

**TEACHING WRITING TO GRADE 5 ENGLISH LANGUAGE  
LEARNERS IN TWO GRAHAMSTOWN EAST SCHOOLS,  
SOUTH AFRICA: A CASE STUDY**

A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

**MASTER OF EDUCATION**

(English Language Teaching)

**RHODES UNIVERSITY**

by

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November 2013

## **ABSTRACT**

The majority of learners in South Africa are not native speakers of English, yet English is the dominant language of learning and teaching (LoLT). South African teachers, therefore, have the challenge of ensuring that their learners' literacy skills in English are adequately developed so as to facilitate learning in other curricular areas.

This study investigated the way in which two Grade 5 teachers employed at different primary schools in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa taught writing to their English first additional language (EFAL) learners. English is the LoLT at both schools.

A qualitative interpretive approach was used to identify factors that shape the ways these teachers handle the teaching of writing. The theoretical framework was informed by Borg's model of teacher cognition (2003) Shulman's conception of teacher knowledge (1987). Data collection methods consisted of interviews, classroom observations and document analysis. In-depth interviews, comprising two semi-structured interviews, two post-lesson informal conversational interviews and one stimulated recall interview were conducted with each teacher. Five of each teacher's writing lessons were observed and audio and video recorded. Samples of learners' written work were also collected.

Analysis of the data reveals that the two teachers' beliefs, their experiences as learners themselves and subsequently as teachers, impacted on their pedagogy, as did other contextual factors (including the support they received from subject advisors, time management, and the number and range of learners in their classrooms). It was found that both teachers focused primarily on ensuring that their learners completed their written work so that it could be marked and graded in response to demands from their superiors, rather than on engaging deeply with the *processes* of writing (brainstorming, drafting, revising etc). Not only does this run counter to the writing pedagogy recommended in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS), but it also denies learners the scaffolding needed to help them develop the self-regulation skills needed to become independent writers. These findings demonstrate the need for assisting teachers to shift away from focusing only on learners' performance (testing and grading) towards a stronger emphasis on the process of writing. This would require that teachers develop a deeper understanding of the *process/genre approaches* to teaching writing advocated by CAPS.

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## LIST OF ACRONYM

<b>ACE:</b>	<b>Advanced Certificate in Education</b>
<b>ANA:</b>	<b>Annual National Assessment</b>
<b>BEd Hons:</b>	<b>Bachelor of Education with Honours</b>
<b>BICS:</b>	<b>Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills</b>
<b>CALP:</b>	<b>Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency</b>
<b>CAPS:</b>	<b>Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement</b>
<b>CK:</b>	<b>Content Knowledge</b>
<b>CUP:</b>	<b>Common Underlying Proficiency</b>
<b>DBE:</b>	<b>Department of Basic Education</b>
<b>DoE:</b>	<b>Department of Education</b>

<b>EFAL:</b>	<b>English First Additional Language</b>
<b>GPCK:</b>	<b>General Pedagogical Content Knowledge</b>
<b>HoD:</b>	<b>Head of Department</b>
<b>ICI:</b>	<b>Informal Conversational Interviews</b>
<b>ICT:</b>	<b>Information Communication Technology</b>
<b>L1:</b>	<b>First Language</b>
<b>L2:</b>	<b>Second Language</b>
<b>LEAP:</b>	<b>Language Enhancing the Achievement of Pasifika</b>
<b>LiEP:</b>	<b>Language in Education Policy</b>
<b>LoLT:</b>	<b>Language of Learning and Teaching</b>
<b>LSMs:</b>	<b>Learning and Support Materials</b>
<b>NAEYC:</b>	<b>National Association for Education of Young Children</b>
<b>NCS:</b>	<b>National Curriculum Statement</b>
<b>NEEDU:</b>	<b>National Education Evaluation and Development Unit</b>
<b>NGOs:</b>	<b>Nongovernmental Organisations</b>
<b>OBE:</b>	<b>Outcome- Based Education</b>
<b>OECD:</b>	<b>Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development</b>
<b>PCK:</b>	<b>Pedagogical Content Knowledge</b>
<b>PIRLS:</b>	<b>Progress in International Reading Literacy Study</b>
<b>SACMEQ:</b>	<b>Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality</b>
<b>SES:</b>	<b>Socio- Economic Status</b>
<b>SGBs:</b>	<b>School Governing Bodies</b>
<b>SNAP:</b>	<b>Special Needs Adapted Program</b>
<b>T1:</b>	<b>Teacher 1</b>
<b>T2:</b>	<b>Teacher 2</b>



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I must first thank God the Almighty, for the wisdom and his grace that sustained me throughout the course of my studies.

Secondly, I thank my two supervisors, Sally-Ann Robertson and Sarah Murray, for their support, guidance and advice. Their professional guidance, continuous motivation and high expectations played a significant role in the completion of this thesis.

Thirdly, I thank the two teachers, T1 and T2, for allowing me to sit and observe in their classrooms. I also thank them for generously making time for me and sharing their insights and experiences with me. The success of this study depended largely on them.

Fourthly, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude and thanks to:

Okangororosa Combined School staff, under the leadership of Alleta N.K. Haggai for their understanding and support during my studies. My Friend Evelina Tamukondjo Niishinda, for her continuous support, motivation and advice. Robert Kraft, Wendelina Kahenge and Edson Nengola for the hospitality they rendered during my stay in Grahamstown and making me feel home away from home.

And finally, my mother Aina Kambadhimbi and Grandmother Emilia Shimaliwa, for their guidance and prayers. They nurtured me into the person I am today, and this degree is dedicated to them.

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1. Introduction**

This case study is concerned with literacy. In particular it investigates the teaching of writing in English First Additional Language (EFAL) Intermediate Phase classrooms. Its focus is the work of two South African Grade 5 teachers. In this introductory chapter I briefly describe the context and origin of the study, and then outline the research goals and research questions I set for myself. I conclude the chapter with the outline of the overall thesis structure.

### **1.2. Context and origin of the study**

Attending to literacy development in English is vitally important in the South African schooling system because, although English is the home language of only 9.6% of the (Lehohla, 2012), it is the dominant language of learning and teaching (LoLT). Around 80% of South African learners have English as their LoLT in the Intermediate Phase (Grades 4-6) (Howie, van Staden, Tshele, Dowie & Zimmerman, 2011, p. 11).

In 1997 the new South African Language in Education Policy (LiEP) was introduced, in terms of which learners were (a) given the choice as to which LoLT to use; and (b) required to learn an additional language from Grade 3 onwards (South Africa. Department of Education (DoE), 1997)<sup>1</sup>. School Governing Bodies (SGBs) decide on the language offerings for their schools based on parental preference and or the demographic profile of learners at a particular school. Even in cases where few, if any, of the learners or teachers speak English as a home language (especially in township schools), many SGBs still choose English as the LoLT (Navsaria, Pascoe and Kathard 2011) from the Intermediate Phase onwards, as is the case with the two schools in this study<sup>2</sup>. In practice most South African learners learn in their home language up to Grade 3, and in English thereafter, with the assumption that by Grade 3 they will have acquired competency both in reading and writing when they come to use it as LoLT.

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<sup>1</sup> Since the beginning of 2012, however, the policy was modified. In terms of the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) learners must now learn an addition language from Grade 1.

<sup>2</sup> CAPS requires FAL to be taught from Grade 1 but prior to that the LiEP did not require it to be to taught until Grade 3 and many schools – including the ones in this study - delayed the introduction of EFAL until Grade 3 even though English was to become the LoLT in Grade 4.

Learners in such a situation face the double challenge of acquiring the LoLT and at the same time developing the appropriate reading and writing proficiency needed to meet the requirements of the curriculum. This situation has created numerous teaching and learning problems which ultimately contribute to poor literacy levels among many South African learners.

The literacy challenges faced by many second language learners are topical discussion points in South Africa. Some educators argue that the home language is being abandoned as LoLT too early and that a reliance on the new first additional language (which in most cases is English) is premature and may undermine its effectiveness as a LoLT (Prinsloo & Heugh, 2013). They have expressed concern about the Grade 3 introduction of a first additional language, seeing this as too late for learners who will use English as their LoLT in Grade 4.

Particular problems arise with regard to the demands made on learners' reading and writing ability in their additional language in the Intermediate Phase. Whereas reading has received a great deal of attention from researchers in the field of language and literacy teaching, writing appears to be a relatively neglected area of literacy research. Research has shown that writing is particularly neglected in South Africa because not only is children's writing weak but there is much less research done on writing than on reading (Hoadley, 2010; Navsaria et al, 2011; National Education Evaluation & Development unit (NEEDU), 2012). In a study conducted in six high performing South African schools that promote literacy with students from low income communities, Sailors, Hoffman and Mathee, (2007) found that writing instruction was a struggle across all these schools. These authors observed that "the conception of literacy focused on reading and not on writing" (p. 385), and recommended that far greater attention be given to writing.

A number of studies such as the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) the Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ I, II and III) and the Annual National Assessment (ANA) focus primarily on monitoring learners' progress in reading (Moloi & Chetty, 2010; South Africa. Department of Basic Education (DBE), 2011). There seems to be relatively little literature focusing on the teaching of writing to South African learners in EFAL, most especially in relation to the Intermediate Phase. In addition, these studies (SACMEQ, PIRLS and ANA) often present their findings based on their assessments of learners' competence. Their reports say little about teachers' views or practices.

I felt that in trying to better understand poor performance among learners in EFAL, more attention needed to be given to exploring teachers' views and practices. I am of the view that investigating their beliefs and the contextual factors which might influence the way they teach writing could provide significant insights and highlight important implications for the field of EFAL teaching. Apart from my personal interest in this topic, recent research indicates that teachers' beliefs affect both teaching practices and learners' outcomes (Melketo, 2012; Abadi & Marzban, 2012; Gaitas, 2011). The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is of the view that "teachers' beliefs, practices and attitudes are important for understanding and improving the educational process" (2009, p. 89), although it does note that teaching practices are also affected by other factors such as learners' social and language background, grade level, achievement level and social class.

Powers and Zippay (2006, pp. 123-124) claim teachers' practices are also influenced by factors such as the professional training they received, the limitations imposed by bureaucratic red tape, and lack of professional development and administrative support. So, for example, with regard to writing instruction in the classroom, Fitzgerald (1999, as cited in Gaitas, 2011, unpagged) contends that "if a teacher has a particular theory about how writing should be taught or learned, he or she is likely to teach it in the ways that suits that view point."

There seems to be little research done, however, on the connection between South African teachers' beliefs and their classroom practices in teaching writing in EFAL, particularly in the Intermediate Phase. In her doctoral research that focused on writing practices in three additional languages of the Grade 7 learners from Eastern Cape Province, Hendricks (2006) contended that the understanding of teachers' pedagogical choices is a rich and largely unexplored area of research in the Eastern Cape.

### **1.3. Goals of the study**

The central goal of this study is to investigate how two Grade 5 teachers from two different schools teach writing to their EFAL learners and to identify some of the factors that inform these teachers' pedagogies.

My reason for choosing to focus on the work of Grade 5 EFAL teachers is because Grade 5 is the grade I teach in Namibia. In pursuing this research goal, I hope to gain professional insight into the teaching of writing and to inform the way I teach writing to my own English second<sup>3</sup> language (ESL) learners. Notwithstanding the size of this study, as Hoadley (2010) posits, “there are a number of aspects to the classroom environment that can emerge from smaller scale studies [such as this one] which would merit further investigation at a larger scale and using alternative methodologies” (p. 12). Case studies are very good methods for classroom based research as they fill in the gaps left by powerful generalized studies and illuminate by example (Shulman, 1986). I hope this study makes a contribution to the literature on the teaching of writing in EFAL and offers insights to other teachers, EFAL subject advisors and curriculum developers.

#### **1.4. Research questions**

The investigation is guided by the following research questions:

- How do the selected teachers teach writing to their Grade 5 EFAL learners?
- What informs and shapes their practices in this regard?
- What type of feedback do they provide on their Grade 5 EFAL learners’ written work?
- What in the view of these teachers enables/constrains their teaching of writing to their Grade 5 EFAL learners?

#### **1.5. Research Design**

This study is framed as case study and positioned within a qualitative, interpretive paradigm. The central endeavour of the study is to explore teachers’ beliefs and experiences and try to connect them to their practices ( Losfides, 2011).

I used both purposive and convenience sampling in the selection of the site and participants (McMillan and Schumacher, 1997). The two schools are categorized as Quintile 2 (Q2) schools<sup>4</sup>. The two teachers have extensive teaching experience, both having taught for more than 15 years.

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<sup>3</sup> In Namibia we use the term English Second language, whereas in South Africa it is referred to as English First Additional Language (EFAL)

<sup>4</sup> South African Schools are categorized in 5 quintile system, Quintile 1(Q1) being the poorest schools and quintile 5 (Q5) the least poor. More money is allocated to poorest schools and less funds allocated to least poor schools.

I used three main methods of data collection for this study: interviews, classroom observation and document analysis. Steps were taken throughout the research process to try to ensure validity and to be alert to ethical consideration. For example, I made use of pseudonyms such as School A or B instead of mentioning the actual names of the schools, and the two teachers involved in the study were referred to simply as either Teacher 1 (T1) or teacher 2 (T2). I expand on these sorts of methodological consideration in Chapter Three.

## **1.6. Thesis outline**

In the present chapter I have provided the contextual framework of the study and explained what triggered my interest in conducting this research. In attempting to explain the rationale of this study, I have also outlined the research goals and research questions as well as the broad design of the study.

In Chapter Two I explore some of the literature on the challenges relating to teaching writing to bilingual/biliterate learners who have recently changed from using their home language as the LoLT to using English, a second language in this instance. I also review relevant literature related to pedagogies of writing in the Intermediate Phase and explain the conceptual framework of the study.

In Chapter Three I discuss the methodology of the research, outlining the research paradigm and the methods employed in the collection of data. The chapter ends with a consideration of validity, ethics, and limitations relating to the research process.

In Chapter Four I present the data and make some preliminary analysis of it. The analysis of the two teachers' similarities and differences made this my longest and most challenging chapter because I had to portray each teacher without evaluating or judging their practices (which was not the aim of this study). I analyse how their beliefs, experiences both as learners and as teachers, and other contextual factors appear to have influenced or shaped the way they teach writing to their Grade 5 EFAL learners, and the way they respond to their learners' writing.

Chapter Five provides a second level of analysis in which I begin with a comparison of the two teachers' discourses and practices of teaching writing, and then discuss some of themes emerging from Chapter Four.

In the final chapter, Chapter Six, I start with a summary of the main findings of the study, and then present the contributions for possible further research in the area of literacy teaching. I conclude with a final review of the main limitations I identified in my overall research design and implementation.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Introduction**

This chapter provides the conceptual framework of the study. It aims to explore literacy development and particularly how writing is taught in the Intermediate Phase. It begins by defining writing in the context of this study and then discusses writing as a social practice. The chapter then explores pedagogies of teaching writing in the Intermediate Phase and possible factors that might influence these pedagogies. Finally, I draw on Shulman's idea of *teacher knowledge* (1987) and Borg's conceptualisation of *teacher cognition* (2003) to help understand teachers' beliefs, knowledge and practices in teaching writing to Grade 5 EFAL learners.

### **2.2. Introduction of key concepts**

#### **2.2.1. Writing**

Research has shown that one of the best predictors of whether a child will function well in school and go on to contribute actively in our increasingly literate society is the level of his/her reading and writing (National Association for Education of Young Children (NAYEC) (1998). Although my main focus in this study is on the teaching of writing as a specific activity, learners also write when the focus is on other aspects of English; for example, when they are learning to write sentences, spell words, use English grammar, and respond in writing to questions. In other words, in this study, I am looking at the totality of writing Grade 5 EFAL learners do in their English lessons. Raison and Rivelland (1997) describe how writing integrates these various aspects of language and literacy that come together in the act of writing:

...the writer is simultaneously involved with thinking of what to write, coherence and cohesion of the text, formation and legibility of individual letters, spelling, grammar including punctuation, layout, tone and register, organization and selection of appropriate content for an intended audience. (p.4).

It is often argued that writing and reading are inextricably linked (Bower, 2011); what children write reflects the nature and quality of their reading (Barrs & Cork, 2001, as cited in Bower, 2011, p 4). Similarly, Krashen (1984) argues that extensive reading contributes to the development of writing ability and that it is more significant in improving writing than the frequency of writing. Martin (2003) maintains that children who have difficulties with writing are not experienced enough as readers to anticipate the needs of readers of their writing.



However, unlike speaking, writing is not picked up incidentally; children need careful teaching if they are to learn to write effectively (Initial Teacher Education [ITE], 2013).

According to Raison and Rivelland (1997), children go through developmental stages in learning to write. Raison and Rivelland's continuum identifies six stages of children's writing development, starting from 'role play writing' in the earliest stage and moving on through 'experimental writing', 'early writing', 'conventional writing', 'proficient writing', and finally, 'advanced writing'. However, according to Raison and Rivelland (1997), "children's language, including their skills in writing does not develop in a linear sequence" and "each child is unique with individual differences so that no developmental pathway is the same" (1997, p. 2).

#### **2.2.1.1. Writing as a social practice**

Many writers claim that writing is a social practice (Barton & Hall, 2000; Zamel, 1992). By social practice, Barton and Hall (2000) hold that what is right, wrong, appropriate or inappropriate about our writing is defined by the users in the social community. Learners' homes, family, neighborhood, school and local community all offer relevant social contexts (Murdoch, 1998). According to Bloome (2000) every occurrence of reading and writing implies social relationships among people. Similarly, Neuman and Roskos (1997) observe that learners discover and gain knowledge about written language through active engagement with their social and cultural world, which may include a classroom. Bloome describes the relationship between a classroom and literacy as 'inseparable', claiming that in schools learners learn to "use reading and writing in ways consistent with the classroom community" (1986, p. 74).

Murdoch (1998) maintains that writing as social practice begins when learners share learning and ideas about issues they see as relevant to their world. Therefore, a language teacher's role is to "introduce learners to the idea that writing can be used as a way of interacting with others to bring about social change and to set up situations in the classroom that allows this to happen" (Western Australia. Minister for Education. 2006, p. 138). Harwayne (2000, p. 55) holds that "the ultimate aim of any comprehensive approach to teaching writing is to produce confident, competent and independent writers who write for people". To become effective writers, learners need to see writing as a social practice with a purpose and intended audience (Western Australian. Minister for Education, 2006). Learners need to understand how they, as writers, may

influence and affect their readers (Western Australia. Minister for Education, 2006), which is why it is important that learners be taught to always write with readership in mind (Barton and Hall, 2000).

#### **2.2.1.2. The South African case**

Language in Education Policy (LiEP) gives learners the choice of the LoLT (South Africa. Department of Education (DoE), 1997). Learners in mainstream schools may choose from any of the eleven official languages as the LoLT where practicable (South Africa. DoE, 1997). However, it is the SGB in consultation with relevant provincial authority that chooses the LoLT as representatives of the learners.

In the Eastern Cape where this research is being conducted the language choices are isiXhosa, Afrikaans, Sesotho and English (Lehohla, 2012). Learners are generally taught in their mother tongue up to Grade 3 (South Africa. DoE, 1997), and switch to English thereafter (Navsaria et al, 2011). According to Brock-Utne, Desai and Qorro many parents want their children to be taught in English “as a guarantee of success in the globalised world where English has rapidly assumed the role of lingua franca” (2010, p. 3). This has resulted in many learners learning in a language that is not their home language and that is often unknown to them as they have little exposure to English outside of school (Navsaria et al., 2011).

Because of this situation the CAPS documents call for greater emphasis to be put on the LoLT in the Intermediate Phase to enable learners to develop their cognitive and academic skills, which they need to study other subjects in that LoLT (South Africa. DBE, 2011). In the case of English, learners do not only need proficiency in speaking EFAL and reading it, but also writing it. Harmer (2004, p.4) claims that “in the context of education, it is worth remembering that most examinations often rely on the learners’ writing proficiency in order to measure their knowledge”.

The CAPS for Intermediate Phase EFAL assumes that learners will have reached fairly high levels of competence in English by Grade 3 (South Africa. DBE, 2011). Therefore in teaching writing, an EFAL teacher will need to build on the work done by the Foundation Phase teachers. By the time learners reach the Intermediate Phase, they should, according to the CAPS, “be able

to experiment with language to build meaning from word and sentence levels to whole texts, and see how a text and its content are related” (South Africa. DBE, 2011, p. 12).

Writing competencies of South African learners coming from the Foundation Phase have been documented. NEEDU conducted a study of schooling in the first three grades of largely urban schools across nine provinces. In its national report (2012) the NEEDU indicated that learners from these schools do little writing and what they do takes the form of words or sentences rather than extended writing (paragraph length and longer). The report claims that “teachers do not understand the importance of extended writing and seem to be unaware that it is prescribed in the curriculum” (NEEDU, 2012, p.25).

As outlined in Chapter 1, South African learners are expected to become bilinguals, a concept I discuss further in Section 2.2.1.3.

### **2.2.1.3. Teaching writing to bilingual learners**

Hoffman (1991, p. 15) argues that definitions of bilingualism put forward by many writers are “surprisingly vague”; as such, they say nothing about how well the languages need to be known or whether both to be mastered in all skills. I have drawn from Hall et al.’s (2001, p .5) ‘working definition’ of bilingual learners:

Learners who live in two languages, who have access to, or need to use, two or more languages at home and at school. It does not mean that they have fluency in both languages or that they are competent and literate in both languages.

Thus a bilingual learner may be able to:

- Speak, read, and write fluently in two languages – that is, they are biliterate.
- Speak, read, and write in one language, but only speak another.
- Speak, read, and write in one language, but understand to some extent what is said in another language – that is, they can understand what a speaker of their second language is saying, even though they may not be confident about speaking that language (LEAP, n.d., p. 3).

For bilingual learners, language proficiency needs to be considered on at least two levels: (a) the variety of the first language spoken, and (b) the type and amount of exposure to the second language, in this case, EFAL (Ellis, 1994; Hakuta, 1986). Cummins' Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP) model (1976; 1979) posits that learners' first and second languages are interdependent in terms of literacy development whereby learners' knowledge in first language (L1) may serve as a foundation and facilitate the acquisition of literacy in a second language (L2).

The LiEP and CAPS documents advocate additive bilingualism, whereby teachers *value, enhance, encourage* and *develop* [my emphasis] their learners' bilingualism (South Africa. DBE, 2011; Hendricks, 2006), in such a way that their knowledge of L2 (in this case EFAL) "becomes part of their ever-growing language repertoire and not a replacement for proficiency in their other languages" (Brock & Conteh, 2006, p. 6).

Brock and Conteh stress the importance of contextualizing learning for bilingual learners: "learning is essentially an interaction between what learners already know and the new knowledge to be learnt, and contextualizing this process in familiar and stimulating settings makes it much more effective as well as more interesting" (2006, p.10). Bilingual learners need these meaningful contexts to develop surface fluency, which is necessary to develop Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS), which refers to everyday conversational language (Cummins, 1979). At the same time these contexts provide a basis for the acquisition of Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), the kind of academic language that predominates in classrooms (Cummins, 1979). CALP is needed for learners to "develop and operate in the skills of literacy and the language for problem-solving" (Cummins, 1979, p. 223). According to Cummins (1979; 2000; 2001) children take up to two years to develop BICS, but up to seven years to develop CALP. Cummins holds that the challenge for language teachers is to develop learners' ability to write in abstract ways as part of their developing CALP.

Brisk and Harrington (2007) claim that bilingual learners make use of all their resources in both languages when confronted with new and difficult tasks. They argue that bilingual learners interpret the L2 writing system using both their knowledge of L1 and L2. Many young learners tend, for example, to use invented spelling: they spell according to how the word sounds using sound-letter correspondences from both languages especially if their L1 uses the same

orthography as the L2. For example “A combination of how they pronounce the word in English with their knowledge of sound-letter correspondence either in English or in their first language play a role in their invented spelling” (Brisk & Harrington, 2007, p.18).

Given that literacy, specifically reading and writing, form the backbone of academic achievement, if the curriculum is promoting bilingualism, then it is equally promoting biliteracy (Matjila & Pretorius, 2004). This concept is discussed in the next section.

#### **2.2.1.4. Biliteracy**

The term biliteracy has been used to describe learners’ competencies in two written languages (Dworin, 2003). Bauer and Gort (2012, p. 2) refer to emergent biliteracy as “the ongoing, dynamic, development of concepts and expertise for thinking, listening, speaking, reading and writing in two languages”. They maintain that when biliteracy is encouraged, nurtured, and promoted, literacy skills learned in either language influence, or transfer to, the other language through what appears to be a bidirectional process. According to Bauer and Gort (2012) bilingual children have a potential to develop literacy in two languages, either simultaneously or in succession, in supportive contexts such as classroom, home and community. Simultaneous development of biliteracy happens when children learn to read and write in both languages at the same time whereas in successive development of biliteracy learners are introduced to reading and writing in their home/native language first and later in their second language which is the situation in many South African schools.

Biliteracy requires learners to interact with both their teachers and other learners in the classroom. These interactions may not be easy to initiate, sustain or even develop particularly in EFAL classrooms where learners have only begun to use English as LoLT in Grade 4, and might not yet have developed conventional reading and writing competencies. Mati (n.d.) claims that code switching practices are not only inevitable but also necessary in classrooms where English is being learned at the same time as being used as the LoLT. Teachers in these classrooms use code switching to help in developing formal learners’ spoken and written subject content as well as competences in the language as a subject. However, this may happen “in a very unsystematic, uncoordinated and unplanned manner which may result in the learners’ competence and intelligibility of English to fall to low levels” (Mati n.d. p.10).

Brock-Utne et al. (2010) examine code switching in classrooms in Tanzania and South Africa where, officially, the language of instruction is English. They argue that struggles with language are not only confined to learners, but some teachers too experience them, particularly those teaching in township and rural schools in these countries. These authors claim that “the problem of chorus teaching, rote learning and recitation are reinforced by the limitation of teacher and learner competence in the language of instruction” (2010, p. 6).

#### **2.2.1.4. LoLT as a potential impediment to effective teaching and learning of writing**

In contrast to the generally positive findings on the achievements of many African children taught in their home language (L1) or in bilingual programs (Obondo, 2008; Heugh, 2009; Navsaria et al, 2011), language problems experienced by learners taught in L2 (EFAL in the South African case) have been documented (Alexander, 2005; Brock-Utne & Skattum, 2009; Brock-Utne et al., 2010). These researchers attribute learners’ underachievement to learning in L2 and claim that the choice of English as LoLT by many parents, schools and SGBs undermines the academic achievement of learners that they seek to empower through education.

Cummins (1979) suggests that it takes up to seven years for learners to develop CALP, however for learners particularly in rural and township schools that have adopted a transitional or ‘English from Grade 1’ model, the possible outcomes are considered to be; “lack of sufficient academic language development in L1; making the leap from learning the language in the first 3 grades to using it for learning in grade 4 too steep” (Jordaan, 2011, p. 80). This may lead to what Baker refers to as ‘semilingualism’, a situation where learners ‘have deficiencies’ in both L1 and L2 (1996, p. 148). According to Baker these deficiencies could include reduced or limited vocabulary, incorrect grammatical patterns, difficulty in thinking or expressing emotions in one (or both) languages. This of course may then impede learners’ progress towards becoming competent and fluent in writing. However, the notion of semilingualism is controversial and has been contested. MacSwan (2000), for example, argues that the condition denoted by the term does not actually exist.

#### **2.2.1.5. The effect of socio-economic status (SES) on learners’ writing achievement**

A number of researchers confirm that there is a correlation between SES (which is also referred to as ‘social class’) and learners’ literacy and academic achievement (Chall & Jacobs, 2003; Hart

& Risley, 2003; Fleisch, 2008; Spaul, 2012). The converging evidence from these researchers provides considerable documentation that the literacy skills of children from low-SES households differ from those of their peers from middle and upper income households.

American based researchers, Hart & Risley (2003), conducted a study where they compared the amount of talk, vocabulary growth and the style of verbal interaction between parent and child in professional and low-income families. They found that there was “an increasing disparity between the extremes - the fast vocabulary growth in professional families’ children and slow vocabulary growth from the low-income families” (p. 111). A similar comparative study on writing by Dickinson and Snow (1987) compared the performance of young children from low and middle SES families on different written language awareness tasks. Their findings were that middle-SES children significantly outperformed their low-SES counterparts on measures of print production, book reading concepts and environmental print decoding.

The ‘bimodality of achievement’ (Fleisch, 2008) effect of SES on literacy achievement and writing in particular is not unique to South Africa. Spaul points out, however, that the bimodality of South African learners’ performance is generally ‘impervious’ to the grade or subject under assessment or dataset (2012, p. 4), further arguing that it can be seen as early as Grade 3 and remains unabated until learners finish formal schooling. Literacy develops in environments that provide resources and opportunities for children to have access to these literacy resources. Differences in environments may contribute to the significant variation in patterns of literacy development and writing in particular. The research reported in this thesis was conducted in a township in one of the poorest provinces of South Africa where poverty is rife and unemployment is estimated to be about 70% (Cameron, 2013).

As Spedding, Harking, Making and Whiteman (2007) note, children who are well nourished and thriving in safe homes and community and who are nurtured by literate families are those most likely to become competent readers and writers following the introduction of formal instruction on school entry. Spedding et al. (2007, p. 11) observe that these families are characterized by:

- Academic guidance for their children
- Positive attitude towards (children’s) education

- Languages used and opportunities for interaction improve vocabulary used in school work
- Availability of reading and writing materials
- Parents' high expectations for their children

All of the above may be less than optimal for children from low SES such as the learners included in the present study.

Studies have found that teachers teaching in disadvantaged or low SES schools seem to lower their expectations for their learners' achievements. Pretorius and Machet (2004, p. 58), for example, observed that "there is a tendency in disadvantaged schools for underachievement to be normalized". Overgaard (1985) argues that in communities where learners are believed to be of 'an inferior status', teachers seem to feel authorized to pursue educational purposes with little attention to learners' interest or supposed needs. The author further claims that teachers in these contexts tend "to direct the class in a relatively autocratic way, making all decisions and seeking little but passive behavior from learners" (1985, p. 175). Findings about teachers' expectations for their learners and how SES affected learners' writing achievements in my study are presented in Chapter 4. I now discuss the pedagogy of writing, which is the main focus of this study.

### **2.2.2. Pedagogy**

What constitutes pedagogy is complex and not easily defined. Wilmot (personal communication, March 15, 2013) suggests that pedagogy lies at the interface between teaching and learning. Alexander (2003, p. 3) defines pedagogy as "what one needs to know, and the skills one needs to command in order to make and justify the many different kinds of decisions of which teaching is constituted", while Shulman (1994, p. 7) describes pedagogical actions as:

...ways of talking, showing, enacting, or otherwise representing ideas so that the unknowing can come to know, those without understanding can comprehend and discern and the unskilled can become adept.

Leach and Moon (2008) in their book titled *'The Power of Pedagogy'* assert that pedagogy "is more than the accumulation of techniques and strategies, more than arranging a classroom,



formulating questions and developing explanations” and that “it is informed by a view of mind, of learning and learners and the kinds of knowledge and outcomes that are valued” (2008, p. 6).

Drawing from the definitions discussed above, it is clear that the term pedagogy can be used to describe an approach to schooling, learning and teaching that includes what is taught, how teaching occurs, and how what is taught is learned.

### **2.2.2.1. Different pedagogies of writing**

Nordin and Mohammad (n.d., p.75) assert that “there have been numerous approaches to the teaching of writing in the history of language teaching and this has led to several paradigm shifts in the field.” Researchers such as Cumming (1998) and Matsuda (1999; 2003) note that language practitioners are still in search of a coherent, comprehensive theory about teaching writing.

However, there is no one way to teaching writing. Answering the question of how to teach writing, Raimes (1983, p. 5) argues that “there are as many answers as there are teachers and teaching styles, or learners and learning styles”. In recent years however there has been debate over the relative merits of three major approaches to teaching writing namely: the product-based approach, the process-based approach and the genre/text-based approach. In the following subsections, I briefly discuss what each of these three approaches entails.

#### **2.2.2.1.1. Product-based approach**

During the audiolingual era, language classes downplayed the role of writing since it was only viewed as a supporting skill (Nordin & Mohammad, n.d., p. 75). Nunan cites Raimes in contextualizing the product based approach to teaching writing:

Until the mid1970s writing was seen a subservient skill, whose function was to support the development of oral language. Pedagogy was therefore dominated by form-focused techniques that were in line with the audiolingual ideology of drill and practice.

(Raimes, 1978 as cited in Nunan, 1999).

Badger and White (2000) argue that the focus of writing in the product approach is on the written product rather than on how the learner should approach the process of writing. They hold that writing in this approach “is viewed as mainly concerned with knowledge about the structure of

language, and writing development is mainly the result of the imitation of input, in the form of texts provided by the teacher” (2000, p. 154).

Notwithstanding different teachers and classroom situations, Badger and White (2000, pp. 153-154) summarise four stages typical of the product-based approach:

1. Familiarization, where learners are presented with an exemplar and pick out grammar and lexical points. The exemplar may have been specifically contrived to illustrate grammar points on which the teacher wishes to focus.
2. Controlled writing, where learners practice using grammar and vocabulary, which is the focus of the lesson. Substitution drills might be used in this stage.
3. Guided writing, where learners practice writing longer pieces, at the paragraph level and above using the target grammar and vocabulary. At this stage form, usage and meaning are still very teacher controlled.
4. Free writing, where the teacher allows learners to write with much more freedom, although, the focus is still on form and usage. Typically, the final text will be corrected for accuracy by the teacher and handed back to the learners with perhaps a few comments.

There are some arguments that this pedagogy enhances writing proficiency. Badger and White (2000, p. 157), for example, claim that “writing involves linguistic knowledge of texts that learners can learn partly through imitation”. Myles (2002) holds that if learners are not exposed to native-like models of written text, their errors in writing are more likely to persist.

There are, however, a number of criticisms against the ‘product-based’ approach. Prodromou (1995, p. 21), for example, argues that the “product based approach devalues learners’ potential both linguistic and personal”. Zamel (1987) maintains that the product based approach puts too much emphasis on accuracy and form while ignoring that writing is a way for writers to develop ideas fully. “Process skills such as planning a text, are given a relatively small role and the knowledge and skills that learners bring to the classroom are undervalued” (White & Badger, 2000, p.157). Learners taught in the product based approach “were able to give parrot responses in predictable situations of use, but had difficulty communicating effectively in relatively unpredictable world beyond the classroom” (Nunan, 1999, p. 71). These criticisms *inter alia*

have, according to Matsuda (2003), led teachers and researchers to reassess the nature of writing and the ways writing is taught.

#### **2.2.2.1.2. Process-based approach**

In the 1980s, the teaching of writing began to move away from a concentration on the written product to an emphasis on the process of writing (Raimes, 1983). The process approach focuses on how a text is written instead of the final outcome. In this approach, learners need to be taught to be aware that “what they put down on paper is not necessarily their finished product, but just a beginning, a setting out of first ideas, a draft” (Raimes, 1983, p.10). As Hyland (2003) argues, the process approach emphasizes the importance of a recursive procedure of pre-writing, drafting, evaluating and revising.

The pre-writing activity would involve introducing techniques that help learners to discover and fully explore the topic. (Raimes, 1983; Nordin & Mohammad, n.d.). According to Raimes (1983) many teachers in ESL classes give their learners the opportunity to explore a topic fully in such pre-writing activities as discussion, reading, debate, brainstorming and list making. The first piece of writing produced is not corrected or graded, but the reader responds only to the ideas expressed:

In the process approach students do not write on a given topic in a restricted time and hand in the composition for the teacher to “correct”- which usually means to find the errors. Rather, they explore a topic through writing, showing the teacher and each other their drafts, and using what they write to read over, think about, and move them to new ideas.

(Raimes, 1983, p.10).

The teacher in a process approach becomes the facilitator. In such classrooms, writing is essentially learnt, not taught (Tribble, 1996). “Providing input or stimulus for learners is perceived as unimportant, since the teacher’s role is only to facilitate the exercise of writing skills and draw out learners’ potential” (Tribble, 1996, p. 25). The process approach is thus learner-centred. Learners taught using this approach, according to Raimes (1983), are given two crucial supports: time for them to try out ideas and feedback on the content of what they write in their drafts.

Like other approaches, the process approach has also been criticized by a number of writers. Badger and White (2000, p.154) claim that the process approach “has a somewhat monolithic view of writing”. The process of writing is seen as the same regardless of the target audience and the context of the text (Badger and White, 2000). The process approach appears to narrowly focus on the skills and process of writing in the classroom itself and as a result, the social cultural aspects that have an impact on different kinds of writing are not taken into consideration (Atkinson, 2003).

#### **2.2.2.1.3. Text-based approach**

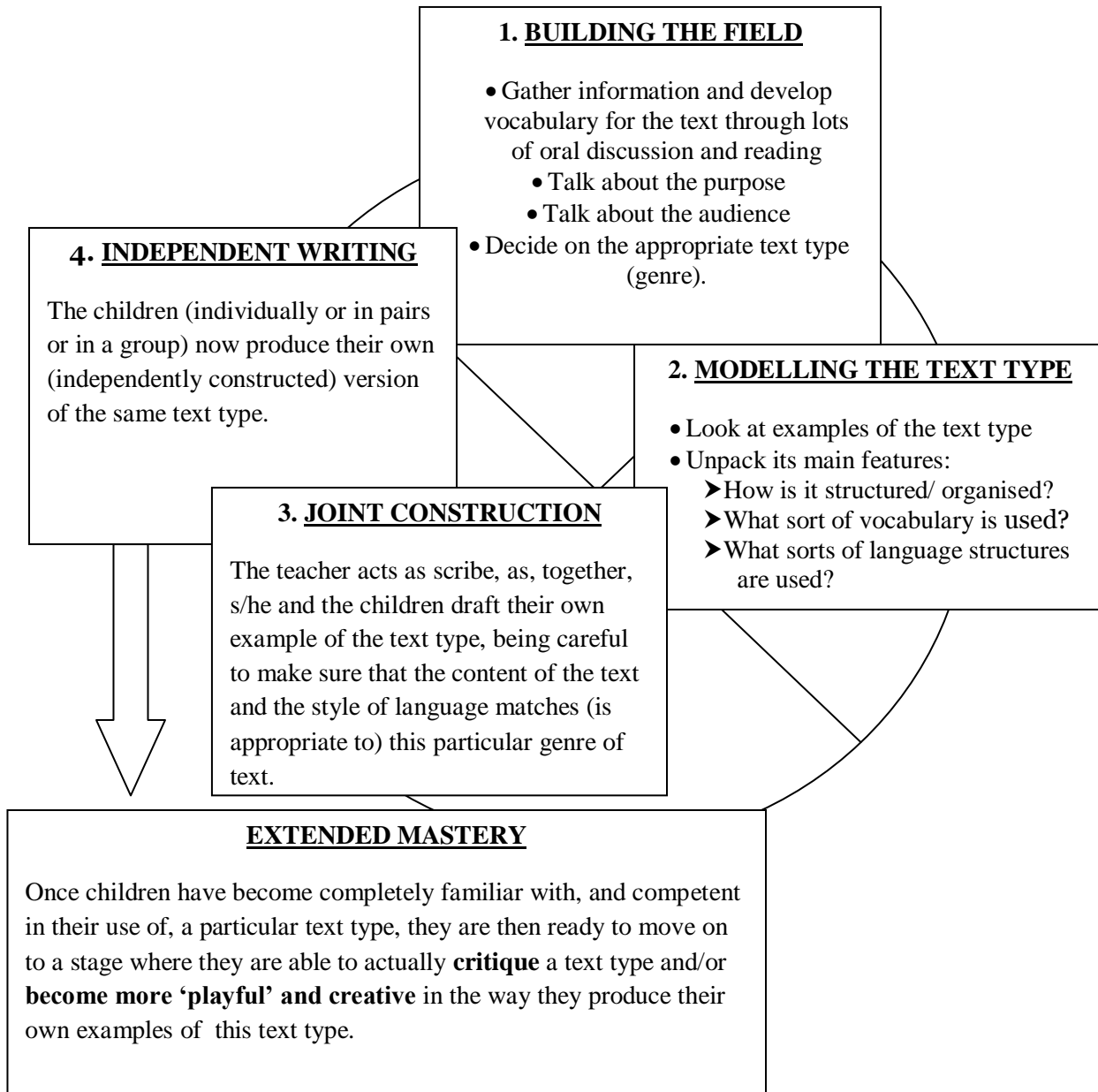
While the CAPS documents used the term ‘text-based approach’ it can also be referred to as a genre approach. Collerson (1998, p.12) defines genre as “a kind of writing or type of text”. Hammond and Derewianka (2001) maintain that genre refers not only to the type of text but also to the predictable and recurring patterns of everyday, academic and literary texts occurring within a particular culture. Genre or text-type, either spoken or written, is often identified or grouped according to its primary social purpose; that is genres which share the same purpose belong to the same text-types (Swales, 1990). Purpose and audience are vitally important in any genre of writing (Bean & Turbill, 2006; Bower, 2011; Collerson, 1988). For learners to become effective writers, they need to be taught to understand the roles that audience and purpose play in shaping different types of text or genre writing (Bean & Turbill, 2006).

Tuan (2011) asserts that in a genre or text based approach to writing, instructions look beyond the subject content, composing process and linguistic forms to see a text as an attempt to communicate with readers. Tuan’s (2011) assertion echoes Reid’s (1995) sentiments that “learners in the genre approach are taught to specify or think about intended and potential readers in order to be able to select or anticipate appropriate content, language and levels of formality.” (p.1472)

In this approach, the language teacher’s role is that of an authoritative guide who scaffolds or supports learners as they move towards their potential level of performance (Hyland, 2003). In scaffolding activity, learners are provided with models, and asked to discuss and analyse their language structures. The scaffolding element according to Hyland (2003) lightens as learners independently produce a text parallel to the model. The role of the teacher thus “moves from

explicit instructor to facilitator, and eventually the learners gain autonomy” (Nordin and Mohammad, n.d., p. 79).

Derewianka identifies four main phases in a typical genre-based curriculum cycle as shown in Figure 1 below (which was developed as part of the Rhodes University material for the English Language teaching (ELT) Bachelor of Education Honours (BEd (Hons) students, 2012). According to Derewianka (2003) this approach allows for both teacher and learners to take responsibility at different phases in the teaching and learning process. As shown in Figure 1, the teacher provides scaffolding from the early phase and as learners develop greater control of the genre, the teacher gradually withdraws support and encourages learners to work more independently.



**Figure 1: Four main phases in a genre-based approach**

[Adapted from Derewianka, B. (2003). Trends and issues in genre-based approaches. *RELC Journal*, 34(2), 133-154.] (Approaches to teaching English, 2012, p. 20)

Badger and White (2000, p. 155) contend that “in some ways the genre approach can be regarded as ‘an extension of the product approach’, the difference is that the genre approach takes into account the context of the text to be created. The genre approach places emphasis on the

relationship between text and their contexts (Hammond & Derewianka, 2001). In other words the genre approach emphasizes the social context in which writing is produced (Nordin & Mohammad, n.d., p. 78).

These social purposes of the genres in turn decide the linguistic input of the text i.e. their linguistic conventions often in form of schematic structure and linguistic features (Hammond & Derewianka, 2001). Schematic structures refer to internal structures or text organization of the text-type for example, in the form of introduction, body and conclusion, while language features consist of linguistic aspects such as grammar, vocabulary, connectors etc the writer has to use in order to translate information/idea into a readable text (Hammond & Derewianka, 2001).

Text types are not fixed and static; they change over time as the social purposes for which they developed change. Also, different people sometimes categorise text types in slightly different ways, and use different terms to describe them (Derewianka, 1990;1996). Table 1(Adapted from *Teaching literacy*, a material developed for Rhodes University BEd (Hons) ELT students) below presents different genres grouped according to their social purposes.

**TABLE 1: Different types of texts and their language features**

<b>Text type/genre</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Text structure</b>	<b>Sentence/word level features</b>
Narrative	To entertain	Orientation (opening) that introduces characters and setting Events leading to a complication Resolution and ending	Written in 1st or 3 <sup>rd</sup> person Written in past tense Chronological Connectives that signal time e.g. <b>Early that morning, later on, once</b> Dialogue Language used to create impact on reader e.g. adverbs, adjective, similes
Recount	To retell events	Orientation – scene setting opening, e.g. <b>I went to the shop</b> ... Recount of the events as they occurred, e.g. <b>I saw a racing bike.</b>	Written in the past tense, e.g. <b>I went</b> Written in chronological order with connectives that signal time, e.g. <b>then, next, after, meanwhile</b>

		Reorientation – a closing statement, e.g. <b>When I got back, I told my Mom.</b> (with elaboration in more sophisticated texts)	Focus on individual or group participants e.g. <b>we, I</b>
Information report	To describe the way things are	An opening, general classification, e.g. <b>Weavers are birds.</b> More technical classification (optional), e.g. <b>Their Latin name is ...</b> A description of the phenomenon, including some or all of its: Qualities, e.g. <b>Birds have feathers.</b> Parts and their function, e.g. <b>The beak is ...</b> Habits/behaviour or uses, e.g. <b>They nest in ...</b>	Written in the present tense, e.g. <b>They nest</b> Non-chronological Initial focus on generic participants, e.g. Weavers in general not a particular weaver. Moves from the general to the specific.
Instructions/ Procedures	To describe (or instruct) how something is done through a series of sequenced steps	Goal – a statement of what is to be achieved, e.g. <b>How to make pap.</b> Materials/equipment needed, listed in order, e.g. <b>mealie meal, salt, a large saucepan</b> Sequenced steps to achieve the goal, e.g. <b>Boil some water in a large pan</b> Often diagrams or illustrations.	Written in the imperative, e.g. <b>Pour the mealie meal into the boiling water.</b> In chronological order, eg. <b>First, next</b> Use of numbers and bullet points to signal order Focus on generalised human agents rather than named individuals.
Explanation	To explain the processes involved in natural and social phenomena, or to explain how something works.	General statement to introduce the topic, e.g. <b>In the autumn some birds migrate.</b> A series of logical steps explaining how or why something occurs, e.g. <b>Because hours of daylight shorten ...</b> Steps continue until the explanation is complete.	Written in simple present tense, e.g. <b>Many birds fly north.</b> May use connectives that signal time, e.g. <b>then, next, several months later</b> May use causal connectives, e.g. <b>because, so, this causes</b>



Persuasion	To argue the case for a point of view. To attempt to convince the reader.	Thesis – an opening statement, e.g. <b>Vegetables are good for you.</b> Arguments – often in the form of point plus elaboration, e.g. <b>They contain vitamins. Vitamin C is vital for ...</b> Reiteration – summary and re-statement of the opening position, e.g. <b>We have seen that ...so ...</b>	Simple present tense Focus mainly on generic participants, e.g. vegetables not a particular vegetable Mainly logical rather than connectives which signal time, e.g. <b>this shows, however, because</b> Movement usually from the generic to the specific
Discussion	To present arguments and information from differing viewpoints	Statement of the issue plus a preview of the main arguments Arguments for plus supporting evidence Arguments against plus supporting evidence Recommendation – summary and conclusion	Simple present tense Generic human (or non-human participants) Logical connectives, e.g. <b>therefore, however</b> Movement from the generic to the specific, <b>Environmentalists agree ... Working for Water, an NGO in the field ...</b>

[Adapted from *The National Literacy Strategy – Grammar for Writing*, United Kingdom Department for Education and Employment] (Teaching Literacy, 2012, p. 15)

Like the product-based approach, the genre approach has also received some criticisms. Many researchers argue that the approach may not help learners to be able to express their own ideas or it can make learners too dependent on the teacher to find suitable materials as models (Nunan, 1999; Caudery, 1998).

Two of the approaches outlined in this section are key aspects of approach to the teaching of writing recommended in South Africa’s CAPS documents discussed below in section 2.2.2.2.

#### **2.2.2.2. Pedagogies adopted by the CAPS documents for the Intermediate Phase**

The CAPS has adopted two main approaches to teaching writing in EFAL in the Intermediate Phase: the *text-based approach* also referred to as the genre approach (which involves listening to, reading, viewing and understanding different types of texts) and the *process approach* (in

which teachers encourage their learners to brainstorm, plan, draft, revise and edit their work before they produce their final texts) (South Africa. DBE, 2011, p.15). Some educators claim that a combination of these two approaches suits the teaching of writing to second language learners because together they provide a lot of modeling, support and scaffolding to learners thus leading them to becoming independent writers (Derewianka, 1990; Ho, 2006; Gibbons, 2002).

Macken-Horarik (2002) holds that the combination of process and genre approaches allows learners to (1) see how texts are written differently according to their purpose, audience and message, and after they are exposed to the organization, structure and language used in the text (2) go through a process of planning, drafting and finally publishing their final product. The teacher's role in using the combination of these pedagogies is usually to provide feedback. Feedback is important in developing learners' competence in writing. The process approach provides opportunities for learners to act on feedback (drafts) whereas the genre approach makes criteria for assessment explicit. The combination of the two approaches adopted by the CAPS can therefore be seen as complementing rather than competing with each other.

By contrast, Dornbrack and Dixon (forthcoming, p. 8) argue that "by conflating the two [approaches] in the CAPS documents the specificity of each approach has been lost." According to these authors, this conflation requires teachers to be well-versed in both approaches, which they claim is a challenge for many South African teachers who have little knowledge about these approaches.

### **2.2.2.3. Feedback on written language**

In all the three written pedagogies discussed above, feedback emerges as a key aspect of their instructional repertoires. Feedback has long been regarded as essential for the development of L2 learners for both its potential for advancing learning and for contributing to learners' motivation (Hyland & Hyland 2006). Up until the 1970s, feedback on written language was traditionally provided by teachers at the end of the writing process with the primary focus on linguistic accuracy and great deal of emphasis on error correction so that no 'bad habits' would be formed by learners (Ferris, 2006). However, as explained above, there has been a shift over time to a more process oriented approach to the teaching of writing (Ferris, 2002). This shift affected feedback practices significantly. Hyland and Hyland (2006) argue that accuracy is no longer the

main priority and that feedback and formative assessment are seen as important developmental tools moving learners through multiple drafts towards the capability of effective self-expression. These authors further assert that in the genre approach, feedback “is the key element of scaffolding provided by the teacher to build learners’ confidence and literacy resources to participate in target communities” (2006, p. 77). In other words, teachers provide feedback in such a way that learners don’t fear to make errors but rather learn from them.

Despite the pedagogical changes, linguistic accuracy and error correction remain key aspects of written feedback. Apart from exploring how the two teachers in this study teach writing to their Grade 5 EFAL learners, I am also interested in finding out how they provide feedback on their Grade 5 EFAL learners’ written work. Corrective feedback helps learners to see where and how they may be making errors or failing to communicate in some way (The role of feedback and assessment in language learning, 2012). Corrective feedback does not only help learners to set realistic goals but also allows them to see where and how they need to improve. There are several ways of providing corrective feedback to learners’ written work. After conducting an empirical study on written feedback, Ellis (2008) identified a ‘typology of options for correcting linguistic errors’; he suggests that teachers can provide direct, indirect or metalinguistic corrective feedback to their learners’ linguistic errors.

In terms of direct corrective feedback, the teacher provides learners with a correct form using techniques such as crossing out an unnecessary word, phrase, or morphemes, inserting a missing word or morpheme, and writing the correct form just above or nearby the error (Ellis, 2008). According to Ellis (2008) direct corrective feedback is desirable especially with learners who have a low level of target language proficiency and are not capable of correcting themselves. The disadvantage of direct CF is that, “it requires minimal processing on the part of the learner, thus although it might help them to produce correct form when they revise their writing, it may not contribute to long-term learning” (p. 99).

Indirect corrective feedback involves teachers indicating that learners have made errors without actually correcting them (Ellis, 2009). By using this type of corrective feedback, the teacher draws learners’ attention to such errors by using techniques such as underlining or circling the error and expects learners to do corrections by themselves. According to Ellis (2008), many researchers prefer indirect corrective feedback to direct corrective feedback because it requires

learners to engage in guided learning and problem solving, and as a result provides the type of reflection that is “more likely to lead to long-term learning” (p.100).

Metalinguistic corrective feedback entails teachers providing learners with some form of explicit written comments related to the nature of errors they have made (Ellis, 2008). This takes two forms: Teachers may decide to take note of the linguistic errors in the text and provide a brief grammatical description for each error at the end of the text or use error correction codes comprised of abbreviated labels or symbols which show the nature of the error and give a clue on the type of correction needed (Ellis, 2008). In the former, learners have to work out the correction needed from the clue provided while in the latter, learners need to first find the error in the text and then work out the correction. The comparison between using codes with other written corrective feedback has been documented. Ferris and Roberts (2001), for example, found that error codes do assist learners to self-edit their writing but this is not as effective as direct and indirect corrective feedback. These authors claim that there was a very limited evidence to show that error codes help writers to achieve greater accuracy over the time.

Hyland and Hyland (2006) assert that the language that teachers use in their feedback plays a significant role in facilitating learners’ writing development. They argue that negative feedback may have a detrimental effect on learners’ confidence. Hyland and Hyland believe that although L2 learners value their teachers’ written comments, some of them may ignore or misuse them when revising their written drafts or doing corrections. Hyland (1998 as cited in Hyland and Hyland, 2006, p. 81) claims that sometimes learners misunderstand, or they understand the errors pointed out by the teacher but are unable to come up with suitable revision or correct answer, which sometimes causes them to simply delete the offending text to avoid the issues raised.

In addition to comments, some teachers also give grades as part of feedback on their learners’ written work. The negative effect of grades has been documented. Hattie and Timperley (2007), for example, argue that grades can be contentious and may negatively affect learner motivation and distract their attention from the more constructive corrective feedback provided by the teacher.

Changes in writing pedagogies have transformed feedback practices with teachers’ feedback now combined with peer feedback, writing workshops, oral conferences and even computer delivered

feedback (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). Many researchers argue that it does not matter who provides feedback as long as it is effective (Keh, 1990; Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Ellis, 2008). Keh (1990) argues that success in writing is encouraged through quality feedback either from the teachers, learners or from the model as an input that encourages learners to revise and improve their writing. According to Hattie (1999, p.9) effective feedback means “providing information how and why the child understands and misunderstands and what directions a learner must take to improve”. Additionally, the type, content, timing, complexity and accuracy of the feedback contribute to its effectiveness (Hattie & Timperley). Furthermore, learners should be given opportunities to practice: “feedback without the opportunity to practice for improvement would seem to be a waste of time” (The role of feedback and assessment in language learning, 2012, p.4).

Even though the CAPS documents provide explicit guidelines on the approaches that teachers should use to teach writing to their EFAL learners, and there is a section on assessment, no guidance is provided on how feedback should be handled. In other words, the CAPS documents appear to be quite procedural on how writing should be taught, and there seems to be little guidance about how teachers should respond to their learners’ writing.

### **2.3. Factors that might influence teachers’ pedagogy**

Raising standards of literacy is a key issue for teachers and the educational system at large. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is of the view that “teachers’ beliefs, practices and attitudes are important for understanding and improving the educational process” (2009, p.89). Recent research indicates that teachers’ beliefs affect both teaching practices and learners’ outcomes (Melketo, 2012; Abadi & Marzban, 2012; Gaitas, 2011). This includes not only what teachers know and believe but also how teachers’ knowledge and beliefs are related to their classroom practices (Gaitas, 2011).

In exploring two teachers’ pedagogy of writing in EFAL at two schools in Grahamstown, I have drawn from Shulman’s idea of ‘teacher knowledge’ (1986) and Borg’s conceptualizations of ‘teacher cognition’ (2003).

### **2.3.1. Teacher Knowledge**

Fradd and Lee (1998, p. 761) provide a concise definition for teacher knowledge when they assert that “teacher knowledge is the repertoire of knowledge, skills and dispositions that teachers require to effectively carry out classroom practices”.

As Cogill (2008, p.1) claims, “teachers’ knowledge is fundamental to pedagogy”. Teachers bring far more than just the latest government thinking on how they should teach in the classroom (Cogill, 2008). Shulman (1987) identifies seven categories to provide a framework for teachers’ knowledge: 1. Content knowledge (CK); 2. General pedagogical knowledge (GPCK), 3. Pedagogical content knowledge (PCK); 4. Knowledge of learners and their characteristics; 5. Curriculum knowledge; 6. Knowledge of educational contexts, and; 7. Knowledge of educational ends purposes and values. According to Shulman, there are at least four major sources of these knowledge categories which he refers to ‘teaching knowledge base’ (1987, p. 8). These sources are:

...(1) Scholarship in content disciplines (the knowledge, understanding, skill and dispositions that are to be learned by children), (2) the materials and setting of the institutionalized educational process (for example, curricula, textbooks, school organizations, the structure of the teaching profession etc), (3) research on schooling, social organization, human learning, teaching and development and other social and cultural phenomena that affect what teachers can do, and (4) the wisdom of practice.

In this study the most relevant categories are content knowledge (CK), general pedagogical knowledge (PK), pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), knowledge of learners and their characteristics, and curriculum knowledge. These categories are of special interest to this study because they will help me in understanding the two Grade 5 English teachers’ practices better and consequently to find answers to some of this study’s research questions. According to Shulman (1986), some teachers begin teaching with expertise of their subject content knowledge, other gain it through wisdom of practice. Therefore wisdom of practice as one of the sources of knowledge is also discussed in this chapter.

#### **2.3.1.1. Content Knowledge (CK)**

Shulman (1987) defines CK as the knowledge of the subject matter that teachers are teaching. Similarly, Ball, Thames and Phelps (n.d.) hold that CK includes knowledge of the subject and its

organizing structure. In this case, this would refer to the two teachers' knowledge of EFAL and ability to analyse and describe the language systems involved in writing in English (lexis, different types of genres, grammar, etc). McNamara (1991) maintains that knowledge of subject content is essential not only for teaching itself but also for the choice and evaluation of teaching aids, such as textbooks. Teachers with sound CK appear to teach in more interesting and dynamic ways, whereas those with little CK may shy away from the more challenging aspects of the subjects, or approach their teaching in a didactic manner (McNamara, 1991).

### **2.3.1.2. General Pedagogical Knowledge (GPK)**

Shulman posits that GPK refers “to those broad principles and strategies of classroom management and organization” (1987, p. 8). Extending Shulman's definition, Grossman and Richert (1988, p.54) suggest that GPK “includes knowledge of theories of learning and general principles of instruction, an understanding of the various philosophies of education, general knowledge about learners and knowledge of classroom management”.

A teacher with good classroom management strategies plans, controls and facilitates interaction in the classroom that is appropriate to the activity, promotes learning and takes into account the different needs and abilities of learners and demonstrates an awareness of equal opportunity and diversity issues in the classroom (British Council, 2007). Similarly, Shulman (1987) maintains that sound classroom management enables the teacher to manage energy levels, ensure appropriate learner participation, and create working patterns that have a positive input on learning. He further suggests that classroom management helps to motivate learners and ensure that different learning styles are catered for and different needs are met.

Brown and McIntyre (1993, pp. 20-39) suggest some qualities that may help to create a good teaching and learning atmosphere:

- Creation of a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere in the classroom
- Retention of control in the classroom
- Presentation of work in a way that interests and motivates
- Providing conditions so that learners understand the work
- Making clear what learners are to do and achieve
- Judging what can be expected of a learner

- Helping learners with difficulties
- Encouraging learners to raise expectations of themselves
- Development of personal mature relationships with learners
- Teachers' personal talents.
- Considering how planning interacts with the management of classes and lessons
- The management of lesson introductions
- Managing question and answer sessions.
- Building the confidence and trust of learners

### **2.3.1.3. Pedagogical Content Knowledge**

Shulman suggests that PCK “represents the blending of content and pedagogy into an understanding of how particular topics, problems, or issues are organized, represented and adapted to the diverse interest and abilities of learners and presented for instruction” (1987, p.8). Shulman further holds that PCK builds upon, but is different from CK and GPK. In Shulman’s view PCK is a form of practical knowledge that is used by teachers to guide their actions in highly contextualized classroom settings (1986; 1987).

PCK entails among other things, knowledge of how to structure and represent academic content for direct teaching to learners, knowledge of the common conception and misconceptions and difficulties that learners encounter when learning a particular content, and knowledge of the specific teaching strategies that can be used to address learners’ learning needs in particular classroom circumstances (Shulman 1986; 1987). Shulman also suggests that PCK is the best knowledge base of teaching:

Mere content knowledge is likely to be as useless pedagogically as content-free skills. But to blend properly the two aspects of a teacher’s capacities requires that we pay as much attention to the content aspects of teaching as we have recently devoted to the elements of teaching process

(1986, p.8)

In light of the above, Shulman’s PCK disputes the issue of solely theoretical knowledge as the requirement for teaching a certain subject. PCK rather bridges the gap between theory and practice, in support of Brown and McIntyre’s (1993) view that a mix of theory and practice provides a greater professionalism.



#### **2.3.1.4. Knowledge of learners and their characteristics**

This category of knowledge refers to a specific understanding of the learners' characteristics and how these characteristics can be used to specialize and adjust instructions in the classroom (Shulman, 1987). Rahman, Scaife, Yahya and Jalil (2010) suggest two different elements of knowledge of learners (KLS) namely the empirical (or social knowledge) and cognitive knowledge of learners. According to Rahman et al (2010, p.87) empirical knowledge "is the knowledge of what children of a particular age range are like, their social nature, how they behave in classrooms and schools, their interests and preoccupations, how contextual factors such as non-routine events or adverse weather can have an effect on their work and behaviours, and the nature of the child-teacher relationship".

Rahman et al (2010, pp. 87-88), however, maintain that cognitive knowledge of learners also consists of two elements. First, there is the knowledge of theories of child development, which informs practice. The second element is context-bound to a particular group of learners: the kind of knowledge that grows from regular contact with these learners, of what they know, of what they can do, and of what they are likely to be able to understand. From this kind of knowledge come the skills and processes of adaptation activities and representations to the needs of particular learners; in other words of differentiation for differing abilities.

Learners come with different strategies of learning languages and expectations to school (Shulman, 1987; Brisk and Harrington, 2007; Rahman et al., 2010), and as Rahman et al., (2010) claim, there is often a mismatch between ways of learning at home and ways of learning at school. This mismatch contributes to learners falling behind and failing to meet their full potential as learners (Rahman et al., 2010). Effective teachers, therefore recognize these differences among their learners and have the capacity and willingness to understand the impact of dissimilar backgrounds and abilities on learning (Wiseman, Cooner and Knight, 1999).

These authors however acknowledge that it is not easy to give individual attention to each and every learner especially in large classes. A study in Tanzanian primary schools (Kambuga, 2013), where classes ranged from 50 to 120 learners, shows that large numbers of learners in classrooms make it impossible for teachers to pursue teaching adjusted to learners' level of

cognitive development. Kambuga (2013) noted that the absence of individual attention for each learner in their classrooms was underlined by the fact that they did not even know the names of their learners.

Similarly, in a study conducted by Navsaria et al (2011) in two primary school classrooms in South Africa, with 48 and 35 learners respectively, teachers indicated large classes as one of the barriers that prevented them from giving individual attention to learners who were struggling to read and write. However, Hendricks (2006) argues that a favourable teacher-learner ratio does not necessarily translate into greater written output from learners. She claims that most township schools in South Africa continue to produce poor results even with fewer learners in their classrooms.

According to the SACMEQ policy brief (September 2011) the recommended learner-teacher ratios and class size for primary schools in South Africa are 40 learners per teacher and 40 learners per class respectively. A report on Special Needs Adapted Program (SNAP) 2013 indicates that the average teacher-learner ratio in primary schools in the Grahamstown district where my study took place is 1-27, however, this may conceal disparities in class size on the ground.

#### **2.3.1.5. Curriculum knowledge**

Cogill (2008) holds that curriculum knowledge is the knowledge of what should be taught to a particular group of learners and requires understanding of children's learning potential, national syllabuses, school planning documents and year plans. In 1997, Outcome-Based Education [OBE] was introduced in South Africa; it was intended to "overcome curricular divisions of the past" (South Africa. DBE, 2011, p. 1). Some experiences in implementing OBE prompted a review of the curriculum in 2000, which led to the revision of the curriculum and the development of a National Curriculum Statement (NCS) (South Africa. DoE 2002; South Africa. DBE, 2011).

The ongoing implementation challenges resulted in another review in 2009, resulting in a repackaging of the curriculum in the form of the CAPS, which was implemented in 2012. CAPS is not a new curriculum but an amendment to the NCS Grades R-12.

A curriculum is one of the fundamental aspects that shape what should be taught in schools (Shulman, 1986). Other factors that might potentially shape the way teachers teach writing, for example, may include the Workbooks provided by the Department of Basic Education, which are deemed to be in line with the curriculum, and any other external assessment such as the ANA tests, for teachers ought to prepare learners for these tests.

#### **2.3.1.6. Wisdom of practice**

Shulman describes wisdom of practice as “the maxims that guide (or provide reflective rationalization for) the practices of able teachers” (1987, p. 11). Much of the conception of teaching according to Shulman (1987) is derived from collecting, examining and beginning to codify emerging wisdom of practice among both inexperienced and experienced teachers. He further argues that unlike other professions, teaching is conducted without an audience of peer and thus devoid of a history of practice. Shulman as cited in Barry (1997) posits that the classroom becomes teachers’ laboratory, a place in which new forms of teaching and learning are ‘painstakingly’ grown in a fertile culture of exploration. The teacher then manages that laboratory (the class) and is responsible for detecting and reporting its lessons for improved educational practice. According to Shulman:

A knowledge base for teaching is not fixed and final. Although teaching is among the world’s oldest professions, educational research, especially the systematic study of teaching, is relatively new enterprise. We may be able to offer a compelling argument for the broad outlines and categories of the knowledge base for teaching. It will, however, become abundantly clear that much, if not most, of the proposed knowledge base remains to be discovered, invented, and refined. As more is learned about teaching, we will come to recognize new categories of performance and understanding that are characteristic of good teachers, and will have to reconsider and redefine other domains.

(1987, p. 12)

Shulman thus believes that expert teachers are able to define, describe and reproduce good teaching. The difference between expert and novice teachers in terms of good teaching has been documented. Jennifer King Rice, in her paper titled ‘*The impact of teacher experience*’ (2010), claims that existing research confirms that, on average, brand new teachers are less effective than those with some experience under their belts. Goodson and Hargreaves (1996) on the other hand contend that teachers derive their skills from

mediation between experience and theory (PCK). They believe experience matters, but teachers also need to have knowledge of the subject content.

There are many other factors that affect teachers' pedagogy apart from these categories of knowledge. Teachers' pedagogy may be affected, for example, by the school environment, teachers' position in school, previous teaching experience, teacher training and teachers' own experience of learning (Borg, 2003; Cogill, 2008). These are issues that characterize Borg's conceptualization of *teacher cognition* (2003) which I address in the next section.

### **2.3.2. Teacher Cognition**

Borg (2003) defines teacher cognition as what teachers think, know and believe and the relationship of these mental constructs to what teachers do in the classroom. Han and Song (2011) expand the definition of teacher knowledge by suggesting that it refers to "teachers beliefs, thoughts, attitudes, knowledge and principles relating to teaching as well as judgments and reflections on the teaching practice" (2011, p. 176). Teacher cognition is considered to be a useful way of understanding how best teaching and learning can be improved. The OECD is of the view that "teachers' beliefs, practices and attitudes are important for understanding and improving the educational process" (2009, p.89). This includes not only what teachers know and believe but also how teachers' knowledge and beliefs are related to their classroom practices (Gaitas, 2011). According to Borg, the value of understanding not only what teacher's do but also how they think has been widely recognized and has led to a number of research initiatives (2009).

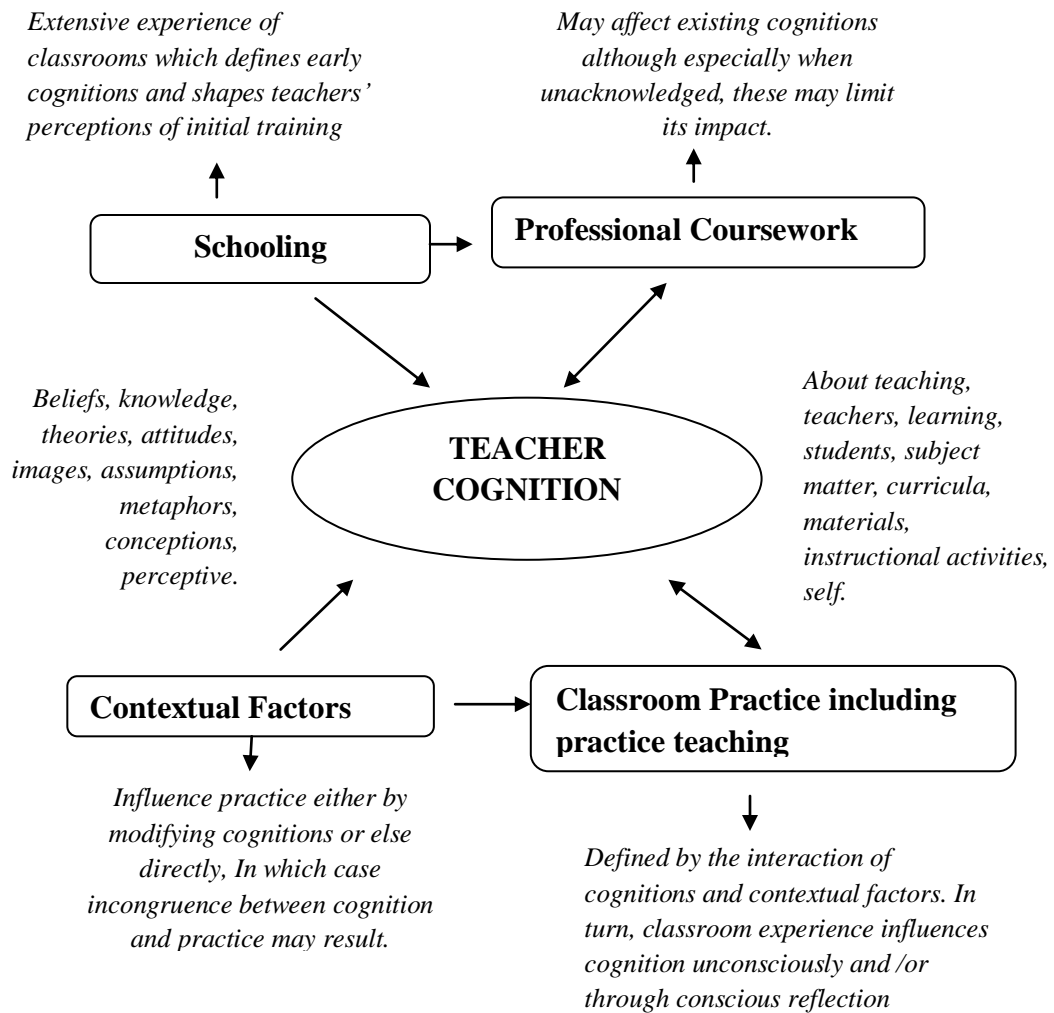
From a number of research projects undertaken on teacher cognition, Borg summarizes what he claims is generally accepted today about the nature of teacher cognition and its relationship to what teachers do:

- Teachers' cognitions can be powerfully influenced by their own experiences as learners
- These cognitions influence what and how teachers learn during teacher education
- They act as filter through which teachers interpret new information and experience
- They may outweigh the effects of teacher education in influencing what teachers do in the classroom

- They can be deep-rooted and resistant to change
- They can exert a persistent long-term influence on teachers' instructional practices
- They are, at the same time, not always reflected in what teachers do in the classroom
- They interact bi-directionally with experience (i.e. beliefs influence practices but practices can also lead to changes in beliefs)

#### **2.3.2.1. Teacher cognition in L2 settings**

Borg (2003, 2006, 2009) has reviewed around 200 studies of teacher cognition. He has developed a useful schematic conceptualization of teacher cognition (2003, p.82), which acknowledges that a teacher's own schooling, professional course work and contextual factors impact on his/her classroom practice (see figure 2 below). These practices are also shaped by the social, psychological and environmental realities of the school and classroom: for example, "interactions with parents, principals' requirements, the school, society, curriculum mandates, classroom and school layout, school policies, colleagues, standardized tests and the availability of resources" (Borg, 2003, p.94).



**Figure 2: Borg's Conceptualisation of teacher cognition (2003, p. 82)**

### 2.3.2.2. Teachers' beliefs

Underlying teachers' behavior and practices in the classroom, there are beliefs and knowledge and related constructs which influence what teachers do (Borg, 2003; Karaata, 2011; Hang & Song, 2011; Melketo, 2012). Yero (2002) delineated four particular aspects (that we can relate to teaching writing in the classroom) embedded in teachers' beliefs. First, teachers' beliefs include a personal definition of education that shapes and circumscribes what the teacher decides to do and not to do. Second, each teacher has a set of beliefs about the nature of knowledge and skills and how learners acquire them. Third, each teacher has a set of beliefs and assumptions about the nature of learning. Fourth, each teacher has a set of values that determine the priorities in the

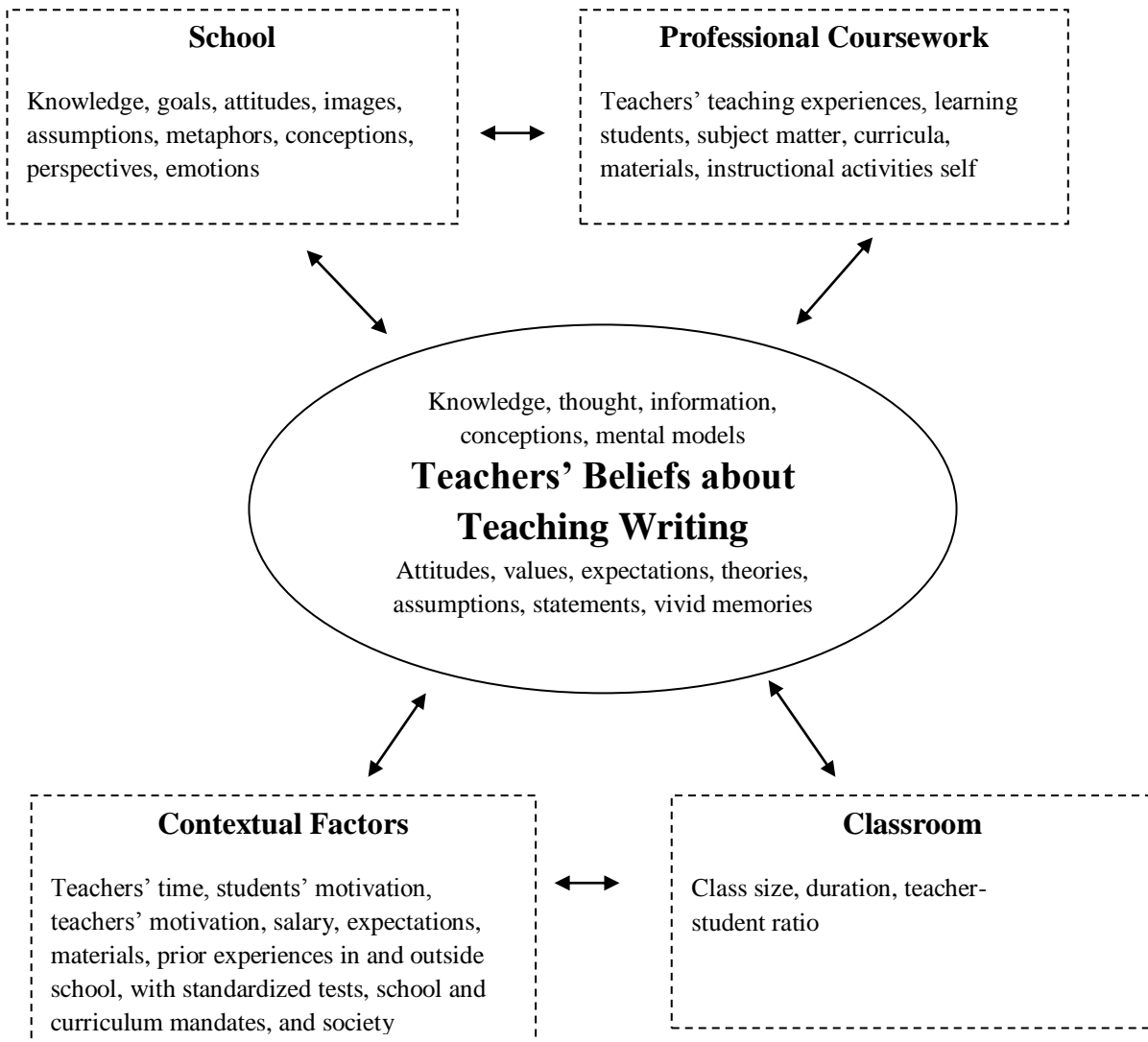
classroom. Yero (2002) further gives an example that if a teacher believes a programme he or she has been told to use is based on a solid foundation, and it corresponds to his or her beliefs, he or she will notice ways in which the programme works. On the other hand, if the teacher believes the programme does not work or is useless, that teacher will notice evidence supporting that belief. Similarly, Smith and Sutherland (2007) claim that most of the pedagogical and curricula decisions made by teachers are solidly grounded in their beliefs and that they do not necessarily align with the tenets of the working curriculum.

If we want to understand fully what teachers do, we need to explore what they believe, what they know, their attitudes and their feelings (Borg in an interview with Birello, 2012). In this interview Borg claims that a large scale of educational reforms failed to have desired impacts in trying to get teachers to change because they were targeting behaviors without taking into consideration teachers' beliefs (Birello, 2012). Borg however made it clear that it is not possible to explain what teachers do in relation to one single set of beliefs - "there are sets of beliefs interacting such as beliefs about learners and learning, beliefs about assessment, beliefs about different aspects of languages etc" (Birello, 2012, p. 92).

In light of the above, the most frequently used methods in data collection in these studies have been self-reports, oral commentary, observation, interview and reflective writing (Borg, 2003).

There is some recent research on teacher beliefs on teaching writing. Abadi and Marzban (2012), for example, carried out research on '*teachers' beliefs and teaching English writing to children and adolescent learners in Iran*'; their findings were that "teachers' theoretical knowledge did not significantly differ from their beliefs about teaching writing" (p. 23).

Similarly, Melketo (2012) carried out a study of three instructors of English L2 at a university in Ethiopia whereby he was *exploring the tensions between English teachers' beliefs and practices in teaching writing*. His findings were that teachers' classroom practices did not always correspond to their beliefs. Melketo has adapted the model from Borg (2003) to represent the conceptual framework of the nature of teachers' writing instruction beliefs and factors that might influence the manifestation of these beliefs in classroom practices (2012, p. 3):



**Figure 3: Melketo's Model of teachers' beliefs about and factors that might affect their practices of teaching L2 writing (adapted from Borg, 2003)**

Although Melketo's research (2012) was conducted with teachers working with adult learners at a university level, this model is useful in this study because it does not only recognize teachers' beliefs in teaching writing but also contextual factors that may influence their practices in their classroom (part of this study's focus).

Much of the research on teacher cognition available in L2 has been conducted with teachers working with adult learners, typically university or private schools settings where classes are



smaller (Borg, 2003). There appears to be less work on teacher cognition in primary and secondary school contexts where teachers work with larger classes of learners (Gains, 2010).

#### **2.4. Conclusion**

This chapter has explored some key literature on the teaching of writing, particularly to L2 or bilingual learners. It has highlighted challenges faced by L2 learners (language barriers as well as the effect of SES on their academic achievement) in becoming proficient writers as per the curriculum/grade requirements. The literature on different teaching approaches language teachers might employ to teach writing in their classrooms and factors that may influence them to teach the way they teach have also been explored. In attempting to understand teachers' practices in relation to their beliefs, Shulman's teacher knowledge and Borg's teacher cognition have been used to provide the conceptual framework for the study. In the following chapter I present the methodology used in this study in the collection and analysis of data showing how writing is taught to the Grade 5 EFAL learners at my two selected research sites.

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1. Introduction**

As stated in the previous chapters, this study explores how two Grade 5 teachers from different schools teach writing to their EFAL learners and attempts to identify some of the factors that inform these teachers' practices. This chapter explains how I obtained the data I needed for my study. It provides an outline of the research approach, the tools used for data collection and how the data was analysed. Ethical considerations in the process of data collection as well as techniques employed to ensure validity and reliability of the study are also discussed. Finally this chapter identifies some of the limitations of the research undertaken.

### **3.2. Research approach**

#### **3.2.1. The interpretive paradigm**

This study is situated in the interpretive paradigm. "The central endeavor in the context of the interpretive paradigm is to understand the subjective world of human experience" (Cohen et al, 2007, p. 21). I believe an interpretive paradigm is appropriate for this study because, as Haralambos, Holborn and Heald (2000) observe, "social action can only be understood by interpreting the meaning and motives on which it is based" (p. 971). In this study I have explored what informs the Grade 5 teachers' pedagogical decisions and tried to identify some of the factors that might have influenced these decisions.

#### **3.2.2. Qualitative research**

When embarking on this study I did not have a preconceived list of hypotheses to test or any list of outcomes that I expected to find. Instead I have tried to find the answers to my research questions as these have emerged from the data. This, as Losifides (2011) suggests, is achievable through the use of rigorous qualitative research methods. The inherent strength of qualitative research is its ability to get closer to the reality:

...being closer to reality means employing methods for gathering information and insights about real people, real situations and real relations. It means gathering information and learning by talking with people about their perspectives, meanings, actions, practices, experiences, situations, social situations and contexts.

(Losifides, 2011, p. 12)

Losifides (2011) further argues that qualitative research is not confined to the study of personal meanings and public discourses. More than that, qualitative research may be viewed as a powerful means for the study of different causal powers and social objects, along with their constraining and enabling effects. In similar terms, Cresswell (1994) defined qualitative research as “an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of information and conducted in a social setting” (p.2).

I discussed some of the literature on writing as a social practice in Section 2.2.2.1.1. Maxwell (2004a) maintains that investigating social practice (in this case the teaching of writing) qualitatively is most appropriate as qualitative methods allow for the collection of rich data and the employment of narrative and connecting analysis. In this way, according to Losifides, “the *how* and *why* questions can be combined and answered in a non-contradictory manner, as understanding a specific social process means the simultaneous explaining of certain outcomes linked with it” (2011, p. 13).

### **3.2.3. Case study**

I chose to use a case study method for my investigation of the two Grade 5 teachers’ teaching of writing, for as Ragin (2000) explains, case studies allow for an in-depth exploration, investigation and understanding of complex phenomena. Stake (1995, p. xi) defines a case study as “a study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances”. This case study takes the form of classroom-based research, in which I sought to understand the two teachers’ practices in teaching writing to their Grade 5 EFAL learners. In doing case studies, Stake (1995, p.1) argues, “we enter the scene with a sincere interest in learning how [individuals] function in their ordinary pursuits and milieus and with willingness to put aside many pre-assumptions while we learn.” Stake (1995) maintains that a case is a specific complex, functioning thing. Ragin (2000, p. 90) identifies the advantage of in-depth case study as being that it provides a researcher with:

... intensive knowledge of the case and its history and thus a more in-depth view of causation. Case study researchers are able to triangulate different kinds of evidence from a variety of different sources in their attempts to construct full and compelling representations of causation in the cases they study. In short, case studies maximize validity in the investigation of causal process

In this study, the case is the teaching of writing in English in Grade 5, not the two teachers or classrooms as such. In pursuing the goal of this study (to investigate what informs or influences the two teachers' pedagogies), I used a variety of data collection tools. These I discuss in Section 3.3.3. A combination of data from different sources accounts for a better understanding of a phenomenon (Cresswell, 2007).

### **3.3. Field work**

#### **3.3.1. Research site**

A research site “implies the real world of programs, organizations, neighbourhoods, street corners and getting close enough to the people and circumstances thereby to capture what is happening” and that “getting closer to the research setting is essential because action can be best understood when it is observed in the setting in which it occurs” (Patton, 2002, p. 48).

The study took place in two Grade 5 classrooms at different schools, School A (Grade 5 B) and school B (Grade 5A), both situated in the heart of a township which is part of Grahamstown and commonly referred to as Rini or Grahamstown East. These two schools are adjacent to each other. There are 35 learners in Grade 5B at School A and 30 learners in Grade 5A at school B. The ethnic make-up of the learner and teacher population at these schools is entirely Xhosa, with the exception of just one isiZulu speaking learner at School B. Both teachers participating in the study were females and had extensive teaching experience. Both had been teaching for more than 15 years.

As outlined in Chapter 1, I chose to focus on Grade 5 EFAL teachers because Grade 5 is the grade that I teach in Namibia. Whereas Grade 5 marks the first year of Namibia's Upper Primary phase (Grades 5-7), in South Africa it is the middle year of the Intermediate Phase. I was interested in understanding more about the teaching of writing to learners who had recently changed over from using their home language as the LoLT to using a second language (English in this instance). By Grade 5, learners are expected to do more independent writing as compared to Foundation Phase (South Africa. DBE, 2011). Doing research on the grade I teach would help me grow professionally and inform the way I supported my own ESL learners' independent writing.

### **3.3.2. Sampling**

Maxwell (2005, p.26) defines sampling as “decisions about where to conduct the research and whom to involve in the research process.” In this case study both purposive and convenience sampling were used. Purposive sampling is a “strategy to choose individuals likely to be knowledgeable and informative about the phenomenon of interest” (McMillan and Schumacher, 1997, p. 433), while convenience sampling “involves choosing the nearest willing individuals to serve as respondents as the researcher simply choose the sample from those whom they have easy access” (Cohen et al, 2007, p.114).

The participating schools were selected for the following reasons: firstly, both catered for Grade 5 learners; secondly, both schools use English as the LoLT in the Intermediate Phase; thirdly, one of my supervisors advised me that these two schools have a good working relationship with staff and students from Rhodes University; fourthly, both schools are reasonably close to the university which reduced travel and other costs throughout the research project; and finally, although this is not a comparative study, I thought that observing similarities and differences between the two teachers might add to the richness of the data.

### **3.3.3. Data collection tools**

The three main data collection methods used in this study were interviews, classroom observation and document analysis.

#### **3.3.3.1 Pilot interviews**

Before I conducted the actual interviews, I piloted the interview questions with two different teachers not involved in the actual study. McLean (1994) suggests that the piloting process involves testing the clarity of the interview questions; eliminating or minimizing ambiguity and difficulties in wording; and gaining feedback on the type of questions. My interview questions were further refined as a result of this piloting process.

#### **3.3.3.2. Interviews**

O’Leary (2004) defines an interview as “a one-on-one interaction which allows the researcher to have control over the process and the interviewee to have freedom to express his or her thoughts” (p. 27). Similarly, Cohen et al (2007) observe that interviews “enable participants- be they

interviewers or interviewees- to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view” (p. 349).

Before I began my observation of the two teachers teaching writing to their Grade 5 EFAL learners, I decided to have preliminary interviews with each of the teachers so that I could gain insight into some of their beliefs regarding writing and writing pedagogy, their beliefs about different approaches to teaching writing including error correction, their beliefs about their learners when it comes to writing, plus any other factors that they thought might enable or constrain them to teach writing effectively. As Borg claims (in Birello, 2012, p. 2), the best way we can know teachers’ beliefs concerning their pedagogies is “to get them to tell us what their beliefs are”. With that being said, I used interviews to solicit information from teachers about how they go about teaching writing and why they teach in such ways. The interviews with the EFAL teachers also gave me an opportunity to elicit information about their knowledge of the CAPS, their knowledge about their Grade 5 EFAL learners, such as their learners’ social background, language ability and the extent to which these appeared to affect the teachers’ ability to teach writing to their learners.

I used semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews enable an interviewer to prompt and probe, press for clarity and elucidation, to rephrase questions to make it easy for the interviewee to grasp them, summarise where necessary and to check for confirmation particularly if the issues are complex or vague (Cohen et al, 2007). I had a few pre-set questions as a framework, derived from the research questions, yet tried to exercise minimal direction over what should be said by the teachers, allowing them freedom to express their subjective feelings as fully and as spontaneously as they were able (Cohen et al, 2007). In addition to the preliminary interviews, I also interviewed the teachers during the observation process to elicit more specific information from them about particular aspects of the observed lessons. Here I used stimulated recall whereby I got each teacher to watch selected video-recorded samples from their lessons with me. Teachers then reflected on these samples and gave reasons for some of their practices.

Subsequent interviews were informal conversational interviews that I had with the teachers after their lessons. Cohen et al (2007, p. 353) suggest that the characteristics of an informal conversational interview is that “questions emerge from the immediate context and are asked in

the natural course of things; there is no pre-determination of question topics or wordings.” I referred to the specific events I observed during the lessons and my field notes to create discussions during the informal conversational interviews. All interviews were conducted in English, normally during the teachers’ free periods. Each interview was audio-recorded and then transcribed in full.

### **3.3.3.3. Observations**

Kumar (2005) describes an observation as “a purposeful, systematic and selective way of watching and listening to an interaction [between teachers and learners, and between learners and learners] or phenomenon as it takes place” (p. 118). Cohen et al observe that the distinctive feature of observation as a data collection tool is that it offers the researcher “the opportunity to gather live data from naturally occurring social situations” (2007, p. 396). Similarly, Merriam (2001) argues that observations are one of the major means of collecting data in qualitative research because they offer a firsthand account of the situation under study and when combined with interviews and document analysis they allow for a holistic interpretation of the phenomenon being investigated.

I observed a total of ten lessons, five lessons from each of the two Grade 5 EFAL teachers which enabled me to then compare observation data with interview data, and to look for congruency between their actual teaching practices and what they had said in the interviews. As Robson suggests, “What people do may differ from what they say they do ... [O]bservation provides a reality check; observation also enables a researcher to look afresh at everyday behavior that otherwise might be taken for granted, expected or go unnoticed” (2002, cited in Cohen et al, 2007, p. 396).

I used direct observation using field notes, plus audio and video recording. My goal was to establish rapport with the learners and teachers, to accustom them to my being in the classroom, in the hope that they would eventually not really notice my presence. During the week before the actual observations I familiarised myself with the classrooms, identified the most suitable place to sit and tested my recording equipment. I also noted down details describing the physical setting of each of the two classrooms, including what print was on the walls, as well as the learners’ seating organization in the classroom

I chose to use non-participatory observation, as it is a “relatively unobtrusive qualitative research strategy for gathering primary data about some aspect of the social world without interacting directly with its participants” (Ostrower, 1998, p. 57), which allows a researcher to concentrate on collecting data without getting pre-occupied by anything else, and to thereby get deep rich information (Wragg, 1999). I am not claiming that my presence had no impact on classroom events, but I did my best to minimize this. As a non-participant observer, I avoided any contact with the learners. I neither talked to them, nor reacted to whatever was happening or whatever they were doing in the classroom.

The formal observations began with T1 during the second week of my stay at the schools. Although my initial plan was to record all the lessons using a video camera, T1 felt that learners seemed to play up to the camera when she was busy teaching. This not only distracted attention from the lesson itself, but also negatively affected the observation process. We then agreed that I should cease the video recording and only use the voice recorder and field notes. I only therefore video recorded two of T1’s lessons, and, because a similar learner reaction then happened in T2’s classroom, I only video recorded one of her lessons.

As I did not have any pre-conceived categories of what to look for, but wanted to learn contextually how these two teachers taught EFAL to their Grade 5 learners, I chose not to use an observation schedule. In recording my observations, I focused mainly on the teachers’ talk, and practices in their classrooms, particularly with regard to how writing tasks were handled. Here I observed how the two teachers prepared their learners for writing activities, what they did *while* their learners were writing as well as *after* their learners had finished writing. There were some days when there were no writing activities taught or done. On these days I simply sat quietly and worked on my field notes. The table below summarises the observation process.

**TABLE 2: Summary of the observation process**

Teacher	School	Number of lessons observed	Number of stimulated recall interview done	Number of post lesson informal conversational interviews
T1	B	5	1	2
T2	A	5	1	2



#### **3.3.3.4. Document analysis**

According to Dias de Figueiredo, the term ‘document’ is “understood very broadly, including not just texts, but also sounds, photos, video and any materials that carry relevant messages” (2010, p. 29). Documents reveal what people do or did and what they value, and my role as a researcher was that of reviewing, interpreting and analyzing some of the relevant documents, including an analysis of the relevant curriculum documents for EFAL (Intermediate Phase). This was done to uncover what is expected to be done both by the EFAL teachers and learners as far as writing is concerned in the Intermediate Phase.

As outlined in the previous chapters, I was interested not only in lessons which focused on writing, but in all the English lessons that involved writing of one kind or another. I therefore chose to collect and analyse a sample of grammar and vocabulary development activities involving writing as well as longer pieces of writing generated during writing lessons. After each observed EFAL writing lesson, I asked the teachers to choose for me 9 samples of learners’ scripts comprised of 3 good pieces of writing, 3 average ones and 3 poorly written ones. In addition to this I also took photographs of learners and teachers while they were busy in the class to assist in describing the classroom settings and the teachers’ practices.

#### **3.3.3.5. Final Interviews**

After I had repeatedly read through the first sets of data obtained from interviews, classroom observations and samples of learners’ scripts, a number of issues and questions emerged which prompted me to conduct final semi-structured interviews with both teachers. I presented the teachers with episodes from the lessons or an extract from interviews where I wanted more clarity. This was done in order to get a deeper access to their beliefs and factors which might underlie their practices of teaching writing to their learners.

#### **3.3.4. Data analysis**

Data analysis in qualitative research “involves organizing, accounting for and explaining the data, in short, making sense of data in terms of the participants’ definitions of the situations, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities” (Cohen et al, 2007, p.461). Similarly, Merriam (2001) suggests that data analysis involves consolidating, reducing and interpreting what the participants have said and what the researcher has seen and read. She further describes

data analyses as a “complex process that involves moving back and forth between concrete bits of data and abstract concepts, between inductive and deductive reasoning, between description and interpretation” (2001, p. 145).

In interpreting and simplifying this complex process, Patton (2002) suggests the coding scheme as the first step of data analysis. Ritchie and Lewis (2003), on the other hand, argue that making sense of the data relies partly on the method or tool that is used to categorise data, but also depends to a large extent on the researcher and the rigour, clarity and creativity of his or her own conceptual thinking.

The teachers’ responses to both the semi-structured interviews, stimulus recall and informal conversational interviews were transcribed verbatim and analysed. With my research questions in mind, I repeatedly read through all the interviews transcripts to make sense of what the teachers had said during the interviews. I then looked for common comments related to teachers’ beliefs, influences of these beliefs and other factors which might have impacted the way teachers taught EFAL writing to their learners.

Video and audio records of the observed lessons were also transcribed verbatim and analysed. A colleague who speaks and writes isiXhosa fluently helped with the translation of teacher-learner interactions that were in isiXhosa. The translated version of isiXhosa to English was checked by another colleague who teaches English and isiXhosa in the Senior Phase (at another school not part of the study) to help ensure that there were no distortions in the data after translation. I read these transcripts to fully familiarise myself with the data.

The samples of learners’ scripts were first used to analyse how the two teachers responded to their writing in attempt to find answers to one of the research questions. The scripts were also used to determine if the EFAL written activities given by the teachers were congruent with the Grade 5 EFAL writing activities recommended in the teaching plans by the CAPS documents for that period of time<sup>5</sup>. In addition learners’ scripts provided insights about how competent they were in EFAL writing in relation to the CAPS assumptions.

Given the fact that I am a novice researcher, I was not able to capture all the necessary data relevant to my research questions at once during the observation period. When I started

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<sup>5</sup> I scanned the page of teaching plan that was relevant for the observation period (Appendix 7)

analyzing the data, I realized that there was still some more data that I had to get from the participants, and that meant I had to go back to the schools several times until saturation was reached. Saturation in qualitative research is the point in the continuous data collection process that indicates little need to continue collecting further data as it (data) becomes redundant and repetitive (Maxwell & Satake, 2006).

Having collected relevant data around each of my original research questions, I looked for similarities, differences, comparisons and themes from which to create a more narrative account of how each of the teachers taught writing to her Grade 5 EFAL learners and what influenced or shaped her practices. This also includes what teachers believed were impediments to teaching writing effectively to their Grade 5 EFAL learners.

### **3.3.5. Ethical considerations**

It is important for me as a researcher to be aware of and observe the ethics of doing research (Stake, 1995). Apart from protecting their identity and retaining a good relationship with the research participants, research ethics also enables the researcher to respect the rights, privacy, dignity and sensitivities of all the research participants as well as the integrity of the institutions within which the research takes place (Awori, 2003). Ethical considerations in this study were taken into account in relation to permission, informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity and plagiarism.

#### **3.3.5.1. Permission**

After my research proposal was approved<sup>6</sup> by the Rhodes University Faculty of Education Higher Degrees Committee, I filled in the Eastern Cape Department of Education Research Request form to be granted permission to conduct research in the two schools. After getting permission from the Eastern Cape Department of Education to conduct research in schools, I then went to the schools, explained the aim of my research to the principal of school A and the acting principal of school B and presented them with letters requesting them to allow me to conduct my research in their schools (see Appendix 2). I obtained permission from the two school principals to carry out the research in their schools and work with the EFAL teachers.

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<sup>6</sup> See approval letters both from The Rhodes University's Faculty of Education Higher Degrees Committee and the Eastern Cape District Director of Education in Appendix 2.

### **3.3.5.2. Informed consent**

I designed the informed consent forms that I gave to each of the EFAL teachers to sign as an agreement and willingness to participate in the research, after explaining to them that their participation in the research was voluntary and they could withdraw at any time if they felt they were no longer willing to participate. The informed consent forms also outlined the research objectives, data collection methods and data collection devices used in the research process. Since Grade 5 EFAL learners are still minors and still under the guidance of their parents, I also sent informed consent letters to their parents explaining the purpose of my research and requesting permission for their children to be part of my research. I wrote this letter in both English and with assistance from an isiXhosa speaking colleague, I also translated it into isiXhosa. I gave the English version to the teachers and made one copy for each learner of the letter in isiXhosa so that they could take it to their parents. I requested the parents to read, sign and return the letters as an indication that they had agreed for their children to be part of my research. All the informed consent letters sent to parents came back signed and are filed in my case study archives (See copies of consent letters for both the teachers and parents in Appendix 3).

### **3.3.5.3. Confidentiality and anonymity**

I assured confidentiality to the schools, principals, the EFAL teachers and learners. No real names have been mentioned in this study. I have referred to the schools as either school A or B, teachers as either T1 or T2 and simply said a learner(s) without mentioning names. I ensured confidentiality of the video-recording, photos and information from the interviews to safe guard the participants' identities (Shank 2006).

### **3.3.5.4. Plagiarism**

I have tried by all means to avoid being guilty of plagiarism. Robertson maintains that plagiarism is when “you try to present someone else’s ideas as your own” and that “plagiarism is treated very seriously in universities and in the wider world” (2013, p.8). Walliman (2005) claims that in doing research, one cannot entirely rely on one/s own ideas, concepts and theories, however we should make it habit to acknowledge the originator of the work we incorporate into our own. To avoid being guilty of plagiarism ideas, concepts, theories or words used in this research have

been acknowledged by using complete references according to the Rhodes University departmental guidelines (Robertson 2013).

### **3.3.6. Validity and reliability**

Validity and reliability are two factors which any qualitative researcher should be concerned about while designing a study, analyzing results and judging the quality of the study (Patton, 2001). Robertson (2012) presents a lucid distinction between the two words. She maintains that validity “is related to the extent to which a researcher’s interpretation of data can be judged as logically derived and credible” while reliability “is roughly equated to the degree to which different researchers might make similar findings given the same research framework” (2012, p. 54). Extending on this definition of validity in a qualitative research, MacMillan and Schumacher (1997) hold that it refers to the degree to which the explanations of a phenomenon match the realities of the world. Validity and reliability are bound to the question: How can the researcher convince his or her audiences to believe in his or her research findings? To answer this question, Cohen et al. (2007, p. 133) assert that “threats to validity and reliability can never be erased completely; rather the effect of these threats can be attenuated by attention to validity and reliability throughout a piece of research”. In other words qualitative research can be more credible as long as certain techniques, methods, and or strategies are used during the research process.

#### **3.3.6.1. Triangulation**

In order to minimize threats to validity, Cohen et al. (2000, p. 17) suggest that the researcher should: “select an appropriate methodology and appropriate instrumentation for gathering the type of data required”. Following this advice, I used methodological triangulation, which entails the use of different methods on the same object of study to seek confirmation of apparent findings, reduce deficiencies and biases that may stem from any single method (Adamini & Kiger, 2005; Cohen et al 2007). According to Seale (1999, p. 61) if triangulation is used with due caution, it can “enhance the credibility of a research account by providing an additional way of generating evidence in support of key claims”. Similarly, Mathison (1989) sees triangulation as one of the powerful means to bolster validity and reliability in qualitative, interpretive research, claiming that it leads to more consistent, objective picture of reality.

I used semi-structured interviews, classroom observation and document analysis to capture data about the practices of the teachers in teaching writing to Grade 5 EFAL learners. Interview questions were piloted with my colleagues who are also English teachers but not part of the study to enable me to see what possible answers I might get during the actual study. The questions were amended after this exercise. By using these various methods to collect data and comparing the data generated I aimed to get rich data to allow for the interpretation of a complete picture and broader understanding of how the two teachers teach writing to their Grade 5 EFAL learners. Another technique employed in this research to establish credibility was member checking.

### **3.3.6.2. Member checking**

Member checking is “the most crucial technique for establishing credibility” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 314). According to these authors, member checking occurs throughout the research process, whereby collected data is presented or played back to the informant to check for perceived accuracy and reactions. Before I did the stimulus recall of the video recorded lesson with each of the teachers, I let them watch the video and they clarified some of the things they said or have done during the lesson (this is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4).

After I transcribed the video recorded lessons I gave the teachers the written transcripts to read through and see if there were incongruities with what they had said or done in their actual lessons. Although Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 315) claim that sometimes informants “may be able to agree that reconstructions are fair even if they are not in total agreement with them”, this did not appear to be the case with T1 and T2, because T1, for example, suggested that I should exclude some content that she was not comfortable with after she watched the video of her lesson, and similarly T2 clarified what she meant in an interview after she read the interview transcript that I had with her.

### **3.3.7. Limitations of the study**

The first limitation was that some of the classroom interactions between the teachers (both T1 and T2) and learners during the EFAL lessons were carried out in isiXhosa. Even though I have a little understanding of isiXhosa, it is not enough to understand fully all the interactions that were taking place in the classrooms. I therefore recorded all the lessons with the audio recorder and a colleague who is isiXhosa speaking, and able to read and write in this language, assisted me with

translation when I was transcribing the lessons that were both audio and video recorded. However, I acknowledge that it not possible to have a perfect translation and that there is a possibility of certain meanings getting lost in the process of translation.

The second limitation was experienced at school A whereby the Head of Department (HoD) for languages was appointed as the school Acting Principal because the Principal was on a sick leave. T2 was then appointed to be the acting HoD for languages. This had some effect on her teaching time because she tried to balance between the administrative work and teaching. There were two days that she did not come to attend to her Grade 5 EFAL learners because administrative work took precedence over teaching time, hence I could not also observe her for these days. Although my initial plan was to observe both T1 and T2 for two weeks, I proposed that we extended the observation duration for at least two days so that we could make up for the days I did not observe her when she did not come to class. To this she agreed.

The third limitation of this research was the number of lessons observed. Due to constraints such as time (I only had one year in which to complete this study), and difficulties with access into schools, I only managed to observe five lessons per teacher. I feel, however, that my decision to observe all English lessons involving writing, and not only those which focused specifically on writing, allowed me to capture rich data related to various aspects of language and literature that come together in the act of writing.

Finally, as Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2001, unpagged) argue, “one of the inherent features of case studies is that they work with a severely restricted focus”. One of the prime reasons for restricting the scope of this type of research according to these authors is that case studies facilitate the construction of detailed, in depth understanding of what is to be studied. This is in agreement with Stake (1995) who argues that “the real business of the case study is particularization, not generalization” (p. 8). This case study is limited to two EFAL teachers. Therefore, the findings of the research may not be generalized to represent a general group of EFAL teachers in South Africa or elsewhere. This however does not mean that this case study “cannot enter into the collective process of knowledge accumulation in a given field or in society” (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 227). My hope is that potential readers of this study find it helpful and would be able to relate it to their circumstances when trying to better understand the teaching of writing and possibly to improve their practice.

### **3.3.8. Conclusion**

This chapter has outlined the methodology employed in gathering data for this study. It has also presented a justification of the site selection and the choice of the participants of the study. The chapter has discussed how the data was analysed as well as the limitations of the study. Ethical considerations and techniques used to minimize threats to validity and reliability of the study have also been outlined. In the next chapter, I will present a preliminary analysis of the data obtained from the two Grade 5 EFAL classrooms.



## **CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION AND PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS**

### **4.1. Introduction**

In this chapter, I provide a preliminary analysis of the data obtained from interviews, classroom observations and documents. I have presented this analysis both in words and tables, relative to the following research questions:

- How do the selected teachers teach writing to their Grade 5 EFAL learners?
- What informs and shapes their practices in this regard?
- What type of feedback do they provide on their Grade 5 EFAL learners' written work?
- What in the views of these teachers enables/constrains their teaching of writing to their Grade 5 EFAL learners?

I begin by introducing the two teachers who participated in my study. This is followed by a description of each school and classroom where the study took place. I then present a detailed account of each teacher's practices in teaching writing and what they believed constrained them from teaching writing effectively to their Grade 5 EFAL learners. I also present summaries of all the lessons observed and I refer to the lesson observations as lesson 1, 2, 3 etc. I make use of direct quotes from the transcripts of interview and lesson observation to serve as evidence that allows the readers to judge if the conclusions made are justified. Additional data presented in this chapter were derived from documents including Learning and Support Materials (LSMs) used in the observation lessons, pictures taken during the observations and samples of learners' marked scripts.

### **4.2. Introduction of teachers**

#### **4.2.1. Teacher 1 (T1)**

T1 is School A's EFAL teacher for Grades 5A and 5B. After matriculating, T1 enrolled at a college of education and obtained a Junior Primary Diploma (JPD) in education, which certified her to be a qualified teacher in the Foundation Phase. After completing her 3 year JPD in education, T1 did not go straight to teaching in schools; she first went to work as a court interpreter for three years. It was in 1993 that she took up her first teaching post as a Grade 1 teacher at a school in Port Elizabeth. She transferred to School B in 1997. She has been a Grade

1 teacher for about fifteen of her twenty years of teaching experience, until 2009 when she moved to the Intermediate Phase to become the Grade 5 EFAL teacher. In addition to being an EFAL teacher, she also teaches Social Studies in Grade 6A and 6B, and she is the coordinator of the school dancing club. She is a member of the school management team and is an acting Head of Department (HoD) for languages.

#### **4.2.2. Teacher 2 (T2)**

T2 is School B's Grade 5A and 5B EFAL teacher. Like T1, after matriculating she went to a college of education and completed her three year Senior Primary Diploma in Education (SPDE). She has been in the teaching profession for 25 years. Besides teaching, she has also been studying further. She completed her Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE), specializing in Information Communication Technology (ICT). She is currently studying for her Bachelor of Education with Honours (BEd (Hons)) at the North West University (specializing in Teaching and Learning) with the aim of strengthening her general pedagogical knowledge' (Shulman 1987). Asked how her Bed (Hons) has impacted the way she teaches EFAL writing, T2 noted that although the course does not directly address the teaching of English or writing in English she believes some of the modules have shaped her practices in an EFAL classroom:

Well it is quite helpful, because we have different modules, like modules on motivation where you can learn different styles of motivating learners, you know as an English teacher there are learners who do not want to communicate, who do not want to do anything in the class. They do give us some modules on what they call Mixed Communication Comprehension, so you are able to reflect on what learners do in class in relation to what the modules are telling you. Not so much is said specifically about how writing should be taught.

(Interview 2, line, 13-18 [Appendix 5b])

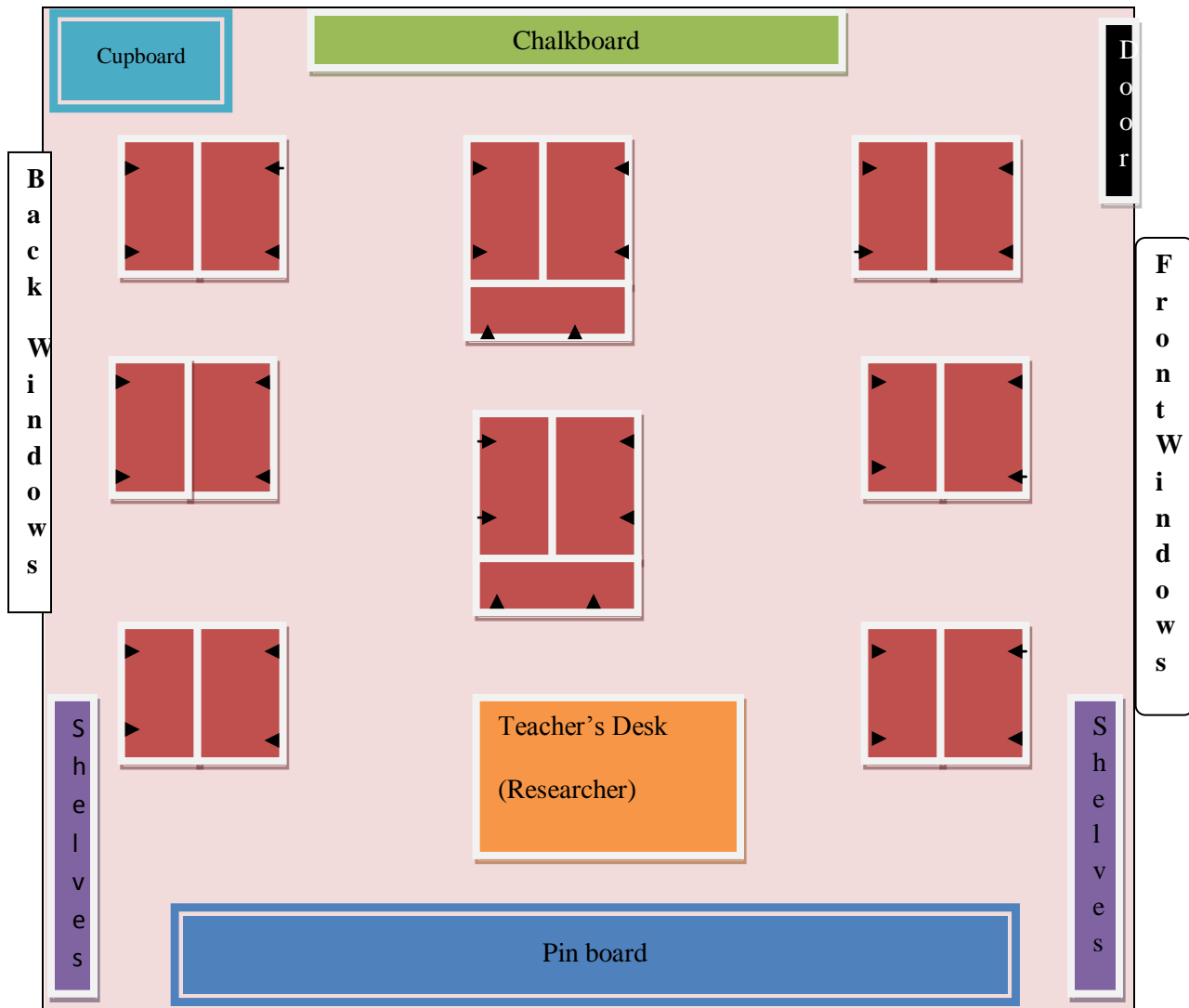
T2's first teaching post was at a primary school in East London where she taught for five years before relocating to another primary school in Cradock. Thereafter she moved to School B in 2005. She has been teaching in the Intermediate Phase throughout her entire teaching career, but only started teaching EFAL in 2005. In addition to being a Grade 5 EFAL teacher, T2 also teaches Natural Science and Technology in Grades 6A and 6B.

### **4.3. Description of the schools and classroom layout**

This section presents a detailed picture of the physical contexts of the two schools. As noted in Chapter 3, these schools have a similar culture and some similar characteristics. They both, for example, cater for learners from Grade 1 to up to Grade 6. The school buildings have a similar structure and design. Learners clean their own classrooms at both schools, and they normally do this on Fridays. At both School A and School B, each teacher has her own dedicated classroom. It is the learners that move as opposed to teachers going to the learners' classes. All the classrooms at both schools have electricity, chalkboards, and pin board displays of different posters and charts. As noted in Chapter 3, there are 35 learners in T1's classroom, and 30 learners in T2's. I describe each teacher's classroom layout separately in the next subsection.

#### **4.3.1. T1's classroom layout**

In the first week of observation, T1 took me to her classroom and introduced me to her Grade 5B EFAL learners (see the classroom layout in figure 4.). She told them that I was their visitor and I would be visiting them for the period of three weeks. She told the learners that: "Mr. Julius wants to see how well you are doing in English, especially in writing" (April 2013). She then advised me to find a place in the room where I would feel comfortable with my equipment. I chose to sit at her desk at the back of the classroom.



**Figure 4: Teacher 1's classroom layout (in School A)**

Learners' desks were arranged in groups of four with two groups of six seated in the middle of the room. Desks were arranged in such a way that learners faced each other yet they were able to see the chalkboard. T1 indicated that she preferred it when learners were seated in groups rather than in rows: "It is easy to monitor them and it causes less distractions when they have to work in groups" (Stimulated Recall interview 1, line 122-123 [Appendix 5a]). There was enough space between the walls and the desks, which enabled learners and the teacher to move around in the classroom comfortably. However, all the window panes were broken and the window catches

were also removed. T1 alleged that the window catches were removed by the people from the community; they sell the catches in the location.

The pin board displayed posters of the following:

- Useful plants
- African maps
- South African national anthem
- The seasons
- Positions (Prepositions)
- Two posters of poems: One poem titled 'I am a little egg' and the other 'The story about the sea' which T1 presented in one of the lessons I observed.
- Time table
- Grade 5 A class lists both for 2012 and 2013
- Personal hygiene

On the shelves there were bundles of different English textbooks ranging from Grades 2-6, Social studies textbooks for Grade 6, dictionaries, various files, some newspapers and magazines in English, learners' books and a drum.

#### **4.3.2. T2 classroom layout**

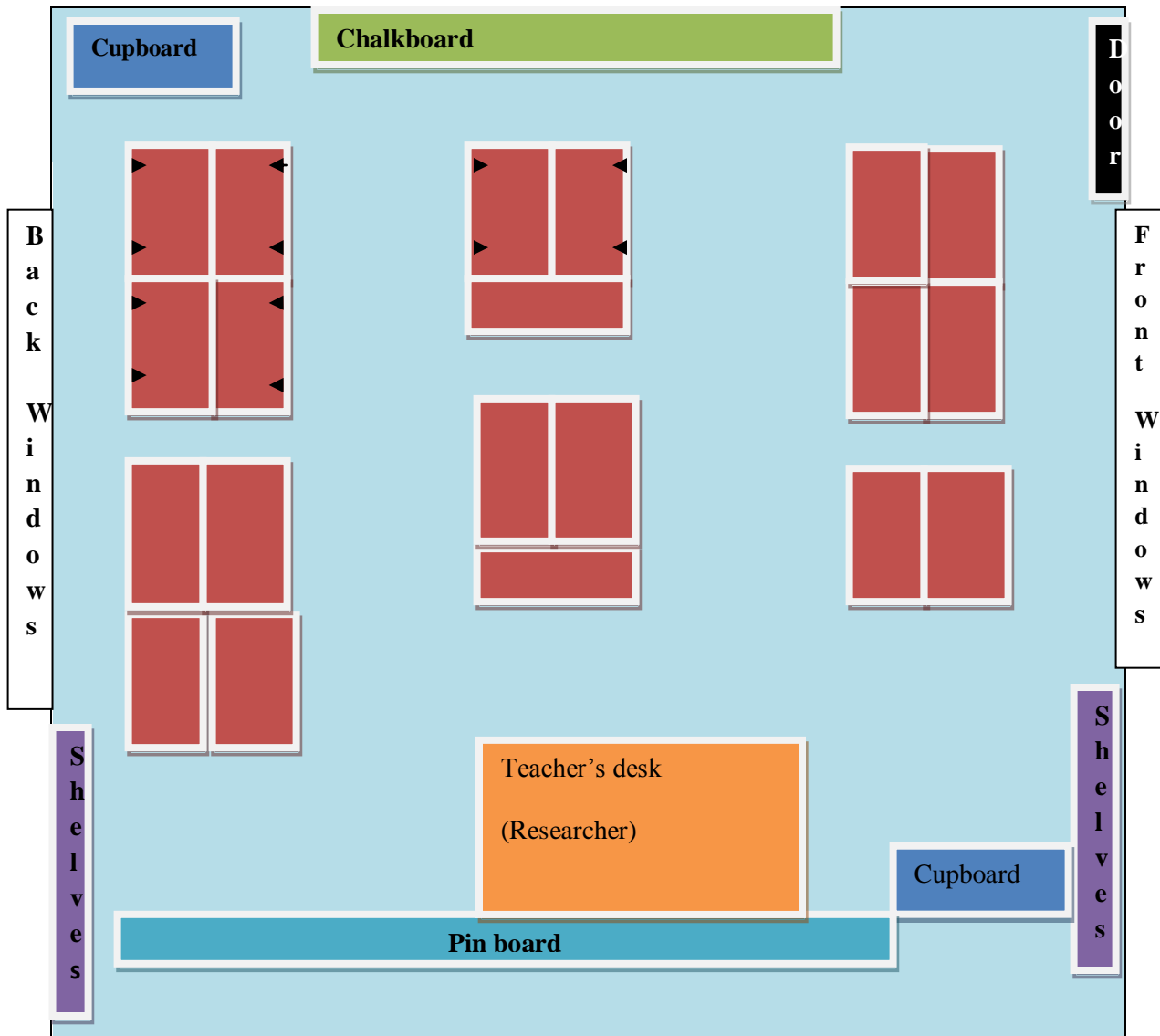
In T2's classroom, there was no uniform pattern of how learners' two-seater desks were grouped. Some learners were seated in groups of 8, some in groups of 6 and others in groups of 4. Their two-seater desks were pushed together, allowing learners to sit facing each other as indicated by the arrows in figure 2.

On the pin board, there were displays of posters which comprised of the following:

- The alphabet both in upper and lower case
- Grade 5B learners' birthday charts
- The seasons
- Adjectives
- Useful plants

- Traditions of South Africa
- Words and phrases on flashcards
- Grade 5B class list

On the shelves there were T2's files both for EFAL and Natural Science, dictionaries, EFAL and Natural Science textbooks, some boxes with books which T2 indicated were outdated. There were also some cylinders and tubes that the teacher said she uses when doing experiments in Natural Science. On top of the cupboard there were empty boxes, and next to the cupboard was a blackboard stand that T2 uses for reading and presenting story books to the learners. The teacher's desk was often filled with learners' books, such as the EFAL composition books, Natural Science exercise and test books for the grades she teaches.



**Figure 5: Teacher 2's classroom layout (In school B)**

T2 indicated that seating groups was required by OBE. Answering to the question whether CAPS requires the same seating requirements, T2 said “they [The DBE officials] are just playing with words. Nothing much has changed about how things should be done. There is no much difference between CAPS and OBE” (Informal conversational interview 1, line 11-13 [Appendix 5b]). Some of the learners’ desks tops were broken and the way they were arranged caused these learners to perch uncomfortably on the iron bars.

There were two cupboards, one in the front corner of the room with a broken door and the other one at the back of the room where the teacher stores her books. In the cupboard at the back of the room, there were unused Grade 5 learners' EFAL textbooks and teacher's guides with suggested learner activities and exercises.

### 4.3.3. EFAL timetables

#### 4.3.3.2. School A's EFAL timetable

School A operated on a seven-day cycle whereby each EFAL lesson was 50 minutes long as shown in Table 3 below. This adds up to an average of 8 hours 20 minutes per 10 day cycle, which is 1 hour 40 minutes shorter than the CAPS requirement of 10 hours per two weeks (10 days) cycle of teaching time for EFAL in the Intermediate Phase. However it is not guaranteed that T1 makes use of this entire time because there were some instances where administrative work took precedence over her teaching time.

**TABLE 3: School B's Grade 5A EFAL lesson timetable**

Day	1	2		3	4	5	6	7
Time	08:00- 08:50	08:00- 08:50 08:50- 09:40		13:10- 14:00	10:30- 11:20 12:20- 13:10		12:20- 13:10	

#### 4.3.3.1. School B's EFAL timetable

School B uses a 5 day cycle timetable whereby each lesson is 1 hour long as outlined in Table 4. This is in line with the CAPS requirement of teaching time for EFAL in the Intermediate Phase to be 5 hours per week or 10 hours per two-week cycle (South Africa. DBE, 2011).

**TABLE 4: School B's Grade 5B EFAL lesson timetable**

Days	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Time	12:30 - 13:30	10:00 - 11:00	11:30 - 12:30	08:00 - 09:00	12:30 - 13:30



#### **4.4. Teachers' views about teaching writing to their Grade 5 EFAL learners**

During the interviews I asked the two EFAL teachers about their views and experiences as far as teaching writing to their Grade 5 learners is concerned. Their responses are reported and commented on below.

##### **4.4.1. Teachers' views and experiences about teaching writing to their Grade 5 EFAL learners**

I asked both teachers to share their experiences about how they were taught writing pedagogy at college and how they teach writing to their Grade 5 learners. T1 indicated that since she was trained as a Foundation Phase teacher, she was trained more on teaching learners to know how to write [to develop learners' handwriting]. She explained that she was taught two types of writing namely "cursive writing" and "scribed writing" by which she means basic print (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 5).

She also indicated the "major thing" that she has noticed in her entire teaching experience is to teach learners to learn to write from left to right (Interview 1, lines 37 [Appendix 5a]). With regard to any differences between teaching in Foundation Phase and Intermediate Phase, T1 said:

Yes, there is a big difference, because at the lowest grade they don't use cursive writing, they use scribed writing. But when they go in the upper grades, say in the Intermediate Phase, they must write in cursive writing. Because their standard of writing is growing up, and up. You know a Grade 1 child cannot write as a grade 5 child, there is a difference. In Grade 1 for instance, they are still learning to writing unlike in Grade 5 where they use writing to learn. In Grade 5 they got a little bit of more knowledge of writing more than the grade 1s.

(Interview 1, lines 68-73 [Appendix 5a])

This extract suggests that T1 equates writing with handwriting, and she has some sense of handwriting being developmental, which may reflect her Foundation Phase training.

She also appears to have adopted a learner-centred, developmental approach which seems to have had an influence on her approach to the teaching of writing. When I asked her specifically how she taught writing to her Grade 5s, T1 indicated that it depended on what type of writing she was teaching. If she was teaching composition she would allow learners to write freely on their

own and choose their own topics. According to her, this allows learners to be expressive and enables the teacher to assess the learners' ability:

Everything that they write in their composition should come from them. So if you tell them to write about something they know, it must come from them. You cannot spoon-feed the kids all the time; let them give you their own knowledge. Don't spoon-feed them do this, do this, let them write what they know so that you can understand their writing ability.

(Interview 1, lines 105-108[Appendix 5a]).

She however indicated that it was different when teaching learners grammar and vocabulary. She explained that with such writing she first does some exercises on the board with learners, before giving them a writing activity to do on their own.

T2, on the other hand, indicated that in her time at school, writing used to be derived from imaginary things:

In our times we had to write compositions, with topics like, a visit to the zoo, yet you have never been to the zoo, so you have to imagine everything. Or you had to write a journey by train but you have never been on the train before. And almost everything was done by the teacher in the class. And we had to copy the work from the chalkboard.

(Interview 1, lines 23-26 [Appendix 5b]).

T2 had a very different understanding of writing from T1. She claimed that writing is a product of reading. She indicated that often before she gives her learners any writing activity, they first have to look at some pictures from the story, predict its sequence, read the story and finally derive writing activities from what was read.

From what they read, it is where you can build their vocabulary, where you can build the language structures, where you can build their writing by doing the recount, by trying to summarise the story they have read, when they summarise the story you do it with them as well and they can even write the comprehension from the story. It is just a chain from reading then to other components of writing like recounts, language structures and comprehension.

(Interview 1, lines 38-43 [Appendix 5b])

When teaching longer pieces of writing such as compositions, T2 asks learners to write about things that they know, for example, to write about themselves or how they spent their holidays. “They should write about what they know. I can’t ask them to write about say, an old shoe tells its history, you know they are too young to imagine things. And their language is not that good they, are still learning the language.” (Interview 1, lines 49-51 [Appendix 5b]).

T2 expects learners to have already been introduced to the structures of longer pieces of writing, such as compositions, when they get into the Intermediate Phase. When teaching a composition she said:

I don’t give them a structure here, but I just briefly go through with them. I go through the topic with them, and then let them write on their own. I don’t have to spoon feed them, or tell them write like this, because things like the format or the model of a composition were taught already in Foundation Phase, in Intermediate Phase we build on them to advance learners’ writing

(Interview 1, lines 68-72 [Appendix 5b])

#### **4.4.2. Teachers’ views about what shaped the way they teach EFAL writing**

In order to get some insights into the two teachers’ beliefs about what shaped their way of teaching EFAL writing to their Grade 5 learners, I conducted a final interview with them, in addition to the pre-observation, and stimulated recall interviews as outlined in Chapter 3. T1 claimed that her way of teaching EFAL writing was shaped to a certain extent by her college training, but believes her creativity and the type of learners in her EFAL classroom play a role in shaping the way she teaches: “To me teaching is all about creativity. Yes I have been taught at the college but, as a teacher you must be very creative.” (Interview 2, line 5-6 [Appendix 5a]).

T2 on the other hand indicated that, although teaching English was part of her training at the college in the 1980s, she only began teaching English in 2005. She acknowledges that her college training might have had an influence especially with regard to designing and using of LSMs like the flashcards that she used in one of her observed lessons, but she believes that her teaching was shaped more by the workshops she attended when she began teaching EFAL: “I have attended many workshops, by READ<sup>7</sup>, by the Molteno Project<sup>8</sup>, and also the workshops for

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<sup>7</sup> READ Educational Trust is a South African based non-governmental organization (NGO) that operates in the education and literacy sectors broadly, and in educator training and school resource provision specifically. For more information about READ log on to their website: [www.read.co.za](http://www.read.co.za)

OBE and CAPS.” (Interview 2, line 26-27, [Appendix 5b]). Amongst the workshops she attended, T2 believes that the READ workshops impacted most on the way she teaches EFAL writing.

I don't know if READ is still existing. They trained us around 2005 or 2006 there, I cannot remember well but it is not a new thing. And that is where I got the READ I used in the lessons you observed. It was from READ workshops where I would say I got some teaching styles and techniques that I use in most of my English lessons. With Molteno we just started with it at the beginning of this year. We only had one workshop with Molteno. But they do come and check what we are doing in our classes.

(Interview 2, line 35-40, [Appendix 5b]).

According to the teacher, it was from READ workshops where she learned that writing lessons develop from reading lessons. She indicated that writing genres and activities such as recounts, compositions, letters, grammar, spelling etc, are derived from a reading lesson.

T1 also acknowledged that she was aware of both READ and the Molteno Project and that they also have some textbooks from the Molteno Project but she had never attended any workshop facilitated by either of the two organizations. She indicated that when READ was active in training teachers around 2005, but she was still teaching in the Foundation Phase then. Asked if the materials from Molteno had in anyway shaped her teaching of EFAL writing, she said:

With writing it is a little bit difficult to tell how they shaped my styles of teaching because we have different types of learners in our classes. You must have your own skill, your style and own strategy to teach them writing and make them enjoy writing. Don't be harsh on them, yet don't spoon-feed them.

(Interview 2, lines, 128-130 [Appendix 5a])

The point emerging here is that the teacher's pedagogy of EFAL writing is largely influenced by her own beliefs of what works for the types of learners she is teaching and that learners should not be fed with information but drive their own learning.

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<sup>8</sup> Molteno Project [now Molteno Institute for Language and Literacy] is a non-profit language and literacy organization that helps with literacy and language development, as well as with providing institutional training and classroom mentoring to developing communities in Africa. For more information log on to: <http://www.molteno.co.za>

Both teachers showed little knowledge about the approaches that the CAPS documents require them to use in teaching writing to Grade 5 EFAL learners. T1, for example, shared her discomfort with the changes in the curriculum and her beliefs about what a child should learn in school:

That CAPS thing is so confusing, because the government keeps changing things now and then. Honestly I don't like it. I am not gonna lie, the government keeps on changing things, it was OBE, you hear it is NCS, CAPS, tomorrow you will hear there is something else. Those things are confusing teachers I am telling you. But my own belief is that, a child must come out of school knowing how to read and write. And express themselves in English. The bottom line is the child must be able to read and write, how you teach... that depends on the creativity of the individual teachers.

(T1, Interview 1, lines 236-242 [Appendix 5a]).

Although she acknowledged that teachers were given training to familiarize themselves with the CAPS documents, T1 showed her dissatisfaction with CAPS pedagogy of writing and still holds on to her own beliefs about learner-centredness:

...they tell us do this in this way, do that in this way, first do reading, or tell them a story, or a poem, sometimes well I do what they tell us, like read them a story, and tell them poems, now what if the child have a better way of doing it herself? Reading or creating her or his own story? For example I also teach dancing, but no one taught me how to dance, but I can dance in a way that you will never forget. My own styles not imitating anybody. That is why I am saying a child must be free and never be incubated. For example if you incubate a child and say CAPS said you should do it that way. Maybe I have a better way of understanding things.

(T1, Interview 1, lines 250-256 [Appendix 5a])

Asked if the way she teaches writing is in line with the curriculum requirements at Grade 5 level, given that she has some negative attitudes towards the CAPS documents, T1 said:

I am teaching in line with CAPS, but I am also implementing my own skills and creativity that suit my learners. Because in the classes you look at the level of the learners, look what they know and build on their knowledge. You can't just say CAPS says I should teach this and start teaching. What if the learners are not yet at that level yet?

(T1, Interview 2, line 104-107 [Appendix 5a])

T2 claimed that there was no difference between CAPS and OBE. She claimed that the CAPS documents reduced teachers' workload as far as writing is concerned; however teachers are encouraged to use and do what suits them at their particular school. "Well with regard to writing, we do not do more writing because CAPS for Intermediate Phase emphasizes more on reading and viewing and then writing. Writing is given less attention compared to reading" (Interview 1, lines 143-145 [Appendix 5b]). This quote clearly shows that this teacher has read the CAPS documents because as outlined in Chapter 2, there is more than twice the amount of time allocated for reading per two-week cycle than for writing.

Like T1, T2 was also not very positive about the changes in the curriculum.

...you know when you are told to do this, suddenly things change again and you are told to do this, you get so irritated and annoyed. Well I don't have a problem with the changes of the curriculum, I am sure that the visiting of the individuals like you, (laughs) to my class and the feedback they give me tells me whether I am doing the right thing or not. And the NGOs that come here tell me they are very impressed with the way I teach, we have the Molteno Project, they came here and gave us really useful books and they assist us on how to go about teaching different aspects of language to learners and how to cope with the changing of the curriculum. So we get more exposed and it builds our confidence.

(Interview 1, lines 208-216 [Appendix 5b]).

#### **4.4.3. Teacher's views about their learners**

Both teachers were asked to share their views about their Grade 5 EFAL learners' writing proficiency. T1 indicated that most of her learners were not as proficient as they should be at their grade level but she is confident that they can all write.

Some of them are good and most of them are not good. Not all of them are good when it comes to writing. The only thing I am positive about is that they all can write. Well their writing may not be that meaningful at times but as a teacher I can understand, oh, this one wants to write about this and that. Like I said their level of writing is not the same so as their ability to learn is not the same.

(Interview 1, line 153-157 [Appendix 5a])

She added that most of her learners' writing was untidy and that they made a lot of spelling mistakes:

They do a lot of spelling mistakes, they have bad handwriting, like I told you most of them did not have good foundation from the lower grades, so that gives us who are teaching at the Intermediate Phase tough time because we are teaching them how to write and we should also teach them writing for learning. You see all their other subjects are taught in English, except isiXhosa, so they have to really have knowledge of writing to pass all the other subjects. Now they are already struggling to form words yet we have to make them writing sentences and paragraphs. Sometimes I blame it on the language.

(Interview 1, line 224-230 [Appendix 5a]).

She explained that she always encourages learners to think before they write so that they can avoid too many mistakes. Asked about how she provides feedback for her learners' written work, she said that she marks the books and instruct learners to do corrections of the comments she has made in their work. She further explained that she cautions learners "to read their writings, find all the mistakes before they give in their books" (T1, interview 1, lines 130-131 [Appendix 5a]).

T1's beliefs about her learners' ability to write and the way she discourages them from making mistakes expands the picture that although she sees writing rather mechanically in terms of handwriting and correctness, this is counterpoised with her personal pedagogy of allowing learners to be free to write what they like.

T2 said that most of her EFAL learners were poor at spelling, they write slowly and some learners use isiXhosa words in their English writing. Some learners write in what is termed 'cellphone language':

Some of them also have a problem with what is called cell-phone language. Learners write letters instead of words. I don't know now if they have cellphones or they see it at home from their siblings. For example instead of the word you, the learner will write letter u, be, will write b, etc...

(Interview 1, line 186-188 [Appendix 5b]).

Asked how she teaches writing to learners who write slowly, T2 explained:

I let them write on their pace, but then sometimes I am forced to give them a little than I intended to give. Because what is the use of loading them with a lot of work

which they won't finish anyways? So I give them just enough for the lesson and I don't rush them. Or maybe let them write it groups. Then they are a bit faster when they work in groups, but I don't really like group work because it is not easy to tell if all learners have learned anything.

(Interview 1, line 95-99 [Appendix 5b]).

Both teachers blamed their learners' Foundation Phase teachers, introduction of English as LoLT from Grade 4 and lack of support from home as contributing factors to learners' poor writing skills in EFAL. They both indicated that learners are struggling to learn English which they only started learning in the previous grade, and to which they have limited exposure. They indicated that many of their learners stay with their grandparents, most of whom are not literate enough in English to help their children with their written school work. Teachers claimed that they are discouraged from giving homework because learners come back with it unfinished, or they do it early next day in class:

Most of the learners do not grow up with their parents; they are staying with their grandparents. Grandparents don't assist them with their school work. They do not even check their books. They only do the book checking when we call them at school, and only a few will pitch up if you invite them to school. We normally have parents' evening where we explain what we have encountered from the learners. You take learners' work, you put them on the table with the parent and explain to them how learners supposed to do and ask them to go through the books, that is when they even get shocked because some of their children do not even complete their work in the classroom.

(T2, Interview 1, line 159-169 [Appendix 5b])

#### **4.5. The structure of the two teacher's Grade 5 EFAL writing lessons**

In the following sections, I describe how each of the teachers taught writing to their Grade 5 EFAL learners. I start off with a summary of the structure of each teacher's five observed lessons. I then present the categories that emerged from these lessons. In Chapter one I outlined that my main focus in this study is on actual writing lessons where the focus is writing, but learners are also writing in other lessons, for example, in answer to comprehension questions, and in the context of grammar and vocabulary development activities, spelling, etc., all of which involve important aspects of writing. I wanted to examine learners' written work in all its aspects. Therefore, the summary of observed lessons below comprises of both lessons where the



focus was on writing and lessons where the focus was not primarily on writing but learners had done some writing.

**TABLE 5: Summary of T1's lesson 1**

<b>Topic: Composition</b>		<b>LSMs: Chalkboard</b>
<b>Duration : 40<sup>9</sup> minutes</b>		
<b>Stage of the lesson</b>	<b>Teacher's actions and activities<sup>10</sup></b>	<b>Learners' actions and activities</b>
<b>Before writing activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tells learners in isiXhosa that they will be doing something new.”<i>Bekani zonke iincwadi, sizakwenza enye into eyalhukileyo namhlanje.</i>” (Put all those books away, we are going to do something different today).</li> <li>• Tells learners to be silent.</li> <li>• Tells learners that they are going to write a composition.</li> <li>• Asks learners to tell her any English word that they can remember.</li> <li>• Writes the words on the chalkboard, as learners say them.</li> <li>• Asks if learners know the meaning of the word they mentioned.</li> <li>• Tells learners that they should write a composition in their grammar books using the words on the chalkboard.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put away some of the books they were busy with before the teacher came to the classroom (make some inaudible mumbling).</li> <li>• Brainstorm words such as, wearing, singing, going, road, swimming, goes, running communication, wash, education, sleeping, smelling etc.</li> <li>• Answer in a chorus: “Yes Mam!”</li> <li>• Take out their grammar books.</li> </ul>
<b>During Writing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tells learners that each of them should come up with the topic for his or her composition.</li> <li>• Urges learners to write as creatively as they can and that their essay should be two paragraphs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start writing individually in their grammar books.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walks around the room from group to group</li> </ul>	

<sup>9</sup> The duration of the lesson reduced to 40 minutes because the EFAL teacher had a staff meeting which took up 15 minutes of the lesson.

<sup>10</sup> Teacher's and learners' activities refer to what they (teachers and learners) were doing or saying in the observed lessons

	<p>monitoring how learners are writing, and reprimanding those who were distracting others. Tells them that if they have questions they should ask her not their fellow learners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After looking in some learners' books: "Some people do not even know what a paragraph is, were you not taught how to write in paragraph in Grade 4?"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Answer in unison "Yes Mam!"</li> </ul>
<p><b>After writing</b></p> <p>The bell rings, indicating the end of the lesson</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asks learners if they have finished.</li> <li>• Tells learners to put their grammar books on her table before they go for the next lesson so she can mark them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some of the learners answer that they have finished.</li> <li>• Most them are still writing, but eventually put their books on the teacher's table and leave for the next lesson.</li> </ul>

**TABLE 6: Summary of T1's lesson 2**

<p><b>Topic: Past tense</b>                      <b>LSMs: Chalkboard</b></p> <p><b>Duration: 50 minutes</b></p>		
<b>Stage of lesson</b>	<b>Teacher's actions and activities</b>	<b>Learner's actions and activities</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writes "Past tense" and "What is past tense?" on the chalkboard.</li> <li>• Reminds the learners that they have already done the present tense, and asks if they can still remember what it means. Asks, "What is present</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Answer in unison, "Is when you are doing something now."</li> </ul>

	tense?”	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Asks learners to mention any other thing that they can remember about present tense.</li> <li>Very good. (<i>Writes on the chalkboard</i>) –ing. But it is different in past tense.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One learner answers “the verb should end with -ing.”</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writes the definition of the past tense on the chalkboard and asks learners to read it aloud in unison.</li> <li>Tells learners to repeat after her “Repeat after me, it is something that you are not doing at the present moment.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read the definition as written on the chalkboard aloud in unison; past tense “is something you are not doing at the present moment”.</li> <li>Repeat after the teacher in (<i>in unison</i>) “it is something that you are not doing at the present moment.”</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explains in isiXhosa: When you write a sentence in past tense, “<i>Zikhona izinto ezizakutshintsha</i>” (there are things that will change). Tells learners that some words like <i>is</i> changes to <i>was</i>, <i>are</i> changes to <i>were</i>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appear to be listening to the teacher.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does a drill of two sentences with learners on the chalkboard.</li> <li>Interacts with learners both in English and isiXhosa.</li> <li>Instructs learners to take out their grammar books and do the activity written on the chalkboard.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify tenses of the sentences written on the chalkboard and convert them to past tense.</li> <li>Take out their grammar books.</li> </ul>
<b>Exercises</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writes five sentences on the chalkboard and asks learners to write them in the past tense</li> </ul> <p>The activity was written as follows<sup>11</sup>:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Write down the exercises individually in their grammar books.</li> </ul>

<sup>11</sup> I copied down these sentences exactly as they were written on the chalkboard by the teacher with no punctuation or numbering.

	<p><b><u>Write these in a past tense</u></b></p> <p><b>The donkey is grazing on the field</b></p> <p><b>The cats are licking milk</b></p> <p><b>Cars on the street are running</b></p> <p><b>My baby is crying all day</b></p> <p><b>School boys are clapping hands</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructs learners that any of them who finishes should come to her desk so that she can mark their work.</li> <li>• Sits at the desk and waits for the learners to bring their books for marking.</li> <li>• Urges learners to write fast.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Those who finish early take their books to the teacher for marking.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Conclusion</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After she has marked all the learners' grammar books, she discusses the answers with the class.</li> <li>• Prompts for the correct answers from the learners.</li> <li>• The bell signaling the end of the lesson rings while they are still busy with the second sentence.</li> <li>• Tells learners to leave the classroom for the next lesson.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss the oral feedback on the activity with the teacher.</li> <li>• Leave the class for the next lesson.</li> </ul>

**TABLE 7: Summary of t1's lesson 3**

<p><b>Topic: Comprehension      LSMs: Benny, and Betty and their friends: Standard 1 Reader</b></p>		
<p><b>Duration: 50 minutes</b></p>		
Stage of lesson	Teacher's and activities	Learners' and activities
<p><b>Introduction</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hands out the readers to the learners and instructs them to turn on page 2 (some learners were sharing, others had their own readers )</li> <li>• Instructs learners to read a short story on page 2 in unison.</li> <li>• Corrects pronunciation of certain words and demands that all learners read the story aloud three times.</li> <li>• Instructs learners to take their grammar books and do exercise 2 in their readers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Turn to page 2 as per their teacher's instruction.</li> <li>• Read the story loud in unison as instructed.</li> <li>• Take their grammar books and work individually.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Exercises</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promises learners that the exercise is easy and that she expects them to answer all the questions correctly.</li> <li>• The activity in the textbook was written as follows:</li> </ul> <p><b>Look at pages 1 and 2. What are the right words?</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. <b>The children are going to Mr. Nkomo's shop/school/house.</b></li> <li>6. <b>Mr. Nkomo is on/inside/outside the shop.</b></li> <li>7. <b>Mr. Nkomo sees/says/sews "Good morning, children"</b></li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quietly do the activity in their grammar books.</li> </ul>

	<b>8. Betty is buying some sugar/shorts/shirts.</b>	
<b>Conclusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructs learners that if they have finished writing, they should bring their books their books to her so that she can mark them.</li> <li>• Asks if everyone’s book has been marked.</li> <li>• Does correction of the activity with learners.</li> <li>• Asks learners to say aloud the correct answers for the activity (e.g.” What is the correct word for number 1?”)</li> <li>• Instructs those who did not answer all the questions correctly to rewrite the activity correctly in their grammar books.</li> <li>• Releases the teacher for the next lesson.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Those who finish first take their grammar books to their teacher for marking.</li> <li>• Answer in unison “Yes mam”</li> <li>• Give the correct answers for each question in unison (e.g. shop, inside etc.)</li> <li>• Those who did not get all the answers correct rewrite their work.</li> <li>• Leave the class for the next lesson.</li> </ul>

**TABLE 8: Summary of T1's lesson 4**

<b>Topic: Poetry</b>			<b>LSMs: A poster with a poem and chalkboard</b>		
<b>Duration: 50 minutes</b>					
<b>Stage of the lesson</b>		<b>Teacher’s actions and activities</b>		<b>Learners’ actions and activities</b>	
<b>Introduction</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pastes the poster of the poem on the chalkboard and asks learners to read the poem aloud in unison.</li> <li>• The poem reads as follows:</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read the poem aloud in unison.</li> </ul>	

	<p><b><u>The story of the sea</u></b></p> <p><b>Oh! What a big place like you?</b></p> <p><b>Life is there and death is there.</b></p> <p><b>Healthy food is unforgettable.</b></p> <p><b>Dangerous animals that don't care.</b></p> <p><b>But of all things you are our life.</b></p> <p><b>God created the sea for the people to be happy.</b></p> <p><b>The sea we love you.</b></p> <p><b>Minerals and water of nature comes from you.</b></p> <p><b>Blue colour of hope.</b></p> <p><b>The sea, Oh! The sea.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asks questions about the poem e.g. "What is the poem all about?"</li> <li>• Asks about activities that are done in the sea.</li>   <li>• Asks learners to mention what people get from the sea.</li> <li>• Brainstorms more ideas with the learners: "Yes, we get salt, from the sea, what else?"</li> <li>• Gives some cues: "Yes, but what else do we</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give possible answers in unison: 'the story about the sea'</li> <li>• One learner puts up his hand and lists some activities, e.g. "swimming, running, jumping."</li> <li>• One learner answers "salt"</li>   <li>• One learner answers "water".</li> <li>• One learners answers: "Vegetables"</li> <li>• Le learner mentions "fish" (The answer that the teacher was looking</li> </ul>
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	<p>get from the sea? We like it, we eat it.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asks learners if they know what a sea is, and tells them is isiXhosa:</li> <li>• We don't get vegetables from the sea. <i>Ingathi abanyebenu abalazi ukuba yintoni ulwandle.</i> (It seems some of you do not know what a sea is).</li> <li>• Tells learners the advantages of fish, e.g. one can get Omega 3 vitamins from fish.</li> <li>• Writes a stanza on the chalkboard and instructs learners to copy it into their grammar books in addition to the one written on the poster.</li> <li>• The stanza written on the chalkboard reads:</li> </ul> <p><b>“Fish is our food that we get from you sea. To strengthen our brain for future. Thank you God to create the sea for us. The sea oh! The sea.”</b></p>	<p>for.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen to the teacher as she describes the advantages of eating fish</li> <li>• Start copying the poem, first from the poster, and then the one on the chalkboard.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Exercises</b></p>	<p>Writes some questions on the other side of the chalkboard which read:</p> <p><b><u>Questions from the poem</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>How is the colour of the sea water?</b></li> <li>2. <b>What do we get from the sea that is our food?</b></li> <li>3. <b>Who created the sea?</b></li> <li>4. <b>What else can we see in the sea?</b></li> <li>5. <b>What is so dangerous at the sea?</b></li> <li>6. <b>Draw the animal that is good for our</b></li> </ol>	

	<p><b>health which we get from the sea.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructs learners to start answering the questions written on the chalkboard in their grammar books individually</li> <li>• Answers a learner in isiXhosa: “<i>Hay sanukukopa imibuzo bhalani nje impendulo</i>”. (No, Do not copy the questions; just write the answers to the questions.)</li> <li>• Reads through the questions aloud, explaining some (e.g. question 6) in isiXhosa</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One learner asks in isiXhosa if they should also copy the questions into their grammar books: “<i>Singayikopela ezincwadini zethu lemibuzo okanye sibhale nje impendulo?</i>” (Should we copy the questions into our books or we must just write the answers?)</li> <li>• Do the activity individually</li> </ul>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructs learners to put their books on her desk after they are done writing the activity and leave the room for their next lesson.</li> <li>• Marks the books of learners who finish early.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put their grammar books on the teacher’s table as soon as they finished writing..</li> <li>• Leave for the next lesson.</li> </ul>

**TABLE 9: Summary of T1's lesson 5**

Topic: Letter writing (Inviting a friend for June holiday)		LSM: Chalkboard
Duration: 50 Minutes		
Stage of lesson	Teacher's actions and activities	Learners actions activities
Pre- writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Asks learners who amongst them have friends.</li> <li>“<i>Ngobane kuni abanetshomi?</i> (Who of you have friends?) <i>Aba bangaphakamisanga zandla abanazo itshomi?</i> (Those who are not putting their hands up do not have friends?)”</li> <li>Asks individual learners what they would be doing during the June holiday.</li> <li>Tells learners that they will have to write a letter to their friends inviting them to come for the June holiday to their houses to enjoy the holiday.</li> <li>Ask learners if they knew how to write a letter and if they were taught how to write a letter in Grade four.</li> <li>Explains the structure and process of writing a letter. Starts with how the address should be written, the salutation and the introductory paragraph, explaining both in English and isiXhosa: “In this paragraph you greet your friend. <i>Qala ngokubulisa itshomi yakho umxelele</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Put their hands up to indicate that they have friends</li> <li>Answer in unison. “We do!”</li> <li>Tell what they will be doing, e.g. “ I am going to Port Elizabeth”, “We are going to the festival” etc.</li> <li>Some learners respond with a “Yes” others with a “No”.</li> <li>Listen to the teacher</li> <li>Participate when given turns to speak</li> </ul>

	<p><i>ukuba unjani impilo. Awunakuqala ngokukemema ungabulisanga.</i> (Start by greeting your friend and tell him/her how you are. You can't just start inviting him/her without greeting him/her). For example you say, how are you doing my friend? I invite you for June holiday at my home..."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asks learners what else they would like to tell their friends.</li> <li>• Instructs learners to take out their grammar books, and write a letter to their friends, inviting them to come for June holiday. Writes on the chalkboard: "Invite your friend for June holiday".</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Answer "to come and enjoy", "to bring sweets."</li> <li>• Take their grammar books</li> </ul>
<b>During writing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sits by her desk and instructs learners to write quietly: "<i>Akhange ndithi qalani ukwenza ingxolo, thulani niqalise ukubhala. Ndifuna incwadi zenu zegrammar emva kwalelesini. Niyandiva?</i> (I did not say start making noise, keep quiet and start writing. I need your grammar books by the end of the lesson. Do you understand?")</li> <li>• Explains to the learners that their letters should be two paragraphs long, and that after they are done they should write "Your friend" and their names in the next line.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Answer, "Yes, mam", and do their activity silently</li> <li>• Busy writing</li> </ul>
<b>Post Writing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (<i>After the bell has rung</i>) Instructs learners to put</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (Some are still writing but hand in their books anyway for marking) Put</li> </ul>

	their grammar books on her desk.	their grammar books on the teachers' desk.
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**TABLE 10: Summary of T2's lesson 1**

<p><b>Topic: Recount of a story: The day the truck got stuck</b></p> <p><b>LSMs: The day the truck got stuck (Story kit), Flashcards</b></p> <p><b>Duration: 1h00</b></p>		
Stage of the lesson	Teacher's actions and actions	Learners' actions and activities
<p><b>Pre-writing</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Asks learners if they can remember what they learned in the previous lesson.</li> <li>Asks questions from the story that they read in the previous lesson e.g. Who helped the truck driver, where did the truck get stuck etc.</li> <li>Asks in isiXhosa if learners can retell the story without her asking probing questions: "<i>Ngubani onokusixelela ibali ndingakhane ndibuze mibuzo?</i>" (Who can tell us the story without being asked the probing questions?)</li> <li>Instructs learners that they should work in groups of four to six and write the recount of the story.</li> <li>Hands out paper to each group and instructs them to choose someone to write.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One learner answers that they read a story called 'The day the truck got stuck'.</li> <li>Give possible answers, e.g. Tebogo helped the truck driver, the truck got stuck under the bridge.</li> <li>Appear to be shy, until the teacher appoints one learner to try.</li> <li>The appointed learner tells the story, though not as precise as it was read.</li> <li>Get into groups</li> </ul>

<p><b>During writing</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourages participation from all the group members.</li> <li>• Instructs learners to also make use of words on the flashcards pasted on the chalkboard in writing up their recount.</li> <li>• Tells learners that if there are words that they do not understand they should ask her to explain: “<i>Ukuba awazi ukuba amanye amagama athetha ukuthini ndisuze</i>” (If you see there are words that you do not know their meanings please ask me)</li> <li>• Walks from group to group monitoring learners’ progress.</li> <li>• After about 30 minutes, asks each group to choose a representative to present their work to the class</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start writing in groups</li> <li>• Ask the teacher to translate for them some of the word, e.g. approach, and screech.</li> <li>• Each group chooses a representative to read their work</li> </ul>
<p><b>Post-Writing</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructs learners to stop writing and pay attention when others are presenting.</li> <li>• As learners read their work, she corrects some of their pronunciation and grammar errors.</li> <li>• After all the groups have presented their work, she instructs learners to first correct their mistakes and hand in their work for marking.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each group representative reads their work</li> <li>• Learners work on their mistakes as corrected by the teacher and hand in their work.</li> </ul>

**TABLE 11: Summary of T2's lesson 2**

<b>Topic: Comprehension</b> <span style="margin-left: 150px;"><b>LSMs: Chalkboard</b></span> <span style="float: right;"><b>Duration: 1h00</b></span>		
<b>Stage of the lesson</b>	<b>Teacher's actions and activities</b>	<b>Learner's actions and activities</b>
<b>Introductions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writes the questions on the chalkboard and instructs learners not to copy them into their exercises books but to rather read them silently.</li> <li>• The comprehension questions on the chalkboard read as follows:</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Comprehension</u></b></p> <p><b>Answer the following questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) <b>Who saw the truck coming down the road?</b></li> <li>(b) <b>What was written on the truck?</b></li> <li>(c) <b>What happened to the truck on its way? Why?</b></li> <li>(d) <b>Who tried to help the truck driver? And how?</b></li> <li>(e) <b>Did the plan work?</b></li> <li>(f) <b>What else did the tanker driver do to help?</b></li> <li>(g) <b>Did the tow-truck driver help the ice-cream truck driver? How do you know?</b></li> <li>(h) <b>How did this affect other road users?</b></li> <li>(i) <b>Explain the conversation between the truck driver and the engineer.</b></li> <li>(j) <b>Who helped them and how?</b></li> <li>(k) <b>What are the advantages and disadvantages of a</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read the questions silently as the teacher writes them on the chalkboard.</li> </ul>

	<p><b>cellphone? Name 3 of each.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reads through the questions before instructing learners to answer them individually in their exercise books.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Answer the questions individually in their exercises books</li> </ul>
<p><b>Exercises</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tells learners to ask her if they do not understand any of the questions so that she can explain again.</li> <li>• Explains question ‘g’ in isiXhosa: “Letter g is asking, <i>Umqhubi kazithuthi ebemncedile umqhubi wetraki ye-ice cream?</i> (Did the tow-truck driver help the ice-cream truck driver), <i>Wazi kanjani?</i> (How do you know?)</li> <li>• Translates the question in isiXhosa: “<i>Cacisa inxoxo phakathi komqhubi wetraki ne-njineli?</i>” (Explain the conversation between the truck driver and the engineer) “<i>And the last question is asking ubuhle ne ububi bekusebanzisa iphoni</i> (advantages and disadvantages of using a phone).</li> <li>• Walks around monitoring learners’ progress and reprimanding some learners who are distracting others.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some learners indicate the questions they do not understand, e.g. “we do not understand number g”</li> <li>• One learner shouts: “number i?”</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Urges learners to write fast and finish before the bell rings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write individually in their exercises books</li> </ul>
<p><b>Conclusion</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When the bell has rung, she instructs all the learners to put their exercises books on her desk so that she can mark their activity.</li> <li>• Orders learners to hand in their exercises books anyway even if they have not finished because they have to go to their next lesson.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some learners were still writing, even after the lesson was over.</li> <li>• All the learners put their books on the teacher's desk before they leave the room.</li> </ul>

**TABLE 12: Summary of T2's lesson 3**

<p><b>Topic: Adjectives</b>                      <b>LSMs: Chalkboard, The day the truck got stuck (Story kit)</b></p>		
<p><b>Duration: 45<sup>12</sup> minutes</b></p>		
<p><b>Stage of the lesson</b></p>	<p><b>Teacher's actions and activities</b></p>	<p><b>Learners' actions and activities</b></p>
<p><b>Introductions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hands learners' exercises books back</li> <li>• Discusses answers for the previous lesson's comprehension questions.</li>   <li>• Asks learners to give correct answers from questions a-j, and instructs them to write down the correct answers for the questions they didn't answer correctly.</li> <li>• Assures learners that most of them have done well in the activity asked them to give themselves a round of applause.</li> <li>• Writes "Adjective" on the chalkboard and instructs learners to read it aloud in unison.</li> <li>• Asks learners to define adjective.</li> <li>• Writes the definition on the chalkboard: "An adjective is a word that tells more about the noun or pronoun"</li> <li>• Gives the definition in isiXhosa: for example <i>Amagama esizakuxelela wona ngamntu</i> (words that will tell you about someone).</li> <li>• Reads a sentence from the storybook and asks learners to identify a noun and adjectives. The</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate and give correct answers for comprehension activities.</li> <li>• Those who did not get all the answers correctly, correct their work.</li> <li>• Clap hands for themselves.</li>   <li>• Read aloud in unison: "Adjective!"</li>   <li>• Nobody answers.</li>   <li>• Listen to the teacher</li>   <li>• Give correct answers that a 'truck' is a noun, 'large' and 'narrow' are adjectives, and explain their answers.</li> </ul>

<sup>12</sup> The teacher did not teach for the normal 1h00 because she had to go for a mass provincial union meeting

	<p>sentence reads: <b>One day a very large truck turned off the high way and onto one of the narrow roads that led into the township.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Asks learners to mention more examples of adjectives from the story and any other that they know.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mention words such as, ice, big, huge, cold, dirty etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Exercises</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writes a list of sentences on the chalkboard and instruct learners to copy them into their Exercises books.</li> <li>The activity was written as follows:</li> </ul> <p><b>Adjectives</b></p> <p><b>Underline the adjectives in each of the following sentences.</b></p> <p>(a) <b>Joan is a clever girl.</b>  (b) <b>Father has big feet.</b>  (c) <b>The plums were sweet.</b>  (d) <b>It was a rough road.</b>  (e) <b>My right foot hurts.</b>  (f) <b>Do it the right way.</b>  (g) <b>We had ripe plums</b>  (h) <b>Her hair is long.</b>  (i) <b>Draw a straight line.</b>  (j) <b>Mother is busy today</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walks from group to group monitoring learners' progress. Reminds learners that the instruction says they should underline the adjectives not circle them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Copy the activity into their exercises books</li> </ul>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tells learners to copy and complete the activity at home because she and all the other teachers have to leave for a union meeting that is taking place in town.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Copy the activity and go home.</li> </ul>

**TABLE 13: Summary of T2's lesson 4**

<b>Topic: Spelling                      LSMs: Chalkboard</b>		
<b>Duration: 1h00</b>		
<b>Stage of the lesson</b>	<b>Teacher's actions and activities</b>	<b>Learners' actions and activities</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructs learners to exchange their exercises books so they can mark each other's activities on adjectives.</li> <li>• Advises learners to use pencils only when marking their peers books so that they will be able to make corrections.</li> <li>• Asks learners to say aloud the correct adjectives.</li> <li>• Underlines the correct adjectives when learners call them out.</li> <li>• Instructs learners to give their peers' books to her after they have finished marking them so that she can sign them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exchange their books</li>   <li>• Call out correct adjectives for each sentence.</li>   <li>• Take their peers' books to the teacher to be signed.</li> </ul>
<b>Writing exercises</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writes jumbled words on the chalkboard and instructs learners to write them correctly in their exercises books. Tells them to just write the answers but not to copy the questions.</li> </ul> <p>The activity reads:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work individually in their exercises books.</li> </ul>

	<p><b>Spelling</b></p> <p><b>Write the following words correctly.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) <b>Kcurt</b></li> <li>(b) <b>Reknat</b></li> <li>(c) <b>Daor</b></li> <li>(d) <b>Enohpllec</b></li> <li>(e) <b>Pihsnwot</b></li> <li>(f) <b>Reenigne</b></li> <li>(g) <b>Revird</b></li> <li>(h) <b>Kcuts</b></li> <li>(i) <b>Yob</b></li> <li>(j) <b>Ciffart</b></li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reminds learners that all these words are extracted from the story they read about ‘The day the truck got stuck’.</li> <li>• Tells learners to write fast and that if any of them finishes, he/she should put their hand up so that she can mark his/her work.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Conclusion</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walks around the room marking learners’ books.</li> <li>• After marking all the learners’ books, does correction of the activity with the learners.</li> <li>• The corrected version of the activity: (a) <b>Kcurt - truck</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early finishers put their hands up so that the teacher can come and mark their work.</li> <li>• Say aloud the correct spelling of the jumbled words on the chalkboard.</li> </ul>

	<p>(b) <b>Reknat</b> - tanker  (c) <b>Daor</b> - road  (d) <b>Enohpllec</b> - cellphone  (e) <b>Pihsnwot</b> - township  (f) <b>Reenigne</b> - engineer  (g) <b>Revird</b> - driver  (h) <b>Kcuts</b> - stuck  (i) <b>Yob</b> - boy  (j) <b>Ciffart</b> – traffic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructs all learners to do correction of their work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy the corrections into their exercises books and leave the classroom for other lessons.</li> </ul>
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**TABLE 14: Summary of T2's lesson 5**

<p><b>Topic: Friendly letter writing</b>                      <b>LSMs: Chalboard</b></p> <p><b>Duration: 1h00</b></p>		
<b>Stage of the lesson</b>	<b>Teacher's actions and activities</b>	<b>Learners' actions and activities</b>
<b>Pre writing activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explains to the learners that they are going to pretend they are Tebogo, (from the story they have read) and write a letter to their friends telling them the whole story about how the truck got stuck and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen to the teacher</li> </ul>

	<p>how the truck driver was helped.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With learners discuss how to go about writing a friendly letter.</li> <li>• Asks probing question e.g.: “What do we write first when we write a letter?”</li> <li>• Asks learners to tell her the address she should write on the chalkboard; writes the address in an unadjusted way on the top right corner of the chalkboard and asks learners to identify what is wrong with the way she has written the address.</li> <li>• Explains how the address should be adjusted by drawing a horizontal line.</li> <li>• Explains both in English and isiXhosa the steps of writing a letter, form of address, greeting, introduction, body, conclusion and the end (salutation).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate and answer the teacher’s questions.</li> <li>• Give answer: “we write an address”.</li>   <li>• Seem not to notice what was wrong with the way the address is written.</li>   <li>• Listen to the teacher</li>   <li>• Listen and participate when given chances by the teacher</li> </ul>
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#### **4.6. Description of teachers' practices in teaching writing to their Grade 5 EFAL learners**

In the following subsections I present the two teachers' practices in teaching writing to their Grade 5 EFAL learners according to the categories that emerged from the summary of the observed lessons presented in Section 4.5. I analysed the types of learning support materials (LSMs) used by these teachers in teaching writing to their EFAL learners, teacher-learner interaction, the content of their lessons, the type of writing activities they give to their learners, time allocated for completion of learners' writing activities and the type of feedback they give to their learners.

##### **4.6.1. The type of learning support material used by the EFAL teachers**

The most common LSMs used in both teachers' lessons were the chalkboard by the teachers and learners' books in which they do most of their writing exercises. While T2 referred to these as 'exercises books', T1 referred to them as 'grammar books', which suggests she might position writing as part of grammar or language work. Explaining why she referred to learners' books as 'grammar books', T1 said:

Because it is language. There is a difference between a reading book and grammar book. A grammar is language. In other words grammar is when you teach them to communicate good a language be it written or spoken. So I call it grammar books because this is where they do everything about the language, their prepositions, tenses, write compositions, letters and everything about the language.

(Interview 2, line 84-88 [Appendix 5a])

Notwithstanding that teachers' might have in other lessons used the various learners' textbooks and Workbooks either approved or provided by the Department of Basic Education, they did not make use of these in the 5 lessons observed. Instead teachers used other LSMs in the lessons I observed for various reasons. In addition to the chalkboard, which is the most widely used teaching tool, T1 chose to use an outdated text intended for Standard 1 (i.e. Grade 3): "Benny"<sup>13</sup>, and Betty and their friends: A standard 1 reader" for lesson 3 (see figure 6 below); and designed her own poster for lesson 4. She explained that her choice of LSMs, such as "Benny, and Betty

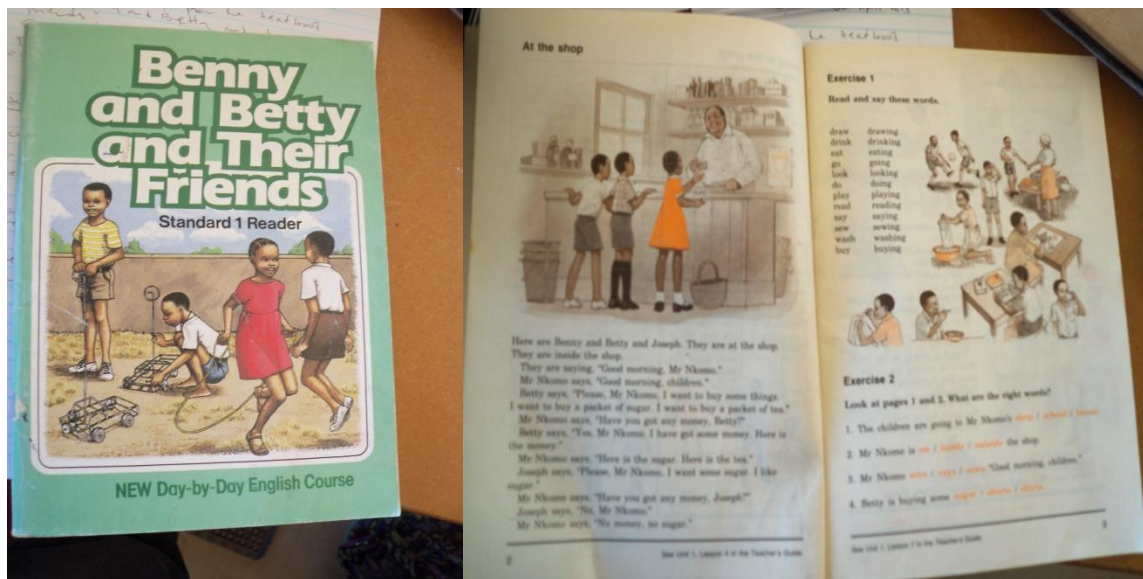
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<sup>13</sup> Dalias, D., Harman, H.T., Hartshorne, K. B., Hemming, J. & Miller, W.T. (1983). *Benny, and Betty and their friends: Standard 1 Reader*. Cape town: Maskew Miller Longman (Pty) Ltd

and their friends' for a reading comprehension lesson in Grade 5 was influenced by the language level of her Grade 5 EFAL learners:

It is good that you have noticed the type of material I have to use to get at their level. That is exactly the level where our learners are. If you look in their grammar books not all of them could get this task correctly. So I use these lower grades books just to develop their basic English skills and pull up gradually when I see that they are doing well.

(T1, lesson 3, line 49-50 [Appendix 4a])



**Figure 6: One of the LSMs used by T1 in her writing lessons**

This reader is part of a widely known series of textbooks, *Day-by-Day*, used pre-1994 when Grades were still referred to as Standards; this particular reader was published in 1983 and reflects a different (audiolingual) approach to language teaching than the communicative, text-based approach currently recommended by the CAPS. Interestingly the book is at Grade 3 level, suggesting a 2 year gap between the Grade 5 learners and their grade appropriate language competence.

With regard to the poster that T1 used as a LSM for her poetry lesson, she indicated that she chose to compose her own poem because she wanted to teach her learners about the vitamin<sup>14</sup> that one can get from eating fish and “the books [she has] didn’t write that down” (Informal

<sup>14</sup> T1 explained that she had in mind Omega3 when she composed the poem, but in reality the poem was not strictly speaking about the vitamin let alone mentioning it in the poem.

conversational interview on lesson 3, line 8 [Appendix 5]). She further noted that as a language teacher one does not need to stick to prescribed text books or “follow one stream of doing things but rather be creative and dynamic” (Informal conversational interview on lesson 3, line 10-13 [Appendix 5a]).

T2 on the other hand indicated that she was overwhelmed by so many English textbooks and she did not know which one to use anymore:

I have so many textbooks for English. Sometimes I think the department wastes a lot of money on buying so many textbooks that we don't even use. For instance I have this one, '**Shuter's Top Class English: Grade 5 learners' book**', I have this one, '**Headstart English: First Additional Language Learners**', and this one [**Grade 5 English first additional language: Term 1-2**]. All these books are said to be in line with the CAPS documents. In addition to those I also have this one, '**New Bridge to English: Grade 5 learners' book**' which I got from the Molteno Project that provides a lot of schools here in Grahamstown with so many teaching aids. So somebody will come and check whether you are using this, somebody will come and check whether you are using the other book..."

(T2, Stimulated Recall Interview [SRI] 1, line 26-34 [Appendix 5b]).

In the lessons I observed, she used a READ Aloud Big Book titled 'The day the truck got stuck, Storykit, 2005, stage 5' to formulate her learners' activities for all the lessons except for lesson 3 on adjectives, which was not related to the story at all. The teacher's choice of the READ materials was underpinned by her beliefs that writing is a product of reading, which were shaped by the READ workshops she attended in 2005/6.

Both teachers indicated during the informal conversational interviews I had with each of them that they only use the Workbook titled 'Grade 5 English first additional language: Term 1-2' (provided by Department of Education) for informal activities or to keep learners busy when there was no formal teaching taking place. They gave similar reasons that they liked using other teaching aids and only use the Workbooks for learners to practice what they have learned in their English lessons (See informal conversational interviews (on T1's lesson 4 and T2's lesson 2) [Appendix 5]).

#### **4.6.2. Teacher–learner interaction during EFAL writing lessons**

As noted earlier in this chapter both teachers speak the same mother tongue (isiXhosa) as all their learners, with the exception of one learner in T2's Grade 5A EFAL class who speaks isiZulu. Learners are expected to be literate in both isiXhosa and English. I was therefore interested in finding out how the two teachers use the mother tongue to develop their learners'

writing in English. In both T1's and T2's observed lessons, teachers were the main speakers while learners were passive participants, who mostly only spoke when given turns by the teachers to respond, were instructed to repeat after the teacher (in T1 lesson 2), or when they [learners] asked, for example, if they should 'copy the questions or only write the answers in their grammar books' which they often did in isiXhosa. Learners' English responses were brief, usually in the form of a single word, e.g. 'yes', a phrase e.g. 'yes mam' or sometimes they would just be silent even when their teachers invited them to speak. There were incidents of code-switching in both teachers' EFAL lessons (during teacher-learner, and learner-learner interaction). Both teachers' reasons for code-switching were attributed to learners' inability to communicate in English fluently. They believed code-switching was inevitable in their EFAL lessons:

...you must... I mean it is just a must to use code-switching with this learners. If you can't then there will be a problem. Some of these learners do not understand English. Well I spend most of my time speaking to them in English but I have to tell them what I mean in isiXhosa, so that they will know exactly what I want them to do. If you say no code-switching, then expect zeros in the activities because they would not know what they are expected to do.

(T1, SRI 1, line 166-170 [Appendix 5a])

...even the ANA [Annual National Assessment] officials sometimes come here and tell us that we should not tell learners what things mean in their mother tongue. That is why learners fail those ANA tests so much. These learners are still struggling to learn the language, many of them don't understand even a single sentence. So I think if you give them the English version and then tell them what it means they will somehow learn. Do you think it is right to just expect them to answer questions correctly when we all know they are struggling with the language?

(T2, SRI 1, line 13-19 [Appendix 5b]).

During observations, it was evident that teachers code-switched to explain concepts, explain activities and drills on the chalkboard as well as for classroom management. It is worth pointing out that, even though there was quite a lot of code-switching orally in the two teachers' lessons, there was little evidence of linking the two languages to develop learners' writing. It emerged that there were slightly more code-switching incidents in T1's EFAL lesson than in T2s. I have included some of the code-switching incidents that happened during lesson observations in the

summary of the two teachers' EFAL lessons in Section 4.4. (See both teachers' lesson transcripts in Appendix 4).

#### **4.6.3. The type of writing activities given to the Grade 5 EFAL learners**

In both teachers' observed EFAL lessons, learners' activities were comprised of grammar and vocabulary development tasks as well as longer pieces of writing such as recounts, a composition and informal letters. The amount and length of writing depended on the type of activities each teacher focused on in each particular lesson.

In T1's lesson 1, learners were asked to write a composition individually. The teacher asked them to list any English words they could remember, and instructed them to write a two paragraph composition using some of the words that they had listed and were written on the chalkboard. They had total control over the choice of their essays' topic, genre and audience. T1's explanations for allowing learners to write their compositions with total independence were:

Sometimes as a language teacher, it is good to know learners' creativity. Kids are not the same in the class, there are those who are shy, there are those who are quiet, and even if they know something they will never say it. So let them be free to write whatever they want to tell you. Yes introduce something to them but let them do the speaking, let them express themselves. So that you can understand, oh, this learner is like this, this learner is like that etc. if you keep them restricted to topics of your choice you cannot know them well, for example one learner might be good at writing about a certain interesting topic, but, that learner cannot show that because you incubated him or her.

(T1, interview 1, lines 108-115 [Appendix 5])

When I asked her if this was the only way she used to teach a composition, she indicated that there are some instances when she decides on a topic for them, because "even during end of the year examinations, learners are asked to write compositions on specified topics and length." (T1, interview 1, lines 136-137 [Appendix 5a]) I asked if learners' first drafts were final or she would give them another chance to work on the comments she gave them to refine their writing, T1 explained that because of time, she is forced to mark her learners' work only once.

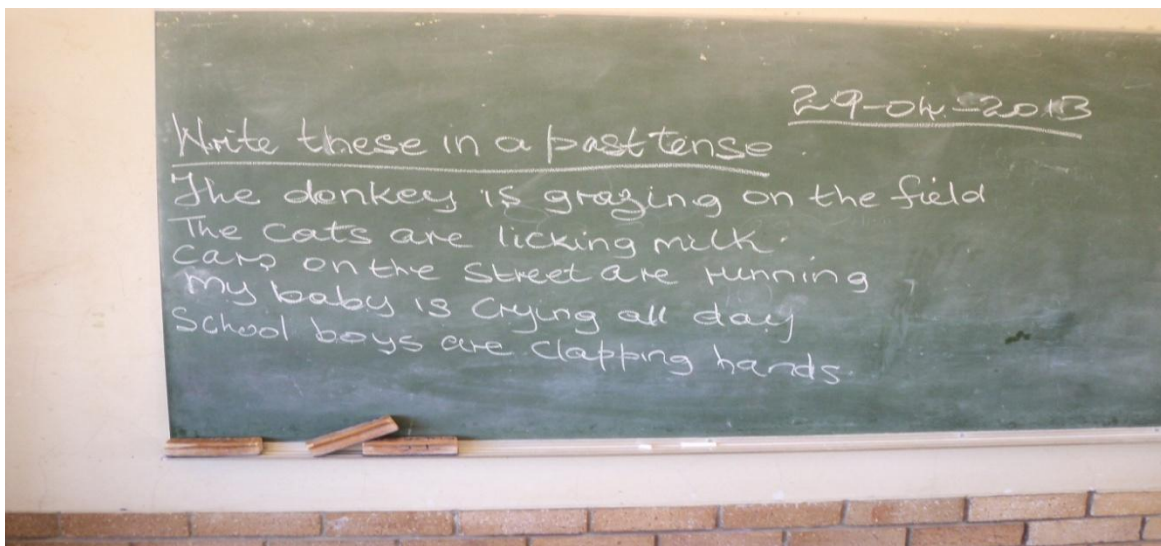
Well I always tell learners to write carefully and think before they write, and make sure what they put on paper is final. Well after marking their books, they can do corrections of the comments I gave them but not for marks. I caution them to read their writings, find all the mistakes before they give in their books. I am

not expecting them to be fluent, no, they are just learners who are learning English like me, it is not our mother tongue.

(T1, interview 1, lines 128-132 [Appendix 5a])

This comment suggests that the teacher's approach to teaching a friendly letter was informed by her perceptions of seeing good writing as error free and that whatever learners gave her for marking was final. She had no sense of the value of feedback and multiple drafts, as a result of editing. She however saw herself as being lenient towards the language used by the learners because she believed they were still learning it.

The writing activity in lesson 2 was on grammar. The teacher and learners first practised a few examples, changing sentences from present tense to past tense on the chalkboard



**Figure 7: Learners' activity written on the chalkboard in T1's lesson 2.**

Although the five sentences written on the chalkboard as the learners' activity were actually in the present progressive (continuous) tense, which suggests that learners were supposed to change them into the past progressive (continuous) tenses, T1 explained to her learners that the sentences were in the present tense, and they should change them into the past tense (as shown in **Figure 7**). Learners were instructed to only write the new sentences in their grammar books. The sentences were not numbered and hardly punctuated, but most of the learners numbered

their new sentences using a, b, c, etc. as shown in Figure 4.6.5. This prompted me to ask her why she chose not to punctuate her sentences on the chalkboard:

I just forgot to use punctuations on the chalkboard today, but if you look in their books you will see that many of them used punctuations. [Laughs] Oh, I didn't see that coming. I might have marked some of them correct even if they did not use punctuations, but it was just a mistake that I have now picked up. Thank you for that.

(SRI 1, lines 109 - 113, [Appendix 5a])

This suggests lack of preparation by the teacher as it appeared as if she only thought of the sentences that she would give as an exercise to the learners during the class, and even made a 'mistake' of not punctuating let alone numbering them.

In lesson 3 learners were given a comprehension activity, based on a short story from a Grade 3 reader (Benny, and Betty and their friends). They were asked to answer four questions, by choosing a single correct word in each sentence that suited the actions in the story (See T1, lesson 3, Appendix 4a). The writing activity for lesson 4 comprised of six questions, five of which were comprehension questions derived from a poem titled 'The story about the sea' and the sixth question asked learners to draw a fish.

Finally, in lesson 5 T1 asked her EFAL learners to write an informal letter to their friends. The teacher first explained the structure of a friendly letter, and then instructed learners to write one to their friends using this structure. She told her learners that the letter should be two paragraphs long and allowed them to write with freedom about what they wanted to tell their friends. T1 explained that her focus for this activity was not on language aspects but on the structure/layout of a friendly/informal letter<sup>15</sup>.

I was not really assessing the language, I did not mind about the language. My focus was on the structure of an informal letter. For example the address must be written straight, the salutation, the introduction, the conclusion and the whole presentation of the letter.

(T1, Informal Conversational Interview [ICI] 2, line 3-6 [Appendix 5a])

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<sup>15</sup> See Appendix 6 for samples of writing of T1's learners' activities from all observed EFAL lessons

This teacher seemed to have different approaches to teaching each type of writing. In this account, she was being extremely procedural; on the other hand, in another lesson she allowed freedom and provided little in the way of scaffolding. The teacher's own learning experience from school seemed to have shaped her procedural approach to teaching a friendly letter:

At the college we were not taught how to write letters. That was long time ago when I was doing my primary and secondary education. I still have that in my memory that a child must know all the parts of the letter, and it must be clear. Our teachers told us that when you look at it even before reading it, it must look like a letter, with all the parts of a letter and written in paragraphs.

(ICI 2, lines 65-69 [Appendix 5a])

In T2's lesson 1, learners wrote a recount of the story (The day the truck got stuck) which they had read in the previous lesson. Learners were instructed to write this recount in groups and they presented their work in the same lesson. The teacher did not specify the length of the recount, hence, some groups wrote a full page and others just wrote a paragraph or two (See Appendix 6b). T2 provided the following reason for letting the learners write the recount in groups:

Although I may not be able to identify individual learners who really understood the story well, I will see from their group's writing, how well they have listened to the story. It is also easier for me to mark their work you know they are too many, and just look at the bunch of books I still have to mark. An essay is not like these short answers that you mark so fast, it is time consuming and you really have to pay attention to it.

(T2, ICI on lesson 1, line 17-22 [Appendix 5b])

In lesson 2, T2 gave a comprehension activity derived from the same story recounted in lesson 1. The activity was made up of ten questions which learners had to answer individually in their exercise books. This was the first lesson I observed in which most of the learners in T2's EFAL lessons used pencils to write (see figure 8.); T2 said that although she was not entirely happy about it, she believed that "sometimes using pencils helps them to write neat things, because they make a lot of spelling mistakes.... So instead of scratching as in case with ball pens, they can neatly use erasers to correct their spellings" (Lesson 2, lines 40-42 [Appendix 4b]).





**Figure 8: A learner writing answers to comprehension questions with a pencil, in T2's EFAL lesson 2**

In lesson 3, learners were given ten sentences which they had to copy down from the chalkboard into their exercise books. They were then instructed to identify and underline adjectives from each sentence. In lesson 4, learners did a spelling activity, in which they were given ten words with the letters written in reverse order, to spell correctly. All the words were extracted from the story (The day the truck got stuck). In lesson 5, the last lesson I observed for T2, learners wrote a friendly letter individually. The teacher first explained the structure of the letter, brainstormed some of the ideas that learners could write in their letters before instructing them to write to their friends telling them about the truck that got stuck. Unlike T1 whose emphasis was just on the structure of a letter, she was looking at both the structure and language used by the learners:

I was looking at both the form and learners' language. I wanted to see if they know the structure of a friendly letter, like the address, greeting, body and conclusion. But I was also looking at the content if they have written according to the instruction. The instruction was, learners had to write a letter to their friends pretending as if they are Tebogo, and tell them about the truck that got stuck and how the truck driver got helped. They have already read this story, so they just had to write as if they were part of the story

(ICI 2, lines 2-7 [Appendix 5b])

In the lesson T2 indeed reminded learners of the story, and told them to pretend to be Tebogo.

#### **4.6.4. Feedback provided on learners' written work**

In both T1's and T2's observed EFAL lessons, learners were instructed to write fast, finish writing their activities and hand in their work at the end of each lesson for the teachers to mark those activities. The only exception was at the end of T2's lesson 3 when learners were asked to finish their activity at home because the teacher had to leave early for a union meeting. Both teachers normally began marking their learners' exercises books during the EFAL lessons, starting with early finishers or immediately after the lessons when learners handed in their books. The EFAL Subject Advisors' visits appeared have shaped these teachers' practices of giving immediate feedback and making sure learners' books are marked. Both teachers explained that apart from helping them with teaching of EFAL subject, the Subject Advisors also look at learners' books:

Yes they do come and look at the learners' books to see if you are doing the work. If they see something wrong, they will tell you. For instance in my case, because I am teaching so many classes, I sometimes don't mark some of the learners' work. I would just put a signature that I have seen their work. So when the subject advisor came here she told me, you better mark the learners' work, don't just put a signature. Mark the work, and do corrections. So now most of the time I mark during the lesson, if learners did not finish, I mark during the afternoon when learners are gone home.

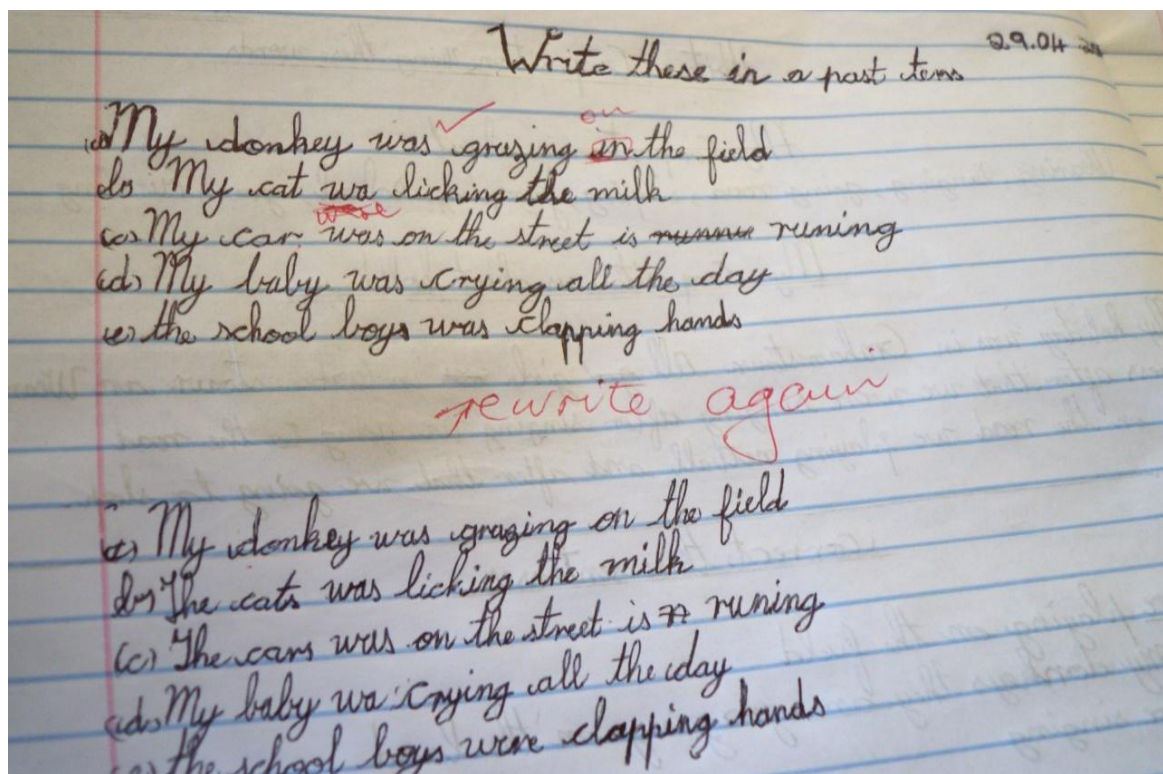
(T1, interview2, lines 61-67 [Appendix 5a])

They also look at the volume of work that you have given to the learners. That is why you see me always giving a task, mark it and do corrections because you need to have those in the learners' books. They must see that you are working and not only come to school to hang the jacket on the chair and chat with the colleagues while learners are doing nothing [laughs].

(T2, interview 2, lines 115-119 [Appendix 5b])

These extracts give a picture that teachers rush learners to finish writing so that they can mark their books to appease their subject advisors when they come and look in the learners' books. It was evident from the samples of learners' written activities that I collected from each teacher's EFAL lessons (Appendix 6a and 6b), that both teachers gave corrected feedback to their learners. They used a red pen to mark learners' written activities as either correct (with a tick) or wrong (with a cross). In some instances, T1 only underlined or circled word(s) or sentences that she

seemed not to comprehend, told learners to rewrite or provide the correct spelling of words (See sample of T1's learner's marked script in figure 4.6.5a). Sometimes she would discuss the correct answers (provided there was time left in the lesson after she had marked learners' books) with learners by asking probing questions and giving cues and then telling them to write corrections in their grammar books. She hardly ever wrote positive comments in the learners' books.

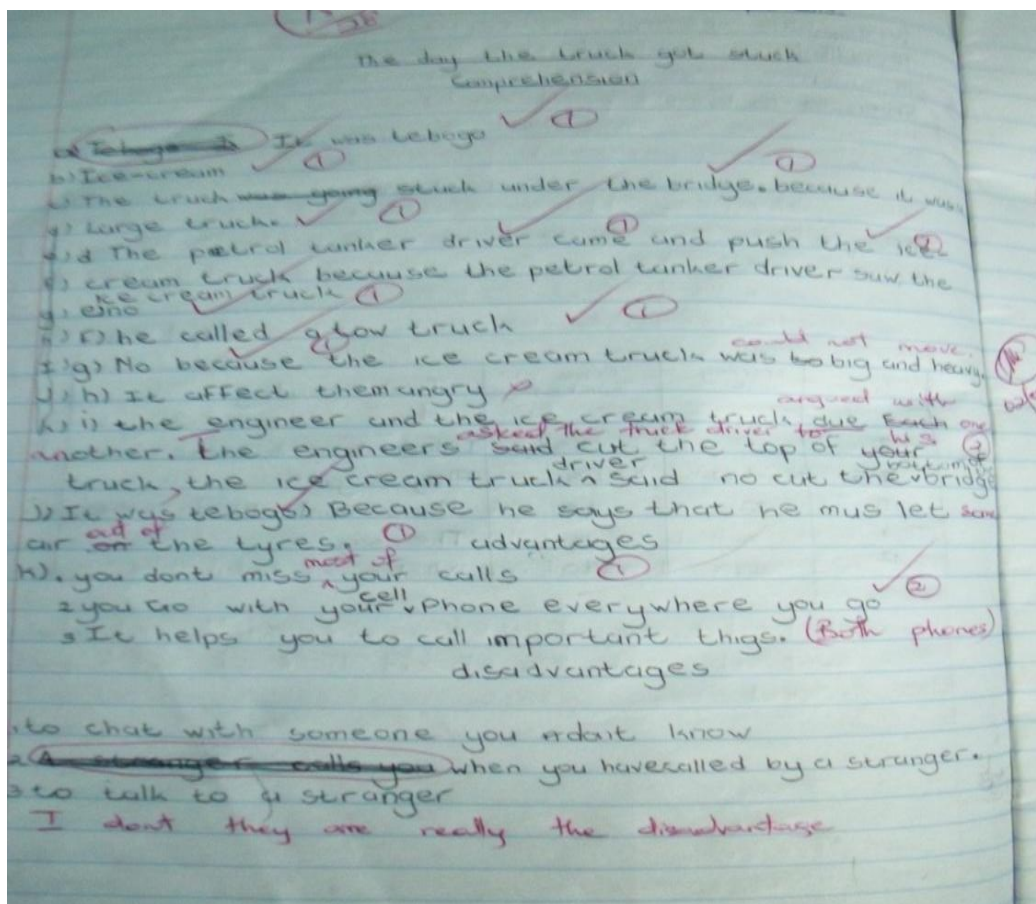


**Figure 9: Sample of T1's learner's marked script for past tense activity**

This figure illustrates that T1's feedback sometimes created more errors in the learners' written work. As shown in the photograph, in the first sentence (a) the learner has correctly written 'in the field' and the teacher has changed 'in' to 'on' which is incorrect. It should be noted however that this is a common mistake for isiXhosa speakers as there is no distinction between 'in' and 'on' in isiXhosa. Again in the third sentence (c), the learner has correctly written 'my car was...'

and the teacher has changed it to 'my car were'. Both corrections have caused the learner to make errors which were not originally there, making feedback from the teacher ineffective.

T2 marked all the activities that she gave to her learners. She sometimes wrote comments in the learners' books for example; 'you are not done', 'incomplete', 'date?', 'I don't think these are the real advantages' or she would provide correct spelling for some words. Unlike T1, she sometimes wrote encouraging comments e.g. 'well done' or 'good'. Figure 10 below shows a sample of marked scripts for the comprehension activity.



**Figure 10: Sample of T2's learner's marked script for a comprehension activity**

T2 did corrections of the previous lesson's activity before she started a new one. She sometimes asked learners if they knew the correct answers and if they showed that they did not know the answers, she would give the correct answers herself. She wrote the correct answers on the

chalkboard and told learners who had done them incorrectly to copy the right answers into their exercise books as corrections.

Both teachers taught the same genre, a friendly letter, to their Grade 5 EFAL learners. I looked at how each of them provided feedback to their learners on this genre and what informed their practices. T1 provided little feedback on her learners' letter scripts, so I collected all the learners' observed letter scripts to be able to get a clear picture of how she provided feedback. T2 on the other had provided quite a lot of feedback; therefore I only collected 12<sup>16</sup> scripts which I believed were enough to illuminate how she provided feedback on her learners' written work. I have chosen one script from each teacher randomly<sup>17</sup> (Figure 11 and 12) from the pile of the scripts I collected from the two teachers, to illustrate typical learners' written work and how each of the teachers provided feedback. I have also done an analysis of the quality of the learners' friendly letter scripts and established some general characteristics of their writing in an attempt to portray their writing competence. Table 15 below presents a summary of the general characteristics of the learners' texts.

**TABLE 15: My analysis of the samples of learners' friendly letter scripts**

T1's learners' scripts	T2's learners' scripts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Punctuation was largely missing in the learners' texts.</li> <li>• Learners knew their audience and what the content of their letters should be (purpose), but lacked the proficiency in English to express themselves clearly</li> <li>• There were many grammatical errors and spelling mistakes.</li> <li>• Their vocabulary was poor, some words were written as they sound, e.g. <i>let as cam</i> (let us come). Their sentences were generally incomprehensible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners made use of little punctuation.</li> <li>• Learners knew their audience, and the purpose of their letter. Their English proficiency was better compared to that of their peers in T1's class and they managed to express themselves quite clearly.</li> <li>• Learners had fairly rich vocabulary and it was easy to read what they had written. Although there were some grammatical errors and some spelling mistakes, their sentences were quite comprehensible.</li> </ul>

<sup>16</sup> I asked the teacher to choose for me 9 samples of learners' letter scripts comprised of 3 good ones, 3 middle, and 3 poorly written

<sup>17</sup> I reshuffled the scripts and chose the script on top from each teacher's pile

5  
30

10012 urkan  
lyahamitain  
13-06-13

My

My dear Linah and Am and Aplele I'm very shy I find it hard to make friends when I read the magazine about you. I want you my friends please my friends letase come to my Home if you can to my Home. Letase come please my friends. please my friend I love you my friends Li Abi and Amanda I love you my friend and I miss you my friend.

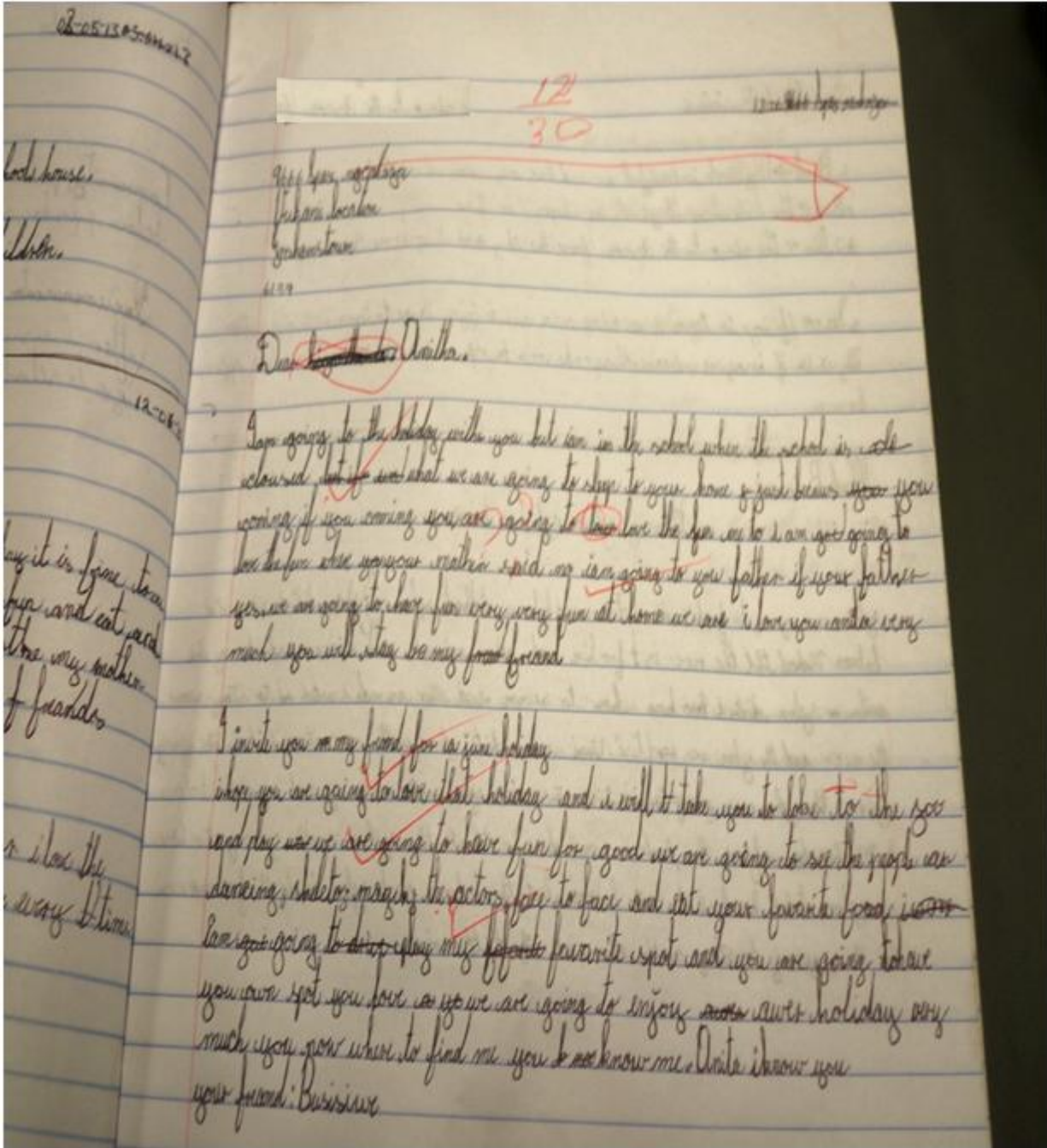
write in cursive please !!

I want you my friends I love you my friends please my friend come to my Home if you can to my Home just look my mother and my father and baby and mi so please come and just go to look show to father. I want you to June Holiday.

conclusion is not done

?? write in cursive !!

(Script 1)



(Script 2)

Figure 11: Samples of two learners' friendly letter scripts with T1's feedback

As noted in the previous section, T1 indicated that her emphasis on this task was on the structure of an informal letter. In the example above it is clearly shown how she has ticked the address, and two paragraphs in Script 1. Normally when something is given tick by the teacher this

suggests that it is correct. This figure (Script 1) illustrates that despite the fact that the address has been written in the middle of the page, the teacher has marked it correct. She has then written comments that the learner should begin her greeting with ‘My’ and that he/she should ‘write in cursive’. Earlier in this chapter, I referred to the fact that T1 had trained as a Foundation Phase teacher and emphasized the teaching of handwriting. In addition, she also taught in Grade 1, where handwriting forms a significant part of teaching writing, for over ten years. This suggests that her initial training at the college and her teaching experience in the Foundation Phase might have had an influence on the way in which she equates writing with handwriting.

Another interesting observation that may also be linked to the aforementioned perception is the number of marks T1 has allocated to these two learners’ scripts. Although both learners have written the address wrongly on the left hand side of the paper and their language is equally incomprehensible, the teacher has awarded more marks to the writer of script 2. The fact that Script 2 has been written in cursive appears to have played a role in the teacher’s decision to award it more marks (12/30) than the first script (5/30). There are barely spaces between words in Script1, and this is perhaps another reason T1 emphasizes cursing writing. She believes that “learners learn to divide words nicely when they are writing in cursive” (ICI2 lines 35-36 [Appendix 5a]). I made copies of all T1’s learners’ letter scripts, and she has provided a similar feedback as illustrated in the two scripts above; giving ticks if learners have written in paragraphs and showing them where the address should be written with arrows, and commenting that learners should write in cursive. Where learners have erased/ scratched out a word(s) in their texts, the teacher has circled it with a red pen to indicate that it is ‘dirty work’, which is congruent with one of her beliefs that writing should be clean.

Explaining how she got 30 as the total mark for the letter and how she allocated marks to her learners’ scripts, T1 said:

I came up with my marks. You know I am looking at how they wrote the address, the body and the conclusion. If you look in these books, I gave some comments, and these comments also minimize the number of marks the learner will get. For example this one (*showing me a learner’s script*) didn’t write the address in the right corner of the page, something I have taught them in the class. So it is these comments that are minimizing the number of marks they obtained from this task. The lesser marks the more encouragement you are giving to the learner to improve. She will be like, oh, I have got so less marks in this task I will have to



work hard next time to get more marks. If you give them bigger marks yet the content is not right, you are killing the child. The child will go on saying I have got 15 or I have got 20 yet what she has written is nonsense. I am not looking at the verbs, the tenses or grammar mistakes; I am looking if they know how to write a letter. I am aware that English is not their language, and most of them tried to make sense in their letters.

(ICI2, lines 38-49 [Appendix 5a])

The teacher believed that the marks she gave to her learners also played a role in motivating them to improve their writing. However, the feedback that she provided was largely ineffective, and learners would not be able to use it to improve their writing. Asked if she was aware of the total marks for longer pieces of writing such as informal letters, recommended by the CAPS documents, T1 said:

Well I don't really know, I am not so well informed about the CAPS things. This 30 mark is just something I have learned for so long... I have learned this from school, when I was a learner. We were taught that a letter should have an address, greeting, body, conclusion and the ending. And we were given marks out of 30 marks. But we were sometimes told to copy the letter from the chalkboard which is wrong. My own belief is that the child must try on his/her own. If you spoon-feed him or her how will you know that the child is learning the language? To me a child will become perfect in writing by writing more and more on his own.

(ICI2, lines 54-62 [Appendix 5a])

The extract suggests that the teachers' experience as a learner also had an influence on shaping the way she taught and assessed an informal letter, but she still holds on to her strong beliefs of allowing learners to write freely. The extract further depicts that the teacher is not aware of the CAPS criteria for assessing EFAL writing activities.

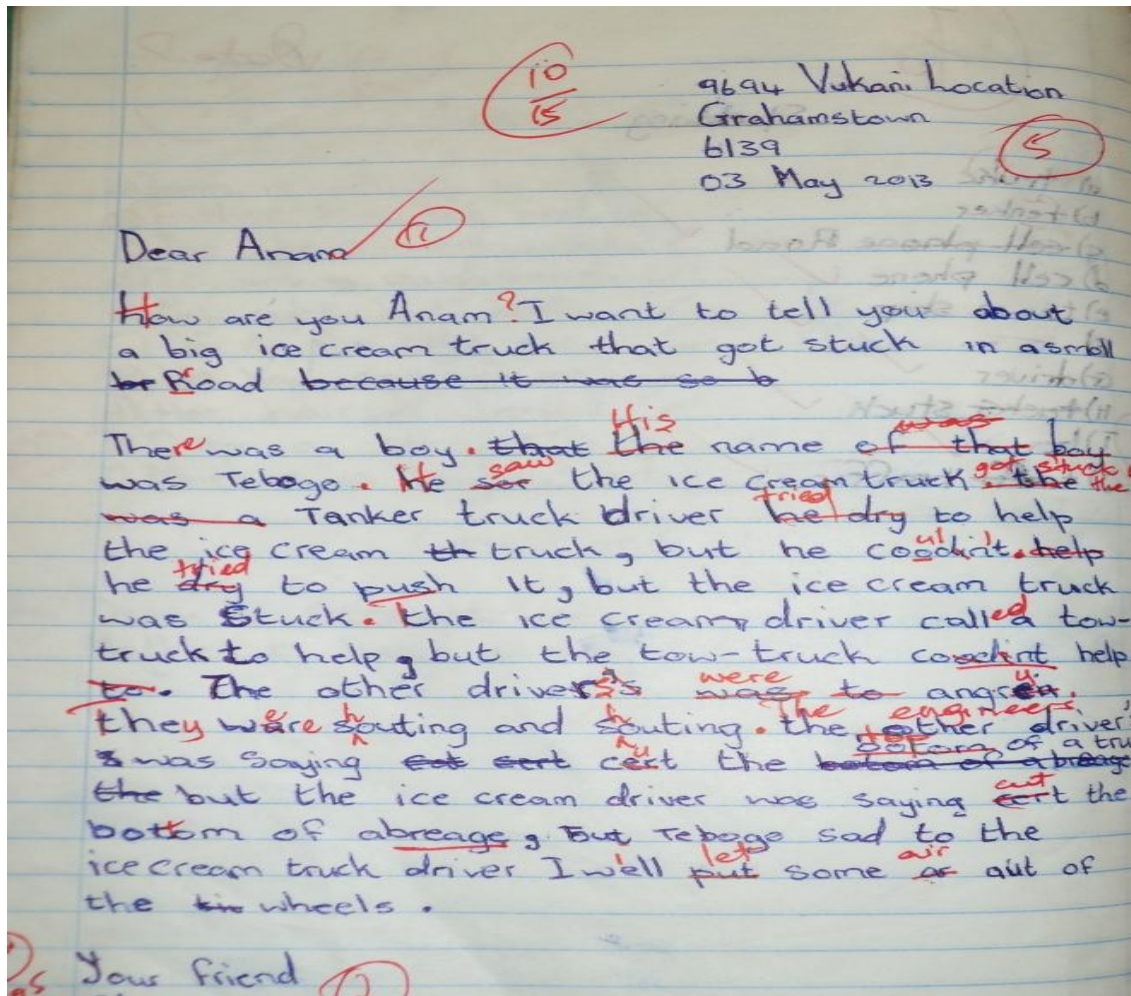
T2 had a different way of giving corrective feedback to her Grade 5 EFAL learners. For the friendly letter, as noted earlier in this chapter, her focus was both on the structure and language. The two scripts shown in Figure 9 below illustrate how she provided feedback on her learners' writing. She directly provided correct wording, punctuation and spelling to explicitly show the errors that learners had made in their written work.

T2 used 15 as the total marks for the friendly letter. Like T1 she indicated that she just chose to use 15 marks as a total for longer pieces of writing such as friendly letters. She explained how she allocated the marks:

I divide the 15 marks into 3 parts: 5 marks for the address if written correctly, in the top right corner of the page, and it is straight, 6 marks for the content, where I look at how the learner has organized his/her ideas, the use of language, mistakes made and if the learner's writing is in line with the topic given. The last 4 marks are for a good greeting and ending of the letter. For example if a learner correctly wrote: Dear Thandi, that is 2 marks, and if she/he correctly wrote your friend... Yours sincerely, or anything similar but correct and his /her name at the end of the letter, that is another 2 marks. The more mistakes the lesser marks.

(ICI2, lines 13-19 [Appendix 5b])

### Script 1



## Script 2

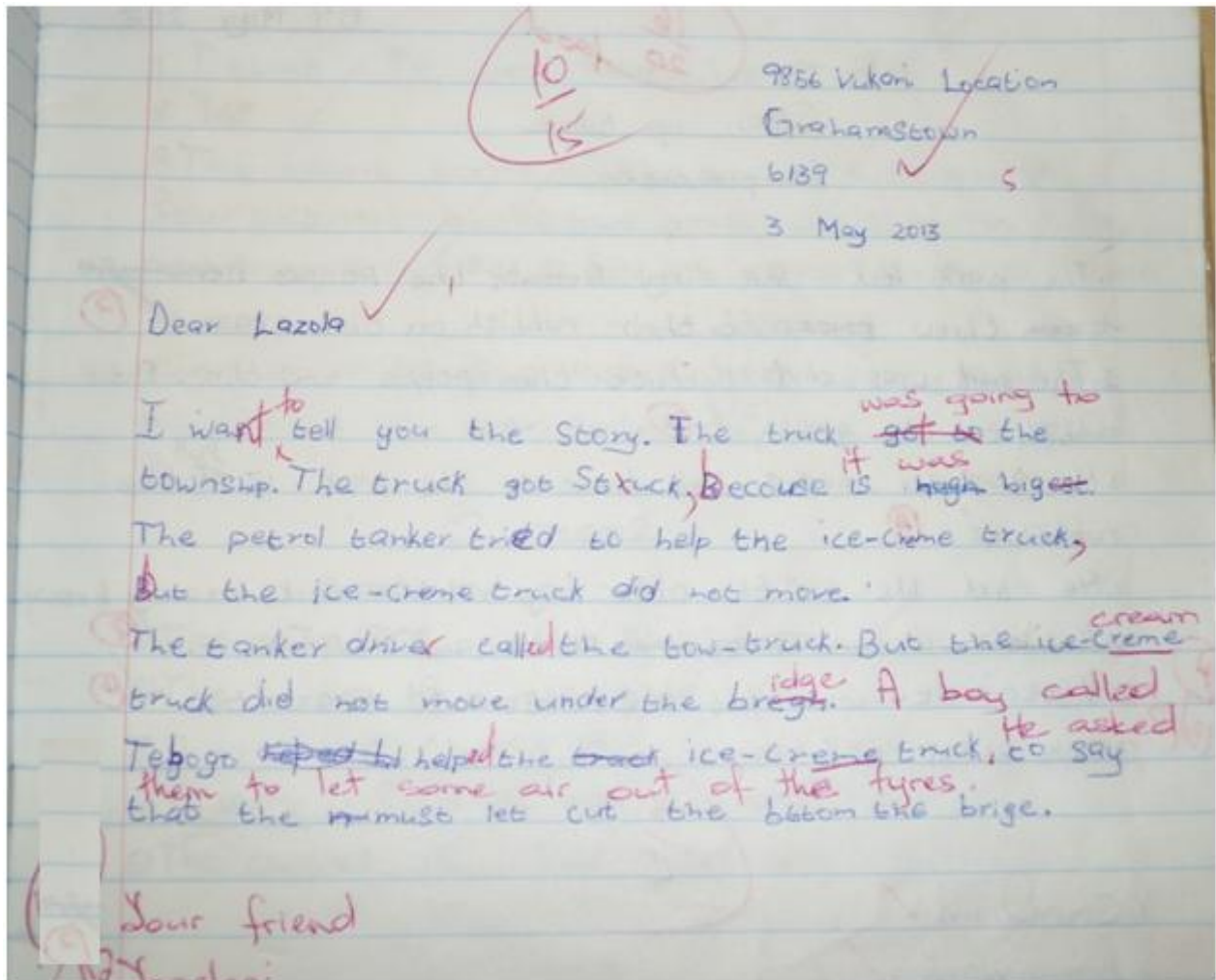


Figure 12: Samples of two learners' letter scripts with T2's feedback

The teacher has clearly indicated how she has allocated the marks for each part of the friendly letter. These two scripts were awarded similar marks 10/15. Using the criteria explained by the teacher for marking this task, it implies that in Script 1 the learner has only been awarded 1 mark for the content, since the other 9 marks were the sum of marks awarded for the address, salutation and the ending. For script 2 the content has been awarded 4 marks, since 6 marks were the sum of the marks awarded for the address and salutation. The learner did not write the ending; presumably no marks were given for this part. The picture that emerges here is that the

teacher awarded more marks to the parts that are less cognitive (the address and ending) than the content which required learners to think and used their language. Although she described (in the quote) a fairly good balance between the structure and content, she did not apply this very consistently.

The teacher believed that learners would use the feedback she provided on their written work to improve their spelling and grammar. She thus made it a habit in her class that learners should write corrections as soon as they got their scripts back from her. Asked if she marked learners corrected version after she had given the feedback, T2 said.

No, I don't really mark them. I would perhaps just sign or give a tick that I have seen the correction. I give them marks when they first hand in their books. The reason I give feedback on their writing activities is because I want them to learn from their mistakes, learn how to spell words correctly and learn some correct grammar from the feedback I provide on their writing. It is not easy to mark letters over and over, as you can see they are quite a lot of learners and I don't have enough time. This is not the only subject or class I am teaching.

(ICI 2, lines 36-41 [Appendix 5b])

The teacher's comments here reveal that she did not encourage multiple drafts, and the feedback given on the learners' first drafts served as the only and final feedback. Although the teacher only cited the number of learners, time and amount of work, as factors that impinged on her marking of the corrected version of her learners' written work, data revealed that her experience as a learner also had an influence on the way she handled feedback on her learners' friendly letters. It appeared as if she replicated what her teachers used to do when she was a learner. This emerges clearly in the next quotation in which she was reflecting on how her teachers used to mark students' friendly letters when she was still a learner in school or at the college:

I can't remember how they use to mark or what they look at those years, but the little I can remember from school is that, we used to be taught all the parts of the letters just like I did, and we would be given marks, I cannot really remember out of how much. The teacher used to demonstrate how the letter should look like but the content should come from you. When you get the script back, you could see the teacher looked at the grammatical errors, such as the spelling, punctuations, how you organised your paragraphs and how you ended your letter. The book used to come back all red. I can't remember if we have written friendly letters at the college...When you get your book you just have to rewrite your correction incorporate the comments from the teacher and that is all because we used to get our books back with our final marks.

(ICI2, lines 44-51 [Appendix 5b])

T2 explained that the CAPS documents did not recommend specific marks that should be awarded for longer pieces such as friendly letters, but she was aware that they make up 25% of the second paper for the EFAL midyear or end-of-year examination. This is additional evidence that this teacher has at least read the CAPS documents. I discuss what the CAPS documents say about assessing and providing feedback on EFAL writing in the next chapter.

#### **4.7. Conclusion**

In this chapter I have presented a preliminary analysis of data collected from two teachers' classrooms investigating how they teach writing to their Grade 5 EFAL learners. The data reveals how the two teachers' views and beliefs, their experiences (school, teacher education, further professional development, the curriculum and the types of learners in their classrooms), influenced their practices in teaching EFAL writing. The data also reveal the two teacher's expectations for their learners, the type of writing activities and feedback that they provided on their learners' writing. Some of the implications of these findings are discussed in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

### **5.1. Introduction**

In this chapter I analyse the data in more depth and discuss my findings. As noted in the previous chapters the aim of this research was to explore how two Grade 5 teachers teach writing to their EFAL learners and to identify some of the factors that inform their practices. I have used my research questions to guide the discussion and interpretation of themes that emerged from Chapter 4.

Interpretation goes further than presenting the data. As Patton (1990, p. 423) notes, interpretation involves:

Attaching significance to what was found, offering explanations, drawing conclusions, making inferences, building linkages, attaching meanings, imposing order and dealing with rival explanations, disconfirming cases and data irregularities as part of testing viability of an interpretation.

The analysis begins with a comparison of the two teachers' pedagogical practices, followed by two broad themes: the gap between the learners and the curriculum and the role of code switching in the two teachers' EFAL writing lessons.

### **5.2. A comparison of the two teachers' pedagogical practices**

As noted in Chapter Two, I drew on Shulman's idea of *teacher knowledge* (1987) and on Borg's conceptualization of *teacher cognition* (2003) to help me interrogate more deeply my observations of the way the two teachers taught writing and of what informed and shaped their pedagogy. It seeks to provide an in-depth description and analysis of what I observed during these teachers' EFAL lessons and what I believe was revealed in the interview data, and to link these to ideas about teacher knowledge and teacher cognition.

#### **Some differences between the two teachers**

The fact that the two teachers' responses to almost identical sets of questions during the interviews and informal conversations were dissimilar (see Appendix 5) gave me confidence that I had actually succeeded in accessing some of their beliefs about teaching writing. Borg argues that it is not possible to explain what teachers do in relation to one single set of beliefs - "there are sets of beliefs interacting such as beliefs about learners and learning, beliefs about assessment, beliefs about different aspects of languages etc" (As cited in an interview with

Birello, 2012, p. 92). In addition to beliefs, research has revealed that teachers' pedagogy may also be shaped by interacting issues such as their experience as learners, college education, teaching experience, further professional development, curriculum, subject content knowledge, classroom context (class size, learners with varied abilities) (Shulman, 1986, 1987; Frad & Lee 1998; Borg, 2003; Cogill 2008; Karaata, 2011; Hang & Song, 2011; Melketo, 2012).

In comparing these two teachers' views about, and ways of teaching writing to their Grade 5 EFAL learners, I would expect to see some similarities because they come from similar backgrounds, and they are teaching in fairly similar contexts and at the same grade level. They are also teaching learners from similar family backgrounds with similar characteristics (for example, same home language (isiXhosa)).

At the same time, I would expect also to see significant differences in the way these two teachers teach and articulate their views on the teaching of writing as a consequence of the different professional qualification pathways they followed, and their prior teaching experiences. T1 initially trained as a Foundation Phase teacher but is now teaching in the Intermediate Phase. She had been a Grade 1 teacher for 15 years before she voluntarily began teaching EFAL in the Intermediate Phase after the former EFAL teacher retired. Unlike T2, she has done no further study since leaving teachers' college. The only professional development workshop on teaching EFAL she attended was a CAPS workshop organized by the Department of Education. T2's initial training, on the other hand, was as an Intermediate Phase teacher, and she subsequently studied further. She obtained an ACE specializing in ICT in 2005, and is currently enrolled for a BEd Honours degree. She has attended various workshops on EFAL teaching organized by both the Department of Education and nongovernmental organizations. This implies that she is more professionally oriented than T1.

The two teachers in this study have different discourses about writing. In talking about how she teaches writing, T1 for example, revealed a variety of beliefs not only about her understanding of teaching writing but also about learning in general, some of which were in contrast with the practices observed in her lessons. Her discourse spoke to the mechanics of writing: 'cursive/scribed writing', 'writing from left to right', 'clean writing', 'holding a pen' etc, all of which related to teaching handwriting. Her discourse about writing was lacking in sophistication compared to that of T2. T1 did not have a deep understanding of the nature of writing nor did she

have a metalanguage that she could use to adequately explain her writing pedagogy. Despite efforts during the interviews to let her talk about her understanding of and how she taught writing in, she constantly referred back to the teaching of handwriting.

In Chapter Four, the data revealed how T1's disposition and understanding of writing was profoundly influenced by her initial teacher training as Foundation Phase teacher as well as her experience as a Grade 1 teacher where handwriting forms a fundamental aspect of teaching learners how to write. These experiences developed in her a belief that writing is the same as handwriting.

There is, of course, a difference between writing and handwriting, the former being a purposeful activity of conveying a message in print while the latter is a mechanical way of learning how to write (e.g. correct pencil grip, how to form letters write in cursive/scribed, starting point, direction of movements etc). The belief instilled by her initial teacher training and experience as Grade 1 teacher seemed to have impacted on the way she taught and assessed her Grade 5 EFAL learners' writing.

The data revealed that when assessing learners' written work, her focus was primarily on handwriting (i.e. if learners had written in cursive) before anything else (See figure 8). The data also suggests that the teacher lacked the CK (Shulman, 1987) to teach English because she was trained to teach in the Foundation Phase where isiXhosa is used as the LoLT. Shulman maintains that CK is a significant aspect of teaching because it affects the teacher's planning, task setting, questioning, explanation of concepts, assessment and feedback.

There was a strange tension in the ways T1 presented her writing lessons. On one hand, when she taught a composition (lesson 1), she revealed a *laissez-faire* approach, incorporating an element of learner-centredness, where she allowed learners to be free to write what they liked and provided little in terms of scaffolding. On the other hand, she was also procedural in her approach and viewed writing in terms of 'clean' writing and error free writing. The data reveal that she tried to adopt new ways of teaching English but fell back on old strategies (e.g. 'repeat after me') that she had probably experienced as a learner. This suggests an audio-lingual/behaviourist approach counterpoised with a learner-centered approach. Learner-



centredness seemed to be understood as the teacher holding back rather than the teacher supporting the process of learning (O'Neill 1991).

T1 expressed beliefs about allowing learners to express their creativity. These beliefs also exerted a powerful influence on her practice of teaching writing, which resulted in her Grade 5 EFAL learners' being given autonomy in writing their compositions. This suggests a *laissez-faire* approach to teaching writing. According to Dudley-Marling and Paugh (2009) *laissez-faire* is never good for teaching. For struggling writers who are still in the process of mastering the target language and unable to correct themselves without being helped, such as some of the EFAL learners in this study, explicit, and individualized instructional support is crucial in developing them to become good writers (Dudley-Marling & Paugh, 2009). Similarly, Clay (1991) suggests that teachers need to take an active role in their learners' writing by providing appropriate scaffolding or else learners may continue writing 'nonsense'. Clearly these authors are calling for an approach where the teacher would help learners to move from the known to unknown.

T1 also expressed beliefs that using the CAPS documents or some prescribed textbooks to plan her learners' activities would be "incubating learners" (interview 1 line 284 & ICI line 15 [Appendix 5a]) as they might have a better way of doing things than those recommended by the CAPS documents or textbooks. Her way of teaching suggested that she did not plan carefully what and how she was going to teach; her teaching was loosely framed in a sense that she expected learners to do almost everything on their own (Bernstein, 1990). The incidence of a loosely framed teaching approach in South African schools has been documented. In his paper titled 'The state of South African schools Part1: Time and the regulation of consciousness', Nick Taylor (2009) claimed that the pedagogical approach in many South African poor SES schools "was very loosely bounded and appeared unconstrained by the curriculum expectations" (p. 9).

T2, on the other hand, demonstrated a more comprehensive understanding of writing. She showed some sophistication in her discourse about writing. Although she did not mention the terms *process/genre approaches* in her discourse about writing, she made use of terms such as 'building learners' vocabulary', 'recount' (which is a specific genre taught in the Intermediate Phase) etc, all which are associated with teaching a language and or writing in particular.

T2 expressed beliefs that writing is a product of reading. This shows her insight into the nature of literacy, that there is a strong link between writing and reading (Bower, 2011; Marten 2003). Krashen (1985), for example, is a strong proponent of this view. He argues that the most important thing for becoming a good writer is reading a lot and that writing and reading are inseparable – they are two sides of the same coin that is literacy. Four of T2's five observed lessons were derived from the story which they had read. From the story she also extracted new words, which she wrote on flashcards, explained what they meant to the learners and instructed them to use some of these words in their writing. In her first observed lesson, for example, she started off with an oral recount before she instructed her learners to do a written recount in groups, which is suggestive of a *genre-based approach*. According to Gibbons (2002) a recount is a good genre to use when teaching writing in the beginning because it bridges the oral and the written.

In Chapter Four, the data revealed how T2's practices of teaching writing were shaped by the READ workshops that she attended around 2005. The READ workshops introduced T2 to the notion of writing as a product of reading and had a lasting impact on her practices of teaching writing. She was still using the READ Big Book that she received from one of the READ workshops about seven years prior to the study. It is interesting to note here that despite having access to textbooks provided by the DBE and the Molteno project, which are said to be in line with CAPS, the teacher chose to use the READ materials from the former OBE curriculum which fitted her beliefs and style of teaching. This is in line with Yero's (2002) claim that if teachers believe a programme they have been told to use is based on a solid foundation, and it corresponds to their beliefs, they will notice ways in which the programme works and are likely to stick to it.

It is worth noting that there is not much difference between OBE and the CAPS in terms of approaches to teaching writing, and the Big Book that T2 used is described as 'Stage 5,' suggesting that it was intended for Grade 5 EFAL learners. This is unlike T1, who chose to use an old Grade 3 book (*New Day by Day*) from pre-1994 to teach comprehension to her Grade 5 EFAL learners, presumably because it fitted with one of her styles of teaching, the audio lingual method. Not only was this book very old and from an earlier approach to teaching language, but it was also a Grade 3 book which suggests a 2 year gap between the Grade 5 EFAL learners in

her class and the book. This may also speak to her expectations of learners. I discuss the gap between learners and the curriculum in detail in Section 5.3.

### **Some similarities between the teachers**

Both teachers compared their current practices of teaching writing with those in the years when they were learners, and both indicated that there was a difference in the ways they were taught writing at school and the way they themselves now teach writing to their learners. In their discourse about writing, both teachers spoke of children's development in terms of teaching writing and that writing should be contextualized. For example, they both believed that learners should write about things that they know and what they have experienced, e.g. write about their holidays etc. They both spoke of giving opportunities to learners to construct their own writing, working from known to unknown. This suggests that their experiences both as learners and teachers as well as their college training have had some implications for their understanding of writing being developmental and contextualized.

The curriculum is a fundamental part of the factors that shape teachers' teaching practices (Shulman, 1987). In Chapter 2 (Section 2.3.2.5) I briefly outlined some of the changes that have taken place in the South African curriculum since 1997 (from OBE to the RNCS and the NCS, and now currently, the CAPS). I had expected that the requirements outlined in the CAPS documents would have impacted in some way on the two teachers' teaching of writing practices. However, despite having regular conversations with both teachers in attempting to uncover their awareness of the *process/genre approaches* to teaching writing prescribed by the CAPS documents, neither teacher mentioned anything about these approaches; they both instead shared their feelings about the curriculum changes.

In their responses, the two teachers appeared to be overwhelmed by the curriculum changes and seemed to rather teach writing according to their beliefs and what they perceived would work well in their classrooms. The data revealed not only that there was little evidence that these teachers were aware<sup>18</sup> of the pedagogical approaches recommended by the curriculum for the teaching of writing, but they were not even using the teaching plans provided in the CAPS

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<sup>18</sup> Even if there was little evidence that the two teachers were aware of the *process/genre approaches*, I observed some tenets of these two approaches in some of their EFAL writing lessons.

documents (see Appendix 7). The writing activities I observed in the first two weeks of the second term were not in line with those that were recommended in the CAPS documents teaching plan for that period of time.

Learners for example were expected by the CAPS to write “a simple story with a frame” and “a simple book/story review with a frame” in the first two weeks of the second term, but neither teacher taught this. I should note here that both teachers had the CAPS documents with them, but they expressed (during the interviews) ignorance of, and negative attitude towards the CAPS. Instead, they chose to teach what they believed was at the appropriate level of their learners and in the ways they believed would work for their learners. These findings support the claim made by Smith and Sutherland (2007) that most pedagogical and curricula decisions made by teachers are solidly grounded in their beliefs and they do not necessarily align with the tenets of the official curriculum. The fact that teachers did not use the teaching plans and showed little knowledge about the pedagogies recommended by their curriculum for teaching EFAL writing implies a lack of consistency between the requirements of the curriculum and what actually happens in the classrooms.

On the other hand the problem might not solely lie with the teachers, for they have done their best by interpreting and teaching the curriculum according to their beliefs, experiences (as both learners and teachers) and types of learners in their classrooms thus creating the enacted curriculum (Murray, 2012). The findings therefore raise a question whether the writers of the curriculum have taken sufficient account of where the teachers and learners are before they developed the curriculum.

The data revealed some similarities in the ways the two teachers paced writing activities and provided feedback to learners. Both teachers indicated that they felt pressured by their visiting subject advisor(s), who demanded that written activities in the learners’ exercises books should be marked. This in turn, seemed to have influenced the teachers to push their learners’ pace when they give them writing activities so that their exercise books could be marked instantly. In most of the observed lessons I noted that both teachers would instruct their learners to ‘write up quickly’, and would then mark their books during their EFAL lessons, starting with early finishers. Those who were still writing when the lesson ended were instructed to hand in their books anyway for marking. It is safe to conclude here that teachers’ focus was not primarily on

the *process* of developing learners as writers but on the hurriedly completed *product* which they could then mark to prove to their superiors that they were indeed doing their job. This relates to performativity – a system where there is too much emphasis on accountability and demands for production in order to fulfill requirements rather than allowing for deep engagement with learning activities (Griffiths, 2011). It seems to me that the performativity demanded by the subject advisor, works against the implementation of the approaches recommended in the curriculum.

Teachers seemed to emphasise performance (assessing, correcting and giving marks) over learning (Griffiths, 2011; Watkins, 2003). According to Watkins (2003 p. 8,) “performance is not learning, although it may develop from learning” and a focus on performance can demoralize learning. Learners who are taught with the focus on performance display negative effects *inter alia*: ‘negative ideas about their competence’, ‘greater helplessness (i.e. I am not good at EFAL writing)’, ‘they seek help less (from peers and teachers)’, ‘they continue to use strategies which are less effective’ and ‘their greater focus is on grades not on the process of learning’ (Watkins, 2003, p). All these may result in learners’ poor performance.

In teaching writing, learners of any language or age group need two crucial forms of support from their teachers: time to try out ideas and feedback on the content of what they have written in their drafts (Raimes, 1983). For longer pieces of writing (such as compositions, recounts and letters), learners need time to talk about their audience, clarify and check their spellings which often lead to revising and rewriting (Raimes, 1983). This is in line with the *process/genre-based* approaches to teaching writing endorsed by the CAPS documents. In the *process approach* for example, teachers are supposed to encourage their learners to brainstorm, plan, draft, revise and edit their work (Raimes, 1983; Tribble, 1996; Nordin & Mohammad, n.d). This is seen not as series of steps, but rather as a recurring cycle of activities whereby at each point learners are encouraged to share ideas and drafts and get feedback either from the teacher or peers. Derewianka’s four phases (2003) (see Figure 2, Chapter 2) in a typical genre-based approach to teaching writing start with (1) *building the field* where a teacher familiarizes learners with the text type, (2) then *modeling of the particular text type*, (3) then *joint construction* between teacher and the learners and (4), finally (once learners have developed greater control of the genre), independent construction.

Data in this study reveal that both teachers chose to teach a friendly letter. They both explained to their learners the purpose and audience of the letter. They then gave a little scaffolding on how to write a friendly letter and instructed learners to independently compose a friendly letter to their friends. Their practices suggest some approximation of a genre-based approach (even if they may not have realized they were drawing on this approach). What emerges from my observation data, however, is that from the *building the field* phase (Derewianka's Phase 1), where teachers and learners gather information such as text type, purpose, audience, and develop vocabulary for the text through discussions (and reading), both teachers immediately pushed their learners to do *independent writing* (Derewianka's Phase 4) where they required them to produce their own, independently constructed, version of the same text type discussed in phase 1. In other words, neither teacher provided their learners with support at Phases 2 and 3. In neither case was the modelling of the text type sufficiently done.

Learners were not given opportunities to look at examples of the text type in order to unpack the main features of the text type they were being required to write. Furthermore, both teachers skipped the joint construction phase where they supposed to - together with their learners - discuss and draft examples of the text type, suggest more appropriate vocabulary, and consider alternative ways of wording an idea and work on correcting grammar mistakes, spelling and punctuation errors and so on (Derewianka, 1990; Gibbons 2002). As a result, some learners were not, for example, able to correctly position the address for a friendly letter, write their salutations correctly, or end their letters correctly (see Figure 8 and 9, in Chapter 4). The teachers' main role at the joint construction phase ought to guide and encourage learners by giving explicit feedback that refers to the structural or language features that are matching the particular text type that they have required their learners to write before instructing them to write independently (Gibbons, 2002; Derewianka 2003).

As stated in Chapter 2, the combination of process and genre approach is seen as complementing rather than competing with each other. Research has shown that when writing is taught using the combination of *process and genre approaches* learners not only enjoy the interactive recursive characteristics of the approaches, but also learn from each other through peer responses or editing with guidance from their teachers (South Africa. DBE, 2011D;

Macken-Horarik, 2002). Learners are thus able to incorporate the draft feedback into their writing. This helps them deepen their appreciation of the value of editing and revising in helping to make their writing clearer and more cohesive (Myles 2002; Raimes 1987).

In providing feedback for longer pieces of writing the two teachers made use of both direct CF (by providing learners with correct forms and spellings) and indirect CF (whereby they only underlined errors, or used arrows to point out mistake/errors and expected learners to perhaps do corrections themselves) as well as grade/marks (Ellis, 2009). For grammar and vocabulary development tasks both teachers simply provided feedback by giving a tick or a cross to indicate whether learners' answers were correct or wrong and providing grades. They then wrote correct answers on the chalkboard and instructed learners to copy them down into their exercise books as corrections. These practices suggest that teachers believed that students would learn and subsequently improve their writing competence in the process of copying and rewriting the corrections. Neither encouraged multiple drafts by their learners. Despite the fast pacing I discussed earlier in this account, learners' first drafts to the teachers were the final, which teachers then marked and awarded final grades

In marking learners' writing in class, teachers need to be able to pick up common errors and plan appropriate remedial language lessons and exercises to help learners improve on their writing (Gibbons, 2002). The data reveal that although teachers might have done corrections on the chalkboard for writing activities such as comprehension, and grammar and vocabulary development exercises, no feedback for longer pieces of writing was discussed with learners after they had been marked by the teachers. The reasons given by the teachers for some of these practices were primarily time and the large number of learners in their EFAL classrooms that impinged on them providing opportunities for multiple drafts and discussing feedback with their learners effectively.

There were 35 learners in T1's Grade 5 EFAL classroom and 30 in T2's, both of which are below the recommended benchmark of 40 learners per teacher in South African primary schools (SACMEQ policy brief 2011) but slightly more than the 1:27 averages reported by the SNAP (2013) for primary schools in the Grahamstown district. However, these teachers explained that when they spoke of large number of learners, they were not only referring to the EFAL

classrooms which were part of the study but they were also teaching EFAL and other equally demanding subjects to learners in other grades. Data reveal that teachers in this study often acted as the sole source of feedback in their classrooms. This was evident during the observations when it appeared to be a norm for learners to always hand in their books so that teachers could mark them instantly. Again this speaks to performance and accountability demands made by the subject advisor.

While acknowledging that providing feedback on written language can be time consuming especially with a large group of Grade 5 EFAL learners who are still struggling to learn the language, the reasons given by the teachers about number of learners in their classroom preventing them from providing and discussing feedback are questionable; they could for example have encouraged peer feedback, which is advocated in current writing pedagogy (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). This implies that teachers could make use of learners to discuss and provide feedback to each other; of course, they would need to facilitate this process.

There was no evidence of peer editing or marking in any of T1's observed lessons. T2 at least used peer marking in lesson 4, which was about spelling where learners had to just confirm (by matching their peers' answers with correct ones written by the teacher on the chalkboard) if the spelling of each of the ten words was correct or wrong and give a grading. Peer editing or marking for longer pieces of writing was barely encouraged in the two teachers' classrooms. Keh (1990) argues that success in writing is encouraged through quality effective feedback either from the teachers, learners or from the model as an input that encourages learners to revise and improve on their writing. However what was observed from the two teachers' lessons was that, although learners in both classes were seated in groups when they wrote, teachers often admonished: 'write in your books individually', which appeared as if the act of writing was a test that learners had to always complete without their peers' assistance. The single case when learners worked in groups was observed in T2's lesson 1 when they wrote a recount in groups but the teacher provided feedback herself. Even if she asked learners to read their recounts, she provided correct pronunciations and corrected some grammatical errors orally. Both teachers expressed positive beliefs about group work as they felt it could be used to enhance EFAL speaking skills but their beliefs and doubts about their learners' writing competencies in EFAL



seemed to have discouraged them from using peer editing or marking especially for longer pieces of writing.

While acknowledging that teachers' feedback is expected and valued in teaching writing, many researchers have found that learners' collaboration in written activities and peer review are also useful in improving their writing (Raimes, 1983; Tribble, 1996; Murdoch, 1998; Harwane, 2000). These researchers claim that peer review provides learners with authentic audiences, discussions that lead to discovery and necessary peer feedback that may help them to improve their writing. It is therefore teachers' responsibility to provide the opportunity for learners to reflect on their own writing and share their attempts with each other. Of course, the reason for learners sharing their writing is not merely for them to transcribe what others have said but to make them feel comfortable to experiment in their writing, try out new ideas and new genres as well as share personal information and insights (Tribble, 1996; Myles, 2002).

### **Comparison of the two teachers' feedback on their learners' EFAL writing**

The way the two teachers responded to their learners' writing also varied in some ways. Although they both provided corrective feedback (Ellis, 2009), the data revealed that in some cases T1's feedback to her learners' writing was largely ineffective. There were even incidents (Figure 6) where her feedback caused more errors in the learners' work than had originally been there. She was not consistent with the criteria she had orally set for herself in marking some of her learners' work. For example for the friendly letter, she expressed that she was only assessing if learners knew the format/structure of a friendly letter, but she ended up marking some of the learners correct even when they wrote the address wrongly. This suggests that T1 lacked knowledge of how to judge her learners' capabilities, and she did not seem to engage with their writing. In some instances her feedback was vague, sometimes authoritarian and not sufficiently effective to allow learners to self-regulate their own writing. For example, she would comment that learners should 'rewrite', but did not explicitly explain why or how they should do so. According to Hattie (1999, p.9) effective feedback means "providing information how and why the child understands and misunderstands and what directions a learner must take to improve". Research has shown that if the teacher's feedback is inconsistent, arbitrary, vague or authoritarian then it fails to either inform or motivate learners to improve (Hattie, 1999; Hyland & Hyland, 2006).

The data reveal that T2 at least engaged with her learners' writing. This was evident from the explicit, direct corrective feedback that she provided on most of her observed learners' written work (also see Appendix 6b). She provided correct spellings, correct forms, correct grammar and wording on some of her learners' written work, and she also wrote positive comments for some of those that she believed had done well in the activities. Although direct corrective feedback has been criticized by some educators for requiring little in terms processing by the learners, it is the most desirable with learners who have low level of target language proficiency and are not capable of correcting their written work themselves (Ellis 2008; 2009).

Both teachers' beliefs and experiences as learners also had an impact on the ways they provided feedback on their learners' work. T1, for example, indicated that the way she marked the friendly letter and compositions was based on her experience as a learner. She explained that she marks longer pieces of writing out of 30 marks as these were the grades used by her English teacher when she was a learner. She believed that giving high grades to learners would result in learners having false information about their writing competencies; she preferred giving low grades so that learners would try to work hard to get more marks. It is interesting to note that the teacher wanted learners to improve on their writing, yet the feedback she provided, let alone the approach she used in teaching writing were largely ineffective. Besides this, there are arguments against the use of grades in teaching writing. Hattie and Timperly (2007), for example, argue that if grades are not used carefully, they can be contentious and may negatively affect learner motivation and distract their attention from the more constructive corrective feedback provided by the teacher.

T2's experience as a learner also appeared to have an influence on the way she provided feedback on her learners' written work. She, for example, commented on how, as learners, she and her peers used to get their books from their teachers red with suggested correct spelling of words, grammar and form as well as grades. They were instructed to use the feedback from their teacher to correct their own written work. These experiences were reflected in her practices when she provided feedback on her EFAL learners' written work. She explained that she responds to linguistic matters (grammar, spelling, sentence structure) in the learners' texts so that they would be able to correct their own work when they get their books back from her.

Neither teacher seemed to have established written criteria for assessing their learners' writing. Although they both explained orally during the interviews what they were looking at in the learners' writing, they did not provide learners with these criteria in writing or orally. Learners did not know what exactly their teachers expected to see in their writing. "The criteria for evaluating any learning achievements must be made transparent to students to enable them to have a clear overview both of the aims of their work and what it means to complete it successfully" (The role of feedback and assessment in language learning, 2012, p.22). In Section 2.2.2.2. I outlined that in the assessment section of the CAPS documents there is little information about the importance of formative assessment and how teachers should respond to their learners' EFAL writing. This implies that there are no formal guidelines in the CAPS can guide teachers on how to respond to their learners' writing, hence leaving room for teachers' to use any technique that fits with their beliefs and or experiences.

### **5.3. The gap between learners and the curriculum**

Both teachers referred to learners' lack of grade appropriate competence in EFAL as one of the contextual factors that prevented them from teaching writing effectively. T2 for example indicated that she had resorted to giving her learners a limited amount of work because most of them were struggling with writing and unable to finish on time. T1 even went to the extent of using a Grade 3 textbook to give a comprehension activity claiming that she was adjusting to her Grade 5 EFAL learners' level. What was even more interesting with regard to T1's observed Grade 5 EFAL learners was that, even if the comprehension activity consisted only of four questions in which they had to select a single correct word (See the activity in Appendix 6)) and was extracted from a textbook which was two years lower than their current Grade level, only about 43% (15 of the 35 learners) got all the answers correct (4 out of 4). The rest of the learners got from 1 to 3, but none of the learners got zero. This implies that most of the learners were still unable to do an activity extracted from a grade that they had long passed. The data revealed that most of T1's Grade 5 EFAL learners' written language in the longer pieces of writing sampled was incomprehensible with a lot of spelling and language errors, and they were not producing written work at an appropriate level for a Grade 5 learner. In trying to identify the level of writing competence of the Grade 5 EFAL learners in this study, I have drawn from Raison and Rivelland's 'Writing Developmental Continuum' (1997), where they have identified six stages of

children's writing development (See Appendix 8). By comparing some of the Grade 5 EFAL learners' samples of writing against the ones illustrated in the Writing Developmental Continuum, I have identified that most of these learners were in the 'experimental<sup>19</sup> writing' and 'early writing<sup>20</sup>' stages. I had expected typical Grade 5 learners' level of writing competence to be at least between Raison and Rivelland's 'early writing and conventional writing<sup>21</sup>'. Both teachers singled out learners' poor foundation and the late introduction of English as factors that contributed to their poor level of writing competence.

These findings confirm those of other studies conducted in South African schools (Brock-Utne et al., 2010; Navsaria et al.; 2011; NEEDU, 2012). These studies have documented similar findings across all the phases (Foundation Phase, Intermediate Phase and Senior Phase) that not only do learners do very little writing but they also do not have age and grade-appropriate reading and writing skills. In its recent national report NEEDU, for example, claims that many Foundation Phase teachers in their study "do not understand the importance of extended writing and seemed to be unaware that it is prescribed in the curriculum and even if they do, learners do little writing, and the gradient is so flat that the level is more often than not, already too low by Grade 3". This implies that when learners come into the Intermediate Phase, they have such a poor foundation that they continue to learn little and lag behind grade appropriate outcomes throughout their school careers. The damage starts as early as from the first grades and learners are promoted to the next grades without having achieved the necessary outcome for that grade until they reach matric, and this ultimately leads to large annual failure rates of learners in matric examinations (Navsaria et al. 2011).

Similarly, in their working paper titled 'The negative consequences of overambitious curricula in developing countries', Pritchett and Beatty (2012) observed shallow learning in grades 2-5 in developing countries from Latin America, South Asia and Africa. These authors found that the

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<sup>19</sup> Children are aware that speech can be written down and that written messages remain constant. They understand left to right organization of print and experiment with writing letters and words (Raison & Rivelland, 1997, p.2).

<sup>20</sup> Children write about topics which are personally significant. They are beginning to consider audience needs. They have sense of sentences but may only be able to deal with one or two elements of writing at one time, e.g. spelling but not punctuating (Raison & Rivelland, 1997, p.2).

<sup>21</sup> Children at this stage are familiar with most aspects of the writing process and are able to select forms to suit different purposes. Their control of structure, punctuation and spelling may vary according to the complexity of the writing task (Raison & Rivelland, 1997, p.2).

relationship between the number of years that learners spend in school and the measures of their learning content mastery is “far too flat”, claiming that learners “learn so little from each year of instruction that the completion of even basic schooling leaves children lacking necessary skills” (p.1). Pritchett and Beatty (2012) argue that the reason why learners are so far behind the curriculum and why the curriculum is so far ahead of the learners in many countries is because the “level of instruction in the curriculums is overambitious relative to learners’ skills” (p.10). These authors defined an overambitious curriculum as the one that “covers too much, goes too fast and too hard compared to the initial skills of the learners” [which subsequently leads to poor results in schools] (p.10).

The EFAL learners in this study, for example, only began with English as their LoLT in Grade 3, two years prior to the study, and most of them are from poor SES homes where they barely get any exposure to hearing and speaking English let alone reading and writing it. One would, of course, expect a language barrier in these learners. Not only have they not yet acquired BICS in English, but they also need time to develop CALP which can take up to seven years (Cummins, 1979). Yet the CAPS documents are assuming that by Grade 5 learners should have reached a level of competence that will enable them to experiment with English, and do writing activities such as story/book reviews. It is also assumed that writing should be taught using a *process/genre approach*. Notwithstanding that the teaching approaches recommended by the CAPS are appropriate for teaching writing to second language learners, if learners did not acquire appropriate reading and writing skills from lower grades, then these approaches in higher grades are “pointless” (Pritchett and Beatty 2012, p.13). Learners, on the other hand, cannot be expected to develop grade appropriate competence in English if they are not given the opportunity to do so in class let alone at home.

#### **5.4. The role of code switching in the two teachers’ EFAL writing lessons**

I have outlined in Chapter Three that all the learners in this study (with the exception of one isiZulu speaking learner in T2’s class) speak the same mother tongue as their teachers, isiXhosa, which is also taught at the school as the first language, hence, they are biliterate. Their literacy in two languages was developed in succession, that is, they first learned to read and write in isiXhosa which they also used as the LoLT from grades 1-3 before they were introduced to EFAL as LoLT from Grade 4. Research has shown that learners’ first and second languages are

interdependent in terms of literacy development whereby learners' knowledge in first language (L1) may serve as a foundation and facilitate learning in a L2 (Cummins, 1976; 1979; Brisk & Harrington, 2007; Bauer & Gort, 2012). Furthermore Gort (2012 as cited in Bauer & Gort, 2012, p.92) posits that oral and written code switching may serve as an important composing strategy for biliterate learners, as they draw on their L1 repertoires in the process of creating texts in L2. Therefore, I was interested in observing the two teachers' practices to find out how they take advantage of their learners' literacy in isiXhosa to develop their learners' writing in EFAL.

I did not expect EFAL learners in Grade 5 to be able to communicate solely in English especially given the fact that they are not immersed in English. I therefore expected teachers to do some code switching orally and through discussions, translations etc to help learners to use their knowledge of isiXhosa to do their EFAL writing. In the friendly letter writing lessons, for example, teachers could ask learners to relate how they were taught a friendly letter in isiXhosa and see if they are able to talk about it in EFAL, and or let learners make use of bilingual (English and isiXhosa) dictionaries in doing their letter writing.

However, what emerged from the data is that there was little if any evidence that teachers in this study were taking sufficient account of their EFAL learners' literacy in isiXhosa to develop their writing in EFAL. There was quite a lot of oral code switching observed in the two teachers' lessons but neither of the teachers attempted to use learners' knowledge of isiXhosa to help them with writing. In other words teachers did not build on the children's writing ability in their home language in teaching EFAL writing.

These findings reflect Brock-Utne et al.'s claim that it is normal for many African teachers in township schools where the LoLT is English, to teach and explain instructions in their relevant African languages and then ask learners to write the activities in their books in English, so that if any subject advisor or parent were to look in the learners' books, they would see that learners have indeed written in English as required by the LiEP (2010). It is not illegal for teachers to code switch in their EFAL lesson. In fact, the literature and even the South African LiEP do not rule out the use of code switching in EFAL lessons or any other language, however, the extent to which teachers in this study used it seemed to be contradicting the way many writers advise how it should be applied in bilingual classrooms to develop and promote biliteracy.

## **5. 5. Conclusion**

In this chapter I have analysed and discussed some of the findings which are significant to the goal and research questions of this study. These findings reaffirmed the views about teacher knowledge and teacher cognition. The findings confirmed the widely acknowledged view that the way teachers teach, interpret, modify and implement the curriculum and (language) policies is shaped amongst other things by their beliefs (about learners or about themselves), experiences as learners and teachers, teacher education, content knowledge of the subjects they teach, classrooms (e.g. class size) and other contextual factors (e.g. learners' backgrounds, subject advisors etc). The major findings of the study are summarized in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION**

### **6.1. Introduction**

The focus of this case study has been on how two teachers from different schools taught writing to their Grade 5 EFAL learners and factors that might have influenced or shaped their practices in this regard. The main contribution of this study is that it provides depth to our understanding of how Grade 5 teachers teach writing and why they do it in this way. This is very much the purpose of case studies: to illuminate by example, and try to fill in gaps left by large scale generalized studies (Hoadley, 2010; Shulman, 1986). It is already known from large scale studies (e.g. NEEDU, 2012) that the teaching of writing in EFAL is problematic, but this case study helps us begin to understand what is happening locally by providing a detailed authentic description of how and why the two teachers taught writing the way they did.

In my introductory Chapter I indicated that I was interested in finding out how teachers' beliefs and knowledge influence their practices. I chose Borg's conceptualisation of teacher cognition (2003) and Shulman's idea of teacher knowledge (1987) to inform the theoretical framework of this study. In this concluding chapter I now use the four dimensions (teacher's own schooling, professional coursework, contextual factors and classroom practice) outlined in Borg's model of teacher cognition (Figure 2) to synthesise key aspects of my findings in relation to the research questions. I then note the limitations of the study and provide suggestions for further research.

### **6.2. Summary of findings**

Borg (2003, p. 247) argues that in order to provide an adequate basis for the study of what teachers think, know and believe, "researchers may draw inferences about teacher cognition from what is observed, but verification for these must be sought through further source of data." Reflecting on this argument the findings of this study were derived from the interviews with the teachers, classroom observations and document analysis. As explained in Chapter Three, the interviews used in this study provided me with the opportunity to listen to the teachers' own voices when they shared their views (and beliefs) about teaching writing, reflected on their observed lessons and discussed some of the contextual factors they believed had impacted on their practices.



The following research questions guided this case study:

- How do the selected teachers teach writing to their Grade 5 EFAL learners?
- What informs and shapes their practices in this regard?
- What type of feedback do they provide on their Grade 5 EFAL learners' written work?
- What in the views of these teachers enables/constrains their teaching of writing to their Grade 5 EFAL learners?

### **The role of teachers' beliefs and experiences in shaping the way they taught writing.**

This study has illustrated how the two teacher's beliefs, own schooling (i.e. their experiences as learners), professional coursework (i.e. their experiences as teachers) and knowledge of EFAL influenced their writing pedagogy (Borg, 2003).

In the interviews T1 professed beliefs about embracing learners' creativity and allowing them to write freely about what they want. Her initial teacher training as a Foundation Phase (Grade 1) teacher introduced her to teaching learners how to write (develop learners' handwriting). This experience developed beliefs in her of equating writing to handwriting which seem to have an impact on her understanding of and the way she taught writing at Grade 5 level. This suggests that she transferred aspects of her teaching practices for Grade 1 to Grade 5, with little modification to accommodate the writing requirements of the curriculum at a Grade 5 level. In teaching writing she would allow learners to write freely about what they wanted and provided little in terms of scaffolding which suggested laissez-faire approach and exaggerated element of learner-centredness (Dudley-Marling & Paugh, 2009; Oneil, 1991). Data reveals that she appeared to lack the pedagogical skills and subject content knowledge (Shulman, 1986) to cope with teaching EFAL writing at Grade 5 level. The main reason for this probably lay in the fact that she had initially trained as a Foundation Phase teacher and had received no additional training to teach English in the Intermediate Phase. The departmental workshop(s) she had attended intended to familiarize teachers with CAPS did not seem to have had any impact on her practice. She expressed skepticism towards the workshop and still held on to her beliefs about learners' creativity and learner-centredness. This supports the claim that depending on the length and quality of the training, "in-service training will have a lasting impact on teachers' classroom practice only when it addresses their existing beliefs." (Borg, 2003, p. 30).

T2 on the other hand professed beliefs about writing being a product of reading. Her initial training was as an Intermediate Phase teacher, and she had also studied further and attended various in-service training on EFAL writing which seemed to have contributed to her more comprehensive understanding of writing. Of these in-service trainings the one she identified as the one that had influenced the way she taught writing the most was the one organized by READ. It was the READ training workshop that had introduced her to the notion of writing being a product of reading and this had had a lasting impact on her practice (to the extent that she still had the Big Story Book which she received more than five years ago from the period of OBE training, and used it in some of her observed lessons). Her awareness of the link between reading and writing enabled her to teach writing with an approach which is suggestive of a *genre-based approach* (i.e. beginning with oral recount before written recount (Gibbons, 2002)), one of the approaches recommended by the curriculum.

The way the two teachers themselves were taught and given feedback in school seemed to have been influential in their practices. For example, the ways they taught a friendly letter and provided feedback on this genre in some way reflected those that they had been subjected to as learners (see Section 4.6.4). This resonates with Borg's claim that teachers' cognitions can be powerfully informed by their own experiences as learners (2009).

### **The influence of contextual factors and classroom on the teachers' writing pedagogy**

One of the contextual factors that this study has revealed to have influenced the two teachers' writing pedagogy is their EFAL subject advisors' directive that they 'should give and mark learners' work'. The findings reveal that in teaching writing, for example, both teachers' focus was not primarily on the process (e.g. brainstorming, drafting, revising etc) of developing learners as writers but rather on their learners' hurriedly completed written work which they would then mark and grade in response to their subject advisor(s)' demands. In other words, summative assessment took precedence over formative assessment. This goes against the tenets of the *process/genre approach* to teaching writing advocated in the CAPS documents. Since both teachers appeared to have the perception that all their subject advisor(s) wanted was to see learners being given work and this work marked; they did not seem to have taken on board the curriculum recommendations on writing and thus did not familiarize themselves with what the

*process/genre approaches* might be about. There was little evidence that these teachers were even aware of these approaches.

The range of learners in these teachers' classrooms also seemed to have played a significant role in the choice of writing activities they gave their learners. While the CAPS documents for Intermediate Phase EFAL assumed that learners would have reached a fairly high competence in English by Grade 5 (South Africa. DBE, 2011), data revealed that the level of proficiency in English for Grade 5 EFAL assumed by the CAPS documents is beyond most of T1 and T2's learners' actual levels of competence, and both teachers in fact expressed low expectations for their learners.

Earlier I indicated that summative assessment dominated formative assessment in the two teachers' observed lessons. This also appears to have affected the quality of feedback they provided on their learners. It appeared as if teachers assessed and provided feedback on their learners' writing for accountability rather than formative (i.e. to promote learning) reasons. Their feedback was insufficient in helping learners improve on their EFAL writing competence. For longer pieces of writing, for example, neither teacher provided enough scaffolding to their learners before they instructed them to produce their texts independently. They also did not discuss their feedback with their learners after they handed them back their graded work. They however provided their reasons for this. They identified things such as time and the number of learners in their classrooms as some of the contextual factors that constrained them in providing effective feedback to their learners (for example, allowing for multiple drafts). This reflected in Melketo's model of 'teachers' beliefs about factors that might affect their practices of teaching writing' (2012), (Figure 3), in which he claims that duration of lessons, class size and teacher-learners are one of the classroom factors that can affect teachers' practices.

Finally, the findings of this study disclosed that the CAPS documents do not seem to offer adequate guidance on how teachers should provide feedback on their learners' written work. The assessment section in these documents appears to be more procedural on how writing should be taught, with nothing that actually tells teachers how to respond to their learner's writing.

These findings interactively illuminate how the two teachers in this study taught writing to their Grade 5 EFAL learners and what informed their practices. Although these finding cannot be

generalized due to the size and nature of the study, they may offer insights for EFAL teachers, as well as for those responsible for appointing teachers at schools, subject advisors, teacher educators, curriculum developers and other education stakeholders to possible ways forward in incorporating best practices and improving pedagogical practices of teaching EFAL literacy, particularly writing.

### **6.3. Suggestions for further research**

This case study focused on the work of two teachers who were trained at colleges of education more than a decade ago. The study demonstrated these teachers' limited awareness of the *process/genre approaches* to teaching writing. To get a more complete picture of South African EFAL teachers' awareness of the *process/genre approaches* to teaching writing, further research may be needed with EFAL teachers who have graduated more recently from the universities. In addition, further research should also take into consideration a larger sample size which will contribute to the potential generalizability of findings such as those contained in this study.

The learners who participated in the current study only started learning EFAL as a subject from Grade 2. It would be interesting to replicate this study with learners who have been learning EFAL as a subject since Grade 1 to see if there would be in any comparative improvement when *they* reach Grade 5.

Due to time constraints, and the limits of a masters' thesis, this study could not establish how widespread is the phenomenon of teachers such as T1, who were trained and had been working as Foundation Phase teachers but who were now placed to teach at Intermediate Phase, hence applying their Foundation Phase pedagogical skills and experiences in teaching EFAL at this higher level. Further research is needed to confirm whether this is a widespread phenomenon in the Eastern Cape schools, or not.

Finally, the envisaged role of the subject advisors is to assist and support teachers in teaching methodologies in line with the curriculum and ensure quality subject management at every school. There is probably a need to explore the effectiveness of EFAL subject advisors' interventions and the assistance to teachers.

#### **6.4. Limitations of the study**

I discussed some of the limitations of this case study in Section 3.3.7 of the methodology chapter. These included the challenge I had of grasping everything that was said by teachers and learners as some of their classroom interactions were carried out in isiXhosa; and the fact of T1 being an acting HOD during the time of data collection (which had some effects on the observation process as there were days when she got pre-occupied with administration work and did not come for her EFAL lessons). I could not observe her as we originally scheduled, and had to extend the observation duration. Another limitation already alluded to is that, given the nature of the study, and the method used in analyzing the data, and that this case study was limited to two teachers, the findings of the research cannot be generalized.

One further limitation was that the two teachers in this study appeared unused to being observed or having someone seated at the back of their classrooms (and even worse videotaping and (audio) recording them while they are teaching). It was inevitable therefore that my presence in their classrooms influenced some of their behaviours (and perhaps practices) and that of their learners also. Although I tried my best to minimize this, it is not easy to determine how my presence may have affected the validity of some of my data.

Finally, as a novice researcher, there were inevitably some aspects of the investigation that might have been strengthened had I been more experienced.

#### **6.5. Conclusion**

This case study has documented a range of interacting factors that informed or shaped the ways in which the two teachers taught writing to their Grade 5 EFAL learners. These factors included amongst other things, teachers' beliefs about writing and teaching writing; their experiences as learners and teachers; the in-service training/workshops they had attended (conducted both by the Department of Education and non-governmental organizations); visits from subject advisors; and the types of learners they had in their Grade 5 EFAL classrooms.

Although the curriculum is deemed to be one of the fundamental aspects shaping what should be taught in schools (Shulman, 1986), there was little evidence that the requirements outlined in the CAPS documents had any significant impact on the way the two teachers taught writing to their Grade 5 EFAL learners. There appeared to be a distinct mismatch between the theoretical

approaches to teaching writing outlined in CAPS and these two teachers' actual classroom practices. This mismatch suggests the need for interventions to bridge the gap between where teachers [and learners] are and where the curriculum is in relation to teaching EFAL writing, and for the teachers to engage with the curriculum.

Although the focus of this study was on how writing is taught, reading and writing are inseparable. Not only are they very important aspects of literacy development but they are also essential tools for assessing learning in the classroom. Literacy development in a language classroom is dependent on the experience children get through engaging in reading and writing activities and through the support they get from their teachers. It is essential therefore that teachers, especially those in a similar situation to that of T1 in this study, get support and guidance from the relevant stakeholders in order to increase the effectiveness of their practices.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1: PERMISSION LETTERS

#### 1A: PERMISSION LETTER TO THE SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Hill 60  
3 Philips Street  
Grahamstown  
11 April 2013

Principal: [Name of the school]

[Address]

Dear .....

#### Re **PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT YOUR SCHOOL**

I thank you very much for having agreed to allow me to carry out research in your school.

As indicated in early March this year when I first mooted with you the possibility of using the Grade 5 English lessons taught at your school for my research, I am doing a Master of Education degree in English Language Teaching [MEd(ELT)]. The research in your school will form the substance for my full-thesis.

Thank you for directing me to [teacher's name]. As you know, I have now paid several visits to her Grade 5 English class. [Teacher's name] has been briefed as to the research area that I am focusing on in her classroom and has been most welcoming to me. She does know however, that if at any time she wishes to withdraw from the project that's entirely her prerogative. I do, of course, fervently hope that this circumstance will not arise!

When it comes to writing up the full-thesis I shall, of course, preserve the anonymity of both the school and the teacher concerned through the use of pseudonyms. No learners will be identified. Should you and/or [Teacher's name] be interested in reading the final product of this research I'll very gladly provide a copy of my full-thesis.

Thank you again, [Principal's Name], for your generosity in allowing me this access to your school. I really appreciate it.

My sincere regards

Lukas Homateni Julius

## **1B: PERMISSION LETTER TO THE TEACHERS**

Hill 60  
3 Philips Street  
Grahamstown  
11 April 2013

[Teacher's name]  
Teacher: [School's name]  
[Address]

Dear [Teacher's name]

### **Re YOUR AGREEMENT TO ALLOW ME INTO YOUR CLASSROOM**

Thank you very much, [Teacher's name] for agreeing so readily to have me in your classroom, and for your willingness to thereby contribute to my MEd(ELT) Full-thesis research. I'm most grateful to you.

I attach herewith a copy of the letter which I have given to your Principal in this regard.

If there is anything which you are unhappy or uncertain about regarding the way I am going about the research, please do tell me, and we can work around it. Please know also that if at any stage you wish to withdraw from the project that is entirely your prerogative.

My kindest regards

**Julius Homateni Lukas**

**1C: PERMISSION LETTER TO THE PARENTS (BOTH THE ENGLISH AND ISIXHOSA VERSION)**

**English Version**

Hill 60  
3Phillips Street  
Grahamstown  
15 may 2013

Dear parent

I am a student at Rhodes University. I am carrying out a research on how grade 5 teachers are teaching writing in English. The purpose of the research is to explore different ways of teaching writing used by Grade 5 teachers and see if there are areas that need to be improved.

I am carrying out the research in two schools. I have permission to carry out the research from the principal of the schools, schools SGBs and the teachers. Rhodes University has also approved my research.

I am doing research in (teacher's name) Grade 5 class. I will be videoing her teaching English and also taking photographs of the classroom. The photos and videos will be used for the purpose of the research. The only people who will have access to the are myself, my two supervisors (Mrs Sally-Ann Robertson and Ms Sarah Murray).

I request permission to carry out research in your child's class. If you have any questions, you can contact me on (073...) or you can talk to the class teacher, (teacher's name).

Yours sincerely

Lukas Homateni Julius

Master of Education Student

.....

I have read the above letter and give permission for you to do the research in my child's class.

Please sign your name below:

.....

**isiXhosa Version**

Hill 60  
3Phillips Street  
Grahamstown  
15 may 2013

Bazali ababekekileyo

Ndingumfundi waseRhodes University. Ndenza uphando ngendlela ootitshala bebanga lesiHlanu abafundisa ngayo abantwana ukubhala ngesiNgesi. Isizathu sokwenza oluphando kukufuna uukhangela nokuphucula indlela ekufundiswa ngayo ukubhalwa kwesiNgesi kwibanga lesiHlanu.

Ndenza oluphando kwizikolo ezimbini. Ndifumene imvume yokwenza oluphando kwiiNqununu, iSBG kwakunye nootitshala. IRhodes University nayo indivumele ukwenza oluphando.

Ndenza uphando eklasini yebanga lesiHlanu yaka tsitshalakazi (.....). Ndabe ndishicelela utitshala (.....) ngexesha efundisa isiNgesi. Ndizabe ndithatha nefoto eklasini yakhe. Ezifoto nolushicelelo zizobe zisetyenziwa koluphando. Abantu abazabe bekwazi ukuzifumana ndim, nabaphathi bam (Mrs Sally-Ann Robertson no Ms Sarah Murray).

Ndicela imvume kuni bazali yokwenza oluphando eklasini yomntwana wakho. Ukuba ninayo imibuzo ngoluphando ninganditsalela umnxeba kulenombholo 073..... okanye ungathetha notitshalakazi (....)

Owenu ozithobileyo

Lukas Homateni Julius

Umfundi weeMasters Education eRhodes.

.....  
.....  
Ndiyifundile lembalelwano, ndiyavuma okokuba ulenze oluphando eklasini yomntwana wam.

Sayina ngasezantsi igama lakho:

.....

## APPENDIX 2: APPROVALS

### 2a: Approval letter for research proposal by the Rhodes University's High Degrees Committee



RHODES UNIVERSITY  
Grahamstown • East • South Africa

CENTRE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION RESEARCH, TEACHING AND LEARNING  
P.O. Box 94, Grahamstown, 6140, South Africa  
Email: chert@adm.ru.ac.za  
Tel: +27 (0)46 622 5171/3  
Fax: +27 (0)46 622 5187

23 May 2013

To whom it may concern

**Approval of Master's Thesis Proposal:** Lukas Homateni Julius (Student number: g11j0005)

This letter confirms that Mr Julius's Master's proposal was approved at a meeting of the Faculty of Education Higher Degrees' Committee on 11 April 2013. His study is provisionally entitled:

*Teaching writing to Grade 5 English language learners in two Grahamstown East schools, South Africa: A case study*

In the event that the proposal does not present particularly difficult ethical issues and that the proposal demonstrates an awareness of ethical responsibilities and a commitment to ethical research processes, the approval of the proposal by the committee constitutes ethical clearance. This was the case with Mr Julius's research proposal.

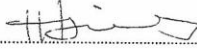
Yours sincerely

Prof S. Mckenna  
Chair of Education Higher Degrees Committee  
[s.mckenna@ru.ac.za](mailto:s.mckenna@ru.ac.za)

**2b: Approval letter to conduct research in schools from the Eastern Cape District Director of Education**

18

13. To abide by any reasonable additional conditions the Department may impose regarding the implementation of my research project.
14. To ensure that this research project involves no financial implication for the Department
15. To present the Department with a copy of my final paper/report/dissertation/thesis free of charge in hard copy and electronic format.
16. To submit on a six monthly basis a progress report to the Director: Strategic Planning Policy Research and Secretariat Services.

SIGNATURE APPLICANT: 

PRINT NAME IN FULL: LUKAS HOMATANI JULIW

DATE: 9 APRIL 2013

PLACE: RHODES UNIVERSITY


WITNESS: (1) PRINT NAME IN FULL: WENDELINA KAKENGE

SIGNATURE: 

DATE: 9 APRIL 2013

APPROVED/NOT APPROVED

*As and when the research findings have to be used against the Department of Education, permission needs to be sought from the Department for the use of those findings*

SIGNATURE: 

DR ANNETIA S HECKROODT  
DIRECTOR STRATEGIC PLANNING POLICY RESEARCH AND SECRETARIAT SERVICES:

DATE: 28/05/13

This is a binding contract.

**A T FETSHA**  
DISTRICT DIRECTOR  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
Private Bag X1001, Grahamstown,  
6140  
Tel: 046 6033299 Fax: 046 6033287

END OF DOCUMENT



**APPENDIX 3: CONSENT FORM SIGNED BY THE SCHOOLS' PRINCIPALS:**

**Lukas Homateni Julius** is hereby given permission to observe two weeks in term 2 Grade 5 English lessons taught at [school's name].

I note that data from this classroom observation at the school, together with follow-up interviews with the Grade 5 teacher, [teacher's name], will contribute to the full-thesis which Mr. Julius is required to submit as part of his Master of Education degree in English Language Teaching.

I have been assured that the anonymity of my school, my learners, and the teacher concerned will be preserved in Mr. Julius' writing-up of his full-thesis.

**Principal's signature:** ..... **Date:** 11 April 2013

## APPENDIX 4: LESSON TRANSCRIPTS

### 4A: LESSON TRANSCRIPTS FOR T1

#### LESSON ONE

Activity: Composition

Duration: 40 Min (08:10 – 08:50)

Date 11 April 2013

LSMs: Chalkboard

---

- 1 *T1 came in the class delayed by 10 minutes. She told me that they had a staff meeting and it is*  
2 *the one that delayed her.*
- 3 T1: Close all your books. Bekani zonke iincwadi, sizakwenza enye into eyalhukileyo namhlanje.  
4 *(We are going to do something very different today).*
- 5 Ls: Put their books in their bags and making some inaudible conversations with each other.
- 6 T1: Keep quite please. Today we are going to write a composition. I want you to tell me any  
7 word that you know in English. Any word that you can remember in English.
- 8 As she writes the word on the chalkboard, learners mentioned the following words;
- 9 Ls: (Saying out words randomly) wearing, singing, going, road, swimming, goes, running  
10 communication, wash, education, sleeping, smelling, eating, cooking, correction, position,  
11 between, preposition, season, sing, shoes, water.
- 12 *Some learners were reading English words that were pasted on the classroom notice board and*  
13 *the teacher wrote all these words on the chalkboard, like; under, on top of, between, above, next*  
14 *to, behind... these words were written on the poster with prepositions pasted on the classroom*  
15 *notice board.*
- 16 T1: very good. You gave me these words, meaning you know the meaning of these words, don't  
17 you?
- 18 Ls: (chorus) Yes mam!
- 19 T1: Now I want I want you to be as creative as you can, and write a very beautiful composition  
20 you these words. You can choose any topic that you want to write about. Your composition  
21 should be two paragraphs only. Are we clear?
- 22 Ls: (Chorus) Yes Mam!
- 23 T1: Good , now everyone take your grammar book, start writing your composition now. Make  
24 sure you give a title to your composition for example, my cat, my dog, our schools etc. I will not  
25 give you a topic because if I gave you a topic it will be difficult for you to write your own things.  
26 All I need is two paragraphs from you.
- 27 T1: You don't need to talk to anyone else but to yourself, and please write clearly. Think before  
28 you write any nonsense in your books that you will end up erasing again and make your book  
29 look so dirty.
- 30 The teacher then walks around the class, making some inaudible conversations with learners.
- 31 T1: Some people don't even know what a paragraph is. Where you not taught how to write in  
32 paragraph in Grade 4?
- 33 Ls: (chorus) yes mam!
- 34 T1: Please write in paragraphs and when you finish you bring your book to me so I can mark it.  
35 If you have questions ask me not your friend. You just want to make noise.
- 36 The teacher's phone rings, and she walked outside to answer it. She was on a phone call for  
37 about 2 minutes and comes back in the class.
- 38 T1: Are you done?
- 39 Ls: No.

40 T1: Ok, write up meaningful things. If you finish you put your book on the table so I can mark it.  
41 *When the bell rang all learners put their books on the teacher's table to go to the next class. Not*  
42 *all the learners wrote two paragraphs. Some learners numbered their paragraphs, others only*  
43 *wrote two or three lines and handed in their books.*

## LESSON TWO

Date: 29 April 2013

Duration: 50 min (08:00-08:50)

Activity: Past tense

LSMs: Chalkboard

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- 1 T1: (*writes on the chalkboard 'Past tense' and underlines it. And then she writes a question on*  
2 *the chalkboard, what is present tense?*) Last time we spoke about present tense, today we will  
3 talk about past tense. What is present tense?  
4 L: (*In unison*) is when you are doing something now.  
5 T1: Very good. What else do you know about present tense?  
6 L: (*One learner raised his hand*)  
7 T1: (*Mentions the learner's name*)  
8 L: The verb must end with -ing.  
9 T1: Very good. (*Writes on the chalkboard*) -ing. But it is different in past tense. Past tense  
10 means it is over. You have done it yesterday, you have done it last year, or you have done it two  
11 years ago. So you have done it long time ago. It is something that has been done long time ago.  
12 May be on Sunday, last week, long -long time ago, it is still past. It is something that is over.  
13 Something that you are not doing now or at the present moment. If I asked you what is past tense  
14 you say; past tense is something that you are not doing at the present moment. What is past  
15 tense?  
16 Ls: (*Chorus*) It is something that you are not doing at the present moment.  
17 T1: Repeat after me, it is something that you are not doing at the present moment.  
18 Ls: (*All of them*) it is something that you are not doing at the present moment.  
19 T1: Indlule (*it has passed*) if I say when was your birthday, you say it was last year, or it was last  
20 week or it was long time ago, because it is in past tense.  
21 T1: Now let us come to sentences form where we are going to change sentences into past tense.  
22 (*Cleans the chalkboard*). When you write a sentence in past tense, there are some few things that  
23 are going to change. Zikhona izinto ezizakutshintsha (*there are things that will change*).  
24 *Ezizaku? (going to...?)*  
25 Ls: (*Chorus*) Tshintsha! (*change!*)  
26 T1: When you write in past tense there are things that are going to ?  
27 Ls: (*Chorus*) change!  
28 T1: Like? May be what are those things? (*Writes the word 'verb' on the chalkboard*) one: the  
29 verb will change. What is a verb anyways? Who can tell me what a verb is? (*Mentions a*  
30 *learner's name*)  
31 L: A verb is an action.  
32 T1: Good, a verb is an action. Lento uyenzayo- (something that you do) something that you are  
33 doing. When you deal with a past tense, your verb is going to change. (*Writes on the chalkboard*  
34 *as she speaks*) 'The verb is going to change'. Second; if you use 'is' and 'are' in the sentence,  
35 those two words in the past tense are also going to change. Let me give you an example. There is  
36 my sentence (*writes the sentence with no punctuation at the end*) 'The dog is jumping'. Let us all  
37 read this sentence.  
38 Ls: (*Chorus*) The dog is jumping.  
39 T1: Ikweyiphi itense lesentensi? (*in which tense is this sentence?*)  
40 L: (*Chorus*) The dog is jumping.

41 T1: I did not say read, I asked in which form is this sentence? In which form of a tense is this  
42 sentence? Ikweyiphi itense lesentensi? (*Which tense is this sentence?*)  
43 (*One learner puts up his hand*)  
44 T1: Tommy ikweyiphi (*which*) tense is this? It is in...?  
45 L: Is...  
46 T1: What about 'Is'? I am asking about the whole sentence. Not 'is' only, but the whole  
47 sentence. Look at it and tell me in which form is this sentence?  
48 T1: (*One learner came in the classroom from outside and the teacher asks her*) Uvelaphi? -  
49 (*where are you coming from?*)  
50 L: Gantsi - (*Downstairs.*)  
51 T1: Hlala Phantsi- (*sit down*) in which form? It is in...? It is in...? Sukufunda fori ukulibala -  
52 (*Don't learn to forget*) remember I told you that before you answer your question, you read your  
53 sentence twice then you answer it. Okay let us read this sentence together.  
54 Ls: (*Chorus*) The dog is jumping.  
55 T1: So our verb is ending with? (*Pointing at the word jumping*)  
56 Ls: (*Quietly looking at the teacher, seeming not to know what the teacher is talking about*)  
57 T1: Our verb is ending with -ing, meaning this sentence is in which tense?  
58 Ls: (*Chorus*) In present tense...  
59 T1: Very good. It is in present tense. Guys don't learn things to forget. Sukufunda fori ukulibala  
60 (*don't learn to forget*) If I tell you something, keep that in your oblongata and never forget it. If a  
61 sentence has -ing, that sentence is in present tense.  
62 T1: Yeka Ukuphithizela ( stop what you are doing) (classroom management). Masiyifunde - (*let*  
63 *us read this*)  
64 Ls: (*Chorus*) The dog is jumping.  
65 T1: Meaning which tense is this sentence? Inja iyaxhumaxhuma (*the dog is jumping*)  
66 Ls: It is in present tense.  
67 T1: Why is it a present tense? Repeat after me, because the verb is ending with -ing. Yilena  
68 Uvebhu yakho (*this is your verb*).  
69 Ls: (*Repeating after the teacher in unison*) Because the verb is ending with- ing.  
70 T1: (Walks to one learner and reprimand him for misbehaving in the classroom) I said Yeka  
71 ukuphithizela (*I said stop what you are doing*).  
72 T1: It means our sentence is in present tense. Now... Now you can tell me that Inja  
73 iyaxhumaxhuma (The dog is jumping) is in present tense. When I look at it I will say my dog is  
74 jumping. Yilena ivebhu yakho- (*this is your verb*) (*pointing to the word 'jumping'*). Now you  
75 want to tell someone about your dog. It is not jumping now. You say (*as she writes on the*  
76 *chalkboard*) 'My dog was jumping yesterday'. If I asked you what was your dog doing? Your  
77 answer will be (*pointing on the chalkboard*)?  
78 Ls: (*Chorus*) My dog was jumping yesterday.  
79 T1: All of us?  
80 Ls: (*Chorus*) My dog was jumping yesterday...  
81 T1: Meaning it is the past now. It is no longer jumping... Inja yam ibixhumaxhuma? - (*my dog*  
82 *was jumping?*)  
83 Ls: (*Chorus*) Izilo - (*yesterday*)  
84 T1: It means now you are talking about the past, elidlulileyo- (*it has passed*). It was something  
85 that happened yesterday not now. This means 'is' has already changed. Remember when we

86 talking about 'is' in the past tense it becomes was. Ixesha elidlulileyo – (*the time that has*  
87 *passed*). Ikweyiph iitense?- (*which tense?*)  
88 L: Ixesha elidlulileyo (*the time that has passed*)  
89 T1: Ngubani lo uhlekayo? –(*Who is laughing?*) (*Classroom management*)  
90 Ls: (*Pointing at each other*) Nguwe – (*it is you*)  
91 T1: (*Reprimands the learners who were disturbing*) You are disturbing others, kutheni besithi  
92 bonke nguwe – (*why are they all saying it is you?*) Usile!- (*you are silly!*)  
93 T1: *Now masithathe (let us take) something else (Writes on the chalkboard)* 'All girls are  
94 playing'. Read this sentence all of you...  
95 Ls: (*All of them*) All girls are playing.  
96 T1: Again?  
97 Ls: All girls are playing.  
98 T1: Okay, can I ask something again? Is this sentence the in the same tense as the first one?  
99 L: (*One learner speaking with uncertainty*) No... Yes... No...  
100 T1: No, I agree they are not in the same tense, (Mentions a learner's name) stand up. In which  
101 tense is this sentence? You said 'No' and I agreed now tell me in which tense is this sentence.  
102 Ikweyiph iitense (*in which tense*) is this sentence? All girls are playing.  
103 L: It is in past tense.  
104 T1: Huh? Wait, I am looking at you now, you are standing, or we are standing together on the  
105 field, and I say; All girls are playing now. Is that a past tense? I told you that if you look at  
106 something and it is happening now, it is present tense. Now look at this sentence, 'All girls are  
107 playing'. So which tense is this one?  
108 L: present tense...  
109 T1: Yes, full sentence please...  
110 L: It is in present tense.  
111 T1: Susa isandla emlonyeni (*take your hand out of your mouth*)  
112 L: It is in present tense...  
113 T1: Correct, because *uyawabona* (*you can see them*). You can see the girls now.. Phendula  
114 kakhulu xa uthetha (*speak aloud when you speaking*). Now if we want to tell someone about the  
115 girl, we will say, all girls were playing. You see we have changed 'are' to 'were'. Okay let me  
116 test you; if used 'are' how many people am I talking about? (*Mentions a learner's name*)  
117 L: Many.  
118 T1: Phendula kakhulu (*speak up*)  
119 L: Many people.  
120 T1: Yes, many people, and if I am talking about 'is', how many people am I talking about?  
121 L: *mumbling...*  
122 T1: Kwaza xa uthetha (*speak up when you are talking*). Lomntu akafuni uzeke idegree yakhe (*He*  
123 *is not here for you he is here for his degree*)  
124 L: We are talking about one person.  
125 T1: Yes, we are talking about one person, so if we are to write them in past tense, 'is' becomes  
126 'was' and 'are' becomes 'were'. Mamela – (*listen*), I can see that you want me to write  
127 something on the board. (*Writes on the chalkboard*):  
128 **Write these in a past tense**  
129 **The donkey is grazing on the field**  
130 **The cats are licking milk**  
131 **Cars on the street are running**

132 **My baby is crying all day**

133 **School boys are clapping hands**

134 T1: take your grammar books and write that exercise. Vala umlomo wakho (*Keep your mouth*  
135 *shut*). Ndizanibetha (*I will beat you*) if I see you making noise. (*Goes to one learner that was*  
136 *making noise*) Yintoni le uyifake entloko? (*What is in your head?*). Ndixelele (*tell me*). Now  
137 write this individually and give your books to me when you are done.

138 Learners wrote individually and gave their books to the teacher for marking when they were  
139 done. Each learner takes his or her book to the teacher for marking immediately after finishing  
140 writing, waits for the book to be marked and gets it back. Sometimes they are told to go and  
141 rewrite if the teacher is not happy with what they have written.

142 After the teacher marked all the learners' books in class, she gave the oral feedback of exercise  
143 to the learners.

144 T1: Listen guys, listen. Let us do corrections for our activity. What is the correct answer for the  
145 first sentence? (*Mentions a learner's name*)

146 L: The donkey was grazing on the field.

147 T1: Is that correct class?

148 Ls: (Chorus) Yes!

149 T1: Okay, the second sentence? (*Mentions a learner's name*)

150 L: The cats are licking the milk.

151 (*The sound of the bell ringing signifying the end of the lesson*)

152 T1: You have to go to your next class. This exercise is very easy, where there is 'is' you change  
153 is to was, where there is 'are' you put?

154 Ls: (Chorus) Were.

155 T1: Good, you may leave for your next lesson.

### LESSON THREE

20 May 2013

Duration: 50 Minutes (13:10 -14:00)

Activity: Comprehension

LMs: Dalias, D., Harman, H.T., Hartshome, K. B., Hemming, J. & Miller, W.T. (1983). *Benny, and Betty and their friends: Standard 1 Reader*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman (Pty) Ltd.

1 After T1 gave each learner a textbook, she started paging through and the told learners to open  
2 on page three.

3 T1: I want you to read that story aloud, all of you at the same time.

4 Ls: (*in unison*) At the Shop. Here are Benny and Betty and Joseph. They are at the shop. They  
5 are inside the shop. They are saying, good morning, Mr Nkomo.

6 T1: Some people are not reading aloud, I can't hear their voices. Read again, start from the  
7 beginning.

8 *Learners read the story again altogether*

9 *The story was written as follows:*

#### 10 **At the shop**

11 **Here are Benny and Betty and Joseph. They are at the shop. They are inside the shop. They**  
12 **are saying "Good morning, Mr. Nkomo." Mr. Khomo says "Good morning, children"**

13 **Betty says, "Please, Mr. Nkomo, I want to buy some things. I want to buy a packet of sugar.**  
14 **I want to buy a packet of tea." Mr. Nkomo says, "Have you got any money, Betty?" Betty**  
15 **says, "Yes, Mr. Nkomo, I have got some money. Here is the money."**

16 **Mr. Nkomo says, "Here is the sugar. Here is the tea." Joseph says, "please, Mr. Nkomo,**  
17 **I want some sugar. I like suger." Mr. Nkomo says, "have you got any money, Joseph?"**

18 **Joseph says, "No, Mr.Nkomo." Mr. Nkomo says, "No money, no suger".**

19 *Learners read the story three times, with the teacher correcting them on certain pronunciations.*

20 T1: Now in your grammar books, you should answer those questions that were taken from the  
21 story that you just finished reading. Open your grammar books and do exercise 2. The answers to  
22 those questions are in the story that you just read. This is a very easy story, so I expect all of you  
23 to get all the answers correct. Are we clear?

24 Ls: (*chorus*) yes mam!

25 *Exercise two was written as follows:*

26 Exercise 2

27 **Look at pages 1 and 2. What are the right words?**

28 **1. The children are going to Mr. Nkomo's shop/school/house.**

29 **2. Mr. Nkomo is on/inside/outside the shop.**

30 **3. Mr. Nkomo sees/says/sews "Good morning, children"**

31 **4. Betty is buying some sugar/shorts/shirts.**

32 *Instructions were not clear whether learners should underline, circle or tick the 'right' words,*  
33 *and the teacher did not clarify this either. However, most of the learners ticked the 'right' words.*

34 *Each learner gave the book to the teacher for marking immediately after finishing with writing.*

35 *All the learners' books were marked in the class by the teacher. After she finished marking all*  
36 *the books, she did corrections orally with the learners.*

37 T1: What is the correct word for number 1?

38 Ls: (*in unison*) shop!

39 T2: For number 2?

40 Ls: Inside!



41 T1: Right, number 3?  
42 Ls: Says!  
43 T1: Number 4?  
44 Ls: Sugar!  
45 T1: Good those of you who did not get the exercise correct please rewrite it and correct your  
46 work.  
47 *Learners were released to go to the next lesson after the bell rang... I asked the teacher was she*  
48 *chose to use a standard 1,(Grade 3) to give activities to Grade 5 learners:*  
49 T1: (*Laughs*) It is good you have noticed the type of material I have to use to get at their level.  
50 That is exactly the level where our learners are. If you look in their grammar books not all of  
51 them could get this task correctly. So I use these lower grades books just to develop their basic  
52 English skills and pull up gradually when I see that they are doing well.

## LESSON FOUR

Activity: Comprehension based on a poem: The story about the sea

Date: 23 May 2013

Duration: 50 minutes (10:30 -11:20)

LSMs: Poster

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- 1 T1: Good morning all of you?  
2 Ls: (*chorus*) Good morning Ms.  
3 T1: (*Pastes the poster of the poem on the chalkboard*) I want you to read this poem. All of you  
4 read aloud at the same time.  
5 Ls: (*read the poem written on the poster in unison*)  
6 *The poem on the poster was written as follows:*  
7 **The story of the sea**  
8 **Oh! What a big place like you?**  
9 **Life is there and death is there.**  
10 **Healthy food is unforgettable.**  
11 **Dangerous animals that don't care.**  
12 **But of all things you are our life.**  
13 **God created the sea for the people to be happy.**  
14 **The sea we love you.**  
15 **Minerals and water of nature comes from you.**  
16 **Blue colour of hope.**  
17 **The sea, Oh! The sea.**  
18 T1: What is the poem about?  
19 Ls: (*Chorus*) The story about the sea.  
20 T1: Good, we all know what we do in the sea, isn't? Who can tell me what we do in the sea? Yes  
21 (*mentions a learner's name*)  
22 L: We swim, we run, we jump...  
23 T1: Okay, okay, stop there. What is good that we get from the sea? (*Mentions a learner's name*)  
24 L: Salt.  
25 T1: Speak louder please, are you sick? Or why is your voice so low?  
26 L: Salt!  
27 T1: Yes we get salt from the sea. What else do we get from the sea? (*Mentions a learner's name*)  
28 L: Water.  
29 T1: Yes, but what else do we get from the sea? We like it, we eat it. (*Mentions a learner's name*)  
30 L: Vegetables .  
31 T1: No! We don't get vegetables from the sea. (*Mentions a learner's name*). Ingathi abanyebenu  
32 abalazi ukuba yintoni ulwandle. (*It seems some of you do not know what is a sea*). A sea is  
33 ulwandle. What do we get from the sea? You like it, and you sometimes buy it from Checker's,  
34 Shoprite and many other shops.  
35 L: fish  
36 T1: Yes, very good. We get fish from the sea. Who doesn't eat fish in this class? No one right?  
37 So we get fish from the sea. Fish is very good for our health. They have a special vitamin called  
38 Omega 3, which is good for our brain. This vitamin makes us even think properly. So it is not  
39 wrong to eat fish. You can eat a lot and lot of fish, but you will never be sick, but if you eat for  
40 example a lot of sweet you might be sick, because sweets are not good for your health. But fish  
41 is very good for your health. Now let us read our poem again at the same time.

42 Ls: *(read the poem aloud in unison).*

43 T1: Copy this poem into your grammar books. First copy the one that is written on the poster and  
44 add these verses to your poem again.

45 *She writes another stanza on the chalkboard which reads:*

46 **Fish is our food that we get from you sea.**

47 **To strengthen our brain for future.**

48 **Thank you God to create the sea for us.**

49 **The sea oh! The sea.**

50 *While learners are busy copying the poem both from the poster and the chalkboard, T1 writes  
51 the questions on the other half of the chalkboard. The questions read:*

52 **Questions from the poem**

53 **7. How is the colour of the sea water?**

54 **8. What do we get from the sea that is our food?**

55 **9. Who created the sea?**

56 **10. What else can we see in the sea?**

57 **11. What is so dangerous at the sea?**

58 **12. Draw the animal that is good for our health which we get from the sea.**

59 T: please write fast we cannot copy a poem for the whole day, you have to finish copying so  
60 that you can answer these questions on the chalkboard.

61 *After 10 minutes more than half of the learners confirmed to have done copying the poem  
62 into their grammar books.*

63 T1: Are you all done copying the poem?

64 Ls: *(chorus)* Yes!

65 T1: Good let us read these questions aloud all of us.

66 *Learners read questions from 1-6, in unison.*

67 T1: Now close that page where you have written the poem and answer these questions on a  
68 separate page, because I don't want you to read answers from the poem, I want to see if you  
69 really understood the poem.

70 *One learner puts up her hand in seek of the chance to speak.*

71 T1: Yes *(mention's the learner's name).*

72 L: Singayikopela ezincwadini zethu lemibuzo okanye sibhale nje impendulo? *(Should we  
73 copy the questions into our books or we must just write the answers?)*

74 T1: Hay! Sanukukopa imibuzo bhalani nje impendulo. *(No , Do not copy the questions; just  
75 write the answers to the questions.)* After you are done with questions one up to five, then  
76 you do question six where you have to draw the animal that is good for our health. Zoba  
77 isilwaninyana esifumaneka elwandle. *(Draw an animal that we find in the sea).* Sizobe  
78 kakuhle uzuke wonke umntu ayibone lento uyizobileyo, niyeva? *(Draw it nicely so that  
79 anybody can see what type of animal you have drawn, do you understand)*

80 Ls: *Make some inaudible noise in their groups.*

81 T1: I said write the answers to the questions, I did not share the answers with your friends.  
82 Why are you making noise? Zip up your mouth please, zip up.

83 *Each learner answered the questions individually in his or her grammar book. After  
84 approximately fifteen minutes almost half of the class was done. Those who finished early  
85 gave their books to the teacher for marking. If a learner brings the book the teacher marks the  
86 book immediately and hand it back to the learners.*

87     *The bell rang after 51 minutes. Some of the learners' books were still not yet marked, the*  
88     *teacher instructed them to leave their English grammar books on her desk so that she would*  
89     *finish marking them. Learners collected their books and put them on the teacher's table.*  
90     *They then left for another lesson.*

## LESSON FIVE

Activity: Informal letter

Duration: 50 minutes (12:20 -13:10)

LSM: Chalkboard

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- 1 *After she greeted her learners*  
2 T1: who of have friends in this class?  
3 Ls: (*Some learners put their hands up*)  
4 T1: Ngobane kuni abanetshomi? (*Who of you have friends?*) Aba bangaphakamisanga zandla  
5 abanazo itshomi? (*Those who are not putting their hands up do not have friends?*)  
6 Ls: (*making inaudible sounds*) We do!  
7 T1: What are you going to do during this coming holiday?  
8 Ls: (*Making inaudible sound*)  
9 T1: Hey! Keep quiet; I want to talk to one person at a time.  
10 L: I am going to Port Elizabeth.  
11 T1: (*mentions a learner's name*)  
12 L: We are going to the festival.  
13 T1: Okay, they will be going for the festival, other people, where will you be going or what will  
14 you be doing during the holiday? (*Mentions a learner's name*)  
15 L: I am going to stay home.  
16 T1: (*mentions a learner's name*)  
17 L: We are going to play soccer with my friends.  
18 T1: Okay, let us do something. Let us all invite our friends from other places to come to  
19 Grahamstown because there will something happening here which they don't know. What is  
20 that? What is it exactly?  
21 Ls: (*Shouting in unison*) Festival! Festival!  
22 T1: What do people do during the festival?  
23 Ls: they dance! They sell things! Cook food!  
24 T1: Okay, okay. We are going to invite our friends to come to Grahamstown for the festival  
25 which takes place during the holiday. We are going to write a letter to them and tell them to  
26 come to our houses so that they will be able to see the festival. Do we all know how to write a  
27 letter?  
28 Ls: Yes, No...  
29 T1: Let us look at how we write a letter. You were taught how to write a letter in Grade 4 isn't?  
30 Zange nifundiswe ukubhala ileta kwa Grade 4? (*where you not taught how to write a letter in*  
31 *Grade 4?*)  
32 Ls: Yes mam!  
33 T1: How do we start writing a letter? What do we start with first?  
34 Ls: Address!  
35 T1: Okay, (*writes the address on the top right corner of the chalkboard*) we start with the  
36 address:  
37 276 Extension 4  
38 Joza  
39 Grahamstown  
40 6139  
41 13-06-13

42 T1: Make sure your address is written straight (*draws a vertical line to demonstrate how the*  
43 *address should be adjusted*), and then you leave an open line to write your salutation. In the  
44 salutation you write (*writes on the chalkboard My dear...*) then you say the name of your friend.  
45 You all know your friend's names.  
46 T1: this is called salutation or greeting. What do we call this? (*Pointing on the chalkboard*)  
47 Ls: Salutation or greeting!  
48 T1: Good, then you go to the first paragraph that is called introduction. What do we call the first  
49 paragraph?  
50 Ls: Introduction!  
51 T1: In this paragraph you greet your friend. Qala ngokubulisa itshomi yakho umxelele ukuba  
52 unjani impilo. Awunakuqala ngokukemema ungabulisanga. (*Start by greeting your friend and*  
53 *tell him/her how you are. You can't just start inviting him/her without greeting him/her*). For  
54 example you can say: How are you doing my friend? I invite you for June holiday at my home.  
55 T1: What else do you want to tell your friends? (*Mentions a learner's name*)  
56 L: To come and enjoy!  
57 L: Bring sweets.  
58 T1: Good, write everything that you want to tell him or her in your letter. Now take your  
59 Grammar books and start writing a letter to your friend. Invite your friend for June holiday. Your  
60 letter should be two paragraphs. (*Writes on the chalkboard*): "invite your friend for June  
61 holiday". Tell your friend what happens during the festival.  
62 Ls: Yes Mam! (*Noise level starts rising*)  
63 T1: Akhange ndithi qalani ukwenza ingxolo, thulani niqalise ukubhala. Ndifuna incwadi zenu  
64 zegrammar emva kwalelesini. Niyandiva? (*I did not say start making noise, keep quiet and start*  
65 *writing. I need your grammar books by the end of the lesson. Do you understand?*)  
66 S: Yes mam!  
67 T1: When you are done writing your two paragraphs (*Draws horizontal lines on the chalkboard*  
68 *to illustrate paragraphs*), then you write; Your friend, then in the next line you write your name.  
69 T1: (*Sits by her desk*), If you have a question just ask me not your friend. When you are done put  
70 your books on my desks.  
71 *By the end of the lesson all learners put their grammar books on the teacher's desk. Some*  
72 *learners were still writing even after the bell rang but the teacher told them to hand in their*  
73 *books anyway because they had to go to the next lesson. T1 began marking the first books that*  
74 *were put on her desk.*

## 4B: LESSON TRANSCRIPTS FOR T2

### LESSON ONE

Topic: Story Recount: The day the truck got stuck

Date: 25 April 2013

Duration: 1hour (12:30 – 13:30)

LSMs: READ Big Boog- The day the truck got stuck

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- 1 *After greeting the learners, T2 started asking questions about the previous lesson.*
- 2 T2: What did we learn about yesterday?
- 3 Ls: *(raising their hands)*
- 4 T2: Yes... *(Mentions the learner's name)* .
- 5 L: We read a story about 'The day the truck got stuck'...
- 6 T2: Is that correct?
- 7 L: *(chorus)* Yes!
- 8 T2: Who helped the truck driver? *(mentions the learner's name.)*
- 9 L: It was Tebogo.
- 10 T2: Correct?
- 11 Ls: *(Chorus)* Yes.
- 12 T: Where did the truck get stuck? *(Mentions the learner's name)*
- 13 L: It was too big.
- 14 T2: Is that correct?
- 15 Ls: *(chorus)* No!
- 16 T2: What is the correct answer then?
- 17 L: Under the bridge.
- 18 T2: Yes, it got stuck under the bridge.
- 19 T2: Why was the truck stuck?
- 20 L: Because it was too big. *(This learner has been giving correct answers throughout the lesson)*
- 21 T2: What did the petrol attendant do to help the truck driver?
- 22 L: *(quiet, no one seems to know the answer)*
- 23 T2: *(giving cues)* He...? He... Push...?
- 24 L: *(same learner who usually gives correct answers)* He pushed the truck.
- 25 T2: With what?
- 26 L: With his petrol tanker truck.
- 27 T2: Very good. Now I want answers from other people. Not only her. Ayinguye yedwa ofunde elibali *(She is not the only one that read the story)*
- 28 T2: How did Tebogo help the truck driver?
- 29 Ls: *(most of them raising their hands),*
- 30 L: Tebogo told the truck driver to remove some air out of the tire.
- 31 T2: Very good. You seem to remember the whole story very well.
- 32 *(Learners seemed to remember the story very well, judging from the correct answers they were giving about the story.)*
- 33 T2: If I asked you to tell me this story or tell someone about this story that we have read in the class, will you be able to do it?
- 34 Ls: *(chorus)* Yes!
- 35 T2: Who can stand up and tell us briefly the story? This time I won't be asking questions, you just stand up and tell us what happened in the story. Ngubani onokusixelela ibali ndingakhane ndibuze mibuzo? *(Who can tell us the story without being asked the probing questions?)*
- 36
- 37
- 38
- 39
- 40

41 *Learners appeared to be shy, but the same learner who usually speaks in the class stood up and*  
 42 *retells the story. Although she could not tell the whole story exactly as it was read, she tried and*  
 43 *managed to tell the story in the similar sequence as it was read. T2 gave learners some blank*  
 44 *papers and told them that they will work in groups of four to six.*  
 45 T2: Now, in your groups tell me about the story that we just read yesterday. You can make use of  
 46 the words<sup>22</sup> in the flashcard on the chalkboard to write your essay. What is the topic of our story?  
 47 Ls: (*chorus*) The day the truck got stuck!  
 48 T: Ukuba awazi ukuba amanye amagama athetha ukuthini ndisuze (*If you see there are words*  
 49 *that you do not know their meanings please ask me*)  
 50 *Learners worked in groups. Although they were writing in English, learners were mostly*  
 51 *discussing in IsiXhosa (not recorded). Sometime learners asked T2 to translate for them some of*  
 52 *the words in IsiXhosa to English. T2 walked around the class and from group to group giving*  
 53 *some help to the learners and see how they are progressing.*  
 54 T2: (*comes towards me and say*) you see one thing I have noticed, it is mostly girls who are  
 55 doing the writing. I did not remove the flashcards with the new words from the chalkboard so  
 56 that they would use it when they are writing their recount. That's why you see them coming to  
 57 me asking what those words mean.  
 58 *Learners were visibly using the words on the flashcards, as some of them stood to take a closer*  
 59 *look when they were copying them down into their papers. The words written on the flash cards*  
 60 *were: approached, bridge, petrol tanker, screech, trouble and tow-truck.*  
 61 L: what is approach?  
 62 T: approach means to arrive, ukufika.  
 63 L: Bridge?  
 64 T: A bridge is ibhulorho, and a petrol tanker is intenka-yamafutha enquwelo.  
 65 L: Scream?  
 66 T: To Screech mean to make noise... like to scream. You know ukakhala...  
 67 T2 *Encouraged participation from all the group members, and told them that each group should*  
 68 *present their work in class.*  
 69 *At exactly 08:40, the T2 told learners to stop writing.*  
 70 T2: *Stop writing! All pencils down. Now I want each group to read to me what they have written.*  
 71 *The person who was writing should not be the one presenting.*  
 72 *Representatives from the 8 groups in the class read their stories aloud. T2 instantly provided*  
 73 *feedback of tenses, correct pronunciations and some grammar mistakes. After the groups*  
 74 *presented T2 told learners to read their work again correct their mistakes and hand in their*  
 75 *papers for marking. Some of the groups wrote long essays about the story, while some only wrote*  
 76 *a paragraph.*  
 77 *The bell rang, at 09:00, some of the learners were still finalising their work, but the teacher*  
 78 *insisted that they should hand in their work and go for the next lesson,*

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<sup>22</sup> The words in the flashcards were explained in the previous lesson on reading.



## LESSON TWO

Monday, 29 April 2013

Duration: 1 hour (10:00 – 11:00)

Topic: Comprehension

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1 *After the greeting the learners, T2 spent about 8 minutes writing questions on the chalkboard.*

2 T2: *(talking to me)* You see this thing of not having photocopying machines wastes our time.  
3 Now I have to write these questions on the chalkboard for learners. But if we had a photocopy  
4 machine things were going to be a bit easier.

5 T2: writes the following on the chalkboard:

### 6 **Comprehension**

7 **Answer the following questions:**

8 **(l) Who saw the truck coming down the road?**

9 **(m) What was written on the truck?**

10 **(n) What happened to the truck on its way? Why?**

11 **(o) Who tried to help the truck driver? And how?**

12 **(p) Did the plan work?**

13 **(q) What else did the tanker driver do to help?**

14 **(r) Did the tow-truck driver help the ice-cream truck driver? How do you know?**

15 **(s) How did this affect other road users?**

16 **(t) Explain the conversation between the truck driver and the engineer.**

17 **(u) Who helped them and how?**

18 **(v) What are the advantages and disadvantages of a cellphone? Name 3 of each.**

19 *T2 told learners not to write the questions, but to simply write down the answers to the questions*  
20 *in their grammar books. T2 read through all the questions, explaining what some of the words in*  
21 *IsiXhosa.*

22 L: We don't understand number g.

23 T2: Letter g is asking, Umqhubi kazithuthi ebemncedile umqhubi wetraki ye- ice cream? *(Did*  
24 *the tow-truck driver help the ice-cream truck driver), Wazi kanjani? (How do you know?)*

25 L: Number i?

26 T2: Cacisa inoxo phakathi komqhubi wetraki ne-njineli? *(Explain the conversation between the*  
27 *truck driver and the engineer)* And the last question is asking ubuhle ne ububi bekusebanzisa  
28 iphoni *(advantages and disadvantages of using a phone)*

29 Learners worked in individually in their grammar books. Most of the learners were using pencils  
30 to write with.

31 *T2: walks around the class, reprimanding some of the learners who were disturbing in the class.*

32 T2: *(talking to me)* You see most of them are writing with pencils. I have always complained  
33 about it in the staff meeting with the principal, and it was brought up in the parents' meeting that  
34 they should buy ball pens but parents don't want to buy pens for their children. A pen is not that  
35 expensive, it is not more than ten Rand and most of these children are getting grants from the  
36 government. The work you see written in their grammar books with ink pen; they used the ones  
37 that were provided by the department. If they get finished then learners have nothing to write  
38 with. That is why we have no choice but to let them use pencils that are also provided by the  
39 Department. So we gave them those pens at the beginning of last term that is why they are all  
40 finished. But sometimes using pencils helps them to write neat things, because they make a lot of  
41 spelling mistakes. So instead of scratching as in case with ball pens, they can neatly use erasers  
42 to correct their spellings.

43 T2: Please hurry up, it is almost time, you are so slow. After the bell rang, the teacher asked  
44 learners to hand in their books for marking.  
45 *Four learners are still not done. T2 instructed them to hand in their books anyways.*  
46 *See samples of some of the learners' marked scripts for this lesson.*

### LESSON THREE

Date: 30 April 2013

Duration: 45 Minutes (11:30 -12:15)

Activity: Adjectives

LSMs: Chalkboard

1 *When learners came in the class, T2 gave them their exercise books back. She told them to do*  
2 *corrections of the previous lesson's comprehension exercise. The teacher read the questions*  
3 *written on the chalkboard, (the questions were not erased from the chalkboard) and asked*  
4 *learners to give answers orally. Answers were not written on the chalkboard. Where learners got*  
5 *stuck the teacher gave answers herself.*

6 *Possible answers to the comprehension questions. These were not written on the chalkboard, but*  
7 *discussed by the teacher and learners.*

8 **(a) Tebogo**

9 **(b) Ice-cream**

10 **(c) The truck got stuck under the bridge, because it was too big.**

11 **(d) A petrol tanker tried to help the truck driver by pulling the truck behind.**

12 **(e) No.**

13 **(f) The tanker driver pushed the truck from behind, but the truck would not move.**

14 **(g) He hooked up the chains to the ice-cream truck and pulled it until the bridge shook,**  
15 **but the ice-cream truck stayed stuck.**

16 **(h) There was a long line of cars on the road because they couldn't go forward or**  
17 **backward.**

18 **(i) The engineer suggested that they should cut off the top of the ice cream truck**  
19 **because it was too high, but the ice cream truck said they should not cut the truck**  
20 **but they should cut off the bottom of the bridge because it was too low**

21 **(j) Tebogo, he told them to let some air out of the ice cream truck tires..**

22 **(k) Any (three for each) possible answers from the learners**

23 T2: Correct your answers in your exercise books as we discuss the questions. Some of you are  
24 just looking at me, you are not writing down the correct answers that we are discussing now.  
25 Bhala ezimpendulo (*write the answers*) in your books.

26 *Learners gave correct answers to most of the questions.*

27 T2: Well most of you did well in this exercise; give yourselves some hands.

28 Ls: *Clapping hands and making some inaudible mumbles. Some of the learners were looking in*  
29 *each other's books and asking how much they got from the exercise.*

30 T2: No, No, I did not say make noise... you (*learner's name*) hlala phantsi umamele (*sit down*  
31 *and listen*)

32 *T2 writes the word 'adjectives' on the chalkboard and asks all the learners to read it aloud.*

33 T2: Read this word all of you.

34 Ls: (chorus) Adjectives

35 T2: What is an adjective? Who can tell us what an adjective is?

36 *No learner seemed to know the answer, as none of them raised his or her hand.*

37 T2: (*writes the definition of the word adjective on the chalkboard*) 'An adjective is a word that  
38 tells more about the noun or pronoun'. For example, Amagama esizakuxelela wona ngamntu  
39 (*words that will tell you about someone*), for example we can say (*mentions a learner's name*) is  
40 beautiful, or handsome, or short etc.

41 T2: (*takes the book with the story about 'the day the truck got stuck'*) Listen to this sentence  
42 carefully, I will ask you some questions after I am done reading it. (*Reads*) One day a very large  
43 truck turned off the high way and onto one of the narrow roads that led into the township (*She*  
44 *read it two times*). Which word is a noun in this sentence?  
45 Ls: (*chorus*) Truck!  
46 T2: Which word is telling us about the truck?  
47 Ls: (*chorus*) Large!  
48 T2: So large is an... what? (*Mentions a learner's name*)  
49 L: It is an adjective  
50 T2: Why? (*Mentions another learner's name*)  
51 L: Because it is telling us about the truck.  
52 T2: Very good. Now find another adjective.  
53 Ls: (*mentioning words randomly*) very, road, narrow...  
54 T2: No, please one person at a time! Put up your hand if you want to say something. (*Mentions a*  
55 *learner's name*).  
56 L: Narrow  
57 T2: Why are you saying narrow is an adjective?  
58 L: Because it is telling us about the road.  
59 T2: Very good. Now can you remember anymore adjectives from the story that we have read?  
60 Tell me some.  
61 Ls: (*mention more words*), ice, big, huge, high, big, old...  
62 T2: Tell me some adjectives it this class.  
63 Ls: (*chorus*) clean, short, dirty, beautiful, ugly etc.  
64 T2: Do you all understand now? Wonke umunyu ngoku uyayazi yintoni iadjective? (*Does*  
65 *everyone understand what we mean by adjective now?*)  
66 Ls: (*Chorus*) Yes!  
67 T2: (*writes on the chalkboard*) Copy the following sentences in your grammar books.  
68 **Adjectives**  
69 **Underline the adjectives in each of the following sentences.**  
70 (k) Joan is a clever girl.  
71 (l) Father has big feet.  
72 (m) The plums were sweet.  
73 (n) It was a rough road.  
74 (o) My right foot hurts.  
75 (p) Do it the right way.  
76 (q) We had ripe plums  
77 (r) Her hair is long.  
78 (s) Draw a straight line.  
79 (t) Mother is busy today.  
80 T2: Please copy all the sentences into your grammar books and underline the adjectives. Some of  
81 you don't even know what it means to underline. You are told underline, but then you end up  
82 circling the word. I will have to go for a meeting, so bhala phanki ezisentensi uyokuzibhala  
83 ekhaya (*copy these sentences and you can go and do the activity at home.*)  
84 *The teacher had to go for a union meeting that was held somewhere in town. All the learners*  
85 *were released early that day because all the teachers went for a meeting.*  
86 *The teacher only used the first 45 minutes of the lesson*

## LESSON FOUR

Date: 2 May 2013

Activity: Spelling

Duration: 1h00 (08:00 – 09:00)

LSMs: Chalkboard

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1 *T2 first made correction of the previous lesson's activity (adjectives) she told learners to*  
2 *exchange their exercise books so that they would mark each other's books*  
3 *The activity was still on the chalkboard; therefore T2 just read the sentences and asked learners*  
4 *to mention the correct adjective. She underlined the correct adjectives while, and learners*  
5 *marked each other's books by verifying correct answers on the chalkboard.*  
6 *The activity with the solution on the chalkboard appeared as follows*

7 (u) Joan is a clever girl.

8 (v) Father has big feet.

9 (w) The plums were sweet.

10 (x) It was a rough road.

11 (y) My right foot hurts.

12 (z) Do it the right way.

13 (aa) We had ripe plums.

14 (bb) Her hair is long.

15 (cc) Draw a straight line.

16 (dd) Mother is busy today.

17 T2: Please you must all use pencils so that you will be able to erase if you make a mistake.

18 Ls: Yes mam!

19 *While learners were busy marking T2 came and explains to me why she let learners mark each*  
20 *other's books:*

21 T2: You know this work was supposed to be for the previous day, it is just that I was interrupted  
22 by the union's meeting that we all had to attend. So we have to finish it and give feedback  
23 quickly so we can move to the next activity. If learners mark each other's work it won't waste  
24 time as compare to when I have to mark all the books myself in one lesson.

25 T2: (*talking to learners*) If you finished marking your friend's book bring it to me so I can sign  
26 it.

27 Ls: (*chorus*) yes mam!

28 *After 15 minutes all the books were signed. T2 then cleaned the chalkboard and wrote a spelling*  
29 *exercise, where learners have to organize jumbled words and writes them correctly. She writes:*

### 30 Spelling

31 Write the following words correctly.

32 (k) Kcirt

33 (l) Reknat

34 (m)Daor

35 (n) Enohpllec

36 (o) Pihsnwot

37 (p) Reenigne

38 (q) Revird

39 (r) Kcuts

40 (s) Yob

41 (t) Ciffart

42 T2: We have read all these words, now look at them carefully and write them correctly. You are  
43 doing this activity alone okay?

44 Ls: Yes mam!

45 *Learners did the activity individually in their exercise books. They kept asking the teacher to  
46 verify some of the letters that were not written so clearly on the chalkboard.*

47 T2: You should write fast, because we don't have any more time left on our lesson. If you finish  
48 writing then you put up your hand so that I can come and mark your book. Mentions a learner's  
49 name...

50 L: Can we write those words on the chalkboard or just the answers?

51 T2: Just write the answers because we will have to make correction on the chalkboard after I  
52 have marked all your books.

53 *After the teacher marked all the learners' books, she did correction of the activity with the  
54 learners. She asked learners to say out the correct words while she writes them next to the  
55 scrambled ones. The answers were:*

56 (k) **Kcirt - truck**

57 (l) **Reknat - tanker**

58 (m) **Daor - road**

59 (n) **Enohpllec - cellphone**

60 (o) **Pihsnwot - township**

61 (p) **Reenigne - engineer**

62 (q) **Revird - driver**

63 (r) **Kcuts - stuck**

64 (s) **Yob - boy**

65 (t) **Ciffart – traffic.**

66 *All learners were told to copy down the corrections of the words that they did not write correctly  
67 in their exercise books. All learners leave the classroom to go to the next lesson in another class.*

## LESSON FIVE

Date: 3 may 2013

Topic: Friendly/informal letter writing

Time: 12:30 – 13: 30

LSMs: Chalkboard

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- 1 T2: Today we are going to pretend as if we are Tebogo to tell our own friends about the truck  
2 that got stuck. You will write to your friend tell him or her how the truck got stuck, and how the  
3 driver was helped, *niyeva?* (you understand?).
- 4 Ls: Yes mam!
- 5 T2: When you write a letter, what is that you write at the beginning? How do we start writing a  
6 letter?
- 7 Ls: We start with an address.
- 8 T2: Very good, we start with an address. How do you write your address? Do we start with a  
9 date, do we start with a town, or how do we start with the address?
- 10 Ls: You start with a number...
- 11 T2: You star with a number? What number?
- 12 Ls: Street number.
- 13 T2: Okay say the address. (*As she writes the address on the chalkboard in the top right corner*)
- 14 Ls: 6586 Hlalani location, Grahamstown, 6139.
- 15 T2: (*Writes the address in a skew/ unadjusted way*) Am I correct?
- 16 Ls: (*Chorus*) Yes!
- 17 T2: Is my address correct the way I have written it? What is that you find incorrect with this  
18 address? (*Mentions a learners names to give answers to her question but learner is just quiet,*  
19 *mentions another learner's she is also not saying anything. Learners seem not to notice what is*  
20 *wrong with the way the teacher wrote the address*)
- 21 T2: (*After 30 seconds or so*) let us not waste time; the way I have written my address is wrong.  
22 Always make sure that the address is written straight. (*Draws a vertical line to show how the*  
23 *address should be straight*). It should be written very straight like this. But I do not want to see  
24 this line in your books. What else should we write?
- 25 Ls: The date.
- 26 T2: Yes, the date in which you are writing your letter. What is the day today?
- 27 Ls: 3rd May 2013.
- 28 T2: (*writes on the chalkboard*) 3 May 2013.
- 29 T2: (*as she draws a horizontal line to demonstrate*) *Tsiba umgca* (skip a line), *Ubhale igama*  
30 *letshomi yakho* (write the name of your friend), for example: Dear Asola. Then you greet your  
31 friend. We call this greeting. Then you skip a line again and start a new paragraph (*Draws*  
32 *another horizontal line*). In this paragraph you can greet your friend and tell your friend how you  
33 feel, how you missed your friend and all that. *Xelela utshomi wakho ukuba unjani* (tell your  
34 friend how you feel) and *zinjani izinto kwicala lakho* (and how things are on your side) Then you  
35 skip a line again (*Draws a horizontal line to indicate that learners should skip a line*).
- 36 T2: Then you start writing the second paragraph. In this paragraph you tell your friend about the  
37 truck, what happened, and how it was removed etc. at the end you skip a line again. Then what  
38 do you write? (*Mentions a learner's name*)
- 39 Ls: From.
- 40 T2: Do you need to write 'from'? You say...? What do you write? Who can tell us what is that  
41 we write at the end when we finish writing our paragraphs?

42 Ls : *(No one seems to know the answer)*

43 T2: You write either your friend or yours sincerely.... Then you write you name down.

44 T2: Okay now I want you to take your English exercises books, write a letter to your friend.

45 Write your own home address, I don't want you to use the address that is on the chalkboard.

46 Remember you write your own address, and your own friend's name. Not the one on the

47 chalkboard.

48 Ls: *(take out their exercises books and start writing)*

49 *The teaching on how to write a letter takes about 15 minutes, and the rest of the lesson time,*

50 *each o learners has been busy writing a letter in his/her exercises book. The teacher walks*

51 *around the class monitoring how learners are writing. Learners mostly communicate in*

52 *IsiXhosa.*

53 T2: *(noticed some learners drawing the same lines she drew on the chalkboard to demonstrate*

54 *that she skipped a line) Heey, asiyiboni lemigca (we don't see these lines) I was just showing*

55 *you that you should skip a line. And as you can see our address is not written in the middle of the*

56 *page. Where is it written?*

57 Ls: (Chorus) In the corner...

58 T2: You must write your address in the top right corner of your page. Look where is your right

59 and write in that corner. *Siyevana?* (do you understand?)

60 Ls: (Chorus) Yes mam...

61 T2: *Enkhosi* (thank you). Now *bhala* (now write).

62 T2: *(Talking to one learner that was walking from group to group) Hey you hlala phantsi* (sit

63 down). *Nehla nenyuka oko oko* (you are just going up and down, up and down). *Yiza Zohlala*

64 *apha* (come and sit here)

65 T2: *(speaking to another learner) you are just wasting time using a pencil. Yeakani ukubhala*

66 *nge-pencil ngoba ni –rubber oko oko* (stop using a pencil because you keep on rubbing). After

67 you finish you bring your book to me.

68 *Not all of the learners finished writing their activity when the lesson ended. Although no*

69 *instructions were given about the length of their letters, some learners only write a paragraph,*

70 *some for example wrote two paragraphs and some wrote a full page. They all submitted their*

71 *work to the teacher.*



## APPENDIX 5: INTERVIEWS TRANSCRIPTS

### APPENDIX 5A: INTERVIEWS TRANSCRIPTS FOR T1

#### Interview 1

11 April 2013 (09:00 - 09:44)

Interviewer= J

Interviewee =T

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72 **J:** good morning Ms. As I told you I am doing research on literacy in English, specifically I  
73 would like to see how writing in English is taught in Grade 5.

74 **T1:** mmhh.

75 **J:** So, I just want to ask you some few questions that will help me significantly in finding  
76 answers to my research questions. Be free to express yourself and ask me as many questions as  
77 possible for clarity.

78 **T1:** (laughs), No problem Julius...

79 **J:** Well I am recording our interviews with the voice recorder so that I will be able to transcribe  
80 what we talked about in this interview.

81 **T1:** No, no, I don't mind at all.

82 **J:** Okay, before we talk about how you teach writing, can you tell me about your experience  
83 about writing? Like how where you taught writing say at school or college?

84 **T1:** Ummh, I have been to the college for three years, ummh... doing JPD. JPD mean Junior  
85 Primary Teacher's diploma which I did for three years, and ummh, you don't do that JPD if you  
86 don't have matric. You must have matric to do JPD or whatever diploma you want to do, but I  
87 chose JPD because I love children.

88 **J:** Okey...

89 **T1:** then I have been at the college for three years, doing course one, course two and course three  
90 then I graduated after course three. After that I went to school, uuum, long time ago, but I know  
91 it plus-minus twenty years now that I am in teaching profession. I was not teaching specifically  
92 English, but I taught in many different schools. I taught in Port Elizabeth, isiXhosa and English  
93 but it was the lowest grade, Grade 1. Then I came here to Grahamstown, (*mentions the name of*  
94 *the school*), again I was not teaching English there, I was only teaching music, African dance and  
95 all theatre things. Then I applied a post here at this school in 1997. That is how I became a  
96 teacher here and then teaching English and all that. When I came at this school I started teaching  
97 in Grade 1, it was just in 2009 that I moved to Intermediate Phase. But at the moment I am  
98 teaching English and Social Sciences Grade 5 as well as arts to Grade 6 learners.

99 **J:** Okay. Now let us talk about your experience about writing. How you were taught writing at  
100 the college?

101 **T1:** at the college, there were two types of writing that we were taught; the cursive writing and  
102 the scribed writing. Cursive is when you write like this (*illustrating on a piece of paper*) all  
103 words written together.

104 **J:** Mmhh

105 **T1:** But scribed writing, if you write A, it must be A alone, B alone until the word is finished,  
106 then cursive is used when kids are learning to combine words, like word to word. There were so  
107 many things that we were taught at the college and I cannot mention all of them now. But when  
108 you teach a child to write that is the major thing that I have noticed from my 15 years of  
109 experience... a child cannot write if you did not tell him or her that you must start from left to  
110 right. Some children don't even know left and right, they keep on forgetting. But if you show  
111 him or her that this is your left hand and this is your right hand, put your left hand on top of your

112 book, and when you write you start from next to your hand up to the end of your page. From left  
113 to right, left to right. Then a child will be able to write because she or he knows, okay this is my  
114 left hand this is where I must start my writing. I must always start from next to my left hand side  
115 to the empty side of the page. Then tell the child, there is a red line at the end of the right side of  
116 the book, that line should be the end, you should stop there and start from the left again. That is  
117 how I first give them basic skills of writing, because some kids even at Grade 5 will start from  
118 right to left and their words get mixed up and you cannot even know what the child has written.  
119 But if you teach them that people start from left to right, it is easy for them to remember and  
120 write well.

121 **J:** Hmmm...

122 **T1:** you know learners are not the same. There are those who are bright and there are those who  
123 cannot understand so fast, slow learners, middle learners and what have you. So as a teacher you  
124 must make them to understand what you are trying to tell them. Make things easier for them to  
125 understand, and try to use a simplest form so that he or she cannot forget what you said. If you  
126 have to do it in IsiXhosa do it, it is not a crime. They call it code switching.

127 **J:** Hmmm...

128 **T1:** and be humble as much as you can and don't be so humble, if they are doing something  
129 wrong tell them it is wrong and they will stop it. He or she must know the rules and the  
130 regulation of the class. But make them feel comfortable but not to be afraid of you otherwise  
131 they won't learn. Learners must be able to share everything with you. When you get into the  
132 class greet them and make jokes with them, they must be free. As a teacher, make sure, when it  
133 is time to work, they must work. When it is time to stop, they must stop. Don't be like a big giant  
134 coming from the forest, no, they will be scared and unable to learn. If learners are afraid they  
135 will forget everything they have learned in the class.

136 **J:** You said you started teaching from the lower grades in the Foundation Phase and then you  
137 came to teach now in the Intermediate Phase, is there a difference in terms of how to teach  
138 writing?

139 **T1:** yes, there is a big difference, because at the lowest grade they don't use cursive writing, they  
140 use scribed writing. But when they go in the upper grades, say in the Intermediate Phase, they  
141 must write in cursive writing. Because their standard of writing is growing up, and up. You know  
142 a Grade 1 child cannot write as a grade 5 child, there is a difference. In Grade 1 for instance, they  
143 are still learning to writing unlike in Grade 5 where they use writing to learn. In Grade 5 they got  
144 a little bit of more knowledge of writing more than the Grade 1s.

145 **J:** So the cursive writing is taught from which grade?

146 **T1:** From Grade 3 upwards, when they have learned how to write properly. From those grades  
147 they have got the understanding of writing. You cannot just tell learners, write, you should first  
148 give them an exercise, we call that exercise motor nerve exercise to train their hands, how to  
149 write, how to hold a pen etc. But at Grade 5 now, they can write on their own, they are very  
150 flexible to write enough whatever they are given to write.

151 **J:** In Grade 1, you use to teach your learners, how to writing by telling them that they should  
152 start from left to right, and you teach them how to hold a pencil etc, now let us focus on Grade 5;  
153 How do you go about giving a writing tasks to your learners? What do you do procedurally in  
154 teaching writing to your Grade 5 learners?

155 **T1:** Even in Grade 5 you still have to teach them how to hold their pens.

156 **J:** Is that so?

157 **T2:** Yes, because some of them are holding them like this (*demonstrating*), you have to teach  
158 them how to hold a pen. If a child is holding a pen like this (*demonstrating*) he misses  
159 something, her foundation teachers did not teach him correctly how to write or hold a pen. Well  
160 in grade 5 they suppose to be writing on their own as I said, sometimes we answer questions  
161 from the a story that we read, sometimes they can list words that they know and I will tell them  
162 to write a composition using those words. And in Grade 5 they must be able to write cursively.  
163 Well if they are using scribed writing that is their own choice, but the emphasis should be, to  
164 teach them to write in cursive. As a teacher you should make sure they write clear things. Things  
165 that they can read, don't just say write, write, but tell them to write something that they will be  
166 able to read or somebody else will be able to read. I f I call a learner and ask her to read the  
167 sentence she wrote for me, she must be able to read it because she wrote it on her own.

168 **J:** So, how do you...?

169 **T1:** whatever she or he writes I tell them to write clearly and in cursive writing.

170 **J:** So before they write in class, say before they do any writing exercise, are there any activities  
171 that you do with them or how do you approach writing?

172 **T1:** Ummh, sometimes in the lower grades...

173 **J1:** well, lets us say Grade 5 now where we are focusing in this interview.

174 **T1:** Ok, in grade 5 if maybe I am going to teach them to write something, I tell them, guys I want  
175 you to write clearly, but never tell your learners what they should write, you will bore the  
176 learners. Everything that they write in their composition should come from them. So you tell  
177 them to write about something they know, it must come from them. You cannot spoon-feed the  
178 kids all the time; let them give you their own knowledge. Don't spoon-feed them do this, do this,  
179 let them write what they know so that you can understand their writing ability. Sometimes as a  
180 language teacher, it is good to know learners' creativity. Kids are not the same in the class, there  
181 are those who are shy, there are those who are quiet, and even if they know something they will  
182 never say it. So let them be free to write whatever they want to tell you. Yes introduce something  
183 to them but let them do the speaking, let them express themselves. So that you can understand,  
184 oh, this learner is like this, this learner is like that etc. if you keep them restricted to topics of  
185 your choice you cannot know them well, for example one learner might be good at writing about  
186 a certain interesting topic, but, that learner cannot show that because you incubated him or her.  
187 for instance the way I teach my own learners how to write a composition, I told them, mention  
188 any word in English that you know. And as they mention the words I write these words on the  
189 chalkboard, and then let them write a composition of their choice using their own words that they  
190 mentioned on the chalkboard. And when they write they are free and as a teacher you will see, oh  
191 this one is good and this one needs help here and so on.

192 **J:** Now do you give them a topic to write on using those word or?

193 **T1:** As I said, you don't need to be so restrictive, let them choose their own topic.

194 **J:** And how do you give them feedback?

195 **T1:** Well I read through their writing, do some corrections of the words that they have spelt  
196 wrongly, and then give them marks.

197 **J:** Now after you corrected their work do you let them rewrite and correct their work and hand  
198 them in for marking again or how do you do it?

199 **T1:** Well I always tell learners to write carefully and think before they write, and make sure what  
200 they put on paper is final. Well after marking their books, they can do corrections of the  
201 comments I gave them but not for marks. I caution them to read their writings, find all the

202 mistakes before they give in their books. I am not expecting them to be fluent, no, they are just  
203 learners who are learning English, like me it is not our mother tongue.

204 **J:** Now when you let them to be free and choose their own topics to write their composition how  
205 do you rate their writing? Do they write readable things?

206 **T1:** (laughs) you don't do that all the time, there are some times when I have to give them a topic  
207 and ask them to write a composition on that topic. Even during end of the year examination  
208 learners are asked to write compositions on specified topics and length. And you can't do that if  
209 you are teaching other language aspects. For example if I am teaching prepositions I can't say do  
210 your own prepositions no, you specifically teach what you want that day and see how they are  
211 going to make sentences out of what they have learned. So in this case, first they must know  
212 what a preposition is, second, they must know all the prepositions, well not all because they are  
213 not English speaking people, but as many as they can. And then you write a sentence, you tell  
214 them to use prepositions that were discussed in the class. They should use those prepositions to  
215 correct the sentences. You see, this time you don't say write whatever you want to write. So  
216 there are some certain formal work and informal work in the class. So if I say my cat is dash...  
217 the table, they should be able to fill in the correct preposition. For example, under, on top of,  
218 above etc, there must be a guideline, or a specific need that you want them to do, that is formal  
219 work.

220 **J:** and informal work?

221 **T1:** Informal work is when you work with them on the board, like they give correct answers to  
222 some sentences on the board and you will not mark those work.

223 **J:** Okay, interesting. How do you rate your learners' level of writing?

224 **T1:** Some of them are good and most of them are not good. Not all of them are good when it  
225 comes to writing. The only thing I am positive about is that they all can write. Well their writing  
226 may not be that meaningful at times but as a teacher I can understand, oh, this one wants to write  
227 about this and that. Like I said their level of writing is not the same so as their ability to learn is  
228 not the same.

229 **J:** Is there something maybe as their teacher that you think constraints or enables learners to be  
230 proficient writers than others?

231 **T1:** Ummmh, yeah, some of them seem not to have good foundation of writing. You know we  
232 teachers are not the same. That is why as teachers we must know our learners. You know the  
233 problem with us blacks; we have bigger number of children in our classrooms, so it takes time to  
234 learn about and understand all of them at the same time. But in white schools, the number of  
235 learners per teacher is so small, they have got 20 or 25 five if they are many, but with us, we can  
236 go up to forty or fifty learners in a class. So how are you going to be able to focus on learning  
237 about this one child? No way. It is difficult but we are trying our best. But the major thing is we  
238 got big number of learners in our classes. So we do not really give them the attention they  
239 deserve.

240 **J:** In your case how many learners are in your English class?

241 **T1:** they are 35 learners, they are quite a lot, but now that I give them work almost every day,  
242 when I mark their books, I will learn that this one is like this and this one is like this. But they are  
243 not the only class I teach. I teach Grades 5 A and B English, Grade6 A and B, English and Social  
244 Studies, as well as Dance on Wednesdays. You see how I am overloaded? And do you still  
245 expect me to be able to give individual attention to learners?

246 **J:** From my experience as a teacher we ought to teach in line with our syllabuses or say  
247 curriculum when teaching our respective subjects, what is your curriculum saying about teaching  
248 writing in English, Grade 5?

249 **T1:** What do you mean?

250 **J:** I mean the South African Curriculum and Assessment Policy statements (CAPS), what  
251 directions does it give as far as teaching writing in English first additional language in Grade 5 is  
252 concerned?

253 **T1:** Well for me, for the children to become proficient in writing they must write all the time, or  
254 frequently. Give them a lot of work to write. Give them homework etc. I mean if they are not  
255 writing how are they going to become good? Writing is like dancing. You become good after so  
256 many practices. If we do not let our learners do a lot of writing they will never be good; their  
257 writing will never improve if you don't give them a lot of writing activities to practice. So they  
258 must write, they must think, and write. So it should be writing, communication, writing  
259 communication. The child must be able to read, write and listen all these skills should be  
260 developed. So my policy is; they should do less listening, and more reading and writing.

261 **J:** How about their background, like the learners' home background or perhaps the school  
262 background, does it perhaps have any effects on how you teach writing or how learners write?

263 **T1:** Mmhh yeah, background sometimes can play a big role to the child because they are not  
264 coming from the same background. Some of them are coming from painful backgrounds, you  
265 know, their backgrounds are different. Like in my class I have two learners who are positive, one  
266 has TB and one has cancer. These children need help. But that should not be your focus as a  
267 teacher. I love all my children and treat them equally regardless of their backgrounds. Some of  
268 them are coming from the poorest of the poor, but don't treat them bad. You don't have to tell  
269 children you are poor you cannot write or you are dirty that is why you will not be able to learn  
270 or you are rich you can do this and stuff like that, no, tell them they are all learners and they can  
271 learn. Always encourage the learners and motivate them to do their best, of course most of my  
272 learners are coming from poor backgrounds, but that must not be in their minds. They should  
273 know that they are all learners and they can all achieve whatever they want to achieve. If you tell  
274 them they can't do something, they will take it to their mind that, teacher told us that we cannot  
275 do this. So their background does not really hinder my teaching. Some of them come to school  
276 hungry, they will just start shaking and trembling when you give them something to write, if you  
277 ask them why, they will tell you that they did not eat since last night. So their source of food is  
278 just the little meat they get at school. Do you expect that learner to do well at school? This is the  
279 reason you find learners doing so many mistakes with their school work because they are just  
280 thinking about food.

281 **J:** Okay, that is quite interesting. So what sort of mistakes do they make in their writing?

282 **T1:** uuuuh, there are so many mistakes, one; their work is always very dirty. He or she writes a  
283 sentence and then make some other filthy things on the page, and it becomes so dirty. Well I tell  
284 them, you should look at yourself, you are clean and beautiful, and your book and things you  
285 write must be like you. Your book must be clean and beautiful like you.

286 **J:** You mentioned their dirty work, any other mistakes they do when they write?

287 **T1:** Yes, if they are writing, sometimes they like to write and rub it out. So I say, okay if you  
288 rub, can you rub something from your body, they say no, then I say, so why would you do  
289 something like that in your book? I tell them your books must represent you. I tell them that  
290 before you write something thing about it twice, and when you write it read it twice, and make  
291 sure what you have written is final. No need to scratch and make a mess in the book again. Of

292 course they are learners, they ought to make mistakes, but I don't motivate mistakes, I want them  
293 to be proficient in their writing and become some useful people in the future.

294 **J:** What other mistakes have you encountered in learners apart from cleanliness?

295 **T1:** they do a lot of spelling mistakes, they have bad handwriting, like I told you most of them  
296 did not have good foundation from the lower grades, so that gives us who are teaching at the  
297 Intermediate Phase tough time because we are teaching them how to write and we should also  
298 teach them writing for learning. You see all their other subjects are taught in English, except  
299 IsiXhosa, so they have to really have knowledge of writing to pass all the other subjects. Now  
300 they are already struggling to form words yet we have to make them writing sentences and  
301 paragraphs. Sometimes I blame it on the language. You see they start with English only in Grade  
302 4 as a medium of instructions. They were used to writing in their mother tongue, so when they  
303 come in Grade 4 it is like another Grade 1 and Grade 5 appears like Grade 2. Learners are really  
304 struggling with English.

305 **J:** I wanted you to tell me, in your continuous assessment form for English, what do they expect  
306 you to assess as far as writing is concerned? Like what does CAPS say about writing?

307 **T1:** You know what? That CAPS thing is so confusing, because the government keeps changing  
308 things now and then. Honestly I don't like it. I am not gonna lie, the government keeps on  
309 changing things, it was OBE, you hear it is NCS, CAPS, tomorrow you will hear there is  
310 something else. Those things are confusing teachers I am telling you. But my own belief is that, a  
311 child must come out of school knowing how to read and write. And express themselves in  
312 English. The bottom line is the child must be able to read and write, how you teach... that  
313 depends on the creativity of the individual teachers. Not CAPS, what do learners have to do with  
314 the name CAPS or NCS yet they do not know how to read and write? I teach my way and make  
315 sure children acquire knowledge about reading and writing.

316 **J:** So you do not even know what they said about writing?

317 **T1:** I don't care about those things, they call us to trainings, I go to the training because the  
318 government says we should attend and blah- blah, but to me the child must understand and know  
319 how to read and write, and express themselves, simple as such.

320 **J:** So, what do they emphasis on when they call you at the workshops?

321 **T1:** Ummh, they tell us do this in this way, do that in this way, first do reading, or tell them a  
322 story, or a poem, sometimes well I do what they tell us, like read them a story, and tell them  
323 poems, now what if the child have a better way of doing it herself? Reading or creating her or his  
324 own story? For example I also teach dancing, but no one taught me how to dance, but I can  
325 dance in a way that you will never forget. My own styles not imitating anybody. That is why I  
326 am saying a child must be free and never be incubated. For example if you incubate a child and  
327 say CAPS said you should do it that way... Maybe I have a better way of doing things. Well I  
328 am not saying CAPS or the workshops are wrong, but am just saying they shouldn't restrict us.  
329 Children should be able to communicate freely, well as a teacher if I am communicating with a  
330 learner and she makes a mistake I don't say hey, stop that is a mistake, no, I would rather say  
331 what she said in a right or correct way and then she will know haa, so this is the correct way of  
332 doing it? Don't say they are wrong, you will make them shy, and won't be able to talk again or  
333 write something to you.

334 **J:** Okay- is there anything else that you would like to share with me about writing?

335 **T1:** Ja, you know teaching is quite a difficult career, because your strategies of teaching as a  
336 teacher, you change them depending on the type of learners you have. You know each of us have  
337 our own strategies of teaching. So for instance this year I have got kids that go on wild, if they

338 see me they go on like woow Ms.. (*Mentioning her name*) you are here, we missed you..  
339 Sometimes I had kids who are very much afraid of me, so the way I will deal with these kids  
340 won't be the same. Yes we have been trained to teach in a certain way at the college but we must  
341 also have our own way of doing things depending on the situations we find ourselves in and the  
342 types of learners that we have. You use your own skills, your own materials that will make your  
343 teaching to be effective. Otherwise , teaching is... yes you have been trained to be a teacher, but  
344 teaching needs somebody who is creative. Because learners in the classroom are not like when  
345 you are at the college. Learners are totally different from when you are at the college. They have  
346 got problems, more that the theories we do at the colleges. Sometimes I will be like, oh my God,  
347 how will I solve this problem, but we must always be creative and innovative in dealing with  
348 learners. When you are a teacher, you are not simply a teacher; all the professions are in you.  
349 You are a nurse, you are a counselor, you are a lawyer, an advocate you are a president,  
350 whatever. To me teaching is the most difficult career in the world because everything that  
351 surrounds the world is in you. For instance if a child hurt another child what are you going to do?  
352 If a child is swearing to each other what are you going to do? So, that is why I think you are  
353 everything when you are a teacher. And amongst these, love must come first, you must make  
354 sure that you love the kids.  
355 **J:** Mmmh,  
356 **T1:** Don't discriminate them, and say, no this one is like this, this one is like that. No,they must  
357 all be equal.  
358 **J:** You just mentioned something about parents; well tell me about your learners' parents, do  
359 they play a role in helping their children with writing?  
360 **T1:** Well, there, we have a very big problem, even if you give them homework, they will come  
361 back without having done the homework, and some parents do not even look in their children's  
362 books. There are so few that are supportive, but many seem not to care about their children's  
363 education, as long as they make sure they come to school, they get food here, you know we have  
364 a feeding program for all the children at school, so that in my view has even reduced the case of  
365 absenteeism because learners come to school knowing that they will also come to eat. But  
366 parents in this community are not supportive. Well most of them are not educated, so they don't  
367 really know the importance of education for their children.  
368 **J:** Thank you so much Ms... for your time and insightful answers you gave to my questions  
369 **T1:** you are welcome Julius.

## **Stimulated Recall interviews (1) (Lesson 2, Past tense)**

**29 April 2013 (12:33- 13:00)**

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1 **J:** What is your view on today's lesson?

2 **T1:** I would not say it was good nor would I say it was bad. You know with these learners you  
3 just have to be patient. You can see they have language problem. Like today I was just teaching  
4 the basics, but they are still struggling. I taught them about present tense last week, but not all of  
5 them can remember.

6 **J:** Do you believe they all understood?

7 **T1:** Well whether the child understands or not, she or he can still forget what she was taught.  
8 You know they are still young and they like playing a lot, so when they are in class, you can see  
9 they just want to play with each other, and are not paying attention. So That is why I started  
10 asking them about present tense which I have already taught them and given them an exercise to  
11 do in class, so that they can maybe make connections to what I taught them today, past tense. I  
12 am trying the best I can do.

13 **J:** Now with these learners struggling with the language as you said, how well do you think you  
14 are equipped to teach them English First Additional Language in Grade 5?

15 **T1:** As I told you in the first interviews you had with me, I was not trained to teach in the  
16 Intermediate Phase. I was trained to teach lower grades, like Grade one and two. But because  
17 there is need for an English teacher in the Intermediate Phase at our school, I was assigned to  
18 teach this phase. This is my third, no, fourth year teaching in the Intermediate Phase. For the past  
19 sixteen years I have been teaching in the Foundation Phase, in Grade one. But I am adjusting to  
20 the situation. I cannot say I am all that well equipped. We receive some training from the  
21 Department but what they usually tell us to do, there is not corresponding with the reality we  
22 have at schools. They want us to give individual attention to learners, give a lot of work and  
23 mark them, use different books, etc, etc. if you look in my cupboard there are so many books that  
24 I should apparently use in my English lesson only. Look, I teach English Grade 5A, and 5B,  
25 Social Science Grade 6A and 6B, and in addition to that I offer Dancing classes in the afternoon.  
26 So I am way too occupied. I don't have a chance of calling individual learners and say, come  
27 here you do this and you do that. I serious don't have such time. Yes I am willing to help them  
28 individually but time won't allow me to.

29 **J:** Mmmh...

30 **T1:** The other problem is the big number of the learners in our class. This class has 35 learners,  
31 Grade 5B has 37 learners you see? And I still have to take care of the Grade six learners in Social  
32 Sciences. This is the problem with township schools, but if you go in town it is a different story.  
33 I can sent you to (Mention's the name of a school in town) or (Mentions a school's name) or  
34 (Mentions a school's name), when you go there, (laughs) you will find twenty, nineteen learners  
35 in each class and I tell you the biggest number must be twenty-two learners in a class. But that  
36 particular teacher does not change either, like to teach other subjects. She or he just focuses on  
37 his or her particular subject with that particular Grade. That is where the problem of giving  
38 individual attention to learners is sometimes.

39 **J:** Mhhh...

40 **T1:** And what I have noticed about town school is that, they keep on photocopying. So if they  
41 want to give work they do not write on the chalkboard they just make copies enough for the  
42 learners.

43 **J:** You do not have a photocopy machine at this school?



44 **T1:** We do, Yes we do. But personally I don't like to make that. I like the child to be creative on  
45 her or his own. To be able to do things on his or her own, because I am preparing him or her for  
46 the future. Maybe he will end up not have an opportunity to make copies, but if he can write on  
47 his own it would be helpful. I don't know I might be wrong or might be doing this in a wrong  
48 way.

49 **J:** May be we should also look at the technological trend. I mean we are moving into a world  
50 where a lot of work is made easier. We have a plenty of copy machines, computers and...

51 **T1:** I know, I know, what I mean is that if we want to train learners to write well they should  
52 write more. Instead of giving them copies of worksheet, they should also sometimes copy from  
53 the chalkboard.

54 **J:** Okay, we still did not clear that part about how you see yourself as an English teacher.

55 **T1:** (*Laughs*), I think I have answered you Julius. You see we as teachers came from different  
56 colleges. And those colleges have different backgrounds and approaches of training teachers.  
57 Like me I came from the college where almost all the lecturers were white and the only black  
58 lecturer was the one who was teaching us isiXhosa. We use to teach us isiXhosa didactics and  
59 isiXhosa academics. So the rest of the subjects were taught in either English or Afrikaans. This  
60 has somehow equipped my English. That is why even the principal asked me to come and teach  
61 the Grade 5. She came to me and said (mentions her name), you see we are in dire need of an  
62 English teacher, all the applicants for this post specialized to teach in the Foundation Phase,  
63 please go and help there and the new teacher will take up your class. Since then she never  
64 removed me from this phase. I think I am still doing well.

65 **J:** Mhhh...

66 **T1:** So what I saying is that we do not have the same background. You will find that some  
67 teachers' language is good and other ones is not that good. We are never the same and we can't  
68 be teaching in the same way.

69 **J:** When you teach your learners as certain aspect of language, for example today, you were  
70 teaching past tense, how do you assess them in the class? Do you only focus on the aspects you  
71 are teaching on that specific day or how do you do it?

72 **T1:** Give me an example...

73 **J:** Say for example you gave them sentences in present tense that they should convert to past  
74 tense. Do you only assess how they are changing the sentences to past tense such as changing of  
75 verbs or you also look at how they deal with other grammatical constructions such as articles,  
76 concord or punctuations for example?

77 **T1:** Okay, I get you. It is because neh... If you can notice, these learners' foundation is not good.  
78 Look at the typical example, why can't they understand those basic sentences that I am teaching  
79 them? So I am forced to teach every aspect separately. That is in terms of grammatical  
80 constructions. To tell you the truth I have a very big problem... Yes I love English and I would  
81 like my learners to learn good English but if you can notice, it is very difficult for them to even  
82 write a single sentence because they didn't get a very good foundation for English from the  
83 lowest Grades, especially in writing English. Most of them might be able to speak good English  
84 but if you give them to write, you will see what I am talking about.

85 **J:** Mmmmh.

86 **T1:** That is why I even made it a point during thing morning in the staff meeting that why can't I  
87 maybe be allowed to go back to Intermediate Phase? Because these learners are coming here  
88 without even the basics that we start a sentence with a capital letter and end with one of the  
89 punctuations. Even teaching them a sentence: The donkey is grazing grass. I will have to teach

90 them word-by-word. For example; donkey, I have to tell them what is a donkey, is, meaning one  
91 donkey, grazing, I will have to explain to them that an animal does not eat we say grazing the  
92 grass. So I will have to learners to understand. I explained to them that we say is in the present  
93 tense and it changes to was, in the past tense. But the verb must stay the same because you are  
94 telling someone else about the donkey. That is why the verb must end up with -ing.

95 J: Okay....

96 T1: Hmm... That is my strategy of trying to make an input to their minds and learn how to  
97 communicate in English and the knowledge of it. And... When um... When I am talking about  
98 present, one we use is, two or more, we use are or were in the past tense. That is just to push  
99 them to understand.

100 J: How about the punctuations?

101 T1: You cannot teach them to write for example; The donkey is grazing, the blank, no full stop.  
102 You should tell them that they must write neatly, they should start their sentences with a capital  
103 letter and end with punctuation. They all know that. If you see them tomorrow and ask them,  
104 when you write a sentence, what do you put at the end of the sentence? They will tell you it is a  
105 full stop. Well I have got my own way of doing it, not like others. I should have been far with  
106 them if they had a very good foundation.

107 J: Okay, so even if you do not use punctuations on the chalkboard they just know that they  
108 should use them? You don't seem to have used punctuations here (showing her the video)

109 T1: (Laughs looking at the video of herself teaching) you caught me there Julius. I just forgot to  
110 use punctuations on the chalkboard today, but if you look in their books you will see that many  
111 of them used punctuations. (Laughs) oh, I didn't see that coming. I might have marked some of  
112 them correct even if they did not use punctuations, but it was just a mistake that I have now  
113 picked up. Thank you for that.

114 J: You are welcome. Please don't take it that I am here to pick up your mistakes, I just want to  
115 understand why you do things and the reason I asked you is because I don't want to assume  
116 things. I don't want to assume that you do A and B because of C and D... But I want you tell me  
117 yourself.

118 T1: I don't have a problem Julius (laughs). You are welcome to ask anything from me, I mean  
119 anything that has to do with your research (Laughs).

120 J: Thank you for understanding. I see your learners are seated in groups. What are your views on  
121 group work?

122 T1: I prefer it more when they are seated in groups than in rows. It is easy to monitor them and  
123 its causes less distractions when they have to work in groups. I do make them work in groups  
124 um... for instance if we do a story or poem, I do group them; I mean if there is dramatization and  
125 competition, they do all that in groups. When I do the grouping in English, there must be a  
126 competition there. So that... I mean, when I do that, it is going to be easy for them to try and  
127 compete because it is a competition and everybody wants to win. There will be group A, group  
128 B, C, D, etc. Sometimes I even give them names, like this group is apple, pear, orange; chocolate  
129 etc. So, to see which group is doing better than the other, each group should try to work harder to  
130 outsmart the other groups. I usually do that when we read a story and they have to dramatise it.

131 J: So you only use group work for speaking?

132 T1: No only speaking, sometimes I can ask them to write a recount of a story in groups, and then  
133 I will have sweets for example... the best group will get a lollipop. I ask them to write, even if  
134 they make a lot of mistakes in writing, or the wording is wrong, I don't really mind as long as  
135 they their presentation in English is super. Because I am not assessing their written language

136 proficiency that time, I am looking at participation. How can he or she expresses him or herself?  
137 I strictly enforce speaking in English. If for example a learner says ‘Mohlo’, I will tell him or her  
138 that, unfortunately you won’t get a lollipop because that is not an English word, then you will see  
139 him or her going on, like no miss, I meant good morning, etc (laughs). Well I don’t know if what  
140 I am doing is right, but if the DoE came here and asks me why are you not following CAPS, I  
141 will tell them, you better go and do your CAPS somewhere else because I am having a problem  
142 here of teaching learners who do not know what they supposed to know at their level.

143 **J:** But you said they offer you training on how to implement the CAPS documents

144 **T1:** Mhhh..

145 **J:** Have you told them about the problem you have with your learners as far as English is  
146 concerned?

147 **T1:** Ja, they do train us, but the funniest thing is, they don’t do a full long training. They usually  
148 send messages like, there will be a CAPS training in the afternoon, or there will be a CAPS  
149 training at half past two. What are you going to learn there? Nothing. It is boring sometimes, and  
150 I don’t even really pay attention to what they are saying because it doesn’t work in the classroom  
151 situation. It is just theories, and they seem to be wasting government’s money on trainings that  
152 are not productive. With me children must be able to read and write. And they must be able to  
153 communicate.

154 **J:** Okay, finally, the lesson ended before you finished giving feedback to the learners. You were  
155 still busy giving feedback or rather doing correction with them when the bell rang, will you be  
156 doing the correction with them in the next lesson?

157 **T1:** Um, as I said, that was just the basics, that is why you saw I was even giving feedback  
158 orally. They just had to change one word to past tense. Well we can go through with them in the  
159 next lesson just to finish the correction but I will have to see if it necessary. I usually tell learners  
160 who have shown that they understand to do correction for others on the chalkboard. You see  
161 learners also learn fast from each other. But if I see something is complex and none or most of  
162 the learners have failed the exercise, I have to re-teach that lesson and make sure I do and  
163 explain even more in detail to them. That is when I am even forced to use the mother tongue  
164 more to make them understand.

165 **J:** Does that mean you always code- switch in your class to make them understand?

166 **T1:** You must... I mean it is just a must to use code-switching with this learners. If you can’t  
167 then there will be a problem. Some of these learners do not understand English. Well I spend  
168 most of my time speaking to them in English but I have to tell them what I mean in isiXhosa, so  
169 that they will know exactly what I want them to do. If you say no code-switching, then expect  
170 zeros in the activities because they would not know what they are expected to do. For instance in  
171 this class I only have (mentions some learner’s names) who are a bit good in English, the rest  
172 would just be looking at you as if they you are speaking Chinese. So this how I do it. I give them  
173 instruction in English for the first time, and second time in English, and for the third time I will  
174 tell them in isiXhosa that, guys the instructions says this and that. Only then they would start  
175 writing.

176 **J:** Doesn’t that have effect on their writing? Like don’t they perhaps end up writing in both  
177 English and isiXhosa?

178 **T1:** Well, I encourage them not to mix. If I spot any isiXhosa words in their writing, I would call  
179 them ask them what they want to say, and tell them the English word, but warn the not to write  
180 isiXhosa in their English grammar books. In fact the isiXhosa teacher came to me complaining  
181 that learners are writing English in their isiXhosa books. They are mixing the two languages

182 when writing essays in isiXhosa. I don't know why, but she said even if she reprimands them for  
183 doing so many of them always write some English words in their isiXhosa activities

184 **J:** So you only use mother tongue when you are teaching complex things?

185 **T1:** You can see yourself that if I decide to speak English the whole lesson, most if not all of the  
186 learners won't understand anything. They can't speak or understand English properly yet. Most  
187 of them only hear English at school. They are staying with their Grandparents who don't even  
188 know how to read, so do you expect those learners to be helped even with writing their  
189 homework? No.

190 **J:** Okay thank you so much for the insightful reflection and more information we shared today.

191 **T1:** (Laughs) was that insightful? You are welcome Julius

## **Informal Conversational Interview 1 (Lesson 4, Poetry)**

**23 May 2013 (12:00 – 12:31)**

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1 **J:** I just want us to reflect on your poetry lesson. I should really comment on your effort and  
2 creativity that you came up with your own poem, to teach your learners poetry. Would you  
3 perhaps share with me why did you choose to come up with your poem rather than extracting  
4 one from some Grade 5 English textbooks?

5 **T1:** Ummmh... I didn't want to incubate them, and the book might not give what I want to give  
6 them. For instance, fish, what do we get from fish? Omega 3 which is good for the brain, the  
7 books I have didn't write that down. So by creating my own poem about the sea, it will help  
8 them to have more and more understanding and more knowledge about what is good and what is  
9 bad about the sea. And secondly, when you teach a child, you must not teach a child by  
10 following one stream or ... umm...one way of doing things or just follow the prescribed  
11 textbooks but be creative and dynamic. Teach a child to have a broad mind. The child must be  
12 broad minded. She or he must know that if I do this, this can come up or that can come up. That  
13 is from one thing you can get another thing. The child must be able to explore and understand  
14 and have more knowledge about something. Not to be incubated, no.

15 **J:** Okay, what was the aim of teaching them a poem and there after ask questions based on the  
16 poem?

17 **T1:** I wanted to see if they really understood what I have taught them? Do they understand what I  
18 am teaching them? Or are they having interest of what I am teaching them? Because it is of no  
19 use to teach a child something that she does not understand or is not even interested in. Or the  
20 child has no knowledge or background of what you are teaching. You test if they have all these  
21 by asking them questions. If you teach something and you don't assess if learners understand it,  
22 what is the use of teaching it? You are actually wasting time.

23 **J:** Mhhh...

24 **T1:** If you are teaching something, make it a point that learners know what you are teaching,  
25 they understand what you are teaching and they can answer whatever questions you are asking  
26 about from what you taught them. It is of no use of teaching if a child cannot understand what  
27 you are talking about. If you see learners do not understand, you must explain fully what you are  
28 talking about. You can even do it in their mother tongue. It is not illegal to teach learners in their  
29 mother tongue. It is even supported by CAPS, they call it, uhhmm... code switching. So do that  
30 in their mother tongue if they do not understand.

31 **J:** When you asked your learners to answer questions about the poem, you instructed them not to  
32 read the poem while answering the questions. Would share with me why did you do that?

33 **T1:** You see learners must not learn to forget. I made them read the poem, they are supposed to  
34 understand it and be able answer questions based on it with reading. They must learn to  
35 understand and keep everything in the mind?

36 **J:** Does that mean you expect them to memorise the poem.

37 **T1:** Not necessarily memorise. There is a difference between memorizing and understanding.  
38 Sometime when you memorise something does not mean you understand it. With me I want  
39 them to understand it and be able to answer questions based on it. They will even be able to talk  
40 about this poem in the next grade.

41 **J:** What are the possible answers that you expect from the learners for those questions?

42 **T1:** All the answers are in the poem Julius, for instance number one the answers is blue, number  
43 two the answers is fish, number three is God, number four they can say water or minerals,  
44 number five they can say animals, and the last quest is simply to draw a fish.

45 **J:** Okay, I found this work book, (Grade 5 First Additional Language Book 1, Term 1-2)...

46 **T1:** Where did you find the book?

47 **J:** Well I saw it with the learners. One learner was paging through it this morning and I asked to

48 have a look at it. I then asked if everybody had this book and they said they were all given the

49 same book.

50 **T1:** Hmmm...

51 **J:** When I went through their work book, it has a plenty of writing exercises for learners but

52 most of the learners have not written anything in their books. Why don't you make use of this

53 book?

54 **T1:** Okay, you know what about this book? I like this book too, but to see the ability of the child

55 without me telling them do this and do that, because in this book there are number of activities

56 and I want to see if their mind fit to answer whatever is asked here. You know I have been

57 teaching them English, how will I know they understand my language if I keep on spoon feeding

58 them? But if you give them this book, you will see that okay, they understand my language

59 because you are not going to tell them this question says this, this question asks this. You just

60 give them the book, answers these questions. To see the knowledge and the understanding of my

61 language, their writing, can they writing neatly here without my supervision? It is easy to find

62 out using this book.

63 **J:** So, you do not use these books in class?

64 **T1:** I do use them for instance, if I gave them an exercise on poetry and they finish writing,

65 while I am busy marking their work, I tell them to answer some of the questions in this book, I

66 don't specify which one, because English is on their mind. Remember I told them, they must not

67 learn to forget. So if I go through their work book and look at how they answered the questions

68 independently, I will be able to tell, this learner does not understand, this one does understand

69 but lacks this skill etc.

70 **J:** Bus as I told you, most of the learners have not written anything in those books, those who

71 have, they have just done a few exercises...

72 **T1:** No, no, I know Julius. The pages are not written because it was still the first term. I like to

73 use them in the second term, because in this Grade, Grade5, I received these learners from Grade

74 4. I want to give them good English first, the one standard for their grade level. So second term

75 they must be able to answer questions from this workbook because they would have ready

76 picked good English for a Grade 5 learner. You know from Grade one, two, and three the

77 medium of instruction is a mother tongue Xhosa, so it is not easy for them to write in English in

78 the first term. So in the second term that is when I give them these books. Sometimes I can give

79 them for homework but I hate to give homework in this book because someone in high school

80 will help them, and you will fool yourself, ooh, this one is good, yet she is not the one that

81 answered the questions. But if they are writing here in class in front of me, I will see how each of

82 them is struggling and I will see the true picture.

83 **J:** Hmmm...

84 **T1:** So I like this book so much, most especially when I am doing marking, it keeps them busy,

85 and helps me with classroom management. They make a lot of noise if they are not doing

86 anything. So this book keeps them busy when I am also busy here.

87 **J:** So you do not use the exercises in this book for formal marking but rather for classroom

88 management and to informally assess your learners' level of English?

89 **T1:** Not really, I can mark them, like in the afternoon when I finish with their grammar books, I

90 can call each of the learners to see what they have written. But yes I normally use it for informal

91 academic work, just to see the learners' understanding of the language. So I do mark the books  
92 but I usually I do it in the afternoon when they are all gone to their houses, I tell them to put their  
93 books on my table then I will look at each learner's answers.

94 **J:** Would you like to share why do you use them for informal tasks?

95 **T1:** Because some of the tasks in this book provide too much guidance or they are just too  
96 advanced for them. The major thing I want them to have is that they must have good English. I  
97 rely more on what they have written in their own grammar books to assess their abilities. Of  
98 course they are good books for practicing.

99 **J:** Thank you so much for your time answers Ms...

100 **T1:** (Laughs) Always Julius. You are welcome

## **Informal Conversational Interview 2 (Lesson 5, Friendly Letter)**

**13 June 2013 (13:00 – 13:34)**

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1 **J:** Let us reflect on your lesson about writing a friendly letter. What were your lesson objectives  
2 for this lesson?

3 **T1:** You know for this lesson, I was not really assessing the language, I did not mind about the  
4 language. My focus was on the structure of an informal letter. For example the address must be  
5 written straight, the salutation, the introduction, the conclusion and the whole presentation of the  
6 letter.

7 **J:** Mmm... just the structure of the letter?

8 **T1:** Yes, because they are in Grade 5 and their language may not be hundred percent, but they  
9 must know that we start a letter with the address, dear... my friend, the introduction, the body,  
10 where they have to say whatever they have to say and then the conclusion. I was teaching them  
11 to do that, because they did not even know the structure of a letter. In fact they should have  
12 known how to write a letter from Grade 4 already. I then told them who they should write to.  
13 You see how I made it easy for them? First I went through with them in the structure, and told  
14 them who they should write their letter to and what should be the content of their letter.

15 **J:** Is this the final product or they are still going to refine it after you have seen how well they are  
16 doing with the structure and given them feedback?

17 **T:** Yes, I have given them an activity to do in the class so that I can see them writing. I told them  
18 to write and finish in the class so I could mark their books, see who is struggling and who is not.  
19 When I mark their books, I just comment on the aspects I want to focus and tell them to do  
20 correction. There is no time for writing, then mark, then write again no. Unless sometime for  
21 example if I want to assess on their language usage, I will let them read their letter aloud in the  
22 class, listen to what they are saying and correct their mistakes when they are reading. I will then  
23 tell them to rewrite a corrected version which I will let them mark each other's. In that way they  
24 can also learn from each other you know. I tell them, what you read must be in the paper, and  
25 you must write something that you or someone else would be able to read. I want to motivate  
26 them to be able to speak and write in English freely, and not to be shy.

27 **J:** Now when you were marking their books, did they show that they understood the structure of  
28 an informal letter?

29 **T1:** Well most of them showed that they understood, but there are those who still wrote for me,  
30 an address in the middle of the page. Some of them did not end their letter so well; you see they  
31 wrote 'your friend' and their names in the same line when I explained to them what to do during  
32 the lesson. I did not really comment on their language, but I just gave them marks according to  
33 the way they have structured their letters. Look at this book for example his structure is good, but  
34 he tried to draw the line that I drew on the chalkboard to show them how the address should be  
35 written. Some of them did not write in cursive, you know learners learn to divide words nicely  
36 when they are writing in cursive.

37 **J:** Why did you make the total marks for the letter out 30?

38 **T1:** I came up with my marks. You know I am looking at how they wrote the address, the body  
39 and the conclusion. If you look in these books, I gave some comments, and these comments also  
40 minimize the number of marks the learner will get. For example this one (*showing me a*  
41 *learner's script*) didn't write the address in the right corner of the page, something I have taught  
42 them in the class. So it is these comments that minimized the number of marks they obtained  
43 from this task. The lesser marks the more encouragement you are giving to the learner to  
44 improve. She will be, oh, I have got so less much in this task I will have to work hard next time



45 to get more marks. If you give them bigger marks yet the content is not right, you are killing the  
46 child. The child will go on saying I have got 15 or I have got 20 yet what she has written is  
47 nonsense. I am not looking at the verbs, tenses or grammar mistakes; I am looking if they know  
48 how to write a letter. I am aware that English is not their language, and most of them tried to  
49 make sense in their letters.

50 **J:** Well, I was interested in knowing why the total marks for the letter are 30?

51 **T2:** This is my own thing. I came up with my own marks.

52 **J:** How many marks do the CAPS documents recommend as the total, when you are assessing  
53 learners' longer piece of writing like this one?

54 **T1:** Well I don't really know, I am not so well informed about the CAPS things. This 30 mark is  
55 just something I have learned for so long.

56 **J:** Mhhh, where did you learn this?

57 **T:** Laughs, your questions sometimes nee... I learned this from school, when I was a learner. We  
58 were taught that a letter should have an address, greeting, body, conclusion and the ending. And  
59 we were given marks out of 30 marks for both letters and compositions. But we were sometimes  
60 told to copy the letter from the chalkboard which is wrong. My own belief is that the child must  
61 try on his/her own. If you spoon- feed him or her how will you know that the child is learning the  
62 language? To me a child will become perfect in writing by writing more and more on his own.

63 **J:** I would like to hear more about things you learned from school or college that you can  
64 remember and use the in your teaching of writing like the point you made about 30 marks.

65 **T2:** No, at the college we were not taught how to write letters. That was long time ago when I  
66 was doing my primary and secondary education. I still have that in my memory that a child must  
67 know all the parts of the letter, and it must be clear. Our teachers told us that when you look at it  
68 even before reading it, it must look like a letter, with all the parts of a letter and written in  
69 paragraphs. Sometimes you don't need to assess the language you just look if the learner knows  
70 the structure of the letter. If you gave them less marks because they did not do it right, they will  
71 never forget that, they will learn how to do it right. But if you let them copy from the chalkboard,  
72 they will easily forget what they have learned.

73 **J:** How about those who were not done?

74 **T1:** There are always some learners who do not finish their work. If you look in their books, I  
75 have written, you are not done, do this and that. So I told them what they still have to do to finish  
76 their letters. And they know if I told them that they are not done they should rewrite and finish  
77 their work. They know there will just be a day when I will go from learner to learner, demanding  
78 to see if they have written their corrections.

79 **J:** So when are you going to teach them an informal letter focusing on their language?

80 **T1:** I will still give them the same topic where they have to write a letter, and we will do as I told  
81 you earlier. Like let them read in class, check their spelling errors, let them read each other's  
82 work and then when they bring their books to me, I will just mark their work focusing on their  
83 language usage. I will tell them that I need good English, good tenses, and correct punctuations.  
84 The challenge is just time. For example if you let every learner read her letter in class, not even  
85 half of the class will read their work, and then the lesson is over already.

86 **J:** Thank you Ms. We can end here and thank you for being so helpful throughout the whole  
87 research process.

88 **T1:** You are welcome Julius.

## **Interview 2**

**27 June 2013 (09:00 – 09:43)**

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1 **J:** The way you teach writing is just so unique. I am interested in knowing what shaped the way  
2 you teach writing. Could it be the way you were taught in school when you were a learner, or the  
3 way you were taught at the college, or the workshops you attend from time to time as a teacher?

4 **T1:** Hmm, No. To me teaching is all about creativity. Yes I have been taught at the college but,  
5 as a teacher you must be very creative. I have got my own reasons for that. If you look in the  
6 class, these kids are different. They are coming from different backgrounds and all that. So you  
7 must have your own style and own creativity to make them understand. Of course at the college  
8 we were taught what to do and what not do with the kids, but you must have your own way of  
9 implementing the knowledge to learners because learners are not the same. In the class there are  
10 slow learners, there are those who are in the middle and those who are even much brighter. So if  
11 you are not creative enough it will be difficult for you to handle these varieties of learners. Make  
12 them feel that they came to learn.

13 **J:** In addition to your creativity does the curriculum, say CAPS documents that are currently in  
14 use, shape the way you teach writing to your learners?

15 **T1:** In a way yes, CAPS for instance would provide a topic that should be taught, from that topic  
16 you should teach for example a poem, you should give comprehension, let learner do a drama  
17 etc. Now if you are not creative enough, how are you going to do that? CAPS for example will  
18 give you a topic like, 'A day to the sea'. How are you going to do drama on that if you are not  
19 creative? How are you going to do composition out of that if you are not creative? So you need  
20 to tell the children what is the sea, what is done at the sea etc. because some of the kids have  
21 never been to that place. You see there is a problem with writing now. Like in my case, my  
22 learners in Grade 5 are coming from other grades. We are not the same teachers. Our abilities,  
23 creativity, educational backgrounds are not the same. So when they come in my class I always  
24 tell them, write something that you can read. No matter how bad or good the learner's language  
25 may be, he or she must be able to read what she or he has written in the book. She must be able  
26 to write clearly. If she can't read what she has written, she must rewrite until she is able to read  
27 what she has written.

28 **J:** Now let us say they have written something they can read but is not even meaningful, how do  
29 you go about helping them?

30 **T1:** Okay, if I say write something that you can read, we all know with writing you just need a  
31 pen and a book to write in. So I tell them look you have got a left hand and right hand. Write  
32 from the left to the right and make sure that what you write, you will be able to read it and  
33 understand it. They should always write from left to right.

34 **J:** Isn't that some sort of handwriting? I would like us to talk about writing itself, like when they  
35 write a composition, a formal or informal letter, etc. When they do these types of writing and  
36 they are readable but not meaningful. How do you help them?

37 **T1:** You know one thing is to never spoon-feed the children. Let the child explore and say  
38 whatever she or he knows. Because you will never know what they know until you let them do it  
39 themselves. If you tell her write a composition about this and this, let her write what his or her  
40 own views on the topic. If you say write like this and that, you are spoon-feeding her and you  
41 don't need to spoon-feed the learners. Of course from the beginning make it clear what you want  
42 them to write about. If it is a composition, tell them for example, write about my summer  
43 holiday, and then you talk a bit about the topic, like what do we do during summer holiday? And  
44 then they would answer; we are going to do this and that. What do we wear in summer? And

45 they would tell you what they do in summer. From there you tell them, okay you all know what  
46 the meaning of summer is, so write your own composition using your own ideas about the  
47 summer holiday. Don't incubate them. Let them be free to express themselves.

48 **J:** Well, and then when they write and express themselves freely, what type of feedback do you  
49 provide on their writing?

50 **T1:** You mark them. After marking you give each learner his or her own book and ask them to  
51 read in the class while others are listening. I ask them to listen to what others are reading, and if  
52 they hear anything wrong, they should lift up the hand say it out so that it can be corrected. But  
53 then it takes time because I have got big number of learners in my class. But you can do it for a  
54 week you take this group and that group, the other week you take this group of learners etc until  
55 you are done with them. So by presenting they will be fluent in English, and their writing must  
56 be clear. Well if they can read what have written, then what more can I do? Nothing but to move  
57 to the next activity.

58 **J:** From my experience as a teacher, we have subject heads that come to schools to monitor how  
59 their subjects are taught and give assistances here and there. Have the English subject advisor (s)  
60 ever visited your school or your classroom in particular?

61 **T1:** Yes they do come and look at the learners' books to see if you are doing the work. If they  
62 see something wrong, they will tell you. For instance in my case, because I am teaching so many  
63 classes, I sometime don't mark some of the learner's work. I would just put a signature that I  
64 have seen their work. So when the subject advisor came here she told me, you better mark the  
65 learners' work, don't just put a signature. Mark the work, and do corrections. So now most of the  
66 time I mark during the lesson, if learners did not finish, I mark during the afternoon when learner  
67 are gone home. Sometimes it is not easy to mark during the lessons because learners are  
68 changing so many times from one lesson to another, and you don't have time to mark more than  
69 60 books in a day. You see I am not only teaching English, I am also teaching Social Sciences.  
70 So I need to mark English for the two Grade 5s and Social Science for both Grade 6 A and B.  
71 Don't just count the Grade 5B learners, I am doing marking in all the other subjects and Grades.  
72 You see how difficult it is?

73 **J:** So, does the number of learners have an effect on how you teach writing to your Grade 5  
74 learners?

75 **T1:** Yes. It has an influence somehow. Because when marking their books, you will see the  
76 writing is not clear here and there, but you don't have enough time to come and say you do this  
77 and this about it, because the next period is something else different from English. Then you try  
78 to do it the following day, yet you supposed to do something new that day. But you need to  
79 repeat the previous day's work because a learner or some learners didn't do well. You would not  
80 always be able to help or give that individual assistance because of time and the number of  
81 learners.

82 **J:** You refer to the books where your learners do all their writing activities as "Grammar books,  
83 why do you call them such?

84 **T1:** Do you know why? Because it is language. There is a difference between a reading book and  
85 grammar book. Grammar is language. In other words grammar is when you teach them to  
86 communicate good a language be it written, or spoken. So I call it grammar book because this is  
87 where they do everything about the language, their prepositions, tenses, write compositions,  
88 letters and everything about the language.

89 **J:** What are your views on ANA?

90 **T1:** Well, ANA is good because it helps you as a teacher to assess your ability. It gives you  
91 feedback about your teaching. If your learners are failing everything in ANA, then what did you  
92 teach? You supposed to have taught some of the things in the ANA question papers. Of course  
93 they cannot pass everything but they should be able to answers most of the questions in there.  
94 Sometimes it can also be disappointing because learners just fail because they are not used to  
95 answering in questions papers. They do most of their writing in their grammar books here, so  
96 when they see question papers they seem to get confused and just end up not choosing random  
97 answers. ANA question papers are just multiple choices, so learners don't really do a lot writing  
98 there.

99 **J:** Does ANA tell you in advance what they are expecting your learners to be able do?

100 **T1:** Their test is in line with CAPS. But as I told you, with me it is not about CAPS, to me a  
101 child must be able to read and write. What is the use of saying CAPS says this and that if the  
102 child doesn't know how to read and write?

103 **J:** Now when you say, what is the use of CAPS, what are you teaching according to?

104 **T1:** I am teaching in line with CAPS, but I am also implementing my own skills and creativity  
105 that suit my learners. Because in the classes you look at the level of the learners, look what they  
106 know and build on their knowledge. You can't just say CAPS says I should teach this and start  
107 teaching. What if the learners are not yet at that level yet?

108 **J:** Some schools received books and teaching and learning materials from nongovernmental  
109 organizations such as Molteno'and READ. I understand they also give some workshops to  
110 language teachers. Did you also attend their workshops.

111 **T1:** We received some English textbooks from Molteno, but I have never received training from  
112 them. I usually make use of their books when we are reading. They have got nice stories and  
113 their level of language is quite good. Sometimes we read a story and play a drama out of it.

114 **J:** How do you make use of Molteno's materials teaching writing to your learners?

115 **T1:** What I like most in their books is the stories. They have got good stories, and their language  
116 is simple and can be understood by the learners. Learners like stories you know. So if I want to  
117 read them a story I sometime make use of Molteno books. With writing, there are some few  
118 exercise that I make use of here and there, but most of the time I create my own writing  
119 activities. READ was also good but it is no longer existing. They use to have big books with  
120 pictures that we can read in class and small ones for learners that they can go with home and  
121 read, and tell you what they have read.

122 **J:** Have you attended any of their workshops?

123 **T1:** No, when read was active those years I was still teaching in the Foundation Phase, and I have  
124 never attended any workshop by Molteno Project. But I have made use of Molteno books in  
125 some of my English lessons, especially in reading lessons.

126 **J:** Okay, I am still interested in know how these organizations and their materials shaped the way  
127 you teach writing to your learners.

128 **T1:** Well, with writing it is a little bit difficult to tell how they shaped my styles of teaching  
129 because we have different types of learners in our classes. You must have your own skill, your  
130 style and own strategy to teach them writing and make them enjoy writing. Don't be harsh on  
131 them, yet don't spoon-feed them.

132 **J:** Do think there is a difference between the way you teach writing now and the way you were  
133 taught writing in school.

134 **T1:** Of course. In those years teachers were seen as masters of all. Learners' knowledge was not  
135 really considered. We were used to write what the teacher wants and know. Most of the time you

136 are just spoon fed, you are not really free to come up with your own ideas. We even used to be  
137 afraid of asking the teachers if we didn't understand. There was corporal punishment then, so  
138 you just think the teacher will beat you if you ask. But I don't blame them because that is how  
139 they were trained. But now learners need to take control of their learning.

140 **J:** Can you remember how you were taught writing, for example a composition or a letter when  
141 you were in school?

142 **T1:** You know what? Those years, teachers never even taught us how to hold a pencil. They  
143 didn't care how you hold a pencil, which is not right. But these days you must teach the child  
144 how to hold a pencil because writing is going to be there. If a child is holding a pencil in a wrong  
145 way, obviously the way she writes will be wrong.

146 **J:** Teaching children how to hold a pen is supposed to be done in the lower grades isn't? So when  
147 you get to the higher grades, how did they teach you how to write longer piece of write, say a  
148 friendly letter?

149 **T1:** They didn't do it in the way we do it know. The structure of a letter those years was not  
150 taught more in detail like we do now. Now you teach a learner, this is the address, this is  
151 greetings, body, conclusion, salutation, etc. The major thing if you want to win writing is, the  
152 way the child sits, the way the child holds a pen, the way the child uses the hands. The child  
153 cannot sit like this way (demonstrating) and expecting a good writing from her. She is going to  
154 write wrongly because she's sitting in a wrong posture. And make them enjoy it. You rather  
155 give them a lot of work to write than speaking. Because obviously they can speak. So let them  
156 write. If they are in the Foundation Phase give them exercises like motor verses and piano,  
157 flickering a card and all those.

158 **J:** And at Grade 5 level? Those are like some development of handwriting for young learners.  
159 But in Grade 5, the writing part...

160 **T1:** Ja, in Grade 5 they are writing on their own, but you must teach them to be clean and clear,  
161 and understand. They must understand what they have written.

162 **J:** What type of writing do they do in the examination?

163 **T1:** They do cursive writing. But some of them do scribed writing.

164 **J:** I am not talking the hand writing, I am talking about the type of activities they do, the  
165 activities they write. Like what does the examination look like? Do you ask them to write,  
166 compositions, letters, recounts, etc... what is that they are tested on?

167 **T1:** For instance in my subject they have got comprehension, after that they are given some  
168 alphabet, A,B,C,D and asked to circle the answer. After that they say, complete the sentence.  
169 There must be sentences that should be completed. And that is where the writing starts, when the  
170 complete the sentences, or fill in the missing words.

171 **J:** And extended writing? Where they have to write say in paragraphs?

172 **T1:** There some paragraphs. For example they can be asked. In one paragraph give story a title  
173 and write what the story is all about. And that is a paragraph.

174 **J:** Thank so much for your time and answers. Is there anything else you want to share with me?

175 **T1:** I don't know, I have said some of these things over and over. I wish you good luck.

176 **J:** Thank you so much.

## APPENDIX 5B: INTERVIEWS TRANSCRIPTS FOR T2

### Interview 1

11 April 2013 (12:00 – 12: 45)

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1 **J:** Good afternoon Ms... thank you for accepting to have an interview with me this afternoon  
2 besides your busy schedule. As we spoke about it earlier and in the letter I wrote to you, I am  
3 doing research on how writing in English First Additional Language is taught in Grade 5. I  
4 would like you to answer some the following few questions. Your answers to these questions  
5 would help me get some of the answers to my research questions.

6 **T2:** (Laughs) okay Julius, no problem.

7 **J:** feel free to tell me anything, if you feel you are not comfortable or you would like to withdraw  
8 feel free to do so. You may as well ask for clarity where you do not understand.

9 **T2:** Okay it is fine with me.

10 **J:** Before we go on about how you teach writing to your Grade 5 learners, can we talk a little bit  
11 about you? Do you mind sharing how you were taught about writing say in school or college?

12 **T2:** We were taught in three languages, Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa. So that means we had  
13 three languages. At the college we were trained to teach all the areas in the intermediate phase.  
14 But I have been teaching Natural Science since I started teaching. Well let me say I have taught  
15 almost all the subjects in the Intermediate Phase so far except for Economics and Management  
16 Science, otherwise I have taught all the subjects in the Intermediate Phase.

17 **J:** mmmh....

18 **T2:** In our times at school we had to write compositions, with topics like, a visit to the zoo, yet  
19 you have never been to the zoo, so you have to imagine everything. Or you had to write a  
20 journey by train but you have never been on the train before. And almost everything was done by  
21 the teacher in the class. And we had to copy the work from the chalkboard. But when we teach  
22 now we check what the learners know then we add from what they know... you move with them,  
23 let me say they are taught what they are familiar with. You check their pre-knowledge then you  
24 add from there. You can even find some useful information from them that you were not aware  
25 of.

26 **J:** So how do you teach writing now building on pre-knowledge as you said?

27 **T2:** You know all writings are a products or reading. Learners must first read before they write.  
28 Mostly when I teach, before they write anything they have to read a story. We first have to look  
29 at the pictures and they predict the story, we can do this orally because of the time, and you  
30 know it is easy for the learners to predict the sequence of the story if it has pictures. Pictures also  
31 make it easy for the learners to rectify their mistakes when reading. From what they read, it is  
32 where you can build their vocabulary, where you can build the language structures, where you  
33 can build their writing by doing the recount, by trying to summarise the story they have read,  
34 when they summarise the story you do it with them as well and they can even write the  
35 comprehension from the story. It is just a chain from reading then to other components of writing  
36 like recounts, language structures and comprehension.

37 **J:** What are the procedures that you follow when you teach your learners any type of writing?  
38 How do you approach teaching writing?

39 **T2:** It depends, let us say for compositions, they can even write about themselves, or they can  
40 write about how they spent their holidays... You know... they should write about what they  
41 know. I can't ask them to write about say, an old shoe tells its history, you know they are too  
42 young to imagine things. And their language is not that good they, are still learning the language.

43 **J:** Well, now if they are to write a composition, do you give them a model or do they already  
44 know how a composition should be written?

45 **T2:** Yes we do, but that is done at the Foundation Phase. At foundation phase you give them a  
46 topic and then you go through the topic with them. You teach them the structure of the  
47 composition so that when they come here at the Intermediate Phase they already know the  
48 structure. How it begins, the body, and the conclusion.

49 **J:** So that is only supposed to be done at Foundation Phase?

50 **T2:** Well I don't know at Senior Phase, but the structures and all that are just done at Foundation  
51 Phase.

52 **J:** what do you focus on then at Intermediate Phase when teaching composition?

53 **T2:** Well, I don't give them a structure here, but I just briefly go through with them. I go through  
54 the topic with them, and then let them write on their own. I don't have to spoon feed them, or  
55 tell them write like this, because things like the format or the model of a composition were taught  
56 already in Foundation Phase, in Intermediate Phase we build on them to advance learners'  
57 writing.

58 **J:** Do you give them a topic or they just choose their own topic.

59 **T2:** (laughs) No, Julius, they write on the same topic, say from a story that they have all read, or  
60 maybe for instance, they just came from the holiday, I can ask them to write about their holiday  
61 or about their favorite sports etc... I don't let them choose their own topic.

62 **J:** When they write on their own, how do you rate their writing?

63 **T2:** They are very poor at spelling. And they are very slow. I don't know if it is because they are  
64 still young, or it is because it is not their mother tongue. But they are very slow in writing. Some  
65 of them write slowly because they are trying to write in cursive writing. Cursive writing is  
66 emphasized in Foundation Phase but we do not really pay attention to form of writing in  
67 Intermediate Phase. If you give them something to writing, the whole lesson that is 50 minutes  
68 long, can go by without them finished with what they are writing. Some of them will not even  
69 finish with their first paragraph by the end of the lesson. Well I know writing is not easy  
70 especially in an additional language, where they have to learn to write the language and learn the  
71 language itself at the same time. But it is a challenge because they sometimes delay me.

72 **J:** Now that your learners are so slow, how do you deal with them? What do you do when they  
73 are not done with what they supposed to write in that lesson?

74 **T2:** I let them write on their pace, but then sometimes I am forced to give them a little than I  
75 intended to give. Because what is the use of loading them with a lot of work which they won't  
76 finish anyways? So I give them just enough for the lesson and I don't rush them. Or may be let  
77 them write it groups. Then they are a bit faster when they work in groups, but I don't really like  
78 group work because it is not easy to tell if all learners have learned anything. I prefer giving  
79 them group work for speaking activities.

80 **J:** Mmmh, tell me more.

81 **T2:** (Laughs), do you want hear more?

82 **J:** Yes please, you are being too brief today (laughs).

83 **T2:** (Laughs) It is maybe because you told me you are recording. For instance if you are to give  
84 them something to write independently, you check, which words do I think they are not familiar  
85 with? Then I write down some of those words on the flash cards, give them the meanings of the  
86 words, in fact I check with them, by asking if they know the meaning of the words, if they don't,  
87 then I will explain to them what the words mean. Most of the time I ask the questions with those  
88 words just to assess if they know the words, or to drive them to what I want them to write.

89 **J:** How do you give them feedback? Like what do you look at when they hand in their work for  
90 marking?

91 **T2:** It depends on the type of activity whether to just give a tick or cross when they are correct or  
92 wrong, or perhaps look at the language structures. When they for instance write a recount of a  
93 story or composition, I correct some of the words they have written wrongly, and tell them to  
94 rewrite using the feedback I have given them.

95 **J:** Do you mark the books after you they have incorporated your comments in their writing?

96 **T2:** Not always, I always encourage them to write their corrections after I have marked their  
97 books. I try my best to correct as many mistakes as possible in their writing so that they can do  
98 correction and learn the correct way of doing it.

99 **J:** Apart from your strategies of teaching writing, what Approaches do CAPS recommend for  
100 teaching writing in the Intermediate Phase?

101 **T2:** Well, I don't want to say CAPS has moved away from OBE, but you know the department is  
102 just playing with the words here.

103 **J:**mmmh?

104 **T2:** They are saying they have reduced the work load from the teachers' side, but they also said  
105 we should use and do what suits us at our schools at a particular time. Well the Department has  
106 trained us once for a week to familiarize us with CAPS. They talked about the pre-lesson, during  
107 and post-lesson. Depending on what skill you are teaching. For example in writing, it is pre-  
108 writing, during-writing, and post writing. It is just the same with OBE, the introduction of the  
109 lesson, the body and the conclusion. To me they haven't changed anything; they are just playing  
110 with the words. Well with regard to writing, we do not do more wring because CAPS for  
111 intermediate phase emphasizes more on reading and viewing than writing. Writing is given less  
112 attention compared to reading.

113 **J:** What are the things that you think might perhaps enable or constraint you to teach writing  
114 effectively?

115 **T2:** Like?

116 **J:** (Laughs) What makes you teach writing so effectively and if not what prevents you to?

117 **T2:** Well, you know with the case of our learners, it seems they only get to do school work when  
118 they are at school. You can give them homework, they will come back the next day, do it in the  
119 morning in the class and they want to copy from others, you know. There are very few that do  
120 their homework, but the majority do not do their homework. Even if you give them assignments  
121 or a projects to do, they don't. I don't know whether it is because of the area where we are. Here  
122 most of the learners do not grow up with their parents; they are staying with their grandparents.

123 **J:** Mmmh, so?

124 **T2:** Grandparents don't assist them with their school work. They do not even check their books.  
125 They only do the book checking when we call them at school, and only a few will pitch up if you  
126 invite them to school. We normally have parents' evening where we explain what we have  
127 encountered from the learners. You take learners' work you put them on the table with the parent  
128 and explain to them how learners supposed to do and ask them to go through the books, that is  
129 when they even get shocked because some of their children do not even complete their work in  
130 the classroom. The fact that they get shocked implies that that they do not check their learners'  
131 books when they are at home.

132 **J:** So now that they barely do their homework, what strategies did you put in place to make sure  
133 that they do their homework?



134 **T2:** Well I try, not that I stopped giving them homework, but I try, I plead to them that please,  
135 please you must do your homework. Well sometimes I am just discouraged to give them  
136 homework because most of them will still do it class the following day. The other challenge is  
137 language; most of the learners have difficulties with English. You know all of them are IsiXhosa  
138 speaking, only one boy who is a Zulu. They were taught in IsiXhosa from Grade 1, and they only  
139 begin with English as a medium of instruction from grade four. You see that this is their second  
140 year of using English as a medium of instruction. I am sure most if not all of them only attempt  
141 to speak English when they come to school. They are not exposed to English at home. That is  
142 why sometimes I am just forced to tell them what to do in their mother tongue because they do  
143 not understand what is going on. You find learners writing an English composition but she or he  
144 has also written in some IsiXhosa words. Some of them also have a problem with what is called  
145 cell-phone language. Learners write letters instead of words. I don't know now if they have  
146 cellphones or they see it at home from their siblings. For example instead of the word 'you', the  
147 learner will write letter u, be, will write b, etc...

148 **J:** How do you help them with those problems?

149 **T2:** Well I am not so worried about language problem. I expect them to struggle with writing  
150 because , I mean they are young and they are just learning a new language, but I do discourage  
151 those mistakes such the cellphone language I talked about, or sometimes if they have written a  
152 word in IsiXhosa I will call them and ask what they are trying to say in IsiXhosa then show them  
153 how to write it in English. By so doing learner won't forget and will learn easily. You know  
154 learners understand better in their mother tongue.

155 **J:** What type of teaching aids do you use when teaching writing?

156 **T2:** They have got books, they've got mmmh... they've got exercise books, sometimes I use the  
157 newspaper prints, sometimes I use the exam pads to give them the worksheets, sometimes I use  
158 one of the working books that I have. So I used so many teaching aids, it depends on what I  
159 teaching on that day.

160 **J:** Tell me, how are you finding the CAPS as compared to the other curriculums?

161 **T2:** The curriculum that is changing every time? I don't know, you know when you are told to  
162 do this, suddenly things change again and you are told to do this, you get so irritated and  
163 annoyed. Well I don't have a problem with the changes of the curriculum, I am sure that the  
164 visiting of the individuals like you, (laughs) to my class and the feedback they give me tells me  
165 whether I am doing the right thing or not. And the NGOs that come here tell me they are very  
166 impressed with the way I teach, we have the Molteno Project, they came here and gave us really  
167 useful books and they assist us on how to go about teaching different aspects of language to  
168 learners and how to cope with the changing of the curriculum. So we get more exposed and it  
169 builds our confidence.

170 **J:** So they train and assist you in all the subjects or only in English?

171 **T2:** In all the subjects and they assist you if you have any problem with teaching say English.  
172 They provide us with books and materials. Like in English they gave us very good textbooks,  
173 'The New bridge to English Grade 5', (showing me the book) this one. It has so many easy and  
174 activities that suits Grade 5 learners. Unlike these books that we get from the department. Now I  
175 have so many books I don't even know which one to use anymore. CAPS is saying use this one,  
176 Molteno Project is saying this is the best book, you just don't know, but yes, we try our best.

177 **J:** From your 25 years of teaching experience, what is the biggest challenge that you have  
178 encountered with the learners?

179 **T2:** Sjoe, discipline..., discipline. That is the greatest of all. Most of the learners are ill-  
180 mannered. You know I have been moving around from school to school until I came to this  
181 school which is in my hometown, Grahamstown. You know when you compare learners from  
182 different schools that you have teaching you find out that this were better than this and that was  
183 better than this. When I was teaching in Cradock, I was teaching older learners in Grade 5. You  
184 could find a nineteen or eighteen year old learner in Grade 5 and the way they behaved, could  
185 tell that they are not supposed to be in that class. These ones make so much noise, they swear so  
186 much. So you see there is a difference between working with young learners and working with  
187 older learners.

188 **J:** Thank you Mrs.... for your time and useful information you have shared with me, do you  
189 have anything else you would want to share with me?

190 **T2:** Not now Julius, (laughs) you said you will be here for two weeks so I will keep on sharing  
191 as time goes on.

192 **J:** Thank you

## **Informal conversational interview 1 (Lesson 1, Recount)**

**25 April 2013 (12:33 – 12:59)**

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1 **J:** You told learners to work in groups so that they can do the recount of the story, would you  
2 like to share your views on group work with me?

3 **T2:** Well it depends on what type of work I am giving them. I do not always make them work in  
4 groups, because it is not easy to see if all the learners understand or are doing well in an activity.  
5 Some of the learners do not even participate in the groups discussions. So they rely more on  
6 those who are more active. That was OBE, OBE was motivating group work, that is why we are  
7 even advised to make them sit in groups like that. Well I am not saying group work is bad,  
8 because sometimes learners may not understand when the teacher teaches, but she or he may  
9 learn or understand more from the peers during group work. They way others understand, if they  
10 try to explain it in the group, it may even make sense than the teacher's explanations.

11 **J:** That was OBE, is CAPS still requiring the same sitting arrangement?

12 **T2:** As I told you, they are just playing with words. Nothing much has changed about how things  
13 should be done. There is no much difference between CAPS and OBE.

14 **J:** So why did you let them write the recount in groups today?

15 **T2:** You know these learners like stories. As you see when I was reading them a story yesterday  
16 they all paid attention. They enjoy it even more if you let them work in groups to retell a story  
17 that you have just read them. So they are also enjoying it. Although I may not be able to identify  
18 individual learners who really understood the story well, I will see from their groups' writing,  
19 how well they have listened to the story. It is also easier for me to mark their work you know  
20 they are too many, and just look at the bunch of books I still have to mark. An essay is not like  
21 these short answers that you mark so fast, it is time consuming and you really have to pay  
22 attention to it.

23 **J:** Do they always work in groups when writing recounts?

24 **T2:** Not at all, there are times when I want to see each learner's individual work. Sometimes, we  
25 read a story in class, and I would ask each learner to write a recount individually. I can then  
26 choose either to mark it or I will tell learners to swap their books and mark each other's work.

27 **J:** You asked learners to read their recounts before they handed them to you for marking.

28 **T2:** Hmmm...

29 **J:** ... and while they were reading or rather presenting their work, you also gave them instant  
30 feedback on some pronunciations, spelling and sequence of the story. They were visibly erasing  
31 and doing corrections in their work. Now do you regard this as their final draft or you still have  
32 to give them more time to write a final draft?

33 **T2:** They write quite slowly, but I don't really rush them or demand more from them. When they  
34 hand in their work to me for marking is final. I don't mark and then let them work again on the  
35 same exercise. I would perhaps just ask them to do corrections for that specific work but not for  
36 marking .

37 **J:** Judging from the learners' work, some of them wrote full pages, some half a page and there is  
38 even this group that only managed to write a paragraph. What do you think might have caused  
39 this?

40 **T2:** Well I was not really specific how much they should write in groups, my focus was just on  
41 how well they can express themselves in writing, by recounting on a story that they have read. I  
42 know they need more time, but isn't one hour enough? Those who did not finish are just slow in  
43 writing.

44 **J:** What feedback are you going to give them tomorrow?

45 **T2:** They will just have to copy this into their grammar books. I will tell each group member to  
46 copy this in his or her Grammar book. I have made comments; I corrected some words, so they  
47 will just have to write corrections in their books on Monday.

48 **J:** And then?

49 **T2:** That is all (laughs). I would not mark the books anymore. When they copy the recount in  
50 their exercise books is just for everyone to have the activity they have done in groups in his/her  
51 own book. I will just walk through and make sure everyone has copied their group work into her  
52 exercise book.

53 **J:** Thank you so much for your time and answers to my questions.

54 **T2:** It is my pleasure.

## Stimulated Recall Interview (Lesson 2, Comprehension)

29 April 2013 (13:38 – 14:00)

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- 1 **J:** We have watched the video of the lesson; now let us reflect on some of the things that have  
2 happened during the lesson.
- 3 **T2:** (Laughs) Okay, Julius... It was so nice; I didn't know it comes out clear like that.
- 4 **J:** Before you wrote the questions on the chalkboard, you first asked some of the questions orally  
5 and learners gave the answers. You then wrote on the chalkboard some of the questions again of  
6 which you asked already, why did you do it that way?
- 7 **T2:** You know, that was just a way of bringing learners in the lesson. We read the story already  
8 on the previous day, and like any normal person learners can forget easily. So by asking them  
9 first to answer orally, they will remember many aspects of the story and will eventually give  
10 correct answers in their exercise books.
- 11 **J:** I see you also read through the comprehensive questions with them and later you were  
12 translating some of the questions for them in isiXhosa...
- 13 **T2:** Oh, Yes... That is what I wanted to ask you too Julius, even the ANA [Annual National  
14 Assessment] officials sometimes come here and tell us that we should not tell learners what  
15 things mean in their mother tongue. That is why learners fail those ANA tests so much. These  
16 learners are still struggling to learn the language, many of them don't understand even a single  
17 sentence. So I think if you give them the English version and then tell them what it means they  
18 will somehow learn. Do you think it is right to just expect them to answer questions correctly  
19 when we all know they are struggling with the language?
- 20 **J:** Well I am not in a position to say who is right or wrong here yet. That is why I am doing this  
21 research; to see how you teach writing and why you teach the way you teach. You should have  
22 good reasons why you do what you do, just like you explained about the language barrier.
- 23 **T2:** Yes, Language is really a problem amongst our learners.
- 24 **J:** You were only using one book to read to the learners; don't you have enough books for  
25 English for Grade 5?
- 26 **T2:** I have so many textbooks for English. Sometimes I think the department wastes a lot of  
27 money on buying so many textbooks that we don't even use. For instance I have this one,  
28 '**Shuters Top class English: Grade 5 learners' book**', I have this one, '**Headstart English:**  
29 **First Additional Language learners**', and this one [**Grade 5 English first additional**  
30 **language: Term 3-4**]. All these books are said to be in line with the CAPS documents. In  
31 addition to those I also have this one, '**New Bridge to English: Grade 5 learners' book**' which  
32 I got from the Molteno Project that provides a lot of schools here in Grahamstown with so many  
33 teaching aids. So somebody will come and check whether you are using this, somebody will  
34 come and check whether you are using the other book.
- 35 **J:** Who is that somebody?
- 36 **T2:** People from the department. Molteno Project is also saying we should use their books. They  
37 are saying this book is aligned with CAPS. So they [officials from Molteno Project] come here  
38 sit here and check whether we are using their books. Once you are busy using these books, the  
39 two books from the department, for example I was using this one [**Headstart English: First**  
40 **Additional Language learners**'] from the beginning of the year, and I see learners were  
41 enjoying it, and it is aligned with this one with CAPS, this one is also aligned with CAPS but I  
42 haven't started using this one [**Shuters Top class English: Grade 5 learners' book**'] yet  
43 because it just arrived last week.

44 **J:** Arrived from where?

45 **T2:** These [**Shuters Top class English: Grade 5 learners' book'**] were bought by the school,  
46 while these [**Headstart English: First Additional Language learners' and Grade 5 English**  
47 **first additional language: Term 1-2** ] were bought by the Department. But I am using this one  
48 [**Grade 5 English first additional language: Term 1-2**] more for homework or to keep them  
49 busy when I am busy with something and I don't want them to make noise I let them do some of  
50 the activities in this book. Then I can go through what they have written and just to see how they  
51 are progressing. So the subject advisors monitor these books, they come here to see if we are  
52 using these books. They are really confusing us, now because of so many books that I don't even  
53 know which one to use, I sometimes use newspapers, articles from the newspapers or magazines  
54 that we read in class together with learners, and extract questions that learners would answer.

55 **J:** Why do you choose to only use them for homework or to keep them busy?

56 **T2:** They were not given so we can focus solely on them. You know you can't just get all your  
57 activities from one teaching aid. But they are good for the learners to practice what they have  
58 learned in an English lesson. For us teachers, is just to monitor how they are progressing.

59 **J:** Hmmmm....

60 **T2:** When I was using this (**Headstart English: First Additional Language learners' and**  
61 **Grade 5 English first additional language: Term 1-2**) book in the first term, this term I am  
62 told that I should use this book that the school just bought recently. Um, it is too much Julius.  
63 This is just so confusing.

64 **J:** Okay, back to today's lesson, I see some of the learners were not done with their work and  
65 you told them to just hand in their books. Will you mark their work or you will allow them to  
66 continue during the next lesson.

67 **T2:** Julius, these learners are very slow... Very-very slow. If you allow them to continue in  
68 every next lesson when will you even finish all the activities for the term? Well I do not rush  
69 them but when the lesson ends I have to stop them and mark the little they have written. There  
70 are some learners who are really good, but some are very slow. I don't know if it is because of  
71 the language problem, or maybe they lacked poor foundation from the Intermediate Phase. You  
72 know most of them are using English as medium of instruction for the second year this year.  
73 They only start with English in Grade 4. They are very slow in writing even with copying from  
74 the chalkboard. Just copying notes from the chalkboard into their notes books, they copy letter-  
75 by-letter. That is why I even told them that they should not copy the questions, because most of  
76 them would not even have written any answer to these questions yet.

77 **J:** Okay. Thank you so much for your time and answers.

78 **T2:** You are welcome Julius.

## **Informal conversational interviews 2 (Lesson 5: Friendly letter)**

**3 May 2013 (13:00 – 13:20)**

---

1 **J:** What was your focus on this letter?

2 **T2:** I was looking at both the structure of a friendly letter and learners' language. I wanted to see  
3 if they know the structure of a friendly letter, like the address, greeting, body and conclusion. But  
4 I was also looking at the content if they have written according to the instructions. The  
5 instructions were, learners had to write a letter to their friends pretending as if they are Tebogo,  
6 and tell them about the truck that got stuck and how the truck driver got helped. They had  
7 already read this story, so they just had to write as if they were part of the story.

8 **J:** Why did you make the total marks of the letter out of 15?

9 **T2:** I usually use mark letters out of 15 marks, and allocate the marks according to the parts of  
10 the letter.

11 **J:** How do you allocate marks? I mean what determines the amount of marks each learner would  
12 get?

13 **T2:** Well, with me I divide the 15 marks into 3 parts: 5 marks for the address if written correctly,  
14 in the top right corner of the page, and it is straight, 6 marks for the content, where I look at how  
15 the learner has organized his/her ideas, the use of language, mistakes made and if the learner's  
16 writing is in line with the topic given. The last 4 marks are for a good greeting and ending of the  
17 letter. For example if a learner correctly wrote: Dear Thandi, that is 2 marks, and if she/he  
18 correctly wrote your friend... , Yours sincerely, or anything similar but correct and his /her  
19 name at the end of the letter, that is another 2 marks. The more mistakes the lesser marks.

20 **J:** What do The CAPS say about how these marks should be allocated?

21 **T2:** Well, I don't think they have explained specifically, how we should allocate these marks. All  
22 I am aware of is that longer pieces of writing such as letters, compositions, recounts etc, make  
23 up 25 of the second paper during examinations. I think it depends on the teacher to see what  
24 he/she is assessing and how much marks out 15 she/he will give to the learner.

25 **J:** You have done quite a lot of correction in most of your learners' writing. When you give their  
26 books back, what do you expect them to do?

27 **T2:** Of course to write their correction. I have trained them from the beginning that they should  
28 write corrections for all their work. When I mark their work for other activities we usually do  
29 corrections together in the class. But for an activity like a letter, where everyone writes  
30 something different even though it is on the same topic, it would not be easy to do corrections  
31 together on the chalkboard. I correct some of their mistakes and tell them to rewrite their letters  
32 using the corrections I have done in their books. In the process they will learn how to write some  
33 of the words I have corrected, and may not repeat the same grammatical errors that I have  
34 corrected.

35 **J:** And do you still mark their corrections and give them marks?

36 **T2:** No, I don't really mark them, I would perhaps just sign or give a tick that I have seen the  
37 correction. I give them marks when they first hand in their books. The reason I give feedback on  
38 their writing activities is because I want them to learn from their mistakes, learn how to spell  
39 words correctly and learn some correct grammar from the feedback I provide on their writing. It  
40 is not easy to mark letters over and over, as you can see they are quite a lot of learners and I  
41 don't have enough time. This is not the only subject or class I am teaching.

42 **J:** Can you perhaps remember how your teachers in school or at the college used to mark your  
43 friendly letters?

44 **T2:** (Laughs) I can't remember how they use to mark or what they look at those years, but the  
45 little I can remember from school is that, we used to be taught all the parts of the letters just like I  
46 did, and we would be given marks, I cannot really remember out of how much. The teacher used  
47 to demonstrate how the letter should look like but the content should come from you. When you  
48 get the script back, you could see the teacher looked at the grammatical errors, such as the  
49 spelling, punctuations, how you organised your paragraphs and how you ended your letter. The  
50 book used to come back all red. I can't remember if we have written friendly letters at the  
51 college.

52 **J:** When you get your scripts from your teachers, all red as you said, were expected to do  
53 correction and give it back for marking?

54 **T2:** Of course we were told to do corrections. When you get your book you just have to rewrite  
55 your correction incorporate the comments from the teacher and that is all because we used to get  
56 our books back with our final marks.

57 **J:** Where you provided with any form of criteria so that you would know what the teacher  
58 expects from you?

59 **T2:** Well, the teacher would just tell you what they want you to do the chalkboard. And if you  
60 write out the topic, you would lose marks. I don't know if they had some criteria apart from how  
61 we organized our letters and how we used the language.

62 **J:** Do you think this has somehow shaped the way you teach a friendly letter to your learners?

63 **T2:** Maybe yes, but not really, because then, writing was not really derived from reading as we  
64 do now. You are told to write a letter about trip to Johannesburg or your trip by a train, when you  
65 have never been to Johannesburg or travelled by train. Well I should admit there are some of the  
66 things that I do now as result of my experience as a learner. For example looking for and  
67 marking all the mistakes if I am to get a learner's book. Our English teacher use to make our  
68 books red by correcting many errors in our writing. And I find myself doing that most of the  
69 time. I think is it is just in the nature of a language teacher.

70 **J:** Thank you so much for your time today.

71 **T2:** You are welcome.

72



## **Interview 2**

**27 June 2013 (12:10 – 12: 43)**

---

1 **J:** Let us talk about your BEd (Hons) studies. Why did you decide to do it with Northwest  
2 University?

3 **T2:** Well, I got an invitation from the Department of Education that there was somebody who  
4 was coming to introduce BEd (Hons) course for teachers. I think peer pressure played a role as  
5 well because at our school, there are some teachers who are studying with Northwest University.  
6 So I decided to register as well so that it can be easier for us to discuss with them about what we  
7 are expected to do in the assignments.

8 **J:** What course are you doing?

9 **T2:** I am doing Teaching and learning. It does not really have a specific subject specialization,  
10 but I believe it can be very helpful for me in teaching my subjects, English and Natural Science  
11 and technology. I enjoy teaching all of them, so this course will just do justice to all of them.

12 **J:** Do you think it has shaped the way you teach writing to your learners?

13 **T2:** Well it is quite helpful, because we have different modules, like modules on motivation  
14 where you can learn different styles of motivating learners, you know as an English teacher there  
15 are learners who do not want to communicate, who do not want to do anything in the class. They  
16 do give us some modules on what they call Mixed Communication Comprehension, so you are  
17 able to reflect on what learners do in class in relation to what the modules are telling you. Not so  
18 much is said specifically about how writing should be taught.

19 **J:** Do you think the way you teach English, particularly writing, has changed in anyway after  
20 you took up your BEd Hons studies?

21 **T2:** Not really, I think my way of teaching English was influenced more by the workshops I have  
22 attended and the training I got from the college. Although teaching English was also part of my  
23 training at the college, when I started teaching, I was not teaching English. I have been teaching  
24 Natural Science. But when I came at this school the teacher who was teaching English went on  
25 retirement, then I took over. I have attended many workshops, by READ, Molteno, and also the  
26 workshops for OBE and CAPS. So in those workshops they show us how to go about presenting  
27 our English lessons. So I took it from there and combined it with what I have learned from the  
28 college. But you know learners differ also, in fact your presentation is influenced by the type of  
29 learners you are teaching. You then you change your teaching styles in response to the type of  
30 learners you are teaching.

31 **J:** Interesting, you did not say anything about READ the last time. Can you tell me more about  
32 READ?

33 **T2:** Read is just like Molteno. You know what Molteno was doing is not different from READ.  
34 They were also introducing their teaching materials. You know Molteno just came to our school  
35 this year, but I don't know if READ is still existing. They trained us around 2005 or 2006 there, I  
36 cannot remember well but it is not a new thing. And that is where I got the READ I used in the  
37 lessons you observed. It was from READ workshops where I would say I got some teaching  
38 styles and techniques that I use in most of my English lessons. With Molteno we just started with  
39 it at the beginning of this year. We only had one workshop with molten. But they do come and  
40 check what we are doing in our classes.

41 **J:** How would you say READ workshops shaped your way of teaching writing then?

42 **T2:** When they trained us they emphasized that we should always start with the reading. We do  
43 reading aloud, group reading, shared reading and individual reading. The lesson for writing

44 develops from reading lessons. You then do the recounts, grammar, spelling and all sorts of  
45 writing exercises.

46 **J:** Let talk about your views on feedback. What are your views on providing feedback for your  
47 learners writing?

48 **T2:** You see feedback is sort of reinforcement. You are reinforcing what learners couldn't  
49 understand during the lesson. You also give feedback to learners so that they can see their  
50 mistakes. When they see their mistakes you let them work on them and get the right. First you  
51 ask them to do it themselves if you see they are unable, and then you help them with correction. I  
52 think learner's mistakes should be corrected immediately so that they can learn from them.

53 **J:** Does the number of learners have an impact on the way you give feedback to your learners?

54 **T2:** It is better than when I started teaching. When I started teaching around the 1990s I used to  
55 have up to 50 learners in a class. These are still many but more manageable than those years. The  
56 number of learners keeps on reducing these years. Last year I had many learners in Grade 5  
57 compared to this year. I had about 37 learners.

58 **J:** Now that the number of learners has reduced, how has is shaped your teaching writing and the  
59 way you provide feedback to your learners?

60 **T2:** Well if I see that a learner is really struggling, we break late. I don't let that learner go home  
61 with others when the school knocks off. I sit with that learner and we do some exercises together  
62 until I see to it that she can now manage to move on with the others. I usually stay behind with  
63 those that are struggling with reading in the library, where I give them some books to read and  
64 even read with them. If I see that I cannot help the learner, maybe she /he has some  
65 psychological or mental problems then I will talk to the HOD or principal, so that she/he can be  
66 referred to some officials in our district that help learners with those problems and make proper  
67 referrals or even send learners to a special school if they see that the problem is severe.

68 **J:** Okay, let us focus on teaching writing, in your lessons , you made use of very interesting  
69 words that most language teachers barely use like recounts, shared reading etc, and you also  
70 made use of flash cards as your learning support materials when you taught reading and  
71 instructed learners to use those words in their recounts. Where did you learn all these?

72 **T2:** Things like recounts, I learned from the workshops, the learning support materials, like flash  
73 cards, those were part of our training at the college when I was doing my diploma.

74 **J:** Which workshops are you referring to here?

75 **T2:** All the workshops, READ workshop, the OBE, or CAPS and the Molteno.

76 **J:** (Laughs) All the workshops taught you the same thing? Which one of these workshops do you  
77 believe have influenced your teaching of writing more?

78 **T2:** Hmmm, I would say the one that have influenced me more is READ. READ had big books  
79 which they read before they go to small books which they read for individuals. What I mean is,  
80 you use the big book for reading as the whole class, and then they do shared reading or group  
81 reading using the small books. To me, and you know when you start introducing a lesson, you  
82 start by discussing the topic, or asking learners to predict the story, and many of READ books  
83 even the small ones have got pictures. So, learners predict the story by comparing the topic of the  
84 story with what they see in the pictures. Thereafter, you read to them. As a teacher you read for  
85 them aloud, and then you read as a whole class with learners. Learners then make connections of  
86 what they have predicted with what they have read from the story. You have seen the way I have  
87 done it; you see the process go on until writing activities comes in. Then another story come up  
88 we follow the same process.

89 **J:** As you said you attended READ workshops and received materials around 2005 or so, which  
90 was the time of RNCS and people are now using CAPS. Aren't the two contradicting each other  
91 in term of teaching approaches?

92 **T2:** They are not. As I told you there is no much differences between CAPS and the other  
93 Curriculums, say OBE. Well in fact I only attended one CAPS workshop on English. Most of the  
94 CAPS workshops I attended were for Natural Science and Technology. Because I teach Natural  
95 Science and Technology to Grade 5 and Grade 6, but I only teach English to Grade 5 learners. So  
96 mostly it was my HOD that attended most of the CAPS workshops on English. I knew that she  
97 would transfer the information to me, but as she we discussed; we could see that there is nothing  
98 different from what we are doing already in the classes. Mostly when you attend these  
99 workshops, the facilitators try to first find out what you already know about teaching a certain  
100 aspect and how you go about doing it. Then they assist you here and there. So there is nothing  
101 new that they bring up at the workshops.

102 **J:** Apart from your HOD, what do the English subject advisors do? I mean what help do they  
103 give when they come and visit your school?

104 **T2:** They focus more on administration, files, and learners' exercise books. For example they  
105 say, each and every learning area must have file. They look if you have the annual teaching plan,  
106 lesson preparations, assessment tasks and guidelines, recording sheets, school based assessments  
107 and moderation tools and learning material and support. In the learners' books they look how we  
108 assess learners and the type questions we ask our learners. They are discouraging us from using  
109 the old way of asking such choose the correct answer, fill in or underline. Questions that are only  
110 asking learners to give one simple answer you know. Those are old ways of teaching that we  
111 used then.

112 **J:** Who are you referring to when you say 'we' and when is 'then'?

113 **T2:** I mean we used to be taught like that when we were learners even before OBE. But now  
114 things have changed. Learners should be asked questions which require them to write more so  
115 that they can develop the language properly. They also look at the volume of work that you have  
116 given to the learners. That is why you see me always giving a task, mark it and do corrections  
117 because you need to have those in the learners' books. They must see that you are working and  
118 do not only come to school to hang the jacket on the chair and chat with the colleagues while  
119 learners are doing nothing [laughs]. But we don't have such incidents at our school, where you  
120 would find teachers chatting to each other leaving learners alone.

121 **J:** Do they give any assistance with regard to filing your necessary documents and assessing  
122 your learners?

123 **T2:** They do assist us. If they find out that you need help in a certain aspect they will tell you  
124 what you should do, or what is the right way of doing it.

125 **J:** Do they specify the volume of written work that should be at least be in the learners exercise  
126 books?

127 **T2:** Well, the volume of work depends on the pace of the learners. You know our learners are  
128 slow in writing and you cannot push them to write a lot of work. They can take even an hour  
129 writing only ten sentences. It would have been good if they started with English from Grade 1.  
130 These ones only started learning English from Grade 3, I feel if they started with it a bit earlier,  
131 they would have some good command of English by Grade 5. But they are not bad though. I  
132 hope things will change now because this year, English was introduced as a subject in Grade 1.

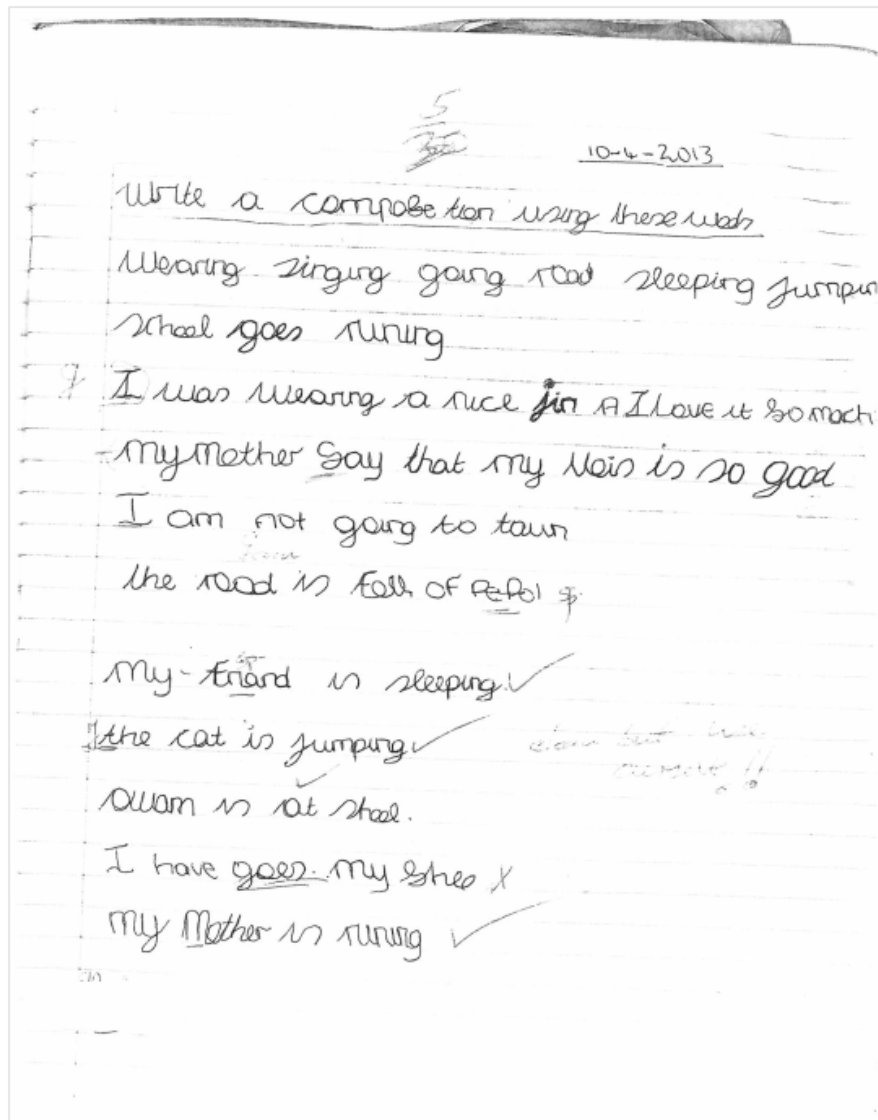
133 **J:** Thank you so much for your time and answers. Is there anything else you would like to share  
134 with me?

135 **T2:** Nothing much. I wanted to ask you how you found my teaching when you sat in my class.  
136 **J:** It was very interesting; it really helped me in answering some of my research questions. For  
137 me as an English teacher for Grade 5 learners as well, it was indeed a pleasure sitting in your  
138 classroom observing you teaching and seeing how you do things here in South Africa. Once  
139 again thank you so much.  
140 **T2:** It's my pleasure.

## APPENDIX 6: SAMPLES OF GRADE 5 EFAL LEARNERS' WRITTEN ACTIVITIES

### 6a: Samples of T1's Grade 5 EFAL learners' written activities

#### Lesson 1: Composition activity



Lesson 2: Past tense activity

Memorable Salage 29-04-2013

Write these in a past tense

The donkey is grazing on the field  
The cats are licking milk  
cars on the street are running  
my baby is crying all day  
school boys are clapping  
hands

Memorable Salage 2-03-2013

at the shop

The children are going to Mr Nkomo's shop  
school house

2 Mr Nkomo is on inside outside the

3 Mr Nkomo sees say (Betty's) good  
morning

4 Betty is buying some sugar children  
shorts shirts.

Lesson 3: Comprehension activity (from New day-by day)

at the shop

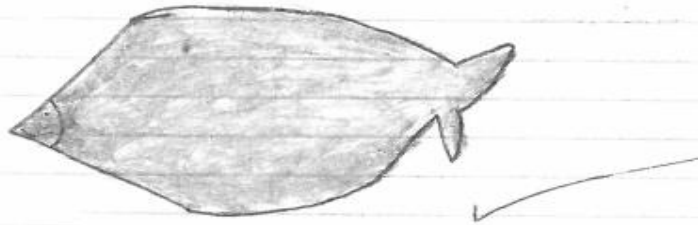
shop / school / house / on / inside / outside / news / rays / news / sugar  
shorts / shirts

1. The children are going to Mr nkomo's shop
  2. Mr nkomo is inside the shop
  3. Mr nkomo says good morning children
  4. Betty is buying some sugar
-

Lesson: 4 Poetry activity

Question from the poem

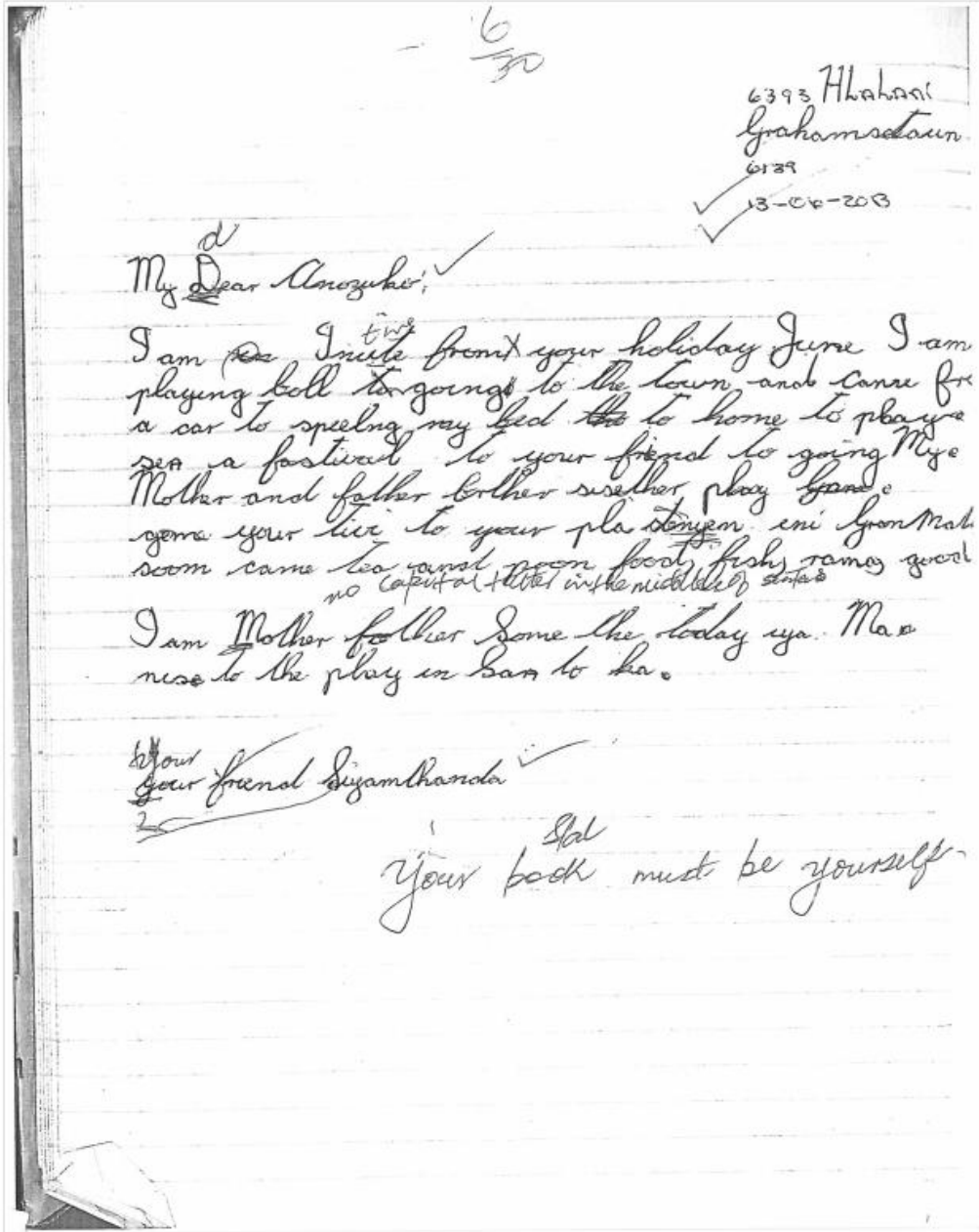
1. it is a water snake to dems X
2. it is a fish ✓
3. a bat is a size X
4. is a dog X
5. ned to dems is a fish X



Fish



Lesson 5: Friendly letter





Lesson 2: Comprehension

9  
28

29 April 2013

The day the truck got stuck

Comprehension

a) Febago ✓ ①

b) ice-cream ✓ ①

c) ~~It is got stuck under the bridge because it is very big truck~~ People are shouting and they want to go home ✓

d) the petrol tanker driver ~~the~~ ice-cream truck ~~to~~ is ~~stuck~~ but is dia-  
ETNO ✓ ①

e) He tried to push the ice-cream truck ✓

f) no, because the ice-cream truck got stuck under the bridge ✓

g) engineer he said cut off top of truck truck driver he said cut off  
bottom of a bridge ✓

h) Febago he said let some air out under tires ②

29/04

Incomplete!

Just work is really. Please write neatly.

Lesson 3: Adjectives activity

(7/10)

30 April 2013

Junior English sJD II - Lower

(1) Jaan is a clever girl. ✓

(2) Sathers has big feet. ✓

(3) The plums were sweet. ✓

(4) It was a rough road. ✓

(5) My right foot hurts. ✓

(6) DO it the right way. ✓

(7) We had ripe plums. ✓

(8) Her hair is long. ✓

(9) Draw a straight line. ✓

(10) Mother is busy today. ✓

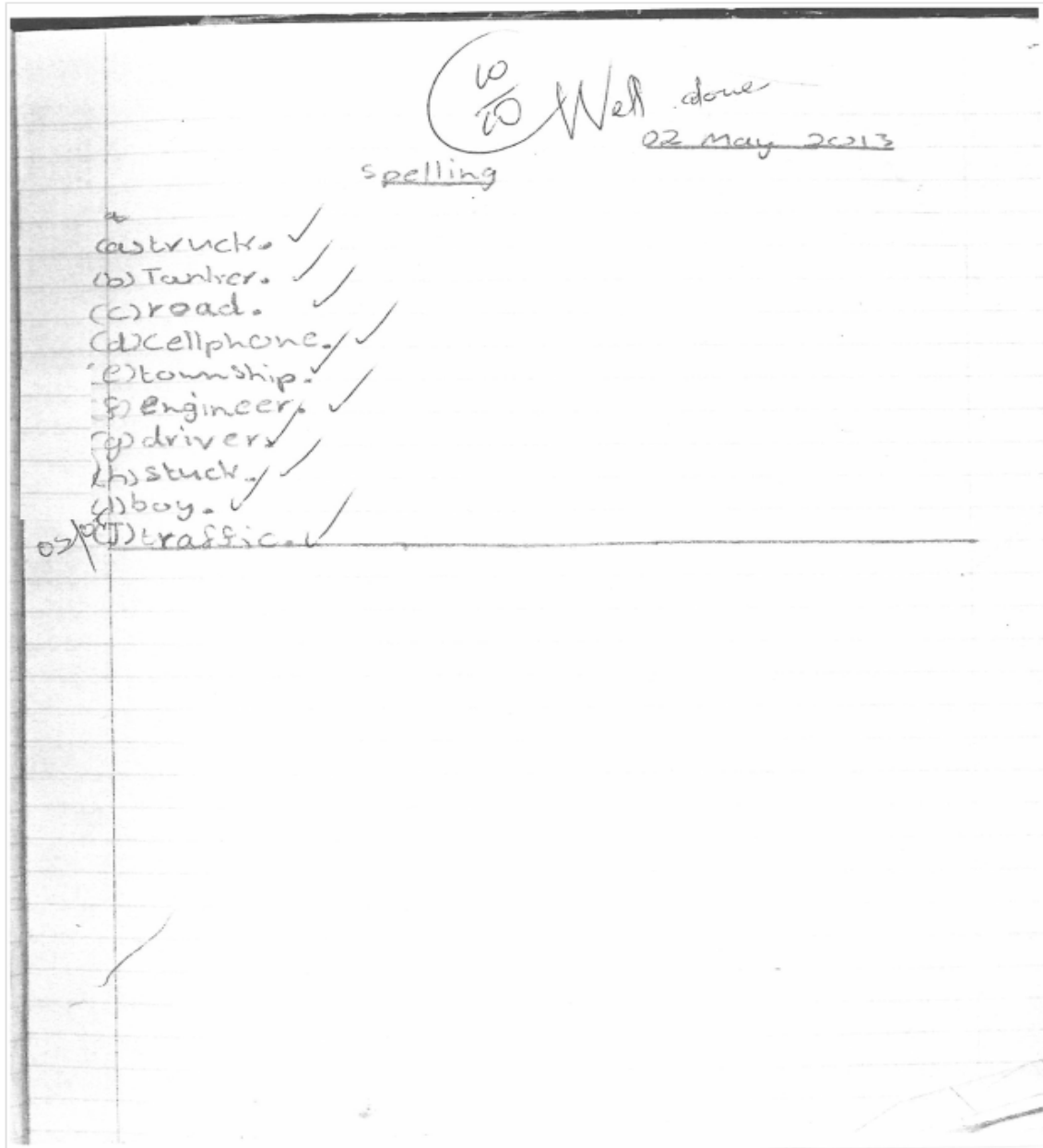
Corrections

✓ (3) The plums were sweet.

(5) My right foot hurts.

(8) Her hair is long.

**Lesson 4: Spelling activity**



Lesson 5: Friendly letter

01/15

6586 Hlulani Location

Grahamstown

6139

3 May 2013

1

Dear Luxolo

1

My name is Asonge my surname is Busani. I am live at Hlulani 6586. I like to write and read my books after school. My favourite food is pizza. My favourite drink is tea and my favourite time is story time. I like to play soccer with my friends.

~~to my friend~~ I like you so much. One day there was a big truck <sup>going to run</sup> ~~they~~ <sup>township</sup> ~~were~~ <sup>The truck</sup> got stuck under the bridge and petrol tanker is tried to push ice cream truck but ice cream truck is can't go. The ice cream truck driver he call a tow-truck tow-truck ~~driver~~ is tried to keep help truck driver and the little boy he came over mountain and smiling he said let some air which ~~to~~ <sup>to</sup> tires.

Your Friend

1

Asonge

You don't have to tell your friend your name. He knows you, and where you live.

GRADE 5 TERM 2				
SKILLS	LISTENING AND SPEAKING (ORAL)	READING & VIEWING	WRITING & PRESENTING	LANGUAGE STRUCTURES & CONVENTIONS
<p>58</p> <p>CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT POLICY STATEMENT (CAPS)</p> <p>230</p>	<p><b>LISTENS TO A STORY</b></p> <p>(Choose from contemporary realistic fiction/traditional stories/personal accounts/adventure/funny/fantasy/real life stories/historical fiction)</p> <p>Text from the textbook or reader/s or Teacher's Resource File (TRF)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Answers literal questions</li> <li>• Answers questions about what came first, second, third, etc.</li> <li>• Gives a personal response</li> <li>• Answers more complex questions, e.g. Why don't they...? What would you do...?</li> <li>• Expresses feelings and opinions, e.g. Why couldn't ...?</li> </ul>	<p><b>READS A STORY</b></p> <p>Text from the textbook or reader/s or Teacher's Resource File (TRF)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-reading: reads and discusses title and looks at pictures</li> <li>• Uses reading strategies, e.g. making predictions, using contextual clues</li> <li>• Discusses new vocabulary</li> <li>• Identifies sequence of events, setting and characters</li> <li>• Makes up questions about the story</li> <li>• Uses a dictionary</li> </ul> <p><b>DOES COMPREHENSION ACTIVITY ON THE TEXT (ORAL OR WRITTEN)</b></p> <p>Reads a simple book/story review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies key features, e.g. title, list of characters, brief summary and rating</li> <li>• Gives opinion of the review</li> </ul> <p><b>PRACTISES READING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reads aloud with appropriate pronunciation, fluency, and expression</li> </ul> <p><b>REFLECTS ON TEXTS READ DURING INDEPENDENT/PAIR READING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does a short oral book review</li> </ul>	<p><b>WRITES A SIMPLE STORY WITH A FRAME</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writes an appropriate opening sentence</li> <li>• Writes about events logically</li> <li>• Uses connecting words (and, but)</li> <li>• Uses some adjectives as comparatives and superlatives</li> <li>• Writes an appropriate ending</li> </ul> <p><b>WRITES A SIMPLE BOOK/STORY REVIEW WITH A FRAME</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses frame correctly</li> <li>• Includes title, main characters and plot/topic</li> <li>• Includes summary of plot</li> <li>• Gives personal opinion of text</li> </ul> <p><b>RECORDS WORDS AND THEIR MEANINGS IN A PERSONAL DICTIONARY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writes sentences using the words or explanations to show the meaning, etc.</li> </ul>	<p><b>SPELLING</b></p> <p>Uses the dictionary to check spelling and meanings of words</p> <p>Uses knowledge of alphabetical order and first letters of a word to find words in a dictionary.</p> <p><b>WORKING WITH WORDS AND SENTENCES</b></p> <p>Uses nouns that have only plurals, e.g. scissors and trousers</p> <p>Begins to understand there is no article with uncountable nouns (e.g. I like fish.)</p> <p>Builds on use of adjectives (before nouns), e.g. The small dog</p> <p>Uses some adjectives as comparatives and superlatives</p> <p>Develops the use of question forms e.g. who, what, when, which, why, how</p> <p>Uses connecting words to show addition e.g. and contrast e.g. but</p> <p><b>VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT</b></p> <p>Words taken from shared or individually read texts</p> <p>Collocations, e.g. Happy birthday, fish and chips</p>
	<p><b>TERM 2 WEEK 1-2</b></p> <p><b>TAKES PART IN A CONVERSATION ON A FAMILIAR TOPIC, CODE-SWITCHING IF NECESSARY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asks and answers question</li> <li>• Respects other learners by listening to them</li> <li>• Encourages other learners to speak</li> </ul> <p><b>PRACTISES LISTENING AND SPEAKING</b></p> <p>(Choose one for daily practice)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performs a short poem or rhyme</li> <li>• Plays a simple language game</li> <li>• Gives and follows instructions / directions</li> <li>• Tells own news</li> <li>• Tells of own related experiences</li> </ul>			

Writing Development Continuum / Individual Student Profile

# Indicators For Writing Development Continuum

Beyond the Roleplay phase children are said to be working in a particular phase when the Global Statement and key indicators represent the best fit with the children's behaviours and beliefs. Children need not display all key indicators to be placed in a phase; the placements rests upon the teacher's professional judgement.

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 I. D. \_\_\_\_\_  
 School \_\_\_\_\_

## Phases

### PHASE 1: Role Play Writing

<b>Content, Organisation and Contextual Understandings</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>assigns a message to own symbols</li> <li>understands that writing and drawing are different, e.g. points to words while 'reading'</li> <li>is aware that print carries a message</li> <li>orally recounts own experiences</li> <li>knows some favourite parts of stories, rhymes, jingles or songs</li> <li>reads text from memory or invents meaning (the meaning may change each time)</li> <li>writes and asks others to assign meaning to what has been written</li> <li>talks about own drawing and writing</li> <li>tells adults what to write, e.g. 'This is my cat'</li> <li>role plays writing message for purpose, e.g. telephone messages</li> <li>states purpose for own 'writing', e.g. 'This is my shopping list'</li> <li>recognises own name (or part of it) in print, e.g. 'My name starts with that'</li> <li>attempts to write own name</li> <li>thinks own 'writing' can be read by others</li> </ul>
<b>Concepts and Conventions</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses known letters or approximations of letters to represent written language</li> <li>shows beginning awareness of directionality, i.e. points to where print begins</li> <li>draws symbols consisting of straight, curved or intersecting lines that simulate letters</li> <li>makes random marks on paper</li> <li>produces aimless or circular scribble</li> <li>makes horizontal or linear scribble with some breaks</li> <li>places letters randomly on page</li> <li>writes random strings of letters</li> <li>mixes letters, numerals and invented letter shapes</li> <li>flips or reverses letters</li> <li>makes organisational decisions about writing, e.g. 'I'll start here so it will fit'</li> <li>copies layout of some text forms, e.g. letters, lists</li> </ul>

<b>Strategies</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>experiments with upper and lower case letters. May show a preference for upper case</li> <li>repeats a few known alphabet symbols frequently using letters from own name</li> <li>copies print from environment</li> </ul>
<b>Attitude</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>enjoys stories and asks for them to be retold or reread</li> <li>listens attentively to the telling or reading of stories and other texts</li> <li>writes spontaneously for self rather than for an audience</li> </ul>

### PHASE 2: Experimental Writing

<b>Content, Organisation and Contextual Understandings</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reads back own writing</li> <li>attempts familiar forms of writing, e.g. lists, letters, recounts, stories, messages</li> <li>writes using simplified oral language structures, e.g. 'I brt loles'</li> <li>uses writing to convey meaning</li> <li>voices thoughts while writing</li> <li>writes to communicate messages, direct experiences or feelings</li> <li>assumes that reader shares the context so may not give sufficient background information, e.g. may tell 'who' but not 'when'</li> <li>often begins sentence with 'I' or 'We'</li> <li>is beginning to use written language structures. Has a sense of sentence, i.e. writes complete sentences with or without punctuation</li> <li>repeats familiar words when writing, e.g. cat, cat, cat</li> <li>generates writing by repeating the same beginning phrases, e.g. 'I like cats, I like dogs, I like birds, ...'</li> <li>recognises some words and letters in context</li> <li>recognises that people use writing to convey meaning</li> </ul>
<b>Concepts and Conventions</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>realises that print contains a constant message</li> <li>uses left to right and top to bottom orientation of print</li> <li>demonstrates one-to-one correspondence between written and spoken word</li> <li>uses upper and lower case letters indiscriminately</li> <li>distinguishes between numerals and letters</li> <li>leaves a space between word-like clusters of letters</li> <li>dictates slowly so teacher can 'keep up' while scribing</li> </ul>

<b>Strategies</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>relies heavily on the most obvious sounds of a word</li> <li>tells others what has been written</li> <li>asks others what has been written</li> <li>traces and copies letters with some successful formations</li> <li>points to 'words' while reading own writing</li> <li>voices thoughts while writing</li> <li>reads back what has been written to clarify meaning</li> <li>experiments with, and over-generalises, print conventions, e.g. puts a full stop after each word</li> <li>uses knowledge of rhyme to spell words written</li> <li>uses print resources in classroom, e.g. charts, signs, word banks</li> </ul>
<b>Attitude</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>listens attentively to the telling or reading of stories and other texts</li> <li>writes spontaneously for self or chosen audience</li> </ul>

### PHASE 3: Early Writing

<b>Content, Organisation and Contextual Understandings</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses a small range of familiar text forms</li> <li>chooses topics that are personally significant</li> <li>uses basic sentence structures and varies sentence beginnings</li> <li>can explain in context, some of the purposes of using writing, e.g. shopping list or telephone messages as a memory aid</li> <li>uses a partial organisational framework, e.g. simple orientation and story development</li> <li>often writes a simple recount of personal events or observation and comment</li> <li>uses time order to sequence and organise writing</li> <li>is beginning to use some narrative structure</li> <li>is beginning to use some informational text structures, e.g. recipes, factual descriptions</li> <li>writes simple factual accounts with little elaboration</li> <li>includes irrelevant detail in 'down-to-dark' recounts</li> <li>attempts to orient, or create a context for the reader, but may assume a shared context</li> <li>re-writes known stories in sequence</li> <li>includes detail in written retell</li> <li>includes several items of information about a topic</li> <li>is beginning to use 'book' language, e.g. 'By the fire sat a cat'</li> <li>joins simple sentences often overusing the same connectors, e.g. 'and', 'then'</li> <li>uses knowledge of rhyme, rhythm and repetition in writing</li> <li>repeats familiar patterns, e.g. 'In the jungle I saw ...'</li> </ul>
<b>Word Usage</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>experiments with words drawn from language experience, spelling activities, literature, media and oral language of peers and others</li> <li>discusses word formations and meanings, noticing similarities and differences</li> <li>transfers words encountered in talk, or reading, to writing</li> <li>highlights words for emphasis, e.g. BIG</li> </ul>

<b>Editing</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>begins to develop editing skills</li> <li>deletes words to clarify meaning</li> <li>shifts words to clarify meaning</li> <li>begins to proofread for spelling errors</li> <li>responds to requests for clarification</li> <li>attempts the use of a proofreading guide consulted jointly by students and teacher</li> </ul>
<b>Language Conventions</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>attempts to use some punctuation</li> <li>sometimes uses full stops</li> <li>sometimes uses a capital letter to start a sentence</li> <li>uses capital letters for names</li> <li>attempts use of question marks</li> <li>attempts use of exclamation marks</li> <li>sometimes uses apostrophes for contractions</li> <li>merges/realises use of print conventions, e.g. misuse of apostrophes, full stops, dashes, and commas</li> <li>often writes in the first person</li> <li>attempts writing in both first and third person</li> <li>usually uses appropriate subject/verb agreements</li> <li>usually maintains consistent tense</li> <li>writes a title which reflects content</li> </ul>
<b>Strategies</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>talks with others to plan and revise own writing</li> <li>re-reads own writing to maintain word sequence</li> <li>attempts to transfer knowledge of text structure to writing, e.g. imitates form of a familiar big book</li> <li>shares ideas for writing with peers or teacher</li> <li>participates in group brainstorming activities to elicit ideas and information before writing</li> <li>in consultation with teacher, sets personal goals for writing development</li> <li>discusses proofreading strategies with peers and teacher and attempts to use them in context</li> </ul>
<b>Attitude</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>perseveres to complete writing tasks</li> </ul>

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