

**Essay Writing Skills: A concern in Sepedi Secondary Schools in the  
Bronkhorstspruit Circuit,  
Gauteng Province**

**SC MAKGAI**

**Essay Writing Skills: A concern in Sepedi Secondary Schools in the  
Bronkhorstspuit Circuit, Gauteng Province**

by

**Samuel Maselepe Colly Makgai**

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for:

**MAGISTER ARTIUM**

In The Department of African Languages

**PROMOTER**

Dr R.M. Ramagoshi

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
PRETORIA

2015

## DEDICATION

*I dedicate this Magister Atrium studies to Heavenly Father who made it possible for me to accomplish this demanding voyage.*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

- My thanks are directed to my grandfather Maselepe, my parents Maphale and Ramaesele Makgai who brought me up.
- My wife and children who always supported me.
- My lecturers especially my promoter Dr R.M. Ramagoshi who gave me the correct guidance step by step until the completion of this work.
- Professor Kosch for her continued advise and encouragement.
- Not forgetting the Almighty who through Him, everything becomes possible.  
Thank you.

## DECLARATION

I declare that this mini-dissertation, which I hereby submit for the degree Magister Atrium of Education at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not been previously submitted by me for degree at this or any other tertiary institute.

Signed this ----- day of -----

## SUMMARY

Essay writing is a stepping stone to broaden the learner's intellect because it helps him or her to think logically, to plan, create and synthesize information which has to be clearly understood by the reader. Brown (2002:1) asserts that 'it cannot be written haphazardly without following a specific structure and consolidating its ideas with its supporting ideas so that they adhere to the chosen topic'. This puts a great challenge to the Grade 10 Sepedi speaking learners who as it has been established in this research do not have the skill to write meaningful essays as evidenced by their incoherent introduction, poor word choice, wrong sentence constructions and illogical paragraphing which all result in poorly structured body paragraphs and concluding paragraphs.

The study investigated the challenges which the Grade 10 Sepedi learners are facing in their essay writing and proposes ways to eliminate common errors so that learners would be able to face their educational future and corporate world with confidence. The investigation was also based on how different types of essays were taught; how essay pre-writing activities were taught to the learners by the educators before a full-fledged essay is written and how learners were taught to write a full-fledged essay. The significance of this study is that learners and educators will be empowered with essay writing skills which will also improve performance.

An in-depth review of the literature related to essay writing skills was presented. The literature review emphasized how some authors interpreted essay writing skills. Different types of essays were unpacked for the learners and educators to make them aware of their differences and their different approaches. Different skills for essay writing were also discussed which included the spider web diagram. Duncan and Clearly (1997:97) concur that 'writing an essay has to begin with one idea and related ideas that sprout threads to other ideas, which become their own webs'.

The method for research included both qualitative and quantitative research. Data was collected from the learners and educators in the form of questionnaires, observations

and essays which had already been written by learners. The data was analysed and interpreted in order to give tangible feedback and recommendations. The theoretical framework that underpins this study is based on constructivism. Constructivism is a theory based on observation and scientific study about how people learn. People construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences (@ 2004 Educational Broadcasting Corporation).

Data from the questionnaires, which consisted of twenty questions, proved that skills for essay writing are not taught by educators to the learners. Data further showed that teachers do not explain the different types of essays and their approach to the learners. Learners were also not taught how to implement process writing, the purpose of which, as endorsed by Murray and Johnson (1994:1) is the 'gathering of ideas, organisation of ideas, drafting, revising, and editing drafts until the final version is presented for marking'. Analysis from the Grade 10 learners' written essays brought to light that skills for essay writing are not used by learners during essay writing because they are not familiar with them. Important aspects such as spelling mistakes like 'legodu' instead of 'lehodu' and proper use of pronouns and nouns were some of the findings that needed attention.

The recommendations from the findings will help the teachers to realise that skills for essay writing can be effectively and efficiently imparted to the learners by the educator in the teaching and learning situation in order to empower the learners in essay writing.

## KEYWORDS

- Process writing
- Spider-web
- Essay types
- Writing skills
- Brain-storming
- Classroom observation
- Questionnaires
- Findings
- Conclusions
- Recommendations



## OPSOMMING

Opstelskryf is 'n vertrekpunt om die leerder se intellek te verbreed, want dit help hom om logies te dink (redeneer), te beplan, te skep en om inligting te sintetiseer om dit vir die leser verstaanbaar te maak. Brown (2002:1) beklemtoon dat dit nie lukraak geskryf kan word sonder om 'n spesifieke struktuur te volg nie. Die idees daarin vervat, moet by die betrokke onderwerp pas. Dit plaas 'n groot uitdaging op die skouers van die graad 10 Sepedi-leerling, wat nie die vaardigheid het om betekenisvolle opstelle te skryf nie, soos vasgestel deur hierdie studie. Hulle onvermoë om behoorlike opstelle te skryf het gebryk uit hulle onsamehangende inleiding, swak woordkeuse, verkeerde sinkonstruksies en onlogiese paragraafindeling, wat daarop dui dat die res van die opstel nie deeglik gestruktureer is nie.

Die studie is daarom daarop gemik om uitdagings wat die graad 10 Sepedi-leerders in die gesig staar uit te lig met die skryf van opstelle. Die ondersoek was ook gebaseer op hoe verskillende tipes opstelle aangeleer word, hoe opsteltegnieke deur onderwysers hanteer word, voordat opstelle deur die leerders geskryf word. Die doel van die studie was ook om vas te stel hoe verskillende tipes opstelle onderrig word, hoe vooraf aktiwiteite onderrig word en hoe leerders geleer word om 'n volwaardige opstel te skryf. Die betekenis van hierdie studie is dat leerders en onderwysers bemagtig word met opstelskryfvaardighede wat ook prestasie sal verbeter. Die literatuur-oorsig beklemtoon die siening van verskeie outeurs in verband met die aspek van skryfvaardighede. Hoofstuk 2 gee 'n in-diepte bespreking van die literatuur in verband met die skryf van opstelle. Die verskillende tipes opstelle word bespreek om die verskillende benaderings toe te lig. Verskeie vaardighede van opstelskryf is ook uitgelig wat die spinnerak-diagram insluit.

Die metode van navorsing het beide kwantitatiewe sowel as kwalitatiewe navorsing ingesluit. Inligting is versamel van leerders en onderwysers in die vorm van vraelyste, waarnemings en opstelle wat alreeds deur leerders geskryf is. Die inligting is ontleed en geïnterpreteer om 'n verantwoordbare terugvoer en aanbevelings deur te gee.

Hierdie studie is gemik op die bevindings van die klaskamer-observasie, die leerders se vraelyste asook die onderwysers se vraelyste. Die vraelyste is ontleed om te bepaal hoe die vaardighede van opstelskryf gebruik word om leerders te help om betekenisvolle opstelle te skryf. Volgens die observasielys wat twintig vrae ingesluit het, het dit duidelik geword dat vaardighede van opstelskryf nie heelhartig aan leerders oorgedra word nie. Dit is gevind dat onderwysers nie opstelonderwerpe aan die leerders verduidelik nie. Hulle verduidelik nie die verskillende soorte opstelle nie. Leerders word ook nie geleer hoe om die proses van skryf te implementeer nie. Murray en Johnson (1994:1) beklemtoon die doel, versameling van idees, inkleding van idees en hersiening daarvan totdat die finale produk gereed is vir nasien.

Volgens die onderwysers se respons gedurende ongestruktureerde onderhoude om die bevindings geldig te maak, het dit duidelik geword dat onderwysers nie vaardighede vir opstelskryf onderrig nie. Leerders vind dit moeilik om opstelonderwerpe te verstaan en te interpreteer. Paragraafindeling is ook 'n uitdaging. Vir diegene wat paragrawe bemeester het, ontbreek die verbindingswoorde wat die opstel se vloei benadeel. Die graad 10-leerders se opstelle het baie spelfoute gehad. Voorbeeld: 'legodu' in plaas van 'le~~h~~odu'. Dit was ook verwarrend vir hulle wanneer om voornaamwoorde en naamwoorde te gebruik. Hulle het die naamwoord herhaal in die ondersteunende sinne in plaas daarvan om die voornaamwoord te gebruik.

Die gevolgtrekkings van die studie asook aanbevelings van die bevindings sal dus tot gevolg hê dat die onderwyser vaardighede vir opstelskryf effektief en doeltreffend sal kan inskakel gedurende die klaskamer situasie.

## SLEUTELWOORDE

- Die proses van skryf (Skryfproses)
- Spinnerak (Breinkaart)
- Opsteltipes
- Skryfvaardighede
- Denkskrum
- Klaskamer-observasie
- Vraelyste
- Bevindings
- Gevolgtrekkings
- Aanbevelings

## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

NCS	National Curriculum Statement
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development
CLA	Critical Language Awareness
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation
Org	Organization
Fig	Figure
HTML	Hypertext Mark-up Language
WWW	World Wide Web
LP	Language Policy
SAG	Subject Assessment Guidelines

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# **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

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## **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

From this study it has been established that most of the Grade 10 learners do not have the skill to write a meaningful essay. This is revealed by their introduction, which is incoherent, their poor word choice, wrong sentence construction, illogical paragraphing, i.e. the body paragraphs and conclusion paragraphs that are not well structured. Furthermore, the learners hardly use figures of speech, idioms and proverbs in their essays. The prescribed length of an essay is also not adhered to by the learners. The educator's need to put their focus on skills of essay writing to enable the learners to write creatively using their initiative in writing essays in Sepedi as a Home-Language. The focus of this study is to determine to what extent the teachers teach learners pre-writing activities and skills in writing essays and to find out if learners are competent in these areas. The study will help in honing the teachers teaching skills in essay writing thus in turn equipping learners with appropriate skills in essay writing.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

According to Brown (2002:1), 'an essay is a formal, structured piece of writing which makes a statement on a topic or question and which supports this statement throughout with information and ideas'. By 'formal', Brown asserts that it cannot be written haphazardly without following a specific structure and consolidating its main ideas with its supporting ideas so that they adhere to the chosen topic.

Essay writing is a stepping stone to broaden the learner's intellect because it helps the learner to plan, create and synthesize information that will form a whole. This will enable the learners to have the correct choice of words that are relevant to the topic they have chosen and to use appropriate idioms and proverbs to enhance language proficiency in Sepedi. Essay writing skills need to be well mastered because they form a strong foundation for creative writing, especially in a secondary school

context. The skills that they learn in writing essays at High School level are life-long skills that they will use in both the academic world and the corporate world to prepare presentations and draft reports, for example. Acquiring skills to write an essay will broaden the learner's educational boundaries in the sense that they will be able to further their studies with ease being able to write proposals, different books and articles. According to Murray and Johnson (1994:1) essay writing is a process which involves:

the establishment of its purpose, gathering of ideas and information, organization of ideas and information, drafting and revising it, writing up ideas, expressing them accurately, referring to sources, editing drafts, writing and presenting a final version.

This means that it is important to know why an essay has to be written and how ideas are to be collected and arranged. Furthermore, an essay has to be brainstormed, rechecked and revised repeatedly, until a final draft is presented.

Acquiring the skill of essay writing trains a learner to think logically and prepares him or her to be a prominent public speaker or a skilled writer. This study is based on an assumption that learners find it difficult to consolidate their thoughts and to adhere to a prescribed length when writing an essay. This problem may be exacerbated by a number of factors, such as the traditional way of teaching essay writing - just giving a topic and expecting the learners to write a good essay without further pointers.

### **1.3 THE RATIONALE**

For the past 12 years I have been involved in learner's assessment as a senior marker and a chief marker for the Grade 12 examinations. My main concern is the learners' poor performance in Paper 3 (Creative Writing) which involves essay writing. The important factors that prompted me to embark on this study were: firstly the learners' unsatisfactory performance in essay writing. Secondly, they were losing a lot of marks in the examination and that could affect their future career intentions.

As a result of this observation, I am interested in finding out how educators teach essay writing skills before a full-fledged essay is written.

Another reason that I assume could be causing poor performance in essay writing may also be the result of the influence of other languages on the standard Sepedi. Other scholars, such as Malimabe (1990:120) and Calteaux (1996:187) have conducted research on code-switching and code-mixing. It is generally assumed that this has a negative impact on learners' essay writing. Malimabe (1990:12) further agrees that this 'occurs as a result of industrialization and urban migration' which results in languages influencing each other. When learners of different languages and cultural backgrounds are situated in the same vicinity, this will affect their language competency, especially in essay writing.

#### **1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

When one writes an essay, one should consider process writing, not just product writing. As a subject advisor, I am interested in observing whether the educators teach process writing to the learners and how they teach it to their learners. Process writing entails the consideration of a number of steps before an essay can be started, completed and be meaningful. In process writing, one does not produce a final product at once. This view is also endorsed by Swanepoel (1990:11), who argues that:

Process writing is not a one way system of writing because it needs moving back and forth from general statements to specific details such as facts, examples, descriptions, illustrations, reasons, causes, effects, comparisons and contrasts.

Therefore there is no way in which one can write an essay without following a specific process that involves planning. However, it has been assumed that learners were not trained to implement essay process writing. That is why not all learners are capable of writing a two-page essay. It has also been observed that during

examinations, some of the learners write a full-fledged essay first before working out the mind-map plan.

From the points mentioned above, it seems that teachers do not always teach learners how to write an essay in an appropriate manner. The traditional way of teaching essay writing still seems to prevail in the classroom. The traditional way of teaching is the one in which the educator instructs learners to write an essay without briefing them. This is evident when the selected topic is not presented clearly, when the purpose of essay writing is not properly explained, when the length and mark allocation are not clearly stated, and essay type topics are given to the learners just to occupy them while the educator is busy with other activities such as marking other work.

The proper teaching of process writing in essays will have a positive impact on the final product because learners will have the correct writing skills in order for them to write a full-fledged essay. Thus it is important that educators be equipped to teach learners the appropriate writing skills.

## **1.5 THE AIM OF THE STUDY**

The aim of this study is to determine:

- (a) How different types of essays are taught,
- (b) How essay pre-writing activities are taught to the learners by the educators before a full-fledged essay is written, and
- (c) How learners are taught to write a full-fledged essay.

## **1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The study will help educators in honing the learners' skills in writing different types of essays and how to use idioms and proverbs that are relevant to each type of essay in improving Sepedi language proficiency. Failure to write an essay of the required length during examinations, is also an indication that the learner's vocabulary and use of idiomatic language is lacking. This research study will empower the educators

in teaching essay writing skills to be able to teach the learners to be efficient in writing essays.

## 1.7 LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Quina (1989:5), the effective teaching of essay writing involves the sharing of:

Experience between students and the teacher, imparting information and critical thinking skills to others, guiding students to be critical thinkers and enabling them to evaluate their world, the art of showing, sharing and exploring aspects of life and helping students to find knowledge within them. This means essay writing must not be used as punishment to keep learners quiet but a joint venture on the part of both the educator and the learner in the teaching and learning situation.

It is clear that the first time an educator teaches skills in writing an essay, he/she has to tap into the learners' knowledge and guide the learners to use their critical thinking in, for example, brainstorming a topic before writing takes place.

According to NCS which is the National Curriculum Statement (2002:20), there are six types of essays to be taught to learners in Grade 12 before they sit for their final examination. The Department of education has 'Guidelines for Teaching and Writing Essays and Transactional Texts (2011:5-8) which states six different types of essays and how they are to be taught. They need different skills for them to be written meaningfully. According to Fletcher (1990:27) the **narrative essay**, which involves 'story telling', needs the skill of writing long sentences, the repetition of words to show movement and logic of facts. The story teller must have skill to make the audience visualize what he/she is narrating about. This is done through the correct choice and usage of words. For example, one cannot just say 'yesterday it was cold' if it was extremely cold, but one will say 'yesterday it was ice cold'. The word 'ice' helps the audience to visualize and feel the type of coldness which was experienced.

This idea is reiterated by Ramagoshi (2011:69) which states that “A meaningful sentence is the most important unit in any exchange of ideas. Educators should make a point of inculcating a sense for sentences in learners, since many learners have a very poor concept of what a sentence involves”. According to Ramagoshi (ibid), a long sentence can be used to create an atmosphere of leisure or happiness. Furthermore, they can also convey a feeling of tranquility. She gives the following example of a long sentence appropriate in writing a narrative essay:

*Monnamogolo Motshweneng o ne a ile kwa lebentleleng fa a rakana le mosadi wa Mosweu yo o mo thapileng.*

(Old man Motshweneng was going to the store when he met a White woman who hired him).

In the **discursive essay** the educator must have the skill to show learners that this essay needs both the negative and positive aspects of the topic and that ideas are not one sided. Given a topic like, ‘Discuss the impact of English as a medium of instruction in schools’, the educator must have the skill to show to the learners that English as a medium of instruction has a number of advantages and disadvantages which are to be included in essay writing. Here the **contrasting skill** has to be used. For example, learners may be given a chance to tabulate all the advantages and disadvantages of English as a medium of instruction on the chalkboard or in groups before the real writing about the topic can take place.

In an **Analytical essay**, according to Fletcher (1990:56), one must have the skill to ‘separate the topic into parts or components in order to examine and understand it more fully’. For example, the topic may be ‘Analyse the impact of drugs on youth in secondary schools’. Here the educator as well as the learners must have the skill to explain every word in the topic so that learners know what is expected of them. In reality, no essay can be executed correctly without both the teacher and the learners understanding the words they use for a topic and their meanings. If the educator allows learners to tell the story about a drug addict, they shall have missed the theme of the essay by not having analysed the impact of drugs. Here the educator is expected to explain to the learners how drugs change the life of a learner in secondary school.

In an **argumentative essay** Fletcher (1990:65) agrees that one must have the skill to assume one viewpoint of an argument and to defend that viewpoint with valid facts and not opinions. For example, if the topic 'Do you think corporal punishment is necessary in schools?' is given, one must have the skill to explain what corporal punishment is, and its value or its disadvantages to the reader to the extent that the reader will visualize its importance or its disadvantages. In the **expository essay** the writer must have the skill to explain a topic in a sound and straightforward manner. The writer must further be able to present a fair and balanced investigation of the topic based on facts.

According to Mclean (2011: 127), when one writes a **descriptive essay** one must have the skill to describe persons, places, objects, experiences or events as clearly as possible. Pemberton (1993:129) also agrees that in a descriptive essay one must have the skill to 'create mental images by appealing to the reader's senses'. The writer must have the skill to arouse all the five senses of sight, touch, taste, smell, and feeling when describing a thing or an event in order to make readers a part of the event. For example if the topic is 'The accident which I will not forget', the reader must be able to visualize the accident in reality because of the way the writer has chosen and used his/her words. This type of essay needs the use of short sentences. Ramagoshi (2011:95) is of the opinion that 'short sentences can be used to create an atmosphere of suspense and anticipation' as it will be explained later.

Language needs to be polished by correcting grammar, making sentences flow, editing, and proofreading it until the essay not only sounds and reads well but flows logically.

A skill is the ability to do something well following specific steps. For one to show essay writing skills one must show creative and organizational skills of writing. Besides the skill of knowing which words and type of sentences one has to use, the other skill that goes with essay writing before a full-fledged essay is written is the pre-writing skill. The type of sentences mentioned above are part of pre-writing skills one needs. The other pre-writing skills entail for example, an activity where the learners are given the five senses and they must describe different things like sound, taste, etc., in an African language. For example:



Sense of Smell: Describe a sweet smell and a bad smell

Sense of Hearing: Sit very quietly, and listen to all the sounds you can hear. Describe them as you hear the sounds. Ramagoshi (2011:61).

Reduction of wordiness: *Boitumelo o ne a gakgamala fa a bona lorato lwa ga Thabang lo fofa jaaka kala e e tlhotlhoregileng matlhare.*

*(Boitumelo was surprised to see Thabang's love flying like a branch without leaves.)*

Instead of

*Boitumelo o ne a sala a tshwere diphofa nonyane (Thabang) e fofile.*

(Boitumelo was left holding the feathers while the bird (Thabang) has long flown away. (Idiomatic expression literal translation).

Using one word instead of a sentence: *Mosadi yo o swetsweng ke monna* instead of *Motlhologadi.*

(The woman whom her husband has passed away, instead of a widow).

These are just some of the examples given for pre-writing. More of the pre-writing skills will be elaborated on in detail in Chapter 2.

A very significant skill called a spider web diagram is a skill which is advocated by Duncan and Clearly (1997:97). According to Duncan and Clearly 'writing an essay has to begin with one idea and related ideas that sprout threads to other ideas which become their own webs'. To create a spider web diagram requires only a single word or concept, or topic written either on a chalkboard or on a piece of paper with a circle around it. This type of skill has to involve the learners in the sense that the educator has to ask learners to identify the key word or phrase in the chosen topic. For example if the topic says 'discuss the challenges which youths are facing at present in the country'. The learners will choose 'challenges' as the key word. The learners are to write that keyword in the middle of a page and brainstorm other words which are linked to challenges of the youth and write them around the key word 'challenges', for example unemployment, crime, peer pressure, drug abuse,

diseases, etc. These words which are linked to the key word can be written in the form of a diagram. Those words are to be included in the formation of the introductory paragraph, body paragraphs, and the conclusion paragraph. The above mentioned skills will be elaborated on in detail in Chapter 2.

From their selected words which are linked to the key word 'challenges', learners are to write their own short main ideas. For example, they may say 'most of the youths are unemployed', 'youths are involved in crime', 'they are faced with peer pressure', 'they are faced with illiteracy', 'they are involved in drug abuse', and/or 'they are also infected with diseases'. They are to create a paragraph for every main idea using supporting sentences. This will be explained in full in the recommendations.

In drafting an essay which is a skill, Rodseth (1992:88) accepts that 'for writing a meaningful essay the writer has to discuss the topic with friends, colleagues and lecturers and developing his ideas by debating them with others'. Debating ideas with others will help him to refine and order them logically. Debating is also a skill because it involves listening to the speaker and responding to his/her ideas with facts in a logical way. According to Murray and Johnson (1994:66) good essay writing needs the skill of revision and editing. Essay writing is "concerned with the development and organization of ideas and making sure that the argument is clear and logical" and the learners can do this through revising and editing their essay with the assistance of the educator. This means writing an essay as a once off process leaves much to be desired, because it will have a lot of errors which will need to be rectified.

McGraw (1986:156) agrees that essay writing needs the skill to be able to structure paragraphs and make them logical. Paragraphs are to be categorized into the introduction, body and conclusion. According to him, 'the opening paragraph is the reader's first contact with the writer's intention'. I differ from him because to me, the first contact with the essay writer has to be a meaningful topic which can be easily understood by learners.

Learners must have the skill to know how to present their paragraphs logically. Using the given topic 'challenges facing the youths', the first paragraph after the introduction may be peer pressure, followed by drug abuse, followed by diseases,

followed by illiteracy, followed by unemployment which results in crime. The skill of sharing ideas as stated by Quina (1989:5) between the educator and learners has to be ensured. He goes on to say that 'the sharing of experience between students and the teacher in the form of imparting information and critical thinking skills, and guiding them to be critical thinkers and enabling them to evaluate their world will also help learners to find knowledge in themselves'. In sharing ideas it means the educator needs to ask students open ended questions so the students can learn to use critical thinking skills and think in terms of other ideas on the subject. This challenges the youths in facing their present problems.

Mgabadelo (1999:40) is of the idea that planning is a skill that will assist learners to make their essays meaningful. According to her essay writing is a process which needs thorough planning which includes pre-writing, drafting, brainstorming and making a list of a chain of ideas. She emphasises that there is no way by which meaningful and fascinating ideas can be brought to light in the form of an essay without planning. Both Fongoqa (2002:24) and Mgabadelo (1999:46) are of the same opinion that process writing in essay writing is very important. Fongoqa (ibid) furthermore, emphasizes that when the essay writer knows his role as a writer, he has to know even the audience he writes for and the skill of writing he has to apply for those readers. Knowing his role means he also knows the reason why he is writing an essay. Knowing the audience means to whom the essay is directed. Knowing the audience will assist the writer to make meaningful word choices which are suitable to the audience or readers. In addition, the prescribed length and clarity on mark allocation will also motivate the learner to write a meaningful essay as discussed by Fongoqa (2002:24).

If learners are sharing skills of essay writing in the form of making groups and discussing their ideas, as stated by Quina (1989:5), this will enhance the effective way of teaching essay writing which also involves the sharing of experience between learners and the teacher. The teacher will guide learners to be great thinkers and enable them to evaluate the world and in so doing also acquire the skill to negotiate.

The National Curriculum Statement (2002:36), the LP which is the Language Policy and the SAG which is the Subject Assessment Guideline documents, are documents that educators have to use in guiding them to teach process writing. However, it

seems as if these documents of teaching how essay writing is done are not properly used or they are not used at all. This is the reason why the researcher has embarked on this topic.

## **1.8 METHODOLOGY**

Both qualitative and quantitative methods of research will be used in this investigation. Qualitative methods of research are employed in many different academic disciplines. Since their aim is to provide an in-depth understanding of human behaviour and the reasons that govern such behaviour, this method will assist to uncover why the Grade 10 learners do not perform well in their essay writing and what can be done to minimise the problem. This method will be carried out in the form of observing the selected learners in the teaching and learning situation. The behaviour of those learners will be recorded and compared with the behaviour of other learners in other schools. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2001:101) this research method often starts with general research questions rather than a specific hypothesis and is followed by the collection of an 'extensive amount of verbal data collection from a small number of participants', which in this case will be the Grade 10 learners.

Quantitative research methods refer to the systematic empirical investigation of social or educational phenomena via statistical or numerical data. Quantitative research methods are conducted for the purpose of obtaining empirical evaluations of attitudes, behaviour or performance designed to generate projectable numerical data about a topic as stated in '[www.jrconsulting.net/free articles 21.html](http://www.jrconsulting.net/free_articles/21.html)', accessed 1 January 2014. The quantitative strategy is the size of sample groups and the targeted classes which are discussed in more detail below.

Through a quantitative research method, variables are quantified, i.e. essays of both boys and girls as Grade 10 learners of equal quantities (50 learners comprising of 25 boys and 25 girls which will be 10 learners per school consisting of 5 girls and 5 boys from each school), will be compared to obtain greater clarity on how skills in essay writing are taught in the classroom by the teacher. Moreover, using the qualitative research method, data will be objectively analysed, evaluated, synthesized and interpreted to determine the extent to which the teaching of skills for essay writing

have an influence on writing meaningful essays. The results from the quantitative research feedback will determine the extent to which the quality of teaching essay writing has to be improved.

## **1.9 DATA COLLECTION**

This study will be conducted at 5 different schools, ranging from urban to, semi-rural and rural schools in the Gauteng North Circuit. These schools are from Silverton, Cullinan and Ekangala areas. Data will be collected from the observation of 10 learners per school for Grade 10, making up a total of 50 learners from 5 different schools. Those 10 learners per school will consist of 5 girls and 5 boys in each school. Questionnaires will be given to both learners and educators to assist in the collection of data. The data collected will help in answering the research questions. Permission will be requested from the Department of Education in the Gauteng North Circuit, the Circuit Manager, as well as Principals of the schools to conduct this research in the designated areas. Informed consent will be sought from the parents or guardians of the participants. Assent from participants will also be sought. Learner's portfolios will be collected and perused at each school to determine to what extent different types of essays are taught by the educator and also ascertain the extent to which pre-writing essay activities are taught to the learners before a full-fledged essay is written and educators begin marking it.

Each school will be assigned a different type of essay to write. For example: school A will be writing descriptive essays, while other schools will be writing the other different types of essays. In this manner the five different types of essays will be covered.

## **1.10 DATA ANALYSIS**

From the outset of the research the data collected will be analyzed immediately. In a case study method, as in any other qualitative study, data collection and analysis occur concurrently. The questionnaire's data will be scrutinised more than twice and transcribed in a table format without compromising the language and body inflections to facilitate data analysis. Recurring patterns will be noted and arranged into themes. These will ensure credibility and dependability of the study and its findings. Upon

discrepancies, the participants may check their responses in the respective questionnaires. Participants will thus be able to reflect on their responses and perhaps even clarify further what they wanted to convey or edit their responses.

### **1.11 RANDOM SAMPLING**

According to (Hughes 1936:205), sampling involves observing a portion of a population in order to draw a conclusion about the entire population. According to him this is a useful method for making justifiable claims about what trends can be found in a population without observing each and every member. He states that when a sample of a population is used as the evidence from which he draws a conclusion about the whole population, his reasoning will be in the form of an inductive generalization.

According to Somekh and Lewin (2005:217), random sampling is the simplest strategy in which each population member has an equal chance of selection through 'pulling names from a hat' or assigning each member a unique number and using random number generators. In this research, the learner portfolios will be selected by way of random sampling from their attendance registers, i.e. five male learners and five female learners in Grade 10 of each of the schools selected. This will be done by putting all names of Grade 10 girls in a hat and selecting only 5 girls per school and putting all the names of Grade 10 boys in another hat and selecting only 5 boys per school. Subsequently the identified learners will be given a questionnaire to determine their skills for essay writing. The selected Sepedi language educators will also be required to fill in questionnaires to establish skills they use in the teaching of essay writing.

### **1.12 CLASSROOM OBSERVATION**

According to Stangor (2011:132), both acknowledged and unacknowledged observers have an impact to the person(s) observed. This means that if either the learner or the educator starts to realize that he/she is being observed and the recording is taking place, the observed person or learner will start behaving in a way that he/she thinks is acceptable. If he/she realises, on the other hand, that nobody is observing him/her, he/she will relax and behave as usual. Therefore, in this study the

researcher will observe the teaching of essays which will be taking place in the classroom. The aim is to observe if skills for essay writing are taught in the teaching of essays. After observation, both the educator and the learners will be given questionnaires to complete regarding how they approach essay writing.

### **1.13 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Maxwell (1998), says a theoretical framework is a structure that helps in aligning research ideas, which researchers use in their studies. The theoretical framework also helps to approve expectations and opinions one has about a research topic. The theoretical framework for this study is based on constructivism. Constructivism is a theory based on the observation and scientific study about how people learn. It argues that people build their own view and knowledge of the world, through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences. (© 2004 Educational Broadcasting Corporation). Among the educators, philosophers and psychologists who have added new perspectives to constructivist learning theory and practice are Piaget, Vygotsky, Bruner, and Ausubel:

Hmelo-Silver (2004:1) in his/her research explains constructivism in short as follows:

*Constructivism, which is perspective in education, is based on experimental learning through real life experience to construct and conditionalize knowledge. It is problem based, adaptive learning, that challenges faulty schema, integrates new knowledge with existing knowledge, and allows for creation of original work or innovative procedures.*

This explanation paraphrases constructivism as a theory that proves that if you show the learners *how* things are done, they will remember instead of telling them *what* to do. For that matter, constructivism is about constructing new knowledge. The educator teaches small groups of learners who come up with specific analysis techniques and work towards solutions of the open-ended problem. D'Angelo (2014:7) is of the idea that, 'students benefit from this type of teaching because they are given a chance for making decisions as part of their learning process and



because they experience and address different viewpoints'. Learners get an opportunity to discuss a case using their knowledge, previous experiences and perspectives to elucidate the problem. Learners will be involved in arguments based on the interpretation of the case. As a result these will nourish their understanding of the case they are eager to solve.

Jean Piaget- 1896-1980: Cognitive constructivism is linked to the work of Piaget, which deals with how one learner understands things according to developmental stages and learning styles. According to Hmelo-Silver (2004:2), Jean Piaget found that the way a child learns and thinks change as they develop into adulthood. Knowledge, according to Piaget exists not only in the outside world, or in the adult, but is inborn in the child. Constructivists are of the idea that learning is affected by the context in which an idea is taught as well as by the student's beliefs and attitudes (Piaget, 1965). Piaget (1954) is of the view that children construct knowledge of the world through assimilation and accommodation, but he stressed biological maturity as an essential condition.

Jerome Bruner 1960: The other theorist who fabricated on Piaget's theory of constructivism is Bruner (1960:7). He alleged that the idea of structure is very imperative. Bruner and Piaget are of the view that we develop our intelligence by trying to make sense of the new ideas that we find in the form of a specific structure. Bruner upholds the view that when learners are helped in the overall pattern of structure, they are more likely to understand principles that can be used in different situations.

Social constructivism is related to the work of Vygotsky (1962) who stressed that meaning and understanding grow out of social encounters. Lev Vygotsky, an education psychologist, concurs with many aspects of Piaget's work but stresses cultural and social influence on cognitive development (Vygotsky, 1986). Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism stresses the interaction of children with other people in cognitive development. His theoretical concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978) expresses his belief that cognitive development is directly related to social development. This difference between a child's actual mental age and level they reach in solving problems with assistance indicates the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1986). For that matter, most



constructivists advocate instructional intervention that will not only match but also hasten student's cognitive development.

If somebody studies theorists who support constructivism at present, which is the basis of what is regarded as good teaching and learning, he still finds traces or a continuation of what was started by theorists such as Piaget, Bruner and Vygotsky. The recent researchers are of the idea that the child's experiences at home and school form the basis of her or his learning.

People like (Badders (2007:1), Gravett (2005:19) and Newby, Stepich, Lehman and Russell (2006:34), are of the idea that learning in constructivism instigates the learners to be taught that learning is an active process of building meaning for oneself. Learners already have their own experiences which they have already learned before going to school. They merge the new ideas or information taught at school, into their already existing conceptual framework. This interpretation is further echoed by Schocolnik, Kol and Abarbanel (2006:12), who maintained the idea that constructivism, is a theory of learning, which inspires learners to learn by actively constructing their own knowledge.

In addition, knowledge under constructivism is not seen as a product to be transferred from expert to learner, but rather as a construct to be mended together through an active process of involvement and interaction with the environment.

In the view of this discussion, the research will look at how teachers teach learners pre-essay activities and skills in writing full-fledged essays.

## **1.14 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS**

### **CHAPTER 1**

In Chapter 1, the following was discussed: Introduction, Background Study, The Rationale, Problem Statement, Aim of the study, Significance of this Study, Literature review, Methodology, Data Collection, Data Analysis, Random Sampling, Classroom Observation, Theoretical Framework and Delineation of chapters.

## **CHAPTER 2**

This chapter deals with an in-depth discussion of the literature review related to essay writing skills.

## **CHAPTER 3**

Chapter 3 deals with data collected through the classroom observation, the learners' questionnaires and the educators' questionnaires. The questionnaires were analysed to determine how the skills for essay writing are used to assist learners to write meaningful essays.

## **CHAPTER 4**

Chapter 4 comprises the findings, analysis and the interpretation from Grade 10 essays of both boys and girls.

## **CHAPTER 5**

This is the concluding chapter. It provides a recapitulation which is a summary of all the chapters as well the conclusion and recommendations.

## **CHAPTER 2: AN IN - DEPTH DISCUSSION OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW RELATED TO ESSAY WRITING SKILLS**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The aim of this chapter is to give an in-depth review of the literature that deals with essay writing skills in detail and to explain why those skills are important in the writing of an essay.

The National Curriculum Statement (2002:36) emphasises that all learners in a normal stream school should be taught all the six types of essays before they complete Grade 12. Those essays include narrative, discursive, analytical, argumentative, expository and descriptive essays.

### **2.2 SKILLS TO WRITE DIFFERENT TYPES OF ESSAYS**

#### **2.2.1 The narrative essay**

Fletcher (1990:27) emphasised that the characteristics of the narrative essay comprises of 'story telling, the ability to write long sentences, the skill to repeat words which display movement and to present facts logically. The narrator must have the ability to create images in the minds of the reader or the audience. This is enabled by the correct choice and usage of words. For example by simply stating that 'yesterday Peter was happy' (if he was very happy) the aim to awaken the senses will be missed. However, should it be said that 'yesterday Peter was over the moon', the phrase over the moon would help the audience to have an imagery of the type of happiness he experienced. The Department of Basic Education Guidelines for teaching and Writing Essays and Transactional Texts (2011:5) emphasises that 'A successful narrative vividly highlights sensory details such as sight, sound, taste, smell and tactile sensations'.

In conclusion, the writer of the narrative essay has to portray the skill of imagery so that the reader or the audience would have the picture of what is narrated about.

### **2.2.2 The discursive essay**

The Department of Basic Education Guidelines for teaching and Writing Essays and Transactional Texts (2011:7) defines discursive essay as follows:

The discursive essay has to be objective and aims to give a balanced view of both sides of the argument. The essay must be well-reasoned and well-supported with facts and not opinions.

For example, if the learners are given the topic like, 'Discuss the impact of policemen in the society', the educator must have the skill to ascertain that the learners are able to relate obtained knowledge about policemen by reasoning and arguing rather than using intuition. This will help the teacher to notice that the learners do not pass aimlessly from one subject to another without giving relevant facts on the topic.

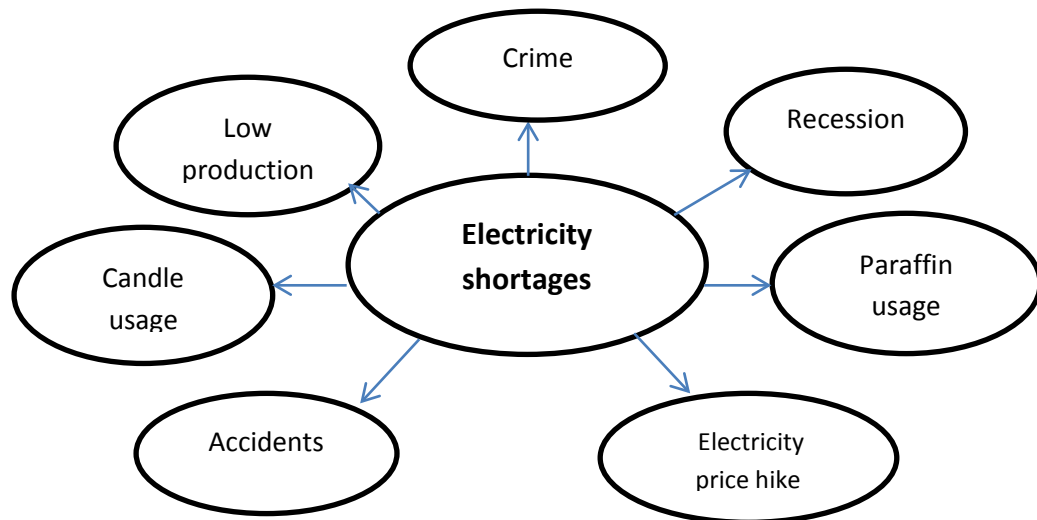
### **2.2.3 Analytical essay**

In an analytical essay, Fletcher (1990:56) is of the opinion that:

The writer must use the skill to break the topic into parts or components in order to examine and comprehend it more fully.

For example, if the topic is 'Analyse the impact of electricity shortages in the community.' The educator and learners should have the ability to understand the meaning and explanation of all the words which constitute the topic. This will enable them to clearly make the readers understand the impact electricity shortage has in the community because they would have explored the central idea or question based on the topic and how the learners are engaged with the topic.

This confirms that no essay can be written clearly if both the educator and learners are unable to interpret the words used in a topic. The educator has to allow learners to brainstorm the topic so that it can be easy for them to write. The following words may come out during brainstorming: crime, recession, low production, accidents, electricity price hike, candle usage, paraffin usage, etc. This can be diagrammatically represented in the form of mind map as follows:



**Figure 1**

A dictionary can be used to find out the meaning of the complex words which constitute the topic so that learners can write what they understand. Learners have to be taught to make better choice of words which gives a clear picture of the problems caused by electricity shortages.

#### **2.2.4 Argumentative essay**

The Department of Basic Education Guidelines for teaching and Writing Essays and Transactional Texts (2011:7), emphasises that ‘in an argumentative essay, the writer has a specific opinion or viewpoint and argues to defend or motivate his or her position’. This is supported by Fletcher (1990:65) who agrees that one must have the ability to take side when arguing and be able to support one’s viewpoints with valid facts and not opinions. For example, if an essay is to be written about the topic ‘Do you think alcohol is necessary in schools?’ by learners, they must have the ability to

explain what alcohol is, and its values or detriments to the reader to the extent that one has the image of its dangers or values. If the learner agrees that alcohol is not necessary in schools, he or she must take the standpoint throughout the essay regardless of the opposition even if one runs short of facts. In conclusion, when one engages in an argumentative essay which usually involves emotions, convincing facts with supporting ideas one's point of view to be given for one's standpoint.

### **2.2.5 Expository essay**

According to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GR4lunWz-jU>(February 6, February 2014) accessed 17 November 2015:

The expository essay is a genre of essay that requires the student to investigate an idea, evaluate evidence, expound on the idea, and set forth an argument concerning that idea in a clear and concise manner

This type of an essay needs facts and not the writer's opinions. For example, if the topic is, 'Women cause more accidents than men'. The writer of the essay will need to go to institutions like Road Accident Fund and ask for statistics of accidents caused by men and women and evaluate the evidence. The findings will help the writer in her arguments to agree or dispute this fact. The Department of Basic Education Guidelines for Teaching and Writing Essays and Transactional Texts (2011:6), stresses that this 'is a factual essay in which the writer explains ideas or give facts in a systematic way'. An expository essay needs to be well researched and ideas are to be supported with facts and not opinions.

### **2.2 Descriptive essay**

The Department of Basic Education Guidelines for Teaching and Writing Essays and Transactional Texts (2011:6), 'in a descriptive essay, the writer describes something to allow the reader to experience the topic being described as vividly as possible'. In this case, figures of speech like imagery, metaphor and simile are the best constituents in the descriptive essay to portray pictures in the minds of the readers.

In this essay, the choice of words should be exceptionally accurate to arouse senses of sight, sound, hearing, taste and touch. This is supported by Pemberton (1993:129) that in a descriptive essay, one must have the skill to ‘create mental images by appealing to the readers’ senses’. For example, if the writer has to ‘describe lovers in paradise’, the setting must be designed to make the reader visualises the image of real lovers in a real paradise with green grass, red and white clothes, juicy yoghurts with strawberries which will make the passer-by feel hungry. When the guy rolls the strawberry into the yoghurt and gently pushing it into the lady’s mouth, that picture must be vivid in our minds even the taste of the munched strawberry must be felt sliding down our throats. In conclusion, the writer of a descriptive essay must have the skill to make the reader or audience feel that he or she was there when the events were taking place.

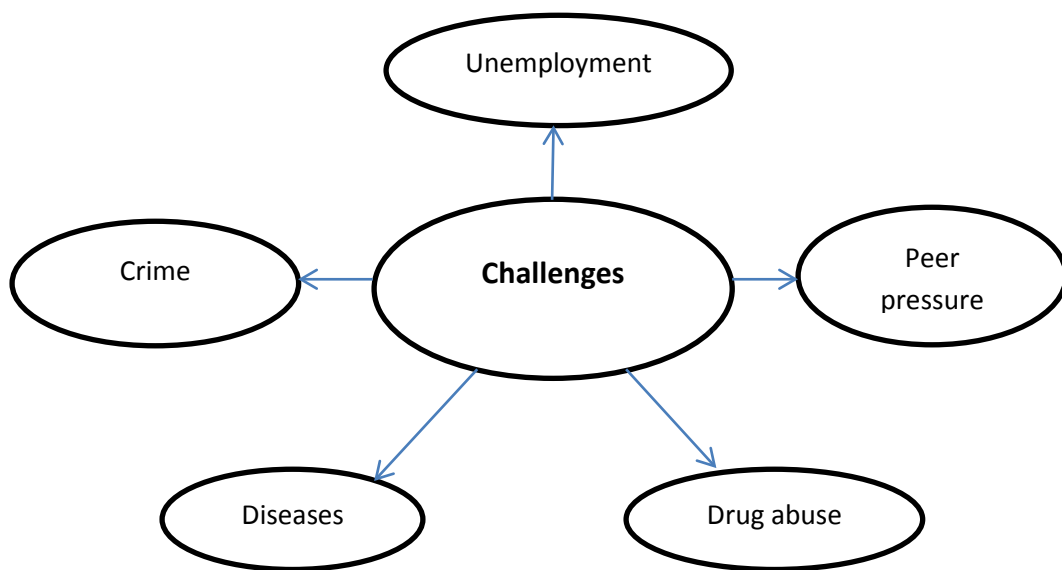
## **2.3 DIFFERENT SKILLS OF ESSAY WRITING**

### **2.3.1 The spider web diagram skill**

A very important skill called a spider web diagram is the one which is advocated by Duncan and Clearly (1997:97). According to both Duncan and Clearly ‘writing an essay has to begin with one idea and related ideas that sprout threads to other ideas, which become their own webs’. To create a spider web diagram requires only a single word or concept, or topic written either on a chalkboard or on a piece of paper with a circle around it. This type of skill has to involve the learners in the sense that the educator has to ask learners to identify the key word or phrase in the chosen topic. For example, if the topic says ‘discuss the challenges which youths are facing at present in the country’, the learners will choose ‘challenges’ as the key word. The learners are to write that keyword in the middle of a page and brainstorm other words which are linked to *challenges* of the youth and write them around the key word. For example, around the keyword ‘challenges’ they will write words like unemployment, crime, peer pressure, drug abuse, diseases, etc. These words which are linked to the key word can be written in the form of a diagram. Those words are to be included in the formation of the introductory paragraph, body paragraphs and the concluding paragraph.

From their chosen words which are linked to the key word ‘challenges’ learners are to write their own short main ideas. For example, they will say ‘most of the youths are unemployed’, ‘youths are involved in crime’, ‘they are faced with peer pressure’, ‘they are faced with illiteracy’, ‘they are involved in drug abuse’, and ‘they are also infected with diseases’. They are to create a paragraph in every main idea using supporting sentences. This will be explained in full in the recommendations.

An example of a diagrammatic representation of a spider web is as follows:



**Figure 2**

### **2.3.2 The drafting skill and debating skill**

In drafting an essay which is a skill, Rodseth (1992:88) argues that ‘for writing a meaningful essay the writer has to discuss the topic with friends, colleagues and lecturers and developing his ideas by debating them with others’. Debating ideas with them will help the writer to refine and order them logically. Debating is also a skill because it involves listening to the speaker and responding to his ideas with facts in a logical way. According to Murray and Johnson (1994:66) good essay writing needs the skill of revision and editing. These skills are ‘concerned with the development and organization of ideas and making sure that the argument is clear



and logical' and the learners can do this through revising and editing their essay with the assistance of the educator. This means writing an essay as a once off process leaves much to be desired, because it will have a lot of errors, which will need to be rectified.

### **2.3.3. The skill to structure paragraphs**

McGraw (1986:156) agrees that essay writing needs the skills to structure paragraphs and make them logical. Those paragraphs are to be categorised into the introduction, body and conclusion. According to him, 'the opening paragraph is the reader's first contact with the writer's intention'.

Learners must have the skill to know how to make their paragraphs logical. Using the given topic 'challenges facing the youths', the first paragraph after the introduction will be peer pressure, followed by drug abuse, followed by diseases, followed by illiteracy, followed by unemployment which results in crime. Learners have to know that every paragraph has a main idea which in most cases appears at the beginning of the paragraph. This main idea or main sentence has to be supported by supporting ideas or sentences which are linked to the main idea. The supporting ideas are to be logical and to the point. When the paragraph is completed, it means that the main idea is fully supported with supporting ideas. This makes the writer to start another new paragraph using the same procedure. When a new paragraph has to be started, linking words of the paragraphs are to be used to connect the previous paragraph with the new one in order to maintain the logic of an essay. Examples of those paragraphs' linking words or transition words will include furthermore, thereafter, finally, in conclusion, etc. which (Go tloga moo, morago ga fao, mafelelong, go rumeng, bjalobjalo in Sepedi).

As stated by Quina (1989:5) the skill of sharing ideas between the educator and learners has to be ensured. He further states that 'the sharing of experience between students and the teacher, in the form of imparting information and critical thinking skills and guiding them to be critical thinkers enables them to evaluate their world and this will also help learners to find knowledge in themselves'. This means essay writing must not be used as a form of punishment to keep learners quiet in the classroom but a joint venture on the part of both the educator and the learner in the

teaching and learning situation. In sharing ideas it means that the educator has to tell learners his experience about *challenges* which youths are facing at present and the learner has to do the same.

#### **2.3.4 Brainstorming as a skill**

The isiXhosa African writer Mgabadeli (1999:40) agrees that planning is a skill that will assist learners to make their essays meaningful. She says that essay writing is a process which needs thorough planning which includes pre-writing, drafting, brainstorming and making a list of chain of ideas. She reiterates that there is no way by which meaningful and fascinating ideas can be brought to light in the form of an essay without planning. The brainstorming skill as part of planning is important in the sense that if an essay topic is given to the learners, the topic has to be brainstormed, before they can start writing. After brainstorming the topic, words are explained then used in sentences. The sentences are then arranged into introduction, body and conclusion.

Both Fongoqa (2002:24) and Mgabadeli (1999:46) are of the opinion that process writing in essay writing is very important. Fongoqa (ibid) furthermore, emphasizes that when the essay writer knows his role as a writer, he has to know even the audience he has to write for and the skill of writing he has to apply for those readers. Knowing his role means, he knows the reason why he is writing an essay. Knowing the audience means he knows to whom the essay is directed. Knowing the audience will assist the writer to make meaningful word choices which are suitable to the audience or readers. In addition, the prescribed length and clarity on mark allocation will also motivate the learner to write a meaningful essay Fongoqa (2002:24).

#### **2.3.5 The skill to negotiate or sharing ideas.**

When learners share skills of essay writing by forming groups and discussing their ideas, as stated by Quina (1989:5) that 'effective way of teaching of essay which also involves the sharing of experience between students and the teacher will guide learners to be great thinkers and enabling them to evaluate the world.' The skill which will be taught to learners when sharing ideas will be the skill to negotiate. For example, groups are to consist of a limited number of members so that they can be

efficient and managed easily. The group must not consist of more than five members so that even the role changing must be done with ease. In every group there must be a scribe, a presenter and a leader who acts as a chairperson and maintaining the functionality of the group. If the topic has been brainstormed, discussed and presented by learners themselves, it will be easy for them to write on it with confidence.

## **2.4 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter an in-depth review of the literature related to essay writing skills was presented. The importance of skills for writing an essay were emphasised which included the skill to approach and plan different types of essays. In the planning the spider web skills, the drafting skills, the debating skills, the paragraphs structuring skills, brainstorming skills and group management skills were emphasised. If the above mentioned skills can be taken cognisance of, the learners' performance in essay writing will be improved. That is why the researcher has embarked on this research of skills for essay writing.

## **CHAPTER 3: DATA COLLECTED THROUGH THE CLASSROOM OBSERVATION**

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### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The aim of this chapter is to collect data through give the classroom observation, the learners' questionnaires and the educators' questionnaires and to analyse their responses to determine how the skills for essay writing are used to assist learners to write meaningful essays. The observation list which the researcher used was the learner questionnaire which consisted of 20 questions (Refer appendix A).

While observing the educator, the researcher was looking at the following during the observation: Is the educator clarifying the topic to the learners, explaining different types of essays, introducing a mind map, assisting learners to choose the correct words which are linked to the topic, are the learners taught how to write main ideas, supporting ideas and meaningful paragraphs. The researcher was also observing whether critical language awareness which includes figures of speech, proverbs, idiomatic expressions and the correct terminology language usage are considered. Furthermore, the researcher tried to establish whether essay group discussions were held and process writing was done.

### **3.2 DATA FROM THE CLASSROOM OBSERVATION**

#### **3.2.1 Data from School A**

After writing the topic on the chalkboard, the educator didn't clarify it to the learners. He failed to explain the different types of essays to the learners. Topic breakdown for the learners is never entertained by the educator. The introduction of the mind map to the learners is not done. Learners are not assisted in the choice of words which are directly linked to the topic. Learners are not taught about the role and the importance of every paragraph in the essay. Identification and the use of main ideas and supporting ideas are not reiterated to the learners. Critical language awareness

which encompasses figures of speech, proverbs and idiomatic expressions are not taught to the learners. Process writing emphasised by Mgabadeli (1989:40) which includes drafting, revising and editing before final submission is expected to the learners was not taught.

### **3.2.2 Data from School B**

In School B the following aspects were overlooked: No assistance was given to the learners in terms of simplifying the topic to them. The explanation of different types of essays to the learners was not considered. Brainstorming the topic with the learners was not undertaken to any extent by the educator. The importance of assisting the learners to select words which are linked to the topic in the form of a spider web diagram as highlighted by Duncan and Clearly (1997:97) was not given full attention. The learners were taught the skill to make meaningful paragraphs. Learners did not know how paragraphs are to be written, because they were writing a bulk of information without punctuation marks and open lines. Learners could hardly differentiate the main ideas from the supporting ideas. Critical language awareness, which entails the use of idioms, proverbs and figures of speech in essay writing, was also not taught. The importance of drafting, editing and revising an essay was not brought to the learners' attention. Enough time was not given to the learners to explore the given topic in groups. During the observation in this class, the researcher noticed that most learners' had poor handwriting, and this contributed towards learners' poor performance. In brief, the mistakes which were found in School A were also prevailing in the group at School B.

### **3.2.3 Data from School C, D and E**

Data from the above mentioned schools were the same in the sense that no clarity of the topic was given by the educator. The in-depth explanation of different types of essays was not imparted to the learners. The topic brainstorming by the educator to the learners was not given enough attention. Skills for mind mapping the topic were also not unpacked for the learners in order to help them not to run short of facts in their writing. The skill to structure paragraphs as accentuated by McGraw (1986:156) was not discussed by the educator to the learners. The critical language awareness skills which involve the integration of figures of speech, proverbs, idiomatic

expressions and standardized terminology in the essay writing were not given enough attention. Process writing which includes the correct choice of words, the drafting of main ideas, supporting ideas, paragraphing, revising and editing the work before submission was clearly not visible during observation. Debating essay ideas with friends and colleagues as stressed by Rodseth (1992:88) which will help the learners to refine and order their ideas logically, was not highlighted by the educators.

From all the findings which were observed in all the five schools, no essay writing skills were imparted to the learners by their educators.

### **3.3 THE ANALYSIS OF THE LEARNERS' QUESTIONNAIRES IN GRADE 10 CLASSES**

The aim of the learners' questionnaire was to identify and verify whether skills for essay writing are taught by educators before a full-fledged essay is written and submitted for marking. To verify whether process writing is considered when essays are written by the learners and why learners are performing poorly in essay writing.

It has been shown in Chapter 1 that the Grade 10 learners have a challenge in writing meaningful Sepedi essays. This challenge could be detected especially in their skills of writing meaningful essays. To get the necessary data that shows that the skills for essay writing are not implemented in the teaching and learning situation, the learners as well as the educators were requested to complete the questionnaires as was stated in Chapter 1.

At the five schools where this study was done, the learners who study Sepedi are in different classes and are only combined in one class during the Sepedi period. This is done to fit the available teaching staff and to avoid accommodation problems. The following tables illustrate the numbers of the Grade 10 Sepedi learners per school and the number of the learners who were randomly selected for research.

**Table 3.1: The Grade 10 learners for School A**

Classes	Number of learners per school	Number of learners who were randomly selected
Class: A	26%	3
Class: B	24%	2
Class: C	27%	3
Class: D	23%	2
Total	100%	10

The Grade 10 learners for Sepedi in School A are 100 in number. As already mentioned, those learners converge in one class during the Sepedi period. Only 10 learners were randomly selected for research purposes in order to determine whether skills for essay writing are taught by the educator at school or not. All learners who were randomly selected were given a questionnaire regarding skills for essay writing to complete. The following aspects were discovered from their responses: All the learners agree that they are not taught those skills, in most cases they are only given a topic to write about.

**Table 3.2: The Grade 10 learners for School B**

Classes	Number of learners per school	Number of learners who were randomly selected
Class: A	37%	4
Class: B	33%	3
Class: C	30%	3
Total	100%	10

In school B, the Grade 10 Sepedi learners are also 100 in number. The learners also combined in one class during the Sepedi period and go back to their classes when the period is over. Like in School A, in School B only 10 learners were randomly selected for research purposes in order to determine whether skills for essay writing are taught by the educator at school or not. All learners who were randomly selected

were also given a questionnaire regarding skills for essay writing to complete. The following aspects were discovered from their responses: All the learners agree that they are not taught those skills, in most cases they are just instructed to write an essay so that it can be quickly marked by their educator.

**Table 3.3: The Grade 10 learners for School C**

Classes	Number of learners per school	Number of learners who were randomly selected
Class: A	27%	3
Class: B	24%	2
Class: C	26%	3
Class: D	23%	2
Total	100%	10

**Table 3.4: The Grade 10 learners for School D**

Classes	Number of learners per school	Number of learners who were randomly selected
Class: A	35%	4
Class: B	34%	3
Class: C	31%	3
Total	100%	10

**Table 3.5: The Grade 10 learners for School E**

Classes	Number of learners per school	Number of learners who were randomly selected
Class: A	33%	3
Class: B	29%	3
Class: C	38%	4
Total	100%	10



In School E, the Grade 10 Sepedi learners are also 100 in number. Those learners also combine in one class during the Sepedi period and disperse to their different classes when the period is over. Like in school D, in school E only 10 learners were randomly selected for research purposes in order to determine whether skills for essay writing are taught by the educator at school or not. All learners who were randomly selected were also given a questionnaire regarding skills for essay writing to complete. The following aspects were discovered from their responses: All the learners agree that they are not taught those skills, in most cases the educator just writes a topic on the chalkboard and instruct them to write about it and when they do not manage to complete writing he allows them to complete the work at home and submit the following day.

From the learners' responses, it proves beyond doubt that educators do not teach skills for essay writing to the learners and that is why the researcher feels compelled to embark on this topic.

### **3.4 THE EDUCATORS' QUESTIONNAIRES**

All the five educators from school A, B, C, D and E were given the educators' questionnaires to complete after the learners had completed their essay writing. Their questionnaire consisted of twenty questions with spaces to write either 'yes' or 'no' and give comments if possible. The educators' questionnaires are attached in the (Appendix B).

The reason for giving questionnaires to the educators to complete after learners completed writing their essays was to get the true reflection of what the educators do *before* learners start with their essay writing. This was done to elicit information on the prevailing practice from the educators. Should they have been given the questionnaires to complete before learners start with their essay writing, the true reflection of what educators do, will not be visible. The questionnaire will make the educators to align with the questionnaire and teach according to the questions of the questionnaire.

### 3.4.1 The analysis of the educators' questionnaires

Looking at the educators' response to the questionnaire, it clearly shows that they do not teach skills for essay writing to the learners. Again looking at the learners' response to the questionnaires in all the five schools, it also proves that the educators do not teach skills for essay writing to the learners. Observations of when learners were given different topics by different educators of different schools, also shows that educators were not teaching learners skills for essay writing. This was shown by the fact that educators just wrote the essay topic on the chalkboard without clarity to the learners and instructing them how to write about it.

When analysing the educators' questionnaires in all five schools the following were found: Educators were not clarifying the essay topics to the learners. Different types of essays were not explained to the learners. It was not explained that those different types of essays are to be written differently. The topic break down was not brought to the attention of the learners. This means that every word constituting the topic was not explained to the learners. Learners were not assisted to identify words which are directly linked to the topic. The mind map and its purpose were not introduced to the learners. The writing of main ideas and supporting ideas in a paragraph were not given full attention by the educators. Words which are to be written at the beginning of each paragraph to make paragraphs follow in logical order were not revealed to the learners. Critical language awareness which includes how to incorporate figures of speech, proverbs and idiomatic expressions in essays were not taught to the learners. The process writing which includes drafting, revision and editing were not inculcated in the learners' minds.

Facilitating learners' essay group discussions in order to share and sharpen their minds, making them confident about what to write before the real writing was done, was not considered by the educators. Learners' peer assessment of their own essays was not encouraged by the educators in order to assist each other to identify common mistakes.

In short, educators did not teach learners skills for essay writing as it has already been stated in the first chapter.

### **3.4.2 Teachers' responses during unstructured interviews in order to validate the findings**

When asking individual educators about why learners were in most cases performing badly in essay writing, they offered the following responses:

There are educators who are teaching Sepedi because it is their mother-tongue and not because they have majored in that subject. Other educators said the community around, is speaking either isiZulu or isiNdebele and that affects the learners' performance in Sepedi in the classroom. Some said Sepedi as a subject in school is not given the desired preference. This is shown when there are no extra classes for Sepedi on Saturdays and winter schools. This is shown again when there are no extra resources like Sepedi dictionaries and other reference books like 'Marema ka Dika' and 'Dilakalaka tša Segagešo' for both learners and educators for Sepedi as a subject, whereas other subjects do have fruitful resources.

Most said there are no reading corners where books are kept for learners who are struggling in that subject, since that language is not dominant in the area. They also emphasised that there is no time for class, inter-classes or inter-schools debates in African languages especially in Sepedi because in most cases preference is given to other subjects. They stressed that there are no career paths or opportunities emphasized by the educators to the learners for Sepedi as a subject. Even the Sepedi teaching educators are in most cases communicating among themselves and their learners in either isiZulu or isiNdebele. This shows that they do not have a passion for their subject or language. Even the Sepedi learners who have recently arrived from rural areas, where Sepedi is a dominant language, are usually laughed at and switch to either isiZulu or isiNdebele as a means of daily communication. All these make them to perform poorly in their writing of essays.

In short, from the educators' response to the questionnaire given to them, skills for essay writing are not fully imparted to the learners. They blamed other factors such as student's attitude towards their home language. They don't recognise their own lack of skills in teaching essay writing.

### **3.5 ANALYSIS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRES TO DETERMINE HOW SKILLS FOR ESSAY WRITING ARE USED TO ASSIST LEARNERS TO WRITE MEANINGFUL ESSAYS.**

From the findings observed in all five of the schools, it clearly proves that skills for essay writing are not imparted by the educators to the learners. From the learners' responses to the questionnaires in all five schools, it also proves beyond doubt that essay writing skills are not taught to the learners by their educators. From the educators' responses to the questionnaires in all five schools, it clearly shows that educators do not teach skills for essay writing to the learners in those schools. Lack of proper briefing regarding essay writing by educators affects the learners' performance at the end of the year and their future career intentions.

### **3.6 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter it was shown from the findings of the researcher's observation, the responses of the learners based on their questionnaires, the responses from the educators' questionnaires and the educators' individual's responses, that educators do not teach essay writing skills to the learners.

## CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS: GRADE 10 LEARNERS' WRITTEN ESSAYS

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### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to analyse findings from the Grade 10 learners' written essays to find out whether skills for essay writing are used by the learners. The findings revealed that skills for essay writing are not taught by their educators during essay writing.

### 4.2 FINDINGS FROM THE GRADE 10 ESSAYS OF BOTH BOYS AND GIRLS

The following are findings from the Grade 10 essays of boys and girls from the selected schools.

#### 4.2.1 Findings from School A

When perusing the Grade 10 learners' essays from School A the following was found:

The learners were misinterpreting the essay topic. The topic given to the learners was '**Mogokong o re lobišitše.**' meaning '*There was great damage which was done by the caterpillars in the field*'. Because the topic was not clearly interpreted by the educator to the learners, the learners thought that '**mogokong**' is the name of a criminal who was doing a lot of house breaking. Since it was a narrative essay, they started to tell a story about that criminal **instead** of the damage which was done by those worms to the crops. It was really difficult for the learners to understand the word '**mogokong**' and most learners wrote only half a page instead of two.

Most learners did not write a mind map which would have assisted them in the flow of ideas. Their word choice was also wrong because they could not understand what was needed in the topic. Learners were writing their essays without paragraphs. This

showed that they did not know the importance of paragraphing. It was difficult to identify the main ideas and supporting ideas of the paragraphs because paragraphs were not used. There were no linking words between paragraphs '*ka morago ga moo*', '*go tloga moo*,' '*le ge go le bjalo*' '*mafelelong*', '*go rumeng*' *bjalo bjalo*. The direct translations of these linking words are, 'thereafter, therefore, even though, finally, in conclusion, respectively.

Their skill to show critical language awareness could not be addressed, because no figures of speech like personification, simile, metaphor, alliteration, imagery, idiomatic expressions and proverbs were employed.

There were a many spelling as well as grammatical mistakes in the learners' essays which shows that learners were not taught how to revise and edit their written work before final submission. For example spelling mistakes like 'ba bolawa **dikatšing**' instead of '**dikotseng**', 'ke **nko** ya paseka' instead of 'ke **nako** ya paseka', '**Browa**' instead of '**Borwa**' and grammatical mistakes like 'ka mogwa **yo**' instead of 'ka mokgwa **wo**'. It is difficult to read most of the learners' handwriting, which means skills to improve handwriting were not imparted to them. There were no drafts before the final essay was written and submitted. It was clear that skills for essay writing were not taught by the educator.

#### **4.2.2 Findings from School B**

When checking the learners' written essays from School B the following was found:

The learners in this school also misinterpreted the essay topic which they were to write about. This shows again that the educator did not unpack the topic with the learners so that they can understand it clearly. This was a discussion topic with the following directive: '**Ahlaahla khuetšo yeo e dirwago ke polelo ya Seisimane ge e dirišwa bjalo ka polelo ya go ithuta dithuto ka moka dikolong**', which means 'Discuss the influence of English as a medium of instruction in all learning areas in schools'. Here the learners' essays were only about the importance of English as a medium of instruction and the second part of the essay which was to talk about the disadvantages was ignored. This shows that every word of the essay topic was not explained to the learners. Again it shows that learners were not taught about the

different types of essays and how they are to be approached. It was also difficult for the learners to identify and use words which could be directly linked to the topic. This means that the topic was not well brainstormed by the educator together with the learners before the real writing started. In most learners' essays there was no a mind-map to help learners to identify and write words directly linked to the topic.

From the learners' written essays, it was observed that paragraphing was still a challenge. Some learners wrote a bulk of information without paragraphs. Other learners cut the bulk of information into segments which looked like paragraphs but in those grouped sentences there were no main ideas which were supported by supporting ideas. There were no paragraphs' linking words between paragraphs to make the whole essay to flow.

Most learners did also not consider using figures of speech either, such as the simile, metaphor, personification, imagery and alliteration. They also did not use idiomatic expressions or proverbs.

There were many grammatical and spelling mistakes in the learners' essays. Grammatical mistakes include '**Batha ba sepelo**' instead of '**Batho ba sepela**'. Spelling mistakes include '**moiieng**' instead of '**mebileng**', '**tlamele**', instead of '**tlamegile**'. This shows that learners were not taught the importance of drafting the essay before submitting the final draft. Many errors once again show that learners were not aware of the importance of revising and editing their work before submission. In addition, most of the learners' handwriting was difficult to read, which shows that skills for improving handwriting had not been imparted to learners. In short from the finding from learners' essays of School B, it was clear that skills for essay writing were not imparted by the educator to the learners.

### **4.2.3 Findings from School C**

When scrutinizing the learners' essays from School C the following were found:

Learners in School C were given a descriptive essay to write. The topic was '**Kotse ya masetlapelo yeo nka se tsogeto ke e lebetše**', which means, 'The horrible accident which I shall never forget'. To some learners it was difficult to visualise and imagine that type of accident, because they said they had never experienced

something like that. As result, **instead** of pretending they had had such an experience, they wrote only half a page instead of two. It was difficult for other learners to interpret the word '**masetlapelo**' in the topic and that made it difficult for them to elaborate more on the topic.

It was challenging for learners to understand that this is the type of an essay whereby words are to be skilfully selected and used to sensitise most of the reader's senses. Those senses include **the sense of smell, touch, sight, taste and hearing**. '*Dikwi tšeo di akaretša tša monkgo, go kgongwa, pono, mohlodi le tša go kwa*'. For example short phrases or sentences like, 'the street was **smelling of blood**', '*tsela e be enkgga madi*', 'the bodies were **ice-cold**', '*mebele e be e tonya wa leswela*' 'the flask's contents **tasted of alcohol**', '*dikagare tša folaseke e be e le tša mohlodi wa bjala*', '**bang!**' was the great **sound** from the street, '*thuu! e be e le modumo go tšwa mmileng*' were not prevalent in the learners' essays.

From the learners' writings, it was evident that the topic had not been brainstormed. The learners' essays were very short and they ran out of words. Most of the learners did not include a mind map in their essay writing, which could have assisted them to write appropriately on the topic and to create meaningful paragraphs.

Paragraphing was also a challenge to the learners. In most cases they just wrote one paragraph which covered the whole page, instead of singling out the many main ideas and developing each of them in the form of a paragraph. From the findings, show that learners find it difficult to differentiate between both main ideas and supporting ideas. Furthermore, it is a challenge for the Grade 10 learners to identify and use the paragraphs' linking words to make their paragraphs flow and coherent.

Most of the learners' idiomatic expressions and proverbs were in most cases irrelevant to the content of the essay. This means that learners were not assisted to choose words which are linked to the topic in order to use them as keywords. Learners did not know anything about the importance of figures of speech, proverbs and idiomatic expressions when writing an essay.

Legible handwriting was also a challenge to most of the learners. This means that the educator did not have time to impart skills on how to improve handwriting to them. Most of the learners' essays had spelling and grammatical errors which should



have been rectified if learners had revised and edited their essays before submission.

In short, from the findings found in the Grade 10 learners of School C, it also proves beyond doubt that skills for essay writing are not taught by the educator to the learners.

#### **4.2.4 Findings from School D**

When perusing the Grade 10 learners' essays from School D the following were found:

At School D learners were given an argumentative essay topic to write about. The topic was, '*Na o nagana gore kgati e a nyakega dikolong? E tšwa tema.*' meaning 'Do you think that corporal punishment is necessary in schools? Expatiate.' Here also the learners had a challenge in understanding the topic. It was difficult for them to support one side of the argument and supply reasons for their ideas. This shows that they did not have the skill of arguing in essay writing.

It was difficult for the learners to write an essay of two pages. This shows that the essay topic was not well brainstormed. Learners did not include a mind map in their essay writing because they had not been assisted to develop ideas to write about the topic in an organised way.

Paragraphing was also a challenge to the learners. It showed that they do not know at what point to start a paragraph and at what point to complete it. This shows that they did not know the importance of paragraphing. The usage of paragraphs' linking words was also a challenge to the learners. It was also difficult to identify both the main ideas and supporting ideas of the paragraph.

It was difficult for the learners to use figures of speech like personification, simile, metaphor and alliteration. Both idiomatic expressions and proverbs were not used in their essays.

The learners' essays had many spelling and grammatical mistakes. This means that learners were not taught to revise and edit their work before final submission. Even their handwritings were not clear or easy to be read. This means skills for improving

learners' handwriting were not taught by the educator to the learners. In short, skills for essay writing were also not taught in this school.

#### **4.2.5 Findings from School E**

In School E the learners were given the expository essay topic to write about. The topic was, '**Ge o ka ba moetapele wa naga ya Afrika Borwa, o ka dira eng go fokotša tlokego ya mešomo mo nageng?**' which means, 'If you were the South African President, what would you do to reduce the unemployment rate in the country?'

The challenges were the following: It was difficult for learners to put themselves into somebody else's shoes, and act as if they were that particular person. In order to respond to the given topic, some learners went to the extent of saying that, they know that they could never be the South African President, so there was no point in making suggestions for the reduction of unemployment. This shows that learners needed more clarity on the topic.

It shows that the educator did not brainstorm the topic with the learners. That is why it was difficult for them to understand what was required of them. . There were no mind-maps in the learners' essays which could have assisted them to write meaningful paragraphs.

In this school paragraphing was also a problem. Learners did not know how to write a meaningful paragraph with one main idea and supporting ideas which are linked to the main idea. It was also difficult for the learners to write paragraphs' linking words. Both proverbs and idiomatic expressions were not used in their essays. Even figures of speech like metaphor, simile, personification, imagery were not used in the learners' essays.

Drafting, revising and editing the essay, before final submission to the educator for marking was not done. That is why the learners' essays had many spelling and grammatical mistakes. Even the learners' handwriting left much to be desired.

In brief, from all the findings which were gleaned from the learners' essays in all five schools, it was clear that no essay writing skills were imparted to the learners by their educators.

### **4.3 LEARNERS' RESPONSES DURING UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEWS IN ORDER TO VALIDATE THESE FINDINGS**

When learners were individually asked about their poor performance in the essay writing these were their responses:

- Sepedi is not their mother-tongue.
- Most of the people at school and in the community don't Sepedi and they feel looked down upon.
- If there were extra classes for Sepedi they should have performed much better.
- It is usually difficult to get extra resources like dictionaries and other reference books for Sepedi.
- Sepedi as a subject does not lead to job opportunities, even if they could pass the subject well, there is nowhere they could be employed as Sepedi practitioners. This shows that those learners lacked guidance regarding the value and career opportunities for the subject. They were complaining that even the educators who teaching them Sepedi mostly use either isiZulu or isiNdebele as their means of communication. They were complaining that even their colleagues who are not Sepedi speakers were laughing at them when they speak Sepedi.

In short, learners' response to their poor performance in essay writing was due to the fact that the subject itself is not given its due consideration at schools.

## 4.4 EXAMPLES OF THE COMMON ERRORS FOUND IN GRADE 10 ESSAYS

### 4.4.1 Learner A: Misinterpretation of the essay topic

Learner A misinterpreted the essay topic. The topic was '**Mogokong o re lobišitše.**' (Great damage was done by caterpillars in the fields). He wrote '**Ruri wena mogokong ke duma ge o ka išwa kgolegong, dinotlolo tša gona tša lahlelwa bodibeng bja lewatle.**' (Surely, if Mogokong can be jailed, keys must be thrown into the sea), thinking that Thinking that **mogokong** is a criminal who needs to be arrested.

### 4.4.2 Learner B: Spelling mistakes

Spelling mistakes such as the following occurred: 'Wena mogokong o legodu'. (Mogokong you are a thief). Instead of 'le~~h~~odu', learners wrote 'legodu', 'mošo' instead of 'mošomo'.

### 4.4.3 Learner C: Use of proper nouns

When the main idea has been started with a **proper noun**, there is no need for the proper noun to be repeated in the supporting sentences, but a pronoun can be used to replace the proper noun. For example, '**Matome** o ile a thulwa ke sefatanaga. **Matome** o ile a dutla madi a mantši' (Matome was knocked down by a car. Matome was profoundly bleeding). There is no need to repeat Matome in the supporting sentence, because from the main idea we already know that the learner is speaking about Matome. Instead, the pronoun **He** can be used.

### 4.4.4 Learner D: Conjunctive writing

Learner D was combining words which were to be separated. For example, 'Batho **kamoka** ba ile ba gobala', 'Kotse e hlagile **kalebelo**'. (All people were injured. The accident happened quickly). The sentences should be, 'Batho **ka moka** ba ile ba gobala'. 'Kotse e hlagile **ka lebelo**'. Word division is another orthographical aspect of essay writing that is ignored in Sepedi essay writing in this research.

#### 4.4.5 Learner E: Disjunctive writing

Learner E was separating words which were to be combined. For example, ‘**Sephatša maru** se be se lekola moela wa **difata naga** tseleng’. Meaning: ‘The flight was observing the traffic flow on the road’. Instead of: ‘**Sephatšamaru** se be se lekola moela wa **difatanaga** tseleng. And ‘**ga botse**’ should be ‘**gabotse**’, ‘**go bane**’ should be ‘**gobane**’. Learners tend to write words which are conjunctival in a disjunctive way.

#### 4.4.6 Learner F: Punctuation

Learner F started both the sentences and names of people in small letters. For example: ‘**mogokong** o ile a hlaba mokgoši ge a bona seresanta **lekalakala** a e tla’. (Mogokong cried when he saw sergeant Lekalakala approaching). It should be: ‘**Mogokong** o ile a hlaba mokgoši ge a bona seresanta **Lekalakala** a etla’.

#### 4.4.7 Learner G: Locative suffixes

Learner G was ignoring **locative suffixes** when writing the essay. For example: ‘Ke tla hlohleletša batho gore ba ye **dikolo** e se go **bjala**, gore ba tle ba hwetše mešomo’. (I will encourage people to go to schools and not to the beer hall, so that they can be employed). It should be: ‘Ke tla hlohleletša batho gore ba ye **dikolong** e se go **bjaleng** gore ba tle ba hwetše mešomo.

#### 4.4.8 Learner H: Incorrect use of numerals

Learner H has a challenge of writing **numerals**. For example: ‘Go be go thulane difatanaga tše **raro**, tše **dipedi** tša tšona di be di ka se lokišege’. (Three cars were involved in an accident and two of them were beyond repair). It should be: ‘Go be go thulane difatanaga tše **tharo**, tše **pedi** tša tšona di be di ka se lokišege’.

#### 4.4.9 Learner I: Incorrect use of tenses

Learner I was using **tense** incorrectly. For example: ‘Mofetakatsela o **bitšile** maphodisa ge a bona kotse’. (The passer-by called the police when he saw the accident). It should be: ‘Mofetakatsela o **biditše** maphodisa ge a bona kotse’.

#### 4.4.10 Learner J: Incorrect use of idiomatic expressions

Learner J used the **idiomatic expression** incorrectly. For example: 'Mogokong o **bolailwe ke naga** ge a bona maphodisa'. (Mogokong run away when he saw the police), instead of: 'Mogokong o **bolaile naga** ge a bona maphodisa'.

In short, there were many mistakes found in the learners' essays which contributed to the poor performance of the learners in Grade 10.

### 4.5 REMARKS BASED ON THE INTERPRETATION OF THE ESSAYS FROM THE GRADE 10 ESSAYS OF BOTH BOYS AND GIRLS

The interpretation of the essays from the Grade 10 learners is that, although skills for essay writing are to be taught to the learners, the grammar aspects are also to be emphasised to assist learners to perform well in their essay writing.

#### 4.5.1 Learner A

The interpretation from the essay of learner A shows that he does not have enough Sepedi vocabulary to understand some of the Sepedi words. That is why he interpreted the topic incorrectly. This can be solved if the school has Sepedi dictionaries and other references as resources to assist the learners. To encourage learners to write their own glossary of challenging words will also assist.

#### 4.5.2 Learner B

Interpreting learner B's essay writing shows that he has spelling problems, hence **legodu** instead of **lehodu**. This can be solved if dictation of challenging vowels, consonants and words can be introduced even in the secondary school classes. Hanging charts of vowels, consonants and short challenging phrases on the walls can be of assistance especially to the learners for whom Sepedi is not their mother-tongue.

### 4.5.3 Learner C

The interpretation of essay writing of learner C is that, he has to know the different types of nouns and pronouns. He has to know the roles which are played by nouns and pronouns in a sentence or paragraph. He has to know that the noun in the main idea has to be replaced by the pronoun in the supporting idea.

### 4.5.4 Learner D

The interpretation of the essay from learner D shows that he does not know the correct words division. This can be solved if many reading exercises are done by the learner at school and even at home. **Drop everything and read projects** can also assist in this instance. Resources like dictionaries will assist in these instances.

### 4.5.5 Learner E

The interpretation of the essay in the case of learner E is that he does not know compound nouns. For example, ‘**sephatsamaru**’, ‘**sefatanaga**’ .etc. This can be solved by the educator giving many exercises to the learners and showing which words are to be combined or separated when marking the learners’ work.

### 4.5.6 Learner F

What has been interpreted in learner F’s essay is that, he does not know which words are to be written in capital letters. It is the educator’s responsibility to teach that to the learner. For example, people’s names, names of mountains, rivers and towns are all to be started in capital letters.

### 4.5.7 Learner G

Here the interpretation of the Learner G’s essay is that he does not know the **locatives**. This can be taught by the teacher in the form of classwork before learners attempt to write a full-fledged essay. For example, the noun changes to the locative if the suffix **-ng** or **-eng** is attached to the end of that noun. For example: ‘Ge nka ba moetapele wa Afrika Borwa, ke tla hlohleletša batho gore ba ye **dikolo**, e sego **bjala**’. ‘Dikolo – dikolong’ and ‘bjala – bjalleng’. That would read as: ‘Ge nka ba

moetapele wa Afrika Borwa, ke tla hlohleletša batho gore ba ye dikolong e sego bjaleng’.

#### 4.5.8 Learner H

The interpretation of the essay from learner H is that he does not know **numerals**. For example he cannot correctly use ‘**e tee, tše pedi, tše tharo, tše nne, tše tlhano, bjalobjalo**’ in the sentence. This can be achieved especially for the learners for whom Sepedi is not their mother-tongue by having charts for them on the wall or dictation can also assist and they must be able to quantify those numbers.

#### 4.5.9 Learner I

The interpretation of learner I is that he does not know tense. For example in present tense ‘**bitša**’ will be ‘**biditše**’ and not ‘**bitšile**’. He also uses isiZulu phoneme in Sepedi verbs. For example:

**Table 4.1: The usage of isiZulu morpheme**

	Present tense	Past tense
<b>isiZulu</b>	<b>Biza:</b> meaning call	<b>Bizile:</b> called
<b>Sepedi</b>	<b>Bitša:</b> meaning call	<b>Biditše:</b> ‘called’ and not ‘bitšile’

This problem can be solved when learners are given enough time to read Sepedi books with and without the supervision of the educator. Introducing debates in African languages, especially in Sepedi will also assist and improve performance in essay writing and speaking.

#### 4.5.10 Learner J

Learner J used the idiomatic expression incorrectly. For example: ‘Mogokong o **bolailwe ke naga** ge a bona maphodisa’ (Mogokong was killed by the land when he saw the police) instead of: Mogokong o ile a **bolaya naga** ge a bona maphodisa’ (Mogokong did ran away when he saw the police). (Refer Appendix D).



The general interpretation of the learners' essays in Grade10 in different schools is that they made many errors which in most cases could have been avoided if the educator had taken time to impart the essay writing skills to them. Then learners' performance would have been much better or well improved considering the environment in which they are living.

## **4.6 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter it was shown from the errors of the learners' essays of different schools that skills for essay writing need much more attention on the part of the educator. This has been observed through the researcher's findings, analysis and interpretation from the essays which learners have already written.

## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The aim of this chapter is to summarize the contents of all the previous chapters, and to give recommendations based on all the findings so that skills for essay writing can be efficiently and effectively imparted to the learners by the educator in the teaching and learning environment.

The aim of Chapter 1 in this research project was to highlight that the Grade 10 learners have a challenge in essay writing that can be easily eradicated if educators seriously teach essay writing skills to the learners.

The aim of Chapter 2 was to conduct an in-depth discussion of the literature review related to essay writing skills that is to uncover the essay writing skills in detail and explain why those skills are important in the writing of essays.

Chapter 3's purpose was to deal with the findings from the classroom observation, the learners' questionnaires and the educators' questionnaires, and to determine how the skills for essay writing are used to assist learners to write meaningful essays.

Chapter 4 was intended to document the findings from the Grade 10 learners' written essays and to determine whether skills for essay writing were taught, to analyse and interpret those findings and ascertain whether the skills for essay writing were indeed taught by educators in the teaching and learning situation.

The aim of the concluding chapter (Chapter 5) is to present a summary of all the preceding chapters, conclusions and recommendations.

## 5.2 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, when critically reflecting on the researcher's observations during the learners' essay writing, the learners' and educators' response to the questionnaires, both the educators' and the learners' unstructured interviews by the researcher and findings from the learners' essays, it proves beyond doubt that skills for essay writing are not taught by the educator to the learners and that is why learners' performance in essay writing leaves much to be desired. The following recommendations are to be taken into consideration in order to rectify the situation.

## 5.3 ANSWERING THE AIMS OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study was to determine:

- (a) How different types of essays are taught,
- (b) How essay pre-writing activities are taught to the learners by the educators before a full-fledged essay is written, and
- (c) How learners are taught to write a full-fledged essay.

From the findings of the study, it was observed that all the three aims were not adhered to by the teachers and the learners. Learners learn and imitate what the teachers had taught them. The theoretical part of learning what an essay is, the different types of essays, the skills like mapping, the structure of an essay as well as orthography and spelling rules and language usage, should all be put into practice by the learners because the teachers taught them these aspects. Educators are regarded as experts in the teaching of essays. However, in the study, all the aims stated above by the researcher, showed that none are practiced by both the teachers and the learners. There is a serious need to take essay writing as an important aspect of language learning based on the findings in the research. There are a number of aspects embedded in essay writing that help in improving Sepedi language usage. Therefore, the importance of essay writing skills in schools should be seriously looked into.

## **5.4 FINDINGS BASED ON THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The theoretical framework based on constructivism for this study was used. The aim of constructivism is about building knowledge and the researcher wanted to find out which part of constructivism during essay writing was used. However, due to the uniformity of non-compliance in teaching essay skills, by both the teachers and the learners, constructivism was not used by the teachers in the findings of this research. In the area of pre-writing essays, constructivism based on cognitive constructivism of Piaget (1980) that children construct knowledge based on assimilation and accommodation based on their maturity level. Learners in Grade 10 who are mother-tongue speakers are capable of constructing mind map, using language, orthography as well as correct interpretation of the topic given. However, that was not the case in this research.

Bruner (1960) on the other hand taught that structure is very important. In this research, the learners wrote long paragraphs in their essays without dividing them into paragraphs. This is evidence of the teachers not teaching learners the importance of dividing ideas into paragraph that flows from the introductory paragraph, to the body paragraphs and to the concluding one. The length of the introductory and conclusion should not be more than five lines while the middle paragraphs can range from 1-6 or to 7 lines.

Vygotsky (1962) is of the opinion that the meaning and understanding grow out of social encounters. Cultural and social influence should aid the learners in interpreting and understanding the topics given by the educators. These studies showed that the learners misinterpreted most of the topics. This showed little knowledge of the idiomatic language.

## **5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.5.1 Recommendations by the educators to the Department of Education**

As a result of the Grade 10 Sepedi learners' poor performance in Sepedi essay writing, the educators for Sepedi Grade 10 recommended to the Department of Education that they treat all subjects equally, especially when it comes to resources like Sepedi dictionaries and other reference books. Sepedi and other African

languages are to be treated equally when it comes to the subjects taught during winter schools and on Saturdays. Study guides for Sepedi are to be written and sent to schools in order to help learners who are seriously performing poorly in Sepedi as a subject.

Inter-Provincial Olympiad competitions on Sepedi essay writing are to be introduced with prizes to be worn by participating learners. Inter-classes and inter-schools' debating competitions in Sepedi are to be introduced. If learners' spoken language is improved, this will automatically improve the learners' essay writing skills. The Department of Education has to enforce that educators who are teaching African languages, in this case Sepedi, must be those who have majored in that subject.

There must be prize giving for both learners and educators who perform exceptionally well in the subject. This will motivate other educators and learners to perform well in the subjects.

In short, if the above-mentioned educators' recommendations can be taken into consideration by the Department of Education, the learners' performance will be improved and this will also improve the learners' skills for writing essays.

### **5.5.2 Recommendations by the researcher to Sepedi educators**

Educators should explain in full what is expected by the topic to the learners. Essay writing must not be used to babysit learners in the classroom or as a form of punishment. All the different types of essays are to be taught to the learners by the educators together with their different approaches of writing. The essay topic needs to be thoroughly brainstormed by both the educator and the learners before a full-fledged essay can be written.

The mind-map and its purpose should be thoroughly elucidated to the learners by the educators. They should assist learners in selecting words which are directly linked to the essay topic. The learners should also be taught to write short main ideas which are linked to the topic. They are to be taught how to write supporting ideas which are directly linked to the main idea of the paragraph.

Paragraphing has to be thoroughly taught by the educator to the learners. Learners have to know what a paragraph is and its purpose in the essay. They have to know different roles which are played by different paragraphs in the writing of essays. Learners are to be taught about the value and purpose of linking words between paragraphs.

Different types of figures of speech are to be taught to the learners and how they are to be included in an essay. Both idiomatic expressions and proverbs are to be taught to the learners. The learners should know how to include them in their essay writing and know that they have to be in relation to the contents of the essay.

The educators should teach learners about the importance of editing and revising the written essay before it can be finally submitted to the educator for marking. Educators should teach learners about essays' group discussions with the peer. They should teach learners about the skills which will assist in the improvement of their handwriting and the disadvantages of bad handwriting. They should encourage learners' peer assessment of the essays they have written using rubrics. This can be done when learners are marking their colleagues' essays using a pencil because the pencil is erasable.

Educators are to act as role models of their learners. This means that they have to speak the standardised Sepedi language so that learners can be able to imitate them and have passion for their language.

If learners are given more reading time, this will assist the educator to identify errors in the learners' language and this will, on the other hand, help to reduce the learners' errors in essay writing.

Both the individual and general discussion of the learners' errors found in their essays writing will help the learners to improve their performance.

Learners are to be encouraged to speak standardized Sepedi and exclude the loan words as much as they can.

Educators are to be discouraged to code-switch when they are teaching Sepedi as this will delay the learners to improve in the usage of the standardised Sepedi language.

Learners are to be praised when using the correct Sepedi language in their daily speech and daily written work.

No educator has to teach Sepedi just because there is a shortage of Sepedi educators in that school. Educators are to be well qualified for the subjects they are teaching.

Staying in the area where isiZulu and isiNdebele are the dominant languages, does not mean that educators have to ignore Sepedi as the language they teach. It is the Sepedi educator's obligation to make sure that his subject is also given preference in the school. The Sepedi educator has to identify all the challenges which his learners are facing and make them a priority for him that those challenges are changed into possibilities.

The Sepedi educator also has to emphasise both morning and afternoon classes especially for the learners who do not perform well in the subject. Both Saturday classes and winter schools for Sepedi and other African languages must be recommended by the educator in order to bring about an improvement in the learners' performance.

Sepedi reading corners where books are kept for learners who are struggling in that subject are to be introduced, because that language is not dominant in the area.

Class, inter-classes and inter-schools debates in Sepedi are to be introduced since this will help learners to perform much better in the writing of essays.

Sepedi teaching educators should also guide learners about Sepedi career opportunities so that learners can have a vision and passion for their language.

The Sepedi educators must use Sepedi as a means of communication since they are acting as role models to their learners. They must instil confidence in the recently arrived learners from the area where Sepedi is dominant that they have to stick to their mother-tongue and be proud of their language and not feel small or ashamed when they speak their language.

### **5.5.3 Recommendations by educators to the parents**

Most educators recommended that parents should give educational support to their children. They said that parents should check the learners' work and append signatures where necessary. Checking the learners' work will include checking the dates on which the learners' work has been written and even the educators' marking and signatures. Educators agree that parents are to phone schools regarding their learners' progress and performance or make an appointment with the educators in order to discuss their learners' progress. Parents are not supposed to come to school only during their learners' registration and the collection of reports. Additional tutors may be employed by parents to assist their children with challenging subjects at home for a nominal fee if they can afford to do so.

Parents should assist their children with the drafting of their children's home personal study time-table. Children are not supposed to be given lot of family work which will hamper their study progress.

Since learners do not perform well in essay writing, they say parents should as much as possible communicate with their children in Sepedi so that they can get used to that language because this will help them to develop Sepedi vocabulary which can be used in essay writing. If the school cannot provide extra resources like Sepedi dictionaries and other reference books for the learners, parents should buy them for their children.

### **5.5.4 The researcher's recommendations to learners**

The researcher recommends to the learners that they should be proud of Sepedi as their language. They don't have to feel humiliated when they are laughed at when they are speaking Sepedi. They must ask their parents to buy both Sepedi dictionaries and reference books for them so that their quality of essay writing can be improved. This will assist them to obtain better marks and to pass their grades.

Learners must feel confident to ask questions concerning language aspects they do not understand. Asking questions will also help them to improve their knowledge of the subject and increase their language vocabulary.



Learners should write a glossary of words which are difficult for them in their memo-books so that when they write longer texts, they do not run short of words.

After being taught by the educator about the skills for essay writing, learners should know how to interpret the essay topic. They should know how to brainstorm the essay topic. They must be able to draft an essay mind-map so that they will not have only a superficial knowledge of the topic. They should know the different types of essays and how they are to be approached. Learners should know aspects to be included in the introductory paragraph of the essay.

They should know how to select key-words which are linked to the topic. They must be able to write main ideas using those key words. They must have the skill of writing supporting ideas which are linked to the main ideas. They are to practice the writing of meaningful paragraphs which are linked to each other and to the topic. They must be able to write the correct paragraphs' linking words which can make the whole essay logical.

Learners should be able to use and integrate figures of speech correctly in their essay writing. Both idiomatic expressions and proverbs are also to be correctly used by the learners when writing essays. They should know that writing an essay is not a once-off process. They have to start with a draft, and able to revise and edit their work before a final draft is submitted to the educator for marking.

Learners should spend more time studying their school work so that their performance can be improved. They must be selective when it comes to friends because some of them could make them lose focus of their study. They have to know that studying is not a competition, but preparation of the future. And if they fail, they must have courage to repeat until they pass.

### **5.5.5 The researcher's recommendations to parents**

It is recommended that parents should give educational support to their children. They should help them to develop a thirst for education by showing them prominent people in the society who succeeded as a result of education.

Parents should not use studying as a form of punishment to their children. For example, it is wrong when a child is locked in a room to study as a form of punishing him for wrong doing.

Parents should monitor learners' work in the form of checking dates of the written work and signatures of the educators. They should go to the extent of hiring private tutors for their children to assist them in challenging subjects if they can afford. They have to ask questions about the unusual signatures in the learners' work. They may even give extra work to their children about subjects they have an insight in or ask the learners' siblings to assist where it is possible.

Parents are to communicate with their children's educators regarding the learners' performance. They must not visit school only during the time of crisis but a casual visit with the appointment will be appreciated by the educators. If the learners can realise that their parents did pay a visit to their schools, they will start pulling up their socks.

Parents should as much as possible speak Sepedi at home in order to make their children appreciate and be comfortable with the language.

Parents should assist their children with the drafting of their children's home personal study time-table. Children are not supposed to be given extra family chores which will interrupt their study processes.

## **5.6 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

In conclusion, the above-mentioned recommendations will assist to bring about a change in the language efficiency of the learners and especially in the writing of meaningful essays.

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## Appendix A

### A questionnaire for the learner :

### Dipotšišonyakišišo tša moithuti:

**To determine whether skills for essay writing are used / Go lekola ge eba mekgwa ya maleba ya go ngwala taodišo e a latelwa:**

**Please complete/ Ka kgopelo tlatša:**

**Instructions:** Read and make a tick in the necessary block and make a remark.

**Ditaelo:** Bala o be o swaye ka dikgobeng o be o fe maikutlo a gago.

	Yes/Ee	No/Aowa	Remarks / Maikutlo
1. Does the educator clarify what an essay is to you? / <b>Naa morutiši o go hlalošetša gore taodišo ke eng?</b>			
2. Does the educator explain the different types of essays to you? / <b>Naa morutiši o go hlalošetša ka mehuta ya ditaodišo?</b>			
3. Does the educator provide topic break down? / <b>Naa morutiši o go hlalošetša hlogo ya taodišo lentšu ka lentšu?</b>			
4. Does the educator introduce the mind map and its purpose to you? / <b>Naa morutiši o go bontšha mmapa wa monagano le go hlaloša mohola wa wona?</b>			
5. Do you consider word choice when writing an essay? / <b>Na o šetša kgetho ya mantšu ge o ngwala taodišo?</b>			
6. Do you consider the value or constituents of the introductory paragraph? / <b>Naa o šetša mohola le dinyakwa tša temana ya matseno ya taodišo?</b>			

	Yes/Ee	No/Aowa	Remarks / Maikutlo
7. Do you make use of main ideas when writing an essay? / <b>Naa o šetša dikgopolokgolo ge o ngwala taodišo?</b>			
8. Do you consider the role of the supporting ideas when writing an essay? / <b>Naa o šetša dikgopolotlaleletšo ge o ngwala taodišo?</b>			
9. Do you make use of the paragraph's linking words? / <b>Naa o diriša mantšu a go tlemaganya ditemana?</b>			
10. Do you consider the value or the role of the concluding paragraph? / <b>Naa o šetša mohola goba karolo yeo e kgathwago ke temana ya mafelelo?</b>			
11. Do you make use of figures of speech when writing an essay? / <b>Naa o diriša dika tša polelo ge o ngwala taodišo?</b>			
12. Do you consider idioms when writing an essay? / <b>Naa o šetša dika ge o ngwala taodišo?</b>			
13. Do you make use of proverbs when writing an essay? / <b>Naa o diriša diema ge o ngwala taodošo?</b>			
14. Do you consider essay editing? / <b>Naa o swaolla taodišo ge o e ngwadile?</b>			
15. Do you have essay group discussions? / <b>Naa le rerišana ditaodišo ka dihlopha?</b>			
16. Is your handwriting legible? / <b>Naa mongwalo wa gago o a balega?</b>			

	Yes/Ee	No/Aowa	Remarks / Maikutlo
17. Do you sometimes have peer assessment? / <b>Naa le fela le lekolelana mediro bjalo ka bagwera?</b>			
18. Do you consider self-assessment? / <b>Naa o fela o lekola modiro wa gago?</b>			
19. Do you make use of group assessment? / <b>Naa le fela le lekolelana mediro ya lena bjalo ka bagwera?</b>			
20. Do you prepare a draft when writing an essay? / <b>Naa o diriša dingwalwa tša boitukišetšo ge o ngwala taodišo?</b>			

**School's name/Leina la sekolo** : .....

**Learner's name/ Leina la morutwana** : .....

**Grade/ Mphato** : .....

**Date/Letšatšikgwedi** : .....



## Appendix B

### A questionnaire for the educator :

#### Dipotšišonyakišišo tša morutiši.

**To determine whether skills for essay writing are used / Go lekola ge eba mekgwa ya maleba ya go ngwala taodišo e a latelwa:**

**Please complete/ Ka kgopelo tlatša:**

**Instructions:** Read and make a tick in the necessary block and make a remark.

**Ditaelo:** Bala o be o swaye ka dikgobeng o be o fe maikutlo a gago.

	Yes/Ee	No/Aowa	Remarks /Maikutlo
1. Do you clarify what an essay is to the learners? / <b>Naa o hlalosešša barutwana seo e lego taodišo?</b>			
2. Do you give topic breakdown? / <b>Naa hlogo ya taodišo o e hlaloša lentšu ka lentšu?</b>			
3. Do you introduce the mind map to the learners? / <b>Naa o ruta barutwana mmapa wa monagano?</b>			
4. Do you consider word choice? / <b>Na o dira kgetho ya mantšu?</b>			
5. Do you consider the value or constituents of the introductory paragraph? / <b>Naa o šetša mohola goba dinyakwa tša temana ya matseno?</b>			
6. Do you make use of main ideas? / <b>Naa o diriša dikgopolokgolo?</b>			
7. Do you consider the role of the supporting ideas?/ <b>Naa o šetša dikgopolo nnyane?</b>			
8. Do you make use of the paragraph's linking words? / <b>Naa o diriša mantšu ao a tlemaganyago ditemana?</b>			
9. Do you consider the value of the concluding paragraph? / <b>Naa o šetša</b>			

	Yes/Ee	No/Aowa	Remarks /Maikutlo
<b>mohola wa temana ya go ruma?</b>			
<b>10. Do you make use of figures of speech? /Naa o diriša dikapolelo?</b>			
<b>11. Do you consider idioms? / Naa o šetša dika?</b>			
<b>12. Do you make use of proverbs? /Naa o diriša diema?</b>			
<b>13. Do you consider didactic methods? / Naa o šetša mekgwa ya go ruta?</b>			
<b>14. Do you make use of language assessment? / Naa o diriša tekolo ya polelo?</b>			
<b>15. Do you make use of teaching tools? / Naa o šetša dithušathuto?</b>			
<b>16. Do you consider the language assessment strategies? / Naa o šetša mekgwa ya go lekola polelo?</b>			
<b>17. Do you make use of peer assessment? / Naa o diriša tekolano ya dithaka goba barutwana?</b>			
<b>18. Do you consider self-assessment? / Naa o šetša boitekolo ?</b>			
<b>19. Do you make use of group assessment? / Naa o šetša tekolano ka dihlopa?</b>			
<b>20. Do you consider drafts in essay writing? / Naa o šetša dingwalwana tša boitukišetšo ge go ngwala taodišo?</b>			

**School's name/ Leina la sekolo** : .....

**Subject teacher/Leina la morutiši** : .....

**Grade/Mphato** : .....

**Date /Letšatšikgwedi** : .....

## Appendix C

### The sampled learners' response to all questions from Questionnaires:

1. Out of the selected 50 learners from school A to E 49 said 'no' to question 1 that the educators do not clarify what an essay is to them.
2. Out of the selected 50 learners from school A to E 48 said 'no' to question 2 that educators do not explain different types of essays to them.
3. Out of the selected 50 learners from school A to E 50 said 'no' to the question that the teacher provides a topic breakdown to them.
4. Out of the selected 50 learners from school A to E 46 said 'no' to the question that the educator introduces the mind map and its purpose to them.
5. Out of the selected 50 learners from school A to E 45 said 'no' to the question that they consider word choice when they write an essay.
6. Out of the selected 50 learners from school A to E 50 said 'no' to the question whether they consider the value or the components of the introductory paragraph when writing an essay.
7. Out of the selected 50 learners from school A to E 44 said 'no' to the question that they use main ideas when writing an essay.
8. Out of the selected 50 learners from school A to E 44 said 'no' to the question that they consider supporting ideas when writing an essay.
9. Out of 50 selected learners from school A to E 50 said 'no' to the question that they use words which link paragraphs and make the essay logic.
10. Out of 50 selected learners from school A to E 50 said 'no' to the question that they do consider value or role of the concluding paragraph.
11. Out of 50 selected learners from school A to E 49 said 'no' to the question that they do not consider figures of speech when writing essays.
12. Out of 50 selected learners from school A to E 47 said 'no' to the question that they do not use idiomatic expressions when writing essays.

13. Out of 50 selected learners from school A to E 48 said 'no' to the question that they use proverbs in essay writing.
14. Out of 50 selected learners from school A to E 49 said 'no' to the question that they do consider essay editing.
15. Out of 50 selected learners from school A to E 50 said 'no' to the question that they have essay group discussions.
16. Out of 50 selected learners from school A to E 37 said 'no' to the question that their handwriting is readable.
17. Out of 50 selected learners from school A to E 50 said 'no' to the question that they have peer assessment.
18. Out of 50 selected learners from school A to E 50 said 'no' to the question that they consider essay self-assessment.
19. Out of 50 selected learners from school A to E 50 said 'no' to the question that they use essay group assessment.
20. Out of 50 selected learners from school A to E 47 said 'no' to the question that they prepare drafts when writing essays.

The total of the responses to all **20** Questions by all **50** learners was **953** – divided by **100%**, this amounts to **95.3%**.

This means that **95.3%** of the sampled learners agree that skills for essay writing are not taught in all the five schools.

## Appendix D


### Some examples of the learners' work

Learner (1)

Diokobotši ke etšo tšeo di šomišo batho ba moafrika-banwa ke moqwašo<sup>no</sup> o dpa swane-  
logo ke gore mang le mang wa go šomišo  
diokobotši, ga a se šomišo ep<sup>o</sup> batšo mo thlo-  
gonyeng ke go bantš diokobotši dišo šomišo  
ba haswa. Diokobotši ke di (Drugs) tšeo  
ba di gogang bwaša ka motšwa, batho ba  
go šomišo diokobotši ba ba bantš ke moqwašo  
yo "Matsamaya, pholelo, go se tšape le go  
nyaka batho tšetele" e bile batho ba gona  
go ba tšene ekašo ebele ga baba etšo  
ga ba bantš.

Tšeo ye tšone yo go se šomišo diokobotši  
ke gore mang le mang eudu batšwadi  
ba tšokomše<sup>baantš</sup> batho ba bantš le metšwadi yo  
bantš ka mošo e bile diokobotši di dišo gore  
batho ba otšwa se mo dintlong tšeo ba ba  
bangwa batho ga ba se e tšeo metšeng  
yo bantš batho mahodū bantš ba šomišeng<sup>go</sup>  
diokobotši.

Mošo wa ba rana o tšamele<sup>šamele</sup> gore o tšee  
Moikarabela. Ka batho bantš ba šomišeng di-  
okobotši mo pšeo ga batho le mošepa o batho  
ke mošo ebele mošo wa rana ga wa tšame-  
le gore o dumeš diokobotši moafrika-banwa  
le mošwanthe ba se ke ba ba dumeš<sup>ga</sup> ke  
gore le bantš ba tšang le diokobotši kamo  
lefatšeng ke ba rana.



Learner (2)

Batho ka diketekete ba bofua dikatsing  
tsa mebileng nakong ya Iehu ka morena.

Batho Afrika Brawa ka nko ya poseka  
ba sepele ba (good Friday), poseka ka Iehu  
ie morena sepele mebileng ba ya di <sup>bofua</sup> ~~bofua~~  
ke <sup>nako</sup> di Batho ba diketekete Batho sepele  
ba ya Iehu ka morena ka Iehu ie  
op batho ka Afrika Brawa ka nakong ba  
sepele ie o morena ya ba batho ka Iehu.

ke <sup>nako</sup> ya poseka go ka morena batho  
sepele ie batho ie morena ya re op Iehu  
batho o morena ya sepele Brawa Afrika  
Brawa ie ba batho ba ya sepele ka Iehu  
Iehu ia morena o sepele ie batho ka Brawa

Batho<sup>o</sup> ba sepele<sup>o</sup> ka poseka ie morena<sup>o</sup>  
ba Batho<sup>o</sup> ba diketekete ba batho<sup>o</sup> bofua<sup>o</sup> dikatsing<sup>o</sup>  
tsa mebileng. ka Batho Batho ya sepele ka  
morena ka Iehu ka batho<sup>o</sup> bofua<sup>o</sup> ka go ya  
Aporie zu ka Iehu ia morena batho nko ya  
nko poseka ka (good Friday) batho<sup>o</sup>

*Handwritten signature*