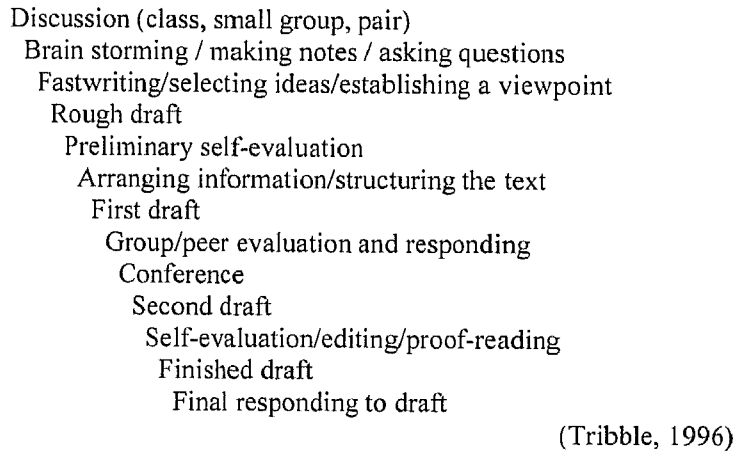# CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews and discusses some related literature that has guided and helped me in the formulation of this study. I begin with a discussion on the disillusionment of the process approach and make a case for genre approach as a scaffold or a support in empowering 'limited' readers and writers. In my review I then cover three broad areas: genre, situating genre in the classroom as well as genre and the teaching of reading and writing. I proceed to examine genre in its three interrelated purposes: learning genre - widening students' genre repertoires; learning about genre - fostering genre awareness and learning through genre - using genres as tools for critical thinking and learning in particular situations (Chapman, 1999). Then I go on to suggest adopting and/or adapting a genre based pedagogy as an alternative in the classroom. In the final part of this chapter I examine the reading-writing connection. In relation to this, the use of model texts in the teaching of writing is also discussed.

2.2 Critique of the Process Approach to Teaching Writing

Process approach to writing was seen as a possible solution to facilitate writing while making writing more meaningful. A typical sequence of activities in the process approach would probably look something like Figure 2.

Figure 2: Process Approach to Writing

Discussion (class, small group, pair)
Brain storming / making notes / asking questions
Fastwriting/selecting ideas/establishing a viewpoint
Rough draft
Preliminary self-evaluation
Arranging information/structuring the text
First draft
Group/peer evaluation and responding
Conference
Second draft
Self-evaluation/editing/proof-reading
Finished draft
Final responding to draft

(Tribble, 1996)

Reader feedback on the various drafts is what pushes the writer through the writing process on to the eventual end-product. In the reality of the classroom, states Applebee (1984) such an approach is viewed as impractical and 'too time consuming'. As such, process approach was hardly implemented because many teachers had not worked out just *how to* implement such an approach within the constraints of the classroom (Applebee, 1984). Furthermore, the process approach does not provide sufficient input in linguistic knowledge to enable students to write successfully (Badger & White, 2000). Reid (1987) also suggested that "this approach neglects to seriously consider variations in writing processes due to differences in individuals, writing tasks, and situations; language proficiency; level of cognitive development, and differences between writing in a first and second language". According to Rodrigues (1985), "alongside their need for time to think through their ideas, to revise them, and to write for real audiences and real purposes, students also need structure; they need models to practice". I believe genre approach to reading and writing provides students the assistance they need. Genre is the

form or structure, a useful tool, a scaffold that helps students write till they are ready and confident enough to do without them. Teachers help them focus on the features and form and once the features and form has been mastered the students are then ready to take off on their own.

2.3 Genre Approach to Teaching Writing

Calkins (1994) explains that genre study is actually a structure teacher creates in order to scaffold and support reading-writing connection. And I have learnt that structure operates at two levels; the macro level (how the text is organised) and the micro level (the kind of syntax, discourse markers related to certain kind of genres. I see the purpose of highlighting this big and small structure, that is to raise awareness of genre in children, is to help them reproduce and/or transform genres.

Calkins (1994) also goes on to say that " . . . our students read and evaluate, muse over and analyse, learn from and model themselves after texts that are like those they will write" (p. 36). Calkins observes that for many educators, the focus of the curriculum is apt to shift not from one genre to another, but from one topic to another. She argues that "if the focus is always on the topic - the country or the dinosaur - when will children inquire about line breaks, meter, and repetition in poetry, or about deveoloping a character and staging a story in fiction?" (p. 357). She says. . .

> I regard genre studies as fundamental enough to shape our curriculum. I find that when an entire class inquires into a genre, it is life-giving. It opens doors and leaves a lot of room for variety and choice, while also allowing the classroom community to inquire deeply into something together (p. 363).

Caudrey (1998) says that writing effective texts involves many different areas of knowledge and skill. "One very important factor is the ability to select appropriate content and language to suit the communicative task on hand", he says. He anchors his argument for genre approach with the example below . . .

> . . . to take a simple example, there is a convention that a letter in English normally begins "Dear XXX"; such an opening can safely be used in any letter. However, beginning a letter "Darling XXX" would be appropriate in only very few situations, despite the fact that "dear" and darling" would appear on the face of it to be similar expressions. Only convention dictates the use of "dear". . . . skilled writers need to know what the conventions are, and use that knowledge in their writing. (p.2)

From my experience as a teacher, I have come to realise that helping students to be aware of genre is very important as Caudrey puts it " . . . any given piece of writing is a communicative act, generic considerations will be important in creating it". Christie (1984) in Richardson (1994) also says that teaching needs to make explicit the 'how' of writing while Gilbert (1990) in Richardson (1994) emphasises the importance of making explicit to students 'how a text is made'. Richardson says that writing is a learned cultural practice. Delpit (1986) calls the teaching of genre as 'explicit teaching' while Bernstein (1975) refers to it as 'visible pedagogy'. The more text children know, he states, the more they will become aware that writing is crafted within generic conventions, thus the more possibility there is for play and constructions.

What is missing in most of our classrooms is the discussion or 'the talk about text'. Giving genre a chance in our classrooms, I believe, will bridge this missing link. This is because genre studies would be a very focused activity with ready input for learners to

play with language. 'Things people do with language' can then be experimented and explored. This, I feel, is very suitable for our many linguistically limited learners.

2.3.1 Genre

It has been difficult to avoid the word 'genre' in literacy and language education in recent years, particularly concerning the teaching of writing. I noticed that new ways of looking at genre, traditionally a way of classifying texts with common features or purposes, have been emerging in different educational contexts. Shaw and Liu (1998), Chapman (1999), Caudrey (1998) and Calkins (1994) are but some who claim that a genre focused pedagogy is effective and beneficial. However, Freedman (1993) strongly feels that attempts at explicit teaching of particular genres may be unhelpful, in fact may quite possibly be detrimental. She claims that the "genre approach subordinates individual voices to pre-determined notions of genre, promoting an artificial, formulaic, even impersonal image of writing and language". Genre approach, she says, "become prescriptive and even authoritarian in practice".

Oliver (1999) argues instead that a "flexible, participatory and critical view of genre offers ways of seeing writing as both a social and personal activity and provides a basis for discussing difference, similarity and change in all kinds of texts and text-making". This is true because "genres are seen as dynamic, as things that people *do* with language, as ways in which communication between readers and writers is set up in particular communities and situations" (Bazerman, 1997 cited in Chapman, 1999).

Comparisons of texts by our many L2 writers and L1 speakers in our classroom illustrate the ways in which their completion of writing tasks differ in terms of generic

features as well as in terms of linguistic accuracy and range. Recognising the empowering nature of mastery of genres, I see great benefits in the use of genre-based writing teaching in our school system especially in the primary schools. Having been empowereed, the students can then be weaned out from a scaffolded construction through genre approach to independent construction through process approach in later stages, perhaps in the secondary schools.

2.3.2 Learning Genre

Oliver (1999) warns us that learning genre is not just a matter of assimilating linguistic knowledge from texts. It is clear that the kinds of dialogue and interaction which takes place around text, the ways of 'talking into text' (Unsworth, 1997) contribute to understandings about genre in the classroom. Learning genre, Oliver states, requires 'not only competence with the product but also a raised rhetorical consciousness'. I noticed that although Freedman (1993) opposes explicit teaching, she feels that teaching about and raising awareness of the importance of generic factors in general may well be of value to all writers. I also found that Caudrey (1998) supports this. A genre-focused course, he says, needs both to make students more aware of the concept of genre and the way it affects texts and increase their ability to differentiate their language and text structures through the use of a greater linguistic range.

Chapman (1999) asks and answers an important question, 'What does it mean to "learn genres"? She quotes Himley (1986) who says that 'it means, in essence, learning how to participate in the actions of a community'. For Freedman (1993), learning genre is part of children's literacy development. Chapman (1994) herself says that learning genres

is an emergent process. She then reviews her stand and discovers that learning genre, for her, is not only cognitive but also social (Chapman, 1999). She goes on to say that, most significantly, learning genres can be thought of as learning to use genres as cultural resources besides using them as cognitive tools.

For me, learning genre, besides what has been mentioned earlier, is above all an act of empowering students because it makes them conscious and active learners of language and not the passive recipient as is the scenario in many of our Malaysian classrooms now.

2.3.3 Learning About Genre

According to Hyland (1992), genre analysis is directly relevant to the classroom and illuminates a neglected area in our teaching methods and materials. It emphasizes the crucial importance of rhetorical text structure and is beginning to influence how writing is taught by providing models of different communicative activities. He feels that genre approach can help teachers intervene more effectively in classroom writing. He then cites the work of Swales and Martin. Swales (1984) reports that the grade 2 pupils' written work also improved after they were taught to recognize elements of narrative structures and model their own writing on these (p. 346, cited in Hyland, 1992). Martin (1987) claims that this knowledge prompted 'more effective negotiations as well as providing each child with their own individual scaffolding that can be deployed to produce successful texts' (p.357, cited in Hyland, 1992).

Hyland (1992) states that genre analysis is the study of how language is used within a particular context. Genres differ in that each has a different goal and they are

structured differently to achieve those goals. Caudrey (1998) too states something similar. A genre, he says, has a particular schematic structure: a distinctive beginning, middle and end. It is this which constitutes the genre of a text.

The main concerns of this approach, says Hammond (1987) is to make explicit to teachers and students knowledge about how the type of text (or genre) will vary according to purpose, topic, audience and channel of communication. The claim of genre analysis , I deduce, is that it can both reveal communicative processes and serve a pedagogical purpose.

Hyland (1992) is firm that genre analysis can provide the vocabulary and concepts to explicitly teach the text structures we would like our students to produce. It is said to place language at the centre of writing development by allowing shared understanding and explicit guidance.

For Kay and Dudley-Evans (1998), this doesn't mean that genre theory builds down to a mechanistic 'drills' approach - that such a focus on structure and the use of a linguistic metalanguage constrains 'creativity' and sacrifices content to perfect form. Examining texts as finished products in no way implies a product-oriented approach or the teaching of prescriptive formulae, they say. This is echoed in Bakhtin's (1986) work. Genres are flexible models, he says, not merely generic forms that writers slot ideas into. In addition to that, Kay and Dudley-Evans (1998) say, control over the conventions of a genre is a prerequisite for creativity, and students simply require more information on the features that constitute good texts in order to improve their writing skills. I strongly believe that explicit descriptions are the most effective means of accomplishing this.

Chapman (1999) too defends genre-based approach saying that it does not suffocate innovation and personal expression, but it can provide a methodological environment that develops writing skills and encourages creativity. It can also provide opportunities for students to reflect on and discuss how language works in a given context and how it can most effectively be employed to meet particular goals, she adds.

As I see it, learning about genre, is essentially about sensitizing the learner to language and language use in particular contexts. Sensitizing them, through learning about genre, I feel is almost like liberating them for they then become critical consumers of language. This awareness is definitely useful in jumpstarting writing, an activity many students and teachers shudder away from.

2.3.4 Learning Through Genre

Callaghan, Knapp and Noble (1993) say that a worthwhile final step is to have students explore the possibilities of the genre by working creatively within and beyond it. This is important, they say, not only because creativity is in itself a useful and necessary part of learning, but because it allows students to see how aspects of a genre, and their modification, affect the process of communication.

Russel (1997) advocates using genres as cognitive tools. He argues that learning to use genres as cognitive tools is more important than adopting textual features. Thus curriculum subjects should be used not only as vehicles for teaching content knowledge, but as ways of teaching thinking and communicating.

Chapman (1999) states that the most important aspect of curriculum genres is their epistemic (knowledge-construction) potential: learning through genres. Curriculum genres can create situations that enable students to experience ways of discipline-based thinking and communicating. The greatest potential for situating genres within the school subjects is to enable students to use them as cultural tools, as resources for supporting and extending thinking (Hanks, 1991 cited in Freedman, 1997). Chapman (1999) says that we can create situations and the genres embedded in them socially situated, immediate and 'real' for students. In school, we cannot replicate exactly what goes on in the wider world. However we must try to imitate as close as possible.

For students, literary genres, like the fables, appear to be decontextualised rather than socially situated. Perhaps traditional approach to teaching literary genres, with its focus on textual features rather than features of situations, has created this sense of 'disconnection'. She proceeds to say that the potential of narrative genres is realized more fully by shifting from learning about narrative (story elements) to learning through narrative - narrative as a tool for creating personal identity and for connecting with others, one's culture and one's world. Chapman (1999) also goes on to say that writing is more socially real not only when it is embedded in social situations but also when writers and readers engage in conversations around texts.

Literary thinking is important to intellectual development, says Santman (2001). Literature, she says, helps us realise who we are and imagine who we could become. It helps us consider others and see a world larger than our own. Therefore, she advises that the curriculum should be so designed that it would be able to teach kids to think

provocatively and compellingly about their books and to use books to think provocatively and compellingly about the world.

This perspective is mirrored in Delpit (1991). Learning genre is too easily seen as a matter of assimilation rather than critical engagement. A broader view of access is necessary - access to critical as well as normative knowledge; access to reflection as well as to performance; access to experiment as well as to convention.

One such area where learning through genre is helpful and much needed as cultural tools and resources for supporting and extending thinking is in the area of media genre.

2.3.4.1 Media Genre

Since media is communication, it cuts across all areas and brings relevancy to students. In a sense, it brings the outside world into the classroom. In English classes, for example, students can talk about point of view, persuasion, etc. Since the media has such a powerful impact on our lives we need to deal with it in a rationale and critical manner.

Fairclough (1989) states that language is seen as discourse and as social practice. Mass-media discourse is interesting, he says, because the nature of the power relations enacted in it is often not clear, and there are reasons for seeing it as involving hidden relations of power. He goes on to say that the power being exercised here is the power to disguise power.

According to Shepherd (1992), media literacy is basically the ability to decode media messages. We are constantly being bombarded by various forms of media genre.

Their impact is unavoidable. The media includes all forms of advertising, TV, movies, newspapers, magazines, electronic games, the Internet. The competencies developed around print are just part of the skills necessary to communicate in the technological environment of today's world, he stresses. Traditional literacy focused on print because that was the major method of communication. Through technology we now communicate using powerful and persuasive visual images. Instead of mastering the reading and writing of print, student's today need to know how to 'read' and 'write' the various forms of media, hence the name media literacy (Considine, 1992). The danger is not inherent in television itself, reports Richard (1998) but in the passive way it is viewed. According to Considine (1992), media literate people can read, analyse, evaluate and produce communication using various media. It is vital for students to become critical consumers of media because the image of the outside world as presented by mass media may not be truthful. If schools are to achieve the goal of creating responsible citizens for life in a democratic society, she says, they must help students understand and question ownership, origin, form, and content of information in that society.

We have shifted from a print oriented society to a visual, multimedia society. 'More than one half the population receives daily news from television rather than the newspaper. With television comes advertising that sells lifestyles through products' (Media Awareness Network). Further more, Sylwester (1983) observes that if a child interacts more with media than with other people, they only receive a distorted view of the outside world. Our young people will not become reflective thinkers on their own.

Thus students need instruction in order to develop the necessary skills to become wise instead of passive consumers of media. One such area is advertising.

Consumer reports (1998) indicate that advertising seems to be increasing its presence and influence. Corporations give schools free materials in exchange for a chance to expose children to their products, if not through direct advertising, then through biased classroom materials. Advertisers have devised new approaches to marketing using children as prime targets. The advertisers constantly bombard people with images of their product as gateways to the 'good life' however unreal and unattainable that might be. Hence, there is a need to educate students to avoid media manipulation and to encourage deeper thought about important cultural issues. Learning through genre enables this thoughtful thinking in making informed decisions.

Learning through genre enables us to take pedagogical detours that can bridge the word and the world. Learning through genre stimulates thoughtful thinking, which would help learners in making informed decisions.

How do these three interrelated purposes of genre play out in the classroom? Before we can even think of trying out genre approach, one needs to define the classroom, specifically the 'climate' of the classroom. If it were to be carried out in a unidirectional or transmission oriented classroom, the result will probably be disastrous. The teaching-learning context makes a world of difference and the socioliterate classroom is acutely aware of this.

2.4   Situating Genre in the Socioliterate Classroom

In socioliterate views, Johns (1997) states that literacies are acquired principally through exposure to discourses from a variety of social contexts. Through this exposure, individuals gradually develop theories of genre. Those who can successfully produce and process texts within certain genres are members of communities, for learning does not take place independent of these communities. In this view, she says, the role of learners is an active one. Students are constantly involved in research into texts, roles and contexts. She goes on to say that for Halliday and others, language (and genres) are integral to a social context and that genres provides ways of getting things done among readers and writers whose cultures and communities mold their literacy practices.

I, personally and strongly, believe that there is value in making genre a talking point and focus for analysis in the classroom, where a wide range of genres is encountered in reading and writing. As such I agree and support Oliver (1999) who feels that bringing genre more to the fore is one way of raising awareness of the inter-dependence of texts and how social practices and institutions can be seen as flexible and negotiated, rather than fixed and imposed. According to him, this means comparing and critically reflecting on difference and similarity in a range of texts in a range of media. It also means, he states, encouraging students to reflect on their own experience of texts and communication.

Instead of presenting genres externally as 'required knowledge', Mackin-Horarik (1996) suggests that teachers need to build on the prior knowledge and experience of students and take into account differing perceptions of genres and contexts. This means

considering learning contexts from more than one point of view and taking 'not just the pedagocentric view of the teacher and what is to be taught', but also that of the learner and how this relates to what is already learnt.

A second important concept in the discussion of socioliteracies is discourse community. In the term discourse communities, the focus is on texts and language, the genres and lexis that enable members throughout the world to maintain their goals, regulate their membership, and communicate efficiently with one another (Johns, 1997). She also goes on to say that if there is one thing that most of [the discourse community definitions] have in common, it is an idea of language [and genres] as a basis for sharing and holding in common: shared expectations, shared participation, commonly (or communicably) held ways of expressing.

Socioliterate classroom recognises the importance of interaction. This kind of classroom advocates a multidirectional, action oriented and knowledge-constructing atmosphere. It sees genre as social action and interaction, strategy as well as process.

2.4.1 Genre as Social Action

Wells (1998) expresses in his study of dialogic inquiry, related work in educational linguistics on the dynamics of modelling and scaffolding have alerted us to the importance of dialogue in the classroom. Oliver (1999) also adds that what has emerged from much of his research is a view of genre as dynamic, participatory, situated social action as opposed to static, abstract, decontextualised rhetorical form. Learning a genre, learning to inhabit its conventions and make use of them in the process of making meaning, is not solely a matter of acquisition and instantiation of form, he says. It is more

a matter of engagement with established communities of discourse, of acculturation into conventions and (crucially) negotiations with them and transformations of them in practice, he concludes. In this view, genre knowledge can be seen as a form of 'situated cognition' and our knowledge of genre, rather than being fixed, as constantly updated by experience.

This is further strengthened by Bazerman (1997), in Chapman (1999) and Oliver (1999). He sums up one view of genre as social action: "Genres are not just forms. Genres are forms of life. They are frames for social action. They are environments for learning. They are locations within which meaning is constructed. Genre shapes the thoughts we form and the communications by which we interact. Genres are familiar places we go to create intelligible communicative action with each other and the guideposts we use to explore the unfamiliar".

2.4.2 Genre as Strategy

> "Strategies, for me, are procedures that literate people consciously control which enable them to comprehend and compose text. The direct instruction of certain kinds of strategies would also help children acquire the culture of power because it would give them access to a major medium of power, written language."
>
> Lisa Delpit (Language Arts, 1991, p.19)

In her call for explicit instruction of strategies and conventions, Delpit argues for minority youth who are outside the 'culture of power'. These students, she says, do not have access to the discourse structure that enables them to develop essential literacy

skills. This argument is equally powerful for all students; it is important to create an academic environment that encourages the flexible and knowledgeable use of strategies critical for the academic success of *all* students.

Besides students, teachers too need to strategise the teaching-learning situation. For example, intervention. Hyland (1992) states that intervention by the teacher in the process of writing can be a highly productive exercise. There are a number of key ways in which a teacher, armed with the structural insights of a genre description, can use an explicit knowledge of texts to provide guidance and constructive input - modelling, guided practice, composition, constructive assessment and collaboration.

According to Hyland (1992), research in cognitive psychology in recent years has emphasized the importance of organized background knowledge in text processing. The focus has been on how knowledge of the world is ordered and used in comprehending text. Effective understanding is therefore seen as being dependent on the reader's ability to relate the structure of a text to a familiar conventional pattern. He goes on to say that "as competent readers we therefore rely on an implicit ability to recognise the distinctive ways in which texts are organised. But this aspect of linguistic knowledge is not only central to comprehension strategies, it is also vital to the production of communicatively appropriate texts".

Caudrey (1998) also reports that to write in a particular genre, whether a formal report or a historical romance, the author must be aware of the formal patterns that shape text. Teachers therefore need to strategise his/her teaching so as to familiarise students with the schemata associated with the particular genres they will require.

2.4.3 Genre as Process

According to Chapman (1999), many advocates of process writing have considered genre incompatible with process, especially a traditional method of genre instruction that takes a structural approach and emphasizes literary genres. New views portray genre as situated, social, active, dynamic and flexible, and considerations of audience and situation are fundamental. These notions of genre are not only consistent with the tenets of process writing, they also have the potential to enhance and extend it. She also says that when we emphasize genre as a tool for thinking and communicating rather than its textual features, when we focus more on learning and producing genres, when we place more emphasis on contingent responsiveness to students' writing, than on formal instruction, genre and process can become seamless.

Hyland (1992) wrote 'we can grasp a theory only by trying to reinvent it or reconstruct it, and by trying out, with the help of our imagination, all the consequences of the theory which seems to us to be interesting and important....One could say that the process of understanding and the process of the actual production or discovery are very much alike' (p. 269).

With genre firmly embedded in the classroom, we can now turn our attention to seeing it played out in the teaching of reading and writing.

2.5   Genre and the Teaching of Reading and Writing

Wray and Lewis (1997), whose work on extending literacy have played a major role in developing genre-based approaches in the UK stress , throughout their work, the

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need for flexibility and exploration in the reading and writing of genres. Crucial to this interaction, they emphasise, is children's ability to make links between reading and writing. It does not necessarily mean that students get stuck in one favourite genre. "Genre can be seen as 'generative' within an environment which explores diverse texts and situations. In this kind of classroom, genres are 'made', 'constructed'. They represent opportunities to create new situations, to learn new ways to make meaning, to interpret events and to *be*" (Himley, 1986 & Kress, 1995).

Traditionally, reading and writing have been too often separated in curriculum models and classroom work. For example, in the KBSR syllabus, learners read fables but proceed to carry out an exercise on notes expansion related to facts about animals (Appendix A). From a genre perspective, this separation makes little sense. Genres are jointly constructed by readers and writers. Acts of writing borrow and re-combine language gleaned from reading. Encouraging students to make as many links as possible between their reading and writing in a particular genre, goes some ways towards breaking down this artificial separation. This linking of knowledge can be encouraged as part of students' reflection on their own, and their peers' writing and as part of general feedback on writing.

Learning to read genres may give students clearer understanding of what is valued, and in turn enhance their command of the genres concerned, by setting up active correspondence between the genre-as-written and the genre-as-read (Wells, 1998). Such reading, he adds, might also help to open up the often closed and mystified agendas of writing assessment. Rather than be given abstract lists of criteria for effective writing, he

believes that students can develop genre knowledge which would help them to arrive at judgements in the contexts of reading which will enhance their writing.

But Shanahan (1997) cautioned against the use of writing to improve reading achievement. He stated that the reading-writing connection is a good place to start, but it may not lead to improved learning because although reading and writing tend to overlap in many of the same cognitive areas, they are still two separate methods of processing information.

Daane (1991), however, says that reading and writing are intimately and inextricably bound. If we expect students to evolve as writers, we must be very sure they are immersed in print. Only through reading, she believes, will they acquire the schemes that will enable them to replicate the textures, rhythms, and logic of good writing in a variety of genres. Smith (1983) also states that "just as reading is connected with learning, it is connected with writing. What a person writes reflects on how a person reads." Shanahan (1997) states that reading and writing relationships are a good place to start and the similarities of reading and writing lead to cross-learning opportunities.

Smith's (1983) 'Reading Like a Writer' gives a descriptive overview of the relationship between reading and writing: 'Everyone who becomes a competent writer uses authors [as unwilling collaborators] . . . [A language user]must learn to read like a writer in order to learn to write like a writer (p.562). Over time, "the learner learns through reading like a writer to write like a writer (p 564). Through his study Smith (1983) found that students who reported early pleasure in reading and continued exposure to literature produced texts which were markedly different in syntactic and semantic

complexity, structural and narrative forms, and the use of imaginative language as compared with the text produced by students who reported early frustration and infrequent or no continued exposure to literature. To paraphrase Smith, these students had become writers like the readers they were. Shanahan (1997) also found that writing instruction can improve reading comprehension and reading can improve writing.

In addition to that, seeing genres in terms of dialogue rather than transmission, and as negotiated social practices rather than fixed rhetorical forms, offers us positive alternatives, contributes Williams (1997). Teaching genre and teaching about genre are not incompatible with teaching writing as process, he says. According to him, working with genre does not mean the end of pre-writing, drafting or personal choice of topic. Nor does it necessarily signal the end of personal ownership, discovery and engagement in literacy pedagogy. But it does mean *confronting the social in writing*. Genre, he emphasises, can be seen as a powerful *dimension* of learning about writing, texts and social communication.

Furthermore, one must not forget that producing a successful piece of written work involves competence in a number of connected spheres. Applebee (1982) lists three areas of knowledge that a writer brings to a writing task. There is knowledge of the topic, knowledge of the audience, particularly the extent to which the writer relies on the reader sharing knowledge, and finally there is knowledge of language conventions. Caudrey (1998) too states the same thing, 'genres are defined not in terms of their language, but by features which could be described as external to the text itself. These include areas such as text purpose, writer/reader relationships, and the medium of communication'.

Having all this as the basis, I focused on one genre, the genre of fable.

2.5.1 Reading and Writing Fable

Fables are very brief didactic tales. Many fables have animal characters that talk and act like human characters to indicate a moral lesson or satirise human conduct. The purpose of a fable is to teach a lesson. The fable genre is based on human nature, and although their characters are often animals, the animals personify humankind. The characters are usually one-dimensional: the fox is always sly, the mouse small and rather weak. Unlike fairytales, in which the poor, unsung hero wins the hand of the beautiful maiden, characters in fables basically remain the same. However, as the fable unfolds, each character learns, as does the reader, a valuable lesson in life. Everything revolves around the moral, which is the rationale for the fable's existence.

Fables encourage children to reflect on the strength and weaknesses all humans possess, and they clarify their understanding of human motivation and human nature. From the fox and the Grapes, for example, children can better understand the term 'sour grapes'. For children, fables provide a simple, interesting plot, situations with which they can identify, and a message that can be internalized.

Another reason I chose to use fables is not only because of its appeal to the children but the simplicity of its structure which allows flexibility in both reading and writing fables. Williams (1997) feels that children's pleasure in reading, must be foregrounded first. Their delight, their laughter, sometimes their profound silence at the end of a reading of a text must be retained. As well, their freedom to range across texts of different kind. And their sense of freedom to experiment, to write and read spontaneously

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as a matter of personal interest and choice. Having this basis secure, he says, it is then possible to build on young children's interest in language as an object of reflection by introducing to them tools which enable them to describe language and understand how it works. Gavelek & Raphael (1996) state that textual meaning is not "out there" to be acquired; it is something that is constructed by individuals through their interactions with each other and the world. They also feel that one of the way in which language, from a social constructionist perspective, plays a central role in the development of literate minds is in mediating students' abilities to think, feel and act.

The sense of textual practice Williams (1997) and Gavelek & Raphael (1996) talk about I believe is useful. Most importantly, they state that it directs attention to what people actually do in talking about written text with young children, in the sense of what kinds of meaning the children are typically interested in and produce in different types of context, not what they can do in dislocated instances of language production. He proceeds to say that texts are regarded as agentive in forming the nature of the process in which a child can engage, though children are also afforded an equally active role. They are engaging in complex processes of interpretation which are made possible by the nature of the texts they read and discuss, in other words interactive reading development. The text then, he warns, is not just an enjoyable venue through which to encourage children's reading nor a venue to practice decoding, but an agent in developing understanding of how texts in a particular range of registers mean.

2.5.2 The Use of Model Texts

Texts used during the modelling phase are designed to exemplify the main linguistic forms of knowledge required for effective participation in school subjects.

By analysing how writers conventionally sequence material to achieve particular purposes, Hyland (1992) states that we can begin to describe characteristic schematic types and show how they are realised linguistically. He states that this information can be used by teachers to provide models to develop students' writing skills. He observes that teachers are therefore becoming increasingly interested in the genre-based approach because an understanding of the patterns that underpin effective communication can be used to inform materials production and teaching.

Reading and writing are two closely allied disciplinary partners. Since reading and writing are so closely related, it seems inherent that reading would improve writing and vice versa. Simply by reading, a child can learn organisational patterns of text. The results of one study done by Smith found that because better readers are more frequent readers, reading must "facilitate an unconscious learning of writing by providing a model for written experiences" (as cited in Dana, Scheffler, Richmond and Smith, 1991).

Cazden (1993) explains, 'I also want to make it clear that I am not arguing for immersion in text exemplars without any explicit instruction. All concept learning - from the vocabulary learning of one-year olds on throughout life - benefits from clearly presented prototypical exemplars.'

2.6 Summary

Connor (1987) maintained that both the process and product approaches are necessary for a comprehensive theory of writing. Any effective methodology for writing needs to incorporate the insights of product, process, and genre approaches which Badger & White (2000) calls the process genre approach. The process genre approach places importance not only on the appropriate language required (product) but also the social purpose (genre) as well as the process, to produce the text. This combined approach draws from the teacher, other learners or models to arrive at the linguistic items. Oliver (1999) emphasized that pedagogical applications of modeling should be more "creative and generative" rather than "formulaic and doctrinaire", and that it is a challenge to teachers to select good models that are properly illustrative or accessible to students (p. 170).