grade-level beforehand.

Q4: Are the students involved in any way?

Yes, I try to brainstorm about what our next coming topic/theme should be about. We go through the chapters in the textbook together and choose something that we all feel comfortable working with. Students also come up with their own topics sometimes.

Q5: Where does the writing take place?

Solely in-class writing. I don't let the students write large pieces of texts as homework. The reason for this is because I want to exclude any kind of copying and cheating.

Q6: What different kinds of writing have you used/plan to use with your ninth grades this school year?

I have used argumentative writing and book-reports, where they learn how to analyse, compare and contrast. Then I basically use old national tests for them to practise on. The essay-topics in the national tests are usually really good ones that include a lot of creative thinking. The procedure usually goes like this; I have them write a sketch or a draft in class which I collect, go through and give feedback on. Next time we meet, we go through the feedback and corrections. The texts/essays that I think have reached the VG and MVG level[14], I read out without telling who the author is. Together we go through what the sample essays lack – or opposite…what are their strengths. I like to show my students what they should aim for in each assignment.

---

[14] Swedish grading system (www.skolverket.se)

Q7: Are you familiar with any of these theories: Process- and Genre Writing? Do you use any other theories when constructing writing assignments?

No, I can't say that I'm familiar with any of them, though, I've heard the term process writing before. I think I have read about it during my teacher training, but I can't say that I remember what it is.

Q8: How do you feel about this way of working with writing?

It sounds like I have some process writing in my way of teaching writing, but I do value the actual product as well. I am aware that all students can't hit bulls-eye and write a perfect text with the help of only a few instructions. Writing is a process and I think that every writer is in need of outlining and drafting in order to gather thoughts and come up with a final text to hand in.

Q9: Which aspects of writing do you feel work best for you? Why?

I believe that my students appreciate that I give them some sort of a frame, in terms of instructions, sample essays and grading guidelines before they start to write.

Q10: Would you like to teach writing in any other way than you do? Why (not)?

I think that my way of teaching writing has worked quite alright. But I've only worked as teacher for one and a half year so I'm open to new things and ways of working. I have definitely learnt that teaching writing and different structures for writing takes time and that I shouldn't hurry. It's better to repeat and do something over again instead of jumping to the next step or assignment.

Appendix 7: Ron

Observation

Activity Type

Describe the activity
Creative Writing – writing a fictive story

How is the writing assignment introduced?
- Instructions?

1) "We are going to work with creative writing and the tools that one can use to write stories with a rich language – figurative language: imagery, metaphors" and you are going to write fictive stories today. Stories are handed in at the end of the lesson

2) The teacher summarises the content from the former lesson while handing out a copy of one student's beginning of a story from the previous lesson. He also hands out a hand-out with three instructions: a) Read the student's beginning of a story/essay. b) Identify imagery in the story/essay and evaluate it. c) Write your own ending to the story using figurative language. The stories are handed in at the end of the lesson. The ones that are not finished are allowed to finish it at home.

In what context does the writing assignment appear?
- individual/separate assignm.?
- part of something else ("TEMA")?

Individual assignment and there is a chapter in the students' course literature/textbooks about creative writing.

Other comments
The students are allowed to consult their textbooks for examples and help regarding creative writing and figurative language

Participant Organisation

 - Individual assignment?
 - Group assignment?
            - peer reviewing activities

The stories are written individually but the students are allowed to brainstorm with each other and with the teacher. The stories are handwritten in class and handed in to the teacher.

The Content and Purpose

Prewriting activities?

1) The teacher asks the students to open a specific page in their textbook that deals with Creative Writing. They read some texts and talk about "rich language" and figurative language and bring up some examples. They move on by doing some exercises on this topic in the textbook. The teacher hands out a sheet of paper (heading: Creative Writing) that contains four topics/themes for stories to write about for the remaining of the lesson.

2) They students read the example essay that is written by one of the students during the previous lesson and they all try to identify pieces of imagery and metaphors in the text before they start to write their own ending to the example essay.

What kind of writing is assigned? (argumentative, narrative, poetry etc.)

Creative Writing – writing stories (fictive)

Presented Purpose?
- Writing for writing or a focus on practicing linguistic features (grammar, vocabulary etc.)?

"Figurative language is a necessary tool to use when you write and if you use it in your writing it will be rich of descriptions and interesting to the reader".

Teacher – Student Interaction

Is the teacher aware of the students' understanding of the assignment?

Yes, and he walks around in the classroom to make sure that they are inspired and he brainstorms around different stories/outcomes/scenarios to write about with the ones that find it hard to get started.

Student Influence
- Questions?
- Ideas?

Some students call for the teacher in order to try out some of their thought out imageries and metaphors and also to get an "ok/go!" on their different ideas of stories to write about. It seems like the students enjoy brainstorming with their teacher – "we-are-in-it-together-feeling". Open-minded atmosphere in the classroom and the students seem comfortable asking questions.

Interview
Original interview language: English

Q1: Why is teaching writing important, according to you?
I want my students to understand that there are different forms of writing and that writing is a way of communicating messages. I believe that it is important to have the students understand that there are two aspects of writing depending on what you want to communicate. On the one hand there is the functional and formal aspect of writing where I try to teach my students structured writing for a certain purpose. Here we look at grammar and language. On the other hand we have expressive writing where the main purpose is to convey inner thoughts and ideas.

Q2: How do you come up with writing assignments?

I use the Internet as a resource quite a lot. Both when I am looking for inspiration or information on structures and dispositions. I have come across many good resource pages for teachers and University homepages are also useful but then I try to simplify and adjust the material. Sometimes all English teachers meet to discuss and plan the semester and we also brainstorm ideas and assignments.

Q3: How do you present writing assignments? Why?

I usually introduce by presenting instructions and giving them the tools for the specific writing assignment. For example, if we are working with creative writing I talk to my students about imagery, metaphors etc.

Q4: Are the students involved in any way?

Interesting question. The students are not involved in the planning of writing, or planning of assignments. I leave that to me, but it might be interesting to let them in and invite their ideas. However, I always try to "read" my group of students in order to evaluate what they tend to enjoy working with as well as what they seem enjoy less. I also try to pick up what they are talking about in the corridors in order to match there interest-fields. Sometimes I do proper evaluations that I print out and summarize, but only if I have a specific purpose for my evaluation. In my opinion those habitual evaluations, without any specific purpose, are often useless.

Q5: Where does the writing take place?

Mostly in-class writing but I also send some writing assignment home for the students to do as homework.

Q6: What different kinds of writing have you used/plan to use with your ninth graders this school year?

We have recently worked with informative writing, argumentative writing and creative writing. Basically, my teaching of writing is based on the idea of learning how to analyze texts. I believe that if you give students the codes and the analytical tools in order to analyse texts, they are likely to adapt these codes in their own writing.

Q6.1: Could you describe the analytical tools and codes?

For example, first one can look at different text-types. There are different structures to learn from in say…short stories, plays, poems etc. Texts can also have different point of views and different audiences. Further, one can look closer and brake down the codes in the language, for instance look at vocabulary use, imagery, structure, theme, look at the text in terms of tones etc.

Q7: Are you familiar with any of these theories: Process- and Genre Writing? Do you use any other theories when constructing writing assignments?

My mother is a teacher and I she has introduced the theory of Process Writing to me. I guess I have picked a few things from there and brought it to my teaching. I ask my students to write drafts that they hand in to me for feedback and later they are asked to

create a final version. Honestly, even if my mother wouldn't have told me about Process Writing, I think I would have used it to some extent anyhow. It's pretty much common sense to use drafting and revising, also when I turn to my personal experience from writing in school – writing is some sort of process. I am not familiar with Genre writing, I can guess around it but no…nothing that I have come across. Process Writing is the only theory on writing that I know of.

Q8: How do you feel about this way of working with writing?

As I mentioned earlier, writing is always a process if you ask me. The theory of process writing is, in my opinion quite obvious and there is nothing really spectacular about it. I believe in teaching my students to revise their work, after having received feedback, in order to have another chance to write a final piece. Regarding the genre theory, it sounds very interesting to plan the teaching of writing in terms of different genres. I believe that is something that I to some extent subconsciously do in my teaching today.

Q9: Which aspects of writing do you feel work best for you? Why?

I like to give my students structures and guidelines for writing – that goes for the formal and functional aspects of writing. Regarding the more expressive writing I try to do the exact opposite – I don't touch/correct their creative writing. Here, I leave the grammar and rules for structure and content. I think that it is good to let the students free and have them play with the language.

Q10: Would you like to teach writing in any other way than you do? Why (not)?

I'm always open to new things. The thing you mentioned… Genre Writing seems interesting.

Appendix 8: Mia

Observation

Activity Type

Describe the activity

Writing poems with the help of a picture and a pre-writing activity.

How is the writing assignment introduced?
- Instructions?

The teacher switches off the lights and instructs her students to enter the classroom silently. The teacher has placed two sheets of paper and a pen on each table. She tells her students to sit down and that they aren't allowed to speak to each other – only listen to her instructions. A picture is placed on the overhead (from the Warsaw ghetto, 2nd WW – children playing in a sad surrounding with a dead child lying in the street).

PREWRITING ACTIVITY IN BETWEEN (see details about this activity below)

The students are instructed to take the other sheet of paper. "On this sheet of paper you are going to write a poem that goes with the picture in front of you. The style and structure is free, use your creativity. The columns that you have filled with words can function as a source of words and phrases that you can use in your poems".

In what context does the writing assignment appear?
- individual/separate assignm.?
- part of something else ("TEMA")?

Separate assignment

Other comments

The atmosphere in the classroom is a bit mysterious and exciting due to the dark room, the displayed picture.

Participant Organisation

 - Individual assignment?
 - Group assignment?
                  - peer reviewing activities

Individual assignment

Other comments

The teacher clearly expresses that the students are not allowed to speak with each other or collaborate. The assignment should be carried out silently. "You will need the silence in order to think and feel- use it".

The Content and Purpose

Prewriting activities?

 * *"Divide the first sheet of paper in three columns with these three headings: 'What do see in the picture', 'What you hear when looking at the picture' and 'What do you feel when looking at the picture'".*

 * *"Answer the questions by writing down words and phrases in the columns – make sure to do it in your own pace".*

What kind of writing is assigned? (argumentative, narrative, poetry etc.)

Writing poetry

Expressive writing.

Presented Purpose?
- Writing for writing or a focus on practicing linguistic features (grammar, vocabulary etc.)?

The purpose is to have the students feel comfortable with writing poetry.

"The writing activity that we did today serves as an introduction to the following lessons which we will dedicate to reading English Poetry and I wanted to show you that poetry is not necessarily difficult to write or read".

Other comments

Through the pre-writing activity the teacher "tricked" her students to writing poetry through the pre-writing activity.

Teacher – Student Interaction

Is the teacher aware of the students' understanding of the assignment?

Yes

Student Influence
- Questions?
- Ideas?

Free creativity

Other comments

When the teacher moves around in the classroom helping out, one can see that she respects each students creative mind and their choice of expressions, words –poems.

Interview

Original interview language: Swedish

Q1: Why is teaching writing important, according to you?

Well, writing is communicating. We say things through our writing and there are so many different ways to write what we have to say. There is writing for reflecting and expressing inner thoughts – means of expression. This part of writing is quite complex and as a teacher it can be hard guide the students. It not the same thing with formal writing, such as essays, articles etc. Then there are structures to learn from and to follow

Q2: How do you come up with writing assignments?

When it comes to expressive writing…very much the spur of the moment. I mean, the inspiration can come from everywhere and anywhere; the TV, newspapers, radio, something that I see while driving my car to the school, friends. So ideas for topic and other inspiration for little pieces of creative writing in my class are very spontaneous. At my desk I sit down and structure my ideas and come up with a pedagogic structure and decide on the actual written product and the purpose of it. It's always vital to have a clear purpose with each assignment. When it comes to formal writing I sometimes use my own ideas but I also like to brainstorm with my colleagues and we usually roughly plan what kind of formal writing one can use in class. I have a lot of good textbooks and teaching aids that are functional for structure and content.

Q3: How do you present writing assignments? Why?

I strictly believe in providing students with as much ideas and information as possible before asking them to produce a text. I do all kinds of prewriting activities. Sometimes we look at pictures, or listen to music or speeches. I've also done mind-mapping or we have done mini-discussions or group work of some kind. After this, I present the actual writing assignment and I try to give them as clear instructions as possible and I tell my students what I want them to include in their writing. I never hide what I expect from my students, the opposite, I tell them exactly what I want from them by showing them examples and guidelines.

Q4: Are the students involved in any way?

I try to invite my students' ideas as much as I can, but it definitely depends on the group, or each class. In some classes there is no room for that, it would turn out to be too messy. While in other classes it works really well.

Q5: Where does the writing take place?

That depends on the assignment's purpose. I think most of the writing takes place in the classroom. If the purpose is to evaluate the students writing and check the quality of their writing, I definitely have them write in class. Then they can't reach the Internet or an older brother or mother for help. But if they are supposed to research something, or answer questions about an issue we have discussed or read about in class they sometimes do this as homework.

Q6: What different kinds of writing have you used/plan to use with your ninth graders this school year?

Poetry, creative writing – I had my ninth graders analyze lyrics of songs and later write their own lyrics to a few songs. We have also practised argumentative writing and informative writing.

Q7: Are you familiar with any of these theories: Process- and Genre Writing? Do you use any other theories when constructing writing assignments?

I know what process writing is but I must say that this model for teaching writing is something that I've come across in my other subject, which is Swedish, rather than in English. I suppose I have picked some pieces of process writing in my teaching when it comes to the method of working. For instance, I definitely believe in pre-writing activities and while the students are writing we do a few "pit-stops", as I call them. The idea of the "pit-stops" is for the students to stop and look at their texts and what they have accomplished so far. We repeat what we have gone trough, what the text should include; introduction, 3 arguments etc. and we go through questions that they might have. However, I don't specifically look at the students' process when I evaluate, it is the product that is much more interesting according to me. Of course I'm there all the time coaching the students during their process to make sure that they have understood. But what I grade is the actual written product! I always try to make it clear with what I want them to write. I usually show that sample essay to make sure that they know where they're heading. I usually say; a student makes a beautiful chair with neatly done pieced of joinery/carpentry. Still he fails the assignment since I asked for a stool, not a chair. I'm not familiar with genre writing.

Q8: How do you feel about this way of working with writing?

I not very keen on portfolio methods or process writing. I do see the advantages of them, but I guess I'm more focused on providing my students many and different styles of writing and therefore working with different written products. One week we might work with articles and letters to the editor, then we dedicate the lessons to reading and learning about the structure of articles and letters to the editor in order to create one of our own. The following week we might work with say….short stories, suddenly we have to change our style of writing and I'm there to help them to see and work with the differences of style and structure. When I listened to your short introduction on genre writing it pretty much sounded like something in my direction of teaching writing. I definitely agree with that focus should lie in the product.

Q9: Which aspects of writing do you feel work best for you? Why?

Again, pre-writing activities to have the mind and thinking processes going and then to be as clear as possible with what I want my students to produce. I like to show examples and I often read out one or two texts written by students, without letting them know who the writer is, that I think have succeeded with their writing. In 9th grade they are usually very anxious to receive higher grades and sometimes we look at the grading criteria together with the sample essays in order for them to reflect on what they might have missed out on etc.

Q10: Would you like to teach writing in any other way than you do? Why (not)?

I would love to work together with the teachers of other subjects. Imagine a cooperation/thematic work with English-History-Music/Drama- Science! That would be wonderful!

Lärarhögskolan i Stockholm

Besöksadress: Konradsbergsgatan 5A
Postadress: Box 34103, 100 26 Stockholm
Telefon: 08–737 55 00
www.lararhogskolan.se