

**TEACHING STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE WRITING SKILLS FOR GRADE 8 AND  
9 LEARNERS IN ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE: A CASE STUDY OF  
FOUR HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE CRADOCK EDUCATION DISTRICT.**

**BY**

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## DECLARATION

Student number: 201013162

*I declare that:*

**TEACHING STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE WRITING SKILLS FOR GRADE 8 AND 9 LEARNERS IN ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE: A CASE STUDY OF FOUR HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE CRADOCK EDUCATION DISTRICT.**

*Is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.*

Z.KALIPA

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DATE

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## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to my family especially my loving mother Linda, my sister Apelele, my son Hlumisa, siblings, friends and my colleagues for their unwavering support and encouragement.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am thankful to God for giving me tremendous strength to carry out this study.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Dr. N. Pylman, for providing me with the assistance and guidance in this study. Thank you for your kindness, your patience and for being there every step of the way. Without your encouragement and constant assistance, this dissertation would not have been possible.

I owe my deepest gratitude and love to my mom for her belief in me, caring for my son during this period and for her support in this study. Thank you for your love and support.

I acknowledge with thanks the assistance of the following people:

- The Principals and the teachers involved in this study for their cooperation.
- My friends for their support, Sibongiseni Dwenga and Isabella Mafuna.
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- My aunt, Evelyn Tobbie Kalipa for being there for me throughout this journey.
- Mpumelelo Speelman for his motivation and support.

## **ABSTRACT**

Writing skills is are an essential requirement to lifelong learner success yet the way teachers teach and provide feedback to their learners on writing is quite challenging. This study sought to explore the teaching strategies to improve writing skills as an essential requirement for effective learning in schools for grade 8 and 9 learners in English First Additional Language. For people living in the townships and rural areas in South Africa, exposure to English is limited, because the majority of people communicate with each other in local languages. With teachers and learners residing in the townships where communication occurs mostly in isiXhosa, problems in language proficiency, in particular writing in English First Additional Language, are often encountered not only by the learners, but by educators as well.

This was a case study of four high schools in the Cradock Education District. In-depth interviews were conducted with eight participants in the four schools.

There were eight main findings, which are as follows: Lack of support for teachers, lack of a culture of learning amongst learners, and lack of competence in English for both learners and parents, which need to be addressed; and strategies proposed to improve writing skills are: the importance of creative writing; regular feedback and the importance of drafts.

**KEYWORDS:** Teaching strategies, writing skills, English First Additional Language, process approach model, product approach model and genre approach model.

## ACRONYMS

CAPS	Curriculum and assessment Policy Statement
EFL	English First Language
FAL	First Additional Language
FL	Foreign Language
GET	General Education and Training
HoD	Head of Department
LOLT	Language of learning and teaching
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
SL	Second Language
T1	Teacher One
T2	Teacher Two
T3	Teacher Three
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## **CHAPTER .1**

### **BACKGROUND AND ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY**

#### **1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

This study sought to explore teaching strategies to improve the writing skills for Grade 8 and 9 learners in English First Additional Language: A case study of four High Schools in the Cradock District. Writing skills is an essential necessity to lifelong learner success, yet the way teachers teach and provide feedback to their learners on writing is somewhat challenging. In the South African context, English is mostly used in urban areas, especially in the city, for economic purposes (Nomlolo: 2007). For people living in the townships and rural areas, exposure to English is limited, because the majority of people communicate with each other in local languages. While many schools located in isiXhosa-speaking communities, where teachers and learners are only exposed to English in the classroom environment (Nomlolo: 2007). However, English which is First Additional Language (FAL) to both teachers and learners is also the language of learning and teaching (LOLT) in many schools. According to Al.gomoul (2011) writing is one of the four main language skills that teachers often neglect. Meanwhile, almost all English language teachers in the study by Al.gomoul (2011) expressed their concern with the low level of achievement in writing skills of their students. They confirmed that only 5% - 10% of learners can write legibly.

With regard to the instructional aspects of foreign language/second language (FL/SL) writing, the early 1960s was marked by the prevalence of a product approach. Kroll (1998) in a review of literature about that period argued that the model for teaching writing was composed of four steps. First, rules of writing were presented to students. The students were next provided with a text for classroom discussion and analysis. Third, having supplied the students with an outline based upon the text, the teacher required a writing assignment. Finally, students received comments as to the quality of their completed writing product. This completed product, however produced, i.e.,



irrespective of the strategies and processes the students used, was considered the principal criterion for assigning scores.

Likewise, EFL instruction in the 1970s was marked by the predominance of a controlled composition model. According to Hyland (2002), “learning to write in a second language was mainly seen to involve developing linguistic and lexical knowledge as well as familiarity with the syntactic patterns and cohesive devices that form building blocks of texts” (p. 13). In other words, learning to write involved imitation and manipulation of models supplied by the teacher (Mirzaii, 2012). Richards (2002) enumerates the activities in this approach as including familiarization, controlled writing, guided writing, and free writing. Richards also points out that “activities based on controlled composition predominated during the period that sought to prevent errors and develop correct writing habits” (p. 21).

Subsequently, according to Richards (2002), the focus in teaching writing shifted to a paragraph-pattern approach with an emphasis on the use of topic sentences, supporting sentences, and transitions. In other words, there was a shift in focus from mere attention to the structural aspects of writing—grammar rules and vocabulary items—mainly addressing intra-sentential relationships, to one attending to both structure and content, addressing inter-sentential as well as intra-sentential, relationships (Mirzaii, 2012). The consequence of this shift, according to Mirzaii, was “an emerging attention, requiring sentences to be cohesive, and the whole text coherent” (p. 32).

In the 1990s, the process approach to writing appeared in the context of writing pedagogy, contrasting a newly emerged classroom ideology with that previously espoused by the product approach. Silva and Matsuda (2002, cited in Richards, 2002) depict the process approach as “a complex, recursive and creative process that is very

similar in its general outlines for first and second language writers: learning to write requires the development of an efficient and effective composing process” (p. 261). This composing process would require learners to engage in the operations of rehearsing (also known as prewriting), writing (also referred to as drafting or composing), and revising (also labeled editing) (Richards and Schmidt, 2010).

More recently, foreign language/second language (FL/SL) writing pedagogy has witnessed the emergence of a genre approach to writing instruction. This approach, as depicted by Mirzaii (2012), “looks at the ways in which language is used for particular purposes in particular contexts, i.e., the use of different genres of writing” (p. 34). Bhatia (1993) defines genre as “a recognizable communicative event characterized by a set of communicative purpose(s) identified and mutually understood by the members of the professional or academic community in which it regularly occurs” (p. 43). Similarly, Hyland (2002) points out that “contemporary views of L2 writing see writing as involving composing skills and strategies for drafting and revising but also a clear understanding of genre to be able to structure their writing experience according to the demands of particular contexts” (p. 15).

Furthermore, Al.gomoul (2011) believes that writing is an essential skill in foreign language learning in order to give the learners the opportunity to develop the proficiency they need to write personal letters, essays, research papers and journals. Referring to my own experience as a language teacher 15 years ago, I have noticed that English First Additional Language learners display a distinct difference in their ability to speak English (which they do well) and write in English (which they do poorly). In exploring this issue, the statement of the problem will now be offered.

## 1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

According to the Department of Education (2002) learning outcome 4 requires the learner to write different kinds of factual and imaginative texts for a wide range of purposes. However, Kannan (2009:2) in his statement argues that “even though students are studying English, they are not able to produce even a single sentence without any grammatical error in English”. With teachers and learners residing in the townships where communication occurs mostly in isiXhosa, problems in language proficiency, in particular writing in English First Additional Language, are often encountered. The schools are also located in isiXhosa-speaking communities, and teachers and learners are only exposed to English in the classroom environment. Meanwhile, according to the Department of Education (2002), learners are required to use first additional language effectively and with confidence for a variety of purposes including learning.

According to Badger and White (2000) the only reason to practice writing to many students is to pass tests or examinations. They further explained that this focus on writing to pass examinations reduces writing to produce product and receiving a grade from the teacher and this is not likely to make students interested in writing. Besides, Ruiz-Funes (1999) postulates that students lack the necessary tools to approach writing in an argumentative essay and engage in a complex process that includes exploration of a problem, evaluation of facts and evidences. He therefore, suggested that students need to be aware that good writing is not just grammatically accurate and that other factors such as organization, coherence and the use of cohesive devices are essential elements of good writing.

In addition, teachers need to address the question of why English First Additional Language is being taught and learned, take the students where they are in their writing

expertise and move them forward and help them to create texts that match their expanding intellectual abilities (Leki :2001). From these problems it is evident that there is a need for educators to improve their strategies, attitudes and try out new strategies.

### **1.3.1 Research questions**

**IN THE LIGHT OF THE ABOVE PROBLEM STATEMENT, THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS FOR THIS STUDY ARE FORMULATED AS FOLLOWS:**

- What strategies are appropriate for the improvement of Grade 8 and 9 learners writing skills in English First Additional Language?

### **1.3.2 Sub-questions**

- What problems do teachers experience when teaching writing skills in English First Additional Language?
- What teaching strategies do teachers currently use in teaching writing skills in English First Additional Language?

In order to address the above research questions the aim of this research need to be formulated.

## **1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

- a) To identify appropriate strategies that teachers could use to improve writing skills in English First Additional Language.
- b) To identify the problems experienced by teachers when teaching writing skills in English First Additional Language.

c) To examine the strategies currently used by teachers for the teaching of writing skills to English first additional language speakers.

## **1.5 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

This study aims to examine the strategies suitable for the improvement of Grade 8 and 9 learners writing skills in English First Additional Language. At the same time, it also aims at identifying the challenges that teachers encounter when dealing with writing skills and examining the strategies currently used by teachers for the teaching of writing skills to English First Additional Language speakers. Increasing our understanding of the writing process of English First Additional Language is through the technique of creativity.

## **1.6 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY**

From my own observation as a teacher of English language, I have noticed that Grade 8 and 9 learners in particular find it difficult to write in English. They say they do not find reasonable ideas in English, and even if they find ideas they fail to elaborate them into correct English. So the impact is that they hate to write in English, they start to form a negative attitude towards writing in English. This has been proved by Al-Mashour (2003) in his statement that foreign language learners find writing a difficult and exhausting process. He further explained that such learners may have a limited scope of vocabulary, may suffer from the inability to write coherent and cohesive texts, and may be unable to spell words and use grammatical structure correctly. In view of the above problem this study will be conducted.

## **1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study attempts to shed light on the teaching strategies that English First Additional Language teachers utilize when producing an extended piece of writing. Its implications may help teachers and their students benefit from the findings of the study. It could also lead to a better understanding of the challenges that English First Additional Language teachers are faced with when teaching writing skills. By knowing and understanding these challenges, English First Additional Language teachers will be better equipped to deal with them and more importantly, be significant contributors to transforming learners in becoming better writers. The researcher also hopes to open an avenue in this research area due to its importance to Curriculum Specialists in the Cradock District.

## **1.8 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

A case study will be conducted at four purposively selected High Schools in the Cradock District. This research study will be limited to Grade 8 and 9 English First Additional Language teachers in the four High Schools in the Cradock Education District. Two schools are located within the town of Cradock, while the other two schools are in the town of Tarkastad. Thus, interviews conducted in this study will be directed to English First Additional Language teachers.

## **1.9 DEFINITION OF TERMS**

In answering the research questions of the study, it is firstly necessary to explain the meanings of the terms: Additional language, strategies, writing and language of learning and teaching (LOLT).

**1.9.1 Additional Language** – According to the Department of Education (2002) additional language is a language learned in addition to one's home language. In this study English is used by isiXhosa speaking community as first additional language and language of learning and teaching.

**1.9.2 Strategy**- Pietersen (2010) defines a strategy as the sum of an organization's choices about where it will compete, how it will create superior value for its customers, and how it will generate superior returns to its investors. In this study the strategies are the methods used by teachers to teach writing skills.

**1.9.3 Writing**- Writing is defined as the creation of original text using the individuals' intellectual and linguistic resources (Hudelson: 1988). Writing in this study refers to the way the learners communicate their ideas.

**1.9.4 Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT)**- According to the Department of Education (2002) this is referred to as the language that is mostly used in a particular learning and teaching environment. In this case English is used as a language of learning and teaching.

## **1.10 LITERATURE REVIEW**

The theoretical framework of this study will be located within the Process approach model by Kroll (2001), Steele (2004), White and Arndt's (1991) and Trupe (2001), Product approach model by Gabrielatos (2002) and (Steele: 2004), and Genre approach model by Badger and White (2000) and Cope and Kalantzis (1993). As part of my literature I will discuss the following three models:

### **1.10.1 Writing process approach model**

Kroll (2001) defines process approach as an umbrella term for many types of writing courses. What this term captures is the fact that student writers engage in their writing

tasks through a cyclical approach rather than a single-shot approach. They are not expected to produce and submit complete and polished responses to their writing assignments without going through stages of drafting and receiving feedback on their drafts, be it from peers and/or from the teacher, followed by revision of their evolving texts.

### **1.10.2 Product approach model**

According to Gabrielatos (2002) a product approach is “a traditional approach in which students are encouraged to mimic a model text, usually is presented and analyzed at an early stage”. For example, in a typical product approach-oriented classroom, students are supplied with a standard sample of text and they are expected to follow the standard to construct a new piece of writing. Product Approach Model comprises of four stages (Steele: 2004) these are:

### **1.10.3 Genre approach model**

Badger and White (2000) sees the genre approach as an extension of product approach. Like product approaches, genre approach regard writing as predominantly linguistic but, unlike product approaches, they emphasize that writing varies with social context in which it is produced. So, there is a range of varieties of writing such as sales letters, research articles, and reports linked with different situations.



## **1.11 RESEARCH PARADIGM, DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY.**

### **1.11.1 Research paradigm**

According to Joubish et al. (2011) a paradigm is a worldview, a whole framework of beliefs, values and methods within which research takes place. It is these worldviews within which researchers work. The interpretive paradigm will be used in this research. The interpretive paradigm aims to find new interpretations or underlying meanings and adheres to the ontological assumption of multiple realities, which are time and context dependent. A related term is “naturalistic”, which has connotations of research done in a natural setting, rather than in a laboratory (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). The assumption underlying this paradigm is that people make decisions and act in accordance with the subjective understanding of the situations in which they find themselves.

On the basis of the description of the interpretive paradigm, the researcher will attempt to gain entry into the conceptual world of the research respondents, which are English First Additional Language teachers, in order to understand and interpret experiences pertaining to their practice. This can be done successfully as I will be adopting a qualitative approach to research.

### **1.11.2 Design**

A research design is a plan, structure and strategy of investigation so conceived to obtain answers to research questions or problems (Kerlinger: 1986). The design describes the procedures for conducting the study, including when, from whom and

under what conditions data were obtained. Its purpose is to provide the most valid, accurate answers as possible to research questions (McMillan & Schumacher: 1993).

The research design of this study seeks to investigate the strategies to improve Grade 8 and 9 learners writing skills in English First Additional Language. In order to examine these strategies, data will be collected from teachers by means of interviews. Furthermore, all the sub-questions will be researched by means of a literature review and also drawing on the views of practicing teachers.

### **1.11.3 Methodology**

#### **1.11.3.1 Sample selection**

Out of twenty one high schools in the Cradock District, four high schools will be purposively selected, two schools located in Cradock and two in Tarkastad. This will then be convenient to the researcher as the distance will be much closer. Therefore, the sample of this study will consist of Grade 8 and 9 First Additional Language Teachers in four High Schools, two teachers from each school chosen randomly to fit the purpose of the study. Johnson and Christenson (2004:197) define sampling as the process of drawing a sample from the population where the characteristics of a subset are selected from a larger group. Purposive sampling was used in this study because it is a non-random sampling technique in which a researcher solicits persons with specific characteristics to participate in a research study (Bogdan and Biklen 2007). As an experienced teacher who have taught English First Additional Language to the Grade 8 and 9 learners for 15 years, I will therefore only focus on these grades in determining their feelings about English First Additional Language and the problems they encounter when teaching and learning writing skills.

### **1.11.3.2 Data collection instruments**

Permission to do the research will be required and it will be granted by the Department of Education, the Principal or Head of the English Department and by English First Additional Language Teachers. In order to collect data concerning strategies and techniques followed by teachers and the difficulties experienced by teachers when teaching writing skills, interview guides will be developed and sampling will be done. Semi- structured interviews will be used. All the interviews will be recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis. Since an interview is an eye to eye interaction, I hope to get wholesome information because the interviewee will be speaking from the heart. Purposive sampling will also be used as discussed above.

### **1.12 RELIABILITY**

Koch (1993) suggested that one of the ways in which a research study may be shown to be dependable, is for its process to be audited. Guba & Lincoln's (1985) recommendation is that auditability be the criterion for rigour when dealing with the consistency of data. Therefore, a reliable measure has to yield the same outcome if tested more than once. In qualitative studies the researcher is concerned with the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the data (Rodolo: 2008) and this is what this study aims to achieve.

### **1.13 VALIDITY**

"The validity of a measurement instrument is the extent to which the instrument measures what it is supposed to measure" (Leedy and Ormrod 2005:28). According to

Rodolo (2008) the researcher should be aware of prejudice. Furthermore, Lincoln and Guba (1989) argued that ensuring credibility is one of the most important factors in establishing trustworthiness in the qualitative research. Therefore, validity of the interview instrument will be tested by giving it to educators prior to conducting the interviews. After the interviews, the participants will be given feedback to make sure that the researcher captured their experiences appropriately. Self –awareness of the researcher is also essential (Koch: 1993) and the information given will be based on proven facts.

#### **1.14 DATA ANALYSIS**

A qualitative analysis of the data guided by the steps described by Bogdan and Bilken (1998) will be used to analyse the transcripts of the interviews with the teachers. Everything that will originate out of the interviews will be written down, including the main questions and probes used in order to be able to study the content of the interviews. The main question of the interviews will direct the analysis and will be used to create the first main coding categories. These categories, and the data they contain, will help inspire further questions and sub-coding categories which will be used to analyse the data in greater detail. The data will have to be re-read repeatedly; themes and patterns will be identified and arranged analytically in text summaries. Results of the analysis of the students and teacher’s comments will be compared to each other.

#### **1.15 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Ethics are considered to deal with beliefs about what is right or wrong, proper or improper, good or bad (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993).The following aspects will form the code of ethics that will be employed for the purpose of this study:

#### 1.15.1 Informed consent as dialogue

Participants will be contacted by means of a telephone call followed by a visit. During my visit to each participant, they will be informed of the purpose of the study and will be assured of confidentiality and anonymity (McMillan & Schumacher: 1993). Participants will not be required to give an immediate response, instead, they will be provided with a letter of information and an appropriate consent form to be signed and posted at a later date.

#### 1.15.2 Confidentiality and anonymity

Codes of ethics insist on safeguards to protect people's identity and those of research locations (Thordson: 2000). During this study all reasonable steps to maintain confidentiality of participants will be taken. For example, the findings of the research will be recorded in such a way that participants could not be identified and appropriate codes will be used when individual statements are quoted.

### **1.16 SUMMARY**

In this chapter the background and orientation to the study was covered. The problem statement and the objectives of the study are clearly stipulated. The research questions, the rationale the significance of the study and the literature review are explained. Lastly, the research design and methodology, ethical issues, data analysis, the limitations of the study and the chapter outline are also explained. The literature review and theoretical framework will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

## 1.17 Chapter outline

**Chapter 1:** Chapter one deals with the background to the research problem. The statement of the research problem is tackled as well as research questions, the purpose of this study, rationale and aims, research paradigm, design and methodology. The terminology is defined and the chapter concludes with the chapter outline.

**Chapter 2:** Chapter two presents the theoretical framework and the literature review that was conducted on teaching approaches based on the following headings: process, product and genre approach.

**Chapter 3:** Chapter three explains the research design and methodology employed to investigate the research questions were discussed according to the following headings: research orientation, research purpose, research methodology and data analysis.

**Chapter 4:** Chapter four comprises of a detailed analysis and interpretation of the data collected through semi-structured interviews. The discussion of data collected is preceded by biographical information of the respondents in relation to gender, teaching experience in English, qualifications and age. This is followed by a thematic discussion and interpretation of the interviews conducted. The data to answer the research questions set in Chapter One is discussed.

**Chapter 5:** Chapter five summarizes and concludes the study. Recommendations and suggestions for further studies on the gaps that were identified by the researcher are tabulated in this chapter

## **CHAPTER. 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter is a preparatory chapter to the research. Chapter 2 is a literature review and is twofold; it firstly locate the research within its theoretical framework and context and secondly, to understand writing skills within the school context and the problems faced by teachers when teaching writing skills.

#### **2.1 THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK**

The theoretical framework of this research is located within the Process approach model, White and Arndt's (1991),Kroll (2001) and Steele (2004), and Trupe (2001): Product approach model, Gabrielatos (2002) and (Steele: 2004), and Genre approach model, Cope and Kalantzis (1993) and Badger and White (2000).

##### **2.1.1 Process approach model**

Kroll (2001) defines process approach as an umbrella term for many types of writing courses. What the term captures is the fact that student writers engage in their writing tasks through a cyclical approach rather than a single-shot approach. They are not expected to produce and submit complete and polished responses to their writing assignments without going through certain stages. This includes stages of drafting and receiving feedback on their drafts, be it from peers and/or from the teacher, followed by revision of their evolving texts. Hence a process approach tends to focus more on

varied classroom activities which promote the development of language use: brainstorming, group discussion and rewriting. The Process Approach Model comprises of eight stages (Steele: 2004):

**Stage one (Brainstorming):** This is generating ideas by brainstorming and discussion. This will help to stimulate students to write through inspiring ideas, unlocking creating and providing vocabulary.

**Stage two (Planning/Structuring):** Students exchange ideas into note form and judge quality and usefulness of their ideas.

**Stage three (Mind mapping):** Students organize ideas into a mind map, spider gram, or linear form. This stage helps to make the hierarchical relationship of ideas which helps students with the structure of their texts.

**Stage four (Writing the first draft):** Students write the first draft. This is done in the class frequently in pairs or groups. This stage incorporates strategies developed in brainstorming. Students should concentrate on getting ideas down on paper without worrying about spelling or grammar.

**Stage five (Peer feedback):** Drafts are exchanged, so that students become the readers of each other's work. By responding as readers students develop awareness of the fact that a writer is producing something to be read by someone else and thus they can improve their own drafts. Feedback improves the writers' drafts and developing the readers understandings of good writing (Richards: 2003).

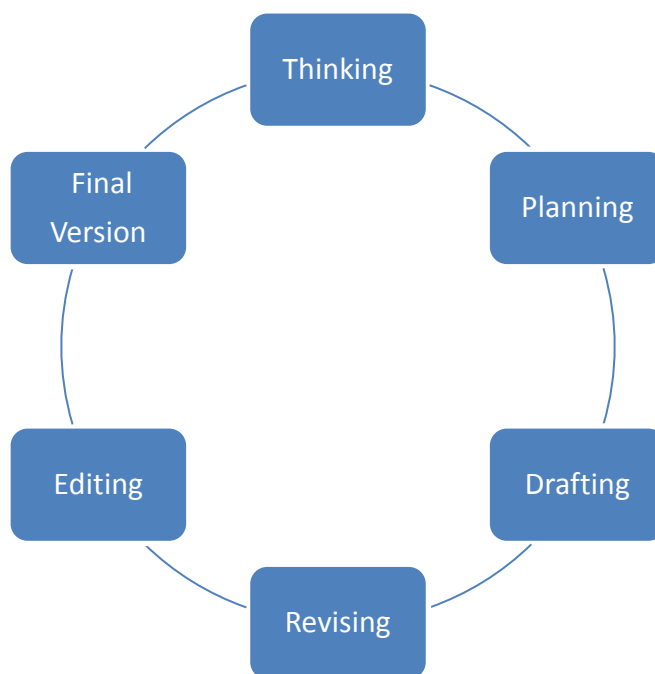
**Stage six (Editing):** Drafts are returned and improvements are made based upon peer feedback. Responses to writing come from a variety of sources: self, teacher, friends and peer response groups.



**Stage seven (Final draft):** A final draft is written. According to Richard (2003) the final draft should be ready for publication and the student should be satisfied with the way the piece reads. This will help in motivating them to write.

**Stage eight (Evaluation and teachers' feedback):** Students' writings are evaluated and teachers provide a feedback on it. According to Richard (2003) teacher written response play a central role in most English First Additional Language writing classes.

The following diagram shows the cyclical nature and the interrelationship of the stages:



**Figure 2.1: A model of writing (diagram of process writing)**

Source: (White and Arndt's (1991)

White and Arndt's diagram (1991) offers teachers a framework which tries to capture the recursive, not linear, nature of writing.

Trupe (2001) mentions that to incorporate process instruction in our classes, we may remember the following points:

Ask students to do a lot of writing, but don't make every assignment count for a grade. Read some student texts as a "real" reader, responding to content without seeking to correct it.

Give students some class time to start brainstorming on a writing topic after you've given an assignment. As little as 5 minutes will be effective.

Encourage a variety of prewriting and planning strategies.

Assign students to peer groups to give each other focused feedback on drafts. Prepare some guidelines for peer responders, so that they can look for specific textual features, and ask them to provide written feedback to the student authors. Peer group sessions can be held in class, face-to-face out of class, or in a computer environment (email, bulletin board, etc.).

Encourage students to ask you questions about their writing, as they are working on papers.

Practice formative assessment.

If at all possible, schedule brief face-to-face conferences for discussion of student writing. Consider framing your comments in terms of questions, like, "What do you mean here?" or, "Can you tell me more about this?" rather than in evaluative statements.

### 2.1.2 Product approach model

According to Gabriellatos (2002) a product approach is “a traditional approach in which students are encouraged to mimic a model text, usually is presented and analyzed at an early stage. For example, in a typical product approach-oriented classroom, students are supplied with a standard sample of text and they are expected to follow the standard to construct a new piece of writing. Product Approach Model comprises of four stages (Steele: 2004)

**Stage one:** Students study model texts and then the features of the genre are highlighted. For example, if studying a formal letter, students’ attention may be drawn to the importance of paragraphing and the language used to make formal requests. If a student reads a story, the focus may be on the techniques used to make the story interesting, and students focus on where and how the writer employs these techniques.

**Stage two:** This stage consists of controlled practice of the highlighted features, usually in isolation. So if students are studying a formal letter, they may be asked to practice the language used to make formal requests, for example, practicing the ‘I would be grateful if you would...’ structure.

**Stage three:** This is the most important stage where the ideas are organized. Those who favor this approach believe that the organization of ideas is more important than the ideas themselves and as important as the control of language.

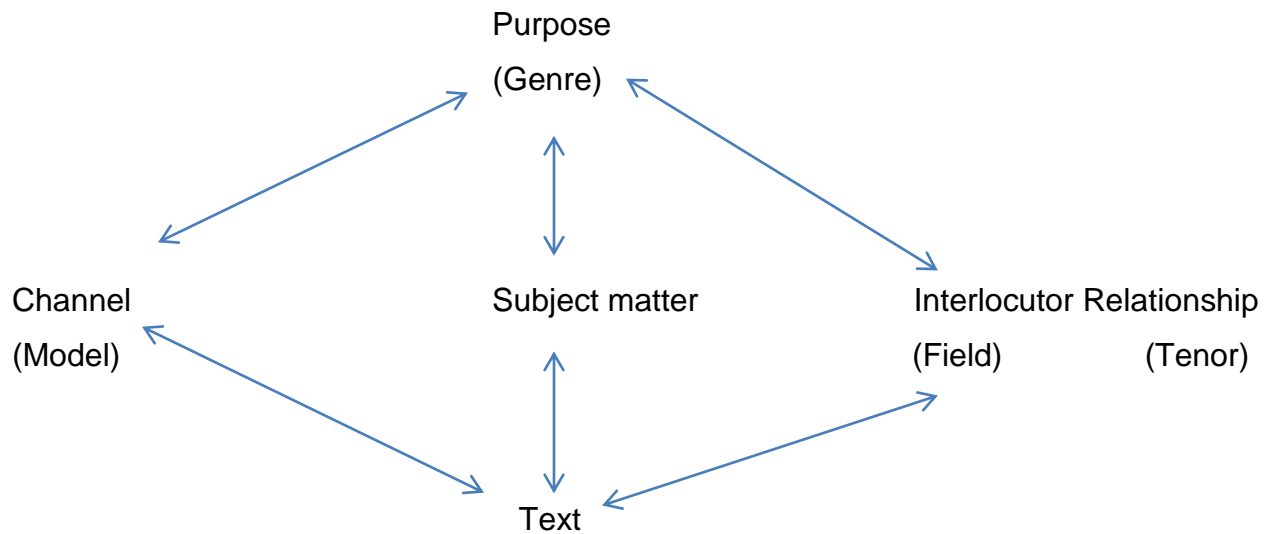
**Stage four:** This is the end product of the learning process. Students choose from the choice of comparable writing tasks. To show what they can be as fluent and competent users of the language, students individually use the skills, structures and vocabulary they have been taught to produce the product.

### **2.1.3 Genre approach model**

Badger and White (2000) sees the genre approach as an extension of product approach. Like product approaches, genre approach regard writing as predominantly linguistic but, unlike product approaches, they emphasize that writing varies with social context in which it is produced. So, there is a range of kinds of writing such as sales letters, research articles, and reports linked with different situations. As not all learners need to operate in all social contexts, this view of texts has implications for the writing syllabus. According to Badger and White (2000) genres are also influenced by other features of the situation, such as the subject matter, the relationship between the writer and the audience, and the pattern of organization. In short, to them genre-based approach see writing as essentially concerned with knowledge of language, and as being tied closely to a social purpose, while the development of writing is largely viewed as the analysis and imitation of input in the form of texts provided by the teacher.

Furthermore, Badger and White (2000) stated that, for genre analysts, the central aspect of the situation is purpose. Different kinds of writing, or genres, such as letters of apology, recipes, or law reports, are used to carry out different purposes.

To them, in terms of writing development, genre approaches have many similarities with product approaches. Cope and Kalantzis (1993) talk of a wheel model of genre literacy. This wheel has three phases:



**Figure 2.2: Wheel model of genre literacy**

Source: Cope and Kalantzis (1993)

Modelling the target genre, where learners are exposed to examples of the genre they have to produce; the construction of a text by learners and teacher; and, finally the independent construction of text by learners. In theory, the cycle can be repeated as and when necessary, but it would seem that often each phase appears only once.

According to Badger and White (2000) the three approaches are largely complementary; this becomes more apparent if we examine their weaknesses and strength. The disadvantages of process approaches are that they often regard all writing as being produced by the same set of processes, that they give insufficient importance to the kind of texts writers produce and why such texts are produced, and that they offer learners insufficient input, particularly in terms of linguistic knowledge, to write successfully.

The main advantages are that they understand the importance of the skills involved in writing, and recognize that what learners bring to the writing classroom contributes to the development of writing ability (Badger and White: 2000). The weaknesses of

product approaches are that process skills, such as planning a text, are given a relatively small role, and that the knowledge and skills that learners bring to the classroom are undervalued. Their strengths are that they recognize the need for learners to be given linguistic knowledge about texts, and they understand that limitation is one way in which people learn (Badger and White: 2000). The negative side of genre approaches is that they undervalue the skills needed to produce a text and see learners as largely passive. More positively, they acknowledge that writing takes place in a social situation, and is a reflection of a particular purpose, and understand that learning can happen consciously through imitation and analysis (Badger and White: 2000).

However, Badger and White (2000) are of the view that an effective methodology for writing needs to incorporate the insights of product, process, and genre approaches. To them one way of doing this is to start with one approach and adapt it. Meanwhile, adapting an approach has led to important developments in the writing classroom. They felt that it is also possible to identify an approach which is a synthesis of the three approaches, which they term the process genre approach. The essential idea is that the writing class recognizes that writing involves knowledge about language (as in product and genre approaches), knowledge of the context in which writing happens and especially the purpose for the writing (as in genre approaches), and skills in using language (as in process approaches), writing development happens by drawing out learners' potential (as in process approaches) and by providing input to which the learners respond (as in product and genre approaches) Badger and White (2000).

## **2.2 PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY TEACHERS WHEN TEACHING WRITING SKILLS IN ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE.**

Yan (2005) indicated that English First Additional Language teachers and students face certain problems in teaching and learning writing. As many teachers of English in China

have noted, acquiring the writing skill seems to be more laborious and demanding than acquiring the other three skills (Zheng: 1999). In fact, Nunan (1999:271) considers it an enormous challenge to produce “a coherent, fluent, extended piece of writing” in one’s Additional language. This is magnified by the fact that the rhetorical conventions of English texts, structure, style and organization often differ from the conventions in other languages. It requires effort to recognise and manage the differences (Leki: 1999).

In addition, Yan (2005) mentioned that in many countries, education systems emphasize writing for taking tests. This is not likely to make students interested in writing, which becomes decontextualized and artificial, giving students no real sense of purpose or perspective of a target audience. Furthermore, while nearly all language teachers would be expected to have had experience speaking, listening, and reading, it is quite possible that few language teachers are writers themselves, either in L1 or L2 and, as a result, have few experiential resources to draw on besides what they might have experienced in elementary school with first language writing instruction, e.g. an focus on neatness, spelling, and grammatical correctness (Leki: 2001). To him, a reasonable position from which to begin both for teachers and teacher trainers would seem to be engaged in some public writing themselves, to reflect carefully on that experience, and to base classroom decisions as far as possible on principle rather than only on habit , only reproducing what they themselves once experienced. Not only teachers’ training but also the educational backgrounds of the students need to be considered and accommodated or built on.

On the one hand, Leki (2001) argued that individuals who learn to write in school settings are nearly invariably tested on their writing and are allowed to advance, or not, depending on the results. This means that some are left behind. Those with access to better writing instruction, those who can afford private tutoring, for example, will advance further and more easily. There is a cost to teachers as well; writing teachers must make enormous time investments to respond adequately to student writing. This is

in line with what is indicated by the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) that the challenge in the senior phase is to provide support for these learners because they still cannot communicate well in their Additional language at this level (Department of Basic Education:2011). This means that writing instruction is expensive on a broader plane (Leki: 2001).

However, according to Leki (2001) introducing new English First Additional Language writing programs where previously writing had only been used to reinforce the development of oral language can create severe logistic tensions. In settings where grammar or translation styles of language instruction predominate, it is possible to have classes of 30 or 50, possible more. Classes of such size create problems for writing teachers. Even without large numbers, it is possible that educational ministries and program administrators who want to include English First Additional Language writing in schools may not be aware of the amount of time demanded of English First Additional language writing teachers and/or may be unwilling to spend the amount of money it takes to have a writing program. For many students an invaluable feature of some writing programs is individual writing conferences with teachers. But teachers may feel that because of the time conferences require, it is simply not possible to include conferencing as part of their teaching strategies.

Moreover, Leki (2001) postulated that beyond issues of time and numbers of students, logistic tensions within the English First Additional Language writing classroom itself include developing an understanding of and a strategy for accommodating local needs. For example, creating or experiencing real purpose for writing may be a reasonable goal in setting where English is the medium of daily communication. There students can be asked to write letters to the local newspapers and in this way perhaps work towards developing a sense of their broader English speaking audience. But these goals may be more difficult to achieve with less access to the target language in the surrounding environment, where there may be no English language newspaper to send letters to.



Furthermore, no matter how persuasive recommendations for writing instruction methods and materials (often coming from the center) may be, they must be adapted to local possibilities. For example, peer responding may include making copies of student texts for peer to read. However, making copies may simply not always be feasible in all settings.

According to Shin (2006) teachers reported feeling overwhelmed by the number of non-native errors in their students' writing and by not knowing where to begin in providing their feedback. However, some students want praise, others see it as condescending, some want a response to the ideas, others demand to have all their errors marked, some use teacher commentary effectively, others ignore it altogether. This makes it difficult for teachers to cater for all these different perceptions and expectations (Hyland: 2003). Similarly, Shin (2002b) postulated that teachers with little or no training regarding how to provide feedback on Additional Language writing often find it difficult to decide whether to start correcting all errors (which often result in crossing out and rewriting entire blocks of sentences) or to leave errors untouched because there are too many of them. He further explained that neither alternative, however, is likely to have a long lasting and genuine impact on students as they learn to improve their writing in English.

Meanwhile, according to Reid (1993) a successful teacher response must help students to improve their writing by communicating feedback detailed enough to allow students to act, to commit to change in their writing. He supported his statement by saying that successful teacher feedback results in substantive and authentic improvements in students' perceptions and practice of writing.

On the other hand, teachers are often the only evaluators of the students' writing and so they want to feel confident that they are responding consistently across student scripts and that other teachers would evaluate the work in a similar way. Unfortunately, they

may be influenced as much by their own cultural context and experiences as by variations in writing quality. Even where texts are double marked, research has found that teachers can differ in what they look for in writing and the standards they apply to the same text. Novice teachers, for instance, tend to be highly visible (Hyland: 2003).

The other challenge confronting teachers of English First Additional Language writing is that of meeting students where they are in terms of language and writing skill and taking them forward (Leki:2001). In addition, if the students do not see a reason to learn to write, and if, nevertheless, it is decided by teachers or ministries of education that English First Additional Language writing will be taught, the challenge then becomes engaging students in dialogue to explain this decision. Furthermore, particularly for writing teachers who are not natives of the students' culture, it would seem imperative to learn about the context in which the teaching will take place. That context include students' previous experiences with both L1 and L2 writing instruction and their thoughts on such questions about writing as what makes writing good, how people become good writers and how good they themselves want to become at writing in English (Leki : 2001).

Moreover, De Segovia and Hardison's (2008) study argues that the policy statements tend to be idealist so the shift from a teacher-centred to a learner-centred approach did not evolve smoothly. It required an understanding of the language learning process in order to establish attainable goals and compatible methodology. Programme implementation involved additional obstacles, including a lack of sufficient teacher training, resources, mentoring support, and the cost of further education for in-service teachers. Although the teachers played a major role in the reform, they were an untapped resource in the decision –making process. Other problems such as teacher confidence and a radical timetable for change contributed to failure.

McAllister (2009) also reflects on the challenges of language teachers. He stresses that the techniques, aims and materials that relate to language teaching need to be reformed. According to him, the teaching of language needs to be in a truer and more complete form. There is the need for trustworthy and thoughtful people to clarify the relevant instructional aims. The final challenge is how to translate aims into real and concrete forms. According to this scholar, this necessitates sweeping changes in the attitudes of people interested in language teaching. It also necessitates having a revolution of classroom presentation and retraining of hundreds of teachers. There is also a need for a comprehensive vision to help in the adjustment to the demands of the new world.

Some students may have had experience, pleasant or unpleasant with peer response (Howard and Jamieson: 1995). Therefore teachers may encounter some students who question the validity of peer response, especially because many students are accustomed to writing solely for the teacher who will assign the grade. They may question their classmates' authority for grading their writing. Teachers can perhaps explain the value of peer response from their own experience with peer review of scholarly work, explaining that responses and suggestions from their colleagues and their responses to their colleagues' work substantially enrich the revising process.

Myles (2002) indicated that student's writing in a Second Language is faced with social and cognitive challenges related to Second Language acquisition. Learners may continue to exhibit errors in their writing for the following social reasons: negative attitude towards the target language, continued lack of progress in the Second Language. Other social reasons include a wide social and psychological distance between them and the target culture, and a lack of integrative and instrumental motivation for learning. However, according to him most research in Second Language writing focuses on the teaching of writing rather than on the Second Language learners' experiences in the process of writing. At the same time, the use of various strategies in

writing is affected by many variables such as gender, attitudes, motivation, cognitive style, self-confidence and the teacher's behaviour. Nordquist (2009) argues that whatever your attitude may be, one thing is certain: how you feel about writing both affects and reflects how well you can write. Certainly you can change your attitude as you gain more experience as a writer.

## **2.3 FACTORS IMPACTING ON WRITING SKILLS OF ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE STUDENTS.**

There are a number of factors that contribute to poor performance of students in their writing. According to Chokwe (2013) these factors include under-preparedness caused by ineffective teaching of writing at school level; socio-economic issues; and inadequate reading. Some of the factors are discussed in this section.

### **2.3.1 Student under-preparedness**

Under-preparedness is caused by a number of factors. As Engstrom (2008) contends, students may be unprepared because of inadequate schooling experiences, competing family and work demands, lack of English language competency. Furthermore, Sanchez and Paulson (2008) argue that minority students' underprepared status often serves to compound their marginalisation and oppression. In addition, Chokwe (2013) postulates that this is a worldwide occurrence, particularly in English First Additional Language contexts where English is the medium of instruction. Similarly, other authors indicate that their students typically come from educationally underprepared backgrounds, with some having had no access to libraries (Granville and Dison: 2009). Moreover, Moutlana (2007) when examining the literacy levels in South Africa argues that the low literacy standards among students should be an issue of concern in education circles

and ascribes the low literacy standards among South African students to student under-preparedness at various levels. According to Chokwe (2011) it is clear that both factors, that is, students' low literacy levels and under-preparedness, can impact negatively on students' writing competencies, and in turn their ability to succeed in their studies.

On the other hand, Chokwe (2013) asserts that student under-preparedness tends to be perceived as a student problem. Several researchers argue that the problem of student writing is also exacerbated by teaching staff members who are at times under-qualified, under-prepared and inefficient (Engstrom: 2008). In addition, Engstrom (2008) contends that institutions that are serious about supporting learners' success and persistence of underprepared students must prepare the teachers not just the students, about what these students need to learn and succeed. For example, Chokwe (2011) mentioned that from the schooling system, there are still instances where members of the teaching staff are not trained to teach subjects they are teaching. Meanwhile, in most cases in the Education field, most of the blame is put on students (Luna: 2002) and none on the teachers.

According to Luna (2002) teachers should also reflect on their practices and approaches that they employ in their classrooms. A new breed of such practitioners is needed in the educational circles for the better development of our students' writing. With the kind of background that the English First Additional students come from, we seem to be expecting miracles from them in producing quality writing without proper training and according to Chokwe (2011) such expectations cannot be justified. However, he suggested that teachers should also reflect on their practice and be introspective about what might be right or wrong about the pedagogic practices and approaches that they employ in their classrooms.

### **2.3.2 Student Writing at school level**

Chokwe (2013) mentions that schools play a critical role in developing students' reading and writing skills. He further explains that if student writing is not addressed adequately at school level, the higher education sector will always be inundated with students who are academically under-prepared. Hart (1995) reports that such English Second Language learners seldom use English in their daily lives, and that crowded classrooms and poor facilities dominate their learning and teaching environment.

He also projects that this situation will remain in the schooling context for the vast majority of South Africans for the foreseeable future. Cliff and Hanslo (2009) also observe that students from under-resourced school backgrounds are often characterised by weak academic performance and that they are likely to continue in higher education. Some researchers attribute students' poor writing skills to the teachers' reluctance to teach writing. For instance, Harris (1977) reports that some teachers do not teach composition at school level. Furthermore, research also indicates that there are fewer writing activities done in schools and student writing is underestimated (Wingate: 2006). For example, he found that many students are no longer required to write essays at secondary schools. This is a challenge that the teachers have to address.

Similarly, Munro (2003) state that dealing with students' literacy difficulties is a challenge that faces many teachers and schools. Chokwe's (2013) article concurs that indeed our students' writing skills demonstrate a dysfunctional education system that younger generations have to live with and that can be attributed to lack of quality leadership in education that should start addressing these issues. To him, some writing deficiencies are attributed to lack of creativity in the classroom practices. Cohen and Riel (1989) report that the task of writing in schools was not effective and could have

been effective when writing to an imaginary audience, and if the purpose was made explicit. Similarly, Engstrom (2008) reports that students consistently said that high school was a waste of time, they learned little from the lecture mode of class delivery and spent few hours (if at all) studying.

### **2.3.3 Writing as a product of reading**

According to Chokwe (2013), writing cannot be discussed in isolation from reading. Research has shown that the two complement each other (Rose: 2004). For example, Rose (2004) argues that the parent-child reading before school is the first stage in a curriculum of reading skills that underlies the content and processes of teaching and learning in each stage of schooling. He found that parent-child reading is not practised in rural areas where indigenous people of Australia live. The situation is comparable to a majority of South Africans who live in rural areas. In addition, Rose (2004) argues that writing activities in schools tend to be regarded as secondary and dependent on reading proficiency. Furthermore, he suggests that for learners to become better writers, they have to master reading from an early age.

However, Jurecic (2006) argues that teaching writing in High School is challenging in this era where the reading culture has been eroded by television, movies, videos and games, amongst other factors. He maintains that students need to read more to be prepared for reading and writing in different disciplines. He also suggest that students also need more practice in using writing to explore ideas, develop positions, deliberate about problems and paradoxes, make arguments and think new thoughts about the world.

Zamel (1992) states that writing allows students to write their way into reading, that reading shares much in common with writing, and that reading is also an act of

composing. She critiques the way reading is being taught in schools. She observed that students view the purpose of reading as to answer questions that follow after reading. In agreement with Freire (1970), she also noticed that students read textbooks so that they can regurgitate what they read back to the teacher, and that if students fail to regurgitate information, they feel they are not good readers. She also noted that students are apprehensive about their own writing. Notably, Zamel (1992) challenges the structure of reading textbooks which relegates writing to the last activity. Therefore, reading and writing are reciprocal as students read what has been written and incorporate that as part of their writing. She also argues that writing enables us to re-look at texts in a way which lets us grapple with uncertainties, reflect on complexities, deal with puzzlements, and offer approximate readings. She also argues that writing dispels the notion that reading is a matter of getting something and getting it at the outset (Zamel: 1992).

The following approaches to teaching writing have been advocated and used in the past few decades of English language teaching and are still used even today.

## **2.4 STRATEGIES CURRENTLY USED BY TEACHERS WHEN TEACHING WRITING KILLS IN ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE.**

According to Yan (2005) one of the processes that are used by teachers is the product approach. Raimes (1983) explained that this approach uses the normal procedure of assigning a piece of writing, collect it, and then return it for further revision with the errors either corrected or marked for the students to do the corrections. Meanwhile, according to Yan (2005) the product approach has received much criticism that it ignores the actual processes used by students, or any writers, to produce a piece of writing. He further mentioned that instead, it focuses on imitation and churning out a perfect product. Even though very few people can create a perfect product on the first draft. Another criticism that he mentioned is that this approach requires constant error



correction that affects students' motivation and self-esteem and that it does not effectively prepare students for the real world or teach them to be best writers. Nevertheless, Yan (2005) recommends the product approach as having some credibility because at some point there will be a final draft that requires attention to grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

However, in mid-1970s the process approach replaced the product approach Yan (2005). According to Tribble (1996) the process approach identifies four stages in writing: (1) Prewriting, (2) composing/drafting, (3) revising, and (4) editing. The process approach emphasizes revision, and also feedback from others, so students may produce many drafts with much crossing out of sentences and moving around of paragraphs Yan (2005). He sees the process approach as bringing meaningfulness to learners who make a personal connection to the topic and come to understand the process they follow when writing about it.

Meanwhile, according to Badger and White (2000), this approach has been criticized because it views the process as the same for all writers, regardless of what is being written and who is doing the writing. Nevertheless, they still maintain that the process approach is widely accepted and utilized because according to them it allows the students to understand the steps involved in writing, and it recognizes that what the learners bring to the writing classroom contributes to the development of the writing skill.

In addition, Hedge (1988) argued that writing is more of recursive activity in which the writer moves backwards and forwards between drafting and revising, with stages of preplanning in between. Rewriting gives students the chance to think further about the content. They are able to focus on the introductory paragraph and develop ideas from the previous draft in a subsequent paragraph in the new version. They refer to all the

components of the process of writing as composing: students start off with an overall plan in their heads, they think about what they want to write and who they are writing for, then they draft out sections of the writing and work on them and they constantly review, revise and edit their work.

In the 1980s it was the genre approach that became popular with the notion that student writers could benefit from studying different types of written texts Yan (2005). Cope and Kalantzis (1993) explains the genre approach in three phases: (1) the target genre is modelled for the students, (2) a text is jointly constructed by the teacher and students, and (3) a text is independently constructed by each student. Badger and White (2000) stipulated that the approach acknowledges that the writing takes place in a social situation and reflects a particular purpose, and that the learning can happen consciously through imitation and analysis, which facilitates explicit instruction. Though, they also criticized it as showing no value to the processes needed to produce a text and sees a learner as largely passive but on the other hand, Yan (2005) regard the genre approach as being successful at showing students how different discourses require different structures.

In fact, many writing teachers recognised the need to adopt a variety of approaches in the writing classroom. They combine them in developing a new way of thinking about writing Yan (2005). One example mentioned by Badger and White (2000) is a synthesis of the process and the genre approaches which they have aptly termed the process genre approach. Yan (2005) describe it as the approach that allows students to study the relationship between the purpose and form for a particular genre as they use the recursive processes of pre-writing, drafting, revision, and editing. According to Badger and White (2000) the teaching procedure for the process genre approach is divided into six steps: (1) preparation, (2) modelling and reinforcing, (3) planning, (4) joint constructing, (5) independent constructing, and (6) revising. Of which, according to the Department of Basic Education (2011) not every step of the process will be used on every occasion. For example, if learners are writing a familiar text type, they will not

need to analyze its structure and language features in so much detail. These steps are described as follows:

#### 2.4.1. Preparation

The teacher begins preparing the students to write by defining a situation that will require a written text and placing it within a specific genre, such as a persuasive essay arguing for or against an issue of current interest. According to them this activates the schemata and allows students to anticipate the structural features of this genre.

#### 2.4.2 Modelling and reinforcing

In this step the teacher introduces a model of the genre and let students consider the social purpose of the text, including who the audience will be. For example, they mentioned that the purpose of an argumentative essay is to persuade the reader to act on something. Next, the teacher discusses how the text is structured and how its organization develops to accomplish its purpose. The students may do some comparisons with other texts to reinforce what they have learned about the particular genre.

#### 2.4.3. Planning

In this step many meaningful activities activate the students 'schemata about the topic, including brainstorming, discussing and reading associated material. The aim is to help the students develop an interest in the topic by relating it to their experience.

#### 2.4.4. Joint constructing

During this step, both teacher and student work together to start writing a text. While doing so the teacher uses the writing processes of brainstorming, drafting, and revising. The students contribute information and ideas, and the teacher writes the generated text on the blackboard or computer. The final draft provides a model for students to refer to when they work on their individual compositions.

#### 2.4.5. Independent constructing

At this point students have examined model texts and have jointly constructed a text in the genre. They now undertake the task of composing their own texts on a related topic.

#### 2.4.6. Revising

Students eventually will have a draft that will undergo final revision and editing. Students may check, discuss, and evaluate their work with fellow students, as the teacher again guides and facilitates. The teacher may make an effort to publish the students' work, which will impact a sense of achievement and motivate the students to become best writers.

Apprenticeship models of instruction, which developed out of Vygotsky's sociocultural theories of language and literacy, are also becoming more common. Students start with what they already know and can do, but their learning is extended into what Vygotsky termed the "zone of proximal development" through strategic instruction, collaborative construction of opportunities and active participation (Lantolf: 2002). Apprenticeship models enable learners to utilize the new language as a tool in the process of becoming self-regulatory.

Similar to Cumming (1995)'s suggestions for fostering writing expertise, that students are supported by scaffold of prompts and explanations, by extensive modelling, by in-process support, and by reflection that connects strategic effort to outcomes (Flower: 1994). This is supported by Department of Basic Education (2011) that writing which is appropriately scaffold using writing frames (as and when necessary), produces competent, versatile writers who will be able to use their skills to develop and present appropriate written, visual and multi-media texts for a variety of purposes. Drawing on and revising student knowledge of genres, reflecting on strategies for approaching a variety of literary tasks, and cultivating a meta-language for discussing texts are important components of socio-literate methods (Johns:1999).

Reid (1993) also mentioned another strategy used by teachers in dealing with unfamiliar content in English for specific purposes and in content-based instruction, that they let the learner explain the content as a way of using English appropriately and dealing with the teacher's possible lack of content knowledge. In addition, Shin (2006) indicated that teachers when faced with unfamiliar content of the student writing concentrate on grammar, spelling and punctuation as mentioned on the background, rather than connecting with the learner to have a better understanding of the content of the student's writing. This is in contrast to the view of the Department of Basic Education (2011:10) that "acquiring the grammatical rules of the language does not necessarily enable the learner to use the language in a coherent and meaningful way." It is therefore required that the teaching of language structure should focus on how language is used and what can be done with language, i.e. how to make meaning, how to attend to problems and interests, influence friends and colleagues, and how to create a rich social life. In addition, the teaching of language structures should be a means to improving one's speaking, reading and writing.

On the one hand, Donald and Williams-James (1997) stated that teachers identify surface errors in writing conventions rather than engaging with issues of argumentation, organization or analysis. Obviously, this is problematic in that the rubric that is used when marking essays in particular emphasizes argument and organization and does not allow teachers to mark down students papers excessively for grammatical error. This further disadvantages those students who may still be learning the convention of written English Rubbin and William-James (1997). Furthermore, writing instructions must be individualized through teacher feedback on student writing because mere exposure to standard writing conventions does not improve student use of them (de la Luz Reyers as cited in Shin: 2006). Therefore, responding to individual student writing, then, is a critical part of one's job as a writing teacher. This further requires a fair amount of practice and reflection as opposed to what teachers do (Shin: 2006).

Even though there are still problems that persist, there are ways to improve the teaching of writing skills to benefit all writing tasks and some of them are discussed below.

## **2.5 GUIDELINES FOR IMPROVEMENT IN TEACHING WRITING SKILLS**

Hedge (1999) assumed that writing is essentially a creative process which involves students in a learning process, motivates, builds their confidence, gives them an opportunity to explore the language, to communicate and to look for the best ways of self-expression. The teacher's role in this process is undoubtedly very important: The teacher's role is to provide an environment in which students will learn about writing, see models of good writing, get plenty of practice in writing, and receive help during the writing process.

This contradicts what is mentioned by Rubbin and Williams-James on the strategies adopted by teachers, that they just identify surface errors rather than helping the students. In addition, Department of Basic Education (2011) postulated that "Frequent writing practice across a variety of contexts, tasks and subjects enables learners to communicate functionally and creatively."The teacher, being a facilitator, helper, motivator, consultant, prompter, advisor and only then assessor should help the learners by organising writing as a series of stages. First of all, students need to feel the necessity of writing: Why should I write? What's the point of writing? These are common complaints of students. And it is up to the teacher to bring the real-world atmosphere in the classroom. As Hairston (1984:82) puts it:

*"We cannot teach students to write by looking only at what they have written. We must also understand how that product came into being, and why it assumed the form that it did. We have to understand what goes on during the act of writing ...if we want to affect its outcome. We have to do*

*the hard thing, examine the intangible process, rather than the easy thing, and evaluate the tangible product.”*

Ur (2002) assure that the writing process is the starting point for developing students' writing abilities, teachers must recognise that students need a range of writing experiences to develop as writers. In addition, in order to become good at writing, learners need concentration, instruction, practice, and patience. The teacher's task is to assist her learners to gain control over the written word. Brown as cited in Al.gomoul (2011) provides guidelines for developing learners' writing techniques. The teacher, when giving the learners a writing task, should always consider various techniques for maintaining efficient writing practice. These include: Balance process and product, take account of the learner's cultural/literacy background, connect reading and writing, provide as much authentic writing as possible, frame lesson plans in terms of including prewriting, drafting and revising stages, offer techniques that are as interactive as possible and sensitively apply methods of responding to, and correcting the students' writing. Besides, the teacher should encourage the students to focus on a goal or main idea when writing. They should also encourage them to utilise feedback on their writing, revise their work willingly, efficiently and patiently make as many revisions as needed.

According to Shin (2006) one of the focuses should be on teachers to explore ways to progressively move students towards less dependence on the help of them by teaching them to learn to recognize and correct their own errors. One way in which the teachers can help their students find errors on their own writing is by using self-editing checklist, bearing in mind that not students can correct their own grammatical errors. He indicated that sometimes learners may have internalized an incorrect version of a grammar rule or they simply have not learned the rule in question. In this case a teacher's intervention will be required.

Browne (1999) suggests that extending children's knowledge about how to write may also be helpful. Contrary to Donald and Williams-James (1997) problems with structure, organisation and sequence in children's writing can be helpful. This can only be done when they are taught about the characteristics and forms of different types of writing and when they are given clear structural guidelines to follow. Planning using sequence of pictures, individual words or captions helps to order children's writing. Brainstorming for ideas and recording these provides a support for children when they are thinking about what to include in their writing. He further mentioned that giving children opportunities to rehearse orally what they are going to write helps them to organise and order their thoughts. This can be done with a peer partner or with an adult who can make suggestions about alterations that will result in better writing. However, decisions about the strategies that are used will depend on the child's needs, and the support that is given will be differentiated to suit the child's interests.

Again, Browne (1999) mentioned that punctuation should be taught within the context of children's own writing and other encounters with print. To him children should be allowed to experiment with punctuation so that teachers can discuss this with them and help them to refine their understanding. Children can be helped to see this convention in action as the teacher writes beneath the children's own writing and discusses how he writes it. Further experiences can be provided through discussions of texts in published books. As the teacher introduces children to the terminology of language, pointing out letters, words and sentences he will be helping children to recognise that words are formed through combining letters and that each word is separated from the next by a space. Discussions about punctuation marks after sharing a story or big book with the class enable the teacher to explain the use of punctuation in a meaningful and visible context.

According to Peters (1985) spelling in English is complicated as a result most writers do not simply 'catch' spelling accuracy, they need to be taught carefully, systematically and



sensitively. He emphasised that good teaching does not merely consist of correcting children's mistakes but helps them to avoid repeating those mistakes. This involves giving children strategies for producing conventional representations of words and remembering the spelling of frequently used words. Learners are best able to make use of teaching when they appreciate its relevance to their own needs, so children are likely to learn most productively if they are taught to spell the words that they use in their own writing. Teachers need to respond positively to the ideas that are expressed and the spellings that have been attempted before discussing how spelling could be improved. This is in contrast to Shin (2006)'s argument that teachers concentrate on spelling when faced with unfamiliar content. This suggests that teachers should refrain from concentrating on spelling errors but rather concentrate on the content. Furthermore, when giving help it is important that teachers limit the number of errors they correct and consider when and which words to teach to individuals, groups and classes.

As it is emphasized by Robb, Ross & Shortreed (1986) that it may not be worth the instructor's time and effort to provide detailed feedback on sentence level grammar and syntax, since improvement can be gained by writing practice alone. However, practice alone may improve fluency, but if errors are not pointed out and corrected, they can become ingrained in student writing. Besides, survey reports in English First Additional Language have indicated that students attend to and appreciate their teachers' pointing out of grammar problems says Brice (1995). In support of this claim, Fathman and Whalley (1990), from their research on feedback and revision in an English First Additional Language context, concluded that grammar and content feedback, whether given separately or together, positively affect rewriting. Lastly, grammatical feedback had more effect on error correction than content feedback had on the improvement of content.

Myles (2002) also argued that students come to class both to improve their language proficiency and become more confident in their writing abilities. Writing practice can also

present diagnostic feedback that helps learners improve their linguistic accuracy at every level of proficiency. Instruction should provide students with ample amounts of language input and instruction, as well as writing experience preferably through the interweaving of writing and reading, referred to as “intertextuality” (Blanton:1999), and feedback to fulfil their goals. As suggested by the Department of Basic Education (2011:6) that “writing is closely linked to reading...” Even though, the Department of Basic Education maintains that “although reading is an important source of input, it is through writing, that writing skills are developed” (pg. 36). According to Myles overt classroom instruction through modelling, is only one part of the teaching process, providing students with feedback on their writing is the other. Essentially, teachers need to consider factors related to language proficiency, second language acquisition, and writing skill development when giving feedback. Specifically, the effectiveness of feedback may depend on the level of students’ motivation, their current language level, their cognitive style, the clarity of the feedback given, the way the feedback is used, and the attitudes of students towards their teacher and the class (Ferris:1997). Classroom setting, course goals, and grading procedures and standards are also important (Leki: 1990).

Meanwhile, teachers must be aware of the complexities involved in the revision process and respond to writing so that students can make modifications with confidence and competence. Ideally, learners should be encouraged to analyse and evaluate feedback themselves in order for it to be truly effective. Teacher commentary, student reaction to commentary, and student revisions interact with each other in a formidable way. How teachers intervene in writing instruction, and how English First Additional language writers react to the feedback influences the composing process. Again process models of writing instruction allow students time to reflect and seek input as they reshape their plans, ideas, and language. In classroom practice, the focus is on idea development, clarity, and coherence before identification and grammar correction. Ideally, instruction and response serve to motivate revisions, encourage learning, induce problem-solving and critical thinking, in addition to further writing practice (Cummings:1989).

According to Wallace, Stariha and Walberg (2004) it appears that computers can be both harmful and helpful in writing and learning to write. They stated that the neat appearance of words in the computer screen may suggest to students that all is well even in the presence of logical, grammatical and stylistic errors. Despite that, computers can make the rearrangement of words, sentences and paragraphs and other revisions far easier. Similarly, some more recent programmes can spot spelling, grammatical mistakes and suggest corrections.

One important point highlighted by Lankshear and Snyder (2000) is that writing, in the sense of making language visible always involves the application of technology of some kind, whether quill, pencil, typewriter and each innovation involves new skills applied in new ways. Though this can only be accessible to few schools because having computer laboratories can be costly and would further require more time on teachers as well as learners. On the other hand, Richards (2003) feels that it is important to recognize, however, that computers are no more likely to bring about learning improvements by themselves than other teaching tools such as blackboards and overhead projectors. Warschauer as cited in Richards (2003) further says that technology is not a method but a resource which can support a variety of approaches. Like all tools and methodologies, to him it is the ways they are used that can change student writing behaviours.

According to Browne (1999) children do not automatically know about the uses of writing and cannot always see the immediate benefits of becoming a writer. When learners are unable to recognise this significance of what they are being taught they might pay little attention to the teaching they are receiving and engage in learning activities in a desultory way. If this is the reason for some children's difficulties the solution is likely to be in the teacher's hands. The starting point will be to examine the writing programme for the class. Teachers might want to ask themselves whether the writing activities children undertake are framed in ways that make the uses of writing

clear. They may ask themselves whether they have an audience, a purpose and an outcome that children can recognise as relevant. They might also want to consider whether writing is given status through being planned to take place over a number of days. For example, do children have the opportunity to:

Plan their writing? Students generate ideas by brainstorming and discussion. The teacher remains in the background during this phase, only providing language support if required, so as not inhibiting students in the production of ideas.

Draft it? At this stage students extend ideas into note form, and judge quality and usefulness of ideas.

Revise what they have written? Students write the first draft. This is done in class.

Discuss their writing with others? Drafts are exchanged, so that the students become the readers of each other's work.

Make decisions about how to present it? Students come up with the strategies that they will use to present their writing and what they will present.

Share it permanently through a display, in a book or by giving it to others to read it? Students once again exchange and read each other's work and perhaps even write a response or reply.

Browne (1999) also added that increasing the number of writing tasks that are planned in this way and including opportunities for children to choose what they want to write about can improve children's motivation. For some children the solution to their difficulties with composition may lie in reducing the number of writing tasks and the amount of writing involved in each activity that they are being asked to undertake. Therefore, limiting their writing to a few lines may help them to see that writing is manageable and help them to concentrate on the essential information they wish to include. Responses to some tasks could take the form of a picture, a sequence of

illustrations, diagrams charts or on tapes. Some writing might be undertaken collaboratively with a partner or an adult.

Wallace, Stariha, and Walberg (2004) stipulated that great writers have often had not only their own writing ability but also strong motivation, inspiring teachers, informative literature and direct experiences, as well as exposure to skilful peers and fine writers. This suggest that all students can be encouraged to write as well as they are able. Similarly, teachers may not only conduct skilful lessons but also stimulates all students to become better writers, and identify talented writers for special encouragement and lessons. According to them, to become better writers, students may need to read good even great literature that can serve as a model for their effort. They further suggested that hearing and reading about the lives of great men and women writers and how they developed their talents may stimulate them and direct contacts with professional writers, such as novelists and news reporters, may be inspirational.

Meanwhile, having topics that a person cares deeply about, as a consequence of personal interest and investigation, may prove decisive for a fine writing and even lead to a life devoted to writing ( Wallace, Stariha and Walberg:2004). For example, it will be better for teachers to give learners essay topics that they are familiar with so as to arouse their interest. This is also supported by (Shen as cited in Myles: 2004) in his statement that any appropriate instruction must take into consideration familiarity with writing topics and distinct cultural and instructional socialisation.

Furthermore, students may be able to communicate more effectively if they are exposed to models of not only standard paragraphs and essays, but also a variety of genres of writing, including flyers, magazine articles, letters and so forth. By examining a variety of written texts, students' awareness can be raised with regard to the way words, structures and genre contribute to purposeful writing (Raimes:1991). Again, "through

interacting with a variety of texts, learners extend their use of vocabulary and correctly apply their understanding of Language Structures and Conventions” (Department of Basic Education, 2011:37). Models can also be used for text analysis, which can help English First Additional Language writers to see how particular grammatical features are used in authentic discourse contexts. However, as the students’ progress, they need to be aware of a variety of forms that “serve the writer’s purpose instead of the other way round” (Atkinson & Ramanathan, 1995:548).

In addition to the use of written models, Cumming (1995) also points out the benefits of cognitive modelling in writing instruction, which involves explicit demonstration of the strategies experienced writers use when planning, making decisions, and revising texts. He also advocates that English First Additional Language instructors make explicit use of thinking or procedural-facilitation prompts and student self-evaluation as the optimal mode of assessment. Both these approaches promote knowledge-transforming models of composing. Self –evaluation can be encouraged in student portfolios, self-review checklists, and teacher and peer responses. In addition, verbalizing the writing process step-by-step can be effective, as it affords both students and teachers the opportunity to consider writing diagonally. However, convincing students to evaluate their own work requires additional instructional tools, and it may not be effective to all learners.

Cummings refers to self-assessment as a component of one-to-one tutoring sessions, which in contrast to the classroom context and are ideally “more conducive environments for the textual, cognitive, and social dimensions of error identification to be integrated with individual students’ composing processes and their immediate concerns about language, ideas, and texts”(p.393). Unfortunately, many teachers have large classes, nonetheless, the use of specific prompts for cognitive modelling in different aspects of composing, including prompts for error identification, has proved to be valuable.

However, beyond issues of time and numbers of students, logistic tensions within the English First Additional Language writing classroom itself include developing an understanding of and a strategy for accommodating local needs (Leki:2001). For example, creating or experiencing real purpose for writing may be a reasonable goal in setting where English is the medium of daily communication. There, students can be asked to write real letters to the local newspaper and in this way they work towards developing a sense of their broader English speaking audience. But these goals may be more difficult to achieve with less access to the target language in the surrounding environment, where there may be no English language newspaper to send to. At the same time, no matter how persuasive recommendations for writing instruction methods and material may be they must be adapted to local possibilities.

On the other hand, teachers may present general guidelines for all writing, but specific types of writing, such as poems and essays, may require specific lessons (Wallace, Stariha and Walberg:2004). This further suggests that students can benefit from practice at writing about the results of their own research, as well as expressing their own feelings and experiences. However, according to them the writing strategies involved in each form require explicit teaching, frequent practice and information given to students about their progress. Therefore, it will be important for teachers to take note that extending learning time by lengthening classes, extending school days, summer school participation and assigning homework promote language learning. They further suggested that the more time students have to practice a skill, the better they learn. As emphasized by the Department of Basic Education (2011) that learners should be getting more exposure to English First Additional Language because it is a Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT) to them. According to the Department, greater emphasis should be placed on using the First Additional Language for the purpose of thinking and reasoning so as to enable learners to develop their cognitive academic skills, which they need to study subjects like Natural Sciences and Mathematics, in English.

According to Richards (2003) teacher written response continues to play a central role in most English First Additional Language writing classes. However, many teachers do not feel that they have done justice to students' efforts until they have written substantial comments on their papers, justifying the grade they have given and providing a reader reaction. Similarly, many students see their teacher's feedback as crucial to their improvement as writers. Meanwhile, a great deal of research has questioned the effectiveness of teacher feedback as a way of improving students writing. Even though, research suggest that teacher written feedback is highly valued by second language writers and that many learners particularly favour feedback on their grammar. Clearly teachers need to consider what students want from feedback and what they attend to do in their revisions. As it is suggested by Richards that it is important to note that what individual students want from feedback and the use they make of it varies considerably.

In addition, Richards (2003) suggest the idea of students receiving feedback from their peers. Peer response can take a number of different forms and occur at various stages in the writing process. It consist of assigning students to groups of two , three or four who exchange completed first drafts and give comments on each other's' work before they revise them. This normally occurs during class time and can take up to an hour to complete, especially if readers are asked to provide written responses to these. Learners work with a set of peer review guidelines to help them focus on particular aspects of the writing and the conventions of the genre. Peer response is said to provide a means of both improving writers' drafts and developing readers' understandings of good writing, but teachers have been more positive than students, who tend to prefer teacher feedback.

On the negative side, the fact that students are rhetorically inexperienced means that they may focus heavily on sentence level problems rather than ideas and organization. Moreover, peers are not trained teachers and their comments may be vague and unhelpful, or even overly critical and sarcastic (Richards: 2003).



Leki (1992) stated that teachers who would like to help students to correct sentences level errors might want to get a picture of the students' developing English by doing a number of formative assessment activities with them: (1) asking them to orally explain their reason for constructing a phrase or a sentence as they did, (2) giving several correct and incorrect versions of the misused structure and asking the student to indicate which ones are correct and which are not.

A method called Free Writing was also highlighted by Bello (1997) as the approach which can be used to improve English Second Language students writing skills. According to him Free Writing is writing for a period of time in class on a topic of interest to them. This is in contrast to what is required in the product approach suggested by Raimes (1993) that is currently used by teachers where students are assigned a piece of writing. Bello (1997) further explain that this writing can take many forms and that includes quick writes, which are time-limited, done individually, and not always shared , and dialogue journals, written to a teacher, a classmate or other partners who then responds. He suggested that these writings be kept in a portfolio or notebook also stated that from these pieces, themes may emerge that can act as springboards for more extensive writing that is discussed, revised, edited and published.

These are a list of activities suggested by Bello (1997) which may lead into either the Free Writing or Process Writing discussed above:

Assessing needs: having learners write about what they want to learn.

Reacting to a text or stimulus: learners can record their reactions to various stimuli, for example, a piece of music, a photograph or drawing, a sound such as water being poured or even smells, such as aroma of different spices.

Writing letters: Letters of complaint cover letters or letters of advice allow learners to practice some of the types of writing that are useful in their daily lives.

Analysing and synthesizing information: using maps learners can write directions from getting from one location to another.

Making lists: lists can help learners generate vocabulary and provide the basis for larger pieces. Some lists could be favourite foods, things missed about one's country and so on.

The other approach recommended by Arroyo, Brown, Young, Marcia, Patricia and Martha (1994) is the process approach which is one of the strategies used by teachers currently. They suggested six stages and Tribble (1996) only focussed on four. In the stages explained by Arroyo, Brown, Young, Marcia, Patricia and Martha (1994) two stages are added of which one is "responding" that comes after drafting where there are responses to writing coming from the variety of sources for example, self, teacher, parents, friends, and peer-response groups. According to them the purpose of these responses is to reinforce the positive aspects of writing and to help in doing revision which is the next step because it is based on these responses.

The last one added is "publishing" which they regard as the most important stage in sharing the piece of writing beyond the peer group and teacher, thus giving the learner an opportunity to become a writer in future. Arroyo, Brown, Young, Marcia, Patricia and Martha (1994) recommended an interview as a process writing activity. According to them with this activity you would pair up to two students together and have them interview each other and go through all of the steps of process writing. It provides for the acquisition and refinement of a variety of cognitive skills and that oral-based language development is stimulated since talk is an essential element of interviewing. The use of authentic material such as dialogues and interviews are also approved by

the Department of Basic Education (2011) as one of the principles that must be taken into consideration when teaching language structures.

Arroyo, Brown, Young, Marcia, Patricia and Martha (1994) suggested a list of things expected from your English First Additional Language students after being involved in many writing activities.

- (a) Rely on invented spelling and punctuation.
- (b) Increase the length of their writing because they gain control of the topic (based on their own experiences).
- (c) Gain greater confidence in their emergent language skills.
- (d) Increase their vocabulary.
- (e) Gain greater control of syntax.
- (f) Reflect different story patterns because of stylistic variation.
- (g) Rely on the influence of structured texts (e.g. textbooks) resulting in conflicts with discourse patterns.
- (h) Increase pragmatics and language as social tools.
- (i) Gain oral reading skills.
- (j) Increase interest in writing through publishing.

According to the Department of Basic Education (2011) the text-based and communicative approach can also improve the learners' writing skills in English First Additional Language. The text based approach explores how texts work. The purpose of a text-based approach is to enable learners to become competent, confident and critical readers, writers, viewers and designers of texts. It involves listening to, reading, viewing and analyzing texts to understand how they are produced and what their effects are. Through this critical interaction, learners develop the ability to evaluate texts. The text-based approach also involves producing different kinds of texts for particular purposes and audiences. This approach is informed by an understanding of how texts are constructed.

A communicative approach suggests that when learning a language, a learner should have a great deal of exposure to the target language and many opportunities to practice or produce the language by communicating for social or practical purposes. Language learning should be carried over into the classroom where literacy skills of reading/viewing and writing/presenting are learned by doing a great deal of reading and learning to write by doing much writing. The Department of Basic Education (2011) further recommended that Language teaching happens in an integrated way, with the teacher modeling good practice, the learners practicing the appropriate skills in groups before applying these skills on their own. The structure of each lesson should be one that engages the whole class before practicing in groups and applying the new skill individually.

Lastly, according to the Department of Basic Education (2011) all assessment should recognize that language learning is a process and that, learners will not produce a completely correct piece of work the first time round. Therefore the various stages in the writing process should also be assessed. When giving a formal assessment task, there will be a focus on a particular skill, for example listening and speaking or reading or writing. Because language learning is an integrated process, more than one skill will be used. The language structures should be assessed in context. The teacher must ensure that assessment is not only done as written work, but as practical and oral work too. It is important to assess what learners understand and not what they can just memorize. As a result, the teacher should, as often as possible, assess the skills in context. For example, learners may spell all their words correctly during a test, but are they able to use those same words correctly spelt when writing/recording their personal news or a story? In addition, self-assessment and peer assessment actively involve learners in assessment. This is important as it allows learners to learn from and reflect on their own performance.

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that writing is an essential but difficult skill for English first additional language students to accomplish. The writing that takes place in the English First Additional Language classroom is authentic to the student. It is very personal to the student. It is the way to express them in the new language that they are trying to learn. If the topic that they are writing about has to deal with them, they will be more apt to finish it. It is work that they can be proud of. Meanwhile, all aspects of language: listening, speaking, reading and writing are followed because of the writing process (Arroyo, Brown, Young, Marcia, Patricia and Martha: 1994). Teachers just need to implement writing in the classroom as much as they can as it is important and, can be included with all the core subjects that need to be taught throughout the school day.

## **2.6 SUMMARY**

In this chapter the challenges encountered by teachers, factors impacting writing skills, strategies currently used by teachers and the strategies to improve the writing skills in English First Additional Language were discussed in detail. Research design and methodology is presented in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter explores the methodological orientation and paradigm in which this research is located. The research procedure is elucidated and its appropriateness is discussed. It outlines the research orientation, describes the case study selection process, it shows how access to participants was gained, it also describes how the data collection and data analysis procedures adopted in the study. It will show how ethical consideration of the study was established.

#### **3.1 RESEARCH ORIENTATION**

The research is located in the qualitative approach and aims to describe and understand in a subjective manner the qualitative nature of teaching strategies to improve the writing skills for grade 8 and 9 learners in English first additional language. My motivation for using a qualitative method in this study is briefly outlined below. Qualitative methodology is a social science research approach which was developed to enable researchers to study social and cultural phenomena (Myers: 1997).

It aims to help us to understand the world in which we live and why things are the way they are. "It involves the use of methods such as case studies, interviews, observation and textual analysis, which provide insights into cultural aspects...and human interactions" De Villiers (2005:13). According to Joubish (2011) it is concerned with social aspects of our world and seeks to answer questions about:

Why people behave the way they do?

How opinions and attitudes are formed?

How people are affected by the events that go around them?

Denzin and Lincoln (2000:4) state that qualitative research involves an interpretive and naturalistic approach to the world. They explain that qualitative researchers attempt to make sense of the phenomena being studied and interpret them in terms of the meanings people bring to them. According to them qualitative research interprets these behaviours and experience in words not in figures, thus providing depth and “thick” description of social reality.

Krauss (2005:760) point out that qualitative research is based on a “relativistic, constructivist ontology that posits that there is no subjective reality, rather... multiple realities constructed by human beings who experience a phenomenon of interest”.

Qualitative approach allows researcher to study subjects in their natural settings (Denzin & Lincoln: 2000). According to Joubish (2011) a qualitative approach refers to situations where you collect data in an unstructured way therefore, if you use an unstructured interview you will have a qualitative data. In addition, Joubish (2011) stipulated that the reasoning process used in qualitative research involves perceptually putting pieces together to make wholes and from this process meaning is produced and because perception varies with the individual, many different meanings are possible.

A researcher obtains a more realistic feel of the world that cannot be experienced in the numerical data, (Matveev: 2002). According to him qualitative approach allows the researcher to use flexible ways to perform data collection, subsequent analysis, and interpretation of collected information. Kirk and Miller (1986) also highlighted the fact that the researcher is able to interact with the research subjects in their own language

and on their own terms. Bogdan and Taylor (1975) mentioned that it provides a holistic view of the phenomena under investigation.

However, the researcher will clearly state the research problem and have strong theoretical foundation of the research in order to compensate the weakness of the qualitative method, such as departing from the original objectives of the research, excessive subjectivity of judgement, and high requirements for the experience level of the researcher (Matveev :2002).

### **3.1.1 Research paradigm**

*Denzin and Lincoln (1994:107) view “a paradigm as a set of basic beliefs (or metaphysics) that deals with ultimate’s or first principles. It represents a worldview that defines, for its holder; the nature of the “world,” the individual’s place in it , and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts, as, for example, cosmologies and theologies do. The beliefs are the basic in the sense that they must be accepted simply on faith (however well argued); there is no way to establish their truthfulness.”*

The net that contains the researcher’s epistemological, ontological, and methodological premises may be termed a paradigm (Guga, cited in Denzin and Lincoln: 1994). According to Patton (2002) paradigms tell us what is important, legitimate, and reasonable. They are also normative, telling the practitioner what to do without the necessity of long existential or epistemological consideration. According to Denzin and Lincoln all research is interpretive: guided by a set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied. To them some beliefs may be taken for granted, invisible, or only assumed, whereas others are highly problematic and



controversial. Each interpretive paradigm makes particular demands on the researcher including the questions that are asked and the interpretations that are brought to them. Thus, the interpretive paradigm which is an approach that originated in the social sciences and humanities was applied in this study.

De Villiers (2005) postulates that interpretivism aims to find new interpretations or underlying meanings and adheres to the ontological assumption of multiple realities, that which are time-and context dependent. A related term is “naturalistic”, which has connotations of research done in a natural setting, rather than in a laboratory (Cohen, Manion and Morrison: 2000). Reeves (2000a) explain that interpretive goals determine how something works by describing and interpreting phenomena regarding domain processes, performances and innovations. According to De Villiers (2005) interpretivism lends itself mainly to qualitative studies. He mentioned that interpretivism investigates research questions, focused on understanding phenomena that occur in natural settings and which use verbal data.

According to (Kaplan and Maxwell, cited in Myers: 1994) interpretive research does not predefine dependent and independent variables, but focuses on the full complexity of human sense making as the situation emerges. Interpretive researchers often use participant observation and field research. These techniques require that researchers spend many hours in direct personal contact with those being studied (Neuman: 2000). To him, the interpretive approach is concerned with how ordinary people manage their practical affairs in everyday life, how they get things done. Interpretive social science is concerned with how people interact and get along with each other. In general, Neuman view interpretive approach as the systematic analysis of socially meaningful action through the direct detailed observation of people in natural settings in order to arrive at understandings and interpretations of how people create and maintain their social worlds.

For interpretive researchers, the goal of social research is to develop an understanding of social life and discover how people construct meaning in natural settings. An interpretive researcher wants to learn what is meaningful or relevant to the people being studied, or how individuals experience daily life. The researcher does this by getting to know a particular social setting and seeing it from the point of view of those in it (Neuman: 2000). Interpretive researchers study meaningful social action, not just the external or observable behaviour of people. Social action is when people attach subjective meaning. Nonhuman species lack culture and the reasoning to plan out things and attach purpose to their behaviour; therefore, social scientist should study what is unique to human social behaviour. This means that the researcher must take into account the social actor's reasons and the social context of action (Neuman: 2000).

### **3.1.2 Case study design**

A case study is a research method which allows a researcher to closely examine a data within a specific context (Zainal: 2007). Eisenhart (2002) defines a case study as a research strategy which focuses on understanding the dynamics present within single settings. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:36) point out that case study provide "a complete understanding of a complex situation, identify uninterested consequences and examine the process of policy implementation".

According to Richard (2003) case studies seek to provide a rich and vivid description of real people acting in real situations, blending description and analysis to understand actors' perceptions and experiences. Zainal (2007) asserts that one of the reasons for the recognition of case study as a research method is that researchers were becoming more concerned about the limitations of quantitative methods in providing holistic and in-depth explanations of the social and behavioural problems in question. Through case

study methods, a researcher is able to go beyond the quantitative statistical results and understand the behavioural conditions through the actor's perspective.

With this study reporting on specific contexts, the case study was considered most appropriate to address the research purpose and objectives. There are several reasons for conducting a case study research. One of the reasons for employing a case study design in this study is captured in Yin's (1994) statement: "A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident". This statement emphasizes that an important strength of case studies is the ability to undertake an investigation into a phenomenon in its context; it is not necessary to replicate the phenomenon in a laboratory or experimental setting in order to understand it. A case study design enables the researcher to generate data on appropriate teaching strategies for the improvement of writing skills for grade 8 and 9 learners in English first additional language.

Cohen and Manion (1994:106) state that the case study researcher "typically observes the characteristics of an individual unit, with the intention of probing deeply and to analyse intensively the multifarious phenomena that constitute the life cycle of that unit". Thus, according to (Flyvbjerg, cited in Denzin and Lincoln: 2011) case studies comprise more detail, richness, completeness, and variance- that is in-depth for the unit of study.

Case studies stress "developmental factors," meaning that a case typically evolves in time, often as a string of concrete and interrelated events that occur "at such a time, in such a place" and that constitute the case when seen as a whole. They also focus on "relation to the environment," that is, context. The drawing of boundaries for the individual unit of study decides what gets to count as case and what becomes context to the case. According to Flyvbjerg the case study can "close in" on real-life situations and

test views directly in relation to phenomena as they unfold in practice. To him, the closeness of the case study to real-life situations and its multiple wealth of details are important to researchers in two respects: it is important for the development of a nuanced view of reality, including the view that human behaviour cannot be meaningfully understood as simply the rule-governed acts found at the lowest level of learning process, and in much theory. It is also important for researchers' own learning processes in developing the skills needed to do good research.

Despite the above advantages, case studies have received criticisms. Yin as cited in Zainal (2007) discusses three types of arguments against case study research. He argues that case studies are often accused of lack of rigor. He notes that "too many times, the case study investigator has been sloppy, and has allowed equivocal evidence or biased views to influence the direction of the findings and conclusions". Case studies also provide very little basis for scientific generalization since they use a small number of subjects, some conducted with only one subject. The question commonly raised is "How can you generalize from a single case?" They are often labelled as being too long, difficult to conduct and producing a massive amount of documentation. In particular, case studies of ethnographic or longitudinal nature can elicit a great deal of data over a period of time. The danger comes when the data are not managed and organized systematically (pg.21). However, in this study, interview guides will be used to collect data.

### **3.2 RE-STATEMENT OF RESEARCH PURPOSE**

The purpose statement establishes the direction of the research and orientate the reader to the central intent of the study ( Creswell: 2003). Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine the strategies appropriate for the improvement of Grade 8 and 9 learners writing skills in English First Additional Language. The research is necessary to

identify the challenges that teachers encounter when dealing with writing skills and examining the strategies currently used by teachers for the teaching of writing skills to English first additional language speakers. Thereby, increasing our understanding of the writing process of English First Additional Language learners through the technique of creativity. Byrne (1982) claims that writing serves a number of pedagogical purposes which are as follows:

- The introduction and practice of some form of writing enable us to provide for different learning styles and needs. Some learners, especially those who do not learn easily through oral practice, feel secure if they are allowed to read and write in the language.
- Written work serves to provide the learners with some tangible evidence that they are making progress in the language.
- Writing is often needed for formal and informal testing.

It is therefore important to identify appropriate strategies that can be employed to promote the writing skills of grade 8 and 9 learners in English First Additional Language. The recommendations will be aimed at improved strategies as well as a better understanding of writing skills.

### **3.3 METHODOLOGY**

The methodological issues discussed in the previous section provided the context for closer consideration of the practical dimensions of the research method employed in this study. The audit trail with respect to gaining approval for the research and arriving at the criteria used for one part of data collection that of participant interview is described. This is followed by a description of how data analysis proceeded.

### **3.3.1 Approval process**

A research proposal for submission to the faculty Research and Higher Degrees Committee was completed. In putting together the chapter on methodology I had on-going discussions with my supervisor to ensure quality and to obtain ethical clearance for the fieldwork. The Eastern Cape Department of Education was requested for permission to conduct research in schools in the province (see Appendix A). Contact with the prospective participants was sought through face to face and by telephone.

Participants were also provided with a cover letter which clearly described the research and its purpose and its anticipated contribution to the field of quality in teaching and information about protection of rights, confidentiality and the voluntary nature of the study. An informed consent form which details the intent of the study, the use of potential findings and any potential consequences for the participants was provided to all participants. All participants were afforded an opportunity to read the consent form with the proviso that participation is strictly on a voluntary basis and could be ceased at any time during the study's research duration see Appendix D. The participants of the 4 schools (for the case study) were requested to sign informed consent forms for the interview process.

### **3.3.2 Research population and sample**

According to Castillo (2009) a research population is generally a large collection of individuals or objects that is the main focus of a scientific enquiry. The target population on which this research focuses includes all teachers that teach English as a First Additional Language in Grade 8 and 9, in the Cradock Education District.

Castillo (2009) mention that target population refers to the entire group of individuals or objects to which researchers are interested in generalizing the conclusions. The target population usually has varying characteristics and it is also known as the theoretical population. The sample drawn from the geographical area of the Cradock Education District is representative of high schools from a township area. One of the reasons for selecting these schools is that they all are information –rich cases, which will provide valid knowledge and meaningful insights. Again, the selection of the four schools was on the basis of proximity, accessibility and convenience. Each of the four schools was representative of the aforementioned initial criteria; however, the final choice was also based on theoretical interest and availability.

Purposive sampling, that is, a non-random sampling technique in which a researcher solicits persons with specific characteristics to participate in a research study, was employed in this study (Bogdan and Biklen 2007; Johnson and Christensen 2004:215). According to Barbie and Mouton (2006), the purposeful sampling method may be used to “study a small subset of a larger population in which the subset is easily identified”. In this research the larger population included all high schools in the Cradock Education District. The logic and power of purposeful sampling lie in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry, thus the term purposeful sampling. Studying information-rich cases yields insights and in-depth understanding rather than generalizations (Preston as cited in Patton: 2002).

According to Rust (2004) purposeful sampling can incorporate effects of constraints imposed by the Federal procurement system. It can include geographically-isolated areas of exposure and individuals known to have been exposed (useful in the case of rare exposures). Sampling design may assign certainty status to subsets of the reference population that are easier to recruit and retain. It can take advantage of

specialized facilities and equipment that are available on a very limited basis; similarly can take advantage of existing environmental data. It allows use of volunteer participants that should have better retention and reliable response rates because of carryover effects from their initial positive attitude toward study participation and use of volunteer participants in cases where the respondent burden is extreme leading to higher retention rates. Volunteer participants simplify recruitment effort thereby reducing recruitment costs. It allows selection of cohort members that have a relationship with data collection organizations, perhaps leading to very cost-efficient data collection.

### **3.3.3 Selection of research participants**

After the researcher has identified the four schools, two educators were selected from the school's staff lists to voluntarily take part in the semi-structured individual interview. The choice of two teachers in each school was based on the fact that they are currently teaching English as an additional language. The choice of sampling method is supported by the view of Saunders et al. (2000:166) that clusters can be based on any naturally occurring groupings.

### **3.3.4 Data collection techniques**

In this study interviews, interview setting, discussion of interview schedule and transcribing of interviews were chosen as the research methods appropriate for this study.



### 3.3.4.1 Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with grade 8 and 9 teachers in four purposively selected schools who agreed to participate in the study. Richard (2003) defines semi-structure interviews as the set of guidelines in no fixed order and allowing extensive follow up. A semi-structured interview was chosen because “it is a basic method of data gathering. The purpose of which is to obtain rich, in-depth experiential account of an event or episode in the life of the respondent” (Fontana & Frey 2000:646). Because they offer flexible tool for gaining privileged access to others’ writing beliefs and practices, interviews allow researchers to probe beyond preconceived explanations to refine categories and explore new perceptions ( Richard :2003 ). On the other hand, Kvale & Brinkmann (2009) define semi-structured interviews as interviews with the purpose of obtaining descriptions of the life world of the interviewee in order to interpret the meaning of the described phenomena.

According Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), the qualitative research interview attempts to understand the world from the subjects’ point of view, to unfold the meaning of their experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations. To them, research interviews have the purpose of producing knowledge. Gomm (2004) describes the cooperative nature of the interview as a “fact-producing interaction”. From a different perspective it could be argued ‘facts’ are always socially produced and the influence of a responsibly engaged researcher helps interviewees describe perceptions they would otherwise think irrelevant or in their normal social context feel inhibited from mentioning. Fox (2009) explains that face-to-face interviewing offers a greater degree of flexibility. A skilled interviewer can explain the purpose of the interview and encourage potential respondents to co-operate; they can also clarify questions, correct misunderstandings, offer prompts, probe responses and follow up on new ideas in a way that is just not possible with other methods.

Face-to-face interviews, on the other hand, allow the observation not only of verbal but also nonverbal data. When in the same room, for instance, participant and interviewer have access to facial expressions, gestures, and other para verbal communications that may enrich the meaning of the spoken words (Carr & Worth, 2001). Relatedly, one assertion frequently made in support of in-person interviews is that because both researcher and participant are in the same space, and thus have access to more than just verbal data, they can build the rapport that may enable participants to freely disclose their experiences more effectively than might occur in phone interviews (Shuy, 2003).

Furthermore, Polkinghorne (1994) asserted that in-person interviews yield authentic and deep descriptions of phenomena via the interviewer's ability to facilitate trust and openness in the interviewee, which then lessens the interviewee's need for impression management and enables the examination of her or his private experiences. Musselwhite et al. (2006) also addressed some of the benefits of in-person interviews, which may help maintain participant involvement more successfully than phone interviews (e.g., fewer dropouts). This would mean that the interviewee will participate more; having enough chance to ask what is unclear. It also clarify the information being communicated (e.g., those with hearing difficulties or those for whom English is not their first language may encounter fewer difficulties in face-to-face interviews; messages being conveyed nonverbally are available to the researcher).

However, it is important to recognise and address the weaknesses this method could be seen to have. For instance, in the interview guide approach Patton (2002) mentions that topics may be inadvertently missed which means that they may be omitted unintentionally. Comparability is reduced because sequencing and wording will probably be different in each interview. What is potentially lost here is gained by allowing interviews to develop their own coherence. Therefore, according to Patton the method

depends significantly on the skill of the interviewer. On the other hand, whenever individuals are questioned, it cannot be certain they have told the truth. To Patton, with this method interviewees may say what they think the interviewer wants to hear. The researcher's concern here may depend on the nature of the topic discussed and checks and probes can be used to where there are doubts. Interviewees often respond in an artificial way, in that, they may describe what they do in terms that they think you will recognize, making a full play of theoretical concepts intended to impress you, or describe what they think they should be doing rather than what they actually do (McKenzie:2007).

### **3.3.4.2 Interview setting**

The interviews took place at times and venues convenient to each participant. The interviews were conducted either in an office in the administration block of the school, or in a classroom to ensure an environment that is free from noise and comfortable to the interviewees. It was explained that the interviews would be conducted in English, but interviewees could respond in any language of their choice, isiXhosa. Most important was that the environment should be comfortable, non-threatening and easily accessible. A pilot study was conducted to ensure that "poorly framed questions or badly structured questions" did not discourage participants.

At each interview the researcher went through the introductory comments, which entailed an explanation of the aims of the interview as well as the role of the participants (See Appendix B). A total number of two respondents at each of the four sites were interviewed. The interview protocol was based on simple, semi-structured, open-ended questions (See Appendix B) in an attempt to allow for in-depth probing and extended responses and to ascertain enriched insight into participants' perceptions on the teaching strategies employed at teaching writing skills in English as a First Additional

Language. Participants were put at ease before the actual interview session, a very important aspect for successful interview sessions (Hughes: 2007). Permission to audio-tape interviews was obtained from each participant and interviews were conducted in a professional and non-biased manner.

#### **3.3.4.3 Discussion of interview schedule**

The interview schedule (See Appendix B) consisted of two sections. Section A sought personal information to variables such as gender, teaching experience and qualifications. Section B focused on aspects to the improvement of writing skills in English First Additional Language. The interview schedule in Section B comprises of ten questions covering different topics to ensure that questions address the same themes in all interviews. In order to enrich my understanding on strategies used to improve the writing skills of learners in English First Additional Language in Grades 8 and 9, the focus of Question one was on the importance of development of writing skills. Question two was about the challenges that learner's experience. While, question three was focusing on the positive lessons that teachers have learnt. Question four and seven focused on the challenges faced by teachers. Chapter five was on the improvement of writing skills. Question six focused on the sustainability of teaching strategies. Availability of support structures was covered in question eight and nine focused on the influence of interaction with the district office.

#### **3.3.4.4 Transcribing the interviews**

According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009:178) "a transcript is a translation from one narrative mode - oral discourse, into another narrative mode - written mode". In their view, to transcribe means to transform, to change from one form to another. The audio

recording of the interview involves the first abstraction from the live physical presence of the conversing persons, with a loss of body language such as posture and gestures. The transcription of the interviews conversation to a written form involves a second abstraction, where the tone of the voice, the intonations and the breathing are lost. In short, transcripts are impoverished, decontextualized renderings of live interview conversations. All the interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. The researcher listened to the recordings several times and everything was written down. All data transcriptions were photocopied with originals stored in a safe place, unaltered. Photocopies of raw data were then used for analysis (Strauss & Corbin: 1990).

### **3.4 DATA ANALYSIS**

The researcher used the semi-structured questions based on the questions as set out in the Appendix B and the transcripts of the interviews to analyse the data by clustering and grouping them according to the responses of the participants under every question as formulated in the semi-structured questions. The purpose of the analysis will be to uncover the meaning of the question, to make explicit its presuppositions and thereby the implicit conceptions of qualitative research it implies (Kvale and Brinkmann: 2009). To them, to analyse means to separate something into parts or elements. According to Neuman (2000:426) “data analysis involves examining, sorting, categorizing, evaluating, comparing, synthesizing, and contemplating the coded data as well as reviewing the raw and recorded data”. The common themes emerged from the responses of the interviews and patterns were then grouped together and analysed as responses. In certain instances the participants were quoted verbatim to emphasize the point made.

Cresswell as cited in Leedy and Ormrod (2005) describe data analysis as a spiral that is, in view, equally applicable to a wide variety of qualitative studies. In using this view, the researcher went through the data several times and followed the following steps:

3.4.1 The data should be organized in the form of smaller units.

3.4.2 The researcher should peruse the entire data several times to get a sense of what it contains as a whole.

3.4.3 The researcher should identify general categories or themes, and perhaps sub-categories or sub-themes, classify and categorize them accordingly and

3.4.4 Integrate and summarise the data for the readers.

Data were analysed empirically. Keys were allocated to common statements and clustered under various themes as they emerged.

### **3.4.1 Qualitative data analysis**

According to (Bogdan and Bilken, cited in Kolb:2012) data analysis is a systematic process of sifting and arranging all information obtained from interview scripts, field notes and other material collected to increase your understanding of the data to be able the presentation of what have been discovered. A qualitative analysis of the data was used to analyze the transcripts of the interviews with the teachers. Everything that came out of the interviews was written down, including the main questions and probes used in order to be able to study the content of the interviews. The main questions of the interview directed the analysis and were used to create the first main coding categories. These categories, and the data they contain, helped to inspire further questions and sub-coding categories which were used to analyze data in greater detail. The data were re-read repeatedly and the themes and teacher's comments were compared to each other. The results are presented by themes rather than in order of the interview questions because the interviews followed a semi-structured scheme with

follow-up questions, and main themes were identified following the various levels of analysis. In qualitative research the information obtained from participants is not expressed in numerical form. Patton (2002) postulated that the challenge of qualitative analysis lies in making sense of massive amounts of data. This involves reducing the volume of raw information, sifting trivia from significance, identifying significant patterns, and constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal.

#### **3.4.1.1 Structural Coding**

Coding involves attaching one or more keywords to a text segment in order to permit later identification of a statement, whereas categorising entails a more systematic conceptualization of a statement, opening it for quantification (Kvale and Brinkmann: 2009). As described by Charmanz cited in Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) codes are immediate, are short, and define the action or experience described by the interviewee. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) the goal of coding is the development of categories that capture the fullness of the experiences and actions studied. The coding of a text's meaning into categories makes it possible to quantify how often specific themes are addressed in a text, and the frequency of themes can be compared and correlated with other measures. Categorization thus reduces and structures large interview texts into a few tables and figures. Following the elements that were suggested by Boyatzis (1998) that make up a good code, the researcher made a descriptive label for each category and have identified and labelled all relevant themes and patterns. A short description for each category was written so as to know what the category stands for and several examples of each category were given to eliminate confusion.

### 3.5 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Reliability and validity are important in research because the study needs to fall within the framework of the work done by other scholars in the field, and is important also for replication. Reliability provides information on whether the data collection procedure is consistent and accurate (Bell: 2005). Reliability refers to dependability or consistency while validity suggests truthfulness (Neuman :2006). In addition, Kumar (1996:140) argues that the greater the degree of consistency and stability in an instrument, the greater its reliability. In addressing the principle of reliability and validity, the interview schedule used in this study was guided and adapted from tested questionnaires in the ESP field including those compiled by scholars such as Leki and Carson (1997) and Margaret van Zyl (1993).

To ensure reliability in qualitative research, examination of trustworthiness is crucial (Bashir, Afzal & Azeem: 2008). Seale, cited in Bashir, Afzal & Azeem (2008:40), while establishing good quality studies through reliability and validity in qualitative research, states that the “trustworthiness of a research report lies at the heart of issues conventionally discussed as validity and reliability”. When judging qualitative work, (Strauss and Corbin, cited in Bashir, Afzal & Azeem, 2008:40) suggest that the "usual canons of 'good science'...require redefinition in order to fit the realities of qualitative research". In contrast, Stenbacka, (2001) argues that since reliability issue concerns measurements then it has no relevance in qualitative research. She adds the issue of reliability is an irrelevant matter in the judgment of quality of qualitative research. To widen the spectrum of conceptualization of reliability and revealing the congruence of reliability and validity in qualitative research, (Lincoln and Guba, cited in Bashir, Afzal & Azeem, 2008:40) states that: "Since there can be no validity without reliability, a demonstration of the validity is sufficient to establish the reliability". Patton (2001) with regards to the researcher's ability and skill in any qualitative research also states that reliability is a consequence of the validity in a study.



Three approaches to validity in qualitative research are validation as investigation, as communication, and as action (Kvale, cited in Bashir, Afzal & Azeem, 2008). According to Bashir, Afzal & Azeem (2008) researchers rely upon experience and literature to address the issue of validity, generalizability, and reliability. It is specified in quantitative paradigm but confusing in qualitative one. In qualitative research validity has to do with description and explanation, and whether or not the given explanation fits a given description (Bashir, Afzal & Azeem (2008). Qualitative researchers are of the view that the term validity is not applicable to qualitative research, but at the same time, they have realized the need for some kind of qualifying check or measure for their research. For example, Creswell & Miller (2000) suggest that the validity is affected by the researcher's perception of validity in the study and his/her choice of paradigm assumption. As a result, many researchers have developed their own concepts of validity and have often generated or adopted what they consider to be more appropriate terms, such as, quality, rigor and trustworthiness (Davies & Dodd, 2002; Stenbacka, 2001). The issue of validity in qualitative research has not been disregarded by Stenbacka (2001) as she has for the issue of reliability in qualitative research. Instead, she argues that the concept of validity should be redefined for qualitative researches. Stenbacka (2001) describes the notion of reliability as one of the quality concepts in qualitative research which "to be solved in order to claim a study as part of proper research".

This study triangulated the methods to strengthen the validity and reliability of data. In other words, all data collection methods, as well as the participants used in this study, aimed to test and validate the data to see if it produces the same results (reliability).

## **3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Wassenaar (2006) claims that, one of the most important aims of research ethics is to protect the welfare of research participants. In undertaking this research the philosophical principles guiding ethical research were observed as closely as possible. Wassenaar (2006) mentions four basic principles applicable to research, namely: autonomy and respect for dignity of persons, non-maleficence, beneficence and justice. In addition to Wassenaar's proposed guidelines, other researchers' views were also used to guide my ethical conduct in this project.

### **3.6.1 Autonomy and respect for the dignity for persons**

One of the ethical requirements for research on human respondents is that the researcher must obtain informed consent from respondents (Wassenaar: 2006). According to (Wassenaar: 2006) the autonomy principle "finds expression in the most requirements for voluntary informed consent by all research participants. "The consent form of this study was a way of ensuring that the prospective respondents understood the nature of the research and could voluntarily decide whether or not to participate. The assurance protects both parties; both the participant whose autonomy is respected and the investigator, who otherwise faces legal hazards (de Vos et al.,: 2002). A copy of the consent form can be found in Appendix D.

### **3.6.2 Non-maleficence**

Wassenaar (2006) explains that this principle of non-maleficence "supplements the autonomy principle and requires the researcher to ensure that no harm befalls research

participants as a direct or indirect consequence of the research. “In this study I guaranteed the participants’ anonymity. This was done by not publishing the participants’ real names, and the real names of their schools. Verbal consent was then tape recorded. In doing this I made sure that the participants understood the aims of the study, that they would be making a time commitment and that they were also agreeing to reveal their knowledge and experiences. The written consent form was left with the respondents to ensure that they could read it later if they had any questions about the process after I had left the site.

The language used in my interview schedule was simple and direct. As explained previously, participants were allowed to code switch to the language of their choice even though interviews were conducted in English. This was done to ensure that language did not become a barrier to their participation.

### **3.6.3 Beneficence**

The principles proposed by Wassenaar (2006) “obliges the researcher to attempt to maximise the benefits that the research will afford to participants in the research study. “I avoided voyeurisms and gave the best of my ability to ensure that the participants gained knowledge about IQMS. Even though I cannot make claims that the cohort of educators interviewed in this study benefitted from the findings of the investigation I will continue to teach educators in this field which will afford me the opportunity to ensure that educators are made aware of the ‘unintegrated’ nature of IQMS and how best this status quo can be improved towards continuous improvement.

### **3.6.4 Justice**

The principle of justice is complex. According to Wassenaar (2006) this principle dictates the respondents are being treated by the researcher with fairness and equity. It also includes the fair selection of respondents. As already indicated, the participants were given the right to decide whether they wanted to take part in the study. They were also given the right to withdraw at any moment in the course of the study. There was also no form of discrimination towards any particular gender, as both males and females participated in this study. Diverse schools were sampled, and included rural, township and urban schools.

### **3.7 SUMMARY**

This chapter addresses the research design and methodology, covering different aspects pertaining to these components. The research process is outlined and strategies employed in the data collection process were presented, with detailed motivations to strengthen my argument for using them. Ethical issues are also explained. The data are presented and analysed in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.0 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the research findings derived from the interviews conducted with the participants as defined in Chapter three. The findings are qualitatively presented in line with the objectives of the study. In addition, the researcher drew from the guidelines provided in the literature on ways of analyzing and interpreting data. The Chapter also presents a detailed analysis of the interviews as conducted in the participating schools.

#### **4.1 DATA ANALYSIS**

According to Mutshinyani (2002), data analysis comprises three concurrent flows of activity namely; data reduction, data display and the conclusion, drawing and verification. The three activities are discussed below.

##### **4.1.1 Data reduction**

Mutshinyani, cited in Dhlamini, (2009) refer to this process as the selection, sampling and transforming of the data that appear in written-up field notes or transcriptions. In the fieldwork of this study data was collected from post level one teachers. The researcher only used critical information which is in line with the objective of the study to analyze and interpret.

## **4.1.2 Data display**

Dhlamini (2009) considers the most important challenge to place raw data into logical, meaningful categories, to examine them in a holistic fashion, and to find a way to communicate this interpretation to others. It is in the sense that the author asserts that the process of analysis requires creativity. In this study a total number of 8 educators from 4 different schools were interviewed using the interview schedule in Appendix? Coding is used to describe the four schools as School A, School B, School C and School D. The codes T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7 and T8 are used to describe the teachers who participated in the research. All schools represented are located in urban, township areas. The contexts of the four schools are represented in the following section.

### **4.1.2.1 Context of the schools**

A brief detailed description of the schools that participated in the study is as follows:

#### **School A**

School A is situated in the Cradock District in the Inxuba Yethemba Municipality. The school has an enrolment of three hundred and seventy two learners and twelve educators, one principal and two Head of Departments (HoD). The predominantly spoken language in the school is IsiXhosa with English as First Additional Language (FAL) and also the language of teaching and learning (LOLT) for all grades. The school accommodates learners from Grade eight to twelve. The school has two Grade 8 and two Grade 9 classes. It is a no fee school, receiving funds from the Department to ensure the smooth running of the school. There is no library in the school. The school is serving both formal and informal settlements. The school commences at 7:45 with morning devotions at assembly with the singing of hymns and reading of the Bible. The school day ends at 14:30 for both teachers and learners

### **School B**

School B is situated in the Cradock District in the Inxuba Yethemba Municipality. The school has an enrolment of two hundred and eighty five learners and twelve educators, one principal and one Head of Departments (HoD). The medium of instruction is English for all grades with isiXhosa as the language that is used mostly by both teachers and learners. The school accommodates learners from Grade 8 to 12. The school has one Grade 8 and one Grade 9 classes. The school is receiving funds from the Department; learners are not required to pay any fees. There is a library but it is not functional because there is a limited number of a book. The school commences at 7:30 for teachers and 7:45 for learners with morning devotions at the singing of hymns and reading of the Bible. The school day ends at 14:00 for both teachers and learners.

### **School C**

School C is situated in the Cradock District in the Inxuba Yethemba Municipality. The school has an enrolment of five hundred and sixteen rand learners and eighteen educators in all. This school is managed by the school principal, the deputy and the three HoD's. The medium of instruction is English for all grades. The language that is mostly spoken by both teachers and learners is isiXhosa. The school accommodates learners from Grade 8 to 12, however, the classes are overcrowded due to a shortage of classrooms. The school has four Grade 8 and four Grade 9 classes. It is a no fee school, the school is receiving funds from the Department to cover all the needs of the school. The school commences at 7:45 with morning devotions at assembly with the singing of hymns and reading of the Bible by the teachers and sometimes with a local priest that is hired. The school day ends at 14:30 for both teachers and learners.

### **School D**

School D is situated in the Cradock District in the Inxuba Yethemba Municipality. The school has an enrolment of eight hundred and ninety seven learners and twenty educators, one principal, one Deputy Principal and three Head of Departments (HoD). The medium of instruction is English for all grades. The school accommodates learners from Grade 8 to 12. The school has five Grade 8 and seven Grade 9 classes, however

classes are overcrowded and teachers are complaining that they can't even move around the tables. The library is not functional because there is no librarian or somebody in charge and trained for the library. It is a no fee school, the school is receiving funds from the Department for the running of the school. The school has employed a special remedial teacher for learners who have difficulty in writing. The school commences at 7:30 with morning devotions at assembly with the singing of hymns and reading of the Bible. The school day ends at 14:30 for both teachers and learners.

During the interview process participants were also asked to respond to the demographic questions about themselves which included gender, age, number of years teaching experience and qualifications. In this study a total number of eight educators were interviewed using interview schedule in Appendix B. Table 4.1 shows the presentation of the number of respondents in relation to gender.

#### 4.1.2.2 Tables

**Table 4.1: Respondents in relation to gender**

<b>Teachers</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
<b>T1</b>		<b>1</b>
<b>T2</b>		<b>1</b>
<b>T3</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>T4</b>		<b>1</b>
<b>T5</b>		<b>1</b>
<b>T6</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>T7</b>		<b>1</b>
<b>T8</b>		<b>1</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>



Table 4.1 shows that the majority of the respondents that were interviewed were females.

During the interview process respondents were also asked to respond to the demographic questions which include the number of years teaching experience, qualifications and age. These responses are presented in the tables below:

**Table 4.2: Presentation in relation to the teaching of English First Additional Language.**

<b>Teachers</b>	<b>1-5</b>	<b>6-10</b>	<b>11-15</b>	<b>16-20</b>	<b>21-25</b>
<b>T1</b>	<b>x</b>				
<b>T2</b>	<b>x</b>				
<b>T3</b>			<b>x</b>		
<b>T4</b>		<b>x</b>			
<b>T5</b>			<b>x</b>		
<b>T6</b>		<b>x</b>			
<b>T7</b>			<b>x</b>		
<b>T8</b>		<b>x</b>			
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>		

The experience of two teachers ranges from 1-5 years, while the experience of three teachers ranges from 6-10 years. The experience of three teachers who participated in the interviews range from 11-15 years.

**Table 4.3 Respondents in relation to qualifications**

<b>Teachers</b>	<b>Matric</b>	<b>Matric+ Certificate</b>	<b>Matric+ 3years diploma</b>	<b>Diploma+ Ace</b>	<b>Honors</b>	<b>Masters</b>
<b>T1</b>					<b>1</b>	
<b>T2</b>	<b>1</b>					
<b>T3</b>			<b>1</b>			
<b>T4</b>				<b>1</b>		
<b>T5</b>				<b>1</b>		
<b>T6</b>						<b>1</b>
<b>T7</b>				<b>1</b>		
<b>T8</b>			<b>1</b>			
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>

From the data contained in Table 4.3, it could be deduced that the majority of teachers are qualified except for one teacher who is unqualified. There is also one teacher who has international qualifications. One of the teachers interviewed does not have any teaching qualification with matric as a highest qualification. Two of the teachers have matric plus a three year teaching diploma, whilst three teachers have a diploma and an advanced certificate in education. One teacher has honors degree in education with the highest qualification being the master's degree in education for one teacher.

**TABLE 4.4 Profile of respondents in relation to age**

<b>Teacher</b>	<b>20-29</b>	<b>30-39</b>	<b>40-49</b>	<b>50-59</b>
<b>T1</b>			<b>1</b>	
<b>T2</b>			<b>1</b>	
<b>T3</b>			<b>1</b>	
<b>T4</b>		<b>1</b>		
<b>T5</b>			<b>1</b>	
<b>T6</b>			<b>1</b>	
<b>T7</b>			<b>1</b>	
<b>T8</b>			<b>1</b>	
<b>Total</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	

The age of one teachers interviewed ranges between 30-39 years, whilst the ages of seven teachers range between 40-49 years.

#### **4.1.3 THEMATIC ANALYSIS**

The data for this section was derived from the transcribed interviews. The following are the themes that emanated from the questions and responses of the interviewer and the research participants: challenges experienced by both students and teachers in the teaching and learning of writing skills, the strategies that are currently used by teachers and strategies that can improve learners' writing skills.

##### **4.1.3.1 CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED IN THE TEACHING OF WRITING SKILLS.**

The following are the challenges that are experienced by both students and teachers when teaching and learning English First Additional Language.

#### 4.1.3.1.1 TEACHERS' PERCEPTION ON THE CHALLENGES FACED BY STUDENTS.

##### (a) Lack of competence

In this theme, lack of competency in English is seen as a major stumbling block for learners to develop their writing skills. Competency in English is regarded as a key component for the development of successful writing skills. The following claims are examples of how respondents made reference to this lack of competence:

*T5: M..... some are really struggling or they are not coping, firstly most of the learners English is not their mother tongue.*

*T6: First of all, English is not their mother tongue, as you can see they are speaking isiXhosa so their home language is isiXhosa, even in their communities, they are speaking isiXhosa.*

*T3: Learners problems number one, one of their problems it is the interference of the mother tongue.*

*T8: I think one it is e.....they don't have the basis of English.*

What is disturbing about the above responses is that learners who do not use English as their mother tongue struggle to cope with writing skills. The use of isiXhosa at home leaves a vacuum for the use of English and the improvement of writing skills. The claims made by the respondents are congruent with the views of Hart (1995) who reports that English Second Language Students seldom use English in their daily lives.

This lack of competency ultimately undermines learners' ability to comprehend grammatically correct in English. T1 makes reference to the weakness of learners to comprehend and their lack of a well-developed vocabulary in English when T1 says:

*Well, the problems that I've noticed are the fact that our learners lacks the skill of comprehend, also the fact that they don't have a well-developed vocabulary when it comes to English. They lack the skill of constructing sentences.*

This response alluded to by T1 makes reference to the difficulties that learner experience when speaking and writing in English. The responses made by the respondents are in line with the views of Shin (2006) that teachers reported feeling overwhelmed by the number of non-native errors in their students' writing.

#### **(a) Fear for making mistakes.**

The following is a vague reference to learners' fear for making mistakes when speaking or writing in English:

*T7: My experience is that they are scared, they are scared to venture out and to write more than what is necessary, I think that they are fearful that if they shine in class is not such a cool thing so rather be a mediocre.*

This responses seems to suggest that learners fear for making mistakes make them reluctant to interact and communicate in class. This is in collaboration with Engstrom (2008)'s view that students may be unprepared and reluctant because of inadequate schooling experience and competing family and work demands which leave them with no adequate support.

#### **4.1.3.1.2 CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED BY TEACHERS.**

It can be seen from the participant's views that they are experiencing many challenges

when teaching writing skills. Teachers complain about overcrowded classrooms, work overload, lack of qualified teachers, inadequate training on the new curriculum, lack of learner commitment, lack of support structures and materials, inadequate development of learners from primary school, and impact of social networks.

### **a) Overcrowded classrooms**

The following extracts are examples of how respondents refer to overcrowded classrooms:

*T6: Overcrowded classrooms is one of our challenge, learners are more than 40 in a class.*

*T1: Because of those big numbers of learners in one class I don't even cope with the marking.*

*T5: Again, overcrowding is one of the challenges.*

These responses seem to suggest that teachers find it difficult to give individual attention to learners in order to develop their writing skills. These claims support the argument by Leki (2001) that big classes create problems for development of writing skills.

### **(b) Work overload**

In this theme the respondents alluded to work overload which causes it difficult for teachers to spend adequate and quality time in the teaching of writing skills. This is how the respondents put it:

*T6: Overload of work because the Department does not want to employ*

*more teachers, you end up not having enough time to deal with marking which of cause is also too much because of the number of learners.*

*T3: Oh.....I must be very honest, like for instance I'm doing grade 9, they are 154 then you tell me how can I, I can't but trying to help them, I wish I could help all of them but I can't. We don't have time, there's overload of work.*

From these two extracts we learn that respondents do not spend adequate time with the teaching and marking. Mistakes made by learners are not identified and feedback to individual learners on how to improve their writing is not provided. According to Richards (2003) there are so many perceptions and expectations from the students with regard to the errors which teachers find them difficult to cater. Richards (2003) supports the view of individual attention and claims that some students want praise, others see it as condescending, some want a response to the ideas, others demand to have all their errors marked and others ignore it altogether.

### **(c) Lack of qualified teachers.**

T2 makes reference to the fact that she was not trained to teach English when T2 says:

*E.....m, I'm not trained as a English teacher but I'm trying my best.*

The participant's report is congruent with Engstrom (2008)'s view that student writing is exacerbated by teaching staff members who are at times under-qualified, under-prepared and inefficient. This is also confirmed by Chokwe (2011) that from the schooling system, there are still teachers who are not trained to teach subjects that they are teaching. According to Luna (2002) most of the blame is put on the students and none on the teachers.

The following is an example of how one respondent made reference to the use of

isiXhosa in teaching English. This is what T4 had to say:

*T4: You might find that some of the teachers, the content teachers don't use English when teaching them, they teach them in Xhosa and yet the learners are expected to write in English.*

This seems to suggest that the lack of qualified teachers to teach English result in the use of isiXhosa.

#### **(d) Lack of adequate training on the new curriculum**

It can be seen from T6 that teachers are not getting enough training on the new curriculum. This is reflected in the following response:

*T6: Our curriculum is changing time and again and we don't get enough training or sometimes the timing is not perfect.*

From the above quotation it is clear that teachers are not adequately trained on the curriculum changes. The curriculum change from the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) to Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS).

#### **(e) Lack of learner commitment**

From the following extracts we learn that the respondents claim that lack of learner commitment can be seen as a major challenge. Failure to do homework, poor school attendance, lack of culture of learning and group work pose major challenge to teachers. The following extracts are examples of how respondents refer to these challenges:

*T5: M..... sometimes if you give them a piece of work to do for*



*instance you are giving them something that like (i) homework, some will not do that they will copy from others.*

**T8:** *They don't do their homework.*

From these responses we learn that learners fail to do homework on the regular basis. Respondents also mention the poor attendance by learners as a problem. The following extract is an example of how T4 refers to absenteeism of students.

**T4:** *The learners bunk classes, they are present at school but they don't come in to classes so they miss out on those lessons.*

Two of the respondents indicated that they are experiencing problems when learners are using group work in class, students waste time when given tasks, they don't all participate and there is chaos in the class. This is how they put it:

**T4:** *I ask to do role playing, they enjoy it ,they enjoy it but the disadvantage is that they tend to waste a lot of time on that, and at times if you are giving them a task as groups you will find that some of them don't participate.*

**T2:** *Sometimes e.....m there is chaos in the class when they work in groups and e.....m some of the learners don't participate in their groups so e.....m, ja this is a challenge.*

Contrary to that, the Department of Basic Education (2011) argues that class discussions can be fruitful as long as everyone is involved. Therefore, there is a need to instill a culture of working together on learners and allow them to do more of group work.

Lack of culture of learning was cited as one of the challenges that teachers encounter when teaching writing skills. This is reflected in what the following respondent is saying:

**T7:** *Also at our school we don't have a culture of learning and I think*

*that's something that needs to be enforced in the school that there should be culture of learning people who do well should be congratulated.*

This is congruent with Engstrom (2008)'s report that students consistently said that high school was a waste of time, they learned little from the lecture mode of class delivery and spent few hours (if at all) studying. In addition, Jurecic (2006) argues that the reading culture has been eroded by television, movies, videos and games.

In reference to this theme the majority of participants maintained that students do participate depending on what the teacher does in class. One teacher reported that they participate better when they are given interesting topics. This is how they put it:

**T6:** *Yes, there are those few who really participate but you really struggle to get participation from all of them. For instance, if they are writing a task even if its five sentences they will write for the whole period so even the next day you will have to continue with the same task so what I sometimes do, I sign their books when they are finish then I threaten them that those who are not finish will stay in my class even in the next period.*

**T8:** *Yes I do, I do get more especially if I choose like I said if I choose a topic they are interested in but if I choose a topic that is boring to them so you'll find them they are not participating but I can read their faces and I quickly change the strategy or change the topic because what is important is for them to participate.*

**T1:** *Yes I do but you just need to monitor them whenever you have given them the task and set time for them to finish their work otherwise when you fail to do that, others do not do what they are suppose to do and they don't finish the task. To get their participation I sometimes threaten to chase them away from my class and go around their desks*

*checking for progress and it really works.*

The participant's views in this study are in agreement with Hegde (1990) that writing is essentially a process which involves students in learning process, motivates, builds their confidence, gives them an opportunity to explore the language, to communicate and to look for the best ways of self-expression. According to Wallace, Stariha, and Walberg, (2004) topics that a person cares deeply about, as a consequence of personal interest and investigation, may prove decisive for a fine writing and even lead to a life devoted to writing. Therefore, the findings of the study suggest that even free writing mentioned by Bello (1997) where students are given a topic of interest can be suitable for improving their writing.

T7 indicated that students love learning and that girls like school more than boys. T7 explains it as follows:

*T7: Yes, they love learning, they do there is no doubt about that, we speak and we laugh why they come to school, especially the girls there is something I've noticed is that the girls are far more into their school than the boys, maybe it's just the age thing or the gender thing.*

T7 pointed out that girls show more interest than boys with some reasons attached to that. The participant's view in this study is in agreement with Zamel (1983)'s statement that the use of various strategies in writing is affected by many variables such as gender, attitudes, motivation, cognitive style, self-confidence and the teacher's behaviour. Despite that, the Department of Education (2011) requires that learners be equipped with the knowledge, skills and values necessary for self-fulfillment irrespective of their socio-economic background, race, gender, physical ability or intellectual ability.

One respondent claimed that learners are passive and that result in teachers giving explanation in isiXhosa. This is what T4 had to say:

*T4: The learners are not really cooperative, they are most of the time passive they want you at times to even go an extra mile in so much that you have to express yourself in Xhosa at times.*

The last thing that respondent T4 alluded to is that, some of the students are passive because they don't understand the language such that the teacher ended up using isiXhosa to help them understand. This will make it difficult for teachers to apply the communicative approach recommended by the Department of Basic Education (2011) to improve student's writing because in this approach all learners are expected to be actively involved. However, the Department have suggested that language learning should be carried over into the classroom where literacy skills are learned by doing a great deal of reading and writing. Therefore, according to the Department the structure of each lesson should be one that engages the whole class.

**(f) Lack of support structures and material.**

In reference to this theme all participants claimed that they do not get any support from their schools because there are no structures in place to help in the improvement of writing skills. The following responses are indicative of this claim:

*T5: We don't have any in our school.*

*T3: Oh.....nothing whatsoever.*

*T8: There is no support.*

*T6: There is no support as such except when I have something I don't understand I will go to my Principal to ask for clarity and most of the time it's something that has to do with the policies not to improve writing skills as you are saying.*

This is in line with Granville and Dison's (2009) view that some students come from

educationally underprepared backgrounds. They even added that some students are coming from educational backgrounds where there are no libraries. According to Chokwe (2011) this under-preparedness can impact negatively on students' writing competencies, and in turn their ability to succeed in their studies.

The following extract is an example of how T2 refer to the lack of textbook.

*T2: Sometimes there are not enough English textbooks for each learner but then i make photostats for them or use another textbook.*

From this extract we learn that teachers find it extremely difficult to teach writing skills in English without the necessary textbooks.

#### **(g) Inadequate development in primary school.**

One of the respondents claimed that learners are not fully developed from primary school. This is how T7 puts it:

*T7: Inadequate development from the primary school those are the big challenges*

This response suggests that learners do not get a proper foundation on writing skills in primary school. This suggests that students cannot become better writers because according to Rose (2004) learners have to master reading from an early age.

#### **(h) The impact of social networks in the learning of writing skills.**

There were mixed responses on the impact of social network on the learning of writing skills. The following extracts are indicative of these responses:

**T5:** Yes, they do influence them a lot because the language that is used in these social networks, they are not writing the...the sorry! the required or expected English most of the time they are using a short version so it influence them a lot in so much that if they are given an essay they like to use that sms style or that mix it language if I may call it.

**T4:** E.....m, i think that one lies squarely in.....in the social networks, the blame is on the social networks because you'll find that in the social networks the language that is used there is not the same as the basic language so they end up not knowing what is the correct way of writing, they don't know the tenses in fact they don't even care about the tenses.

**T8:** I think one it is e.....they don't have the basis of English and secondly it's the slang that they are using, mix it, they write "you" as you as a second person they write "coz " instead of because so they are losing it because of those things.

The views of the participants seem to be in contrast with the Department of Education (2011) that a learner should have a great deal of exposure to the target language and many opportunities to practice or produce the language by communicating for social purposes. In this case, it is evident that there is a need for sweeping attitudes of people interested in language teaching and the need for a comprehensive vision to help in the adjustment to the demands of the new world as suggested by McAllister (2009).

It can be seen from T7 below that social networks impact positively on the writing skills of students

*T7: I think what it does it gives them the confidence to write the language, how they write the language is a different story, the fact that they are communicating in English and that they are reading English scripts and they are reading English instructions I think that is already a good thing. I feel that even if they do write an sms language but it's an English language at least something has been achieved we just need to shape and twig the correct spelling and the correct grammar but the fact that they are communicating in the language I think that already is a big plus and then it makes them brave.*

Contrary to what most of the respondents have said about social networks, T7 had a view that social networks have a negative influence. The argument made by this respondent is congruent with the view of Peters (1985) that teachers need to respond positively to the ideas that are expressed and the spellings that have been attempted before discussing how spelling could be improved.

#### **4.1.3.2 TEACHING STRATEGIES CURRENTLY USED BY TEACHERS.**

Different strategies were indicated by teachers. Teachers mentioned creative writing, sentence construction, different writing models, remedial work and functional writing as the strategies that they are currently using.

##### **(a) Creative writing**

In this theme, creative writing seems to be the most common strategy that the teachers are using. The responses shows that teachers differ in some aspects in the way they apply it, some do mark the draft and others do not mark the draft, they only mark the

final essay stating the problem of big numbers in their classes. Others let the learners brainstorm the essay topics on their own but the other one has indicated that they do the brainstorming with the whole class. Otherwise, they have all indicated that they do the feedback on the blackboard for the whole class. This is reflected in the following responses:

**T4:** *When I teach them essay writing I give them different topics to choose from, then I explain all of them and also give them the chance to brainstorm all of them so as to be able to know what is expected in all of them and they do that as a class, then one will choose an essay and start with his/her brainstorming or mind map again, they do their drafts and then they write the final essay at home. After that they hand in their essays, but I must be honest I don't have time to mark the drafts. After marking the essays I give them back with the errors underlined and some corrected, and then I do the corrections on the blackboard concentrating on the mistakes I have dotted down when I was marking. I don't call them individually because that takes time.*

**T1:** *I think one of the strategies that I've seen that it works wonders is the one of treating writing as in process it is just not a once off activity and (i) writing is not treated as a punitive measure, we should teach them first of all, we should brainstorm what are we going to be writing about we break the, first thing they should understand the essay topic, we break the topic down then after that we do it in class, we break the topic down after they have understood the topic, we then brainstorm and after the brainstorming we as the class, we agree on the points that we think that these points fit in our introduction, these points fit in the body and these points will be a conclusion and after that I give them opportunity to write in class. I give myself chance to read the drafts and correct the mistakes and then after that I give them to write the final draft.*

**T6:** *For an example, when giving them an essay, I give them different*



*topics to choose from, which I think it is important so that one can choose the one he/she is comfortable with, before they even start writing, you need to explain all the topics, let them choose the topic and allow time for them to brainstorm, we call that mind map, then they write their first draft and then after you can let them write their final essay. The draft need to be marked otherwise it's of no use writing a draft if it's not going to be marked otherwise they will repeat the same mistakes that they have done in the draft. After marking the essays, do the corrections even though they will be highlighted in their books but you need to do them for the whole class. If there is an outstanding essay, you need to share it with the whole class so as to motivate them to write good essays.*

The strategies mentioned by the respondents are in line with the views of Yan (2005) which emphasises creative writing, assessment and feedback. We have learnt that though teachers are unable to attend to the learners individually they have indicated that they give feedback. Meanwhile, Browne (1999) highlighted that brainstorming for ideas and recording provides a support for children when they are thinking about what to include in their writing. However, the idea of allowing the learners to write the draft first is supported by Hedge (1988)'s argument that rewriting gives students the chance to think further about the content and enable them to develop ideas from the previous draft in a subsequent paragraph in the new version. It also becomes apparent from their responses that some teachers see the importance of marking drafts though one respondent felt that it takes time to mark them.

It surfaced that some teachers give students different essay topics to choose from, which two of the respondents indicated that they first explain and one respondent who does not explain the topic. However, all of them indicated that they give their students the chance to brainstorm the topic, but they differ in that, two respondents allow students to do brainstorming individually whilst one respondent let them do it as a group. One respondent emphasized the importance of motivating the students by

sharing the outstanding essay with the whole class. Judging from the responses of the above responses, it seems as if creative writing is the most commonly used strategy. However, teachers differ in how they implement it.

From the responses of the respondents below it became apparent that marking of the draft is crucial. According to the respondents marking of drafts improve the final product. For example the respondents have stated that:

***T6:** The draft need to be marked otherwise it's of no use writing a draft if it's not going to be marked otherwise they will repeat the same mistakes that they have done in the draft.*

***T1:** I give myself chance to read the drafts and correct the mistakes and then after that I give them to write the final draft. To me that works in wonderfully because at least at the end of the day the final thing or the final product would be a better product*

These respondents explain how effective the preparation of drafts is in developing writing skills. They also emphasize the importance of the marking of these drafts. This is similar to Steele (2004)'s explanation of the process approach that drafts should be exchanged in the class so that students read each other's work and returned for improvements.

The impression the researcher is getting from the responses below is that teachers are giving the learners feedback and they regard it as an important part of the writing process. This is evident in the following responses:

***T6:** After marking the essays, do the corrections even though they will be highlighted in their books but you need to do them for the whole class. If we had small classes and time, then I would say it is important to deal with those serious mistakes individually because generalizing*

*the errors won't help them. I think giving them the rubric even before they start writing is also very important.*

**T4:** *After marking the essays I give them back with the errors underlined and some corrected, then i do the corrections on the blackboard concentrating on the mistakes I have dotted down when I was marking.*

**T8:** *Give a feedback, give a feedback now and again.*

These respondents regard feedback to learners as a very effective way to correct mistakes and enable learners to learn from their mistakes. According to Steele (2004) feedback should be provided after the students writing has been evaluated. Therefore, the views of the respondents support (Steele: 2004).

### **(b) Sentence construction**

Sentence construction is one of the strategies used by teachers but they seem to differ in the way they apply it. The following extracts are examples of how respondents use this strategy:

**T1:** *For example, the grade 8 what i usually do with them i always want them to write even if its two sentences per day, i instruct them watch the news the previous day, then the following day at least write two sentences.*

The strategy adopted by T1 is congruent to the view of Browne (1999) that limiting the learner's writing to few lines may help them to see that writing is manageable and help them to concentrate on the essential information they wish to include.

**T4:** *Coming to sentence construction, I think I have mentioned earlier on that I first let them do role play then let them explain what they were doing in writing. Sometimes I give them a picture and let them*

*construct sentences on what is happening in the picture.*

The strategy highlighted by T4 is in agreement with Browne (1999) in his statement that giving children opportunities to rehearse orally what they are going to write helps them to organise and order their thoughts. He further suggested that using sequence of pictures, individual words or captions helps to order children's writing.

*T8: Constructing simple sentences, you know those sentences with three words "my name is..." "I am going to town" and then we develop from there where we build sentences from there but if they don't know how to start with these simple sentences.*

This is in collaboration with Lantolf's (2000) view that students start with what they already know and can do.

### **(c) Different writing models**

In reference to this theme one respondent indicated that she gives the students different pieces of writing. This is what the respondent had to say:

*T5: Giving learners different pieces of writing because the pieces of writing needs different format for instance an essay is totally different from (i) dialogue and the dialogue is different from (i) diary entry so there must be (i) variation.*

From this extract we learn that the use of writing models to demonstrate specific writing skills promote learners' understanding of different types of writing. In this sense this strategy also helps teachers refine their sense of student needs in different writing contexts. This is confirmed by Wallace, Stariha, and Walberg, (2004) when saying that specific types of writing, such as poems and essays, may require specific lessons.

### **(c) Remedial work**

One of the respondents brought in the concept of remedial work. According to her students need to be given the chance to do more than one task until they get better understanding. This is how the respondent puts it:

*T2: E.....m, sometimes i have to do more than one activity on one topic for better understanding*

The strategy used by T2 is congruent with the views of Wallace, Stariha, and Walberg, (2004) that the more time students have to practice a skill, the better they learn. This is also supported by the Department of Basic Education (2011) when saying that the learners should be getting more exposure to English First Additional Language.

### **(d) Individual attention**

One of the respondents brought in the concept of individual attention. Judging from the response of the following respondent, it seems as if individual attention is very important and necessary in order to ensure that all students understand what they are required to do. This is how T2 puts it:

*T2: if learners are making the same mistakes i took them aside and individually help them until they understand.*

What the respondent has highlighted is in line with (de la Luz Reyers, cited in Shin: 2006) when saying that writing instructions must be individualized through teacher feedback on student writing.

### **(e) Clear instructions**

It emerged from the interviews that instructions that are not clear and questions that are not within the students' understanding contribute to the lack of proper writing skills on the students. This is how the respondent put it:

*T2: Some learners understand better when you ask in simple language and ask easy questions.*

It becomes apparent from the above response that teachers need to give the students clear instructions by using simple language that is within their standard in order to allow for better understanding.

### **(f) Functional writing skills**

T8 makes reference to functional writing as a strategy to improve writing skills.

*T8: I personally look at what the kids like most i look at what they like most, like i know they like topics about love, they like topics about luminaty, they like topics about the latest gossip or the latest news or the politics so i let them do those things that will make them write or do something and they really help me so that each and every one takes part, participate in class. Let me make an example of teaching them how to deposit money in the bank, there are emails, invitation cards, birthday cards, there are a lot of transactional writing they do but I focus on what will help them.*

This is in collaboration with what Bello (1997) believes may lead to Free Writing. Bello believes that learners should be given writing letters, letters of complaint or letters of advice to allow them to practice some of the types of writing that are useful in their daily lives. Therefore, learning how to deposit money as indicated by T8 is something that will

help learners in their daily lives. Besides, decisions about the strategies that are used will depend on the child's needs, and the support that is given will be differentiated to suit the child's interests says Browne (1999). Therefore, learners should be taught what is in their interest so that they can be able to participate in the class.

#### **4.1.3.3 STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE LEARNERS' WRITING SKILLS.**

In reference to this theme respondents suggested some strategies to improve the learners writing skills. The following extracts are examples of strategies alluded by teachers:

##### **(a) The basics of language**

Two respondents indicated that teachers need to go back to the basics of English and even use good English books to get a good foundation. This is what the respondents had to say:

*T7: Children should be exposed to classic books. I've noticed with my kids when we do Shakespeare very basic Romeo and Juliet and Macbeth that they are enthralled with the stories and if you tell them that the stories were written 500 years ago they cannot believe it because it's so relevant still even today but the language antics them because they are so exposed to American language and this whole new language is coming to them which is good proper English language, have a good foundation of language.*

*T4: They will be in a better position to write good essays if they know the basics*

The view of T7 support the statement by Wallace, Stariha, and Walberg, (2004) that students may need to read good and great literature that can serve as a model for their effort so that they can be good writers.

### **(b) Enrichment programmes**

One respondent raised the idea of enrichment programmes that must be in place to educate parents and learners who have the potential. To this effect this is what the respondent had to say:

*T7: May be that should be our enrichment program at school, is to educate the families as well of the children that has got potentials and possibilities not just them but all of them but I think specifically the ones that we feel has great IQ's, they can achieve a lot.*

From the above quotation we learn that there is a need for programmes that can empower both learners and parents in order to improve the teaching and learning of writing skills.

### **(c) Role play**

One of the strategies given by the teachers is a role play. This is how the respondents put it:

*T8: Teaching a poem is not an easy thing or not all teachers love to teach a poem but ask them to rhyme it, I'll give you an example, I'm teaching e..... "Mr. Cats and the ball" ask them to be Mr. Cats and so to be in a role play they love that, they love to show off acting or you ask them.*



*T4: If may be i wanted to teach them a dialogue, but i first give them the scenario and then we do role playing here in class after that i make them to write the same thing which i asked them to do.*

According to these respondents role play is a very important strategy that teachers can use to develop the writing skills of learners.

#### **(d) Co-operative learning**

One of the respondents brought in the concept of co-operative learning. According to her, learners must be given an opportunity to teach each other. This is what T8 has to say:

*T8: you let one teach another they might not understand you as a teacher but they understand each other very well.*

The sole purpose of co-operative learning is to provide learners with opportunities to learn from one another. This is congruent with Lantolf's (2000) claims that the children's' learning is extended into what Vygotsky termed the "zone of proximal development" through strategic instruction, collaborative construction of opportunities and active participation. Therefore, the idea that students must be given a chance to teach each other supports the claim made by Vygotsky.

#### **(e) Story writing**

Other respondents view story writing as being important in improving the student writing skills. This is what they had to say:

*T6: For example, let them write about their education journey, where*

*they will start from pre-school up until where they are, narrating everything, what they did, their challenges their achievements and so on so in that kind of a task they will tell you everything , take them into their real world.*

T6 view story writing as an interesting strategy to encourage learners to participate, develop and improve the writing skills. The idea is supported by Shen as cited in Myles (2004) in his statement that any appropriate instruction must take into consideration familiarity with writing topics and distinct cultural and instructional socialization.

#### **(f) Motivation**

In addition to the strategies for improvement, it has emerged that learners need to be motivated in one way or another. Teachers have indicated the following ways that can be used to motivate the students:

***T6:** If there is an outstanding essay, you need to share it with the whole class so as to motivate them to write good essays.*

***T5:** We must, we have to try to meet as the English teachers from all grades and even make competitions among the grades just giving them a piece of work to do and make a competition trying to motivate.*

***T1:** I think if we as educators we can focus on encouraging them to be good writers.*

From these respondents external motivation in the form of praise and rewards play a crucial role in the development of writing skills. This is supported by Wallace, Stariha, and Walberg (2004) when saying that teachers may not only conduct skilful lessons but also stimulates all students to become better writers, and identify talented writers for special encouragement and lessons. Therefore, competitions suggested by T5 can be used to motivate the learners who have done well in their writing. In this way, the role of

a teacher being a motivator that is indicated by Hedge (1999) will be fulfilled.

### **(g) Spelling and pronunciation**

The sense that the researcher is getting from what the respondents are saying is that they view teaching of spelling as important but they differ in how they think it must be taught. This is evident in the following responses:

*T6: I think when there is time, you should teach them spelling as it was done in the primary, even if you are going to write all those wrong words that are common and next to a wrong word you write the right one but I think, this can also help.*

*T8: the spelling most of the time you must use dictionaries and let them break down the words and then they bring it together so that it helps with pronunciation and spelling*

The idea of teaching spelling is supported by Peters (1985) when saying spelling in English is complicated and therefore, it needs to be taught carefully, systematically and sensitively. He recommended that children must be given strategies for remembering the spelling of frequently used words.

### **(h) Intertextuality**

It emerged from the interviews that reading and writing should complement each other. This is how the respondents put it:

*T6: Give them the chance to read because they can't write if they can't read, reading and writing will complement each other.*

*T5: Taking a book from a library that they can read during the class period and put whatever they have read in writing may be five sentences.*

*T7: I also encourage them to read.*

In addition to the above views T6 suggested that a reading period should be introduced in the GET Phase where learners are given opportunities to read. This is what she had to say:

*A reading period should be introduced in schools where every learner should read something not prescribed this time, in this way they will learn the writing styles thus improving their writing.*

This is in collaboration with Chokwe (2013)'s views that writing cannot be discussed in isolation from reading. According to (Rose: 2004) research has shown that the two complement each other. Contrary to that, it has been proved that a majority of South Africans who live in rural areas do not practice parent-child reading and that writing activities in schools tend to be regarded as secondary (Rose: 2004).

#### **(i) Practicing writing**

One respondent suggested that learners must be exposed to as much writing as possible including paragraph writing. For example the respondent indicated that:

*T6: I would say paragraph writing should be done frequently; learners should be exposed to more writing.*

What this respondent is suggesting is in line with Jurecic (2006) that students need more practice in using writing to explore ideas, develop positions, deliberate about problems and paradoxes, make arguments and think new thoughts about the world. In addition, Trupe (2001) recommended that students be asked to do a lot of writing in

order to incorporate process instruction in our classes.

### **(j) Interesting essay topics**

According to the following respondents teachers should choose interesting topics when giving learners essays. This is what they had to say about this:

*T6: Teachers should be careful when choosing essay topics, they must choose topics that are interesting.*

*T8: I choose a topic they are interested in. I personally look at what the kids like most i look at what they like most, like i know they like topics about love, they like topics about the illuminate, they like topics about the latest gossip or the latest news or the politics so i let them do those things that will make them write or do something and they really help me so that each and every one takes part, participate in class.*

T6 and T8 stress the importance of essay topics that are interesting and create excitement amongst learners. From these extracts we learn that when teachers use interesting topics learners' imagination will be pricked, resulting in active participation in essay writing.

#### **4.1.4 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The preceding section presented the data and findings. This section presents the discussion of the findings. The discussion of findings is embedded within the theoretical framework and literature reviewed in chapter two. I used the process, product and genre approach theories as the overarching frameworks for discussing the findings. The discussion of findings illuminates three important themes; however, with divergent

thinking with regard to strategies to improve writing skills different sub-themes emerged. In this section the themes referred to are: (1) challenges experienced in the teaching of writing skills (2) teaching strategies currently used by teachers to teach writing skills in English First Additional Language and (3) strategies to improve the learners writing skills. Each of these themes is explained in greater detail below:

#### **4.1.4.1 CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED IN THE TEACHING OF WRITING SKILLS.**

Associated with this theme teachers pointed to the changes experienced by learners and their own challenges in the teaching of writing skills.

##### **(a) Teachers' perception on challenges faced by learners.**

What surface quite predominantly under this theme is the lack of commitment by the learners, lack of competence in English First Additional Language, lack of basis in English and the fear for making mistakes when communicating and writing in English. In consequence hereof, most learners are reluctant to use English at all, which subsequently result in the inability to express themselves in a proper way, to comprehend in English and being unable to have a well-developed vocabulary. This aspect affirms Engstrom's (2008) claim that students may be unprepared because of lack of English language competency. Fear and anxiety associated with the use of English are major impediments to writing and comprehension skills in English. This leads to learner deficit in listening comprehension, impact vocabulary learning, reduced work production and lack of self- efficacy.

One of the significance findings emanating from this study is that English is not the learners' mother tongue. The language mostly used by learners at school and in the communities is isiXhosa, even when they are expected to use English. Hart (1995)

concur with this view by asserting that English Second Language learners seldom use English in their daily lives. He also projects that this situation will remain in the schooling context for the vast majority of South Africans for the foreseeable future. This makes it difficult for learners to cope with other subjects because English is used as the language of learning and teaching (LOLT) for other subjects. The findings of the study show that English proficiency is a great challenge to the learners.

Lack of basis in English result in low literacy standards among students. According to Chokwe (2011) this low literacy level impact negatively on learners writing competencies, and their ability to succeed in their studies. Schools play a significant role in the teaching of writing in English First Additional Language contexts and should provide a good foundation for learners to grasp basic writing skills which they will need to use for the rest of their lives.

### **(b) Challenges encountered by teachers by teachers.**

Associated with the theme of challenges teachers pointed to overcrowded classrooms, work overload, lack of qualified teachers, lack of adequate training on the new curriculum, lack of learner commitment, lack of support structure and materials, inadequate development of learners in the primary school and the impact of social networks in the learning of writing skills. Each impediment is discussed in greater detail below.

The big number of learners in class seems to be a prime challenge identified by teachers. In consequence hereof, teachers are unable to give individual attention to learners whose mother tongue is isiXhosa and to move freely around the desks for access to the learner when it became necessary. This is in contrast to Hyland's (2003)

view who supports individual attention. Lack of individual support and feedback subsequently results in the inability of learners to successfully comprehend and engaged in writing activities within the classroom. Work overload is viewed as a serious drawback that inevitably creates resentment to access learners' written work.

The view of learners as active agents in their own learning is also hampered due to a lack of commitment. This lack of commitment manifests itself when the learners fail to do their homework, absenteeism and the lack of participation in class and interaction with fellow students. Regular communication skills in English are subsequently inhibited.

What surfaced quite predominantly was the lack of support structures and resource materials. Teachers seem to work in isolation with no support structures within the school. In consequence hereof, teachers seem to be capable and capacitated to support one another. Coupled with the lack of qualified teachers in English, this leads to the inability of teachers to teach writing skills in English effectively. This negatively affects the student writing. This is confirmed in the theoretical framework where Engstrom (2008) says that the problem of student writing is exacerbated by teaching staff members who are inefficient. In addition, Engstrom (2008) contends that institutions that are serious about supporting learners' success and persistence of underprepared students must prepare the teachers not just the students, about what these students need to learn and succeed.

The findings are pointing to the fact that there is no adequate training taking place in schools on the new curriculum. The Departmental officials seem to fail in their efforts to conduct enough workshops or training to teachers with regard to the implementation of the new curriculum. This suggests that the development needs of the teachers are not taken into consideration. Lack of support and commitment on the part of the Department of Education is threatening the effective implementation of the new curriculum. Lack of



proper planning and incorrect timing when conducting workshops suggest that the tuition of the school and the needs of the learners are not catered for. Chokwe (2013) support this claim when explaining that the students' writing skills demonstrate a dysfunctional education system. To him, this can be attributed to a lack of quality leadership. The implication is that the Department of Education should start addressing these issues.

Furthermore, the findings of the study indicate a lack of teaching writing skills at primary school which implies that when learners are at high school, teachers will still be catching up on the foundation skills learners should have acquired at primary school. This backlog continues until learners come to higher education and this clearly indicates that the school system fails learners and also creates a huge burden on higher education. This contradicts the view of Moutlana (2007) that the low literacy standards among students should be an issue of concern in Education circles. Inadequate development of learners in primary schools can be attributed to the fact that teachers are inefficient and ineffective in their teaching due to a lack of qualifications as evident in the findings of the study.

One of the findings is that social networks are seen as having a negative impact on the learners' writing skills. Even though, an inference can be made that social networks can help in the development of writing skills. The findings of the study suggest that social networks will help learners to communicate effectively in English which will then give them confidence and boost their self-esteem to participate in classroom activities. This seems to suggest that when we constructively channel students' interests in social networks, we help them create sophisticated and agile communicators, skilled in a variety of both new and conventional literacies. However, inappropriate use of language in the social networks results in the lack of well-developed vocabulary.

#### **4.1.4.2 TEACHING STRATEGIES CURRENTLY USED BY TEACHERS.**

Associated with this theme teachers pointed to creative writing, sentence construction, different writing models, remedial work, story writing and functional writing. Each of these strategies is discussed in greater detail below:

##### **(a) Creative writing**

The study therefore found that creative writing is the strategy that is mostly adopted by teachers. Leki (2001) concurs with this claim when he asserts that in six different countries teachers are using process approach. Although, Wingate (2006) claim that many learners are no longer required to write essays at secondary school. There is a common understanding among teachers on how to teach creative writing, though they differ in some aspects. Findings also revealed that all teachers regard feedback as being important in the writing process, as it is one of the few interactions that teachers have with learners. This suggests that the quality of feedback that learners receive from their teachers cannot be underestimated. Based on the process approach by Kroll (2001) this is a very effective way of teaching creative writing. According to Kroll (2001) process approach focuses on varied classroom activities which promote the development of language use: brainstorming, group discussion and rewriting. He further explain that learners are not expected to produce and submit complete responses to their writing without going through stages of drafting and receiving feedback followed by revision.

### **(b) Sentence construction**

Different methods on how to teach sentence construction are regarded as important in order to allow learners to have a well- developed vocabulary that will help in improving their writing skills. Brown (1999) suggested that introducing children to the terminology of language, pointing out of letters, words and sentences will be helping children to recognize that words are formed through combining letters and that each word is separated from the next by a space.

### **(c) Different writing models**

The use of writing models to demonstrate specific writing skills promote learners' understanding of different types of writing. This strategy can be associated with Badger and White's (2000) genre approach. Badger and White (2000) sees the approach as essentially concerned with knowledge of language, and as being tied closely to a social purpose, while the development of writing is largely viewed as the analysis and imitation of input in the form of texts provided by the teacher. To them, genres are influenced by the subject matter, the relationship between the writer and the audience and the pattern of organization. They have mentioned a range of different kinds of writing which includes sales letters, research articles and reports linked with different situations. Furthermore, the genre and process approach theories offer a multidisciplinary approach and presents an innovative perspective that will assist teachers to overcome challenges with writing skills. It is therefore critical to consider the genre approach when teaching writing skills.

### **(d) Remedial work**

The importance of incorporating remedial work in all writing activities was also stressed.

This suggests that learners should be given an opportunity to do more activities in order to get a better understanding of the content. This is confirmed by Wallace, Stariha and Walberg (2004) when asserting that students learn better when given more time. They further suggested that teachers should promote language learning by lengthening classes, extending school days, summer school participation and assigning homework.

### **(e) Functional writing**

Functional writing was also cited as one of the strategy that teachers are currently using. This approach is similar to Free Writing which is highlighted by Bello (1997) as the approach which can be used to improve English Second Language learners writing skills. According to Bello Free writing is writing for a period of time in class in a topic of interest. The study has therefore found that the teaching of functional writing focuses on the child's needs and the meaning that learners write about.

#### **4.1.4.3 STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE LEARNER'S WRITING SKILLS.**

From the findings of the study, a number of strategies to improve writing skills were identified. These include the basics of language, enrichment programmes, role play, co-operative learning, story writing, motivation, spelling and punctuation, intertextuality, practicing writing and interesting essay topics.

### **(a) Basics of language**

What also surface predominantly was the fact that teacher have to go back to the basics

of English and use old good English books to give learners a good foundation in English. Wallace, Stariha and Walberg (2004) concurs with this claim when they assert that learners may need to read good, even great literature that can serve as a model for their efforts. The findings indicate that the foundation of language learning should begin in early childhood development that proper foundation in earlier schooling levels builds up to further levels. Furthermore, it will be difficult to acquire language basis later in life.

### **(b) Enrichment programmes**

Enrichment programmes for both parents and learners should be in place. Support should also be extended to the parents as well by empowering them with the necessary skills to help in improving the learners' writing skills. The study therefore found that the implementation of enrichment programmes in schools would be the first step in promoting English First Additional proficiency of learners, not only for English First Additional Language but also proficiency and transferring the skills learnt into other subjects as well. These skills are reading and writing, which are instrumental to effective and efficient writing competence.

### **(c) Role play**

The study revealed that role play can be used as one strategy to enhance the art of writing. It therefore suggests that learner's interests are being aroused by role play which creates a positive attitude towards writing and it also motivates them to actively participate in classroom activities. According to Brown (1999) this active participation could be seen when learners are given the opportunity to rehearse orally what they are going to write. He further mention that this helps the learners to organize and put their thoughts in order and that it can be done with peer partners. This is also regarded as an

important strategy which can be used to teach poems.

#### **(d) Co-operative learning**

It emerged from the study that learners must be afforded the opportunity to engage in co-operative learning. This suggests that we improve our learners effectiveness to read and write when we teach learners explicitly how to interact and support one another. This indicates that teachers need to help the learners grapple with new concepts by building classes on collaboration instead of competitiveness. This view is confirmed by Lantolf (2000) who asserts that children's learning is extended into the "zone of proximal development" through collaborative construction of opportunities and active participation.

#### **(e) Story writing**

One of the findings is that all learners have unique thoughts and language skills as well as personal experiences, stories and ideas worth sharing. Learners should therefore be encouraged to write those thoughts down. This is consistent with the findings of the study conducted by Wallace, Stariha and Walberg (2004) which revealed that learners can benefit from practice at writing about the results of their own research, as well as expressing their own feelings and experiences. The findings also suggest that teachers acknowledge the value of students' personal experiences and stories which promote the selection of topics for writing.

### **(f) Intertextuality**

Reading and writing emerged as an important theme in this study. Zamel (1999) supports the view when saying encouraging reading for pleasure instead of turning each reading into a written assignment is crucial for changing the perception of learners and to encourage and enhance their interest for reading. Reading is recognized by teachers as an important activity that can help students to improve their vocabulary, their sense of organization and creativity in their writing. The implementation of a reading period was also stressed. This suggests that a culture of reading should be inculcated amongst learners because reading feeds into writing. Parents, teachers libraries and the education ministry are important stakeholders who have a huge responsibility to encourage learners to read from a young age. This view is supported by Rose (2004) who states that parent-child reading is the first stage before school in the curriculum of reading skills. He found out that parent-child reading is not practised in rural areas. However, he suggest that for learners to become better writers, they have to master reading from an early age.

### **(g) Interesting essay topics**

The findings of the study reveal that learners should be given interesting topics when writing essays and that they must be motivated to do more writing in order to address the issue of improving skills. Wallace, Stariha and Walberg (2004) support this idea when explaining that giving learners topics that they care deeply about makes them to be devoted to writing. According to them, these interesting topics may lead to fine writing and life devoted to writing. They even added that the essay topics must be the ones that the learners are familiar with so as to arouse their interests. This is supported in (Shen as cited in Myles: 2004) when saying that the appropriate instruction must take into consideration familiarity with writing topics.

### **(h) Practicing writing**

It became clear that regular practice and writing exercises are imperative for effective and successful writing skills. Jurecic (2006) argues that learners need more practice in using writing. Yan (2005) warns against the practice of learners always writing for tests and teacher evaluation as it makes learners uninterested in writing. According to him this becomes decontextualized and artificial, giving learners no real sense of purpose or perspective of a target audience. This suggests that allowing learners to more writing and writing to different audiences will improve their writing. The findings therefore shows that there is a need to introduce informal writing activities that are not part of formative or summative assessment as students will practice to become better writers. In other words, more self or peer assessment writing tasks need to be incorporated into English First Additional Language curriculum.

### **(i) Spelling and pronunciation**

The teaching of spelling must be introduced in the GET Phase. It emerged as an important strategy if taught the same way as in the Intermediate Phase. In addition to this, teaching is emphasized on the use of dictionaries to teach spelling and pronunciation. The idea of teaching spelling is supported by Peters (1985) when saying spelling in English is complicated and needs to be taught carefully, systematically and sensitively. He emphasized that good teaching does not merely consist of correcting children's mistakes but helps them to avoid repeating those mistakes. His advice is that children must be given strategies for producing conventional representation of words and remembering the spelling of frequently used words.

### **(j) Motivation**



Engagement and motivation are key factors in getting learners to become best writers. This confirms what Wallace, Stariha and Walberg (2003) has found that great writers have often had not only their own writing ability but also strong motivation , inspiring teachers, informative literature and direct experiences, as well as exposure to skilful peers and fine writers. This suggest that all students can be encouraged to write as well as they are able. Similarly, teachers may not only conduct skilful lessons but also stimulates all students to become better writers, and identify talented writers for special encouragement and lessons. They further suggested that hearing and reading about the lives of great men and women writers and how they developed their talents may stimulate them and direct contacts with professional writers, such as novelists and news reporters.

#### **4.1.5 SUMMARY**

This chapter has presented and analyzed the data emanating from the interviews and the examined and summarized documents as presented from the research conducted in the four high schools who participated in the project. The chapter has made an effort to link empirical data with the literature reviewed in chapter two. The findings and the recommendations of the research will be dealt with in Chapter Five.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 INTRODUCTION

This final chapter concludes the study by providing a synthesis of the literature and research finding. A synopsis of forgoing chapters will firstly be provided. The key findings of the study are summarized. The chapter also provides a set of concluding statements as well as recommendations.

#### 5.1 SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTERS

The main intension of the study was to explore teaching strategies to improve the writing skills for grade 8 and 9 learners in English First Additional Language. Three objectives were formulated, namely (1) To identify appropriate strategies to improve the teaching of writing skills to grade 8 and 9 learners in English First Additional Language speakers (2) To identify the problems experienced by teachers when teaching writing skills in English First Additional Language. (3) To identify appropriate strategies that teachers could use to improve writing skills in English First Additional Language.

**Chapter one** introduces the reader to the importance of writing skills, the challenges faced by teachers and strategies currently used by teachers. Research questions were formulated; an overview of the research paradigm design and the methodology are described; the terminology is defined and the chapter concludes with the chapter outline.

The literature review in **Chapter two** was conducted on teaching approaches based on the following headings: process, product and genre approach.

In **Chapter three** the research design and methodology employed to investigate the research questions were discussed according to the following headings: research orientation, research purpose, research methodology, data analysis and ethics.

**Chapter four** provides a detailed analysis and interpretation of the data collected through semi-structured interviews.

The discussion of data collected is preceded by biographical information of the respondents in relation to gender, teaching experience in English, qualifications and age. This is followed by a thematic discussion and interpretation of the interviews conducted. The data to answer the research questions set in chapter one is discussed.

## **5.2 SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS**

The findings of this study are in response to the following research questions: **(1) what strategies are appropriate for the improvement of Grade 8 and 9 learners writing skills in English First Additional Language? (2) What problems do teachers experience when teaching writing skills in English First Additional Language? (3) what teaching strategies do teachers currently use in teaching writing skills in English First Additional Language?** The responses with regard to these research questions guided the researcher who came to the following conclusions:

The teachers are not getting any support from the school they work in isolation. Those who need support, they receive it from other teachers outside their school environment. In some schools, there are no HoD's to give support, whilst in schools with HoD's , HoD's do not give any support. Some of the problems encountered by teachers are compounded from a lack of culture of learning on learners, resulting in lack of commitment which involves learners not doing homework, poor attendance, and lack of participation. The findings of study showed that teachers are facing a problem of a shortage of textbooks as a result students in some cases share textbooks. Both learners and parents are not competent to contribute to the improvement of writing

skills. However, among various strategies suggested by teachers motivation, enrichment programmes and intertextuality were emphasized as important strategies that can be used by teachers to improve learners' writing skills. Creative writing was shown as the most commonly used and important strategy. When implementing this strategy, teachers are giving the learners feedback consistently as they regard it as the other way of interacting with them. They also emphasize the importance of drafts and their effectiveness though they sometimes don't mark them because of large classes.

### **5.3 CONCLUSION**

On the whole, the study shows that teachers face numerous challenges relating to writing in English First Additional Language. The teaching of writing skills in English First Additional Language was hampered, amongst other things by lack of support material and structures, lack of culture of learning and lack of proper training for teachers. This means that there is still a lot that needs to be done to improve the learners' writing skills. Students should be motivated to play an important role in improving their writing skills. Teachers who lack the skills should be also be given specific training in teaching writing skills. Teachers regarded process approach as being effective and important in the teaching of writing skills. The study not only suggested the need to for new language teaching approaches, but also suggested the need for enrichment programmes to empower both educators and learners to improve the writing skills.

### **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The recommendations of the study are as follows:

#### **5.4.1 Recommendation for practice**

- Parents as stakeholders must be involved and be equipped to assist children to practice writing and do homework at home. This can be done through enrichment programmes that must be implemented by the school or Department of Education.
- Schools and Department of Education must give constant support by providing the schools with enough textbooks and other resource material that will help both teachers and learners to improve the writing skills.
- Teachers must also be introduced to new methods to teach writing skills.
- Teachers must instil a culture of learning to the students. Writing competitions must also be introduced to motivate the learners to improve their writing skills. Where necessary there must be rewards in the form of prizes so as to motivate the learners.
- Drafts should be marked either by teachers or learners (peer assessment) as these drafts improve the final product.

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# **APPENDICES**

**STRATEGIC PLANNING POLICY RESEARCH AND SECRETARIAT SERVICES**

Steve Vukile Tshwete Complex • Zone 6 • Zwelitsha • Eastern Cape  
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02 August 2013

Ms Z Kalipa

50D Cawood Street  
CRADOCK  
5881

Dear Ms Z Kalipa

**PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE A MASTER OF THESIS IN EDUCATION: EXPLORING TEACHING STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE WRITING SKILLS FOR GRADE 8&9 LEARNERS IN ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE – A CASE STUDY OF FOUR HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE CRADOCK**

1. Thank you for your application to conduct research.
2. Your application to conduct the above mentioned research in the following three schools in the Cradock Education District: Matthew Goniwe Comprehensive School Raymond Mhlaba SSS, Phakama High School and Ekuphumleni Secondary School. The Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDoE) is hereby approved on condition that:
  - a. there will be no financial implications for the Department;
  - b. institutions and respondents must not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation;
  - c. you present a copy of the written approval letter of the Eastern Cape Department of Basic Education (ECDBE) to the Chief Directors and Directors before any research is undertaken at any institutions within that particular district;
  - d. you will make all the arrangements concerning your research;
  - e. the research may not be conducted during official contact time, as educator's programmes should not be interrupted;

- e. the research may not be conducted during official contact time, as educator's programmes should not be interrupted;
  - f. should you wish to extend the period of research after approval has been granted, an application to do this must be directed to the Director: Strategic Planning Policy Research and Secretariat Services;
  - g. the research may not be conducted during the fourth school term, except in cases where a special well motivated request is received;
  - h. your research will be limited to those schools or institutions for which approval has been granted, should changes be effected written permission must be obtained from the Director – Strategic Planning Policy Research and Secretariat Services;
  - i. you present the Department with a copy of your final paper/report/dissertation/thesis free of charge in hard copy and electronic format. This must be accompanied by a separate synopsis (maximum 2 – 3 typed pages) of the most important findings and recommendations if it does not already contain a synopsis. This must also be in an electronic format.
  - j. you are requested to provide the above to the Director: The Strategic Planning Policy Research and Secretariat Services upon completion of your research.
  - k. you comply to all the requirements as completed in the Terms and Conditions to conduct Research in the ECDoE document duly completed by you.
  - l. you comply with your ethical undertaking (commitment form).
  - m. You submit on a six monthly basis, from the date of permission of the research, concise reports to the Director: Strategic Planning Policy Research and Secretariat Services.
3. The Department reserves a right to withdraw the permission should there not be compliance to the approval letter and contract signed in the Terms and Conditions to conduct Research in the ECDoE.
  4. The Department will publish the completed thesis on its website.
  5. The Department wishes you well in your undertaking. You can contact the Director, Dr. Annetia Heckroodt on mobile number 083 275 0715 and email: [annetia.heckroodt@edu.ecprov.gov.za](mailto:annetia.heckroodt@edu.ecprov.gov.za) or [bernetia@iafrica.com](mailto:bernetia@iafrica.com) should you need any assistance.

  
**DR AS HECKROODT**  
**DIRECTOR: STRATEGIC PLANNING POLICY RESEARCH AND SECRETARIAT SERVICES**



**APPENDIX B**

1. In your view, why is the development of writing skills in English First Additional Language so important?

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2. Why do you think are learners sometimes struggling to cope with writing skills in English First Additional Language?

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3. What positive lessons have you learnt from teaching writing skills in English First Additional Language?

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4. What challenges do you experience in the teaching of writing skills?

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5. For the purpose of improving writing skills, what teaching strategies do you regard as important?

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6. How confident are you that good writing skills can be sustained by using these strategies?

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7. What challenges do you face in implementing these strategies?

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8. What support structures within the school are in place to support the development of good writing skills?

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9. What influence does interaction from the local District Office has on the improvement of learners ' writing skills?

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10. Is there anything you would like to share with me?

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## APPENDIX C

Annexure A: Consent form

University of Fort hare

### CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

**Title:** Exploring teaching strategies to improve the writing skills for grade 8 and 9 learners in English first additional language: A case study of four high schools in the Cradock Education District.

**Research Question:** What strategies will be appropriate for the improvement of Grade 8 and 9 learners writing skills in English first additional language?

**Purpose:** This is a research project by Zimkhitha kalipa which will be submitted to the University of Fort hare in part fulfilment of a Master Degree. This study investigate teaching strategies to improve the writing skills for grade 8 and 9 learners in English first additional language.

You are hereby requested to participate in the project as a respondent, and will be interviewed by Miss Zimkhitha Kalipa. Participation is voluntary, and your identification is not required, so anonymity is guaranteed. Please also note that the information given during the interview will be treated with the fullest confidentiality and your personal privacy will be respected.

If you agree to participate in this research project, please sign this form, but also note that you can voluntarily withdraw from the project at any time you feel so.

I agree to participate in the project

Signature of participant.....

Date.....

Witness.....

## **APPENDIX D**

### **PARTICIPANT F**

Interviewer: Once again let me thank you for granting me this opportunity to conduct this interview. I am a student at University of Fort Hare doing Masters. Basically I'm doing research and the aim of my study is to try and investigate teaching strategies to improve the Grade 8 and 9 writing skills in English First Additional Language. As I have mentioned when we met that the interviews will be recorded, I don't know whether you have any problem with that.

Interviewee: No, I don't have any problem.

Interviewer: I would also like to assure you that this interview will be treated with the fullest confidentiality and your personal privacy will be respected. The only person with the access to the recordings will be my supervisor and after they have been transcribed they will be deleted. Alright! Then I have few questions to ask and I would urge you to speak a little louder for recording purpose.

Interviewer: In your view, why is the development of writing skills in English First Additional Language so important?

Interviewee: I think these writing skills need to be developed because writing forms the basis of all other subjects, whatever they do they need to write, for them to be able to pass they need to write tests, continuous assessment and examinations not only in English but in other subjects as well. For instance, the language of learning and teaching here at school is English, they learn all other subjects except for isiXhosa in English. These writing skills will not only help them at school but in the real world as well, when they finish school, one might be able to be a book writer, a poet, an editor, journalist and so on. For instance, we have a child here at school in Grade 11, others are in Grade 8 and in other Grades, they can't write and as such they are performing very poor in all the subjects so a lack of good writing skill affects the learner not only in English but in other subjects as well.

Interviewer: Why do you think are learners sometimes struggling to cope with writing skills in English First Additional Language?

Interviewee: First of all, English is not their mother tongue, as you can see they are speaking isiXhosa so their home language is isiXhosa, even in their communities, they are speaking isiXhosa. They are not exposed in English, even when you say they must speak English during an English period, they really struggle so they end up laughing at each other as a result they don't want to practice. When you look at them they seem to like English more than their mother tongue because when they communicate in these social networks they use English or when they write a message they use English but the problem with these social networks is that, they use an informal language which is grammatically incorrect, which is not acceptable in English and as such they are writing in the same way. For instance if they want to write "good" they will write "gud" so the social networks is influencing their writing in a very negative way. Not only their spelling is affected but even the tense as well, what they write in these social networks does not make any sense for instance when they say "what are you doing?" they will say " wud" which means ' what you doing? ". Secondly, learners are lazy to write, if you give them work to writ, they become bored and end up not finishing what they are suppose to write. Even when writing an essay, they will write a very short essay. I always complain because instead of writing two pages in their essays, they write a page or even less than a page so they struggle because they don't want to practice writing. Because it is not their mother tongue they also do direct translation, from home language to English.

Interviewer: (Probe) do you think they get help from their parents?

Interviewee: No, I don' think so.

Interviewer: (Probe) in your view what may be the reasons?

Interviewee: One of the reason is that parents are illiterate, they cannot read nor write so they are not able to see what are their children doing at school, even when they are given homework they are unable to help them and as a result they don't monitor them so if you give them homework more than half of a class will not do your homework such that I have stopped giving them homework, most of the time we are doing our tasks here at school unless they need to finish something.

Interviewer: (Probe) do you think if parents had any contribution or were literate would help in improving their writing skills?

Interviewee: Yes, I think so.

Interviewer: (Probe) can you elaborate on that.

Interviewee: You know, I will make an example about myself, everyday I've got a duty of helping my child with homework, I always check his books and sometimes punish him when he has not done well, when he is going to write tests or exams, I will give him



other exercises from my own books so as to make him practice what he is going to write. I even motivate him by saying he must only get level 4 and 3 because he is still in Grade 4 and not get level 2 and, then if he did that I buy him something as a result he is aiming to get high marks and when he does so he feels great because he knows mommy is going to compliment him. What I'm trying to say is that we need to be part of our children's education and motivate them because some are demotivate, they don't see the value of education. Others will tell you that you can have money even if you are not educated and its true but you have to tell them the disadvantages of having money and being uneducated. You'll find learners in Grade 11 who cannot write, who cannot spell words and when they come to high schools they are not taught spelling and how to write, its something that must be done by the parents when they see that their children have not yet developed those skills. I'm trying to say parents should be playing a big role, even when a parent is illiterate, he /she has to motivate and ensure that homework is done.

Interviewer: What positive lessons have you learnt from teaching writing skills in English First Additional Language?

Interviewee: I have noticed that they are actually more comfortable in using English than their home language even though they have so many errors; some think English is easy as compared to their mother tongue. Even when you listen to them, like expressing themselves in English even when they are suppose to use their home language. I have also noticed that whenever they are doing a task in groups they perform better though it has got its disadvantages but group work improves their performance. They are also interested in tasks that are real or tasks that deals with real life experiences. For example, I sometimes let them write about their education journey, where they will start from pre-school up until where they are, narrating everything, what they did, their challenges their achievements and so on so in that kind of a task they will tell you everything even the ones you wouldn't want to hear so whenever you are teaching them, take them into their real world. I also noticed that they like to compete with each other so when I'm giving them essays, I will say I will choose the best essay and the one who has worn will be given a price even if its something small, it really motivates them even just by reading the essay for the whole class.

Interviewer: What challenges do you experience in the teaching of writing skills?

Interviewee: Overcrowded classrooms is one of our challenge, learners are more than 40 in a class, therefore it becomes uncomfortable for the teacher even to move in between their desks and when they are too many in a class, they become unruly, you can't even arrange the desk in a proper way or in a way that would allow for effective learning. Overload of work because the Department does not want to employ more teachers, you end up not having enough time to deal with marking which of cause is

also too much because of the number of learners. Learners do not come to school on pay days, Mondays and Fridays, you end up teaching half of a class and when you let them write a test, then others will fail because they were absent when you were teaching that particular thing. Teachers are not working together, for instance, I'm teaching Grade 9 and I don't know what the Grade 8 teacher and the primary teachers are doing and as such I assume that they have covered the syllabus. I don't know where to emphasize and its not easy to plan together because some teachers do not feel comfortable to plan with others. Our curriculum is changing tie and again and we don't get enough training or sometimes the timing is not perfect, sometimes even the facilitators in the workshops are not clear and therefore what we sometimes get from the workshops is not helping us. We sometimes feel it is a waste of time to go in those workshops.

Interviewer: (Probe) you talked about the timing which is not perfect, what do you mean?

Interviewee: Most of the time we go to the workshops during school hours and therefore the tuition is disturbed, may be a teacher becomes absent for the whole week.

Interviewer: (Probe) do you have any library at school or locally?

Interviewee: Yes, there is one at school, but there are no books that can assist the learners, in fact there is no teacher who is responsible for the library who can guide the learners when they want books so if you want them to go to the school library you have to accompany them as the subject teacher, mind you, you are not even familiar with the books that are available so it is there but its not helping. There is also another one in town and in the location as well but when you have send them in the library, they would bring the same information, it seems as if others don't go and copy from those few who were able to go there.

Interviewer: (Probe) do you get any participation from the learners in class?

Interviewee: Yes, there are those few who really participate but you really struggle to get participation from all of them. For instance, if they are writing a task even if its five sentences they will write for the whole period so even the next day you will have to continue with the same task so what I sometimes do, I sign their books when they are finish then I threaten them that those who are not finish will stay in my class even in the next period and sometimes I do that but it creates problems amongst us as teachers because the other teacher also needs them in his/her period. You end up not knowing how to punish them.

Interviewer: (Probe) are you able to attend to your learners individually?

Interviewee: Yhoo! That is totally impossible, as I have mention earlier on that our numbers does not allow for individual attention. Even after marking their tasks, I cannot do corrections in each and every learner so I do them for the whole class and I can see it does not work because they are repeating the same mistakes every time. There are serious cases of those who can't even write what is written on the blackboard nor their names and there is nothing I can do because I don't have time and by the way I'm not trained for such special cases. I think such cases need people trained on special needs who will specifically deal with those learners or learners need to be redirected to special schools but there is nobody to do that, even those who are employed in the District office to deal with those learners, they don't function and the learner end up repeating the same Grade for more than 3 years until he/she drops out.

Interviewer: For the purpose of improving writing skills, what teaching strategies do you regard as important?

Interviewee: For an example, when giving them an essay, I give them different topics to choose from, which I think it is important so that one can choose the one he/she is comfortable with, before they even start writing, you need to explain all the topics, let them choose the topic and allow time for them to brainstorm, we call that mind map. I think this stage is very important because they will never be out of topic if they have done their mind maps, then they write their first draft and then after you can let them write their final essay. The draft need ti be marked otherwise its of no use writing a draft if its not going to be marked otherwise they will repeat the same mistakes that they have done in the draft. After marking the essays, do the corrections even though they will be highlighted in their books but you need to do them for the whole class. If there is an outstanding essay, you need to share it with the whole class so as to motivate them to write good essays. If we had small classes and time, then I would say it is important to deal with those serious mistakes individually because generalizing the errors won't help them. I think giving them the rubric even before they start writing is also very important because it will help them to know what is expected of them, what they are suppose to emphasize on and what are you going to mark on their essays and the marks allocated to all the components like spelling, mind map, grammar and so on. Sometimes I give them paragraphs from books and ask them to identify the main sentences and supporting ideas in each paragraph. I also let them read articles from magazines and reflect on them by writing but you need to have a collection of magazines in class so that you can provide them with those magazines otherwise you can't tell them to go and find magazines, they won't do the task. I think when there is time, you should teach them spelling as it was done in the primary, even if you are going to write all those wrong words that are common and next to a wrong word you write the right one but I think, this can also help. Give them the chance to read because they can't write if they can't read, reading and writing will complement each other.

Interviewer: How confident are you that good writing skills can be sustained by using these strategies?

Interviewee: I'm quite confident that by using the strategies I have mentioned, good writing skills will be sustained. For instance, allowing them to do mind map when they are going to write an essay will help them have the correct vocabulary to use and to plan their work logically and as such they will have good essays with the introduction, body and conclusion. This on its own will help them in writing assignments even when they are in the tertiary institutions. Reading magazines would also add up on their vocabulary and improves their spelling. Magazines also increase their enthusiasm because they get bored easily so time and again you need to arouse their interest.

Interviewer: What challenges do you face in implementing these strategies?

Interviewee: I have mentioned that when they are writing an essay, they need to do their first draft but truly speaking it is not always possible to mark their drafts because of the big numbers, that's one of the challenge. Secondly, when they read in class they laugh at each other as a result they end up being shy to read. Sometimes I fail to underline all errors in their essays because I'm marking so many essays so leaving other errors unattended. These are some of the challenges I can mention. Lastly, most of them do not show interest in writing using English and are struggling due to a lack of practice and interest that is why you must keep on motivating them.

Interviewer: What support structures within the school are in place to support the development of good writing skills?

Interviewee: There is no support as such except when I have something I don't understand I will go to my Principal to ask for clarity and most of the time its something that has to do with the policies not to improve writing skills as you are saying.

Interviewer: (Probe) is there any support that you get from the HOD?

Interviewee: Not as such, but she is always willing to help not with regard to the improvement of writing skills.

Interviewer: (Probe) what about the SGB members, the parents component?

Interviewee: Not exactly but they are trying to maintain good discipline at school which of cause can have a positive influence on them in trying to improve these writing skills because if they are disciplined they will be able to listen to the teacher in class and do their homework.

Interviewer: What influence does interaction from the local District Office has on the improvement of learners ' writing skills?

Interviewee: There is no interaction as such except when they are coming to ask for workbooks, teacher's file and learner's files.

Interviewer: (Probe) are there any activities organized by the district that would motivate them to improve their writing?

Interviewee: Except for the competitions that are organized by the department, which are sometimes not helpful because they are being organized at the wrong time and we are given a short notice otherwise I think it was going to help learners.

Interviewer: Is there anything you would like to share with me?

Interviewee: I would say paragraph writing should be done frequently; learners should be exposed to more writing. They should actually be engaged in sentence construction as much as possible. Teachers should be careful when choosing essay topics, they must choose topics that are interesting. A reading period should be introduced in schools where every learner should read something not prescribed this time, in this way they will learn the writing styles thus improving their writing. The learners must be motivated to be writers, they must be asked to write poems. Teachers should let them compete among each other and not wait for the district or department to do these competitions. It is through these small things that we can get our learner's interest, they need to be motivated at all times because most of them do not get such opportunities at home, even to be bought something when they have done well. Let the learners speak English during an English period and be punished if they don't so and teachers to speak English with them, when they get used to this they are going to enjoy it. Otherwise there are learners who are capable of being good writers.

Interviewer: Thank you for your time, I wish you all the best with your learners.

Interviewee: Thank you!

## **APPENDIX D**

### **PARTICIPANT G**

Interviewer: Once again let me thank you for granting me this opportunity to conduct this interview. I am a student at University of Fort Hare doing Masters. Basically I'm doing research and the aim of my study is to try and investigate teaching strategies to improve the Grade 8 and 9 writing skills in English First Additional Language. As I have mentioned when we met that the interviews will be recorded, I don't know whether you have any problem with that.

Interviewee: No, I don't have any problem.

Interviewer: I would also like to assure you that this interview will be treated with the fullest confidentiality and your personal privacy will be respected. The only person with the access to the recordings will be my supervisor and after they have been transcribed they will be deleted. Alright! Then I have few questions to ask and I would urge you to speak a little louder for recording purpose.

Interviewer: In your view, why is the development of writing skills in English First Additional Language so important?

Interviewee: Well, I think that no development can take place unless the writing skills has developed and of cause English being a world language its important that children know how to write a sentence, how to construct a sentence and to carry themselves in a conversation in English. I think it develops them not just in an academic sphere but it also develops them as people. I think that by developing their writing skills it gives them confidence, it gives them thought patterns and directs their thinking, it develops their being and I think it develops their self-esteem.

Interviewer: Why do you think are learners sometimes struggling to cope with writing skills in English First Additional Language?

Interviewee: My experience is that they are scared, they are scared to venture out and to write more than what is necessary, I think that they are fearful that if they shine in class is not such a cool thing so rather be a mediocre and then they won't be put on the spot so children my experience is they don't want to shine because they think that the other children would probably make fun of them, also e.....m ja! I think that's fine.

Interviewer: (Probe) as you know that students are using social networks for example, mix it, face book and so on. Do the social networks have any influence on their writing?

Interviewee: I think what it does it gives them the confidence to write the language, how they write the language is a different story, the fact that they are communicating in English and that they are reading English scripts and they are reading English instructions I think that is already a good thing. I am very much fond of technology, I think it's a wonderful thing that we should embrace more especially with English because it's a world language there is such a vast amount of information in technology available for us that the children know and that they are comfortable with, their phonetics of their writing of cause is a different story but once again I feel that even if they do write an sms language but its an English language at least something has been achieved we just need to shape and twig the correct spelling and the correct grammar but the fact that they are communicating in the language I think that already is a big plus and then it makes them brave you know, but what we should not do is when we come back to school is break them down and say that its overwhelmed to write the language, the fact that they have gone into a phone and they access this thing through the whole English program that to me is already the victory, what happens in the program is something that we can work on.

Interviewer: (Probe) do you think they get any help from their parents?

Interviewee: I think e..... most of our children at the school, their parents are illiterate and the children here are far more educated than what their parents are, so I don't think that they get an academic support from their parents I think that they probably do not get any support from their parents and the parents also do not understand the necessity of doing well academically. I think that's one of the big problems and the idea at school is that we should also empower the parents through the evening may be evening classes and tell them what the kids are doing.

Interviewer: (Probe) do you think if parents had any contribution or were literate, would help in improving their writing skills?

Interviewee: Very much, very much because if the child and the parent could work together it could be really be an empowerment for the household, you know e..... the parents now rely on their children to go to the bank, to go to SASSA, to do all the forms because they understand that they can read English may be not read it very well but they understand the English because they are exposed to things like technology, American movies, Television whatever the case might be so ja I think so.

Interviewer: What positive lessons have you learnt from teaching writing skills in English First Additional Language?

Interviewee: I think that there's a wonderful wealth of knowledge out there amongst our kids, if one can just empower them enough to write their stories and to tell their stories and for them to see these stories actually in print and know that is their voice that have come out, I think is one of the most important things. In my class I encourage the kids to write stories, I tell them and ask them to do their stories and I explain to them that it should come from their heart and that they should have a certain structure, introduction body and conclusion.

Interviewer: What challenges do you experience in the teaching of writing skills?

Interviewee: The challenges of writing skills are that the kids do not understand the skills of writing. I think that the shortcomings probably come from the primary school, they understand the writing but they don't understand the finer nuances of writing and the finer nuances of grammar but once again things are being said and things are being written as they are experiencing so it's not necessarily wrong, we cannot expect the first world template to be put on to our situation in South Africa, we must adapt to our environment and we must also be accommodating but the story is important, the outlay is important and the structure is important, what happens once again in that structure can be twig and can be resolved in some way or the other or just a spell check on the computer.

Interviewer: (Probe) is there any interaction between you as a grade 8 and 9 teacher and the primary school teachers?

Interviewee: Not at all.

Interviewer: (Probe) how do you think it affects the teaching of writing skills in your learners?

Interviewee: I think it isolates you, I think it puts you in a disadvantage because you get children from a broad range of schools coming to our school and you are not sure what they have been taught, you see that there's a big discrepancy in the way they write, in the way they speak, in the way they answer but there is no correlation between us and the primary schools in actual fact I think we are two different worlds.

Interviewer: (Probe) is there any library at school or locally?

Interviewee: There is a lovely library at school that is not being utilized because we do not have a librarian, the community has a library, I often threaten them that I would take them to the library to take out the library cards but once again our time is spreading I teach over 250 learners in Grade 8 and the Grade 9's as well also huge classes so there is just no time for me to go and do that, I encourage them to go themselves to get the library cards, to get to know the library but once again we are sitting with a beautiful



stuck library at school and there is no one available to take care of that library and the school is also not prepared to invest in the payment or the department in the payment of the librarian which I think is a said thing, we can use that library far more effective, beautiful library stacked, lots of books its waste of space and the children love reading that is what we underestimate as well, they love books you know, we don't encourage them enough.

Interviewer: (Probe) do you get any participation from the learners in class?

Interviewee: Yes, they love learning, they do there is no doubt about that, we speak and we laugh why they come to school, especially the girls there is something I've noticed is that the girls are far more into their school than the boys, maybe it's just the age thing or the gender thing but they are and even the guys there is a hunger for them to learn but there is also a big resistance because they feel inadequate because they can't write properly and they can't speak properly and I think that puts them makes them quite they don't develop as they should and I encourage them, rather write something badly than not write at all, we can always work on the semantics later but be brave enough to do that, that is what I encourage them to do.

Interviewer: (Probe) are you able to attend to them individually?

Interviewee: I try as much as I can, I walk through my class, I try to mark as I said before, I have huge group of children that I teach, but I try get to know their names, I look at their papers so now at the end of the year I know exactly if I pick up their papers, this is the child, this is the potential so I try and be very much involved with their academic development.

Interviewer: (Probe) you have mentioned something about marking, do you cope with marking?

Interviewee: No, I don't not at all, I try if I can't mark at least I'll check their work, I walk through their rows, I make sure that they are doing what they are suppose to be doing, if my eye catches the spelling mistakes, where I can give advice I do so and I take a red pen and I just make a mark so at least I've checked that person but it is virtually impossible for me to go through all that marking.

Interviewer: For the purpose of improving writing skills, what teaching strategies do you regard as important?

Interviewee: I let them write essays, I let them write stories, I let them tell their stories. I want them to be comfortable in describing their lives and not feel ashamed or shy or inadequate when they are telling their stories and I also encourage them to read, I try and get them to, I always say listen to English programs, listen to the news in English

try and listen to good English music, get away from the American nice versions and try to go back to the good proper English but I think for me, story writing of your life, introduction your body and conclusion and to get the structures right.

Interviewer: How confident are you that good writing skills can be sustained by using these strategies?

Interviewee: I'm very confident, I think that it's possible to do that e.....m I think that the fact that we must encourage them to finish Grade 12 should be encouraging enough to continue with their reading and writing strategies but it's something that could have been continuously assessed and continuously empowered but I think that the strategies does work but it needs good leadership and needs good enforcement.

Interviewer: What challenges do you face in implementing these strategies?

Interviewee: Very large classes, inadequate development from the primary school those are the big challenges and also at our school we don't have a culture of learning and I think that's something that needs to be enforced in the school that there should be culture of learning people who do well should be congratulated, and we should enforce good behavior and that and we should complement good behavior and that we should try and get away from bad behavior, is seen as good, you know as long as you hit your wife or you and I see that in class the kids even amongst themselves encourage bad behavior and I try to make them aware of that if someone is naughty in class don't laugh at that person because you are encouraging that type of behavior so I think it is also the culture change that needs to take place, personal culture not race culture, academic personal culture that needs to change.

Interviewer: What support structures within the school are in place to support the development of good writing skills?

Interviewee: What we've done now at school is that we've enrolled our kids at a remedial program, we've got a teacher that we use we've probably find the teacher, we encourage the kids to go, we choose 8 kids from Grade 8 that we feel not necessary are not academically developed but we have choose the kids that are really struggling, some have potential but may be they are struggling with few B's and D's and things like that, that's the program that we do at the school at the moment and we started introducing it this year and I think the results are very good we've learnt a lot from the program ,how we should identify the children that can go on this program and also what should be, the outcomes of this program, we want to try and see if that would make a difference for them for the next five years if they get to the matric or at least get the Grade 9, so it's the private program at our school.

Interviewer: (Probe) is there any support you get from the HOD?

Interviewee: No no nothing.

Interviewer: (Probe) what about the parents?

Interviewee: Nothing.

Interviewer: What influence does interaction from the local District Office has on the improvement of learners ' writing skills?

Interviewee: That does not have any impact, we don't get any support from the Department that is why we have initiated this program ourselves, the Department seems to be completely uplevient to the crisis that we are dealing with at the school and that they are focusing on the administration and they are not focusing on the academic development of the children, in days past it was all about the kids, it's not like that anymore. I think it's all about payment and who gets which post and who gets the most payment so the kids are really being left out in this whole process but we don't get any support from them. We don't have any psychometric testing, there is no health coming to our school, we don't know if they are sick, we don't know what they are struggling with and it's not, I'm not a qualified health professional to make these diagnosis but I can see that many of the children obviously suffer from some kind of illness whether it's a physical or mental illness but there is something not right with them and it does impact on me certainly and on the class and then definitely on the child.

Interviewer: (Probe) are there any workshops organized by the District?

Interviewee: No, not for this remedial writing.

Interviewer: (Probe) are there any activities organized by the District to motivate the learners to improve their writing skills?

Interviewee: You know, sometimes we get a memo that says there is writing competition. I've sent some of my children stuff through, we don't get any feedback, we don't get any knowledge about this thing, we don't know who worn, what has happened, what the outcome has been, so I think from our side we have become so despondent because we know that we have to do a lot of work and then it just get lost in the system so from our side we don't do anything but the school try and do something that we are going to think about, for the future is that we have some kind of the internal writing skills development program because I think that could be more effective and maybe we can get better outcomes then send it to the Department. I send staff through in the beginning of the year, six best students who could write very nice essays and it's now going to November and we have not heard anything about that so we've given up on that but I also once again think that the culture of learning needs to be brought back into the school specifically in this school where there is no culture of learning and I think it

also has to do with leadership at the school, I think if we have strong leadership at the school I think that could change a lot for the school because the potential is there, we've got lovely kids here, really really nice kids, that does have a wonderful future ahead of them but they are not encouraged to do well, they are not supported to do well, that's why with their adaptation, what do they go back to when they leave the school, they go back to pain, they go back to poverty, they go back to so much abuse, so much alcohol abuse, sexual abuse so we don't know the value of what we do here, does it impact them at home? And then how does it impact them? especially a child that does not have the opportunity. He/she goes back to a parent that does not understand the potential they have here, how to grow that potential, so may be that should be our enrichment program at school, is to educate the families as well of the children that has got potentials and possibilities not just them but all of them but I think specifically the ones that we feel has great IQ's, they can achieve a lot.

Interviewer: Is there anything you would like to share with me?

Interviewee: Yes, my advice could be that, we should go and read the old English again, ok we are moving in the modern world and English has changed, it's developing and it's still changing and still developing but I've noticed with my kids when we do Shakespeare very basic Romeo and Juliet and Macbeth that they are enthralled with the stories and if you tell them that the stories were written 500 years ago they cannot believe it because it's so relevant still even today but the language antics them because they are so exposed to American language and this whole new language is coming to them which is good proper English language, so ja, ok I think reading better books, prescribing better books, get away from all this e..... I find them so ridiculous we have one book with Hiv story, I think they are so overwhelmed with Hiv, we should try and do something new, something fresh. Children should be exposed to classic books, I think they are so important because it gives you such a grounding of understanding literature and how literature is written, and that's my advice that we should go back to old classic books, have a good foundation of language.

Interviewer: Thank you very much, I really appreciate your time, I wish you all the best with your learners.

Interviewee: Thank you, I hope I have answered some of your questions but I was a little bit nervous.

