What is the Socio-linguistic Context for Teaching English Writing to Senior High School Students in Fiji?

A thesis completed in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Philosophy (Humanities and Social Sciences)

In

Second Language Teaching

Massey University

Palmerston North, New Zealand

Lynn Nicholls

2014

Abstract

This study explores teaching practices for expository writing in a developing world context. A qualitative approach draws on a grounded theory model with three different high school case studies in Suva, Fiji. The participants were teachers and students from Form 6 English classes.

The linguistic landscape is diverse, with the two majority ethnicities comprising of indigenous Fijian and Fijian both learning different vernacular languages as mediums of instruction for the first three years of school. Standard Fijian and Standard Hindi taught in schools are not always the languages these students speak at home. While English is the medium of instruction taught in schools from Class 4, there is no official language of instruction policy.

Students who have English as their second language face challenges in achieving the academic genre of writing. A pass criterion for English proficiency comes with high stakes for success in tertiary studies, with writing for examinations being the only method of assessment.

The study found that teachers lacked appropriate resources for teaching this genre of writing, and therefore resorted to teaching more simple formal writing options. Teacher training and professional development in the areas of second language teaching and unit writing appear inadequate in supporting the teaching and learning writing process, and as a result students may not be adequately prepared for their aspirations of going to university.

Acknowledgements

Table of Contents

Table of Figures

List of Tables

Table of Appendices

1 Introduction

This study sets out to explore practices for teaching expository writing in a developing world context, factors that influence decisions on how to teach the process of writing, and the conditions within which teaching occurs. It also considers the language diversity within this context, beliefs about the purpose for teaching writing, pedagogical approaches, and student responses to the writing process itself. Teachers face many challenges in the wider educational context and this study sought to investigate the support provided by factors such as training and professional development.

1.1 Background Information of Fiji

Fiji is the second largest island nation in the South west Pacific with over 300 islands with the largest groups of people living on its two main islands, Viti Levu and Vanua Levu. Suva is the capital city of Fiji and the high school context in which this study takes place. It is located on the larger island of Viti Levu and has a population of around 200,000. It is also the main campus for the University of the South Pacific which contributes largely to this location, being the hub of the region (see Figure 1 Map of Fiji Islands).

Figure 1: Map of Fiji

Fiji became a British colony in 1874, and between1879-1915, about 60,000 labourers from India were brought in under the indenture system to work mostly on sugar plantations by the Colonial Government (Siegel, 1987). Although Fiji gained independence in 1970, it has not been without political and racial tensions as it has been subject to coups in 1987 and 2000 and 2006.

The two major population groups are the indigenous Fijians and the Indo-Fijian communities. With its history of political tensions between the two majority groups, the current Government advocates that people who live in Fiji should be referred to as 'Fijians'. However, the indigenous Fijian community is sometimes also referred to as 'iTaukei. They are the largest majority group who speak Fijian or a dialect of Fijian as their first language. The 'Indo-Fijian' community now referred to as 'Fijian', make up the second largest majority group and speak Fiji Hindi or another Hindi language or dialect. In this study the terms Indigenous Fijian and Fijian will be used to maintain consistency, but the previous term 'Indo-Fijian' is sometimes used when discussing points made by other authors' study to avoid any potential confusion.

1.2   Languages

Today Fiji has a population of approximately 800,000 and although the first languages of the two majority groups are Fijian and Fiji Hindi, there is a rich diversity. This was important to this study in discovering the linguistic landscape that exists within the high school context of Fiji. English has had an important role with its dominance in the areas of medium of instruction in schools as an official language of the region, but is clearly the second or third language for people within this unique context. The vernacular languages of instruction are used for the first three years of a child's schooling; however, they do not represent the main languages used by some of the population. While Fijian and Fiji Hindi are the main two

languages spoken in the region, Fiji Hindi is not given equal status in the education arena, as the Standard Hindi form is preferred to be used in the schools and by the media (Shameem, 2002). While these vernacular languages are encouraged to be continued as subjects of study up to Form 7, they are not always enthusiastically supported by the students, who see English as being more important for future aspirations.

1.3   Local Setting

High school settings vary in different forms in Fiji. Currently there are 165 high schools in Fiji and these fall into different categories, partly because of historical influences in the education system and partly to meet the needs of the diverse ethnic communities. High school categories range from, urban schools, rural schools, boarding schools, church schools, private schools and an international school. Geographically, most of these schools are spread across the main two islands of Viti Levu, Vanu Levu and a few are scattered on the outer islands of Fiji. The category selection of high schools for this study focused on an Urban School, a Church School and a Community School. These three schools were important as they represent the main types of schools in Fiji, had large rolls of students (including a mix of ethnicities and gender), and because they were located in Suva, where at the time of this study I was living.

1.4   Purpose of the study

I had the privilege of becoming part of this Fijian culture as my husband was working in Suva for a period of two years. My own background includes experience in teaching ESOL to senior high school students and in particular preparing students for English literacy in National Certificate of Education Achievement (NCEA), levels 1-2 within the New Zealand curriculum framework. In understanding the difficulties that second language students

encounter, my experience has shown me that the genre of formal (essay) writing proves to be one of the most challenging to teach, and for students to achieve. I was very interested in finding out what challenges English teachers and senior students in Fiji encountered with writing. It therefore came as no surprise, when teachers and students revealed expository writing as being the most difficult genre to achieve in the Form 6 English examination.

Under the current examination structure Form 6 students sit their Fiji School Leaving Certificate (FSLC) to attain a 50% pass in English as a pre-requisite to Form 7 or tertiary education. Students have aspirations to attend University, but their teachers do not share this confidence. Concerns for students being able to achieve the required standard of English proficiency in writing, by the end of Form 6, are evident. Language barriers prove to create difficulties, and the lack of appropriate resources which support students as writers may hinder their ability to achieve success for tertiary level.

The Literature Review is clear that high standards of essay writing require drafting and crafting for the purpose of encouraging attention to audience and 'quality writing'. There are many advantages seen in creating a social dynamic that allows members of the class themselves to provide an audience for writing through a process of peer review (Hillocks, 2008; Kang & Pyun, 2013; Khan & Mugler, 2001; Moss, 2003; Sabet, Tahriri & Pasand, 2013). However, this process does not appear to be seen as relevant within this context, when assessment is geared only towards examination writing, where students must think and write independently within word limits and time pressures. More importantly the literature has revealed the large research gap that exists within the context of teaching writing in Fiji, and therefore this study is both relevant and timely.

It was with such factors in mind that I undertook this study and the information and analysis of what was found are structured in the following Chapters. The relevant literature will be

reviewed in Chapter Two while Chapter three contains details of the study design, how it was developed and carried out. Chapter Four will show the results of the study and Chapter Five contains the discussion and implications of the study.

2   Literature Review

There has been minimal research undertaken on this topic, within the context of Fiji. This Literature review will cover a range of perspectives which have been important in conceptualising and implementing this study. As this research focuses on students who are taught in English as the medium of instruction at school, it is relevant to include a range of literature studies, which relate to educational policies for teaching English to second language learners not only in Fiji, but the wider Pacific context also. Theories on writing approaches and processes for teaching writing in high schools are also presented, and finally, a section on teachers' beliefs concludes the chapter.

2. 1   The Linguistic Landscape in Fiji

Mangubhai and Mugler (2003: 386) carried out a detailed study in 2003 in which they state that the situation of Fiji is unique and quite remarkable with its degree of linguistic diversity for a country of less than a million people. While English is the official language in Fiji, the use of Fijian and Fiji Hindi for inter-ethnic communication, often referred to as 'vernacular bilingualism' is equally significant. As this study focuses on both the Indigenous Fijian also referred to as (iTaukei), and Indo Fijian, (referred to as Fijian) communities, the languages spoken by these groups of people are particularly important. These two largest groups make up 95% of the population with the Indigenous Fijian group speaking Fijian and the Fijian group speaking Fiji Hindi.

English (inherited from its colonial past) continues to have an important role as the official language of the region, and the language also considered to be the common language for communication of the population. In addition, there are a number of minority languages, contact languages, a variety of dialects and different patterns of multilingualism (Mangubhai & Mugler, 2003 and Milner, Arms & Geraghty, 1984).

The society of Fiji has an interesting history of mixed cultures and multilingualism exists both at societal and at individual levels with the majority of people having rich linguistic repertoires and this is discussed under the next section.

2.1.2 Language Use

2.1.2.1 Fijian Languages

The Fijian language is diverse in varieties, for example, Meke Fijian is the traditional language of poetry and song, Standard Fijian known as Bauan Fijian originally evolved from the colonial era of diplomacy and trade, and is the language taught in schools today. Colloquial Fijian is the informal everyday language used mostly in towns and market places by a large majority of this population (Mangubhai & Mugler, 2003). In addition there is much dialectal diversity, with as many as 300 different 'communalects' (identified as a variation of the Standard Fijian) being reported by Geraghty (1983) spoken among village communities.

2.1.2.2 Hindi Languages

Languages spoken by the Fijian (Indo-Fijian) population are even more diverse in this multilingual culture. People from the North of India spoke various dialects of Hindi, and contact among these groups led to communication in a common language known as 'Fiji Hindi', or 'Fiji Baat' (Fiji Talk) (Mugler, 1996, in Mangubhai & Mugler, 2003).

2.1.2.3 Other Languages

There are also other languages that exist within this linguistic landscape, such as, the Muslim community who speak Urdu and Arabic languages. Minority language groups include the Rotumans, Banabans, Tuvaluans and Chinese. While these groups are familiar with Fijian or Fiji Hindi, (Mangubhai & Mugler, 2003: 380), they have not been included in the discussion of this study.

2.1.2.4 Contact Languages

There are three contact languages which developed as a result of the need for communication between different ethnic groups of people: Pidgin Fijian, Pidgin Hindustani and Fiji English. Pidgin Fijian is a pidginised form of Fijian and is sometimes used as a lingua franca between Indigenous Fijians, Indo Fijians and the Chinese. Pidgin Hindustani developed during the plantation era and was used for communication amongst the people from the North and South of India, but also European overseers, and later the Chinese population in Fiji (Mangubhai & Mugler, 2003).

Although English is used in official domains, the variety spoken colloquially, referred to as 'Fiji English' is quite different. Fiji English is characterised by borrowing words from other languages spoken in Fiji, especially, Fijian and Fiji Hindi, but also from colonial English.

> Fijian terms for flora and fauna, and for items of special cultural significance are prominent (e.g. *yaqona* 'kava' *saqa* a kind of fish*, lolo* 'coconut milk"...., from Fijian; *roti* 'flat unleavened bread' *aji* 'paternal grandmother, *sirdar* 'sugarcane gang leader' from Hindi).The vocabulary also includes terms inherited from Colonial English (e.g. *compound*), archaisms (*thrice*) (Mangubhai, 2002:385).

Thus the English spoken in everyday life in Fiji is not the same as that in which senior high schools students are examined.

2.1.3 Languages of Education in Fiji

In view of the linguistic richness of the Fijian context, and its resulting challenges and opportunities, it is important for this study to understand how this socio-linguistic context has developed in schools. For example, what languages were chosen for educating children in Fiji, why they were designated as national languages, and the guiding policies that have influenced the medium of instructions in school today are central questions.

Originally, during the 19th and 20th century, languages in education were in the hands of the missions; Methodist, Catholic, Anglican and Seventh Day Adventists taught mostly in Fijian and ensured a good literacy rate for primary school age children in the language (Mangubhai & Mugler, 2003; Mangubhai, 2002; Lotherington, 1988). During this period, the Department of Education was established (1916), and initially education for the Indian children was not supported to the same extent by the colonial government. This was mainly because of the diversity of Indian languages and lack of basic infrastructure and resources so education was therefore largely left to parents (Gillion, 1977 in Mangubhai & Mugler, 2003).

Consequently rising demands for further education at secondary level and also for English and the vernacular languages, particularly from the Indian community, generated many submissions to the 1926 Education Commission, (an authority set up by the Colonial Government to make recommendations about general education for children) and this resulted in a greater trend towards the use of English in schools (Mangubhai & Mugler, 2003).

2.1.4   Mediums of instruction in Fiji

The 1926 Education Commission, after reviewing submissions, recommended the use of English as the medium of instruction in schools. Mangubhai and Mugler (2003: 394) give the full recommendations from the commission "because they underpin the subsequent development of languages of instruction in Fiji."

1. The vernacular (Fijian or Hindi respectively) to be taught in all primary schools, so that all children may be given ability to read it and speak it fluently.
2. A carefully planned and very simple course of reading and speaking
3. English to be introduced as early as practicable.
4. The medium of instruction in the subjects of general education, e.g., geography, nature study, health, etc., to be in the vernacular until such time as children have an adequate knowledge of English.
5. In schools where the non-European teacher is a competent teacher in English, and in Missions schools taught by European teachers, English will become the medium of instruction at an early stage.

In addition greater use of English as the medium of instruction was also influenced by the Scheme of Co-operation with the New Zealand Government (1924), which enabled New Zealand teacher recruitment for service in Fiji's schools for teaching English literacy (Whitehead, 1981, in Mangubhai & Mugler, 2003).

The 1969 Report of the Fiji Education Commission which examined the system of education recommended that English be the medium of instruction from Grade 4, which was put into effect when Fiji became independent, has been the guiding policy up to the present time.

While English is the medium of instruction used to teach in schools in Fiji, Standard Fijian and Standard Hindi are also designated national languages (Subramani, 2000 in Shameem, 2002: 389). The 1926 education policy, with the initial mother-tongue instruction being phased to English by Class 4 has influenced Fiji's ' transitional education system', a term which refers to a system where students are expected to transition from their mother tongue to the language of instruction. Fiji primary schools are run by religious, community and parent-teacher committees who determine and make decisions on the language of instruction used for the schools (Shameem, 2002: 390).

Mangubhai and Mugler, (2003: 398) and Shameem, (2002) give detailed accounts of how the vernacular languages do not always best fit recommended education policies. For example, the Standard Fijian that is largely used as the medium of instruction is not always the dialect students speak when they first enter school. Shameem (2002: 388) also refers to this phenomenon for both the Standard Fijian and Standard Hindi vernaculars.

> Policy states that Fiji has a transitional education system with English replacing the mother tongue as the medium of instruction from Class 3. However, while Standard Hindi and the Bauan Fijian dialects have been designated as the vernacular languages

of the Indo-Fijian children respectively, children may have little knowledge of these languages.

The Indian languages are even more diverse and complex, as although Standard Hindi is used as a medium of instruction, most of the Fijian population that speak Hindi, speak Fiji Hindi. (Shameem, 2002) and Mangubhai and Mugler (2003: 398) state that:

> The effect of using Hindi as the medium of instruction is that most, if not all, Indian children who arrive in Grade 1 are taught in a language that is either a second language (for Tamil, Telugu, Malayam, Panjabi or Guarati speakers for example) or a second dialect for those who grow up with Fiji Hindi as their first language.

In summary, the literature is clear about the vernacular language complexity that exists within Fiji schools and the current policies reveal these models are not the 'best fit' for students who have to learn to read a language they do not speak.

2.1.5   English as the Medium of Instruction (EMI)

2.1.5.1   EMI in South Pacific (SP) Countries

How Fiji's language in education model compares with other similar South Pacific (SP) locations is of equal interest to this study, especially for understanding the different types of language models that may apply in SP countries and the roles that English and vernacular languages play within their contexts. This also helps to contextualise this research within the broader SP context.

There has been much research debate about the role of the first language in classrooms and possible types of language-in-education models that apply to South Pacific countries. These language programmes are essentially centred on bi-lingual education with the view of using L1cautiously in the classroom when the medium of instruction becomes English.

Lotherington (1998) provided some early insight initially, in arguing that, bi-lingual education (where both indigenous and the metropolitan languages are taught) did not take a strong form in any SP country, however, this should not be depended on as an indication of the current situation. The author identified country differences taking the form of three models: Transitional bi-lingual education, maintenance bi-lingual education and submersion education. These models give some interesting background and are explained in further detail below.

Model 1: Transitional Bi-lingual Education

Introduces basic literacy in the vernacular language while introducing English as a second language through oral means. Children acquire language skills needed in their own mother tongue, while gradually building a level of English that will cope with school demands. After initial vernacular-medium instruction for approximately three years, the medium of instruction in the classroom officially changes to English.

Model 2: Maintenance Bi-lingual Education

Can be viewed as a model that gives stronger support to vernacular languages, in that the study of the vernacular language is continued as a subject after the medium of classroom learning has converted to the second language of English. Lotherington (1988) suggested that most SP countries provided some form of maintenance bi-lingual education, however, the degree of support for the vernaculars varied in different countries. For example, examinations of the vernaculars at that time were allowed up to Form 5 in Tonga, but up to Form 7 in Fiji (for Standard Fijian and Standard Hindi).

Model 3: Submersion Education

Usually stipulates a particular language to be used in a classroom, as it is not used in the community. For example the national language policy of the Solomon Islands states that children are to be educated in English. Similarly, the education policy in Vanuatu stipulates that education is to be conducted in English or French. "English medium education in the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu is intended to provide a bridge for multilingual classrooms" (Lotherington, 1988: 70).

Lotherington (1988: 66) implied that while Fiji fits into the 'transitional bi-lingual model', it has also provided a 'maintenance bi-lingual education model', with the study of Fijian and Hindi as subjects, being examinable up to the Form 7 year at school, which is still current today.

Mangubhai (2002: 505-507) points out that official language-in-education policies in Fiji have not been developed because of the complex language situation and this remains the case today. He offers three models that may apply specifically to Fiji, if language-in-education policies were to be developed. These models are relevant to this study as they include the diversity of languages used for both the Indigenous Fijian and Indo-Fijian communities, and within the same urban context as this present study.

Model 1 for those areas where children have only their L1 upon entering the formal school system.

Mangubhai (2002) suggests that the situation in Fiji is complex for both of the larger groups: For the Indigenous Fijians a decision needs to be made whether the Standard Fijian or a dialect Fijian is introduced and at what age level. These decisions would need to take into account availability of teachers who speak the dialect. For the Indo-Fijian population this is even more complex because of the number of different

languages spoken as discussed earlier, and the lack of teachers who could teach in the L1.

Model 2 for areas where children have as their L1 a dialect different from the Standard L1 and where parents want their dialect used in schools.

This model suggests that when children enter school they will be instructed first in their own vernacular dialect, but then shift to the use of Standard Fijian or Standard Hindi as the medium of instruction, and then at Class 4 switch to the use of English. Where the teaching of a Fijian dialect can be sustained, the shift may occur in Class 3. For the Indo-Fijian children a decision would need to be made whether the shift is to Fiji-Hindi, then in Class 3 making a shift to Standard Hindi.

Model 3 for some Urban Schools

This model suggests that some Urban Schools follow a modified submersion model, as the there is no use of L1. This lesser role of L1 is based on the grounds that the school population will include speakers of a number of different languages. The following table provided by Mangubhai (2002) suggests uses of (L1) and second language (L2) in Fijian Urban Schools based on Model 3.

Table 1: Suggested use of L1 and L2 for Fijian urban schools

Grade	L2 English	L1 (Fijian/Hindi/other)
Pre-school	100% language of instruction Pre-literacy activities	Used for pragmatic reasons
Grade 1	Language of instruction Development of literacy	Used for pragmatic reasons only
Grade 2	Language of instruction Consolidation of reading and writing	Introduction to literacy in L1 Book-based and oral introduction
Grade 3	Language of instruction L2 as a subject	L1 as a subject
Grade 4 onwards	Language of instruction L2 as a subject	L1 as a subject

It is important to point out that this discussion of languages in education in Fiji is carried on against a background of growing concern about the impact of English on the first and vernacular languages (Crystal, 2000; Phillipson, 1992; Shorris, 2000 in Nunan, 2003). The key concern raised in the literature is centred on the notion that when learning a foreign language, younger is better. As a result of this popular view held by Government officials in some countries, English is being introduced as a compulsory subject in the early years of a child's schooling. Studies in some countries have shown that reducing the age of learning English is having an effect on their own national languages, not only at the national/societal level, but connected with that, in relation to the educational context and curricular level (Ho & Ho, 2004; Nunan, 2003). As a result of these concerns some countries (China and The Philippines) have switched from English back to their own vernacular languages (Ho & Ho, 2004; Nunan, 2003).

This provides clear evidence that language in education policies or models are being re-evaluated in the light of the dominant role that English has played and the effect this is having on vernacular languages in some countries. Nevertheless, this trend of retracting from the use of English as medium of instruction is not reflected in Fiji and currently, in most primary schools, vernacular languages of Standard Fijian and Standard Hindi are dropped as mediums of instruction and replaced with English from Class 4. In addition there are some primary schools in urban areas that teach English from Class 1 (Mangubhai, 2002). Although not compulsory, these vernaculars can be studied as subjects of study through to secondary schooling. However, what is of interest is that the diversity of other vernacular languages, (such as Fiji Hindi and Colloquial Fijian) continues to thrive (although mainly as spoken languages) in their respective communities in Fiji, despite being different from the designated national vernaculars taught in schools (Mangubhai & Mugler, 2003; Shameem, 2002).

2.2 The Writing Instructional Landscape

The second half of this chapter reviews literature on the theories and processes for teaching writing, beginning with more general theories and perspectives, and then moving onto specific high school and L2 teaching contexts within which this study is embedded.

2.2.1 Pedagogical Writing Approaches

2.2.1.1 *Product- based approach*
Over the last few decades there has been much debate in the literature about different approaches to teaching writing. During the 1960's decade research on writing instruction in English as a second language largely focused on contrastive rhetoric (the interference of first language rhetoric experienced by the second language learner) (Raimes, 1988). Research at this time reinforced teaching approaches that emphasised the product and the use of teaching grammar and prescribed patterns of organisation (Yi, 2009; Raimes, 1988).

This approach to writing is referred to as the "product-based" approach or "traditional rhetoric." Teachers who hold this view favour texts inclusive of error free performance at sentence level, and teach grammatical accuracy and form, often in prescribed organisational structures of writing (Yi, 2009; Raimes, 1986). Teachers using this type of model would typically favour a teacher- centred classroom learning style. During the 1960s this approach was criticised as it did not foster the writer's thoughts or expressions or describe the process of writing (Yi, 2009).

2.2.1.2 *Process-based approach*
In light of criticisms discussed in the product-based approach to writing, a paradigm shift occurred (Myskow & Gordon, 2009), when interest in the field widened from just looking at the writing on the page, to what the writer does during the writing process, and as a result, a process-based approach to writing emerged. Research methods of interviewing, observing,

videotaping and composing aloud techniques were used to discover how writers developed their words on the page. The results of these methods were extremely influential in the development of L2 writing instruction in particular, raising awareness of how complex writing actually is (Raimes, 1986; Hyland, 2003).

Of particular interest during the 1980's period was the research development in comparing the use of writing strategies between native speakers and ESL writers and as a result many classrooms have benefited from these findings, especially those which have described writing processes of skilled and novice writers (Gustilo, 2010: 272; Kang & Pyun, 2013: 53).

 Teachers and researchers that support this process approach generally view writing as being learnt not taught. The teacher assumes the role of facilitator, assisting writers to express their own meanings with minimal teacher interference. Students learn to write through self-discovery methods with free- writing activities and reading model texts, where writers develop confidence and self-awareness in the process of reflecting on their ideas and their writing. Teachers of process-based approaches typically identify with student-centred classroom styles of teaching (Hyland, 2003).

However, researchers have also pointed out some limitations with this approach in writing. Hyland (2003: 18) states that while process approaches have instilled greater respect for individual writers and the writing process itself, there is little evidence that they actually lead to significantly better writing in L2 contexts. Hyland suggests this results from failure to attend to the interactive social function of the writer, the disempowering of the role of the teacher, and failure to give explicit teaching instructions. As a result of this kind of discontent, a paradigm shift occurred leading to a 'post process era' with a more socially-orientated approach to writing, also known as the genre-based approach (Myskow and Gordon, 2009: 284).

2.2.1.3   Genre-based approach

Paltridge (2001) in Myskow and Gordon (2009: 284) describes genre-based pedagogies as; "the ways in which people get things done through the use of language in particular contexts." Hyland (2003: 21) provides a detailed overview of the purpose for a genre approach to teaching writing and defines genre as:

> Abstract, socially recognised ways of using language. Genre-based pedagogies are characterized by literacies that belong to community resources which are identified in social relationships rather than an individual writer's personal expression.

Using genre approaches, teachers assist students in identifying patterns for creating a well formed text and, in doing so, providing explicit information about linguistic choices for the target genre. With an emphasis on reader awareness, successful writers are able to make assumptions about what the reader knows and expects and write accordingly. Methods in classrooms may range from investigations of target texts in different contexts and student situations, reflective writing practice, exploiting genre sets, and creating mixed-genre portfolios (Johns, 1977; Paltridge, 2001, in Hyland, 2003).

Teachers who identify with genre approaches typically prefer class-centred learning environments. Senior (2002: 402) defines class-centred approaches as the combining of social and pedagogic priorities to enhance learning. The author suggests that learning is most effective when language classes pull together as unified groups and when the teacher takes steps to ensure that the class is progressing collaboratively, rather than in isolation from one another.

This approach has also been criticised for being too prescriptive and focusing too much on the final product. For example, Yi (2009) noted an overlapping with elements of the product

approach in the use of restrictive formulae which can hinder creativity through prescriptive writing tasks.

However, Bruce (2008) suggests otherwise to the critics view of genre approaches being too prescriptive, or focused on final products, by differentiating social and cognitive genres. The social genre focuses can be seen as the product, serving functions, of conventionally recognised organisations of text and the linguistic elements applicable to the target audience. On the other hand the cognitive genre recognises the social patterns of the text and the embodying linguistic system, which are more transferrable as contributing parts of a range of genres. Different types of cognitive genres include a recount of sequenced events, to explain a process, or to argue a point of view. Furthermore, the critics must also consider the need for a final product in examination writing, these have high- stakes for many teaching situations for example, time factors required with the process approach does not work with examination writing where students need to think and write quickly. In light of this, examination writing could be considered as a separate genre within itself (Moss, 2003). Despite the criticisms, there is no doubt this approach has tested the boundaries of time as, "it has held sway with writing teachers and researchers since it was first developed in Australia in the 1970's" (Yi, 2009: 61).

2.2.2   Teaching Writing Processes in Fijian High Schools

While the scholarship on different approaches to writing is a well debated topic, for this study it was important to be even more specific in reading literature about the teaching process for types of written texts, such as expository writing, i.e. those traditionally taught in high schools. I was looking for a more explicit rationale, but I found that little research had been undertaken in the context of Fiji, particularly at the senior high school level.

In Fiji, an early study in the tradition of investigations of the writing process mentioned above, Lal (1987) completed a study on the composing process of writing comparing expository and descriptive writing. His case studies included six Form 6 students from one high school in Fiji and he used think aloud methods to focus on what behaviours students exhibit while they are writing.

Lal's (1987) conclusions found that while students were taught to compose in the traditional linear pattern, with instructions to first plan, outline write and then revise, in fact the student writing protocols revealed differences and these showed patterns of behaviours that were recursive rather than linear. His study also found that students did not write drafts because writing time limits did now allow for this process. Revision behaviours were also found to be mainly centred on proofreading for errors rather than as a process of the re-shaping of ideas for communication purposes.

Lal (1987: 83) recommended at the time that different teaching approaches needed to be adopted since "composing behaviours like planning by rehearsing, assessing, and reviewing written words, phrases and sentences while writing are not consciously taught in their composition classes." Furthermore, he claimed the allocation of 30 minutes of class time for 250 words which was the norm at the time, was very inadequate. Lal's study did have some limitations as using the think aloud composing method does not capture a complete record of writers' thoughts and processes because writers do not always verbalise aloud all the processes they go through. The size of the study was also limited to one school and was therefore a small representation of the context. However, it represents a useful early attempt to indentify composing behaviours of senior students in Fiji.

A more recent study undertaken in this context was from Khan and Mugler (2001), who compared the Fiji Form 7 high school prescription and the language needs of first year

tertiary students at the University of the South Pacific. Of particular interest to this study were their findings on preparation for writing skills at the end of the Form 7 year.

The study revealed statistics about writing problems students have, in stating that 41% of the Form 7 students in their study had difficulty with expressing an opinion, 39% had problems getting access to material and 49% could not write the required length. The authors further suggest that "Perhaps not having enough ideas is a result of a lack of access to materials" (Khan & Mugler, 2001: 20).

Furthermore, according to Khan and Mugler (2001: 39) teachers and students view their abilities in expository writing differently. The Form 7 students said they "enjoy" their expository writing, yet the teachers consistently claim this to be the most "problem area" of writing, with students' essays being "mere regurgitation." The study revealed that these Form 7 teachers claimed the main problems for students writing expository essays included a lack of logic and independent thinking, expression of fluency in writing, too many grammatical errors and plagiarism.

Some important possibilities for improving writing in their study, suggested Form 7 classes practise "process writing during class lessons" rather than setting these tasks for homework. They found that revision of drafts was difficult for most teachers to administer in a class of 40 students, and therefore peer evaluation of written work should be encouraged. Writing during class lessons also provides an audience that can help to generate ideas, encourage fluency and offer comments on parts of writing that need improvement (Khan & Mugler, 2001).

In addition, the authors recommended providing authentic texts with models to study for structure and styles, peculiar to different genres to give students confidence in writing, as

well as publishing their work to display to a wider audience, such as the school magazine, class newspaper or bulletin board as further incentives to encourage writing.

2.2.3   Discussion of Writing in Other Education Systems

While there are only a few studies of the situation in Fiji to be located there is a wide literature on the teaching of writing elsewhere. For example, Moss's (2003) study of curriculum in the U.K. draws on some popular insightful ideas for teachers about using social dynamics in the process of writing. Although the study focuses on a high school context he does not specifically focus on L2 writers. However, the benefits of utilising peer review roles in the classroom is a widely held view and has also had positive results with writing development for L2 learners, especially when proof-reading drafts (Duff, 2005; Hillocks, 2008; Hyland, 2003; Kang & Pyun, 2013; Sabet, Tahriri, & Pasand, 2013.)

According to Moss (2003: 141), school writing can appear to be an isolated activity where one student independently produces a text which is fed from one source (the teacher), which then may be only read by one person (the teacher). He suggests that teachers have the opportunity to make use of the powerful resource of culture and society that exists within the 'students' world', being the classroom. The social dynamics of the classroom provides functions for students in developing an awareness of writing processes, which stimulate the writing at different stages of before, during and after writing has finished. Moss suggests that students who take part in social dynamic writing roles in the classroom are "namely: adviser and an information source; co-writer; critical reader, consultant, editor, or publisher; and audiences." These roles are intended to be interactive giving students' opportunities to use different kinds of peer review activities in the classroom.

Moss (2003: 142) also refers to the importance of development in the process of writing, where students should be taught to plan, draft, redraft and proofread their work on paper and

on screen. While Moss is describing elements of the process approach to writing mentioned earlier, this is not in isolation, as he also advocates teaching genre approaches of "modelling and scaffolding of writing frames." (p. 150). He claims that. "The most effective modelling practice involves the teacher showing pupils, by doing it in front of them." (p. 150). Interactive class-centred activities could include brainstorming ideas, developing a set of topic vocabulary, organising ideas into a table, selecting, discarding material and use of an overhead projector to present some of the material. Scaffolding writing frames provide students with guidance on the structure of the writing task, or as Moss (2003: 151) describes it, "a visual guidance on the construction of each paragraph." Suggestions for teachers use may include questioning, exploration, investigation, discussion, reflection and evaluation (Duff, 2005; Gustilo, 2010; Kang & Pyun, 2013).

Consistent with earlier discussions on examination writing, Moss (2003) discusses the mixed messages that students receive with encouraging multiple drafts of writing for crafting of ideas for communication or meaning through collaboration with peers or other audiences, and the current emphasis on written examination papers where students write lengthy essays independently, within a set time limit. The author suggests the sense of conflict could be reduced "if examination writing is regarded as a genre which has its own set of conventions that need to be learned." (p. 144).

A final point addressed is the improvement of 'quality of writing' when students have opportunities to write for real audiences and publish their written work which was also consistent with findings in Duff (2005) and Khan & Mugler (2001). "There is substantial evidence that writing for real audiences improves the quality of writing that pupils produce" (Moss, 2003: 148). The author suggests audiences both within and beyond the school are the most valuable resources to teachers teaching writing. Students are more motivated to employ drafting processes and engage in consultation with other writers and readers in paying

attention to features of grammar, style and content if they have real audiences to write for. Obviously, audiences can extend beyond the classroom to include parents, relatives, members of the community, business or education sectors, all of which will give students authentic writing purposes, and possibly the motivation to craft and publish their written work to a higher standard.

2.2.4   Writing for Second Language Learners in High Schools

As English is the second or third language for students in this study it was important to review literature that focused on writing for high school students who have English as their second language. Duff (2005: 46) makes a valid point in stating, "Whereas pressures and challenges for domestic native-English speaking adolescent students at secondary school level are often considerable, for non-native English speakers the challenges are often insurmountable."

A large scale longitudinal National Writing Project was undertaken by Wickstrom, Patterson and Araujo (2010) in Texas which focused on improving academic writing among adolescent Hispanic English learners in high schools. This research engaged 'teacher- consultants' in exploring 'culturally mediated writing instruction' (CMWI) - a set of research-based principles and practices.

The findings from this two-year study provided insights about the complex decisions teachers make as they help to improve their Hispanic English learners academic writing capabilities. This study found two overarching categories that described how teachers implemented CMWI and the first one is worth mentioning in some detail below as the dimensions can certainly be potential resources for L2 teachers and students in Fiji.

 T*he dimensions of student language learning* suggested that teachers prioritized four interdependent dimensions of learning in various ways (Wickstrom, et al., 2010: 20).

Social and cultural capital dimension was found to be important for building interpersonal relationships where teachers saw personal relationships with the students as connected to the students' willingness to take risks in their reading and writing. Or, to encourage students to use funds of knowledge from their home culture or ethnicity, teachers selected reading materials and writing assignments with this in mind.

Linguistic knowledge dimension "is defined by students having knowledge about one or more of the linguistic systems – semantics, syntax, phonemics, grapho-phonemics and pragmatics. It also uses conventions like spelling, punctuation and capitalization" (p. 22). Students learning a second language use this knowledge in cross linguistic-transfer, so it is important to develop a first language system to a high cognitive level through elementary-school years and the English learner's native language is therefore a valuable resource for building proficiency in English. Teachers in this study allowed students to use their first language as they were thinking about what they wanted to write or for discussing unfamiliar vocabulary in challenging texts.

Thinking strategies across sign systems was found to be important as this focuses on the development of cognitive strategies or problem solving and includes strategies such as predicting, connecting, visualizing, summarising, questioning, self-monitoring. "Across the sign systems" refers to teachers encouraging students to use these strategies with graphics, drawings and media presentations as well as with linguistic texts.

Academic content knowledge dimension is defined as student learning related to curricular standards and mandated assessments and was found to be important to develop as it was reported that generally L2 students are weak in academic language.

Of the four dimensions above the most important finding in the study related to *academic content knowledge.* With middle school students, academic content knowledge focused on

vocabulary development and reading/writing skills in preparation for standardized tests. One teacher encouraged her class of bi-lingual students to use both Spanish and English in the classroom at all times. This example shows how the teacher built on students' knowledge of their first language to enhance their skills of academic English, making the vocabulary more accessible to English language learners (Wickstrom et al., 2010)

2.3   Teachers' Beliefs

The study of teachers' beliefs has been a major focus in the arena of language teaching for many years and a focus that has emerged has been the relationship between teachers' beliefs and their classroom practices.   An understanding of my own teaching beliefs and observations of teachers' beliefs within this research context are elements in this study that support the literature in recognising 'tensions' in classroom practice.

Phipps and Borg (2009: 1) suggest a positive perspective on these differences which they refer to as "tensions" between the "subject matter" and the "students." In other words, sometimes teachers' beliefs about how best students will learn a particular concept or skill are outweighed by what motivates the students to learn. Phipps and Borg (2009) refer to this phenomenon as teachers having different levels of beliefs and they identify these differences as core beliefs and peripheral beliefs, with core beliefs exerting a more powerful influence on behaviour than peripheral beliefs. For example, a teacher demonstrating the characteristics identified by Wickstrom et al. (2010) may have a peripheral belief that taking as many opportunities as possible to use English in school will advance a learner's attainment, but this may be outweighed by the core belief that the student's affective needs are more important.

Wickstrom et al. (2010) also refers to "contextual factors" which may create these 'tensions' of beliefs, such as curriculum, time constraints and examination expectations, where teachers may need to compromise their beliefs with a prescribed need to have something done. For

example, Ng and Farrell (2003) in Phipps and Borg (2009: 381) found that, "teachers corrected students' errors because this approach was faster than eliciting these errors; they believed elicitation was valuable in theory but time-consuming in practice."

Borg (2011) completed a study of in-service teacher education on language teachers' beliefs, and found that when teachers were asked about their beliefs in teaching they could not always differentiate their beliefs from practices and theoretical knowledge, and found their beliefs difficult to articulate. However conclusions from this study showed that where teachers have opportunities to examine their beliefs in teacher education programmes, "teachers can learn how to put their beliefs into practice and also develop links between their beliefs and theory" (p. 378).

In conclusion, the literature makes clear links to teachers' beliefs largely influencing the decisions they make in their classroom practices, recognising this is often a complex process with the "tension" of core and peripheral belief differences between the subject matter and the student needs. In addition, contextual factors may influence beliefs, such as curriculum and assessment expectations and may cause teachers to compromise some of their own beliefs, making them difficult to define.

Overall, the Literature Review has contributed widely to this study both in providing an overview of the complex language situation that exists in Fiji communities and the socio-linguistic context in Fijian schools. Historical accounts of education policies and discussions on the role that English has in both Fiji and the wider Pacific have proved to be valuable in understanding what has gone before, and what may lie ahead with the dominant role that English continues to have, and the effect this may have on national languages. The scholarship area of writing theories and English writing practice within the senior high school context, in particular the mode of expository writing, gives some insightful ideas. Lastly

embedded in the complex process of teaching writing are factors that may influence teachers' beliefs and this literature, in particular its recognition of 'tensions about beliefs', reveals why there may be gaps in what teachers believe and what they actually practice in their classrooms.

The examination of the literature has revealed that there is a dearth of research into these issues in relation to the Fiji situation. As a result, the following research questions were developed to guide this investigation:

1. **What is the linguistic landscape in senior high schools in Fiji?**

2. **What is the instructional landscape?**

3. **What is the experience of teaching English language writing for teachers in the classroom?**

4. **What is the English language writing experience for students in the classroom?**

5. **What is the purpose for teaching English writing in Fiji?**

The research questions aimed at capturing information about quite complex dynamics and therefore the following **key sub-questions** were also important in helping to answer the main research questions.

- **How were the teachers prepared for teaching writing?**

- **What are the teachers' beliefs about writing?**

- **What are the methods for teaching writing?**

- **What are the challenges in teaching English writing?**

- **What is the process for teaching expository writing?**

- **What are the challenges for students in English writing?**

3   Methodology

Learning to write coherent formal English text that is grammatically correct in a second language is a slow process for many high school students. Second language writers of English at this level in Fiji sit national examinations (regardless of their ethnicity) to achieve a certain proficiency level of English, which is part of their entry requirement into University or Tertiary Institutions. My own background experience in teaching these students and the unique opportunity of living in Fiji for two years motivated me to investigate what English language challenges both teachers and students experience in Fijian classroom practice, and how they are taught to write English essays in this new culture which I was now becoming a part of. I knew that English is the medium of instruction for all high school and tertiary students in Fiji, and I was curious to know how the teachers were prepared to teach writing and how students developed these skills in a second language.

The purpose of this research was to find out what were the teachers' experiences and classroom practices for developing proficiency in English writing with senior high schools students in Fiji. The Form 6 English level was specifically targeted because at this level writing has a high significance, as for many students this may be the last time they could be expected to achieve a high proficiency in English. All Form 6 students sit their national Fiji School Leaving Certificate (FSLC) at the end of this year to gain their literacy qualifications to pursue either tertiary studies or to proceed to their Form 7 year or to join the workplace.

Previous research undertaken in Fiji in this specific area of writing was based more on textual analysis of writing. I was much more motivated by current research trends and followed qualitative methods suggested by Creswell (2012). The benefits of talking to teachers and students, finding out first hand, their own experiences with English language writing, and

observing the classes in action is endorsed in the literature, and discussed in the comments below. It was my intention to find out the views and perceptions of how the participants respond to the teaching and learning of writing in English and therefore using qualitative forms of methods such as interviews, classroom observations and questionnaires seemed more appropriate for the data collection process. Creswell (2012: 205) discusses some of the benefits of using these forms of qualitative data, in particular, interviews and observations. "In qualitative research our approach relies on general interviews or observations so that we do not restrict the views of participants." The design of this research study has therefore been shaped by this paradigm.

This qualitative research study draws on a grounded theory design using tools of an ethnographic approach. This approach was chosen as I did not have a predetermined theory in mind, so it was my intention to allow theories to emerge from the data that would generate explanations of how teachers and students respond to sociolinguistic contexts for teaching writing to senior high school students in Fiji.

Creswell (2012: 423) makes the point that, "In grounded theory research, this theory is a process theory; it explains an educational process of event, activities, actions and interactions that occur over time." At this early stage in the research process a grounded theory design seemed the most appropriate systematic procedure to generate a theory for this study, not only from the perspective of the participants of the study, but also to allow the theory to emerge during the process of research.

Previous informal discussions with key people helped to sow the seeds for this investigation. Firstly, Mr Paul Geraghty, HOD of Linguistics at the University of the South Pacific, gave reference to the need for first year university students to attend English classes on how to write good essays. Secondly, an informal meeting with Mrs Gillian Green a past staff

member (academic English) at University of the South Pacific, also suggested this would be a useful area of investigation. Thirdly, informal conversations with a number of key staff members from the Ministry of Education in Fiji endorsed the idea of an investigation into the classroom practices of teaching English formal writing.

An application with a proposal to undertake this research was granted by the Ministry of Education in Fiji on 17 February, 2012 (see Appendix 1). Further, after receiving preliminary approval from the Ministry of Education in Fiji to work with high schools, a meeting was held with the Director of the Curriculum Development Unit for a discussion on their recommendations of types of high schools in Fiji that would be considered for the study. A 'Community high school' an 'Urban high school' and a 'Church high school' were suggested, as these represented a sample of the three main types of high schools in Fiji. These high schools were then contacted through email on my behalf by the Ministry of Education, which I later personally followed up when ethical approval from Massey University Human Ethics Committee was received.

The rest of this chapter describes the settings and participants chosen for the research looking first at the setting and population from which a purposeful sampling was drawn, then moving on to the participant selection and a brief introductory description of each setting and the participants within that context. The next section describes the research design, with an outline of the key research questions, followed by an examination of the data collection techniques used and finally the sequence in which these activities were carried out. The three types of instruments used in the study are detailed showing how each was developed, member checked and administered in the research.

3.1 Setting and Population

At the time of undertaking this study I was living in Suva, Fiji and as it was my intention to complete a longitudinal study it was important to be geographically close, having easy access to the high schools and participants. Road conditions in Fiji can at times be a hindrance, limiting access, and consideration for potential high school settings was therefore limited to one urban area.

Ethical procedures of the research followed the guidelines suggested by Massey University Human Ethics Committee. As the risk involving the human participants was considered to be low, and after an initial screening test, an application for a low risk notification was presented and then approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee on 16 May 2012, which determined that the researcher was responsible for the ethical conduct of the this research. Official documentation, as recommended by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee, (see Appendices 3 to 5 below), was designed by the researcher.

3.2   Participants

3.2.1   Selection

In consultation with, and recommendations from the Director of the Curriculum Development Unit Ministry of Education in Fiji, the following criteria was set for the potential participants, as they met the requirements for the study which is explained in further detail below.

1) A sample of the main types of high schools in Fiji

2) Schools with mixed gender students

3) Schools with a mixed ethnicity of Fijian and Indigenous Fijian

4) Established schools with a large roll

5) Schools with Form 6 English classes

Three high schools were identified that met the criteria for the research project. A Church School, a Community School and an Urban School were selected as they represented the main types of schools in Fiji as discussed previously. These schools were purposely sampled as they were well established high schools with large rolls of approximately 1000 students. The language characteristics of the teachers and students were important to the research and therefore the schools chosen had students with mixed gender and a mix of the two main ethnic groups in Fiji being: iTaukei (Indigenous Fijian population) and Fijian (formerly referred to as the Indo- Fijian population).

One senior Form 6 English class from each school was selected as three teachers and classes were considered to be a manageable size for the type of qualitative research that was being undertaken. This school year level was important to the research, firstly, as all students sit their Fiji School Leaving Certificate (FSLC) national examination at the end of this year, and secondly, because of the researcher's prior experience in teaching ESOL High School students in a literacy programme at this level, although this was in a different (New Zealand) cultural setting. The researcher is therefore familiar with problems that students encounter with sitting literacy examinations, especially where English is their second language and this assisted in the establishment of effective working relationships with the participants. In addition, being in the unique position of having a high school teaching background, yet not being directly involved with the teaching structures and systems within this new culture, gave potential for an in-depth study to be taken.

Schools were contacted, initially, by introducing myself through an email. The Ministry of Education (Fiji) had already sent an email to the three potential schools encouraging a working relationship for the study. A further email was sent from myself to the school Principals, attaching a letter of invitation for the school to participate (see Appendix 3) and a 'participant information sheet' (see Appendix 4) with specific details about the research

study. All schools responded to an initial meeting, and in each school, I first met with the Principal, followed by Head of English Department and the English teacher participant.

Although the three schools were given time to think over the research proposal, all immediately agreed to participate in the research and further preliminary meetings and introductions with English Heads of Departments and English teachers followed. In all three schools, principals and Heads of English Departments initially made the decision on which Form 6 English class would be considered for the research study and approached the teacher who then also attended the meeting. At these meetings the purpose and procedures of the research was explained, teaching staff were given copies of the official documentation, including a 'participant information sheet' and relevant 'consent forms' (refer Appendices 3 and 5 (a), 5 (c) and 5 (d). They were given opportunities to ask any questions about the research process and teachers were offered more time to consider their voluntary participation.

Teachers valued the extra time, as this gave them an opportunity to talk to their students about the research study process. All student participants were over 15 years of age, but two of the three schools requested a letter, which I provided 'for student parents' asking permission for their child to participate in a focus group (see Appendix 4).

All the three English teachers approached gave written consent to participate in the research. An initial informal 'get to know each other' meeting with the researcher and individual teachers proved valuable for relationship building 'this also gave them opportunity' to ask any questions about my own background, and to share details about themselves.

Holliday (2007: 156) refers to the benefits of building relationships. "How the researcher conducts him/herself in the new environment also needs consideration. Fellow, friend, teacher, wife, mother? The researcher will need to find a way to work with participants not

above them." I was very mindful of developing relationships with the teachers that encouraged open and honest communication, and for the teachers to feel at ease with me in sharing their views as a colleague, not someone who was 'above them' in their education world. Initially, the teachers were cautious of the research study expectations, but during development of the research they became more relaxed in sharing their experiences and, as they got to know me, they felt more comfortable in that role.

 Further meetings with the teachers and researcher were established to arrange times most suitable to the teachers to commence the study. The period of the research study was from May, 2012 until May, 2013, and all three schools stayed with the research throughout the year with one teacher change after an initial interview. To ensure confidentiality of the participants, schools are referred to as; the 'Church School', the 'Community School' and the 'Urban School'. Teachers have been assigned pseudonyms throughout this thesis.

3.2.2   Characteristics of Participants and Setting

The Church School was the first school the researcher made contact with. Initially, through an informal contact of donating English resources that had been given to me, and then formally with the research proposal. This high school has a church affiliation. It was first established in the late nineteenth century and had at the time a school role of approximately 1000 mixed gender and ethnicity students from Form 3 to Form 7. There are six Form 6 English classes and a total of 227 Form 6 students.

The Principal was a male of Indigenous Fijian ethnicity. He was very positive about the school being involved in the research study. The Head of English Department was female, and of Indigenous Fijian ethnicity with 27 years teaching experience. She initially decided that her class would be considered for the study, but another class was selected as the target class for the study and the details of this class follow.

Teacher Alisi is of minority ethnicity; she has nine years teaching experience and has been in this current school for four years. Teacher Alisi speaks Standard Fijian, English, a minority language, and some Hindi. She has had two years' teacher training and has a Diploma in English and Social Sciences from the Fiji National University. Despite being asked to participate in this research at short notice, Alisi displayed a keen interest in being a participant, as she was considering doing her own research in the near future.

The total number of students in this class was 38 and all students were 15 years and over. Ethnicity groups in this class were predominately Indigenous Fijian, and there was a balanced mix of gender.

The Community School was the second high school the researcher made contact with. This school had levels ranging from Forms 3-7 and is known for its academic focus. The Community School was first established in the mid twentieth century. The current school role has 1000 students with a balanced mix of both Fijian and Indigenous Fijian students and a small number of other nationality students.

In 2012, the Principal was a male from Fijian ethnicity, but at the beginning of 2013, a new Principal was appointed. This school now has a female Principal also from a Fijian ethnic background.

The Head of English Department was female and Fijian ethnicity. All meetings were directed through this participant. An initial meeting was set up with a small group of Form 6 English teachers for the researcher to present an outline of the study proposal, with a question and answer period. Information sheets and consent forms were also given out at this time and the teachers were given time to consider their voluntary participation.

Later teacher Faye was introduced to me as the participant teacher for the target study class. She seemed positive and much focused on getting underway as examination preparation in Term 3 was not such a good time for me to be observing classes.

Teacher Faye comes from a Fijian ethnic background and speaks Fijian-Hindi, English and Standard Fijian languages. She has nine years' teaching experience and completed a three year teacher training programme in Literature and Language with Education Majors through the University of the South Pacific.

The Urban School was the third school the researcher made contact with. First established in the mid twentieth century, this school was originally a boys school but now caters for both genders from Forms 3- 7. Currently this school has a role of approximately 1000 students and is known for its reputation in sports.

After an initial meeting with the Vice Principal, (an indigenous Fijian woman), I was introduced to the Head of Languages, also a female from an Indigenous Fijian background, who was very positive about the research study, and indicated that she had in mind one English teacher who had a difficult class and would value some help with English writing. This period was towards the end of Term 2, and at her suggestion, it was decided not to start the research until the beginning of Term 3, because of end of term school examinations and to allow time for the English teacher to consider participating in study.

When I was introduced to teacher Raijieli, she seemed very positive about participating in the study and indicated she would appreciate some help with teaching formal writing in her English class. Although this was intended as an investigative research project rather than providing uninvited professional development, discussion suggested that the reflective process involved in participation would support her in addressing her concerns, and this influenced my decision to offer input if requested.

Teacher Raijieli is from a minority ethnic background, although she has grown up in Fiji. She speaks three languages, her minority language, Standard Fijian and English. Teacher Raijieli has the least amount of teaching experience of the three teachers, with five years' teaching experience and has only been at this school for one year. Her teaching qualifications include a Bachelor of Arts majoring in English, followed by a Post Graduate Certificate in Education at the University of the South Pacific.

Student numbers in this class totalled 49 and all were over the age of 15 years. The majority of students were indigenous Fijian with only two students being Fijian and one from another culture. This class had a large majority of boys (38) and only 11 girls.

3.3.   The Research Approach

This section describes the research approach used in the study and gives an outline and an explanation of the key research questions.

3.3.1   Case Studies

The three high schools in Fiji have been selected as participants and have been developed as case studies as they closely relate to some key characteristics of case study approaches. Firstly, they are defined as the study of a specific "bounded system" e.g. a person or an institution (Holliday, 2007).   Secondly, Johnson (1992: 75-76) defines case studies as naturalistic and usually exist in their naturally occurring environment. Thirdly, case studies have been widely used in studies of second language acquisition processes. Nunan (1992: 76) states that ethnography is "essentially concerned with the cultural context and cultural interpretation of the phenomena under investigation." As exploring the nature of the socio-linguistic phenomenon within the schools was important to the research study, using a case study approach as a naturalistic form of investigation also incorporated ethnographic tools.

3.4   Instrumentation

This section describes the reasons for choosing the data gathering techniques, their validity, a detailed explanation of why the instruments were used, and how these tools were administered during the research study process.

A review of previous data gathering techniques relating to the process of teaching English writing for second language students in Fiji revealed a focus on either "textual analysis" or "think aloud" methods being used. While these methods were useful for analysing 'for text content, and thought processes', the intention of this study was to uncover the experience of all participants, including the students.

The following types of instrumentation were used for the study because they were considered the most suitable form of data gathering methods to best answer the research questions. The four methods chosen were semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews, questionnaires, classroom observations and documents. It was the intention of the researcher to use the different forms of data gathering techniques because they offered more validity to developing a theory and verification for this type of study. For example by converging the various forms of data information (a process known as triangulation) this offered more validity to the interpretation of the data. The instruments used in the study also gave opportunity for the participants to be 'member checkers' for checking the researcher's interpretations. This process allowed for verification of the data collection and interpretations (Creswell, 2012).

 As English is a second language for both teachers and students, and because English is the medium of instruction used to teach in schools in Fiji, language barriers cannot be ignored. Communication was not anticipated to be an issue because English is the dominant language within this context.   However, the design of the instruments considered some second

language factors, for example, the avoidance of asking teachers to complete lengthy questionnaires (Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003).

3.4.1   Initial Teacher Interview

Interviews have long been used in research as a way of obtaining detailed information about a topic and are popular in qualitative research. They provide an excellent instrument for inviting participants to reflect deeply, and to uncover aspects of their philosophy, practice and experience, that may not be revealed by a more external process such as observation (Creswell, 2012; Holliday, 2007; Mackey & Gass, 2005; Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003).

The primary purpose of the initial teacher interview was to gather first hand background information about the teachers' training, their beliefs and challenges for teaching English writing. In addition, questions pertaining to their perceptions and views of the English curriculum, and in particular the genre of writing that students had the most difficulty with, were also included.

I followed Creswell's (2012: 218) recommendations in the interview design by asking open-ended questions in the interviews "so that the participants can best voice their experiences unconstrained by any perspectives of the researcher or past research findings." The interview questions followed a semi-structured interview approach which incorporated pre-determined questions with the use of prompts to allow for language assistance with potential language barriers that may arise from the questions. This is explained in more detail below.

The initial semi-structured interview was piloted in the Church School with the HOD of English and transcribed for analysis purposes.

The first set of questions for the teacher interview was semi-structured and included general starter questions. The following questions are three samples that were used in the interview:

Some of the characteristics of my class and students are...

Their biggest challenges in writing in English are...

My students will use writing in English in the future to...

The initial questions were given to all teachers before their interview so they had time to complete the question starters in writing if they wished, or think about the questions before the actual interview took place. Teachers were also aware that more specific and detailed questions would follow in the interview, which they had the option of not answering if they did not wish to do so.

The order of the sentence starter questionnaire begins with general questions as shown in the examples above about student characteristics, challenges for students writing English and their future aspirations. It then moves onto the teachers' own background, experiences and beliefs about teaching English writing practices. (See Appendix 6 (a) for the range of questions).

The last question asked was motivated by Creswell's (2012) discussion on the importance of providing mutual benefits for both researcher and participants and asked what the teacher hoped to gain by participating in the research. This question was asked so that researcher had an opportunity to 'make a contribution' or 'give back' in a way that would benefit the teacher participants. This proved to be valuable to both the researcher and participant teachers in the form of an intervention, as I had developed an expository writing unit for teachers for the teachers and this resulted in its being trialled with two of the three teachers in their classes at

the end of the research study during Term 1, 2013 (see Appendix 12 for an overview of the unit).

All teacher participants were given the sentence starter questionnaire at the commencement of the research and kept the questionnaire until the interview had taken place. Only one of the teachers, however, completed the sentence starter questions in writing. This questionnaire was used at the start of each interview, so that teachers could feel more relaxed during the interview process with the pre-knowledge of what was going to be asked initially.

The second questionnaire which was developed for use during the interview process, had more pre-determined questions, but still allowed teacher participants opportunity to shape the flow of information. Wilkinson and Birmingham (2003) refers to this as being a feature of semi-structured interview. The questions asked were specific to elicit information about the research questions and these referred to the teachers' language backgrounds, teacher training, beliefs about teaching writing practices, student writing challenges, methods for teaching English writing and English curriculum challenges. (See Appendix 6 (b)).

Teachers were given choice about the location of the interviews. Two of the interviews were conducted at the home of the researcher as this was mutually considered a quiet and comfortable location, to avoid any potential noise disruptions. This residential location was also in close proximity to the schools which made access easy for the teachers. Teacher Faye, however, preferred to have the interview at her school.

All interviews lasted approximately one hour each, were audio taped and transcribed word for word for data analysis purposes and stored in a computer file. Specific questions that were not fully answered during the initial interview were later followed up in discussions with the teachers and further clarifications in the final interviews.

3.4.2 Teacher Final Interviews

The final teacher interviews were conducted at the end of the data collecting process in April 2013, after the researcher had systematically analysed all the data. Themes that emerged in the data were identified from the different forms of data collected, and which answered the research questions. This process allowed for any new potential themes to be further explored for clarification in the final teacher interviews. This was consistent with Creswell's (2012) approach for an emerging design in a grounded theory model where examining the data is refined into fewer and fewer categories and comparing data with emerging categories.

A visual discussion document which focused on my interpretations of themes that emerged from the data about teaching English writing processes was designed for each participant teacher and given to them before the final interview took place. The visual prompt was the centre of discussion during the final teacher interviews as my interpretations of a 'snap shot' of their teaching practice for the process of teaching formal (expository) writing (see Appendix 7 for a sample of the visual document).

 I have used the term 'snap shot' of the teaching process as classroom observations were limited to set periods of time in the year. The teacher interviews revealed that they may well use other methods at other times in the year, depending on student knowledge and mastery skill, so this was difficult for me to fully capture from the classes I observed. For example, some of my classroom observations were conducted in the last term of the year where the focus was on revision of expository writing, with less scaffolding being required compared to the beginning of the year.

The final interview discussion instrument proved valuable for teachers to gain a sense of the data and to become a part of the research validation process by undertaking the role of being 'member checker' on my interpretations of the data. Teachers were given the opportunity to

reflect and elaborate on my comments and interpretations regarding their teaching practices by reading the discussion document before the interview and by dialogue throughout the interview process.

All three teachers asked for a copy of the visual snap shot of expository writing process which I provided for them, as they wanted to share this with their colleagues. The participant teachers commented they found the discussion document valuable for reflecting on their own teaching practices, and subsequent progress they have now made to teaching writing processes.

All final interviews were conducted in the same location as the initial interview and lasted approximately one hour. Each interview was audio recorded and participant teacher reflections and comments were transcribed for further analysis and stored in a file on the computer.

3.4.3   The Student Questionnaire

The purpose of developing the student questionnaire was to elicit vital information about the range of ethnicity, and language backgrounds of students in Fijian high schools, and their experiences and future aspirations. This instrument seemed the most relevant and effective tool for collecting student data in a structured and manageable form. The questionnaire was member checked by the participant teachers and also by a staff member in the Ministry of Education before it was given to the students to complete. (See Appendix 6 (c).

This group-administered questionnaire included a range of closed, multiple choice and open-ended questions beginning with easier questions about their own ethnicity, language and then moving onto questions about their views and experiences of English writing and future aspirations. All teacher participants made the decision when to administer the questionnaire

to students in their classes. Students were given the option of not participating in answering the questionnaire, but none took this option. Further explanations about the questionnaire were then given to the students by myself and the participant teacher.

All students individually completed the questionnaire during one class lesson with the teacher and researcher present. The questionnaire took about 30 minutes and students were given the opportunity to ask the teacher or myself any questions about the questionnaire. Students had the option not to answer a question and a range of students in each class did not answer every question. Selected data from the student questionnaires were analysed, tabled and stored on a computer file.

3.4.4 Classroom Observations

Wilkinson and Birmingham (2003: 116) state that "it is necessary to see people in action, to experience what it is they do, even to wade in and have a go yourself." Classroom observations are essential to seeing teaching in action from both the perspective of the teacher and student and were therefore chosen as a vital method for data collection in this research study.

A minimum of three classroom observations were initially scheduled in each school. After discussions with each of the participant teachers, it was agreed that I would begin with an initial general classroom observation (to get a sense of the class and to allow the students to get used to my being in the classroom). This would be followed by further observations of teaching lessons on formal writing (mainly expository writing) as both a non participant and a participant observer and this is explained in more detail later.

It was also agreed that I would introduce myself to the students as a student from university in a friendly manner where I could tell them a little bit about my project to ease any curiosity and suspicion (Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003).

Two observation protocols were initially designed to meet the requirements of the research questions in the study. The first initial observation protocol was more general and used for the purpose of gaining a sense of the classroom teaching and learning environment. It described the classroom, the activities, the teacher, the learner and the activities (see Appendix 6 (f).

The second observation protocol followed a research model from Wickstrom et al. (2010) looking at specific writing features of instructional landscape, academic content knowledge, cognitive strategies knowledge, linguistic knowledge, methodologies used in teaching formal writing and teachers beliefs about writing (see Appendix 6 (g). After each observation a discussion was held with the teacher to clarify my interpretations.

My role as a non participant observer gradually moved to a participant observer over the term, as teachers often asked me to help with some classroom activities. Creswell (2012: 215) refers to changing observational roles: "Entering a site as a nonparticipant is a frequently used approach...after a short time when rapport is developed you switch to being a participant in the setting." At the completion of observing classroom lessons on English formal writing, all teachers asked if I would teach some lessons on expository writing, so they could observe a different method of teaching. Our roles reversed, as the teachers then became the observers when I was teaching.

All participant observations and teaching lessons followed a discussion with the teacher and were immediately typed and stored on a computer file. Two of the three classes were videoed during observations once, but this did not prove very successful for data analysis as the video

camera battery failed once during the time recording and a power source was not available at the back of the classrooms.

3.4.5 Focus Group

 Anderson (1996: 200) in Wilkinson and Birmingham (2003: 90) defines a focus group interview as "a carefully planned and moderated informal discussion where one person's ideas bound off another's creating a chain reaction of informative dialogue." Focus group interviews were chosen as an appropriate method for gathering student data with the purpose of obtaining the students' opinions, attitudes, and perceptions of their experiences with formal writing in English. In view of the potential power that a teacher researcher can have over their student participants, I had judged that a small group would be less intimidating for the participants than a one-to-one interview.

A focus group questionnaire with pre-determined questions was developed to use in the semi-structured interview. The questions included a range of closed, open and multiple choice answers which focused on the 'students' experience' through their understandings of the process, and challenges with writing formal essays in English. (See focus group questionnaire, Appendix 6 (d).

The interviews took place in a designated quiet room at the location of the school, where noise disturbance was considered to be minimal. Participant teachers selected six students from their class to participate and students were a mix of gender and ethnicity to cover a range of characteristics of the class. All students signed a 'consent to participate' form and two of the teachers had obtained 'parental permission'. (See Appendices 5(a) and 5(b).

The focus group interviews were audio recorded and the duration of the interviews was 45 minutes for each school. All students had the opportunity to respond to the questions both

verbally, and in written form by completing the focus group questionnaire at the end of the interview. Students completed this questionnaire in writing after the interview for a number of reasons. Firstly, I was uncertain how clearly the students' voices would be heard on the audio tape as there was a considerable amount of background noise disturbance. It also gave students who were not so confident in sharing their views in the group discussion a chance to contribute in writing. This may have also have helped some students with second language barriers to discuss the questions first before writing down their answers.   All interviews were transcribed and filed on computer and the student focus group questionnaires were analyzed for selected data.

3.4.6   Documentation

A range of documents from each school was obtained for the purpose of understanding how the secondary school English curriculum operated within each school and the wider Ministry of Education Department in Fiji.

The documents included:

- Ministry of Education Youth and Sport English Course Prescription (Forms 5 and 6)
- Form Six Scheme of Work for English
- End of Term Form Six English School Examination
- School Term Examination Summary Analysis
- Ministry of Education Form Six Leaving Certificate Examination –English 2011
- A sample of student essay copies
- Ministry of Education Examinations and Assessment Unit – Fiji School Leaving Certificate Examination 2011 Candidate Results Report
- Fiji School Essay Marking Scheme

3.5   Sequence of Research Instrument Activities

This section describes the sequence in which the research instruments were carried out in each school and the reasons why they were administered in this way. A table of the research activities undertaken in each school is summarised below.

3.5.1   Research Activity Procedure

I initially thought I would begin collecting my data with teacher interviews, followed by questionnaires, classroom observations, focus group interviews and collecting documents in each school. However, because of school and teacher timetables the order of administering the data methods changed and differed for each school. This is explained in detail below.

Holliday (2007: 163) advocates that researchers need to be prepared to relinquish power of their own culture and use other non-professional skills to help find ways of fitting in. I was very mindful of being able to 'fit in' with each of the teacher's busy schedules and time availability for participant interviews outside school teaching hours. It was important that I assumed the role of assisting teachers with timetable disruptions. I needed to be flexible by allowing the teacher participants to make decisions such as when it was suitable for me to conduct classrooms observations or teacher follow up discussions, when to administer student questionnaires, and interview times for teachers and focus group students.

Two main factors influenced when and how the different data collection methods were administered. Firstly, it was important to allow teachers adequate time to plan and consider the order of the data collection methods, as the teachers needed to be teaching lessons on expository writing for the classroom observations, and this had to work in with their busy English curriculum work load. Secondly, teacher participants also needed to ensure that school internal examination weeks were not disrupted and that valuable teaching time was

maintained in the time leading up to examinations for their students. These weeks were blocked out from any research being undertaken, but the week before school internal examinations often resulted in being good classroom observation periods, as teachers had scheduled some revision lessons on teaching expository writing.

Undertaking the research activities in the three schools also had its complications. The different schools determined when I started the research, and the order of the research activities. The Church School was the first to begin with an 'initial classroom observation'. A semi-structured interview was piloted with the Head of English Department, who had also initially agreed to be the teacher participant. However, there was a delay in continuing with the research at this time due to this participant being sick. During Term 2, the Community School indicated that it was a good time for me to start classroom observations as teacher Faye had scheduled lessons on revising expository writing.

I initially tried to spend an intense period in each school but the sequence of research activities was very much determined by the teacher and class schedules at the time. The Urban School had requested the research begin in Term 3, and the Church School had made a decision to change the teacher participant which also resulted in the research activities commencing in Term 3. I was therefore able to spend a concentrated time in the Community School during Term 2.

The following table represents the sequential order of the research activities undertaken in each school.

Table 2: Sequence of research activities undertaken in each school

School	Term 2, 2012	Term 3, 2012	Term 1, 2013
The Church School	Initial classroom observation	Classroom observations expository writing	Intervention- Trial of teaching unit
	Pilot Teacher interview	Classroom Questionnaires	Final Teacher Interview

		Focus Group Observations	
		Focus Group Questionnaires completed	
		Teacher Interview and questionnaire completion	
		HOD interview	
The Community School	Initial classroom observation	Focus Group interview	Final Teacher Interview
	Classroom observations for expository writing	Focus group questionnaire completion	
	Student questionnaires	Participant observation lessons	
	Teacher interview and questionnaire completion	HOD interview	
The Urban School		Initial classroom observation Classroom observations for expository writing	Intervention trial of teaching unit
		Participant classroom observations	Final Teacher interview
		Teacher interview and questionnaire completion	
		Student questionnaires	
		Focus Group interview	
		Focus group questionnaire completion	
		Participant observation lessons HOD interview	

3.6   Data Analysis

Having collected a considerable amount of data of various types from the different instruments, files were set up with main themes that emerged and relevant sections were cut and pasted, refining the themes further into sub-categories which produced the research findings.

3.7   The Researcher in the Process

It is important to acknowledge here my own experience and background in teaching English within the New Zealand context, as this is naturally the lens that has, together with the kind of ideas discussed in Moss (2003) and Wickstrom et al. (2010), largely influenced my own experience of teaching writing. As I was an observer of practices in a very different educational context, I have at all times tried to maintain objectivity and have had no wish to be prescriptive, I must acknowledge that I may bring certain assumptions based on my reflections over my years of teaching on what factors help speakers in a migrant situation achieve their literacy for writing in their senior year of school in the New Zealand setting.

4   Findings

Classroom Observation 1 – Urban School

Forty nine young high school students were seated facing the front of a very long and large classroom with windows on one side of the room and a large empty wall space on the other. They were sitting in mixed gender groups, boys in grey shirts and matching sulus (a kind of straight skirt worn by male gender) and girls in a range of pretty pastel shaded dress uniforms. Although with only a handful of girls, this seemed more like an all boys class, boisterous and noisy, with the continuous scraping of wooden desks and chairs, deep loud but happy voices all talking in a language I did not understand. The majority of students in this class were Indigenous Fijian and their big welcoming smiles made me immediately feel part of their world.

The teacher's desk was at the front of the room with the white board behind her and she almost had to shout so students at the back of the room could hear her instructions "Come up and get a past year examination, choose a question from the formal writing and literature sections and write two practice essays." Once students obtained their practice examination handouts they all seemed motivated to go through the paper reading the questions carefully. Some students asked the teacher questions while the rest of them seemed familiar with this process and settled to the task of writing, although this was not in silence as most of the class quietly talked to the person seated beside them.

This chapter is divided into three sections. I became interested in *making sense of the context* for setting up of the whole teaching process, and the intertwining factors that influence the teachers' practices of writing. For example, these included how the teachers were prepared for their training, how the teachers understand the diverse language landscape of the classroom, the resources available to them and the educational context in general that they need to work within, so I have called this section 'Setting up the Practice'. Next, to gain understanding of the real *classroom experience* for teachers and students with English writing practice, and with each classroom having its own unique flavour, I found that the case studies gave valuable insights into the teachers' instructional landscape, and how this was worked out in classroom practice, so I have called this next section 'Classroom Writing Process and

Practice'. Finally, there is a summary with the teachers' own beliefs about the purpose for teaching writing, and the teaching approaches that were unique in each case study, so I have called this section 'Reflected Practice'.

4. 1   Setting up the Practice

4.1.1   Teachers Training and Experience

My interest in this study needed to begin by firstly understanding the teachers' own experience with teacher training programmes. Preparation for teaching varied amongst the three teacher participants, and the type of programme reflected factors such as: what was available at the time of undertaking their study, where the teachers lived, and also the University they attended. The teacher training centres are located at the University of the South Pacific in the capital city of Suva, and the Fiji National University in Lautoka, close to Nadi.

Both teacher Faye and teacher Alisi have more years of teaching experience, and had been teaching in their current school for a much longer period than teacher Raijieli who had only been at her school for one year at the time of undertaking this study. The experience of the teachers was reflected in their skills and knowledge of teaching expository writing and this will be discussed later in the reflective practice section of the chapter.

All the participant teachers have undertaken a significant period of training (3+ years), including additional qualifications in English or other related subjects. Teacher Alisi was continuing to up-skill her training by completing a Bachelor of Education at the University of the South Pacific, part time.

Table 3 below shows a comparison of the teachers' training and teaching experience.

Table 3: Comparison of teachers' training and teaching experience

Teacher	Teaching Training	Years of teaching experience	Years taught at current school
Raijieli	Four years Teacher Training Bachelor of Arts, majoring in English Post Grad Certificate in Education University of South Pacific	5	1
Faye	Three years Teacher Training Programme majoring in Literature, Language with Education majors. University of the South Pacific	9	7
Alisi	Two years Teacher Training Diploma in English and Social Science Fiji National University Currently completing a Bachelor of Education part time at the University of the South Pacific	9	4

However, when I asked about second language training, all three teacher interview responses revealed that they could not clearly recall specific preparation for 'second language teaching' in their teaching training programmes, or in any recent professional development.

"In USP we had one education class - um one hour per week, we used to have this training where we used to have say five minutes talk class" (teacher Faye).

: "I remember the lecturers emphasizing the need for the first language and using that as a platform, but there was not specific strategy of how to" (teacher Alisi).

" Right! Not specifically on English as a second language. Teaching English as a second language – not so much of it" (teacher Raijieli).

Interestingly, all the teachers referred to training by "learning on the job" as being the most effective way they learnt how to teach English, particularly through observation or modelling from other mentors, such as a senior English or Language teacher.

> I think I followed what my senior language teachers were doing (teacher Faye).

> We had to go in the field and learn from the teachers who were already in the field (teacher Alisi).

> We have to resort to whoever's been there in the system to give us the teaching (teacher Raijieli).

In spite of the complexity of the linguistic landscape, this does not seem to have been a salient concern in teacher preparation.

4.1.1.1 Professional Development

As the teachers also indicated that they had not received any second language professional development training, I was curious to find out what support they received in the way of any form of professional development. Their comments revealed that this was mainly organised by the administration of the schools, for general purposes, rather than specific curriculum areas. Teacher Faye reported that sometimes Heads of Departments did organise their own professional development on English topics, but due to time constraints, not in the last year. Teacher Alisi made reference to attending a workshop on research project writing, but nothing so far with essay writing. Sometimes Ministry of Education speakers were invited to present on a topic, but all teachers reported that time restrictions prevented any regularly scheduled professional development for English.

The Ministry of Education did provide some support with professional development courses, and teacher Alisi suggested this was more in the area of general language than any particular courses in English writing, or teaching English as a second language. I also wanted to know if the Ministry of Education had initiated a regional English support group for teachers and the interview responses were mixed.

Two of the teachers were aware of an English support group which they referred to as "Suva English Teachers Association" but only teacher Faye had attended a meeting. She reported

that this association was set up by English teachers, who took turns in presenting topics, but she reported this was now no longer active. Teacher Alisi revealed that she was aware of an English support group; however, it was only for a select group of teachers who were invited to attend and not open to all English teachers.

I wanted to understand more about the English regional support group, and if in fact, it was limited to teachers by invitation only, so I initiated a meeting with the Head of English Department (HOD) in each school. The response was interesting and consistent with earlier comments from teacher Alisi about the support group not being open to all teachers. However, according to comments from the HOD from the Church School, who was a participant of the group, a change is proposed. As with other teachers comments, it does appear the support group was not always active.

> Just a few of us shared resources and met informally once a month, but then quarterly, however this has now been opened up to all teachers and on the 4th December this year there will be an English regional meeting to discuss setting up a support group.

Furthermore, the HOD from the Urban School and the Community School also commented they were aware of an English regional support group, but that they had not been invited to be members. This lack of access to teacher support indicates that English support groups in the past have functioned somewhat selectively for certain teacher members, as the teachers' comments clearly revealed they did not feel they could join the group, unless a personal invitation was extended to them. There is no doubt about the diversity of cultures within each school, and this may be the cause for some underlying relationship tensions. The next section gives a clear picture of the language diversity that is present among schools in Fiji.

4.1.2   The Linguistic Landscape

In view of the complex linguistic landscape described in Chapter 2 I was interested in finding out the ethnicity and language backgrounds and mixes of both teachers and students in the classes, their language confidence in using the English and vernacular languages, and their purposes and preferred use of other languages in their repertoire.

The following information reports on case studies which have been developed for each school and aims to reveal the diverse linguistic landscape for students and teachers within this multilingual context.

4.1.2.1   Teachers' Ethnicity and language mixes

The three English teachers who participated in the study were all female, but from different ethnicities (indigenous and minority) and all three teachers spoke English and Fijian fluently but each had a different mother tongue. All three teachers had English instruction during their own school years and English is the third language for teachers Raijieli and Alisi, and the second language for teacher Faye. I have also included the Heads of Departments in the teachers' ethnicity groups. See Table 4 below.

Table 4: Comparison of teachers' ethnicity and languages

Teacher	Ethnicity Group	Languages (spoken)	HOD Ethnicity Group
Raijieli	Minority Ethnicity	Minority language Fijian English	Indigenous Fijian
Faye	Fijian	Fijian Hindi English Fijian	Fijian
Alisi	Minority Ethnicity	Minority language Fijian English Some Hindi	Indigenous Fijian

4.1.2.2 Language and Ethnicity Focus

Student ethnicities/gender mixes

The identification of student ethnicity and gender mixes in this study is drawn from a total number of 164 student participants who were from three different Form 6 English high school classes. Student ethnicities in the classes overall were largely Indigenous Fijians; (84), followed by Fijians; (20) and 16 from other nationalities. Gender balances included slightly more boys due to the Urban School class having a very large number of boys. The Urban School class also had the largest number of indigenous Fijian students and was the largest class, and while the Church School class had a balanced mixture of student genders, it was the Community School class that had the largest range of ethnicities. See Table 5 below.

Table 5: School comparison student ethnicity/ gender issues

School	Majority Ethnicities		Minority Ethnicities	Gender	
	Indigenous Fijian	Fijian	Various	Boys	Girls
Urban School	46	2	1	38	11
Community School	12	14	7	11	22
Church School	26	4	8	17	21
Total	84	20	16	66	54

4.1.2.3 Language Use

I asked all the students in each class a range of questions relating to language use and the student questionnaires provided rich data on the diversity of languages used amongst the students in the three high schools. The following issues are important for understanding the language range in the classes and also for understanding student preferences for use of languages.

- The main language students spoke at home

- An indication of the range of languages of instruction taught to students

- Which language students preferred to use in formal writing tasks

- The use of students' mother tongue and how this assisted them in the process of writing

4.1.2.4   Main language spoken at home

The student data questionnaire revealed that the majority of students did not speak English at home and the two majority ethnicity groups identified their mother tongue languages as being Fijian, Fiji Hindi, and Hindi. The Church School and Urban School showed the Fijian language as being the mother tongue language spoken the most by students. The Community School had a larger roll of students with mixed ethnicities and therefore a larger range of mother tongue languages was spoken in this class.

4.1.2.5   Languages of Instruction

English was found to be the major language of instruction undertaken by students in all three classes followed by the vernacular languages, Standard Fijian and Standard Hindi. Interestingly, the Church School class had the largest numbers of students who had instruction in the vernacular languages. These were classes in either Standard Fijian or Standard Hindi that were offered by schools up to Form 7 (see Figure 2 below).

4.1.2.6   Preferred use of Language (s)

While very little or no English is used in the home of students at this high school level, English is by far the preferred language for writing tasks, and also the language the majority of students feel most confident in using for formal writing. However, a significant percentage of students in each class indicated that they do use their own mother tongue to assist with English writing tasks (see Figure 3 below).

4.1.2.7 *Use of Mother Tongue*

The students' mother tongue was shown to function as the main language used for conversation at home and also for casual communication in the classroom. Observations in the classroom revealed that students use their own mother tongue for communicating in 'social talk' with their peers. The study also showed that a significant percentage of students in each class, (31% in the Community School, 45% in the Church School and 40% in the Urban School) use their own ethnic language to assist with English writing tasks.

Figure 2: Comparison of languages of instruction
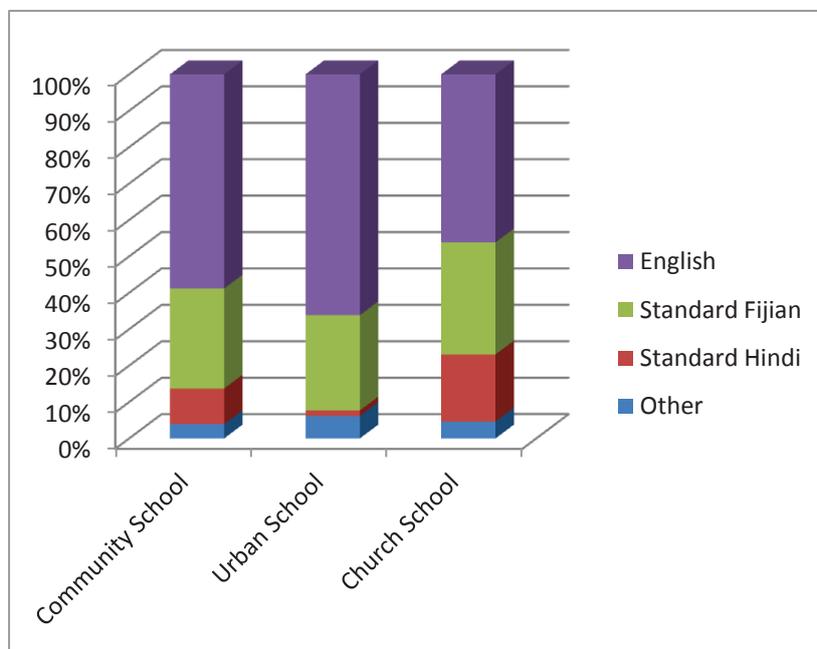
Figure 3: Students' preferred use of language for formal writing
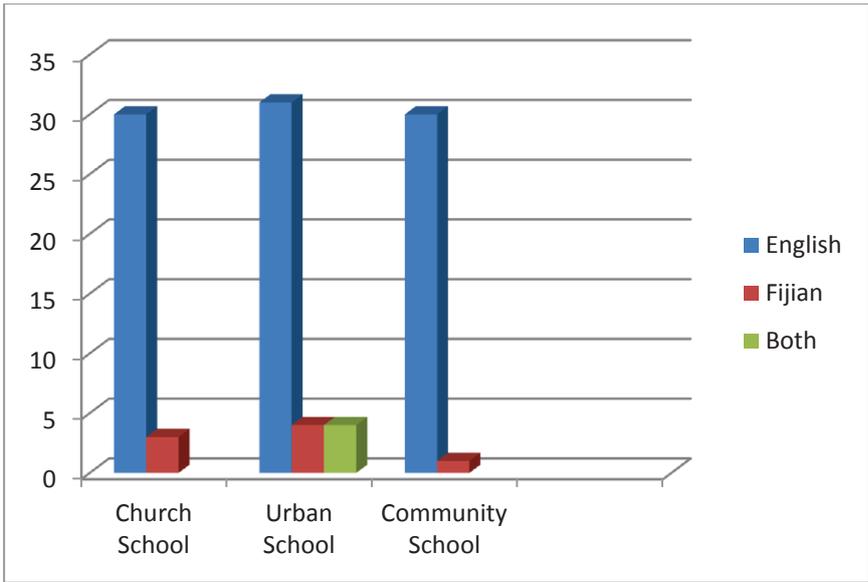
The data also showed that students favoured using their own mother tongue to support English writing tasks for *translations* from their own language to English, and for *understanding* topic questions or key vocabulary. A small minority of student responses from the Urban School class mentioned they used their own ethnic language for *discussions in groups* and this was consistent with classroom observations, as I had noted on several occasions that students sometimes switched between conversing in English and another language in the seated groups, and this seemed to be a natural phenomenon.

Table 6 below shows student use of ethnic language for assisting with English writing tasks.

Table 6: Use of mother tongue with English writing

Student Class	Translations	Understanding Topic Questions or Vocabulary	Discussions in Groups
Urban School	7	7	3
Community School	5	5	
Church School	7	8	

The following three student sample responses gave insight regarding use of their own language, which interestingly, revealed just how much extra time may be needed in the translating process during writing for some students.

> Yes, of course - If I find it difficult to think of English words to use in writing I say what I'm thinking of in my dialect and slowly translate each word (Church School class).

> Yes I sometimes use ethnic language to help with formal writing. I actually try to interpret the topic first in my own language and then try to convert it into the English language (Community School class).

> Yes to understand more on the topic by relating it in Fijian then to English (Urban School class).

4.1.2.8 *Language policies*

Teacher interview responses regarding the use of mother tongue to assist English writing revealed that school language policies do not encourage its use in English classes as these languages are intended to only be used in the vernacular classes. Overall, teachers adhered to this policy; however, in their interviews teachers did admit to code switching with students when necessary for additional explanations and clarifications during topic discussions. This is dependent however on the mix of ethnicities amongst the students. For example, teacher Raijieli from the Urban School was easily able to code switch between English and Fijian as most students in her class were Fijian.

During the final interview teacher Faye from the Community School class added that recently there had been a change in the use of language school policy at her school, and that under the

Human Rights Act, students are now permitted to use their mother tongue for discussion before writing in English.

> So now we have those students discuss in their mother tongue because they feel more comfortable and then they write in English. The change was probably two years ago but it has come about more strongly recently.

Interestingly, the other teachers did not bring this up so we can assume it is not yet widespread.

4.1.3 Educational Context

Teachers need to work within a wider instructional context. The first instructional landscape provides a discussion on curriculum resources and the examination structure. This is then followed by a discussion on the school context including aspects relating to teacher classroom resources and school assessment practice.

4.1.3.1 Curriculum Context

All English teachers were provided with the Ministry of Education English Course Prescription document which gave an outline of the aims and objectives for the English curriculum. I have provided part of the document which outlines the aims for the writing section below.

Document 1: Ministry of Education Youth & Sport English Course Prescription

This document outlines the English course prescription for Forms 5 and 6 and is the official Ministry of Education Curriculum Document. In the introduction, section 1.1 outlines the course covering this two year period: "This prescription is for a course of two years duration commencing at the beginning of the Form Five year and being examinable at the end of the Form Six year."

The general aim in the document is found under section 3, and is to promote personal development and increase students' skills in using English.

Regarding more specific writing aims, section 3.3 in the document requires teachers (e) to develop students' confidence in communication, both orally and in writing.

In the objectives set out for the course outlines and content under the writing section the document refers to teachers preparing students for two types of writing being "personal and formal writing". In section 5.2 this is outlined. (See also Appendix 8).

11. Writing

Personal: including descriptive, narrative, imaginative, letter

Formal: including expository essay, letter, report

(i) Introduction

Writing is divided into two general areas: personal and formal. Emphasis should be on developing students' skills and on motivating them to write. While particular types of writing are specified, teachers are encouraged to take advantage of any opportunities that allow students to write clearly, coherently and accurately in a variety of styles.

(ii) Objectives

By the end of the course, students should be better able to:

(a) Write fluently, clearly, coherently and accurately in a variety of styles

(b) Include adequate and relevant content in their writing

(c) Present points of view logically

(d) Organise their points into appropriate and well-linked paragraphs

(e) Express themselves imaginatively

(f) Set out written work appropriately following current conventions.

This document is fairly open and does not provide clear guidance to teachers as it has included the same objectives for two very different forms of writing (personal and formal). It would be more helpful to teachers if they were provided with specific objectives that give guidance on the two different genres.

4.1.3.2   The Examination structure

The Form 5 and 6 English Curriculum is a two year programme in which students' writing abilities are assessed through the mode of examinations. Schools generally have four to five internal English examinations over the year and all students sit one national examination at the end of each year. The programme incorporates assessment of different genres including personal writing, formal writing, and literature writing. The formal writing section of the examination paper includes options of expository writing, report writing, speech writing, or letter writing. This formal letter writing option is perceived to be easier and has proved to be more favourable to students for marks allocation and time constraint reasons and this is discussed under Assessment Practice. A copy of the English formal writing section from a recent Ministry of Education Form 6 Fiji School Leaving Certificate (FSLC) examination paper has been included in Appendix 10.

 If students pass their FSLC examination at the end of Form 6 they have the option of attending Form 7 or moving onto tertiary studies. However, students who return to complete Form Seven 7 English are not given the same option choices for formal writing in the end-of-year examination paper, as expository writing is compulsory at this level. Teachers reported that some students may be disadvantaged in not having attempted this genre of writing in their previous two years and this is discussed in more detail under Assessment Practice below.

4.1.4 The School Context

4.1.4.1 Resources for the Teacher

Document 2:   Scheme of Work – Form Six English

In addition to the English Course Prescription, schools are required to provide teachers with an annual Scheme of Work for English. Each school had prepared a scheme which I was shown and they were similar in some respects. This document had been developed by each school and similarities revealed each document providing a table and outlining the syllabus under key headings, such as:

- Content/topics,

- Concepts/principles

- Skills, attitudes/values

- Classroom activity references, assessment

The teaching syllabus presented in the Scheme of Work for English which showed the topic planning for the year was divided into three terms of 12 week blocks, with a brief outline of content coverage under the key headings mentioned above. Planning was tabled on a weekly basis and included references to textbook units and or lesson notes. However, references to planning for expository writing was found to be in only one of the school's Scheme of Work, while formal letter planning occurred regularly in all three school documents. I have no doubt that teachers do practice expository writing, even though it may not be in the syllabus planning, as my classroom observations focused on these lessons. I have included a small sample of each school's Scheme of Work for English to show how formal writing planning is set out in the syllabus. (See Appendix 9).

While teachers had an indication of what they will be teaching and assessing over a year, students were not provided with course outlines or assessment schedules in any handout forms, and teachers reported that this information was generally revealed by the teacher during class at the beginning of each unit.

I became interested in finding out whether there were any prepared writing units of work or resources available. Two of the teacher interviews revealed that teachers were required to make up their own lesson plans, as this is the responsibility of the class teacher to develop, though they sometimes shared them. Although I had asked, they did not provide a sample of a writing unit during classroom observations, so these formal documents may not be available in all schools.

Teacher Alisi however, did provide part of a sample writing unit which included a model essay. In the Church School where she worked, units of work were available for teacher shared resources. It is worth mentioning here that English Heads of Departments did not assume the role of overseeing unit work development, as the Scheme of Work was noted to be adequate provision for teachers.

4.1.4.2   *Resources in the Classroom*

I was curious as to what other resources teachers use to assist with the teaching of writing, and while there was some variance, most were common across the schools. Teacher Faye reported: "We use *English the Basic* text book as a "*teachers guide*, and we use this book just to give notes on how to write good essays." Teacher Alisi also mentioned the use of textbooks, being used for writing essay skills. "We have texts that assist the students; *Target 6* has a lot of exercises on sentence combination and paragraph writing to help them." Although I did not manage to observe teachers using these resources in the classroom, some

textbooks were referred to the schools' Scheme of Work for English, indentifying units of work and page numbers. (See Appendix 9).

Previous years' examinations papers and model essays were identified in the teacher interviews as key resources relevant for teaching expository writing. During one of my observations in the Urban School class teacher Raijieli provided students with previous year examination papers to practice write essays in preparation for an end of term English school examination and the details of this lesson were revealed in the classroom observation given at the beginning of this section.

There was no evidence of other visual aids with essay writing reminders or tips in the form of charts, and the teachers reported these were not used in senior level classes, though they did indicate they were useful for students in their junior classes. Teacher Faye suggested this was for age appropriate reasons, suggesting that visual reminders were not something students at this senior level needed, as they were expected to have this prior knowledge already. Interestingly, all focus group students responded positively to the suggestion that charts with writing tips might be displayed, and did not see this as being something that they were too advanced for.

I had noticed during the classroom observations that student handouts for topic readings, teaching instructions, or checklists were not part of classroom practice and when I asked the teachers about this, they responded that this was mainly due to photocopy restrictions which are discussed in more detail under educational resources.

4.1.4.3   *Availability of educational resources*

I was curious to find out what access teachers had to other educational classroom resources which assist with the teaching of writing. The situation varied for each school.

Photocopying resources appear to be restricted by school rules which encompass time consuming procedures, and teachers do think twice about providing photocopied handouts for their students. The study showed that it is common practice for teachers to go through 'a process of approval' in order to gain permission to photocopy resources. This practice includes obtaining signatures from their Heads of Departments who need to endorse or reject the need of the resource for the lesson. Teachers can photocopy without this approval, but the students would be charged 10c per copy. The Urban School's photocopying procedure included a 'second person approval' ensuring they had signatures from both their Head of Department and Vice Principal. Once teachers have obtained the necessary endorsed signatures, the photocopying request is given to the office, which can require a couple of days notice for the request to be completed.

A blackboard or whiteboard was therefore the main resource teachers use for presenting information. They did have access to a shared office computer, but this was not available for classroom use. The teachers commented they generally did not use overhead projectors in their classrooms, although during observations, I noticed schools did have at least one in the library.

Teachers did have access to the school library, but they limited the use of class time spent there. The teachers reported it was not a productive use of time, as having large class numbers was difficult for teachers to manage. How well the libraries were resourced varied amongst the schools. The Community School library had the most resources, with the largest supply of books and also a separate media room with a television, a video and an overhead projector that was available through bookable classroom sessions. Each library had computer(s) for student use, but access was limited, with only one or two of the computers working, so teachers were not so motivated to allow students research study using the internet. A popular resource for gaining knowledge on essay topics used by the students in

each library was found to be the daily display of the local newspaper, 'The Fiji Times'. All schools have computer labs, but these rooms are only used for acquiring computer skills. English teachers reported they do not use these rooms for publishing writing or research study, as internet access is not available in the computer labs.

4.1.4.4 Assessment Practice

I wondered how the teachers evaluated the assessment practice of expository writing. All three teachers reported that the curriculum is heavily exam-orientated, and as they feel the pressure of teaching to examinations, this often results in choosing easier options for teaching and learning.

The teaching of expository writing is currently only assessed through examinations. As discussed earlier, schools have four or five term tests or the examinations throughout the year, and all students sit their national Form 6 FSLC examination during November at the end of the year. As previously mentioned, students have the choice of letter writing and this study showed the majority of students indicated they would choose letter writing for the formal writing section because it was easier and less time consuming.

As assessment in expository writing is just one option among others. Teachers admitted to having less motivation for spending the time required to teach and develop units of work for this genre of writing when there is an easier choice of letter writing in the FSLC National examination. Although students appear to have this choice, teachers reported that they usually make decisions for their students, because formal letter writing is easier to achieve and takes less time to plan and teach. Teacher Alisi suggested that teachers lack confidence in knowledge and skills for teaching expository writing, and therefore formal letter writing is generally the favoured choice for students at this year level.

> Yes because it's an option in the exam and also students - most of them fall back to letter writing. The whole thing is not compulsory so we just don't develop it (teacher Raijieli).

> Formal letter writing it is a shorter time compared to expository writing. Sometimes we lack the knowledge and the skill for teaching expository writing and teachers tend to resort to formal letter writing (teacher Alisi).

On the other hand, teachers voiced concerns that students were not making progress in developing skills for expository writing. Students who choose to come back to school to complete their Form 7 year need to be able to achieve expository writing in the end-of-year national examination.

> For two years we are giving them an option for formal writing then in Form 7 we are telling them they have to write ......suddenly they know there is no choice now when it has already failed them the skill has already gone (teacher Faye).

This overall predicament concerned the participant teacher. Their lack of knowledge and provision of teaching materials created a sense of disempowerment in not being prepared enough for teaching expository writing, and although there was some attention given to this writing genre, the easier option of teaching letter writing was something they felt more confident about.

4.1.4.5 *Reporting Practice*

The interview data revealed that teachers wrote reports on student progress at the end of each term and also participated in parent interviews twice a year.

How teachers analyzed their students' English results differed amongst the schools. Teacher Alisi analyzed her class school assessment results into different genre writing categories, so

students' progress in expository writing could be easily monitored. However, the other two schools only recorded a total test mark for English, rather than a break-down of writing skills or genres. Consequently, student progress results in expository writing were not closely monitored in these classes.

4.1.4.6   Underachievement

Another area I wanted to find out about was how the teachers support students who are not achieving. Teacher interviews revealed that school policies do expect teachers to be available to tutor after school support classes every week from Monday to Thursday. Although usually only below average students attend this is available to all students and English teachers take turns on weekly rosters. Furthermore, this expectation can extend to include some Saturdays, depending on school requests. For example, if school examination results were below average, teachers commented they may be asked to teach on some Saturdays, and their attitudes revealed this did not appear to be out of the ordinary for teachers.

 Students who did not achieve a 50% pass in the end of year FSLC examination were required to repeat their Form 6 year if they chose to continue to Form 7. However, there were no individual subject pass criteria, so if students failed English but had a 50% average pass rate they could still progress to Form 7.

I tried to find out the national statistic results for Form Six English achievement, but I was not granted permission from the Ministry of Education to obtain results for how many students attempted, or achieved nationally, the expository writing section of the Form Six examination papers. However, I was granted access to students' Form Six Leaving Certificate results for each school, but unfortunately, these results only included the total English percentage, so I could not tell if a student had attempted or achieved the expository writing

section of the paper. All teachers and English Heads of Departments also mentioned that they do not analyse this information.

4.1.5 Teacher challenges

Teachers faced many challenges in their practices and in particular the process of teaching writing revealed how language barriers created difficulty with students expressing meaning, how the class size affected teachers' marking and giving 1-1 feedback, how class timetables that had short periods restricted syllabus coverage, and how common it was for students not to complete essays and hand them in.

4.1.5.1 Language barriers

All teachers identified L1 issues as being the main barrier to obtaining a high standard of writing in English. Comments from the teachers revealed that many students directly translated from their mother tongue to English and this caused problems with clarity and too many grammatical errors in English writing. Teachers identified that the biggest challenge students had in writing was "expressing their thoughts into words" (teacher Raijieli), but they also found it difficult to "express their ideas concisely and accurately" (teacher Alisi). As the English language was not used at home by Fijian students especially Indigenous Fijians, English class at school may be the only place they conversed using the English language and the responsibility of developing English writing proficiency therefore fell to the teachers. The following comment from teacher Raijieli showed concerns about the effect of students' language proficiency on their English writing. "I think writing is just a big brick ahead of them. They have their ideas but transforming them into writing - into English, that's the biggest problem."

Policies regarding the use of L1 were very clear but teachers applied them inconsistently. Interview comments from the teachers suggested that allowing students the use of L1

assistance to develop writing skills in English was not encouraged by school policies, and while the use of native words was acceptable in student's personal writing this was not endorsed by Ministry of Education examiners in formal writing. Teacher Alisi referred to an example in a recent examiner's report, where comments were made that discouraged the use of native language, "as everything must be in English." Teacher Faye initially made comments that school policies did not endorse any use of a student's native language in English writing assessments, but in a later discussion she wanted to clarify this and said that students should be allowed to use their own language for discussions and planning writing, but that the finished writing product must all be in English.

4.1.5.2   *Class size*

Having to teach large classes was identified by teachers as being a challenge for marking individual essay writing, and giving feedback to students. All the teachers reported that facilitating the writing of group essays was more common because this lessened the workload of the teacher and saved time when marking essays and giving feedback, especially when there were large numbers of students in the class. The following comments refer to the teachers' preferences for joint group writing and marking.

> Group work is more common because of class size but students do write individual essays (teacher Alisi).

> Group writing is more common because of class size. Individual writing often takes too long to get back so I often don't do that, largely because of the class number (teacher Raijieli).

The teachers however, also alluded to the issue of *'student copying'* during group writing sessions and individual writing that had been set as a homework task. Teachers reported that this has had an effect on students not developing their own ideas for topic questions, and that

therefore they would be disadvantaged during examination writing where individual processing of ideas was required. Interestingly, during focus group interviews, students did not refer to this process as copying, rather the sharing of essay ideas and writing structures which they reported was initiated by themselves.

4.1.5.3   Class Timetables

Teachers faced challenges of covering the curriculum content in short class periods of only 35-40 minutes. Teacher Alisi explained that in fact teachers may only have "20 minutes actual teaching time" in a period by the time students had arrived from their previous class and settled ready to begin work. Teacher Faye reported that a 40 minute teaching period may not be enough time for students to "write and think." The Urban School had a timetable of one hour class periods and Teacher Raijieli reported she preferred the benefits of having more time to "cover curriculum content" in the one hour period. However, my observations showed that students in this class did not necessarily cover more writing in the one hour period, but this may have been because this class had the largest numbers of students and also the highest proportion of students with low English ability.

Finding the time to keep students updated on contemporary issues from news media sources, such as the internet, radio or newspapers was also a concern raised by the teachers, as these sources were identified as being valuable in developing knowledge for potential examination topics.

4.1.5.4   Students not submitting essay work

Another challenge that teachers identified as directly related to the length of class periods, since writing could not be completed in school time, was the issue of students not submitting essay writing that had been given for homework. Teacher Raijieli's class appeared to have the biggest problem with this issue as she reported that less than half the class submitted their

essays for marking. As mentioned above, her class had the largest student numbers of the three schools and she also had the highest proportion of students with a below average English writing ability, and this is perhaps why her comments above refer to individual student essays taking too long to come back for marking. Furthermore, during my classroom observations I was asked to teach a couple of lessons in each class on essay writing. When I did so, students were asked to finish their essays for homework and given a few days to hand them in, but in all three classes teachers were unsuccessful in obtaining completed essays from the majority of students within that time-frame.

Teacher Alisi mentioned that it was usually the essays which were given more than a day to work on that got delayed or were not submitted. Teachers also commented that they did give essays for completion during class, or as tests, but the quality of work could be questionable if not enough time was given for the essays to be completed.

4.1.6 Student Challenges

Student challenges for English writing from the focus group data provided interesting insights. Students preferred the letter writing choice for the examination and their comments revealed this was because expository writing was considered too difficult. Of the nineteen focus group students, only six indicated they would attempt expository writing in their end of year examination, with the rest reporting they would choose letter writing.

The focus group data revealed that writing expository essays within *time limits* was found to be the most difficult, but *planning ideas*, writing the *body* and using appropriate topic *vocabulary* were also considered difficult across the focus groups, (see Table 7 below).

Table 7: Focus group comparison of essay writing difficulties

Parts of essay writing students found most difficult				
	Church School	Community	Urban	Total

		School	School	
Planning ideas	4	2	5	11
Introduction	4	0	0	4
Body	2	4	5	11
Conclusion	1	0	1	2
Grammar	1	3	1	5
Vocabulary	3	5	0	8
Proof reading	2	1	1	4
Time limits	6	5	4	15

Interestingly comments from the focus group interviews students mentioned specific difficulties being time limits with completing their essay, and thinking of appropriate vocabulary relating to their topic. For example, when asked about whether they proof-read after writing they responded: "We do it ourselves but sometimes most students can't finish it on time in the classroom."

To a question about language choices in writing, they responded:

Personally I find it a bit difficult because like what type of word is suitable you need to like think about the appropriate word to be used in that kind of essay.

Possibly vocabulary.....particular formal we're taught English in school but always informal. Hardly ever it's hard to find formal vocabulary...

4.2 Classroom Writing Process and Practice

In this section I aim to describe and interpret the writing process and practice in real classroom experiences, for both teachers and students, in the whole process of the expository writing exercise.

A scenario from the Church School reveals some insight into teaching methods.

Classroom Observation 2 - Church School

Students were seated in groups of four or five facing each other, rather than the front of the room. Girls were dressed in purple dresses with white collars, boys in starched

white shirts and light grey/blue sulus with grey ties. Old wooden small desks with scratched uneven surfaces carved out by years of use, joined groups of boys and girls together, a warm breeze drifted through louvered windows on each side of the room, but provided little relief to the hot humid conditions. I was seated in one of the student groups and felt immediately included and less of an observer, when the girl sitting next to me asked if I would like to share reading her exercise book and the other members in my group gave welcoming smiles and immediately switched to speaking English.

The teacher asked for volunteers to recall features of expository writing. The students interacted with enthusiasm, firstly by discussing amongst themselves in quiet voices, then the teacher drew a T-bar on the whiteboard with column headings 'Do's and Don'ts'. Students quickly decided who would go up from the group to take a rule which was given on a strip of paper (identified by the teacher rather than brainstorming from memory), he or she was then instructed to place it in the right column and explain the rule or give an example.

Some of the student rules or examples included: "use lots of examples, for example, statistics, your own observations", "avoid using colloquial language, for example, slang,," "avoid beating around the bush" which was further clarified in 'a teaching moment' (when the teacher said), (to students) "when discussing a topic about your own culture don't go on about other cultures as too many of you do." Some students who came up the front of the class could not think of an example or how to explain the rule. Although they laughed, their faces showed embarrassment, but they were quickly supported by the other members in their group who called out what they should write.

Although I was aware of the language issues discussed under the teachers' challenges section, I begin with an account interpreting what I observed in these rich classroom experiences, where I had the privilege of fulfilling the roles of both non participant and participant observer. Teaching methodologies and rich descriptions of the teachers' and students' experiences are given for each phase of writing (pre, during and post) with actual classroom scenarios of what I saw and what was later revealed from the data.

4.2.1   Methods for teaching (expository) writing

Teachers in all the three classes had a range of teaching methods they each used to teach expository writing, but they differed slightly in how these methods were presented. The following section discusses in detail the classroom experience of the three writing phases.

4.2.1.1   *The pre-writing phase*

Teaching methods:

The classroom teaching observations revealed that during this phase for expository writing teachers typically used *questioning/brainstorming* methods and *class discussions* to engage students in their prior knowledge for topic development, or to recap on the rules (do's and don'ts) of expository writing. (As classroom observations were undertaken during terms two and three, students had already been given explicit teaching instructions on expository writing so the recalling of knowledge was appropriate at this time of the year). The teachers made the most of these methods with 'teaching moments' often filling gaps that needed reinforcing or further explanations.

Methods of teaching in the Community School class differed with students sitting in rows of three facing the teacher at the front, who initiated class discussions by asking students to recall dos and don'ts of expository writing. Students called out their out their answers which were written on the blackboard. Some of the student responses included: "do use compound sentences", "don't use conjunctions", "don't use personal pronouns", "do use verbs" and "do use imperative verbs". This happened sometimes, surprisingly, in unison together.

Observations in the Urban School showed the teacher initiated an open class discussion using relatively closed questions, which actually elicited fewer responses from the students than the other classes. The class seating arrangements of rows facing the front, and use of closed questions, may have not engaged students to the same degree.

It was the Church School class, described in the observation at the beginning of this section, in which the students engaged most obviously with this process by giving enthusiastic responses and providing 'teaching moment opportunities', where both the teacher and students were able to further explain the rule by giving more examples.

Classroom Observation 3 - Community School

Students were seated on wooden chairs with desks in mixed groups of three or four facing the large blackboard at the front of the room. Girls smartly dressed in white shirts with green and black tartan skirts and boys in white shirts with dark grey sulus. The natural light from open window louvers on both sides, two ceiling fans and a tiled floor gave a pleasant cool feel to this room. Wall displays were scarce with two posters promoting healthy living guidelines and school rules. I sat on a wooden chair at the back of the room. The students' lively chatter permeated the room, but frequent darting looks towards their teacher revealed their readiness to focus with a prompt.

In the previous session the teacher had recapped on the dos and don'ts of expository writing. The topic was already chosen for the students and written as a heading on the blackboard. The teacher explained that students would be planning essay ideas in groups and students received their instructions: "Group 1 will plan the introduction, Group 3 will plan the body of the essay using ' how questions' and three to four strong points, while Group 2 and 4 will plan the body using 'why questions' with three or four good reasons." Students settled immediately working together on their writing task, they had 20 minutes to finish. The teacher then asked for feedback from the groups writing down some of their ideas, but often rewording or elaborating more on what the students said. Most of the students took notes and instructions were given to complete the essay for homework.

Teaching approaches for presenting essay topics varied in the classes with teachers Faye and Raijieli preferring methods of teacher-centred approaches. For example, observations showed that these teachers typically chose the essay topic which was written on the board, with a suggestion of ideas that could be used, followed by a brainstorm of other ideas from students in the class. Teacher Alisi preferred a student-centred approach with providing a range of topics (which were written on the white board) and students in this class made the choice of

which one they would write about, they were then asked to move into groups of common topic choice and brainstorm their own ideas. Discussions with the teachers about providing class reading text resources to help students with developing knowledge and ideas about topics revealed that photocopying restrictions hindered this practice.

Organising topic ideas from the previous phase into paragraph structures was common classroom practice in all the classes. Teaching methods included giving explicit teaching instructions on structuring a particular paragraph by writing ideas and examples on the whiteboard while students took notes. Classroom observations showed that the use of group work for planning topic ideas to write about in paragraph structures was common across all the classes. Teachers initially elicited ideas from students in a brainstorm fashion or suggested possible topic ideas to include in the essay. Students then participated in roles of being co-writers by working collaboratively, planning ideas in their groups. For example, in the Community School class, one group was instructed to write the introduction while the other groups planned different paragraphs for the body of the essay.

I had the sense from my classroom observations that teachers used class discussions and brainstorm methods for planning ideas to prepare their students in getting underway for writing (which in fact took up most of the teaching time for the whole essay writing process), and all the teachers favoured using collaborative class-centred activities rather than developing skills that focused students as individual writers.

Although collaborative writing dominated classroom observations it was individual experiences that students spoke of, referring to planning during individual writing experiences, possibly recalling their examination essay writing experience, rather than as co-writers in collaborative groups.

The majority of students in the focus groups indicated they planned their ideas before writing, while only two students reported they planned while writing and this was to save time.

It was clear that teachers gave instruction on the planning of ideas for essay writing as the data showed that students planned their ideas using the following strategies:

- Jotting down main points on paper and linking them to paragraphs

- Planning which idea went in each paragraph with examples and linking devices

- Listing key words, and main ideas

- Brainstorming ideas in point form

- Incorporating new ideas while writing

- Sharing ideas when allocated sub-topics in groups

The comments below are from two focus group students from the Community School which shows how they retrieved their ideas and that the extent of planning depended on how difficult the topic was:

> I put down the key words before I start writing and I decide which paragraphs would these key words be in.

> It really depends on the topic. If it's simple and I know that I can answer it properly, I'll just plan as I go, but if it's a hard topic and I can't attempt it then I write the keyword down. That serves as a guide for me when I'm writing my essay, but in the exam when I get an idea in my head then I will write it down.

I wondered at this stage in the process if students thought about writing for real audiences, and if this audience included the audiences within the classroom/school and audiences beyond the school. It was clear from the data that preparation for expository writing was mainly for examination practice purposes, and this therefore narrowed the audience, as

students typically write this genre for either their teachers, or examiners, who will be marking their essays.

Providing inquiry opportunities during class was also not common practice during this phase of preparation for writing as the availability of internet access was only in the library and teachers reported they usually had to rely on students doing their research at home to gain knowledge about topics.

The focus group student responses showed that a majority of students (11/19) said they did read or research essay topics, but this was mostly initiated by themselves, and only occasionally requested by the teacher. Students reported it was very helpful for developing content with:

- expression of ideas

- inclusion of facts

- getting their own ideas to write about

- developing original ideas

- showing different ways of expressing a point.

Some of the focus group interview responses differed slightly and offered further information, for example, one student from the Community School said he was motivated to do research if it was a competition and the essay needed to be of good quality. "and like when it's something important like, it's part of an essay competition or something we'll research because we want our essay to be good." Another student from the Urban School said that research was mainly for projects not essays, while another student from the Urban School suggested that they did not need to do research for essays, because examination topics relate to what students already know through media or prior-knowledge.

From what we know of past exams the essay topics relate to what's happening in Fiji or other countries so most of that are either what we seen on the news and other background information we have on it.

The idea of students doing their own research raised more questions, as I knew that availability of internet at the schools was limited, and I wondered how much internet access students had outside the classroom.

Teacher Faye reported that the majority of students attending her Community School came from wealthy backgrounds and did have access to the internet at home. This proved to be consistent with the focus group responses in this school as all students indicated that they had access to computers at home. However, this was not the case for the Urban School, as only teacher Raijieli and a few of her students said they had access to internet at home. Teacher Alisi also suggested that the majority of her students went to the internet shops, which required a fee of up to $1.00 per hour. Interestingly, the students still preferred this choice of research, rather than using other sources.

Once the students had completed their planning, developed paragraph ideas and possibly undertaken some research on their topic, they were ready to begin the writing phase. Understandably, as the earlier part of the process had taken up most of the teachers allocated class time, this phase did not usually happen in the classroom.

4.2.1.2 *The during writing phase*

This phase of the writing process was difficult to observe during class. As teachers did spend a significant amount of class time in the preparation for the writing phase, they usually set the actual essay writing phase for homework with a hand-in-due date, except if students were preparing for an internal examination. In that case teachers used question topic prompts for timed essays or previous year examination papers, and students completed the work during

class. However, as teacher Alisi mentioned previously, writing under these conditions, students did not always produce quality work, and I did not manage to observe teaching in these particular classes.

A disadvantage with students completing their essays at home that emerged in the study was the issue of work not being submitted. In fact in the Urban School class, as mentioned previously, less than half the class handed in their completed essays.

How students developed their ideas in this writing phase process provided rich insight. The focus group data showed that students developed their ideas by drawing from a range of sources, and made evaluations during the writing process. The students generated their ideas from the following sources:

- Knowledge from present society

- Personal experiences

- Knowledge from own culture

- Readings from media sources – internet, newspaper

The students evaluated their ideas by discarding or changing an idea during the process of writing, for the following reasons:

- Idea was not relevant to the topic

- Difficulty expressing/explaining an idea

- Not enough examples or background information to support the idea

- Too many ideas

- New ideas emerged

- Time constraints

- After proofreading an idea might be changed

I wondered if students referred to the do's and don'ts prompts that they were provided with, in the pre-writing phase, as a form of scaffolding in the way of self-monitoring tools, that would assist them with the essay criteria writing process. However, the interviews with the teachers, student focus groups and the classroom observations revealed that though these tools were given before the writing began, they were not explicitly referred to as reminders while students were writing.

Encouraging students to share their essays with peers was not part of the teaching practice, but teachers were aware that students do read each other's essays, and this was usually of their own initiative, to gain more ideas about a topic or for interest purposes, however, they had mixed views on the practice:

> Sometimes they do share their drafts and probably get ideas from each other but usually essays in our school, I think it has become more of individual work (teacher Faye).

> Just the content, you know read each other's essays, yeah but unfortunately students are tempted to copy their peers work (teacher Raijieli).

While the majority of students (14) indicated they shared their essays before handing them into the teacher, this was mostly initiated by the students themselves, as class time was not allocated for this process. Three students reported sharing their essays with family members and two students did not share their essays.

4.2.1.3   The Post-Writing Phase

This phase of writing was equally as difficult to observe in the classroom. As students were typically set the task of the writing phase for homework, the essays came back to the teacher in 'dribs and drabs' rather than on the due date or at a time where I could not be in the

classroom to actually observe this process. Furthermore, this raised more questions as to whether students practice crafting essay writing through multiple drafts, peer sharing for editing and re-writing and/or publishing a final copy.

After some discussion, the teachers kindly provided me with a sample range of the class expository writing essays, and although these were marked, there was not always a range of abilities, because of the problematic aspect of non-completion. Often the students who found the task difficult did not complete the essay task or hand it in, or teachers found it easier to provide me with a sample range of essays that had been written from a recent internal examination. With the sample copies of student essays I was able to see first-hand how the students structured their essay, answered the question with supporting detail, coped with language difficulties, and how the teachers gave the students feedback with comments and marks. This was useful in that it gave me insight into the language difficulties students had, and what the teachers valued in their students writing.

Although it was not my intention to analyze the sample essays in detail, it is important to describe some of the general features. At an overall glance, although the essays varied in writing abilities, they revealed that students were able to write with paragraph structures including an introduction, a body with some paragraph idea developments and a conclusion. Furthermore, most students provided a brief plan at the beginning of their writing.

However, there were some notable differences from students across writing ability ranges. For example, students in the mid-high ability range had more English vocabulary in their repertoire and were able to express their ideas with relevant explanations and examples of points they had made. The use of linking words and cohesive devices was also more varied within this range of students. For example, they included linking paragraph connectives such as; "moreover", "in addition" "all in all", whereas students of low ability showed no use of

connectives, or a limited range, such as "firstly..., secondly..., lastly..." Students in the low ability range generalised their sentences without so much specific use of examples or explanations, and this was made clear in the comments from teacher Raijieli below. Weak introduction and conclusion paragraphs were another notable difference with this range of students.

After reading some of the student's essay work and focus group interview data, I was able to determine that students generated and evaluated their ideas based on their English language ability to express their ideas, how much supporting evidence they could add, and how much time they had to complete the task.

The sample essays revealed that correct use of English vocabulary and grammar structures posed barriers for students and this sometimes caused problems with students expressing their ideas, which is consistent with the teachers' comments mentioned earlier about language use. Incorrect use of pronouns, verbs, tenses, prepositions and articles were found to be the most common grammatical barriers in the samples and teachers identified these errors by circling them in red pen on the essays.

How the teachers marked essays was similar for each school and revealed that teachers valued giving more comments about idea development on their students' essays than structure or grammar. Essays were generally marked out of ten with five marks given for content (how ideas are discussed and developed) and five marks for style, which included the correct use of paragraphing, title, plan and the number of words. Students were not encouraged to exceed a 200 word limit in the examination, and could be marked down for this. Most of the sample essays had an approximate number of words written by the student at the bottom of the page, or a brief note with ''word count" and a question mark by the teacher.

Teacher Raijieli also included "accuracy" in her allocated mix of marks and this referred to use of vocabulary and grammar. The essay marking criteria that teachers had been provided with from the Ministry of Education for marking examinations, was difficult to follow in terms of marks allocation and repetition of elements, (see Appendix 11), so I can understand why teachers had reduced this to two main criteria of content and style for marking class essays.

The teacher feedback comments on the sample essays varied in each case, but most referred to the student's idea development, whereas grammatical errors were identified with a circle, and/or codes. For example, teacher Raijieli's comments on two students with low ability were centred on idea development ("Stop generalising your ideas - be specific and develop them by providing more examples:" "Be more specific still too general") while some grammar errors were identified with a circle in red.

Teacher Faye commented on two students from the mid-high ability range: "Good points but too long - exaggerated unnecessarily at some places": "Very Good work. Very good points, excellent!"

Teacher Alisi was more specific in directing her comments: "More explanation on financial difficulties"; "Explain how this results in children's problems"; "Use formal and concise expressions." She used codes in the margin for identifying grammar errors, for example 'ww' for wrong word, 'sp' for spelling etc.

I noticed that teachers did not circle every grammatical error on the student's text, so I enquired about this and all participant teachers suggested that sometimes there are just too many errors, which, if they were all identified, may discourage a student, so they preferred to focus on giving marks and comments on the development of ideas in the text, which showed that they did make allowances for second language barriers.

It is important to also mention here what the teachers said about their practices of giving feedback on students' essays and their expectations for students re-writing their texts. They indicated that the most common type of feedback was given through general class discussion, where teachers wrote common errors on the board and discussed those in general. One-to-one discussion was not as common, except if students were failing or making significant errors, as teacher Faye reported: "If there are genuine problems like the introduction, where the student was way out of the topic, or still doesn't know how to use connectives or personal pronouns."

Teacher Alisi reported she gave general class feedback because she wanted the students to identify their own mistakes and were able to correct them. Students were expected to re-write their essay if they failed a particular test and until the teacher was confident they had everything right:

> After marking a paper I would put the common errors on the board and discuss that in general. It's not a one-to-one basis. We go over it again and then I ask them to do their own corrections.

Students in the focus groups confirmed that teachers did give helpful feedback comments on their essays and a mark, but one-to-one discussion was not so common. They reported that teacher corrections were mainly for grammar errors, but comments on essay structure and ideas were also found to be common (see Table 8 below). This was interesting as it appears that students may see the grammar errors in red as being more salient.

Table 8: Focus group comparison of teacher feedback on essay writing

Focus Group	Helpful comments on grammar/ideas /structure	Gives a mark or score	1-1 Discussion
Community School	5	7	0

Church School	6	5	1
Urban School	6	5	2
Total student numbers	17	17	3

After teachers had given general feedback on texts their interviews revealed that students only re-wrote essays if they were specifically asked to by the teacher, but this was not an expectation that was common practice: "I only require them to do that when they fail that essay, so if they get less than five they will have to re-write their essay" (teacher Alisi). "There is no expectation that students need to reproduce. We normally prefer them to improve on those comments in their next essay" (teacher Faye).

The majority of the focus group students (11) indicated they did not usually re-draft their essays, as it was not a requirement. However, six students reported they did often re-write their essays, while two students indicated they did sometimes, but this was not teacher-directed, rather from their own initiative.

4.2.1.4   Collaborative Practice

After I had observed classroom teaching practice, at the request of the teachers I agreed to teach some lessons on expository writing. This opportunity inspired me to develop a resource unit on teaching expository writing which was partly trialled in my lessons. However, due to limitations on time I did not have the benefit of teaching the entire unit to observe student progress, and the teachers indicated they would like to complete a trial using the resource. Teacher Raijieli and teacher Alisi agreed to trial the unit in their classes the first term of the

following year, and this has influenced some of their comments in the next, section of the chapter on Reflective Practice. A copy of the unit overview is found in Appendix 12.

4.3   Reflective Practice

In this section I report on teachers' answers to questions that enabled them to initially reflect on the purpose for teaching English writing and what that meant to the students, but I also gave students opportunity to share their future aspirations. Lastly, I conclude this chapter with the teachers reflecting on their own approaches to teaching English writing, and if in their journey so far, they would make any potential changes in their practices.

4.3.1   Purpose for teaching English

In view of the complex linguistic environment discussed above it was important to hear what the teachers believed their purpose was for developing student's English language. The interviews revealed two main categories. One was to prepare students for tertiary or university purposes. However, teachers commented that many students did not go to university and therefore the second purpose, preparing them for communication in the workforce, was also important.

4.3.1.1   Teaching English for university/tertiary purposes

Currently there are three main Universities that provide tertiary education in Fiji. Students can attend any one of the three universities in Fiji. If they wish to enter university in Fiji they need to achieve an overall 250/400 marks in the national Form Six Leaving Certificate examination. For the majority of the courses, these marks include a 50% pass in English and their best marks in three other subjects.

Although teachers suggested that the main purpose of teaching English was to develop English skills that would help students obtain a mastery level for tertiary education, they

raised some concerns about students being able to achieve university entry requirements by the end of the Form 6 year. Their comments below suggest that although this was the students' desire, they did not always meet the criteria.

The main purpose would be to train them for further studies, those who wish to pursue tertiary education. A lot of them are adamant to go for further education but I have told them the grim reality not to discourage them but to let them know (teacher Alisi). As their form goes higher the road gets narrower. It's so limited. If you notice there are six Form 6 classes and only three Form 7...The competition is so high. From my class typically I would say they'll give up. Four to five students maybe that would go to University (teacher Raijieli).

As soon as they finish Form 6, I believe most of them would not be able to pursue further studies (teacher Faye).

The student responses to questions about meeting tertiary level requirements showed it to be important for the majority as university was their future aspiration. Most intended to attend in Fiji, but some preferred other countries.

However, not all intended going to university at the end of their Form 6 year as some students, even if they achieved the marks to go to University at the end of this year, would prefer to stay at high school for their Form 7 year. The reasons varied, as can be seen from these dialogue comments from a focus group interview.

Interviewer: So, if you had really good marks would you want to go on to university next year?

All Students: No

Interviewer:	Can you tell me why?
Student 1:	I'm planning not to do a diploma, but jump straight into a degree.
Student 2:	I want to be a teacher so I have to do Form 7.
Student 3:	I have instructions from my parents to do Form 7.

Teacher Alisi also referred to students preferring to do Form 7, suggesting that staying longer in a familiar environment might be a new trend for the students' education journey. "I think they are more comfortable with coming to Form 7 rather than going to University, which is something new."

4.3.1.2   *Teaching English for communication purposes in the workplace*

This was also considered to be important by the teachers, but less so by the students.

All three teachers indicated that students will need to learn English for entering the workplace. Learning how to apply for jobs is a priority as well as being able to communicate and correspond in various fields of work. Teacher Faye, from the Community School shared that she believed English prepares students to become "good public speakers." Her suggestion that students need to learn to be "interesting speakers", "to participate in their cultural workplaces", is perhaps influenced by the priority given to oral communication in Fiji. Interestingly, entering the workplace immediately after school was not a popular choice for students.

4.3.2   Teaching Approach Reflections

Before our final teacher interviews I gave teachers the opportunity to firstly read over a discussion document in which they could verify my interpretations of the findings in the study. During the final interview I also provided each teacher with a visual handout, in which I had mapped out my observations of the teaching classroom experience for expository writing, and the approaches that teachers identified with. This feedback proved to be

valuable in that it gave teachers an opportunity to reflect on their approaches to teaching English writing. I have included below 'teacher case' summaries of the different approaches unique to their teaching followed by some discussion of how they responded to the feedback provided.

Teacher Faye – Community School

Teacher Faye displayed confidence in teaching this genre of writing and her students participated positively and enthusiastically. During our first interview teacher Faye had identified with a student-centred and class-centred approach to teaching but my observations revealed that in practice she used a predominately teacher-centred approach to writing. For example explicit teaching notes were dictated or written on the board class discussions were initiated by teacher questions being directed to individual students, essay topics were chosen by the teacher and student ideas were sometimes re-worded when written on the board by the teacher during brainstorm activities.

Teaching approaches also revealed some class-centred activities as students worked collaboratively in groups to construct different parts of the essay, but they were not encouraged to undertake any peer review roles in the classroom, such as proof-readers or advisors.

During our final interview, I asked teacher Faye if she had a preference for a teacher-centred approach to learning as on one occasion in class, I had noticed that she re-worded the students' responses, or told them what to write during class discussions and brainstorming ideas. I wondered if this was usual practice, but her comments revealed that she had a certain anxiety about this.

> I was just putting their ideas in ah a nicer way which I thought was our ideas, but I realised it was just teacher-centred, so this year it is very workable its marvellous because students are bringing things from newspapers and they like to use them in their essays.

After my teaching in this classroom, and during our final interview, teacher Faye spoke of how she had reflected on this approach, and had since made changes in her practice which

incorporated some student-centred activities. I think that in theory teacher Faye favoured both student and class centred approaches to learning but was quite unaware that these did not always transfer into classroom practice.

I also discussed other approaches that were evident in the classroom, for example, her preference for peer/group learning showed aspects of a class-centred approach, as during the planning phase of writing students worked in groups collaboratively on generating topic ideas, or as co-writers in creating a paragraph exercise. I was interested to know teacher Faye's reflections on this class-centred approach being extended to create other social roles for students in the classroom, for example, a classroom audience where students shared their essays for peer checking or advising. Her comments revealed that although this had not been previously practiced, she had recently made some changes to include student audiences in her classroom.

> Another thing I may comment what we are doing now. I learnt last year you encouraged peer essay sharing that students should read each other's writing ...so they are doing it now....and some of them are making lots of comments.

The other two teachers at this point had participated in an intervention of trialling the resource which I had written for expository writing, so they had the added experience of discovering new teaching approaches practiced.

Teacher Raijieli – Urban School

Teacher Raijieli had the least teaching experience of the three teachers, and the most challenging class, in terms of both size and students, (the majority of who were boys with a low ability range of English skills.) She had been very open from the beginning of the study, in saying she was not confident in teaching this particular genre of writing, and had very few resources. Although she identified with a student-centred approach to teaching my observations revealed her teaching to be mostly teacher-directed or class-centred due to difficulties of large class numbers. While her preference for teaching writing identified with

a process-orientated approach my interpretations revealed teaching related to aspects of a genre approach which she may not have been aware of.

During our first teacher interview I had asked teacher Raijieli what she considered a good writing class should be and her comments below suggest a mixture of both process-orientated and genre approaches, although she did not specifically identify with the term 'genre approach':

> Planning it's all about the planning proper preparation and planning will give a very good piece of writing. Format, structure and the purpose and type of writing is also very important for teaching them the rules of writing. It should be student-centred and process orientated.

A significant amount of time was given to the planning phase of writing, with class-centred approaches where most of the process was allocated to students working together collaboratively, planning ideas for essay topics, or co-writing a paragraph of the essay task. I was interested in her desire to be student-centred as she mentioned above, and this was further clarified in our final interview: "It's a class number problem and they are not interested in expository writing at all, so maybe that's why I am not so motivated they're just not responding." These comments were consistent with my observation that her students found tasks difficult to complete or engage in.

Extending class-centred activities in the post-writing phase to include the social dynamics of writing for a class audience with peer sharing, editing and further drafting was something that teacher Raijieli said would be difficult to implement, as only a few students submitted their essay work. However, during our final interview when she had reflected on teaching practice, after trialling the resource unit on expository writing, her comments below revealed that she had gained confidence in teaching writing and that students were better prepared in developing writing skills that helped them make progress in their senior class levels.

I didn't realise I did those things. I was looking at it and - oh and you have allowed

me to see my progress in providing the unit with all the teaching notes. I found this

unit very good in terms of developing them. I really want to improve on whatever I

need to cause we are teaching Form 5 and they need to carry that through to Form 7.

Teacher Alisi – Church School

My interpretations of teacher Alisi showed she identified with a student-centred classroom in facilitating the students' learning through a process-orientated approach to writing. She is an experienced teacher (with the top Form 6 class in the school) who showed innovative teaching methods in this genre of writing, at times using a process-orientated approach in allowing her students to learn by exploration or discovery rather than being teacher-led. She also identified with aspects of a genre approach as she mentioned that giving explicit instructions on structure and audience were important and for students to experience different types of writing, and although she had not yet included the social dynamics of writing in her classroom, this was an area she wanted to develop.

During classroom observations I noticed teacher Alisi's preference was to facilitate the

teaching of writing by allowing her students to discover meaning in the process. During one

of her lessons students were given a model essay and asked to find and discuss the strengths

and weaknesses. This activity showed her approaches to be both student and class-centred

with elements of discovery (students have to find information without teacher input) and

collaboration (working in groups together) in the lesson.

These approaches were also consistent with her response to what a good writing class should

be: "The class should be integrated and child-centred and to provide the opportunity for

students to explore greater meaning to them and to also enhance their skills."

When I asked teacher Alisi about her teaching approach preferences she offered more depth

to her teaching repertoire. Her past experience of writing has influenced her beliefs about

providing a process of writing structures for students: "It was not really structured like what it

is today, in the past you just write. It was like freestyle. So I think it is important that we provide structure for them." However, she also believed in providing opportunities for the students themselves to explore different types of writing, (a genre approach) and that through this exploration process, they would create greater meaning and purpose for their writing. "If they have purpose in writing in their particular style on a particular topic that should give them direction or focus when they are attempting the exercise."

During my observations I had noticed that class-centred activities (as with the other classes) did not extend to include the social dynamics of writing. I was interested in hearing teacher Alisi's reflections about this, and her response indicated an intention to take this one step further to include the social dynamics of writing into the wider school, encouraging all students to become writers! "Or we could set up a club where everyone will be able to practice essay crafting."

5   Discussion and Implications

Teaching academic English writing to L2 learners is a complex process, and when both teachers and students have English as their second or third language the complexity of this process is even more heightened, and produces many challenges for teachers in classroom. With no official language policies, a lack of teacher training in second language teaching, unit writing and support teaching resources, it is understandable that teachers do not feel confident in teaching expository writing. In addition the current writing assessment structures do not prepare students for academic writing standards required in tertiary studies. In Fiji students needing to achieve English literacy have the opportunity to do so at the end of their Form 6 high school year, and great significance is attached to achieving a 50% pass in English for University entrance.

This study set out to reveal answers to the research objective of investigating the process for teaching writing to senior high schools students in Fiji. Embedded in this theory were the participant teachers' and students' experiences of the expository writing process which intertwined through the following conditions: Their teacher training experience, their pedagogical writing approaches, the linguistic landscape, the educational landscape and the purpose for teaching English at this high school level.

5.1   Teacher Training

Fiji has a formal teacher training programme, which typically includes a three year period of study, offering various qualifications for this vocation. Teachers who participated in this study trained for English high school teaching preparation through completing a Bachelor of Arts through the University of the South Pacific, or a two year teacher training diploma programme with the Fiji National University.

It was not the purpose of this study to look at in-service teacher training in depth, but this investigation found that a lack of teacher training and resourcing resulted in teachers not being effective within this specific context, with its cultural, curricular and political imperatives. There were few opportunities for teachers to learn skills for teaching expository writing to this cohort. The absence of teacher training and professional development skills in second language acquisition, and the teaching of writing gave teachers little confidence for teaching this genre of formal writing.

There was little evidence of ongoing teacher training or support for English language as busy school schedules hindered the occurrence of regular professional development for English. While the Ministry of Education in Fiji sometimes provided professional development on topics (such as those noted by Teacher Alisi on research project writing in Chapter 4.1.1), the

data revealed there were definite shortcomings for English support in writing and second language teaching.

While the teachers undoubtedly valued professional development, the regional English support group in Suva was not viewed as adequate support, given the general lack of activity and the fact that it did not include all English teachers. Re-instating regional support groups that are inclusive of all English teachers would provide a professional community where teachers share their resources and support each other in their teaching practices.

Teachers were provided with curriculum documents and resources as mentioned in Chapter 4.1. for teaching English writing, but these were more along the lines of 'overviews' or 'guidelines' from the Ministry of Education or the school in which they were working. Detailed planning was the responsibility of individual teachers, and the data showed they did not feel prepared or confident in developing these resources. Not all the participant teachers had access to prepared units of work in their English department and as mentioned in Chapter 4, this was not the responsibility of the Heads of Departments. While teacher Alisi commented their department had files of units that were shared by teachers, this was not the case for teacher Raijieli and teacher Faye, as they reported that the responsibility to develop lessons and unit plans fell to individual teachers.

In addition, the students in this study identified second language features as barriers, and noted in particular a lack of adequate vocabulary and grammar. The notion of supporting second language learners as writers in these inadequate areas should therefore be included, and this is discussed further in the chapter. Furthermore, this study has shown that in the absence of professional development for unit writing, and with resource preparation left to the teachers (relying on experience and other teachers), there was also no close oversight from those with authority or with identified skills in the schools.

In view of this and the participants' desire for my assistance in developing and teaching a unit on expository writing, it appeared evident that support was needed for teachers in this area. Students' writing processes could be supported by the Ministry of Education providing professional development workshops in the areas of second language acquisition, and unit development for expository writing, as it was clear that teachers lacked confidence for this academic genre of writing. The implication of this is that it may affect students' future opportunities for their access or success at tertiary level.

5.2   Language Diversity

Fiji has a unique multilingual culture and this was also evident within the high school context. Both the teachers and students were found to have many languages in their repertoire, but how they functioned in the classroom created tensions arising from the competing demands for mother tongue development and English proficiency. Within the two predominant ethnicities, Indigenous Fijian (iTaukei) and Fijian (Indo Fijian) much language diversity exists with students speaking a number of languages. For example, students who completed questionnaires and identified as speakers of Fijian or Hindi may in fact have learnt to speak fluently in two or three different language varieties by the age of 8 or 9 years old, when the medium of instruction becomes English.

It was clear from the data that learning English mainly occurred in the classroom. School rules and policies discouraged the use of mother tongue languages during English classes; however, teachers showed some inconsistency with this rule. At this senior level only a few students in the study indicated they wrote in their vernacular languages, while the majority reported using their language for conversation with peers and in the home. The interview data revealed that when teachers allowed the use of mother tongue in the classroom, this was to meet the students' language needs for the task in hand such as to clarify meaning.

Interestingly, the focus group data showed that students, by their own initiative, use their mother tongue in assisting English writing tasks relating to *translating* and for *understanding topic questions or key vocabulary.*

While, students were encouraged to continue with the vernacular languages as 'subjects of study' during high school up to Form 7, students did not value their ongoing development in the same way as English. Teachers indicated that English has thus had an adverse effect on the vernacular languages, with students not placing equal value on their mother tongue language. Some reasons for this could be because of past colonial influences resulting in de-valuing native languages, and racial tensions between the two predominant cultures, (Mangubhai & Mugler, 2003) or the fact that English simply provides more opportunities for tertiary options. However, in using the linguistic capital of English, participants in this study spoke of student limitations in English proficiency impeding their ability to express themselves.

A lack of English writing proficiency may affect the students' ability to enter and succeed in tertiary study. Language barriers were identified as being a communication challenge for the students as the most problematic area for students engaging in expository writing was "expressing their thoughts into words". This limitation emerged as a writer problem throughout the study. It was noted firstly in the teacher interviews, but also the sample essays revealed problems with the students' choice of vocabulary sometimes distorting meaning. Furthermore, the students themselves had things to say about expository writing, as they were aware that English vocabulary was one of the skills holding them back.

Students in the focus groups spoke of not having enough "academic words" in their repertoire for formal writing purposes and teachers reported English vocabulary lists were only taught to younger levels in the schools. I would recommend developing support skills for writing to

include vocabulary skills in the English syllabus. Averil Coxhead's (2012) new academic words lists could be incorporated into the English syllabus. Providing weekly vocabulary lists with activities for classroom and homework tasks would help students to acquire more variety of English words in their repertoire and allow more practice using academic words for writing topic sentences.

In addition, teachers also alluded to student essays containing too many grammatical errors, creating a problem for the reader in understanding what the student was trying to say. Teacher participants referred to "direct translation errors" where a student directly translated from their own language to English, causing difficulties with sentence meanings. Interestingly, the students did not identify grammatical errors as being in the most difficult category, so this may suggest they were not made aware of this being a reader problem. The sample essay documents however, did reveal a high number of grammatical errors within the range of student abilities. In light of the students' lack of awareness for accuracy and yet contrast need for vocabulary, there are implications for their success of L2 acquisition, especially in terms of the needs for accuracy in academic English. A process teachers might include in their classrooms is taking one grammar point that has been widely misused in essays and providing class feedback via a mini lesson, and then focusing on that error in the next marking.

5.3   The Educational Context

The education context in which teachers work posed a number of challenges for teachers' writing practice. For example, the examination structure (outlined in Chapter 4.1.3) showed factors that may influence teachers' decisions on what to teach when preparing students for formal writing using English. The recommendation from all three teachers to their students confirmed that they usually encouraged them to attempt the easier option of 'letter writing'

rather than 'expository writing' in the formal writing section of the examination. This was no doubt influenced by contextual factors, such as prescribed curriculum, time constraints and high-stakes examinations as noted by Phipps and Borg (2009) which affect teachers' decisions. A summary of participant teacher interviews revealed that teachers decided to focus on letter writing for the following reasons: formal letter writing was easier to teach, it required fewer skills and knowledge than expository writing, and students were more likely to achieve a pass in the examination.

 In addition, a preference for letter writing was observed in teacher planning as the Form Six Scheme of Work for English documents revealed planning allocated for letter writing, but very little for expository writing, which was interesting as I had observed teaching in these classes. The effect of teaching this skill in a low stakes way may be a reason for a lack of essays being handed in, which is discussed further in the chapter. Furthermore, teacher interview data revealed that the majority of students who leave school at the end of their Form 6 year would most likely be going into the workplace rather than university, so this may be another reason why they did not place such importance on students needing expository writing.

However, it was clear from this study that the teachers had mixed beliefs which are similar to those outlined in Phipps and Borg (2009) in that they suggest that core beliefs may have had more influence on behaviour than peripheral beliefs. Teachers spoke about their concerns in implementing a greater emphasis on letter writing in Form 6 as they were aware that in Form 7 expository writing was compulsory in the examination. Their comments revealed that the lack of skill development and practice with expository writing in the lower Form 5 and 6 levels disadvantaged students' writing progress in Form 7. The students themselves identified this genre of writing to be the most difficult to achieve; only a small number of focus group students indicated they would attempt expository writing in the end-of-year Form 6 (FSLC)

examination with most opting for letter writing instead. Clearly the teachers were confused about the two different purposes of writing for their students. One purpose concerns what students could achieve in the examination (letter writing), while another focuses on what they needed to develop to succeed in Form 7 or tertiary options (expository writing).

Restricted access to support resources created barriers for teachers in providing adequate support resources for students. Consistent across all the schools was the restriction teachers had in providing handouts to students because of the difficult process of obtaining photocopies. School rules and policies discussed in Chapter 4.1.4 discouraged teachers from taking the time required in their busy schedules to initiate this often time-consuming process. The absence of technology for media inquiry, such as the internet, presented challenges for teachers in providing students with knowledge about writing topics and they therefore used sources such as the 'Fiji Times' found in the school libraries. All three teachers commented that research resources were generally very limited.

Interestingly, my observations showed that only one teacher made use of other visual aids such as poster charts. Teacher Faye alluded to posters being mainly used for lower year levels of teaching and the perception that this was something senior students were beyond needing. However, as discussed in Chapter 4, student focus group responses suggested otherwise, noting that teaching aids which reinforced reminders and tips about writing would be helpful in the classroom. This was also consistent with Wickstrom, et al.'s (2010) view on the success of teachers using anchor charts as self-monitoring tools, and this may be a useful tool for the teachers to consider using in their senior classrooms.

 Given the restrictions on handouts, an identified need for input of reading resources, and the fact that other visual aids were not used, raised concerns that possible sources to scaffold the students learning in terms of structure and content knowledge were removed. Teachers could

provide resources in their classrooms such as model essays on a range of topics and self-monitoring aids in the form of posters with a check list on what to include in expository essays to scaffold the writing processes.

Teachers faced challenges in covering the curriculum content due to short time-table periods and large classes restricted teachers from giving students quality feedback to students. Teachers spoke of timetabled periods of 30-40 minutes not being enough time for individual thinking and writing, and these were perhaps one reason why the participant teachers predominately used group work for planning and writing essay paragraphs during my observations. This is discussed further under Classroom Writing Practice.

Teachers had mixed views on giving student feedback as their interviews revealed they could not always practise what they believed to be in the best interests for their students. This was consistent with Phipps and Borg's (2009: 381) insight into deeper tensions among competing beliefs that teachers hold. The teachers believed one-on-one feedback to be the best method for assisting students with their writing, but due to large numbers of students in their class, this method was not always possible to implement. They spoke of giving more 'general feedback' by writing 'common errors' that were identified in students' essays on the whiteboard for class discussion. While teachers gave feedback by writing general and specific comments as noted in Chapter 4.2 on students' work, they preferred giving written comments on the development of ideas more than for elements of accuracy. This was perceived to be negative feedback and less likely to encourage students' progress in writing. This constitutes good practice as the students' sample essays showed a high number of grammar errors, and students could feel discouraged if all errors were identified or requested to be corrected.

5.4   Classroom Writing Practice

Teachers favoured using collaborative methods which involved their students working together in groups, a practice very appropriate within this community culture which also aligns well with genre-based pedagogies. Hyland (2003:24) suggested that "genre-based pedagogies, which rest on the idea that literacies are community resources are realised in social relationships, rather than the property of individual writers struggling with personal expression." During one of my observations teacher Faye instructed her class groups to collectively plan ideas for different paragraphs, while teacher Raijieli instructed her class groups to plan together and write the introduction first. While this emphasis on collaborative was the teachers' favoured mode, it could be extended to include peer review roles in the process of revising drafts. This would also lessen the teachers marking load with large class numbers, a point discussed below and endorsed by Khan & Mugler (2003). One disadvantage, however, is that collaborative methods are not adequate for developing the skills required for examination writing, which requires writers to think and construct paragraphs independently.

The planning phase of the writing process took up most of the allocated time for teaching writing and teachers usually ran out of time for students to write their essay during class, so this was typically given for homework. However, a problem noted by the teachers and discussed in Chapter 4, was the alarming number of students who did not complete or hand in their essays, and the study revealed that this was particularly problematic for the teachers to resolve. Observations showed that students provided many home-related excuses as to why their essay was not completed or handed in. Teachers shared that it was not culturally appropriate to challenge, as the home was typically the village, with its own set of cultural expectations and restraints, such as working space, adequate light at night or family responsibilities with looking after siblings or the elderly. This situation proved to be a tension

for teachers in deciding what was best for passing examinations and what was allowable and considered appropriate for the context.

Sometimes teachers employed 'practice writing' for examinations but participant teachers reported that although they set timed essays during class periods, this was not always their preferred teaching method for expository writing. Teacher Alisi's comments mentioned in Chapter 4, regarding time pressures in practice test essay writing not producing 'quality writing', raised some issues with the mixing of two different genres. Moss (2003) referred to the mixed messages students may receive with crafting writing and examination writing and that perhaps the latter should be regarded as a genre in itself. Teacher Alisi appeared to be confusing the two genres mentioned above and her concern about the failure of completion with the first and highly valued genre of crafted essay is relevant. However, clearly these are two distinct genres, but equally important for future aspirations, one being for passing examinations, and the other for tertiary study. Teachers were aware of the need for students to produce quality essays for tertiary standards, but their curriculum focused on achieving examination writing within fast time limits and knowledge of topics.

Khan and Mugler (2001) noted that writing during class periods rather than as tasks for homework would improve students' writing. This may also reduce problems of essays not being submitted, and would be more manageable for teachers to monitor, but this would need careful planning. Perhaps a clear distinction between the two approaches for teaching is needed. For example, teachers could focus on fewer products over more class periods for the essay genre and practising fast writing for the examination genre. The value of thinking fast and writing quickly on a range of topics for the examination genre could be a different focus. Student progress in writing may also improve with more regulated classroom practice; furthermore, for the essay genre, teachers could take opportunities for exploring the social

dynamic roles in writing during class, as recommended by Hillocks (2008), Kang and Pyun (2013), Moss (2003) and Sabet et al. (2013).

Peer sharing and proof-reading writing was initiated by the students, rather than by the teacher. Students reported they did share their essays informally with peers and family members, but this was mostly on their own initiative. This suggests it was an existing practice that teachers could utilise more formally by providing peer audience roles in the classroom. However, the teachers had mixed views on the sharing of essays and they were aware that some students do share their essays with peers to get ideas, but sometimes they felt this caused problems with student copying, which could be a reason why this is not encouraged during classroom periods. As Moss (2003) suggests, it should involve peer training if used, and teachers could perhaps see aspects of 'copying' being about learning from each other. The advantages of peer reading and sharing essay writing are clear and these include the generation of ideas, encouraging fluency, providing an audience that can offer improvement on parts of writing, co-writers, critical readers, consultants, editors, or publishers and audience (Gustilo, 2010; Kang & Pyun, 2013; Moss, 2003). In addition, peer evaluation lessens the workload for busy teachers needing to mark revision drafts, especially for classes with large numbers of students (Khan & Mugler, 2001).

More broadly, this study has shown there appears to be little motivation for teachers and students to publish a final essay draft. For the teachers, if students are slow to submit completed essays, it is even more time-consuming to monitor students' work to the quality that is required for a final copy, especially when student rolls in classes exceed 40 students. For the students, if they do not have real audiences which they can write for, share their work with, and edit their work for, they will have little motivation to craft their work to the standard required for publication purposes. Irrespective of the approach to teaching writing the lack of a process to produce a final product is a fundamental gap in the teaching of

writing. In summary, listed below are considerations for two different approaches to encourage the teaching writing process:

- An essay genre process where the focus is on drafting and crafting writing during class periods with fewer topics over more lessons. An introduction of an 'internal assessment' for formal writing, where students are not just required to write under 30-40 minute time pressures would provide teachers and students with the motivation to develop composing skills for 'quality writing' in the drafting and crafting process of expository writing.

- An examination genre process where the focus is on fast writing and developing knowledge on a range of topics within word and time limits.

5.5   Final Reflections and Limitations

While my own New Zealand teaching experience has been predominately influenced by western culture, I need to acknowledge that teaching methods which are considered to be successful within this setting, are not always applicable or transferrable into a Fijian setting. However, the value of participation in a research project like this, with its opportunities to self-reflect in discovering new teaching approaches and contributing to professional development with interested parties, has been a privilege. Although I gained so much from those I worked alongside, I hope I was able to offer something as well.

 However, as this has been a small scale study, and I have only been in the field for a brief time, limitations to this study need to be acknowledged. A qualitative approach was chosen

for the study which was effective in enabling an investigation into the socio-linguistic context that revealed the conditions within which the teaching process is situated for expository writing to senior students in Fiji. In terms of the research process, I had hoped to discover all the languages that students spoke within their repertoire. However, language barriers revealed that the wording on my questionnaire was not clearly understood by the students, so they did not identify exactly how many languages they spoke, or if their mother tongue language was a particular dialect. While the teachers had undertaken the role of being member checkers in reading over the student questionnaire protocol before this was implemented, I did not undertake a pilot study with other students which might have removed some of the question problems.

The interview transcription process for focus group discussions proved to be difficult to hear at times because of background noise disturbance within the school, but the students had also completed an interview questionnaire so this was a valuable protocol tool to have as additional data. As with any group discussion, some students spoke more than others in the group and peer influence may have affected how students responded to their questions, with some students not feeling comfortable about disagreeing or providing a different answer.

During my classroom observation teaching sessions, I was hoping to obtain a range of student completed essay copies, but this proved to be too difficult with students not completing or handing in their essays. Although essay sample documents were obtained from the teachers, these did not always provide a range of abilities from the class. However, teachers were very accommodating and provided other sample essay documents from previous school English examinations.

I was hoping to obtain statistical document data from the Ministry of Education for analysis with respect to how many students attempted expository writing in the end-of-year Form 6

FSLC examination, and how many of those students achieved this genre of writing in order to determine the pass rate on a national scale. However, the Ministry of Education did not grant research access to this information. This could be a potential area for future study in Fiji which might inform future assessment reviews or policy changes.

The size of the study was also limited to a small scale urban area in Fiji. Further study in other urban and rural areas, and also other types of schools, such as boarding schools or same sex high schools in Fiji, would be interesting to compare.

As this study has focused on the teaching of formal essay writing further research studies of other writing genres such as literature essays, reports, formal letters or personal writing, and at other senior high school levels such as Form 5 or Form 7 would provide valuable evaluations of other writing genres in national senior high school examinations in Fiji.

Despite the limitations this study has been significant in providing insight into this unique socio-linguistic context for teaching English writing to senior students in Fiji. This has been a timely project, as there has been little research on writing processes undertaken within this local context, and this study has highlighted the urgent need for more. The case studies approach has been valuable in hearing the teachers' and students' voices in their practices and experiences with academic writing and the conditions which these processes are set within.

This research has outlined key areas which would assist with this complex academic process. Firstly, introducing language policies that make clear the competing demands for vernacular language development, and English proficiency would help teachers and students to have a clearer purpose for teaching and learning both languages. Secondly, teacher training and professional development with resourcing were two areas identified and would clearly assist teachers in developing confidence for teaching second language skills, teaching writing approaches and developing units for writing. Thirdly, the development of regional support

groups which would enable 'resource communities' for all teachers, where English skills, resources and professional practice could be shared on a regular basis and provide local professional development for English teachers.

Lastly, the students clearly have aspirations of attending university. Reviewing writing assessment structures which include the essay genre as a writing process allows teachers and students opportunities to produce texts which have been drafted and crafted. Such a process will require training in peer review and publishing for an audience, but ultimately provide students with appropriate preparation for success in tertiary study.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Letter of Approval from the Ministry of Education in Fiji.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, YOUTH & SPORTS AND CULTURE,
NATIONAL HERITAGE & ARTS

QUALITY EDUCATION FOR CHANGE, PEACE AND PROGRESS

Marela House, 19 Thurston Street, Suva, Fiji Islands   Ph: (679) 3314477 Fax: (679) 3305511

Private Mail Bag, Government Buildings, Suva

17/02/2012

Mrs Lynn Nicholls
12 Riley Street
Suva

Re: **Approval for Research Studies**

I am pleased to inform you that your application to conduct a research in Fiji on the topic **'Investigating the teaching of Writing for Literacy- High Schools in Fiji'** has been **approved.**

This approval is for 2 years —27/02/2012 – 27/02/2014.

As a condition for all research approvals, a copy of the final research final should be submitted to this office as soon as it is ready. This will be properly archived as a reference point for the Ministry of Education.

It is also important to note that the Ministry of Education reserves the sole right to publish the final report or an edited summary of it.

In the mean time, please liaise with the schools that you wish to conduct your research in, so that classes are not disrupted.

Finally, the Ministry extends its best wishes in your studies.

With thanks.

Akuila Vulra [Mr.]
for **Permanent Secretary for Education, National and Heritage, Culture and Arts, Youth and Sports**

All COMMUNICATIONS ARE TO BE ADDRESSED TO THE PERMANENT SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION

Appendix 2: Letter of invitation for school participation

12 Riley Street

Suva

June 2012

The Principal

Dear Sir,

Further to a recent email sent to you from the Ministry of Education in Fiji, I am writing to ask for your permission to work with your school and in particular teachers in your English Department to investigate what is the sociolinguistic context, and methods used to teach English writing for students in their senior year, in order to achieve the formal writing part of their 6th form leaving certificate. I have been given permission from the Ministry of Education in Fiji to complete this project in high schools in Fiji this year as part of my master's thesis programme through Massey University in New Zealand. Your school has been selected for its range of ethnicity cultural uniqueness and because it represents a .... school in Fiji.

I am currently living in Fiji and have a visa until the end of 2013, as I am living here with my husband who is working for the Pacific Eye Institute training nurses in a post graduate eye care programme.

I have a strong background as an English specialist teacher in New Zealand, to students who have English as their second language, and I have a wealth of High School experience in teaching students a variety of skills to gain their English literacy in writing for leaving high school and University Entrance purposes. I would be very willing to assist your teachers and English department with any professional development that they identify as being needed.

I would like to conduct interviews and questionnaires with your senior English teachers and observe some classroom teaching sessions to find out the teachers' own language and teaching backgrounds, their teaching methods, beliefs, resources, and any problems they encounter with teaching English writing. I would also like the students to complete questionnaires about their own language backgrounds and English classroom writing experiences and conduct small focus group interviews as follow up discussions.

I would like to commence my research in the latter half of Term two and I anticipate finishing the data collection process before the end of Term three. I will be working with three schools in Fiji and will therefore do my best to work with all teacher and school schedules and with minimum disruption to normal classroom lessons.

I have attached my C.V., The Ministry of Education's Permission Letter, and an Information Sheet about my research project for your consideration. I hope that you will favourably consider this possibility for the benefit of educational research development in Fiji, as well as an opportunity to work collaboratively with English teachers for professional development purposes.

Yours faithfully,

Lynn Nicholls (Mrs)

Appendix 3: Information for Participants

INFORMATION SHEET

Project Title: What is the sociolinguistic context for teaching English writing to senior high school students in Fiji?

Researchers Introduction:

I am a student at Massey University, New Zealand completing my thesis for a Master of Philosophy in Second Language Teaching (MPhil SLT) over the next two years. I am living with my husband in Fiji and have a current visa until 2013.

The qualitative research study I plan to undertake for my thesis will endeavour to find out the purposes for teaching English to senior high school students in Fiji and what language problems both teachers and students encounter within this proficiency level and unique cultural context. There has been very little research undertaken recently on senior writing proficiency levels for high schools in Fiji and because of my experience in teaching English to second language learners, and my situation of living in Fiji for two years, conducting such a research project is both timely and a valued opportunity for working collaboratively with high school English teachers here. I hope that as a result of this research new insights will be developed for teaching English writing and therefore benefit students, teachers and education sectors.

Project Description and Invitation:

The methods I plan to use for this research are based on qualitative research approaches. Senior English classes from three high schools In Suva will be considered for the project as **case study school contexts**. **Questionnaires and Interviews** with teachers from the English classes would be conducted to find out about their teaching backgrounds, beliefs, methods, resources and the problems they encounter with teaching English writing to students with English as their second language**. Student questionnaires** and **classroom observations** would be undertaken by myself to find out the students' language backgrounds and classroom writing experiences and these would be followed up by a further discussion with the teachers for their insights and comments. Permission to access **statistical data** on students' writing achievements may also be requested.

Your school has been identified as a representative sample of a ....-based school in Fiji and I therefore invite you to participate and partner with me in this unique research project.

Participant Identification and Recruitment:

After attaining permission to undertake this research from the Ministry of Education in Fiji and in consultation with their Curriculum Development Unit, your school was recommended for this project. I am particularly interested in high schools which have a balanced ethnicity and gender mix of student attendance.

The number of participants involved will be teachers and students in one senior 6th form English class from three schools in Suva. I have chosen this level of English as students in this year are being prepared for their 6th form leaving certificate and need to attain proficiency in writing in their senior year to enter the work place or further their tertiary education opportunities.

I hope also that we might be able to work together on some of the issues that teachers identify and maybe find new ways to address them.

Project Procedures:

The project is anticipated to commence in the second half of Term 2 and I expect to finish collecting the data before the end of Term 3 in the year 2012. I will do my best to ensure that I work within the constraints of teacher/classroom and school timetables within this timeframe.

Teacher participants will have **one questionnaire** and **2 one hour recorded interviews**, one of these interviews would be an exit interview where we can discuss my observations and also give teachers the opportunity to offer any further explanations and insights.

Student participants will include **answering a questionnaire** about their own language backgrounds and classroom writing experiences. A selection of 6-8 students for **one focus group recorded interview** may also be conducted for follow up discussions on information received from the student questionnaires.

I would l like to observe a minimum of **three classroom lessons** (at a time suitable to the teachers) on the teaching of formal writing, to find out what resources and teaching methods are implemented as classroom practice, or anything that the teachers may identify they would like me to work with them on.

Data Management and Confidentiality:

All of the information collected will be confidential and will only be used for research purposes. This means identities will be anonymous: in other words no one besides the researcher will know names of the teachers and schools involved. Whenever data from this study are published names will not be used. The data will be stored on a computer and only the researcher will have access to it.

Participant's Rights:

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- Decline to answer any particular question.
- Withdraw from the study anytime within the two terms.
- Ask any questions about the study at any time during participation.
- Provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher.
- Be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.
- Ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview.

Completion and return of the questionnaire implies consent. You have the right to decline to answer any particular question.

Project Contacts:

If you have any further questions about the research study, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher or supervisors listed below.

Researcher Contact Details: Mrs Lynn Nicholls

Apartment 21, 12 Riley Street, Suva. Mobile 9039004, email: 2nichs@gmail.com

Supervisor(s) Contact Details:

Gillian Skyrme, (Lecturer, School of Linguistics and International Languages, Massey University).

Phone +64 4 3569099 ext 7754, email: g.r.skyrme@massey.ac.nz

Ute Walker, (Senior Lecturer, School of Linguistics and International Languages, Massey University).

Phone +64 4 3569099 ext 7813, email: u.walker@massey.ac.nz

Low Risk Notification:

"This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently if has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher named above is responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher, please contact Professor John O'Neill, Director, Research Ethics, telephone +64 6 350 5249, email humanethics@massey.ac.nz".

Appendix 4: Letter of Permission for Focus Group Participation

Dear Parents,

My name is Mrs Lynn Nicholls and I am currently living with my husband for the next two years in Fiji completing my masters' thesis with Massey University in New Zealand in the teaching of English writing. I am from New Zealand and I have a strong background in teaching English writing at senior levels, especially to students who have English as their second language.

I have permission from the Ministry of Education in Fiji, and the privilege of working with (school).............. English teachers, to complete this research project. I am asking permission for your child, who has been chosen by their teacher, to participate in one small group interview of 6 students from their class and the completion of a questionnaire. I will be asking the students questions about their English writing classroom experiences, and the length of the interview time will be no longer than 45minutes. This interview will be at a time that does not disrupt normal classes and is expected to take place sometime in Term 3 this year.

All information collected will be confidential and will only be used for research purposes. Whenever the data from this study are published the school and students' names will not be used but replaced with a letter or number, so as not to reveal their identities.

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation, so could you please indicate your permission for your child to participate, or not, by signing and returning this form to your child's teacher.

I would be very happy to answer any further questions you may have regarding this matter, so please do not hesitate to contact me should you need to.

Yours faithfully,

Lynn Nicholls (Mrs)

Phone: mobile 9039004, email: 2nichs@gmail.com

I agree/do not agree to my child participating to the focus group interview being sound recorded.

I agree/do not agree to my child completing a questionnaire about writing.

Signature: _____Date_____

Full Name - printed: _____

Appendix 5: Consent Forms

Appendix 5 (a):   Participant Consent Form - Individual

 Project Title:

 What Is The Sociolinguistic Context For Teaching English Writing To Senior High School Students In Fiji?

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have

been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree/do not agree to the interview being sound recorded.

I agree/do not agree to the interview being image recorded.

I wish/do not wish to have my recordings returned to me.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signature: _____   **Date:** _____

Full Name - printed _____

Appendix 5 (b):   Focus Group Participant Consent Form

Project Title:

What Is The Sociolinguistic Context For Teaching English Writing To Senior High School Students In Fiji?

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have

been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree not to disclose anything discussed in the Focus Group.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signature: .... **Date:** ....

Full Name - printed ....

Appendix 5 (c): Confidentiality Agreement

Project Title:

What Is The Sociolinguistic Context For Teaching English Writing To Senior High School Students In Fiji?

I .... (Full Name - printed)

agree to keep confidential all information concerning the project mentioned above. ....

I will not retain or copy any information involving the project.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Appendix 5 (d): Authority for the Release of Transcripts

Project Title:

What Is The Sociolinguistic Context For Teaching English Writing To Senior High School Students In Fiji?

I confirm that I have had the opportunity to read and amend the transcript of the interview(s) conducted with me.

I agree that the edited transcript and extracts from this may be used in reports and publications arising from the research.

Signature: .... **Date:** ....

Full Name - printed ....

Appendix 6: Protocol Instruments:

Appendix 6 (a): Interview protocol for teachers – sentence completions...

Some of the characteristics of my classes and my students...

```



```

Their biggest challenges in writing in English are...

```



```

My students will use writing in English in their futures to...

```



```

Tell me some things about you that affect the teacher you are? (background, experience?)

```



```

I believe that a good writing class...

When I was learning to teach I was told...

As a teacher of writing English I was told...

By participating in this research I hope...

Appendix 6 (b): Interview Guide for English High School Teachers

Student/Teacher Language Backgrounds

- How many students are in your class?

- How many students are Indo-Fijian?

- How many students are Fijian?

- How many students are from other nationalities?

- Do you consider English as being your second language? What (if any) other languages do you speak fluently?

- How do you get to know your students? Prompt: Their language and cultural backgrounds, strengths/weaknesses etc.

Teaching Background

- How many years have you been teaching English?

- How have you been prepared or trained for teaching English writing?
  Prompt: Teachers college, University, writing courses etc

- Have you had any training or instruction specific to the teaching of second language learning? Prompt: How do you remember this being taught?

Student Writing Challenges

- What do you consider to be the most difficult part of writing in the Form 6 leaving examination for students in your school?

- What are the main difficulties students have in writing expository essays in your 6th form classes? Prompt: Language issues, structure, other?

- Are there are ethnicity differences between Indo-Fijian and Fijian students with proficiency levels in writing English and if so can you explain why?

- Are there any gender differences between boys and girls with proficiency levels of writing English and if so can you explain why?

- Are students allowed to use their mother tongue or native language when completing writing tasks and if so how does this assist their English writing?

- Do you at times speak to students in their mother tongue or national language? and if so when would this occur?

Teaching Beliefs

- What are your beliefs about teaching English writing? Prompt: You may think about commenting on: student centred /class centred or teacher centred classroom learning, student motivation, the classroom learning environment, use of students own knowledge, error correction, teacher feedback, etc.

Teaching Methods

- What methods do you prefer to use to teach formal English writing in your classes and why? Prompt: Y*ou may want to comment on methods such as brainstorming, teacher/peer conferencing, using model text examples, class/group discussions, timed essays etc.)*

Curriculum

- How are students prepared to achieve formal writing for their Form 6 examination leaving certificate? Prompt: Practice examinations, a range of writing topics, model essays?

- What happens if students don't achieve their Form 6 examination certificate?

- How are students supported in English if they are not achieving English writing? Prompt: Extra tutoring, peer/parental support.

- How are students assessed on their formal writing?

- What resources do you use to teach formal writing for Form 6? Prompt: Unit plans, teaching notes, model essays, previous exams, text books?

Appendix 6 (c): Questionnaire for Form 6 high school students

High School:

Date:

1.   What is your ethnicity? Please circle a, b or c below
    a) Fijian
    b) Indo-Fijian
    c) Other

2. What is the **main language** you speak at home? _____

    Have you had any teaching instruction to **write** in this language? If so, for **how many years?**_____

3.   Have you had teaching instruction to write in: Please circle any below:
    a) English for how many years ( )
    b) Standard Fijian for how many years (   )
    c)   Hindi Fijian for how many years (   )
    d)   Other, for how many years (   )

4. How did you first learn English? Please circle a, b or c below.

    a) When I started school and English was taught in all subjects.
    b) When I started school, but English was not taught in all subjects.
    c) Other, please explain here:

5. What sort of writing do you do in your own ethnic language?

7. Which language do you feel the most confident in using for writing? Can you explain why?

8. Which language do you prefer to use in formal writing tasks and why?

9. If you are using a computer for internet or doing research is this done -
    (a) at home
    (b) at school
    (c) other

10. When writing essays do you share your ideas with? Please circle the right answer(s).
    a) With my teacher
    b) With other students
    c) With my family
    d) No-one

11. For the Fiji School Leaving Certificate Examination what choice of formal writing do you think you will choose to complete?

    (a) letter writing   (b) speech writing
    (b) expository writing   (c) report writing

12. What are your future plans? Please choose a or b and answer with more detail.
    a) I plan to study at University.......
       Which University?
       What will you study?

    b) I plan to.......

13. Do you have any other comments you would like to make about learning to write English at high school in Fiji?

Appendix 6 (d):   Interview Protocol for Focus Group Students

Tell me about some of your experiences with writing essays in English?

1.   Can you explain what formal writing in English is?

2.   What choice of formal writing in the examination do you think you will attempt to do? Circle the ones that apply to you.
.
       (a) letter writing
       (b) expository writing
       (c) other....

3.   For essay (expository writing) which parts do you find the most difficult to do in English?

       (a) Planning ideas
       (b) Introduction
       (c) Body
       (d) Conclusion
       (e) Grammar
       (f) Vocabulary
       (g) Proof reading
       (h) Time constraints

4.   Does your teacher give you teaching instructions on how to plan the essay structure e.g., introduction, body, conclusion. How is this typically done in class?

       (a) Discussions
       (b) Taking notes from blackboard or from dictation from teacher
       (c) Photocopied handouts
       (d) Model essays
       (e) Visual aids – Other?

5.   What about the teaching of planning your ideas for your essay? How is this done?

       (a) Individually
       (b) In groups
       (c) Taking notes from blackboard or dictation from teacher
       (d) Photocopied handouts,/readings
       (e) Model essays
       (d)   Visual Aids – Other?

6.   Do you receive any teaching or feedback on grammar in your essay writing? If so how is this done?

(a)   Discussions
(b)   Taking notes from black board or dictation from teacher
(c)   Photocopied handouts
(d)   Model essays
(e)   Other

7.   Do you use any kind of planning before writing your essay or does this happen as you write?

8.   How do you decide on what ideas to use when writing your essay and what makes you decide to change an idea in the process of writing?

9.   Do you use your mother tongue language any time during the process of essay writing? Prompt: Planning ideas, structure, how this is helpful.

10.   Do you do any reading or research at home about your essay topics? Do you think this would be helpful in getting your own ideas to write about?

11.   Do you at any stage when writing your essay share your draft essay with anyone else before handing it into the teacher? If so, who would this person be?

12.   After the teacher has marked your essay do you rewrite or complete more drafts of the essay with any corrections suggested by the teacher?

13.   How does the teacher mark your essays?

    (a)   Helpful comments with grammar/ideas/structure
    (b)   Giving a marks or score
    (c)   Teacher discusses this privately with you.
    (d)
14.   Does your teacher correct errors in your essay which are mainly

    (a)   grammar
    (b)   Ideas
    (e)   essay structure

15.   Have you had any model essays to compare or analyze for essay writing during class lessons?

    (a)   a copy of a good sample essay written by a student from your class or school.
    (b)   a copy of good essay sample given by your teacher?

16.   Does your teacher use any of the following in your English writing class:

(a) Overhead projector

(b) Video

(c) Computer presentations

(d) Posters

17. How do you think teachers can improve lessons to help students write good essays?

Appendix 6 (e):   Interview questionnaire for HOD of English

1. Are you expected in your role as HOD of English to provide support for professional development in the teaching and learning of English for staff at this school? Prompt: Explain any professional development activities for English which has taken place in the last 2 years?

2. Are you aware of a regional English teachers support group for teachers in this area? If so can you explain what typically happens at these meetings and how often you meet? If not, would you be interested in being involved in setting something like this up for English teachers in your area so that you can share resources, ideas and concerns.

3. Has the MOE provided any support for professional development in the teaching and learning of English this year? Prompt: Workshop days, conferences, seminars etc. What suggestions could you make for the Ministry to have more input into developing English teaching support?

4. Do you analyze the school results for English and if so how is this done? Prompt: Annually, gender differences, ethnicity differences, form classes, skill set differences, e.g. reading, writing, speaking etc.

5. Do you have access to English national examination results in English for Fiji and if so do you compare these results with the school you are working with?

6. Do you provide your teachers or students with an English course overview, scheme of work, lesson plans or units for the year or any other handouts?

7. How many 6th form classes does your school have and total number of Form 6students?

8. In your role as HOD of English do you have a resource budget allowance, and if so do you think this is adequate in providing teachers and students the necessary classroom requirements.

9. Please also explain your photocopy procedures for teachers in your school.

Appendix 6 (f): Initial Classroom Observation

Setting: Class/Teacher/School

Observer:

Role of Observer:

Date/Time:

Length of Observation:

The Classroom
Describe how the teachers and learners are seated in the classroom, make notes on sight lines, space, air, warmth, light, whiteboard, equipment etc.

The activities
Make notes on the kind of activities used, that nature of student involvement, balance of students doing things, and teacher doing things etc.

The Teacher
What personal qualities does the teacher have (not teaching techniques)? What kind of rapport does this teacher have? What is the personal atmosphere generated by this teacher? What is it like to be a student in this classroom?

The learners
How motivated are the learners? Why? To what extent are they taking an active part in their own learning? To what extent are they expecting the teacher to do the work for them?

Appendix 6 (g): Classroom Observation Protocol

Classroom Observation Lesson #

School:

Teacher:

Class:

Observer:

Date:

What are the features of Instructional landscape?

Social and Cultural Capital Knowledge- What are the ways that teachers and students get to know each other on a personal and cultural level which enhance the development of formal writing.

Social:
Do students have opportunities to work with each other in sharing ideas or evaluating each other's writing, and if so how is this implemented by the teacher?

Cultural
Does the teacher give the students opportunity to share their own cultural knowledge and backgrounds in the process of writing, and if so how is this implemented by the teacher?

Linguistic Knowledge: What linguistic knowledge does the teacher use to enhance students writing skills?

Linguistic Transfer – Code Switching *Does the teacher or students use their L1 at any time in the writing process?*	**Language Conventions used to enhance students linguistic knowledge.** *What is the language conventions used in the process of teaching writing?*

Academic Content Knowledge: What student learning resources are used which relate to curricular standards and mandated assessments?

Literature/readings provided*:* *What literature or other texts have the students been provided with in preparation for writing their essays*? **Curriculum resources:** Previous examinations/model texts	

Cognitive Strategies Knowledge: What cognitive strategies are students encouraged to use in the formal writing process?

Brainstorming*: Does the teacher use brainstorming or similar techniques to generate ideas for writing?*	
Planning/organising: *Does the teacher give text example models or explicit instructions on how to plan and organise ideas in essays?*	
Retrieving/drafting ideas*: Does the teacher give instructions on how to draft or retrieve ideas?*	
Evaluating*: Does the teacher encourage students to evaluate their writing as they go? Does the teacher allow other students to evaluate their writing?*	
Revising*: Does the teacher ask students to revise their drafts more than once before handing in for marking***?**	

Methodologies used in teaching formal writing: What methods do the teachers use for teaching formal writing?

Brainstorming	
Class discussions	
Group discussions	
Using model text examples	
Question prompts	
Timed essays	
Peer -conferencing	
Teacher conferencing	
Self-monitoring	
Other	

What are the teachers' beliefs about writing?

Student centred: – *Are the students expected to discover their ideas and skills of writing with practice and developing proficiency from model text examples and minimal teacher input.*	
Teacher centred*: Does the teacher provide all student topics, explicit instructions on the organisation and process of writing with little input from anyone else in the classroom?*	
Class-centred: *Do students have the opportunity to work collaboratively together in choosing topics, planning ideas, writing drafts, reading finished products etc.?*	
Student motivation: *What ways does the teacher motivate students to engage in the writing process? Are students provided with opportunity to use their L1 to assist in the process of writing?*	
Utilising students existing knowledge*. Does the teacher use students existing knowledge to assist with writing and if so how is this implemented?*	
Classroom learning environment: *How are students encouraged to participate in writing: Independently, pairs, groups, in silence, with mild noise, very noisy? What is the relationship between the teacher and students?*	
Error correction*: How does the teacher correct errors relating to the writing process and finished product?*	

Teacher feedback: *How does the teacher give feedback for the writing process and finished product?*	
Use of authentic texts*: What kind of texts is used in preparation for the writing process?*	
Product/Process or Genre based approaches: *Which methodology of teaching writing does the teacher mostly identify with?*	

Appendix 7: Sample of Visual Prompt for Final Teacher Interview

Pre Writing Phase

Brainstorm/Discussion
- Student Prior Knowledge
- Rules of Expository Writing
- Visuals – Do's Don'ts
- Students choose for whiteboard
- "Teaching moments" discussion

Teacher code switches language to clarify meaning

Group Work
- Identify Strengths/Weaknesses on A3 Visual Model Essay
- Teacher reviews answers questions → gives feedback
- Expository writing features written on A3 Poster Paper
- Group presentations to class "teaching moments" for feedback
- Creative visual resources made

student – class centred

Expository Writing Process

Students only write in English

Writing Phase

Collaborative Writing
- Students rewrite model essays in groups with corrections
- teacher roams →
- Students write essay in books
- Gives feedback.

teacher facilitator

Individual Writing
- Choice 4 topics on whiteboard
- Teacher explains – how to discuss topics
- Students encouraged to research at home
- Students write essay at home with what is date – few days later

Post-Writing Phase

Student – Central

- all students hand in essays
- Teacher marks every essay /10 → 5 for content 5 for style as per marking Schedule
- Comments on essay structure/grammar/errors
- General feedback in class
- Common errors on whiteboard for class discussion
- Students correct own errors.
- Students re-write essays when requested
- 1-1 discussion – students not achieving – call parents – set up tutoring

student ownership for errors → self learning

Collaborative and Individual writing → class-student centred

Student – teacher – class conferencing → collaborative working environment

teacher facilitator – genre based approach to learning ~ Process oriented ~

Appendix 8: Ministry of Education Form Five and Six English Writing Course Objectives

(iii) CONTENT

The following are basic types of lessons (or parts of lessons) which teachers may wish to supplement and/or adapt:

> group discussions, dialogues, oratory (prepared and impromptu), drama, role playing, meetings, interviews, debates.

II. WRITING

(i) INTRODUCTION

Writing is divided into two general areas: personal and formal. Emphasis should be on developing students' skills and on motivating them to write.

While particular types of writing are specified, teachers are encouraged to take advantage of any opportunities that allow students to write.

(ii) OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course, the students should be better able to:

(a) write fluently, clearly, coherently and accurately in a variety of styles

(b) include adequate and relevant content in their writing

(c) present points of view logically

(d) organise their points into appropriate and well-linked paragraphs

(e) express themselves imaginatively

(f) set out written work appropriately following current conventions.

(iii) CONTENT

The main types of writing tasks should include:

> Personal Writing: including descriptive, narrative and imaginative prose, letter writing;

> Formal Writing: including expository essay, letter, report.

Appendix 9:   Sample of Form Six Scheme of Work for English

W e E k	Contents	Concepts & principles	skills	Classroom activity& References	Remarks
1	COURSE	OUTLINE	PARTS OF SPEECH		
2	Language Literature	Target- unit 1 Reading- chapter 1 /2 and & summary notes	-to be able to use the various parts of speech to answer Target questions - to appreciate reading literature work	Target Unit 1 pg1 'Things Fall Apart' text Lesson notes	Teachers to do pre-reading research on the novel -Nigeria -Africa -Ibo society
3	Language Literature	Target- unit 2 Reading- chapter 2 /3 and & summary notes	-to be able to use the various parts of speech to answer Target questions - to appreciate reading literature work.	Target Unit 1 'Things Fall Apart' text Lesson notes	Teachers could also ask students to write their own diary entry instead of giving a model as this is a form 5 revision
	Essay Writing	Diary Entry	-to be able to use the features of diary entry to write a diary based on any topic(s)	Write model of a diary entry on the board – refer to individual teacher's lesson notes	
4	Language Literature	Realities- Unit 1 Reading Novel- chapter 3/ 4	-to be able to read comprehension passages and respond to the follow-up questions - to appreciate reading literature work and identify characters/setting/themes/styles	- Do follow-up questions from Realities pg - write summary notes from the chapter read	
5	Literature Language	Reading Novel - chapter 5/6 Target unit 4	- to appreciate reading literature work and identify characters/setting/themes/styles - to be able to use the various parts of speech to answer Target questions	Write Summary notes from the chapter read.	

144

Appendix 10: Ministry of Education Form Six Fiji School Leaving Certificate Examination 2011 – Formal Writing English Sample

2.

SECTION A: WRITING   [20 marks]

There are two questions in this section. **Both** the questions are **compulsory**.

QUESTION 1   FORMAL WRITING   (10 marks)

Write about **200 words** on **any one** of the choices (a) – (g) given under the following headings: Expository Essay, Speech, Letter and Report.

During marking, the examiner will be looking especially for the use of an appropriate register, originality of ideas, logical organisation, correct paragraphing, relevant linkages, expression and style.

Expository Essay

Either	(a)	Holistic education is imperative in this day and age.
Or	(b)	Over-commercialisation in sports outweighs its professional development.
Or	(c)	Parental negligence – the main cause of children's problems today.
Or	(d)	The importance of following rules and regulations.

Speech

Or   (e)   You are an Environment Officer.

Write a speech for a group of unemployed mothers on the topic:

"Horticulture – the way out of unemployment."

Write the text of your speech.

Letter

Or   (f)   Your name is Jason Reef, the Officer-in-Charge of the Yellow Ribbon Project Awareness team, which has been given the responsibility to educate students on the rehabilitation programme for prisoners and ways and means to discourage them from entering prisons.

Write a letter to the Principal of Fiji High School, Box 210, Suva, requesting permission for the team to address the school assembly on their programme.

Include the following:

(i)   purpose of writing

(ii)   **two** reasons for the awareness

(iii)   **two** other necessary details

Layout your letter appropriately.

Or (g) Using the table shown below, write a report titled:

Youth Unemployment by Region and Gender: 2003 – 2004 Analysis.

You may use the following headings in the Report:

(i) Introduction

(ii) Causes

(iii) Effects

(iv) Analysis

(v) Recommendations

(vi) Conclusion

Youth Unemployment Rates by Region and Gender, 2003 – 2004 (%)

Region	2003		2004	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
East Asia	5.8	8.1	5.8	8.1
South East Asia and Pacific	15.9	14.1	15.8	13.9
South Asia	11.8	10.7	11.6	10.6
World	13.1	13.5	12.9	13.2

Source: *ILO, Global Employment Trends*, 2005.

146

Appendix 11: Teachers' Essay Writing Marking Schedule

ENGLISH MARKING SCHEME

Expository Writing	**15 marks**

CONTENT	**9 marks**
PLAN	2
Very well planned and being closely followed from introduction to conclusion	2
Good planning but not closely followed.	1
Good or satisfactory planning but not followed at all	½

INTRODUCTION	1
Linked closely to the topic	1
Not closely linked to the topic.	½
Irrelevant and not in any way linked to the topic.	0

FACTS/IDEAS/CONTENT	5
5 or more relevant facts/ideas	5
4 relevant facts/ ideas	4
3 relevant facts/ideas	3
2 relevant facts/ideas	2
1 relevant fact/idea	1

CONCLUSION	1
Linked closely to the whole essay	1
Not closely linked to the whole essay	½
There is a conclusion but not in any way linked to the essay.	0

STYLE

(deduct ½ mark for each type of mistake e.g. 10 missing words deduct only ½ mark) 3
Sentence structure/patterns/types, paragraphing, tone, vocabulary, register, cohesion/fluency, structure of essay: introduction-body-conclusion, expression, linking devices. NO: personal pronouns, repetition, redundancy, rambling, rhetorical questions, contractions, colloquial expression, incomplete sentences, listing, clichés, irrelevant words, monotony, missing words, wrong words (especially for expository)

MECHANISMS

(deduct ½ mark for each type of mistake e.g. 10 spelling errors deduct only ½ mark) 3
Punctuation, spelling, tense, agreement, wrong word order, capitalisation, articles, order of adjectives/adverbs, degrees of comparison, verb endings, voice, prepositions, conjunctions, plurals, word forms, short forms, hyphenating incorrectly.

Appendix 12:   Expository Writing Unit Overview

English Writing Unit Plan Developed for Fiji High School Levels – Forms 5-7

Unit Plan:	**English - How to teach formal (expository) writing**
Level:	**High School, Form 5/6**
Lesson(s) duration:	**6**
Resources:	**Refer to lesson plans**
Objective:	**Students will understand how to use paragraph structures and features of formal (expository) writing in the process of analyzing, crafting and publishing of essays.**
Outcomes:	**By the end of the unit students will be able to:**

- Analyze a sample essay to identify features of expository writing and a range of simple, compound and complex sentence structures.
- Sketch paragraph structure (s) for expository writing.
- Identify key elements to include in an introduction.
- Correctly use linking and connective devices in paragraphs.
- Use the Sexi Model (Statement, Evaluation, Example and Implication) to develop points.
- Identify key elements to include in a conclusion.
- Understand how to use formal language as an appropriate voice in expository essays.
- Read literature relevant to topics to develop ideas and use for reference purposes.
- Write essays on a variety of topics, some being for real audiences.
- Proof-read and self-monitor features of expository writing using a check list.
- Peer critique idea development in essays for further crafting.
- Publish a final draft copy of an essay for a real audience.

Assessments:	**Test on features of expository writing**
	Write essays for international assessment
	Produce a crafted expository essay for a real audience

References

Borg, S. (2011). The impact of in-service teacher education on language teachers' beliefs. Science Direct. 39, 370-380.

Bruce, I. (2008). Cognitive genre structures in methods sections of research articles: A corpus study. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 7, 38-54. doi:10.1016/j.jeap.2007.12.001.

Coxhead, A. (2012). A new academic word list. *TESOL Quarterly*, 34(2), 213-238. doi: 10.2307/3587951.

Creswell, J. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Boston: Pearson.

Duff, P. A. (Ed.). (2005). *ESL in secondary schools: Programs, problematics and possibilities*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence, Erlbaum Associates Inc.

Geraghty, P. (1983). *The history of Fijian languages. Oceanic linguistics*. Honolulu: Hawaii Press.

Gustilo, L. E. (2010). What you think, feel and experience shape your writing: Cognitive, affective and contextual processes in ESL writing. *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher, 19*(2), 271-285.

Hillocks, G. (Ed.). (2008). *Writing in secondary schools*. USA: New York: Taylor and Francis Group LLC.

Ho, B., & Ho, K. K. (2004). The developmental trend of the medium of instruction in secondary schools of Hong Kong: Prospect and retrospect. *Language and Education, 18*(5), 400-412. doi: 10.1080/09500780408666891.

Holliday, A. (2007). *Doing and writing qualitative research*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Hyland, K. (2003). Genre-based pedagogies: A social response to process. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 12*(1), 17-29. doi: 10.1016/s1060-3743(02)00124-8.

Johnson, M. (1992). *Approaches to research in second language learning*. USA: New York: Longman.

Kang, Y. S., & Pyun, D. O. (2013). Mediation strategies in L2 writing processes: A case study of two Korean language learners. *Language, Culture and Curriculum, 26*(1), 52-67. doi: 10.1080/07908318.2012.762012.

Khan, V., & Mugler, F. (2001). The Fiji form 7 prescription and the language needs of first year tertiary students. *Directions, 23*(2), 20-49.

Kirkpatrick, A. (2010). English as an Asian lingua franca and the multilingual model of ELT. *Language Teaching, 44*(02), 212-224. doi: 10.1017/s0261444810000145.

Lal, V. (1987). *The Composing process of sixth formers of an average urban secondary school. Six case studies.* Fiji: Suva: University of The South Pacific.

Lotherington, H. (1988). Trends and tensions in post-colonial language education in the South Pacific. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism 1*(1), 65-75.

Mackey, A. & Gass, S.M. (2005). *Second language research*: *Methodology and design*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Mangubhai, F. (2002). Language-in-education policies in the South Pacific: Some possibilities for consideration. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 23*(6), 490-511. doi: 10.1080/01434630208666482.

Mangubhai, F., & Mugler, F. (2003). The language situation in Fiji. *Current Issues in Language Planning, 4*(3 & 4).

Milner G, B., Arms, D. G., & Geraghty, P. (1984). Duivosavosa. Fiji's languages: Their use and their future. *Fiji Museum Bulletin 8*, 32-76.

Moss, J. (Ed.). (2003). *Writing England*: London: Routledge Falmer.

Myskow, G., & Gordon, K. (2009). A focus on purpose: Using a genre approach in an EFL writing class. *ELT Journal, 64*(3), 283-292. doi: 10.1093/elt/ccp057.

Nunan, D. (1992). *Research methods in language learning*. New York:Cambridge University Press.

Nunan, D. (2003). The impact of English as a global language on educational policies and practices in the Asia-Pacific region. *TESOL Quarterly 37*(4), 589 - 612.

Nunan, D. (Ed.). (2005). *Classroom research*. USA: New Jersey: Erlbaum Associates Inc.

Phipps, S., & Borg, S. (2009). Exploring tensions between teachers' grammar teaching beliefs and practices. *Science Direct, 37*, 380 - 390.

Raimes, A. (1986). Teaching writing: What we know and what we do. (Conference Paper). Available from ERIC, from Conference Paper.

Raimes, A. (1988). The texts for teaching writing. *Materials for Language Learning and Teaching, Anthology Series 22*.

Sabet, M. K., Tahriri, A., & Pasand, P. G. (2013). The impact of peer scaffolding through process approach on EFL learners' academic writing fluency. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 3*(10), 1893-1901.

Senior, R. M. (2002). A class-centred approach to language teaching. *ELT Journal, 56*(4).

Shameem, N. (2002). Multilingual proficiency in Fiji primary schools. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 25*(3), 388-407.

Siegel, J. (1987). *Language contact in a plantation environment. A socio-linguistic history of Fiji.* UK: Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wickstrom, C., Patterson, L., & Araujo, J. (2010). *Culturally mediated writing instruction for adolescent English language learners. National writing project.* Texas: Local Site Research Initiative LSRI Cohort V.

Wilkinson, D., & Birmingham P. (2003). *Using research instruments: A guide for researchers.* London: Routledge Falmer.

Yi, J. (2009). Defining writing ability for classroom writing assessment in high schools. *Pan Pacific Association of Applied Linguistics, 13*(1), 53-69.