

**THE USE OF THE READING-RESPONSE JOURNAL AS A
STRATEGY IN PROMOTING WRITING SKILLS IN
FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING PHASE SCHOOLS**

BY

HLENGIWE ROMUALDA MHLONGO (19890210)

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Supervisor: Dr P. Pillay

Co-supervisor: Prof. S.N. Imenda

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Signature.....

DECLARATION

I, HLENGIWE ROMUALDA MHLONGO hereby declare that this dissertation, entitled: **‘The use of the reading-response journal as a strategy in promoting writing skills in Further Education and Training phase schools’** is my own original work and has never been submitted to any University for the award of any degree. All the sources used have been acknowledged in the form of references.

CANDIDATE’S SIGNATURE.....

CO-SUPERVISOR’S SIGNATURE.....

SUPERVISOR’S SIGNATURE.....

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my two sons Linda and Bonga Mthembu, my grandson Alindele Mthembu, my siblings Ntokozo, Alex and Mondli, my late parents Angel and Dominic Mhlongo for instilling the importance of education, and finally to my entire family for their never failing support and motivation.

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ABSTRACT

This study is aimed at investigating whether or not the use of the reading-response journal as a strategy can yield any positive results in enhancing development of writing skills among learners. The study was conducted as a case study in one of the Further Education and Training (FET) phase schools under uThungulu district, within the province of Kwa-Zulu Natal in South Africa.

It included verification of the FET phase learners' level of competency in writing skills. This was done through interviewing the English First Additional Language (FAL) teacher of the target class in the FET phase. The study targeted English FAL grade eleven learners since journal writing is part of their curriculum. The sample of thirty learners was conveniently selected. The qualitative method was employed for the collection of data; task-based activities and interviews were used as instruments for data collection.

This study is underpinned by the reader-response theory and it sought to; (a) find out the views of learners on the use of the reading-response journal writing as a strategy to develop writing skills, (b) to determine the learners' views on the intervention programme of the reading-response journals in the development of writing skills and (c) the experiences of English FAL learners as participants in the activities of journal writing. Learners were given three different tasks which required them to write essays. The findings revealed that learners are generally resistant to reading and writing. The learners also lament that it takes too long before the educator can bring back feedback on their written tasks, that demotivates them.

The findings also revealed that some teachers regard the teaching of writing skills as an optional task to do, yet it is prescribed in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) document of English FAL in the FET phase. In addition, there is resistance from teachers to use innovative methods of developing writing skills such as journal writing and diary entries, among others. Lastly, the learners showed significant improvement in their writing skills as they participated in the intervention programme. There was significant improvement in their individual performance from task one, to task two and task three. Finally, the study recommended that the Department of Basic Education officials should consider reviewing the pupil-teacher ratio for language teachers so that they can do justice to

the teaching of all language aspects including writing skills. Further research on other types of journal writing was also recommended.

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CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Caesar and Nelson (2013) state that numerous studies on how language is learnt and mastered show that literacy is a foundational skill needed to facilitate effective learning and communication. Caesar and Nelson further state that children who learn to enjoy reading will want to write and educators must endeavour to provide such learners with meaningful writing tasks to develop their writing skills.

Since literacy is considered to be essential to life-long learning, all learners need appropriate support in developing literacy skills (DoE, 2008). The development of a language is a long process that comprises many stages and includes various aspects such as reading, writing, speaking and listening. In teaching a language and developing communicative skills, educators tend not to foreground writing; learners also neglect writing especially under the rapidly changing conditions in the age of technology (Takala, 2013). According to Barrueco, (2012) learners have a negative attitude towards writing, viewing it as a time consuming activity which demands an immense amount of concentration and thinking. This attitude serves to exacerbate the problem of poor writing skills among learners. Therefore, it is essential for language educators to pay more attention to improving the writing skills of learners (Barzun, 1991).

Writing in response to a written text is a very demanding and complex task. Even writing a response to a simple text can require considerable effort and expertise. Zimmerman and Reisemberg (1997) and Graham (2010) state that writing is a goal-directed and self-sustained activity which requires the skilful management of the writing environment and a consideration of the constraints imposed by writing just the topic, the intentions of the writer and the processes, knowledge and skills involved in composing a text. According to Schults and Fecho (2000), writing entails more than what we think. It requires more than what we print on paper. It is also about understanding and linking information coherently so that it is communicated

appropriately to others. However, as writing is a social activity involving implicit or explicit dialogue between writer and reader; it is further shaped by the community of the writer. Writing competence in learners from one school does not ensure competence in learners from another; what and how people write is influenced by the cultural, societal, institutional, political and historical backgrounds in which they are situated (Brooks & Browne, 2012).

The implication of the lack of competencies in literacy skills is a cause for concern in educational research. Incompetency in demonstrating literacy skills, especially writing, by Grade 12 learners as stated in various reports is perceived in this study to be a reflection of a problem emanating from the lower grades. The ministerial report of 2009 states that learners in the senior phases fail to read and write properly (DoE, 2011). The introduction of the Foundations of Learning Campaign in 2008 by the National Department of Education is an initiative towards addressing the lack of competencies in reading and writing (DoE, 2011). The ministerial report is supported by the language curriculum policy which states that by the end of the General Education and Training (GET) band, a learner is expected to demonstrate the following competencies: to read and view for information and enjoyment; respond critically to the aesthetic, cultural and emotional values in texts; to write different kinds of factual and imaginative texts for a wide range of purposes and to be able to use the sounds, words and grammar of the language to create and interpret texts (DoE, 2011). In the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement, (CAPS, 2011) writing and presenting are part of the four important aspects of language skills. Journal writing is mentioned in the CAPS document as an activity to develop the teaching of language in Further Education and Training (FET) band. Journal writing is categorised in the aforementioned document under transactional texts. Journal writing provides learners with the opportunity to practise writing skills on a daily basis by writing texts based on their personal experiences thereby allowing them to be less formal as they incorporate their thoughts, feelings, and opinions into responses. Takala, (2013) claims that the journal entries may include amongst others topics of personal interest, questions and comparisons, evaluations of texts, predictions and comments about important people.

Learners' journal writings can connect reading, writing and discussion through activities that accommodate diverse learning styles and that further learners' language development (Asselin, 2000). There are various types of journals such as: dialogue journal, subject journal, personal journal, creative journal, reflective journal and reading journal (Gary, 2014). The researcher will focus on the use of the reading-response journal as a means of improving writing skills since this type of journal affords learners an opportunity to engage with both reading and writing simultaneously (Lyutaya, 2011). According to Johnson and Karns (2011) the interventions are considered according to learners' needs since learners come from a variety of circumstances. They further posit that English second language learners struggle with phonological processing and semantics. The above assertions show that classroom interventions should be designed to meet the learning needs of all learners with no differentiation according to specific needs. It is undeniable that some learners will need individual support to cater for their needs; some intervention will require an intense small group intervention and such interventions will mean that children are withdrawn from classes for specific intervention.

Irvin, Meltzer and Dukes (2007) point out that intervention provide learners with tools and strategies they need to make great strides in literacy development. Torgesen (2003) concurs with this view by positing that interventions are most effective when providing instruction on whatever component skills that are deficient as there are ample opportunities for guided practice of new skills. In South Africa, schools and classrooms are the only places where many learners have a chance to participate in English second language events and activities such as speaking, reading and writing. Therefore, learners need strategies that will assist them to face challenges of learning a second language as well as developing writing skills that are required to succeed in school and to confidently participate in any activities beyond classroom. The problem under scrutiny in this study is to find out whether or not the use of the reading-response journal as an intervention strategy for improving literacy skills can yield positive results toward strengthening the writing skills of English First Additional Language learners in Further Education and Training (FET) band schools.

1.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

According to Bowles & Osoln (1994) writing has been commonly viewed as a support skill used to reinforce the acquisition of grammar, as in grammar-translation method or to support memorisation of language structures as in audio-lingual method. They further state that teachers look at writing as a process, or a series of drafts, including prewriting, writing, and rewriting. Less attention to correction of grammatical errors, together with real attention to content, leads to better student writing. The establishment of theoretical framework for this study lies in understanding the importance of writing skills, interpretation of text through written responses after reading with comprehension.

Theories of second language education have evolved from the grammar-translation to the audio-lingual method to the more communicative approaches that are commonly used today. Ideas about how language proficiency develops and ought to be taught have also changed. Applefield, Huber, & Moallen (2001), explain that learning according to the constructivist view involves a meaning-making search in which learners engage in a process of constructing individual interpretations of their experiences. The researcher concurs with Applefield *et al.* (2001), that participants will be engaged in activities that among other things involve reading and responding to texts and giving their own interpretations. They will also have journal entries on their world and life experiences. They further posit that the constructivists' interpretive view holds that knowledge is not something that can be derived from the nature of a historically specific world, but rather through interaction with the world. The constructivists' perspective lies in the way knowledge is seen to actively build up and all experiences including all four language aspects i.e. speaking and listening reading and writing. It is on this premise that the researcher regards the cognitive constructivism theory as one of the theories that underpin the acquisition of a second language which includes development of writing skills. The researcher incorporated the constructivist theory through wanting learners to assume an active role in constructing from a textual perspective. I wanted them to respond to text according to a subjective sense of fulfilment as they were given tasks that required their subjective responses in answering the questions in the tasks.

The theoretical framework in which this study is grounded is the reader-response theory. This theory will serve as the framework to analyse students' writing skills in their journals. The reader-response theory gained prominence in the 1960s. The main tenet of this theory is its strong focus on the reader's reaction to a particular text rather than to the text itself. The researcher will use the reading-response journals to ascertain how learners interpret and respond to texts through writing. The reader-response theory emphasises the role of the reader as an active agent who imparts real existence to the work and completes its meaning through interpretation (Rosenblatt, 1994). The reader-response approach allows for the integration of reading, writing, speaking and listening skills because learners use energy to create something that they have a stake in by interpreting texts using their own voices and by gaining control over their ideas and language.

According to Carlisle (2000), reader-response theory in the English language class stimulates language learners to go beyond the first barrier of semantic understanding and move toward critical appreciation as they engage in writing by responding to various texts. Donnelly and Dianne (2009) posit that writing skills can be cultivated through classroom writing activities and they further state that when feelings are evoked through effective strategies of teaching, learners write above their language abilities. It is in light of these assertions that in this study the reader-response theory is regarded as the theory that influences its undertakings. Working within this theoretical framework, the researcher is curious to find out whether using the reading-response journals could be a strategy for promoting writing skills among learners studying English as a First Additional Language (FAL).

1.3 PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW

Farrah (2012) states that the use of journal writing enables the learners to read and write in an unconstrained way on topics related to texts that they have covered in a certain subject or any other personal experience they have undergone. He further emphasises that in journal writing learners interact with texts unimpeded by fear which makes them motivated and confident in their writing skills. Graham (2010)

concur with Farrah by stating that the practice of journal writing is a goal-directed and self-sustained activity requiring skilful management of the writing environment and it is helpful for learners' competence in reading and writing. Scholars like Leppanen, Aunola and Nurm (2005) posit that motivational factors such as opportunities to read and write, autonomy and choice in reading promote engaged readers who in turn display more positive self-efficacy.

The above arguments are seen by the researcher to be in tandem with what the study seeks to explore. The reading-response journal is chosen in this study to ascertain whether or not it has the potential of maximising learners' participation and motivation in reading and writing activities. Moreover, learners will be afforded an opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings through such journals without worrying much about spelling and grammatical errors.

There are various types of journals that can be utilised in the classroom (Hopkins G. 2010). A *dialogue journal* is a log or notebook used by more than one person for exchanging experiences, ideas and reflections. It is used at all levels of education as a means of interaction between students and teachers or classmates. A *subject journal* is a daily written record based on a specific subject or field. It provides students with an opportunity to explain their thinking about that particular subject and allows them to re-examine their thoughts by reviewing and reading their writings. A *personal journal* is a daily recording of personal occurrences, observations, activities, feelings, personal thoughts and reflections. It allows students to write about topics of their interest. A *creative journal* allows students to write in their own way and express their thoughts without fear of any outer or inner critic. It is filled with stories, exercises, humour and insight across all areas of journal writing. A *reflective journal* constitutes a way of thinking in a critical and analytic way about one's work; one writes personal comments about one's own work. The *reading journal or reading-response journal* is used by students to capture their reactions to books and various types of texts. They record their reactions to the reading after engaging with the text. The entries in the reading-response journal include responding to questions, analysing and reflecting on the poems, comparisons, evaluations, predictions, letters to characters and comments on the style of a written text.

Journal writing has been used for years at different levels in education and studies have been done on various types of journals with the aim of promoting writing skills. Kluwin and Kelly (1991) conducted a study on *dialogue journal* writing among the deaf learners to evaluate the utility value of dialogue journals in improving the writing skills of deaf writers who ranged from 10 to 18 years of age. The results showed that there was an improvement in the quality of the writing of deaf students. Borasi and Rose (1989) conducted a study on the use of the subject journal in Mathematics. They used twenty three students; who were given writing activities to engage in as means of encouraging them to love writing. The study sought to find out whether or not keeping a journal throughout a Mathematics course among college students can improve their writing skills. Students had to write three entries per week and journals were collected every Friday and returned on the following Monday with comments from the teacher. The results revealed that the use of a journal can provide a valuable means to facilitate learning of Mathematics. By reading students' journals, teachers received a wealth of information about their students and the course they offered which consequently improved their teaching. Furthermore, journals created a new form of dialogue between the teacher and each student, thus allowing for more individualised instruction and a supportive classroom atmosphere. Kok and Chabeli (2002) conducted a study with Nursing Science students and it sought to determine the students' perceptions on whether or not **reflective journal** writing promoted their higher thinking skills as they wrote in their journals during a six-month work-based placement. The study used a research sample of seventeen final year students and results revealed that reflective journal writing in clinical nursing education promoted reflective thinking, writing skills and learning.

The literature review shows that studies on journal writing have been done but most such studies were conducted on tertiary level students. The results have shown that journal writing can promote writing skills, thinking skills, and processes and beliefs about content subjects. To the best of my knowledge, no research on the use of the reading-response journal as an intervention strategy to promote writing skills at the FET phase level in South African schools has been conducted. Thus, the researcher has identified this as the gap that should be addressed.

1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The perennial problem of the lack of competencies in reading, and lack of interest in writing is a major concern in the educational domain (Graham & Hebert, 2010). South Africa is a multilingual country and it is expected that through schooling, learners will reach levels of proficiency in at least two languages and that they will also communicate both verbally and in writing in more than one language (Revised National Curriculum Statement, 2006; CAPS, 2011). The above statement confirms that learners are faced with two challenges which are; English Second Language acquisition, and development of writing skills in that foreign language. The poor demonstration of reading and writing skills by learners as indicated in various reports is perceived in this study as a problem emanating from the lower grades (DoE, 2009). Graham et al. (2010) further posit that intensive writing was identified as a critical element of an effective adolescent literacy programme. According to DoE (2012:5), Diagnostic Report on the Annual National Assessment (ANA) which is conducted for Literacy and Numeracy, the following are still areas of concern in learners' language performance:

- Many learners cannot read with comprehension, many learners are unable to produce meaningful written outputs i.e. they just write words and sentences without coherence, learners lack the ability to make correct inferences from the given information in a text and their knowledge of grammar is limited.
- The problem investigated in this study is whether or not the use of reading-response journal approach can yield positive results toward strengthening reading and writing skills among learners in FET phase schools.

The problem in the researcher's context is that she has been a teacher for many years teaching English FAL in secondary school. She personally never used the reader-response journal and knows from former my colleagues who are teaching English FAL that they have never thought the journal writing can be ideal for the development of writing skills. It is against this background that the researcher wanted to check whether this strategy can contribute in developing writing skills of learners.

The problem statement formulated for this study focuses on the programme of application or adoption of reading-response journals as one of the strategies that could promote, reinforce and improve learners' writing skills in English First Additional Language.

1.5 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to investigate the use of the reading-response journals as an intervention strategy to promote writing skills among learners in the FET phase schools.

1.5.1 Research questions

The following questions emanated from the formulation of the problem:

- How does the use of the reading-response journals as a strategy enhance the development of writing skills for First Additional Language learners in the FET phase?
- What are learners' views on the intervention programme of the reading-response journal writing in developing writing skills?
- What are the experiences of First Additional Language learners as participants in the activities of journal writing?

1.5.2 Objectives of the study

The objectives contemplated through this study are to:

- Ascertain whether or not the strategy of using the reading-response journal can promote writing skills of learners.
- Explore learners' views about the reading-response journal writing programme as a strategy to promote writing skills.
- Propose a possible model of journal writing that is informed by learners' experiences in relation to the improvement of writing skills.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study will benefit the Department of Basic Education officials, English FAL subject advisors, educators and learners. The Department of education officials could foreground the strategy so that educators would be more aware of its benefits. Learners will be motivated to practise writing regularly through journal writing and that could instil the love of writing and develop their skills. I believe the study will contribute to the strategies of enhancing writing skills. it would be useful to enlighten FET phase educators of English FAL on the benefits of using journal writing, they will also be motivated to implement its use.

1.7 DEFINITION OF OPERATIONAL CONCEPTS

1.7.1 Journal writing

Journal writing is a learning tool based on the ideas that students write to learn; it is a written record of one's thoughts, experiences and observations. Journal writing affords learners an opportunity to actively engage in their own learning and they have the chance to clarify and reflect upon their thinking (Hopkins G. 2010). Journal writing in this study means engaging learners in reading and writing in their journals and also responding to questions based on various texts.

1.7.2 Strategy

According to Killen (2012), a strategy is a plan designed to achieve a particular long-term goal. This operational concept in this study means a plan designed to bring about a desired future such as a solution to the problem; it also concurs with Killen's definition in aiming to achieve a long-term goal.

1.7.3 Intervention

An intervention is an act of inserting one thing between others in order to alter something, it is an action taken to improve something (Johnson & Krans, 2011). The

understanding of intervention in this study is in line with Johnson et al., it refers to an action that will be taken with the aim of improving writing skills.

1.7.4 Further Education and Training Phase

Further Education and Training (FET) phase refers to the phase of schooling in the South African education system consisting of grades 10, 11 and 12. This phase includes the post compulsory phase of career oriented education (Department of Education, 2002). Thus, in this study FET also refers to learners in grades 10, 11 and 12.

1.7.5 Reading

Reading is the basic foundation on which academic skills of an individual are developed. It is a process of mentally interpreting written symbols; and also it is an act of decoding and understanding texts for information and development purposes (Kucer, 2005). The understanding of reading in this study is in tandem with the definition by Kucer; it refers to an activity or practice that is regarded as part of learning by educators and learners.

1.7.6 Writing

According to Grant, Ralehala, Mlotshwa and Brennan (2006) writing is a medium of communication that represents language through the inscription of signs and symbols. Writing in this study means specific abilities which help writers put their thoughts into words in a meaningful form and to mentally interact with the message.

1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

1.8.1 Method of data collection

1.8.1.1 *Research Paradigm*

The researcher employed a qualitative research approach in investigating the problem. According to De Vos *et al.*, (2011) qualitative research is concerned with understanding, naturalistic observations and subjective exploration of reality from the perspective of an insider as opposed to that of an outsider as predominantly used in the quantitative research design. Bird, Campbell-Hall, Kakuma and the MHaPP Research Programme Consortium (2013:338) point out that, “the value of qualitative research in developing better understanding of concepts and behaviours in a particular context is increasing recognised among many researchers”. Typically, qualitative research is flexible, with very little structure and as Bird, *et al.* (2013) point out, “an approach that is too structured may diminish the opportunity for analysis to reflect emerging issues in the data.” Thus, considering that the focus of this research is on critical testing of a theory’s proposition, this approach was deemed appropriate for this study.

1.8.1.2 *Research Design*

The researcher conducted this study in the form of an exploratory case study which often examines a phenomenon that has not been investigated before and can lay the basis for further studies (Rule & John, 2011). The study used a time series design in order to ascertain if there would be any improvement in the writing skills of the FET phase learners if they are given a series of tasks using the same criteria of essay writing. A case study is regarded as a particular instance; it is a circumstance or problem that requires investigation. A case might be a person, a classroom, a programme, a phenomenon, a process, a series of developments, an institution or even a country. What makes it a case is that it is singular and distinct (Rule & John 2011). The researcher situated the case within a larger context but the focus remained on the case. The researcher chose one boarding school to use as an area of investigation because it was found to be a convenient sample that would allow access to the

participants even after formal teaching time. This also allowed the researcher to generate theoretical insights into the use of reading-response journals to develop writing skills among learners.

1.8.1.3 Target Population and Sampling procedures

The target population for this study was grade eleven in the FET phase. The sample was constituted in a boarding school in uThungulu district, specifically adopting convenience sampling approach. A whole class of grade eleven with thirty learners was identified. The identification of these learners was done with the assistance of educators teaching English FAL, the one who taught them in grade ten and the one who was currently teaching them in grade eleven. An instruction on essay writing was given to participants prior to the intervention programme. Unstructured interviews were also conducted before commencement of the intervention. The aim of conducting unstructured interviews was to get information on learners' practical experience on writing before engaging them into the intervention tasks. Structured interviews were also conducted at the end of the intervention in order to ascertain their improvement and their views and experiences of journal writing. All thirty participants were interviewed individually. Understanding intervention models by Johnson *et al.* (2011) gave the researcher an idea on the type of intervention to undertake for this study. The intervention under this study targeted all English FAL learners in the class of grade eleven. However, the class had more than one group, therefore, only one group was formulated through selection of six learners from each group of grade eleven classes. The learners were seen twice a week with one day set aside for reading and writing of activities, and the second day for feedback and discussions. These interaction sessions were done for a period of five weeks.

1.8.1.4 Description of data collection procedures

The instruments that were used for data collection in this study were the structured and unstructured interviews, and written tasks (task-based). The first objective was addressed through creative writing of short solicited essays, reading a variety of structured texts and responding to questions in an essay form by participants,

interacting and feedback. The second and third objectives were addressed through interviewing of participants individually after the whole process of writing tasks to gauge their views and experiences they had when engaged in the instructional intervention programme of journal writing.

Rubrics were designed and used as an assessment tools during the marking of activities. The rubric for each task was given to participants together with each task. At the end of these sessions the educators teaching English FAL in the FET phase were requested to be external evaluators in order to validate the entire process of the intervention and feedback sessions.

1.8.1.5 Data analysis and presentation

Once data was collected from the respondents in their journals, the analytic framework was employed which was the constructivist grounded theory. Different topics or themes were identified through looking at underlying similarities. Categories were named and analysis of data was done through descriptive coding of all data. The journals of thirty participants provided marks on different tasks. They were analysed using the quantitative method of analysing and interviews' recordings provided data to be analysed qualitatively. Therefore, both qualitative and quantitative research data analysis methods were used, such as statistics tables, narrative and thematic.

1.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS, ETHICAL PROCEDURE AND PLANNING FOR FIELD WORK

This study was conducted in the form of a case study. The following considerations were followed:

- (i) The researcher made all endeavours to comply with all ethical principles such as honesty, accountability, anonymity, privacy and confidentiality.
- (ii) The researcher entered into an agreement with participants which clarified the nature of the research and the responsibility of each party. It should be noted

that no isiZulu translation of the participant agreement was provided as the researcher wanted to ascertain the participants' competency in the English language.

- (iii) The guardians' or parents' consent was in both English and isiZulu; it was also administered since the participants were minors.

The researcher included an informed consent process which encompassed the following:

- The purpose of the research.
- Procedures used in research.
- Participant's right to decline to participate at any time.
- Benefits of the research and confidentiality.

The researcher also ensured that she acknowledges other researchers' works. With regard to anonymity and confidentiality, Wiles, Crow, Heath and Charles (2006: 1) opine that these two concepts are "viewed as akin to the principle of privacy" in-so-far as ethics literature is concerned. Further, Wiles *et al.* (2006: 1) explain that the need for anonymity and confidentiality is integral to "societal beliefs that individuals matter and those individuals have the right for their affairs to be private."

To assure someone of confidentiality means that what has been discussed will not be repeated, or at least, not without permission. The notion of confidentiality (and anonymity) is invariably raised and discussed with research participants prior to their participation in research. However, in the research context, confidentiality (as it is commonly understood) makes little sense. Confidential research cannot be conducted; researchers have a duty to report on the findings of their research and they cannot do so if the data they collect is confidential (i.e. cannot be revealed). What researchers can do is to ensure they do not disclose identifiable information about participants and to try to protect the identity of research participants through various processes designed to anonymise them.

The extent to which anonymisation is successful varies according to the research context. In this respect confidentiality cannot be assured as researchers can claim that

they will endeavour to ensure to the best of their ability that participants are not able to be identified yet they cannot promise that this will be the case.

According to Crow and Wiley (2008: 1) “the primary method researchers use to preserve anonymity and confidentiality is the use of pseudonyms for participants and also for the location of the research.” In this study, the participants’ anonymity and confidentiality was protected through the use of pseudonyms. Furthermore, the identity of the participating school was also not revealed.

In terms of ethical procedure the following steps were followed:

- (i) A letter requesting permission to conduct research was submitted to the Head of Department for KwaZulu-Natal Department of Basic Education.
- (ii) A letter was also submitted to the director of uThungulu district requesting permission to conduct research in a school within the district.
- (iii) A letter was submitted to the principal of the target school seeking permission to conduct sessions of journal writing which were reading, writing and feedback with the grade eleven learners.

1.10 SUMMARY

This chapter has introduced the field of study has also contextualised the research problem, the aim, objectives, research questions and elucidation of the key operational concepts. A theoretical framework of this study was briefly outlined. Preliminary literature review which highlighted types of journals and their contribution to the development of writing skills was also presented. In doing so it was envisaged that there would be a clear understanding of the parameters of this study. In the next chapter, a review of literature is presented.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a critical synthesis of literature on theories that underpin journal writing and their efficacy in influencing the writing skills of learners. Writing is an essential skill in the language development of learners, particularly considering that the development of a language is a long process comprising many stages and including various aspects such as reading, writing, speaking and listening. In teaching a language and developing communicative skills, educators tend not to foreground writing. Learners also neglect writing, especially under the rapidly changing conditions in the age of technology (Takala, 2013). In the same vein Lytaya (2011) posits that writing skills are an important part of communication. Therefore, good writing skills allow one to communicate his or her message with clarity and ease to a far larger audience than through face-to-face conversation. Lytaya (2011) also states that poor writing skills create poor first impressions and many readers will have an immediate negative reaction if they identify spelling and other grammatical errors.

In the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (DBE, 2011) it is stated that in order for learners to learn an additional language well, they require as much exposure to it as possible. They also need opportunities to write and make presentations while educators give them guidance continually. In the CAPS document (DBE, 2011) it is also stated that FET learners (grades 10 to 12) be given opportunities to write for interpersonal reasons to develop their imaginative abilities, to develop cognitive academic skills and to prepare for the world of work as they need to understand the purpose for which they are writing and to develop a sense of audience. Learners in grades 10 to 12 should, therefore, be writing progressively more challenging texts and must receive regular feedback on their writing so that they know where and how to improve.

For learners to write well, they need knowledge of different types of texts, wide vocabulary, good control of English grammar, spelling and punctuation and a critical understanding of the potential effects of their writing (DBE, 2011:15). What the researcher intends doing in this study is in line with the demands of the CAPS policy document on English First Additional Language (FAL), that is, engaging learners in journal writing activities, giving those texts that would require them to reflect and respond in writing and providing feedback to assist them in this writing process.

The main aim of this chapter is to explore whether the use of reading-response journals can promote writing skills in FET schools. To achieve this aim, salient aspects of the reading-response journal are discussed, and this is done in line with the research questions. Thus, this chapter presents a survey of literature for the purpose of addressing the research problem that was outlined in chapter one. In doing so, the chapter addresses the following:

- review of literature on the use of journal writing as a teaching strategy for the development of writing skills of English FAL learners in the FET phase
- views on the role of journal writing as an intervention in responding to learners' writing needs, and
- the experiences of learners in reading-response journal writing activities as well as what they benefit in the exercise of journal writing.

The chapter also presents empirical findings from studies done on the general topic of reader- response journal writing as a possible strategy for improving writing skills.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As theories of second language education have evolved from the grammar-translation to the audio-lingual method and to the more communicative approaches that are commonly used today, ideas about how language proficiency develops and ought to be taught have also changed. Writing has been commonly viewed as a support skill used to reinforce the acquisition of grammar, as in the grammar-translation method, or to support memorisation of language structures as in the audio-lingual method. Bowles and Oslen (1994), state that teachers look at writing as a process, or a series

of drafts encompassing prewriting, writing and rewriting. Underpinning this belief is the view that less attention to correction of grammatical errors, together with real attention to content, leads to better student writing. The establishment of the theoretical framework for this study lies in understanding the importance of writing skills and the interpretation of texts through written responses after reading with comprehension. The theoretical framework in which this study is grounded is the reader-response theory. This theory served as the framework in analysing students' writing skills in their task-based activities of journal writing.

The origins of this theory are rooted the field of literary criticism. It originates from the pioneering work in the 1930s of the literary theorist Louise Rosenblatt's transactional theory of reading. This theory places emphasis on the relation between reader and text while constructing meaning. Construction of meaning in the personal literary experience is the main characteristic when thinking of the connection between the reader and the text. The reader-response theory gained prominence in the 1960s. The main tenet of this theory is its strong focus on the reader's reaction or response to a particular text rather than to just reading and understanding the text. Although Rosenblatt is regarded as the main theorist to be associated with this theory, the Reader-Response theorists can be grouped under three umbrellas, namely:

- (i) **experiential** (Louise Rosenblatt, Wolfgang Iser and Hans Robert Jauss)
- (ii) **psychological** (Norman Holland and David Bleich)
- (iii) **socio-cultural** (Stanley Fish).

Reader-response theories foreground the reader. Rosenblatt, Iser and Jauss,(1994) consider the importance of both the text and the reader; Hollard and Bleich direct their energies to the reader's psychology, and Fish concentrates on the reader within the socio-cultural context. The reader-response theory emphasises the role of the reader as an active agent, who imparts real existence to the work and completes its meaning through interpretation (Rosenblatt, 1994).

Below is a schematic representation of five different lenses through which different theorists view and understand the reader-response theory.

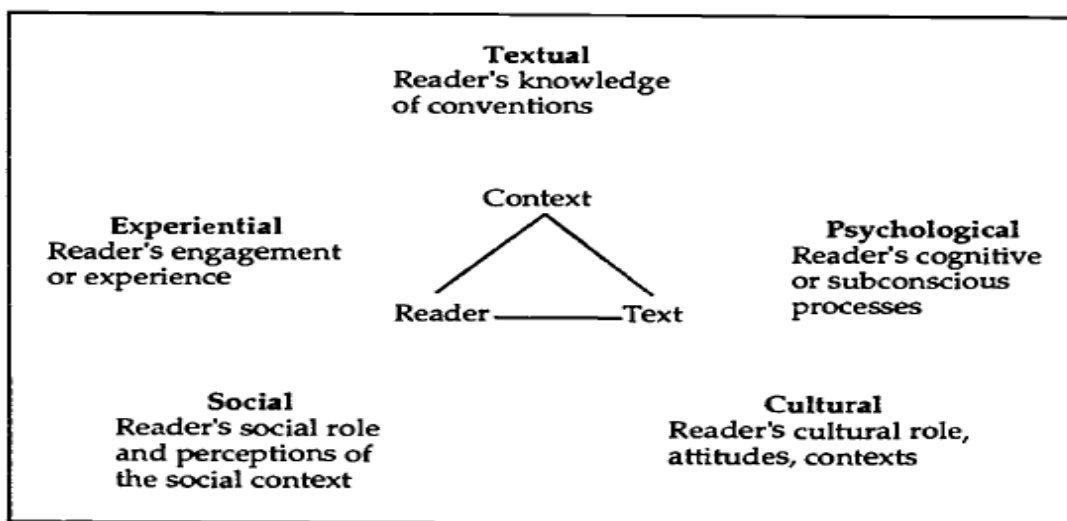


Figure 1: Representation of five different lenses of Reader-response theory

Figure 1 shows five lenses representing umbrellas under which the Reader-Response theory is grouped. Source: Beach (1993). A teacher's Introduction to Reader-Response theories.

These five perspectives or lenses illustrated in figure 1 present different angles that illuminate aspects of the reader, text and context transaction. These perspectives are briefly explained as follows:

- (i) **Textual** theorists focus on how readers draw on and deploy their knowledge of texts or genre conventions to predict the story outcomes or to interpret the story.
- (ii) **Experiential** theorists focus on the nature of the reader's engagement or experience with the texts, that is; the ways in which readers identify with characters, visualise images, relate personal experiences to the text and construct the world of the text.
- (iii) **Psychological** theorists focus on the reader's cognitive processes and how those processes vary according to both unique individual personality and developmental level.
- (iv) **Social** theorists focus on the influence of the social context on the reader's transaction which encourages a lot of open-ended responses.

- (v) **Cultural** theorists focus on how readers' cultural roles, attitudes, and values as well as larger cultural historical context shape responses.

In support of these five perspectives, Beach (1993) states that the different responses by students when responding to questions based on texts from various genres is because they apply all these five perspectives unaware. Each of the five theoretical perspectives serves to explain reasons for differences in terms of readers' responses.

The following are some of the reasons that make readers of texts respond differently:

- (i) Knowledge of text conventions (textual theories).
- (ii) Modes of experience (experiential theories).
- (iii) Psychological perspective (psychological theories).
- (iv) Social context (social theories).
- (v) Cultural identities (cultural theories).

These five lenses discussed above assisted the researcher to provide a variety of genres as tasks, which covered some of these five perspectives through the texts that were given to participants as part of their task-based activities. Those texts required participants to read and respond in writing. The participants' responses varied and the researcher realised that their responses were according to these perspectives though they were not told anything about them.

Rosenblatt (1995) whose theory emerged from her observations of readers in her university class declared that the text is merely an object of paper and ink until some reader responds to the marks on the page that can be read and interpreted. He pointed out that a written text does not have the same meaning for all readers, and that each individual brings background knowledge, beliefs, values, cultural expectations and reading context to the act of reading. Rosenblatt further pointed out that each reading event falls somewhere on a continuum depending upon the adoption of the reader of a predominantly **aesthetic stance** which refers to the reader's attention to what is being lived through during the reading event, whereas **effereent stance** refers to what is to be retained by the reader in his or her memory after the reading event. Rosenblatt (2005) also argued that in most reading there is not only the stream of choices and synthesis

that construct meaning, but there is also a stream of accompanying reactions to the very meaning being constructed. However, Rosenblatt's focus was on reading and retaining what you read in your mind and nothing to be written down in responding to the read text.

Iser (2000) came up with a development in the reader-response theory and argues that a literary text is an artistic endeavour that is re-experienced by the consciousness of the reader in an act of convergence with the it. He claims the existence of two poles in a literary work, that is, the *artistic* which refers to the text created by the author and the *aesthetic*, a reference to the realisation accomplished by the reader. He further states that adopting reader-oriented strategies could be pedagogically successful if aesthetic experiences are methodically incorporated in the curriculum, since the aesthetic stance is content driven. He also points out that the literary text motivates the readers to think more critically and to respond in writing. Reading and writing are closely linked as students write to explore and make sense of their reading in the course of forming more effective analysis of what they have read. This means that reading literature promotes better reading and writing.

Wilhelm (2006) in his exploratory study used a variety of story-based drama activities as an intervention to assist reluctant readers to experience participatory strategies and pleasures of reading. His approach was underpinned by the reader-response theory. These activities assisted reluctant readers to evoke textual worlds, to explore and express story understanding in previously untried ways, and to reconceive meaning making activity. Reader-Response approach was proposed as a viable way to assist in children with language learning difficulties.

Gallop (2007) cited by Anderson (2012) states that Reader-Response theory's emphasis is that in literary transactions, readers play vital roles as active interpreters of meaning. Readers integrate their past literary and life experiences with the world of the text and by using their imaginative powers. The literary text possesses no fixed and final meaning. Literary meaning is created by the interaction between the reader and the text. He points out that there is the *Implied reader* who finds out the determinate meaning of the text as well as the *Actual reader* who fills the gap in the text and also finds out the indeterminate meaning of the text. Reading and responding

to literature critically involve paying attention to the written text and its language, grappling with difficult issues and questions surfaced by the text. It also involves becoming aware of perspectives and other interpretive lenses other than one's own and seeing oneself, other than people and the world differently. Through writing in response to what one has read, individual's interpretations, their worldviews and interpretive lenses become public and therefore, open to reviewing (Park, 2012). He further pointed out that application of the task-based activities on the reader-response theory encourages a meaning seeking process and the development of higher order thinking and writing skills among learners of the language.

However, the reader-response theory has been criticised for its shortcomings; thus, the researcher goes for data collection aware of these limitations. This theory is criticised by Sipe (2008) for giving a subjective reading of the text as the reader is to interpret the text and give his or her own meaning and not every interpretation may be valid. It is also argued that if the text is not read, it is meaningless. It promotes uncontrollable arguments based on multiple interpretations among students. Smith (2000) criticises the reader-response theory for the horizon of expectations which means that there is multiplicity of meanings of interpretations in a text and these can be accessed by the reader according to his or her level of literacy competence. He further states that the author's original purpose and meaning of the text is undermined. The reader-response pedagogies have also been questioned for positioning reading as a solitary and private practice, thereby reinforcing the image of individual isolated reader.

During the year 2000 it was recommended that the reading of a text must be accompanied by a written response in order for other people to have a different view about the text. The adoption of reader-oriented strategies were also considered to be pedagogically successful if aesthetic experiences are methodically incorporated in the curriculum, since the aesthetic stance is content driven. From 2012, other aspects were added. It was suggested that task-based activities such as drama must be incorporated to reading and responding to the text in order to cater for reluctant readers. Currently, the reader-response theory is incorporated into the curriculum (CAPS for FET phase in South Africa) for transactional texts through journal writing where it is recommended that learners must be given tasks from a variety of genres to read and respond in writing. Again, the other aspect which is found to be informed by

the reader-response theory is creative writing of essays where learners are given topics or scenarios to read, understand and respond through the creative writing of essays as part of their classroom activities and assessment in language. Creative writing and its incorporation into classroom activities has been identified as the gap in literature reviewed on reader-response theory. There is no study that the researcher is aware of that explores its incorporation into creative writing.

Probst (1994) posits that the prescripts of the reader-response theory prescripts is that people who engage in reading-response journal writing should be those who enjoy reading literature, who read willingly and enthusiastically and who respond to it and think about it in ways that enrich their emotional and intellectual views. This theory emphasises the importance of writing pedagogy where the teacher avoids directives but instead facilitates students into writing fluently, using classroom activities designed to empower them over the writing act and taking control over their own prose. A technique of using reader-response based pedagogy is also of vital importance (Elbow, 1981). The reader-response approach allows for the integration of reading, writing, speaking and listening skills because learners use energy to create something that they have a stake in, by interpreting texts using their own voices and by gaining control over their ideas and language. What the researcher intended doing is in tandem with Probst's position, who further states that reader-response theory requires people to engage in writing willingly and respond to it in ways that enrich their intellectual views.

In a study that Adeyami (2008) conducted in the Republic of Botswana on the use of the reader-response theory through journal writing as an intervention approach in essay writing at secondary schools, the findings revealed among other things that teachers' approaches to essay writing were mainly product orientated and did not look at the teaching of all aspects to be considered when one writes an essay. Some learners who were interviewed as respondents in that study reported that when they were given a topic to write on, they panicked and were unable to write well because they lacked ideas or the vocabulary to express those ideas. He further stated that as a result of the above situation, it was believed that exploring and strengthening the reader-response theory to teaching writing skills would help alleviate the intractable problem of essay writing development at secondary schools in Botswana. Adeyami

(2008) also believed that the use of response based methodology would ultimately help improve the learning and teaching of writing in English language classrooms in all schools. This is because the use of reading-response journal writing as a teaching strategy that integrates extensive reading, discussions, individual responses and numerous interactive activities enhancing writing in particular

In summary, the reader-response theory was initiated by Rosenblatt in the 1930s. It was referred to as literary theory since it focussed on literary text reading and on giving on one's own interpretation. It is categorised into three umbrellas namely; experiential, psychology and socio-cultural. In the 1990s it was modified to reading, interpretation and keeping in mind interpretation during the reading event. The modification involved Iser Wolgan, Jauss Robert, Holland Norman, Bleich David and Fish Stanley who came after Rossenbalt as proponents of the reader-response theory.

A schematic representation of the Reader-Response theory is presented below:

TABLE 1: READER-RESPONSE THEORY SCHEMATIC REPRESENTATION

Reader- Response theory emerged in 1930 and gained prominence in 1960s.	
THREE CATEGORIES 1. EXPERIENTIAL Leading Proponents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Louise Rosenblatt • Wolfgang Iser • Robert Jauss 	PERSPECTIVES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both text and reader considered important
2. PSYCHOLOGICAL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Norman Holland • David Bleich 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive development of the reader considered important.
3. SOCIO – CULTURAL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stanley Fish 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concentrated on the reader with socio –cultural context.
TIMELINE <i>1930s -1960s</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text based only and the author is not acknowledged. • Text and reader important. • Reader is regarded as third party. • Meaning of text dependent on individual interpretation.
<i>1990s</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading and interpretation of text valued. • Reality exists in reader's mind. • Text that is not read is meaningless. • Main focus on reading with understanding.
<i>2000s</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading of text to be accompanied by written responses. • Adoption of reader- oriented teaching strategies. • Strategies pedagogically considered. • Aesthetic experiences methodically incorporated in the curriculum.
<i>2012- to date</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task- based activities related to drama, poetry and short stories. • Task –based activities catered for reluctant readers. • Incorporation of reader –response theory into the curriculum for reading and writing.

The prescripts of this theory inform the researcher on how to engage with learners in the activities of journal writing in order to ascertain whether or not that can develop their appropriate writing skills. The researcher uses the reading-response journal writing technique to ascertain how learners interpret and respond to various texts. The reader-response theory emphasises that when a reader reads, he or she needs to understand the text and give his or her own interpretation. This is in line with the research methods used in this study, whereby the researcher allowed participants to

write freely in journals without any fear or anxiety that their writing will be judged negatively by the teacher. Learners were given tasks that were based on their prescribed English genres such as short story books, drama and poetry. These texts were intended to activate their critical thinking as they responded to texts in the form of essay writing.

The following section is presented in line with the research questions and will be divided into subsections covering the following:

(i) the use of journal writing as a teaching strategy for the development of writing skills of English FAL learners.

(ii) the views on the role of journal writing as an intervention strategy in responding to learners' writing needs and

(iii) the experiences of learners in their participation in reading-response journal writing activities.

2.3 THE USE OF JOURNAL WRITING AS A TEACHING STRATEGY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF WRITING SKILLS OF ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS

The continuous implications of the problem of the lack of competencies in reading and writing skills among high school learners is a concern in educational research. This is contained in the ministerial report of 2009 that learners in the senior phase fail to read and write properly. The introduction of the Foundations of Learning Campaign in 2008 by the Department of Education is one of the initiatives towards addressing the issue of the lack of competencies in reading and writing (DoE, 2009). The language curriculum policy states that by the end of the General Education and Training (GET) band, DoE, a learner is expected to demonstrate the following competencies:

To read and view for information and enjoyment, respond critically to the aesthetic, cultural and emotional values in texts, to write different kinds of factual and imaginative texts for a wide range of purposes, and to be able to use the sounds, words and grammar of the language to create and interpret texts (DoE, 2009: 36-40).

What this study sought to find out about is in line with the statement in the language curriculum policy, that is, the possibility of the use of reading-response journals as a teaching strategy to develop writing skills among FET phase learners. Hosking (2014) states that it is undeniable that many people are born with writing talent, but talent without technical development is tantamount to not having it, if it is without any instructions on how to build it. However, some learners are able to develop the language to get to a level where they can competently engage their views and ideas in writing even beyond the classroom. It should be noted that developing good writing skills may not fast-track you to higher positions, but it can give you a distinct competitive edge. Taylor and Coetzee (2013) add that we write to exercise our creativity, to share what we know with as many people as possible and to entertain readers who appreciate the ability to play with words. They further opine that everyone has the capacity to write, writing can be taught and teachers can help students become better writers. Writing, like most things in life, gets easier with practice.

2.3.1 Development of writing skills

Development of writing skills cannot be seen as something that an individual can spontaneously acquire, it needs some strategies and practice. According to Omego (2014), language is crucial to human existence and it stands at the centre of human affairs. It is of fundamental importance as it conveys ideas, desires and emotions of individuals. He further states that the importance of language as a vehicle of human communication has underscored the kind of attention given to its acquisition and development in a child. Omego's (2014) emphasises the importance of language and he endorses the idea that second language development amongst learners empowers them with the ability to communicate and convey their ideas, desires and emotions.

Chang (2012) states that second language refers to any language learned in addition to a person's mother tongue language. It can also be named second language acquisition and it can incorporate the learning of a third, a fourth or a subsequent language. The language acquisition refers to the process whereby the child naturally masters a language without necessarily learning it in the sense of receiving instruction. It is what learners do to acquire the language and not necessarily to getting formal instructions in language teaching (Chang, 2012).

The aforementioned statement concurs with the intention of the researcher to focus on language development strategies and not on language acquisition as acquisition may not require formal instruction and practice in the classroom. The reader-response theory emphasises language development as compared to language acquisition. It states that the readers need to have a particular level of literacy competence in order to read and interpret texts. Therefore, various language development classroom activities are encouraged (Smith, 2000).

The National Education Policy Act (No. 27 of 1996) and the South African Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996), has in its current Language-in-Education Policy (LiEP) as its underlying principle, the maintenance of home language while providing access to and the effective acquisition of an additional language. Chang's (2012) argument is in line with the LiEP in saying that mother tongue language acquisition is spontaneous, and children learn the second language when they have already mastered their home language. It is explicitly stated in the LiEP that home language should not be abandoned early in schools because children acquire a second language through understanding of their mother tongue. Practically, there is a feeling that the home language is abandoned too early in schools whilst at the same time there is a premature reliance on a new additional language which compromises its effectiveness as a language of teaching and learning. As such, it is predicted that if learners miss out on age-appropriate reading and writing development, it will result in poor literacy and language proficiency which will cost them their equitable and rightful access to personal opportunities and a promising brighter future. Furthermore, the overall results of learners whose home language and instructional languages have been compromised simultaneously show low educational achievement which includes poor

writing competence throughout the school life of a child (Department of Basic Education, (DBE, 2012).

Prinsloo and Heugh (2013) in their policy brief study, observe that it is alarming that a large number of learners in South Africa cannot read and write competently. The Annual National Assessment (ANA) results show that the majority of learners are failing to obtain a mark of at least 50% in language (DBE, 2012). This LiEP, in principle, further argues that the indispensable role of literacy and language acquisition as the building blocks of further learning, personal wellbeing and economic opportunity should be taken seriously by the education officials. The researcher concurs with the aforementioned position by Prinsloo and Heugh (2013) in the sense that without proper language acquisition the ability to write appropriately is not possible. Learners need to get adequate opportunities in the classroom to practise writing skills in a second language development.

A study done by Omega (2014) in Nigeria looked at the influence of the environment on a child's acquisition of English as a second language. Omega asserts that a child is not born blank; rather he or she has the linguistic predisposition to acquire the language of his or her community. He further states that the child does not learn the language at once; the language development occurs in stages. The study revealed that the majority of children express themselves in English both in class, at home and at play, and that English is used as a language of teaching and learning. These findings raised concerns in Nigeria and were viewed as a challenge that may lead to the death of the mother tongue language if children speak a second language even in their play environment. The study concluded that the environment was a strong influence in a child's second language acquisition (Omega, 2014). The researcher attempts to allay the concerns of the Nigerian community in saying that the strategies implemented for the development of a second language should not be seen as an action that aims at replacing the importance of mother tongue languages.

Prinsloo and Heugh (2013) also posit that reading and writing are part of a continuum. Learning to read and write different genres of texts for different purposes should not be separated. The absence of writing opportunities to accompany reading results not only in poor writing, but also in poor reading development. The occasional one-word

answer or part of a word written in an exercise book is completely inadequate and will never result in proficient writing. Some of the findings in their study portrayed particular implications for strengthening the participation of stakeholders at all layers of schooling, some of the implications identified are:

- (i) *Curriculum management and delivery.*
- (ii) *Teacher training for appropriate language subject.*
- (iii) *Effective use of time to expose learners to enough substantive and extended writing.*
- (iv) *Access and quality of resources including text books and decisions by school governing bodies about school language policy.*

In achieving the objectives outlined above, the schooling system has to abandon inefficient, unproductive and self-defeating practices, such as, the inability of teachers to teach writing skills and ignoring curriculum prescripts because of their incompetence in second language teaching (Howie, Tsele, Dowse & Zimmerman 2012). There must be increasing capacity in the system, in particular with regard to language teachers and learners. In this process, attention should be focused on the appropriate selection of language and literacy teachers and then on effective teacher development. This will ensure that the system is able to deliver the best possible language instruction for every child. Howie et al. (2012) further opine that in the South African context, political will is required to balance global demands, learners' future and decisions by those in power about language use with the individual and cultural values of all home languages. Furthermore, they have observed that a number of interventions relate to teacher training and development, school management, district support, provincial language development strategies, and national policy instead of focussing on learners' classroom activities that could develop their writing skills.

Recommendations in the LiEP are to be acted upon in an articulated way among all three main levels of curriculum development in the South African education system. The national education officials need to take these levels into consideration as they cascade language curriculum implementation. These levels are: (i) **Macro-level** which involves national and provincial offices of the Department of Basic Education where they are expected to provide a clear and complete formulation and explanation of

what LiEP actually means. This has implications for the quality of sequential teaching of both home language and First Additional Language; (ii) **Meso-level** which is between the provincial offices, circuit offices and teachers at school and requires the local provision of infrastructure, facilities and support and monitoring activities related to subject advisors. It also requires a translation of what the language education policy means in relation to each province, which is the province of KwaZulu-Natal in the context of this study, districts and schools; and finally (iii) **Micro-level** this takes place among teachers, learners and parents. It requires expanded opportunities to read and write and on-going classwork and homework practices which foreground regular and challenging reading and writing opportunities, and the availability and use of community resource centres (Prinsloo & Heugh, 2013).

Howie *et al.* (2012) echo some of the points made by Prinsloo and Heugh (2013) by explaining that, in such a dispensation, successful second language acquisition in formal educational settings will benefit certain requirements such as reading and writing. Firstly, the second language acquisition is dependent upon the successful development of the language best known and used by the child upon entry to school. Successful development in reading and writing can only be achieved within a timeframe of six years or more using the language most familiar to the child (Howie *et al.*, 2012). Secondly, where the intention is to develop reading and writing in an additional language which will later be used as a language of teaching and learning, this language must also be taught for a minimum of six years before the learner is expected to use it as a medium of learning. This is not in agreement with the practice in South African schools where learners are introduced to the additional language as early as the Foundation Phase, particularly in the former model C schools. In this case, the second language has to be taught well enough so that learners learn a large body of vocabulary and come to understand how syntax works in both spoken and written forms. This needs a very focused and systematic development of reading and writing opportunities and practices in the classroom. The study by Prinsloo and Heugh (2013) which was on policy briefly highlights that there is an attempt to resolve the discrepancy between current classroom practice and the official language education policy.

With regard to any attempt to address classroom challenges without meaningful consideration of language policy implementation will be a futile exercise. The study by Prinsloo and Heugh (2013) further reports that the key objective of the language policy should be to maintain home language teaching and learning so that learners achieve sufficiently strong reading and writing skills in this language while they simultaneously learn a second language, which is English for most learners. Finally, their study recommends that a strong balance be maintained between conceptual and theoretical assumptions and the practical implementation thereof in the classroom. This includes teachers' understanding of the approaches to literacy and language teaching referred to in the curriculum documentation. Specifically teachers need to understand what is meant by 'the communicative approach' to language teaching. The uncertainty about this concept has led to misunderstandings of how to teach reading and writing and how to develop strong language skills. It is on these grounds that the researcher engages in this study that seeks to determine whether or not the use of reading-response journal writing as an intervention strategy can be used by English Second Language teachers in the classroom practice to develop the writing skills of learners.

Haynes, as cited by Van Patten and Williams (2015) highlights the process of language acquisition which is divided into five stages, namely; *preproduction*, *early production*, *speech emergence*, *intermediate fluency*, and *advanced fluency*. The stages are briefly outlined as follows: in the first stage of *preproduction*, also known as silent stage, learners have a receptive vocabulary of up to 500 words, but they do not yet speak a second language; they instead rely on non-verbal means to communicate. In the second stage of *early production*, during which learners are able to speak in short phrases of one or two words and can also memorise chunks of language, they have both an active and receptive vocabulary of about 1000 words. Learners at this stage are to be given opportunities to participate in whole class activities. The third stage is *speech emergence*. In this stage, vocabulary increases to 3000 words; learners communicate using simple questions and phrases and may make grammatical errors. At the fourth stage is *intermediate fluency*. At this stage, learners have a vocabulary of around 6000 words and can use more complicated sentence structures and are also able to share their thoughts and opinions. They may make frequent errors with more complicated sentence structures. At this stage many

learners would integrate strategies from their home language to learn content in a second language. As a result, they may be translating their written work from their home language. The final stage is *advanced fluency*. This stage is reached between five and ten years of learning the language and learners function at a level close to native speakers. At this stage learners need continued support from teachers, especially in content areas that can be difficult and new to them in writing. In the same vein, Omego (2014) concurs that the child does not learn the language at once. Language development is made up of stages, and it starts and progresses to the stage of competence. Haynes's stages of second language acquisition are useful to this study since they provide a framework for not only understanding the stages that children go through in learning a second language, but also because they offer insight into how to plan a responsive reading and writing programme for second language learners.

The stages identified and explicated by Haynes, as cited by Van Patten and Williams (2015) are in tandem with what the researcher believes in: that the acquisition of second language needs the engagement of learners in different activities, and also that their level of understanding the language should be taken into consideration. The researcher will be using grade eleven learners as participants in journal writing activities where they will be able to share their thoughts and opinions in writing as stated in Haynes's fourth stage of language acquisition. Barcroft (2002) states that for many years the popular way for learning a second language was to focus on grammar and sentence construction first, and then on vocabulary. However, recently there has been a shift toward recognition that learning vocabulary first leads to more success in second language acquisition. Ammar and Spada (2006) have a different view and posit that second language acquisition should include formal linguistics, sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics. They further state that we need to consider the roles of input, interaction, feedback and output. The researcher supports the position of Ammar *et al.* (2006) in saying that, input, interaction and feedback can play a vital role in second language acquisition. As a result, the approach that the researcher will be using to promote writing skills will involve interaction with learners, writing of activities, output and feedback thereof. This will be done with the intention of determining whether or not journal writing can promote writing skills among second language learners in the FET phase.

2.3.2 The use of journal writing in developing writing skills

In order to improve writing skills of English language learners, teachers must consider new innovative methods for their instruction. Current methods are not moving these learners to the level of proficiency that is expected of them (Omego, 2014). Scaffolding coupled with peer work provides English language learners the support they need to facilitate the writing process (Han & Ernest-Slavit, 1999). Bloem, (2004) echoes the above assertion by stating that when students are given opportunities to write for authentic meaning-making and message-sharing purposes, they can enjoy benefits of writing even when they are beginner readers and writers who are doing so in a language they have not mastered.

Journal writing is one of the new innovative methods that are used to improve writing skills. There are various types of journals that could be used in Language teaching for different purposes (Farrah, 2012). Some of these types of journals are: *dialogue journal, subject journal, personal journal, creative journal, reflective journal, e-journal, learning journal, spiritual journal, professional journal, and reading-response journal* among others. Journal writing has been used at different levels in education and studies have been done on various types of journals with the aim of promoting writing skills.

Borasi and Rose (1989) conducted a study on the use of the *subject journal* in Mathematics. A *subject journal* is a daily written record based on a specific subject or field. It provides students with an opportunity to explain their thinking about that particular subject and allows them to re-examine their thoughts by reviewing and reading their writings. The study involved twenty three student participants. Participants were given writing activities to engage in as means of encouraging them to love writing. The study sought to find out whether or not keeping a journal throughout a Mathematics course among college students can improve their writing skills. Students had to write three entries per week and journals were collected every Friday and returned on the following Monday with comments from the teacher. The results revealed that the use of a journal can provide a valuable means to facilitate the learning of Mathematics. Kluwin and Kelly, (1991) conducted a study on *dialogue*

journal writing among deaf learners to evaluate the utility value of dialogue journals in improving the writing skills of deaf writers who ranged from 10 to 18 years of age. The results of their study showed that there was a remarkable improvement in the writing skills of those deaf students. By reading students' journals teachers received a wealth of information about their students and the course they offered, which consequently improved their teaching (Kluwin & Kelly, 1991). Furthermore, journals created a new form of dialogue between the teacher and each student, thus allowing for more individualised instruction and a supportive classroom atmosphere.

Kok and Chabeli (2002) conducted a study with Nursing Science students and it sought to determine the students' perceptions on whether or not *reflective journal* writing promoted their higher thinking skills as they wrote in their journals during a six-month work-based placement. The study used a research sample of seventeen final year students as participants and results revealed that reflective journal writing in clinical nursing education promoted reflective thinking, writing skills and learning.

Naba'h (2013) points out that the rapid advancement of technology, as well as applications of internet, have created new ways of communication which have a great impact on school practices and education, including learning and teaching English as a foreign language. He believes that journal writing can provide opportunities to develop second language literacy because it encourages students to use a language in meaningful learning contexts. *Electronic journals (e-journals)* are accessed via electronic transmission, usually on the internet. Students can post written pieces and access other people's written work online (Bolati, 2002). Furthermore, Bolati believes that *electronic journals (e-journals)* provide a more personal, less structured and self-conscious writing opportunity for students learning highly structured academic writing. The electronic journal writing opportunity allows students to develop writing fluency and to take risks while taking charge of their own writing and it allows the teacher and the student to develop a more intimate form of communication. Cole and Feng (2015) concur with Bolati as they highlight the advantages of using e-journals for both instructional and assessment purposes which include individualisation of language teaching, making students feel that their writing has a value, promoting students' reflection and autonomous learning, increasing students' confidence in their own ability to learn, using reading and writing for

genuine communication and increasing opportunities for interaction between students and teachers. Naba'h (2013) found that the experimental groups who used the electronic journals to interact with their teachers via emails performed better than the control group that used paper and pen in writing about a number of topics throughout the experiment.

A *personal journal* is a daily recording of personal occurrences, observations, activities, feelings, personal thoughts and reflections. It allows students to write about topics of their interest. A study by Jones and East (2010) aimed at checking whether or not personal journal can yield any positive results in developing love of writing among English First language intermediate phase learners. The writing sessions were established for this group of twenty six student participants in one classroom. The teacher was also part of the research as she provided her observation notes as part of data to be analysed. Observations and students' journals were data collection instruments. It was a longitudinal approach because it was done over the course of the academic year. The purpose was to depict the students' writing growth as they were writing every day at school and at home. The teacher had an opportunity to reach students individually every day and discuss their journal entries. The findings delineated the constant growth and achievement that empowered this group of students to become good writers. The findings also revealed that journal writing with proper teacher support empowers students by increasing confidence and control over written language. Results also showed that through writing students learn to tame the printed world around them by manipulating words to express themselves.

A *creative journal* allows students to write in their own way and express their thoughts without fear of any outer or inner critic. It is filled with stories, exercises, humour and insight across all areas of journal writing (Hopkins 2010). Its benefits include making writers more confident to write even when writing formal documents, broadening ones perspective about topics and creativity, providing students with an opportunity to improve writing skills, giving students a chance to vent in their writing and teachers learning to know things about their students, their families and their lives that they never would have known (Meera & Sebastian, 2014).

Colorado (2007) believes with regard to journal writing that a student come up with an idea, think of the appropriate way to say it, start to write it and spell it correctly, and then create another sentence to continue to communicate the idea. He further states that teachers need not worry those students that are making huge embarrassing errors or that their ideas are not very good. If they can consider that, curriculum specialists can begin to understand the complexity involved in writing in a second language or FAL. Serra (2014) concurs with Colorado (2007) in saying that teachers and parents need to help English FAL learners to love writing. She feels that students do not like writing because they have never been encouraged to do it with enjoyment. Serra (2014) further posits that writing like all other aspects of language is communicative. In real life we may write notes, emails, cover letters, journal diaries, assignments and reports. All of these writings have a communicative purpose and a target audience. It is therefore important to use various strategies like journal writing to develop learners' writing skills.

The South African language- in- education policy (LiEP) of 1997 states that the learning of more than one language should be a general practice and principle in our society; hence, effective learning of an additional language is of paramount importance in schools. The policy further stipulates that from grade ten to grade twelve, two languages must be passed, one of which must be an additional language. The stipulations of the LiEP confirm the importance of sharpening our learners' writing skills in order for them to meet the requirements of the language policy in South African schools. Correspondingly, the case study to be undertaken by the researcher on journal writing will provide learners with an opportunity to comply with the prescripts of the language policy.

According to DBE (2011: 25-48) CAPS document, writing and presenting combine three elements namely: *(i) using the writing process; (ii) learning and applying knowledge of the structure and features of different text types; and (iii) applying knowledge of paragraph, sentence structure and punctuation.* The CAPS document further stipulates that in promoting writing skills, learners need to be given various texts such as the familiar text and texts to write without any drafts in preparing them for the examination. In this case, learners are expected to choose appropriate words such as evocative words and phrases to make their writing clear and to organise ideas

in a logical sequence so that the argument flows smoothly in an essay. After this exercise of writing, the teacher is expected to give feedback. The researcher is in line with what the CAPS document highlights, that is, familiar and unfamiliar texts will be given to learners in the exercise of journal writing. They will be expected to have logical sequence in their essay writing and feedback will be discussed in class after marking their essays. It is further stated that in order to teach for excellence about purposes in writing, teachers need to understand; (i) the wide range of purposes for which people write, (ii) strategies and forms for writing for personal growth, (iii) expression and reflection (iv) how to encourage and develop this kind of writing, (v) artistic forms of writing and how they are made. The production of creative and literary texts for the purpose of entertainment and pleasure, appropriate forms of varied academic disciplines and the purposes and relationships that create those forms, and ways of organising and transforming school curricula in order to provide students with adequate education in varied purposes for writing (DBE, 2011:35).

Branstetter (2013) posits that, if you want to know something, read and if you want to learn something, write; therefore we learn through writing. She further avers that learners learn to make connections with what they have read to themselves, to other texts and with the world through their writing. In the same vein, she highlights the importance of using social media to improve writing skills. These learners through Facebook updates are learning when something is inherently interesting to others by feedback or comments. Similarly, Lee (2013) as quoted by Cole and Feng (2015), affirms that using e-journals and online discussion boards are also good technological tools to develop writing skills. With this approach learners can communicate with one another as well as the teacher, receive feedback and practise conversational skills, putting complete thoughts together in the form of typed sentences. In support, Ghandoura (2012) found that, students thought computers made the acquisition of writing skills easier and faster since the computer indicates errors instantly. However, the possible downfall of such tools is that writing on computers gives immediate alerts to grammatical and spelling errors, which could become a crutch that can hinder confidence and language development among learners. Learners could also do a variation on the metacognitive journal and write status updates for characters in books for themselves.

The position by Branstetter (2013) emphasises the importance of providing platforms for learners to engage in various texts with the aim of developing writing skills. For her part, Paris (2014) highlights three strategies to improve students' writing instantly namely; *Student Talks, Teacher Writes* - the teacher instructs a student to talk while he or she writes what the student says and thereafter they are shown the piece of writing from what they were saying. This motivates them to write knowing that writing is simply communication; therefore, there is no need to hesitate when one has a pen in hand and is expected to write. Audio Recording - students record themselves speaking and thereafter are expected to write an essay listening to their audio recordings. They enjoy writing that piece of recorded speech and Audio transcribes - a teacher identifies a tool that will transcribe speaking into text. From these activities, learners will realise that writing is not intended to frustrate or to punish them.

A study done by Shailajan, Nandylan and Subba (2016) in India shows that teaching English is a main pivot of the educational system. The current situation in India is that English is used as a language of teaching and learning. The findings of the study revealed that Indian students could not acquire English naturally but they needed communicative and interactive methods of teaching English as a second language. It was discovered that teachers use the translation method instead of the communicative method where students are supposed to pass certain examinations in English in order to progress to the next class. It was found out that this led to students forgetting everything after being promoted. This compelled teachers to focus on examination related tasks and ignored other English language skills which can promote proper second language development such as writing, reading and speaking. This method of teaching was regarded as a drawback in Indian schools, and teachers were declared incapable of teaching English as a second language. The findings in the study done in India opened a debate on more strategies that should be implemented for second language development, and on the view that teachers should not just be put under pressure to focus on examinations scope and forget about strategies that could be implemented for sustainable language development.

2.3.3 Assessment of learners in the process of using journal writing to develop writing skills

Dreyer (2014:5) defines assessment as: the process of collecting, analysing and recording information on learner performance; it determines whether learning took place, it can be seen as the ability to observe learners, to perceive what they can and cannot do, with the aim of understanding how to support their learning for development purposes. The above definition indicates that assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning and it should be based on learning outcomes that specify what learners know in all aspects of different subjects, including writing skills in English FAL. The importance of assessment as defined by Dreyer needs to be taken into account by all language teachers in their second language curriculum. The syllabus, among other things, should include writing skills as one of the aspects that are essential for their learners' academic success.

In the same vein, Reddy, Le Grange, Beets and Lundie (2015) state the reasons for including writing activities in language teaching and assessment as (i) that writing reinforces the grammatical structures, idioms and vocabulary, consolidates language already presented and orally practised and develops the skills of communicating in writing; and that (ii) learners also need writing skills for study purposes. In agreement, Nel and Muller (2010) state that assessment of writing skills should always have a purpose. For their part, Reddy *et al.* (2015) further state that in the process of assessing writing skills teachers should collect samples of learners' writing, carefully selected over time to understand their level of competence in writing. They also can use self-assessment recorded on self-editing checklists, self-monitoring sheets and questionnaires. Learners can be assessed in various ways using approaches such as **product approach** - on how to write an essay and the teachers will focus on correct sentence construction. They can also be required to expand a summary or an outline, construct paragraphs from frames, and produce a text through answering a set of questions and developing complex sentences following different language rules of sentence combination.

The other assessment approach is **process approach** – whereby focus in assessment is on appropriate planning, and drafting, word- mapping sorting jumbled paragraphs, writing statements and quick writing tasks. In concurrence, Williams (2012) suggests five quick ways of assessing learners’ writing progress, outlined as follows (a) ***X Marks the spot*** - a piece of writing full of comments and proofreading marks can cause learners to feel bewildered and overwhelmed. The aim is for one’s learners to gradually gain writing skills and confidence, not to feel discouraged and negative about their writing. Instead one must focus on the content of the text, put a small x when one sees a grammar or spelling error so that learners will be able to know what to correct when one gives back their marked work with constructive feedback. (b) ***Write an End Comment*** - save comments for the end of the learners’ writing and the comments should comprise at least of one strength, and then point out the problem that the learner needs to improve on, and finally give recommendations or suggestions for the next task in their writing process. Those recommendations at the end could allow students to assess their writing and set goals to continue their progress. (c) ***Address Common Errors Together*** - this involves feedback where the teacher can make notes of common errors and discuss them in class during feedback sessions rather than writing the same comment to all learners in class. (d) ***Use a Rubric*** - this is a great way to see exactly what students are grasping and what they are struggling with; rubrics help teachers to pinpoint where learners need help. (e) ***Incorporate Student Reflection*** - learners can complete a self-assessment sheet, encourage learners to assess their own strengths and needs in their writing. An easy way to motivate learners to evaluate their own writing progress is to create a rating scale.

The activities of data collection for this study will use some of these suggestions; like for example, addressing of common errors together. This will be done during feedback sessions. Learners’ reflections will be catered for by the interviews that will be done as the last session of data collection coupled with the use of X next to errors without many comments on their journals. Likewise, the researcher is in agreement with the above suggestions on assessment of writing skills by Reddy et al. (2015). Literature that has been reviewed has given the researcher greater insights. It has provided clear guidance on what to take into consideration as the study progresses.

According to Lazaro (2010), the Basic Skills Test (BST) is always ideal in the assessment of writing skills. He asserts that careful analysis of BST writing results can help schools to identify specific strengths and weaknesses in writing for learners in their schools. Teachers can use individual BST writing results and other classroom assessments to determine future programming decisions and to select appropriate strategies for teaching learners who experience difficulties in writing competently for different purposes. Nel and Muller (2010) came up with a Basic English Skills Test (BEST) which is a criterion-referenced test of elementary level listening comprehension, speaking, reading and writing. It is a competency based programme. They state that it involves a reading task with word recognition and a writing task. It is usually used for diagnostic purposes and scores are calculated immediately after testing. Learners' performances on the BEST provide the teacher with a clear understanding on how much effort should be put in reading and writing activities.

Lazaro (2010) recommends the use of criterion-referenced assessment in which each piece of writing can be assessed against criteria that measure how well the writing achieves the purpose of the task. The criterion-reference assessment's characteristics are as follows: (i) it tests learners on what they can do, (ii) it is based on learners' needs and tests are created on learners' needs, and (iii) learners are not judged against others as they have different capabilities. However, criterion-reference assessment has boundaries, some of which are; it does not allow comparing performance of learners in a particular location with national norms, it is time consuming to develop assessment activities that cater for individual needs, it is costly to create a specific curriculum and it may hinder the process of curriculum change.

A set of criteria for each task can be utilised by teachers when marking and making judgements against texts. They are provided by Lazaro (2010) as follows: (i) **Text process** - this checks if the learner writes what is asked with clear understanding of the audience and purpose. (ii) **Text features** - this category checks if the learner uses paragraphs correctly, are sentence structures that serve the purpose of texts coherently presented, and if the use of tenses is consistent and appropriate. (iii) **Sentence level** - this criterion assesses the correctness of clauses, use of articles, prepositions, plurals, sentence punctuation, correct subject and verb agreement. Finally, (iv) **word level** – where the main criterion is to examine the grammar at the level of the word choice

making up the text, including the form of the verb and spelling. This could be done step by step by looking at one challenging aspect at a time against a particular criterion. The researcher supports the idea of criterion-reference assessment by Lazaro (2010), since it gives a clear direction on a specific aspect that is assessed in writing assessment activities. The aspects such as *Write an End Comment Use a Rubric and Address Common Errors Together* will be used by the researcher as assessment tools.

For their part, Graham and Harris (2007) suggest an **Integrated Writing Instruction** where learners are to develop an integrated approach to classroom writing instruction designed to accommodate the special needs of disabled writers. In this approach, the students write about authentic topics that have a realistic purpose and relevance. Students receive instructions and feedback in an interactive manner presented both in lecture format and writing conferences with classmates. In addition to that the teacher checks in with students about the status of their current writing projects, then teaches a mini-lesson. Next she or he allows the group time to write and to conference with peers and the teacher, and finally arranges for the group to share or publish their work for the larger audience such as reading their written pieces at the assemble for the whole school or publish their work in a school bulletin.

In a study by Van der Merwe (2010) conducted to evaluate the effect of a writing skills intervention on the performance of first year students in Tourism Development, writing skills were infused into the teaching methodology of the subject. The marks for both pre- and post- tests were collected for comparison. The marks changed between pre-and-post assignments, as well as between their first, second and final assessment. The findings showed that the module Tourism Development improved between a pre- and post-test. The recommendation was that writing skills development presented within the specific domain, in other words infused within the module Tourism Development, should become a common practice. In addition to that, the teacher checks in with students about the status of their current writing projects, then teaches a mini-lesson and allows the group time to write and to conference with peers and the teacher. Finally, the teacher arranges for the group to share or publish their work for the larger audience such as reading their written pieces at the assembly

for the whole school or to publish their work in a school bulletin. These activities and steps will lead to students gaining confidence and wishing to write more frequently (Van der Merwe, 2010). Thus, it is against this background that the researcher will give participants a series of activities to write, constructive feedback, with the aim of checking whether or not there is improvement in their writing skill.

The literature has revealed that writing skills need to be assessed like all other aspects of language. A variety of approaches to assessing writing skills such as, **product and process** approaches were considered as the ideal ones to use when assessing writing skills. Much was discussed by various scholars on how to mark and give constructive feedback to learners without demotivating them on their willingness to write.

This section has highlighted the use of journal writing as a strategy to develop writing skills. The classroom practises to develop writing skills were outlined, which include acquisition of additional language. It also highlighted roles expected from the Department of Basic education from all three levels, that is; macro level (national), meso level (provincial) and micro level (district, circuit and schools). Various types of journals as well as research that have been done on some of those types of journals were briefly discussed. Assessment of writing skills was also discussed which, among other things, looked at the product approach, process approach and Basic Skills Test (BST).

2.4 THE VIEWS ON THE ROLE OF INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES OF JOURNAL WRITING AS A WAY OF RESPONDING TO LEARNERS' WRITING NEEDS

Johnson and Krans, (2011) define an intervention as an act of inserting one thing between others in order to alter something. It is an action taken to improve something. The understanding of intervention in this study is in line with this view as it refers to an action that will be taken with the aim of improving writing skills. In South Africa, school is the only place where many learners have a chance to hear and participate in English language events such as speaking, reading and writing. Johnson and Krans (2011) state that these learners need strategies that will help them face the

challenges of learning a second language as well as developing linguistic strategies required for succeeding in school. While many learners from a variety of backgrounds need interventions, Jonson and Krans (2011) further posit that children in three particular areas need systematic classroom interventions to help them develop as learners. Some of these learners are raised in poverty without adult role models, English second language learners, and those learners who struggle with phonological processing and memory difficulties. Interventions, therefore, should cater for different kinds of children with different learning needs.

To address the needs of such learners in the United Kingdom Johnson and Krans (2011) developed a framework called the Response to Intervention (**RTI**) model structured in three tiers. ***Tier one*** consisted of effective classroom interventions which were designed to meet the needs of all learners in the classrooms with no differentiation according to specific needs. Interventions in this tier were considered to be of high quality because they reached the greatest number of learners. ***Tier two*** interventions were designed for those learners who needed additional support that went beyond what might have been offered in a Tier one type intervention. It focused on learners with very specific needs who would benefit from intense small group intervention. Usually, such interventions may have meant that learners were withdrawn from classrooms for specific interventions. Lastly, there was ***Tier three*** which benefited learners who struggled even when provided with additional support in small groups. Such interventions were usually individual in nature. Understanding intervention models proposed by Johnson and Krans (2011) gave the researcher a perspective on the type of the intervention to undertake. Tier one is in line with what the researcher intended doing.

This study targeted all children in the classroom, rather than a guided intervention with only groups of children or individuals. The whole class of thirty English FAL learners in the FET phase were used as participants during the data collection process. In the same vein, Saddler and Asarao (2013) came up with the same idea of the Tier intervention strategy. They stated that the Tier intervention strategy can be approached in the form of response journal writing. According to Saddler and Asarao (2013), **Tier one** refers to the instructional practices used in the classroom with all students to teach general education curriculum.

In Tier one Saddler and Asarao (2013) further highlighted the following strategies that can be implemented as intervention:

- (i) *Model the target writing skill* – modelling of the target skill that the teacher wants the students to learn during writing instruction. The aim is to have students imitate the important components of the target writing skill.
- (ii) *Provide students with opportunities to write* - consistent, predictable writing times are important to help students develop writing skills. Activities during writing include planning, writing, and revising.
- (iii) *Have students set clear and specific goals for writing assignments* - students should know the purpose of each writing activity. Goals can be used at each stage of the writing process rather than only at the end.
- (iv) *Provide opportunities for peer collaboration* - students must be given time to work together on the writing process. This will work best if the peer pairs have different levels of writing abilities.
- (v) *Provide students with frequent and specific feedback on their writing* - students need help to understand the skills they have mastered and the skill they need to improve on in their writing. Feedback must be constructive with the intention to motivate. It must be a balance of positive reinforcement for writing skills.
- (vi) *Provide students with the opportunity to revise their writing* - students must be given time to revise their written tasks, feedback will have greater impact on learning if students have the chance to revise their writing based on feedback from teachers.

The above instructional strategies by Sadler and Asarao (2013) have cautioned the researcher that giving instruction before the writing task is very important. Therefore, the researcher also started by giving an instruction to the participants on how to go about writing a good essay.

In Tiers two and three - these two tiers entail the sentence combination and self-regulatory strategy instruction and the purpose of sentence combining in order to provide students with the opportunities to manipulate and write a basic sentence and a modifying sentence. The teacher is expected to model the process, provide guided

practice with feedback and thereafter provide independent practice followed by feedback. Self-regulatory strategy instruction is regarded as a framework of teaching stages for writing skills and self-regulation strategies to help students learn about the writing process. Furthermore, the self-regulatory strategy instruction has six stages to teaching writing skills. They are outlined as follows:

- (i) *Introduce the strategy*-state the strategy that will be the focus of the lesson.
- (ii) *Development of prior knowledge* - this is like a warm up to make students familiar with the elements of the writing strategy.
- (iii) *Discussion of a strategy* - explanation of the steps to use for the process of using this strategy.
- (iv) *Modelling of the strategy* - the teacher needs to model the strategy for self-instruction.
- (v) *Memorisation of the strategy* - students are provided with a way to memorise the strategy so that they can recall it independently.
- (vi) *Supportive collaborative practice* - students work with peers on a writing activity to practice the writing and self-regulation strategies.

The researcher's approach of reading-response journal followed the points highlighted by the above scholars. Specifically, *the introduction of the strategy, discussion of the strategy and development of prior knowledge* have sharpened the researcher's approach in terms of what is expected at the beginning of the intervention programme.

Reddy (2012) posits that today's world considers English as a global language because there has never been a language so widely spread or spoken by so many people as English. It makes news daily in many countries and is adopted by many countries. He further states that English has a special role to play in the countries where it has been accepted as the official language and is being used as a medium of communication. The researcher concurs with Reddy (2012) that English is a global language in the sense that in other countries such as South Africa, it is not only used as medium of communication but also as the language of teaching and learning in schools. In the same vein, Shailaja, Kurnool and Subba Rao (2016) agree with Reddy (2012) and contend that English is a language that has a great reach and influence. It is taught all over the world under many circumstances. They further opine that in

English speaking countries, English language teaching has essentially evolved in broad directions, that is; instruction for people who intend to live there and for those who do not. This has influenced the way schools are established and how classes are held.

In the South African context, the concept of additional language would be preferable because English is not the only second language of the African learners. This study is also looking at the strategy to be used to promote writing skills among learners for whom English is the First additional language. According to Krashen (1989), the terms acquisition and learning are not used as synonyms but refer to the subconscious and conscious aspects of the process, respectively. Krashen's view is in concurrence with Chang's (2012) position when stating that language acquisition is a process whereby a child naturally masters a language without receiving formal instruction, whereas language learning involves curriculum implementation, through formal instructional sessions in a classroom setting. Therefore, language acquisition and language learning are different concepts.

In the same vein, Davies (2002) believes that learning a language is a conscious process, much like what one experiences in school when learning a language. New knowledge or language forms are represented consciously in the learner's mind in the form of language rules and grammar. This process often involves error correction. The researcher concurs with the above statements in the sense that the study afforded English FAL learners an opportunity to respond to texts through essay writing of activities that learners experienced in class when they were learning a language.

In trying to improve writing skills, the DBE has had intervention initiatives such as Creating Literate School Communities. The aim of this initiative was to create nurturing spaces which motivate children to want to read and write and give them the sense of identity and belonging. In this initiative learners were encouraged to write for real reasons, and to get them to realise that what they say can be written down. Interactive writing through letters and journal writing have proven to be good at encouraging children to write. The writers' workshops are organised where children can compose poems and write books of various genres. This starts with interactive modelling of shared writing where a teacher or mentor composes first with the

children, and thereafter allows them to work as individuals (Alexander, Bloch, Joge, Guzula & Mahobe, 2011).

Dancing Pencils is also one of the interventions by DBE to promote writing skills. It aims at encouraging creative writing world-wide through skills transfer to children and adults and the establishment of writing clubs. These clubs are coached by a mentor and they allow children to develop their craft, to share their life experiences, and express feelings in a nurturing environment. These initiatives are however, not monitored by the language subject advisors. Thus, not all schools enter the Dancing Pencils competitions on writing. Only motivated teachers enter their learners in the competitions. Therefore, there are no remarkable improvements in the writing skills of learners.

According to Ennis, Jolivette and Boden (2013) some students have primary language impairments that interfere with the content and structure of written texts, but have less difficulty with fluent spelling and handwriting. Writing difficulties can be frustrating to adolescents who typically are assessed for their curricular content knowledge through writing. Some high school learners receive support for their writing difficulties such as extended time and use of the computer to write, but without intervention their difficulties will persist into adulthood thereby limiting their success in higher education and in the work industry. Ennis *et al.*, (2013) further opine that the most effective approach to support students' writing is intervention based on the Self-Regulatory Strategy Development (SRSD). In this model, the teacher's role is to support the application of a writing strategy in guided practice, and to support the students' progress towards independent self-regulated use of that strategy. They further state that the focus on becoming a more self-regulated writer is particularly relevant to adolescents who are often overwhelmed by the complexity and the sophisticated skill required in writing effectively at the secondary school level.

Gradually the student practises and adapts the strategy with teacher guidance, as needed, until they develop independence in using the strategy to complete their writing tasks. The SRSD approach could be ideal to help students employ metacognitive routines that allow them to focus on communicating, organising, evaluating their ideas,

and balance higher-order concerns with those of lower-order mechanical difficulties. For example, spelling, punctuations etc. those are often present in the writing of students.

The above assertions are echoed by De Caso and Gracia (2014) in their claim that there is a need for intervention in essay writing. Language experts and teachers need to intervene in the process of writing acquisition and resolve the differences between expert and novice writers, in order to enhance the quality of written texts, the aim being to change this pattern of failure and allow enhanced self-esteem which can lead to increased motivation towards writing.

De Caso and Gracia (2014) further opine that the mechanical process as involved in writing present the most skills that a student must acquire when writing, such as the behavioural and linguistic components which are the antecedents of the cognitive and metacognitive ones and therefore, condition the motivation. These mechanical order difficulties affect the planning of writing as students are more concerned with how to write words correctly rather than which words to choose. This makes it difficult to experience an appropriate development in writing skills, which in turn may lead to students avoiding writing and to thinking that they are unable to compose texts, and consequently to experience diminished self-esteem and therefore poorer motivation. Such students do not engage in writing activities frequently, they instead experience more academic frustration, increased fear of failure, and they assume less responsibility for their own learning as well as requiring more practice and greater support. Therefore, the improvement of text production in students requires intervention as regards the mechanical processes of writing in order to transcend these difficulties, permitting the automatisisation of these skills and the focus on writing planning so that students do not attend so closely to the mechanical aspects. Based on the above assertions by the various researchers, the researcher echoes their views by stating that English FAL teachers should consider strengthening intervention programmes that are intended for the development of writing skills and also monitor their effectiveness towards achievement of their objectives.

This section highlighted intervention programmes that could be implemented to develop writing skills. Those interventions included Tiers one, two and three by

Johnson and Krans (2011). The initiatives by the DBE to develop writing skills were also highlighted. However, it was revealed that due to lack of monitoring of the implementation of these initiatives, there are no remarkable results in the achievement of their objectives.

2.5 THE EXPERIENCES OF LEARNERS IN THEIR PARTICIPATION IN READING-RESPONSE JOURNAL WRITING ACTIVITIES

Journal writing is one of the new innovative methods that are used to improve writing skills and there are various types of journals that could be used in Language teaching for different purposes (Farrah, 2012). For English language learners, teachers must consider new innovative methods for their instruction in order to improve writing skills, such as, not to focus on the end product in essay writing because those methods are not motivating learners to the level of proficiency that is expected of them. Bloem, (2004) echoes the above assertion by stating that when students are given opportunities to write for authentic meaning-making and message-sharing purposes, they can enjoy benefits of writing even when they are beginner readers and writers who are doing so in a language they have not mastered. Scaffolding together with peer work provides English language learners with support to facilitate the writing process (Han & Ernest-Slavit, 1999).

Journal writing has been suggested as an unthreatening means of practice in writing for English FAL learners; often referred to as an interactive journal. This approach allows learner - teacher communication through a designated notebook designed for written pieces (Lee, 2013). Furthermore, Lee (2013) opines that classroom practice has shown how the implementation of an interactive journal greatly benefits English learners as it motivates them to write more in terms of length, and richer, in relation to content. This does not only provide consistent practice, as the journal is meant to be used daily, but allows the teacher to have an easier and more holistic access to learners' writing, which gives way to more individualised instruction opportunities. Moreover, Lee (2013) suggests various ways in which to use journal writing such as reading-response journals, correspondence journals, and e-journals. Correspondence

journals afford children with time to express themselves both orally and in written forms. Unfortunately, oral talk is often discouraged in a classroom setting. Therefore, using a correspondence journal as a means of facilitating written talk proves to be both an effective and valuable tool. *Reading-response journals* are a means for which students can create meaning from their experience with a text. This type of journal also allows the teacher to observe how a student is developing as both a reader and a writer.

Students respond to a text through teacher-led activities such as predicting plot, personal reactions to characters, and synthesising texts. Students get a chance to generate their own meanings as they read and compose from their own thoughts as they write. Cole *et al.* (2015) point to the need to present opportunities for students to ask and answer real questions of their own about reading and writing. In this regard, reading-response journals provide students with an opportunity to respond and interpret their reading personally. Moreover, reading-response journals enable students to grow as readers and writers by requiring them to use their own background knowledge to construct personal meaning. Much more success of reading-response journals lies with the teacher and the teacher's responses to what the students have written (Serra, 2014). Children will always invest more interest and energy in journal writing when their teacher gives them feedback. It is important that the teacher's feedback be focused on the depth of thinking, rather than the mechanics of writing. Furthermore, the reading-response journals are an excellent means of recording how students' writing has changed and matured, and a valuable means of catching up on new literature that the students are reading.

The above assertions motivate the researcher to conduct a case study on the use of reading-response journal writing as an intervention strategy to promote writing skills among learners in the FET phase. Lee (2013) conducted a case study in Taiwan, investigating the use of the reading-response journal as an alternative to engage low achieving students in English Home Language. He stated that journal writing has been valued as an effective tool for involving students in authentic reading and writing activities. As internet has become an essential medium in today's classrooms; it is advisable to integrate both web and the journal writing when teaching English to students. The rationale for the study was to check whether or not the implementation

of journal writing in English language learning would yield any positive results toward improving students' writing skills. The findings of this study revealed that the implementation of journal writing in English classes yielded positive results and should be considered for use in future.

Walker (2006) conducted a study on journal writing as a pedagogic technique to promote reflection; it was done in sessions of seven weeks. He stated that feedback is important because various factors are presented to students regarding their written entries. However, the study focussed on the use of journal writing in an athletic training education curriculum. The findings showed that journal writing aided in placing responsibility with the students for active engagement and self-directed learning. In addition, the students' self-confidence increased because the journals enabled them to identify their own lack of motivation. It was also found that in the process of journal writing, students moved from passive to active participation during their clinical debriefing sessions, started thinking critically and took responsibility for their learning. Correspondingly, the researcher employed the same strategies of journal writing such as giving participants enough time for their entries with the tasks at hand, having sessions with them to provide constructive and developmental feedback and giving them an opportunity to reflect on their performance.

This section covered the research that has been done on journal writing, as well as the experiences of learners who participated in those studies as participants. It highlighted the positive results yielded by those studies on journal writing in countries such as Taiwan and Botswana among others. Moreover, various ways in which journals can be used as tool of instilling love for writing were discussed. Literature that was viewed on this section also revealed that journal writing could help in placing responsibility with students for active engagement and self-directed learning.

2.6 SUMMARY

This chapter reviewed the literature on writing skills as a problem at hand. It presented the reader-response theory as the theoretical framework which underpins this study. The background regarding the possibility of using the reading-response

journals as an intervention strategy for the development of writing skills among English FAL learners in the FET phase was also outlined. A schematic representation of this theory was presented, clarifying its origins and developments starting from the 1930s to date.

This chapter also outlined perceptions on the acquisition of second language through various methods of teaching and assessment, the importance of writing skills development, and the assessment strategies to be employed in the classroom particularly for the assessment of writing skills. In this regard, the point may be made that competence in writing skills does not happen spontaneously; it should be taught and assessed like all other language aspects. In the next chapter the research design is described and explained in detail.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the design and procedures used in data collection. It also covers the descriptions of the research design and target population, sampling techniques, research instrumentation, administrative procedures related to data collection, data analysis as well as ethical considerations. This study solicited data to answer the following research questions: (a) How does the use of the reading-response journal as an intervention strategy enhance the development of writing skills for First Additional Language learners in the FET phase? (b) What are learners' views on the intervention programme of reading-response journal writing in developing writing skills? (c) What are the experiences of First Additional Language learners as participants in the activities of journal writing? The exploratory case study conducted with a sample of participants drawn from a population of Further Education and Training (FET) phase learners sought to examine the use of the reading-response journal as an intervention strategy to promote writing skills among learners.

3.2 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

3.2.1 Research Paradigm

Barker (2003) defines a research paradigm as a model or pattern containing a set of legitimated assumptions and a design for collecting and interpreting data. On the other hand, Creswell, (2012) defines a paradigm as a worldview or a set of assumptions about how things work, how research should be conducted and what role should the researcher play. Kumar (2014) is also in line with the above definitions of a paradigm. He regards it as a belief system that guides the way to do things or more formally establishes a set of practices which can range from thought patterns to action. The definitions of a paradigm by different scholars all suggest that researchers

can choose a suitable paradigm for their research projects from qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods.

According to De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2011), qualitative research is concerned with understanding, naturalistic observations and subjective exploration of reality from the perspective of an insider as opposed to that of an outsider predominant in the quantitative research paradigm. Bird, Campbell-Hall, Kakuma and the MHaPP Research Programme Consortium (2013: 337-349) point out that, “the value of qualitative research in developing better understanding of concepts and behaviours in a particular context is increasingly recognised among many researchers.” Typically, qualitative research is flexible, with very little structure, as Bird, *et al.* (2013:337-349) point out that it is “an approach that is too structured may diminish the opportunity for analysis to reflect emerging issues in the data.” Thus, qualitative research paradigm is an approach that is concerned with the understanding rather than explanation; with naturalistic observations rather than controlled measurements; with the subjective exploration of reality from the perspective of an insider as opposed to that of an outsider predominant in the quantitative paradigm.

Quantitative research has characteristics which are as follows: (i)it describes a research problem through a description of trends or a need for an explanation of the relationship among variables, (ii) creates purpose statements, research questions, and hypotheses that are specific, narrow, measurable and observable and analysing trends, and (iii) compares groups, or related variables using statistical analysis and interpreting results by comparing them with prior predictions and past research (Creswell, 2012:13). The benefits of quantitative research are incorporated in the discussion of the differences between the two paradigms below.

3.2.2 The Nature of the Qualitative Research

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) highlight the differences between qualitative and quantitative research paradigms, as follows: (a) The objectives of a qualitative research is to gain an understanding of underlying reasons and motivations whereas for the quantitative research it is to quantify data and generalise results from a sample to the population of interest. (b) The sample of a qualitative research is usually a small

number or non-representative cases whereas the quantitative research usually uses a large number of cases representing the population of interest; and randomly selected respondents; (c) Qualitative research data collection methods are usually unstructured or semi-structured whereas quantitative research data employs structured techniques; (d) Qualitative data analysis is non-statistical and findings are not conclusive and cannot be used to make generalisations about the population of interest; findings develop an initial understanding and sound base for further decision making whereas quantitative data analysis is usually statistical and the findings are conclusive and descriptive in nature.

Based on the above assertions by scholars and considering that the focus of this research was on critical testing of a theory's proposition, the researcher employed a qualitative research approach in investigating the problem and this approach was deemed appropriate for this study.

3.2.3 Research Design

A research design is defined by Kumar (2014:123) as the road map that one decides to follow during his or her research journey to find answers to certain research questions as validly, objectively, accurately and economically as possible. Kumar (2014) further refers to it as a plan through which the researcher decides for himself or herself and communicates to others his or her decisions regarding what study design he or she proposes to use, how he or she will collect data from respondents, how he or she will select his or her respondents, how data will be analysed, and how findings will be communicated. According to De Vos *et al.* (2011) a research design refers to all those decisions a researcher makes in planning the research project. He also refers to it as a plan, structure and strategy of investigation so conceived as to obtain answers to research questions or problems.

The researcher in this study opted for a case study design. There are various types of case studies and they are used in a variety of disciplines including medicine, sociology, anthropology, psychology, management studies and education (Rule & John, 2011). Rule and John further state that there are two broad categories of case studies, namely *intrinsic and instrumental* case studies. An intrinsic case study

focuses on the case because it is interesting in itself whereas an instrumental case study examines the case to explore a broader issue. For example, case studies done as part of a commissioned evaluation would be seen as instrumental because the interest in the case stems from external sources rather than an intrinsic interest in the case. On the other hand, Yin (2003) distinguishes between three forms of case study; namely- *exploratory, explanatory and descriptive*. An *exploratory* case study often examines a phenomenon that has not been investigated before and can lay the basis for further studies, an *explanatory* case study attempts to explain what happens in a particular case or why it happens, and a descriptive case study presents a complete description of a phenomenon within its context. Mouton, (2013) compares the case study design with other designs, such as action research, survey, history research ethnography and evaluation. The comparisons are as follows: (i) case and a survey; a case study is intensive whilst a survey is extensive, (ii) case study focuses on a single instance while a survey focuses on a representative sample, (iii) a case study is usually qualitative whereas a survey is usually quantitative (Mouton, 2013:143). A case study and an action research have common characteristics in that they share a focus on the particular; they are both usually small-scale and take into account the relation of the situation to its wider context. However, there are differences. The role of the researcher in a case study is to describe, understand and interpret the case whilst in action research the role of the researcher is to seek understanding of the situation in order to effect change (Kumar, 2014:125).

A case study and life history research have similarities. Both usually examine a life through a particular lens and both attempt to tell the individual story in depth and detail. In comparing case studies to ethnographic research, the latter arises from anthropology and seeks to generate a rich and detailed description of the observable and learned patterns of behaviour, customs and way of life of a culture-sharing group and it would also include a period of extended interaction whereas the case study may not be extended to long lasting months. Lastly, with regard to case studies versus evaluation research, a case study would focus on a programme or project to assess its value and it might focus on the extent to which the project has achieved its objectives or not (Mouton, 2013).

A case study is regarded as a particular instance; it is a circumstance or problem that requires investigation. A case might be a person, a classroom, a programme, a phenomenon, a process, a series of developments, an institution or even a country. What makes it a case is that it is singular and distinct (Rule & John, 2011). Conducting research as a case study has some advantages and limitations. Some of the advantages include the following: (i) the case is an outstanding example of its kind, it can be studied in great depth, (ii) the researcher has easy access to the case, and (iii) the researcher has experience of the case as a particular instance and thus has insider knowledge. Limitations include the following: (i) the findings of the study cannot necessarily be generalised to other cases, (ii) there is no comparative dimension within the study, and (iii) the bias of the researcher might restrict or distort the findings in unhelpful ways especially if the researcher has insider knowledge of, and prior assumptions about, the case.

The researcher conducted this study in the form of an exploratory case study which often examines a phenomenon that has not been investigated before and can lay the basis for further studies as explained by Rule and John, (2011). The researcher situated the case within a larger context but the focus remained on it. The researcher chose one boarding school to use as an area of investigation because it was found to be a convenient sample that allowed easy access to the participants even after formal teaching time. The area of investigation was chosen also considering the intensity of this study. The school has both categories, that is, those who stay at the school residences (boarders) and those who stay around the school and travel from home every day (day scholars). This also allowed the researcher to generate theoretical insights into the use of reading-response journals to develop writing skills among learners through provision of enough time for participants to write tasks in a relaxed atmosphere.

3.2.4 Target Population and Sampling Procedures

Sampling is the process of selecting a few participants from a bigger group as the basis for estimating or predicting the prevalence of an unknown piece of information,

situation, or outcome regarding the bigger group. There are different types of sampling namely; random sampling, non-random sampling and mixed sampling design, snowball sampling, cluster sampling, convenience sampling, stratified random sampling and purposive sampling, among others (Kumar, 2014).

After exploring all these sampling methods, the researcher adopted the convenience sampling technique. Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where participants are selected because of their convenient accessibility and due to cutting of costs. It is against these reasons that the researcher chose a group of boarding school grade eleven learners population for this study. In this sampling approach, the researcher used participants who were easy to get. These participants are selected on the basis of their availability and willingness to participate (Kumar, 2014). In this study, the researcher used a boarding school which is situated twenty kilometres away from the researcher's residence. It was convenient to access participants after formal teaching and learning hours and this gave the researcher enough time to conduct reading and writing sessions with the learners.

The target population for this study was English FAL grade eleven learners in the FET phase. The sample was constituted in a boarding school in uThungulu district, specifically adopting convenience sampling approach. An entire grade eleven class, comprising thirty learners, was identified. The identification of these learners was done with the assistance of educators teaching English FAL; that is the educator who taught them in grade ten and the one teaching them in grade eleven. An instructional briefing on creative writing and unstructured interviews were conducted to gauge learners' level of writing before engaging them in the intervention tasks. This was done in the absence of their teacher in order to make them free to give the required information without any fear of their teacher. After the intervention that was done through writing of essay tasks, structured interviews were conducted in order to ascertain the improvement, their views and experiences of engaging in journal writing activities. The interviews were conducted by the researcher and each interview was voice recorded, this was done with the help of the research assistance who is a music teacher in the school.

3.2.5 Intervention programme and Feedback

An intervention is an act of inserting one thing between others in order to alter something; it is an action taken to improve something (Johnson & Krans 2011). The understanding of intervention in this study is in line with Johnson *et al.* (2011). It refers to an action that will be taken with the aim of improving writing skills. Lee (2015) presents different types of interventions namely; (i) simple intervention, (ii) classical intervention, (iii) family intervention, (iv) crisis intervention and (v) instructional intervention. The first four types of interventions are commonly used for people with addiction or compulsive behaviour whereas instructional intervention is for a specific programme or set of steps taken to help a child improve in an area of need; these are sometimes called academic interventions. Lee (2015:38) further asserts that interventions have key elements, namely: they are intentional and aimed at a particular weakness; they are specific, formal and last a certain number of weeks or months and are reviewed at set intervals, and they are set up this way so that the school can monitor the child's progress with an intervention. Writer (2014) reiterates and adds to the above points by stating that interventions are formal but they can be flexible. For example, if a particular programme is not helping a learner the school may change it and use a stronger intervention, such as increasing the amount of time learners receive for support each week or moving from group to individual help.

Writer (2014) warns teachers not to confuse interventions with strategies because they are different though an intervention may include strategies. The main difference is that an intervention is formal, aimed at a known need and monitored, whereas a strategy, by contrast can be informal and is not always monitored for its effectiveness. By exploring the types of interventions highlighted above, the researcher was able to explore more information on an instructional intervention programme for this study. In particular, English FAL learners, such as the majority of African language speakers in South Africa, need targeted interventions to overcome the effects of not only learning a new language but also learning in a new language. In this country, school is the only place where many such learners have a chance to hear and participate in English language activities such as speaking, reading and writing (Johnson & Krans, 2011). Johnson and Krans further state that these learners need strategies that will

help them face the challenges of learning a second language, learning through a second language, as well as developing linguistic strategies required in order for them to succeed in their schooling career.

All learners in this school are doing English FAL. The study targeted the class of grade eleven. This target class in this school constituted more than one group, but all groups were taught by the same teacher. Only one group was formulated from all sections of grade eleven classes. Six learners were taken from each group for representation in order to have a group of thirty. The six learners from each group were selected by their English FAL educator, he selected them based on their performance in creative writing tasks that they had already done in term one. He selected two in each category that is high, average and low.

The interaction sessions with these learners were conducted over a period of eight weeks. They were not seen every day in a week, but at set intervals. The learners were seen twice a week given a variety of written tasks every week. The first meeting in a week was for the writing of activities and the second meeting in a week was for feedback and discussions. All written tasks required the participants to write an essay based on a given question. This was done in order to monitor their progressive improvement in essay writing since the study aimed at an intervention strategy that might help FET phase learners to improve their writing skills. The researcher started by giving the group guidelines on essay writing. Their teacher was not present during this session. The researcher gave learners the activities to write under her supervision. The learners wrote essays and journals were collected for marking which was completed in three days, and thereafter engaged in feedback and discussion sessions with learners. The feedback sessions were based on the learners' common errors such as using the wrong tense in essay writing. The expected content, layout of the essay and sequencing of ideas were also explained to the group. All writing activities were done under the researcher's supervision and not at home. The rationale behind this was that the researcher wanted an accurate reflection of the learners' writing abilities. The tasks that were given to the participants required them to write a creative writing essay, read a poem, a short story and respond to questions through essay writing. The writing of tasks and feedback sessions were done in the absence of the participants' teacher. The reason for this was that the researcher wanted

participants to participate without any fear of being judged, as the presence of their teacher would put unnecessary pressure on them. The researcher's intention was to conduct these sessions in a relaxed atmosphere. The research assistant did not assist in the marking of tasks because the researcher wanted to have first-hand experience of the level of learners' performance.

Waack (2015) refers to feedback in the classroom as information allowing a learner to reduce the gap between what is evident currently and what could be the case. Based on the definition by Waack (2015), the researcher felt that there was a need for feedback sessions, since the researcher sought to ascertain if there would be any improvement on the FET phase learners' writing skills. In the same vein, Voerman, Meijer, Korthagen, and Simons, (2012) also emphasise the importance of feedback and they opine that feedback is an important tool to enhance learning. This is one of the influential factors in learning. It is powerful in the quality and quantity of instruction and it is regarded as crucial to improving knowledge and skills. This is in line with what the researcher aimed to do, that is, to give clear and specific feedback to see if there would be any improvement in their performance based on the series of tasks that were given to them. This was done through positive and constructive written comments on their scripts and discussions in class.

Voerman *et al.* (2012) posit that feedback has different approaches, those approaches are as follows: ***progressive feedback*** – it provides feedback on the progress students have made towards achieving goals, this feedback enhances both learning and motivation; ***positive feedback*** – it shows support, encouragement and appreciation and ***negative feedback*** – shows disapproval and sarcasm. Voerman et al. (2012) further highlight categories of feedback intervention, such as ***non-specific positive feedback***, for example “good job” and ***specific positive feedback***, for example, “well done, you have shown the clear understanding of coherence in essay writing”; ***non-specific negative feedback***, for example, “that is incorrect”; ***specific negative feedback***, for example, “Your introduction is too long and you do not know the conjugations of irregular verbs.” After the researcher had looked at all these categories of feedback she was able to choose the **specific positive feedback** to employ in this study when marking tasks that were given to participants. The **specific positive feedback** is constructive, encouraging and developmental in nature. The

intention of those written tasks by participants (grade 11 learners) was not to pass or fail them but to assist in developing their writing abilities.

3.2.6 Description of data collection procedures

Data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest, in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer stated research questions, test hypothesis and evaluate outcomes.

3.2.6.1 Instruments used for data collection

The instruments that the researcher used also depended on the data collection method to be used (Creswell, 2012). In research there are various types of data collection instruments such as task - based, surveys, documents, checklist, scales, indexes questionnaires, structured or semi-structured interviews schedule, unstructured interviews and observations among others. Qualitative research usually uses interviews, open - ended questionnaires and observations as methods of data collection.

According to Kumar (2014) defines interviews as a person-to-person interaction, either face-to-face between two or more individuals with a specific purpose in mind. An interview involves an interviewer reading questions to respondents and recording their answers. The use of interviews as a data collection method begins with the assumption that the participants' perspectives are meaningful, known, and can be made explicit, and that their perspective affects the success of the research project (Cohen, *et al.*, 2011). Interviews have been used for various purposes and literature elaborates on the characteristics of a good interview. Kumar (2014:173) provides the characteristics of a good interview schedule should obtain all the information required for achieving the research objectives, must not contain discussion questions, must contain questions that can be answered quickly and easily and must avoid unwarranted presumptions about the respondents. Each question must be limited to a single idea. Questions must be arranged in a logical and psychological sequence that is easy for the respondents and must start with a few simple questions that the

interviewee can answer comfortably. Questions must be in clear, in plain English, and must have a good closing question that helps the interviewee summarise or come to a conclusion.

Kumar (2014) also advises that the interviewer must take time to find a quiet venue in which to conduct interviews. These recommendations assisted the researcher when she was formulating the interview questions. She considered all suggestions to strengthen the quality of an interview schedule. Cohen, *et al.* (2011) state that there are two types of interviews that can be used in evaluating research, that is, structured interviews in which a carefully formulated questionnaire is administered, and the emphasis is on obtaining answers to carefully phrased questions. In structured interviews the researcher asks a predetermined set of questions using the same wording and order of questions as specified in the interview schedule. In in-depth interviews, the interviewer does not follow a rigid format. They are particularly appropriate for complex subject matter, detailed information and highly sensitive subjects.

The instruments that were found suitable for data collection in this study were task-based and semi-structured interview schedule. The first and second objectives were addressed through writing of (i) creative writing essays, (ii) a poem and (iii) a short story from their prescribed genre. Responding to questions based on those tasks, interaction and feedback were done after the marking of tasks, and the third objective was addressed through interviewing of each participant after the whole process to gauge their views regarding the experiences they had when they were engaged in the intervention programme of journal writing.

Interviews have advantages and disadvantages which are outlined by Kumar, (2014:175) as follows:

Advantages of interviews

- They usually yield richest data, details and new insights.
- They provide uniform information.
- Permit face – face contact with respondents.

- Provide opportunity to explore topics in depth.
- Allow interviewer to experience the affective as well as cognitive aspects of responses.
- Allow interviewer to be flexible in administering interview to particular individuals or in particular circumstances.

Disadvantages of interviews

- They are expensive and time consuming.
- Need well- qualified and highly trained interviewer.
- Interviewee may distort information through recall error, selective perceptions, and desire to please the interviewer.
- Flexibility can result in inconsistencies across interviews.
- Large volume of information may be difficult to transcribe and reduce data.

A rubric was designed to use as an assessment tool during the marking of the creative writing essay activities which was given to participants together with the task of essay writing. They were given the rubric with the task in order for them to know what was expected in their essay writing and how marks were allocated for the entire essay. The rubric was categorised according to the aspects that the researcher looked into while marking the essay, such as, content and planning, language style, presentation and argument, sequencing of ideas, original thoughts, editing, coherence in paragraphs and the structure of the essay.

Tasks were formulated as follows:

- In one creative essay task, the participants were given four topics and were required to choose one that suited their individual interests. The topics encompassed a variety of genres such as narrative, descriptive, and reflective topics. This variety of topics for the creative essay gave participants a wider choice of interest.

- The second task was a poem that they had to read and answer the set question in an essay form. The selected poem for reading and response required learners to write their views on the person that gave birth, and dumped the born baby in a dustbin in the street where it was eaten by scavenger dogs as it was abandoned. This poem was considered by the researcher to be ideal as it was able to solicit many responses. Furthermore, this poem provided the scope for learners to be empathetic. In marking the poem the researcher looked at how they sequenced ideas, understood and appreciated the poem, interpreted the meanings inherent in the poem and argued their ideas in an essay form.
- The third task was a short story from their prescribed genre. The researcher gave learners two questions and they were required to choose one question and answer it in an essay format. The short story was about two young people who had a date in the most expensive restaurant in town and both behaved as though they lived an expensive life style, but at the end the man was left in huge debt. The content of the story was applicable to young people and hence learners could identify with the characters.

Consistency was achieved across the three tasks, since all were formulated in such a way that participants write essays. The researcher made sure that the tasks were integral to curriculum texts and that they had enough variety. The participants were informed at the beginning that the tasks would help them develop their writing skills in areas such as organising, reporting, reviewing and editing information. During the interview sessions all participants were interviewed individually; they were called to come to a separate classroom one by one without following any particular order. The researcher asked each one of them the same structured questions from the interview schedule. Their answers were recorded with a voice recorder by the research assistant, and the researcher wrote down their responses to make sure that every answer was captured.

3.2.7 Data analysis and presentation

Qualitative data analysis is a process of inductive reasoning, thinking and theorising. Data analysis involves inferences, comparisons as a central point and public method

or process that reveals the study design (De Vos *et al.* 2012). It is also emphasised that there are core differences between qualitative and quantitative data analysis. Qualitative researchers create new concepts and theory by blending together empirical evidence and abstract concepts, while quantitative researchers manipulate numbers in order to test a hypothesis with variables constructs. According to De Vos *et al.* (2012), quantitative researchers use the language of statistical relationships in analysis, but qualitative data are in the form of words, which are relatively imprecise, diffuse and context based. In some instances, both approaches overlap such that data analysis may involve both qualitative and quantitative data analysis approaches. This study was largely qualitative in nature and did use statistical analysis to quantify the marks obtained by participants.

After data were collected from the respondents' journals, the analytic framework was employed, which was the constructivist grounded theory. The constructivist grounded theory has its foundations in relativism and an appreciation of the multiple truths and realities of subjectivism. It offers a rationale for theory that was grounded, generated and developed during the research project (Mills, Bonner & Francis 2006). Engaging in constructivist enquiry requires transformation of the relationship between the participant and the researcher. For the researcher to analyse the interaction that occurs between the two, their interaction creates data that will emerge from their enquiry. The interviews were used as one of the instruments in this study and that covers the interaction between the participant and the researcher as highlighted by Mills, *et al.*, (2006).

Different topics or themes were identified looking at underlying similarities. Categories were named and analysis of data was done through descriptive coding of all data. The journals of thirty participants and interviews' recordings were provided as data to be analysed. Thereafter, both quantitative and qualitative research data analysis methods were utilised such as statistics, tables, narratives and thematic approaches.

3.2.8 Ethical considerations, administrative procedures and planning for field work

According to De Vos *et al.*, (2012) research should be based on mutual trust, acceptance, cooperation, promises and well accepted conventions and expectations between all parties involved in a research project. Resnik (2015) avers that the standard is that the person must have all the information that might reasonably influence their willingness to participate, such as potential risks, discomfort and adverse effects. All these things must be explained to the participants in a form that they can understand. In the same vein, Creswell (2012) points out factors to be taken into consideration when handling ethical issues. These are; risks of harm, confidentiality, anonymity, right to service, respect for intellectual property and honesty.

To assure someone of confidentiality means that what has been discussed will not be repeated, or at least, not without permission. The notions of confidentiality and anonymity are invariably raised and discussed with research participants prior to their participation in research. However, in the research context confidentiality, as it is commonly understood, makes little sense. Confidential research cannot be conducted; researchers have a duty to report on the findings of their research and they cannot do so if the data they collect is confidential and cannot be revealed. What researchers can do is to ensure that they do not disclose identifiable information about participants and also try to protect the identities of research participants through various processes designed to anonymise them. The extent to which anonymisation is successful varies according to the research context. Based on this background, confidentiality cannot be assured; researchers can claim that they will endeavour to ensure to the best of their ability that participants are not identified but they cannot reasonably promise that this will be the case. According to Crow and Wiley (2008:421-423), “the primary method researchers use to preserve anonymity and confidentiality is the use of pseudonyms for participants and also for the location of the research.” In this study, the participants’ anonymity and confidentiality was protected through the use of pseudonyms. Their names were represented by numbers ranging from 01-030, and that is how the researcher called them during class sessions. Furthermore, the identity of the participating school was also not revealed.

This study was conducted in the form of an exploratory and participatory case study. The following ethical considerations and administrative procedures were followed:

- (i) The researcher made all endeavours to comply with all ethical principles such as honesty, accountability, anonymity, privacy and confidentiality.
- (ii) The researcher entered into an agreement with participants which clarified the nature of the research and the responsibility of each party.
- (iii) The parents' or guardians' consent was also administered since the participants were minors.
- (iv) The parents' consent declaration was provided in both the English and IsiZulu versions to accommodate parents who cannot read and understand English.

These were sent to parents two weeks before the researcher embarked on data collection activities. The forms were distributed to learners to give to their parents or guardians to read and sign voluntarily, and bring them back to the researcher. The participants were also given informed consent declaration forms for them to read and sign voluntarily. The research included an informed consent process which encompassed the following: (i) the purpose of the research; (ii) procedures used in research; (iii) participants' right to decline to participate at any time; and (iv) benefits of the research and confidentiality. The researcher also ensured that the other researchers' works cited in the thesis were acknowledged. With regard to anonymity and confidentiality, Wiles, Crow, Heath and Charles (2006) opine that these two concepts are "viewed as akin to the principle of privacy" in-so-far as ethics literature is concerned. Furthermore, Wiles, *et al.*, (2006:85) explain that the need for anonymity and confidentiality is integral to "societal beliefs that individuals matter and those individuals have the right for their affairs to be private."

In terms of ethical procedure the following was done:

- A letter requesting permission to conduct research was submitted to the Head of Department for KwaZulu-Natal Department of Basic Education.
- A letter was also submitted to the director of uThungulu district requesting permission to conduct research in a target school within the district.
- A letter was submitted to the principal of the target school seeking permission to conduct sessions of reading-response journal writing, giving feedback and having discussions with the learners.

After all these submissions were done, the researcher received positive responses from all of them. The researcher was granted permission to conduct research in any school in the province of KwaZulu-Natal and the School Management Team (SMT) of the target school also granted permission to the researcher to use the school for the case study.

3.2.9 Validity and Reliability

Validity is an important key to effective research. Hinchey (2008) maintains that the validity of the instrument for data collection is defined as plausibility, credibility and trustworthiness of data and whether or not the data can be challenged. The validity of instruments in this study was ascertained through opinions of selected experts. One of them was the supervisor of this research project who holds high qualifications in English and teaches it at the university. The Uthungulu district English FAL subject advisors were also consulted as authorities in the field. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) define reliability as a measure of consistency over time and over similar samples, it yields similar data from similar respondents over time. The reliability of data collected was ascertained through the use of structured and unstructured interviews. Interviews were recorded; solicited documents were collected from participants and there was consistent supervision of participants' journal writing activities by the researcher.

3.3 SUMMARY

In this chapter the researcher has described and outlined the research paradigm including methodological framework and specific methods that were used in the research process. This chapter also included a description of the target population, sampling procedures, description of data analysis approaches, procedures, instruments that were used for data collection and ethical considerations. The analysis of data for the purpose of elucidating findings in relation to research questions is dealt with in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the researcher presents the interpretation and analysis of data collected by means of both task-based and interview instruments from a sample of thirty participants. The three main research questions that were investigated in this study were as follows: (a) How does the use of the reading-response journal as an intervention strategy enhance the development of writing skills for English First Additional Language learners in the FET phase? (b) What are learners' views about the intervention programme of reading-response journal writing in developing writing skills? (c) What are the experiences of English First Additional Language learners as participants in the activities of journal writing? The results from these research questions will be presented statistically and narratively.

The first section is based on the first research question which used written tasks as the instrument for data collection. These will be statistically presented. The second section presents results to the second and third research questions, based on qualitative data arising out of interviews with the participants. Data collected through interviews will be narratively presented.

4.2 USING READING-RESPONSE JOURNAL TO DEVELOP WRITING SKILLS

The first research question of this study sought to explore the effectiveness of using reading-response journals as an intervention strategy to enhance the development of writing skills of English FAL FET learners.

The researcher's observation has been that generally learners are resistant to reading and writing. By giving learners interesting reading materials it motivated them to read. The activities that were given to participants expected them to read and respond to what they have read by writing essays. These two skills are usually integrated and not done in isolation. All tasks that were given to participants required learners to

read topics of creative writing, poem and short story and thereafter respond by writing essays.

Data collected by means of written essays aimed to ascertain whether or not there would be any improvement of FET learners' writing skills. All thirty participants were expected to write the three different essay tasks which differed in genre. Richard (1990) supports the different genre approach in teaching writing skills in English language classes to which he states that learners need to realise and master features such as contexts, audiences, purposes and linguistic conventions of text which are the important features of any text-type. Teaching essay writing skills through production of compositions only benefits learners to produce error-free texts following models of correct language (Heyland, 2002:58). Each task comprised fifty (50) marks. Participants were not identified by name but were assigned numbers ranging from 01-30 as codes to represent their identity. This was done for purposes of anonymity and ethical considerations. In this study an action was taken with the aim of improving English FAL learners' writing skills in the FET phase.

Before the intervention programme commenced, the researcher interviewed the teacher who taught the grade eleven class. The aim of the interview was to know the learners' level of writing in order to confirm the necessity of an intervention. What transpired from the interview was that learners' writing skills were not at the expected level as they were lacking in language command. They showed minimal ability to express their thoughts freely on paper because of their fear of being judged and their essays were usually not reader friendly as they lacked coherence and logical sequence. The concerns expressed by the teacher about the learners' writing skills showed that an intervention programme could assist the learners to develop their writing skills.

In the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement(CAPS) document, it is stated that writing combines three elements namely, *using the writing process; learning and applying knowledge of the structure and features of different text types and learning and applying knowledge of paragraphs and sentence structure and punctuation.* According to DBE, (2011:53) writing for English FAL FET phase needs proper

planning like all other language aspects. Therefore, teachers need to emphasise the following as per curriculum prescripts when teaching writing skills:

- Analyse the structure, language features and register of the text type that has been selected
- Decide on its purpose, audience and context
- Brainstorm or mind map ideas for the topic
- Discuss the rubric or criteria that will be used to evaluate the piece of writing
- Identify main ideas and supporting detail for the topic
- Write simple, compound and complex sentences in an essay.

The guidelines from the CAPS document are in line with what the researcher did, especially deciding on the purpose which was to assist learners to improve their writing skills. The marking rubric also had aspects that wanted ideas and supporting details on the essays.

4.2.1 Task 1 (creative writing)

In task one which was the writing of a creative essay, the participants were given four topics and they were required to choose one that best suited their interest. The topics encompassed a range of genres such as narrative, descriptive, and reflective topics. This variety gave participants a wide choice of interest. The topics were as follows:

1. Empty promises 2. "Oh what a day" 3. Happiness is a state of mind. Do you agree? 4. As I looked at his/her coffin... A rubric was designed to use as an assessment tool during the marking of the creative writing essay activities and this was given to participants together with the essay writing task. Participants were given the rubric with the task in order for them to know what was expected in their essay writing and how marks would be allocated for the entire essay, (see Appendix E). The rubric was categorised according to the aspects and guidelines pertaining to the use of reading-response journal and essay writing as a means of developing writing skills. The researcher looked into the various aspects when she marked the essays, namely, content and planning, language style, presentation and argument, sequencing of ideas,

original thoughts, editing, coherence in paragraphs and the structure of the essay. These aspects were in line with the rubric.

In presenting the data below, on the actual tasks of journal writing, certain paragraphs were extracted from all three tasks using the same five participants. Scripts of five learners were randomly selected to illustrate the improvements that occurred as a result of the intervention programme. The paragraphs were extracted from those five learners' essays which show the weaknesses and strengths of participants in essay writing. Those participants are: 02, 07, 08, 16 and 29 as they were identified by those codes.

Given below are the actual paragraphs selected from task 1.

Participant 02-Task 1

"OH What A DAY"

Introduction

This day I will never ever forget it. Actually that was
the day that I will never stop thinking and talking
about it until I enter my grave. "OH What A DAY"
This should be at the end

"That day was the best day ever and I will never
forget it, Everything was perfect even presents were
nice and beautiful and Laptop and phone are super good.
"OH WHAT A DAY".

In marking the creative essay for participant 02, the researcher identified weaknesses in logical sequencing of tense. There was a very thin story line in the essay and series of events were not coherently presented. The main ideas about the topic were there but not logically presented. The ideas that should have come earlier in an essay were

in the middle and at the end of the essay. The researcher's comments as the marker clearly indicated that ideas are to be logically presented and the use of tenses must be consistent and in line with the topic.

Participant 07- Task 1 "OH WHAT A DAY"

It was the 21th of January when I ~~wake~~^{wake} up in the morning to start in the new School in my high School which is Dlangzwa High. I ~~wake~~^{wake} up in the morning for my preparation for my new school. Although I found it ~~hard~~^{hard} for ^{me} to leave my family and my friends to start a new life but I was happy to start a new life with new people. I was accompanied by my mother when we left home at round about 07:00 AM and we arrived at School at 14:00 pm. When we arrived at School I started up crying because I was feeling the pain of being left in a place I don't know. Seeing other children made me feel better.

When we had done all that was supposed to be done my mother got back home and I was left alone and no one to talk to. I find it hard for ^{me} to accept it but when the day go on I felt better. I ^{??} that moment when I was just sitting on my ~~bed~~ bed I saw a girl coming to me. She introduced herself to me and I also introduced my self to her. Her name is Smangee. She was very kind with me in all things we were talking. It was like we had known each other for a long period of time. In that moment I realised that I was not being left alone.

The creative essay for participant 07 had a weak story line and a series of events that led the writer to say; "Oh what a day." A series of events were not clearly outlined, as a result it was not easy for the researcher to determine the mood, that is, was it happiness, disaster, sorrow or success. After finishing marking the comments to the learner indicated that the use of language and grammar was satisfactory, the topic was not done in depth, and events that led to the writer regarding that day as a special one were not clearly presented.

Participant- 08-Task 1

2. OH WHAT A DAY"

Oh! What what a day, I had on the 24th July 2014. It was the greatest day of my life and yes it was because it was my birthday.

✓ conjunction does not start a sentence And it was time to sleep we went to the room that was booked so we could sleep. I was so tired and at the same time happy so we called it a day and went to dreamland. OH what a day.

So when I was still having my breakfast dad told me to go and bathe quickly, so I did. Everyone was wearing cool, casual clothes as it we^{re} going out for a cruise. We quickly got into the car and I was the only one in the car who had no idea of where we^{were} going to. Guess what? ~~we~~ were going for a cruise. So as we were driving my heart was bubbling because of the excitement. We arrived at the harbour in waterfront part as I got off the car I saw a huge boat with no-one and buggy ? >

Participant 08 produced a satisfactory essay although mentioning the birthday at an introductory stage ruined the elements of surprise and suspense. In good writing, suspense and surprise should build up to climax. The sequencing of tenses was satisfactory, but the participant was cautioned about starting sentences with conjunctions. A conjunction is a connector between two sentences, clauses, phrases or words and starting a sentence. Some conjunctions can start sentences and some

cannot, therefore second language novice writers are discouraged to start sentences with conjunctions.

Participant 16- Task 1

Empty Promises

016

Everything in the world happens ^{for} ~~on its own~~ purpose.
✓ You do things in the way that anyone can ~~think~~
you are crazy, but no it is because of the love we
have. You will realise late that everything is ~~too~~ fake.

✓ *Good Paragraph*
Have you ever been in the mood where you thought everything
is going on your own way. Cuddling and other stuff
made me feel so special. Everything in the world
were promised to be mine, even the Earth was
promised to be mine. Telling your self that you
would do what you want at your own time was the
✓ thing I actually did. I thought I was the Queen
and my dream has come true he was all I wanted.

✓
My family was there to talk to me before it got too
late. Talking to me was so annoying in my face.
I thought they were jealous and they kept on reminding
me about school and respect, What I want in future.
✓ All those things didn't even exist on my mind.
He told me to forget about school because he got was
everything. I can count it Businesses, Money, house
and etc so is school necessary that much to me? No!.

His money, businesses, houses didn't give me what I always wanted or dreaming about, her money didn't reach my goals, it didn't afford my goals but it afforded to destroy me and ~~drag~~ me to hell.

The researcher found that the essay for participant 16 was good, series of events were coherently presented and language command was also good. However, the conclusion did not adequately summarise all the events that led to the participant to say "Empty Promises." The language use was satisfactory, the writer was consistent in using the tenses and grammatical errors were limited. The intervention programme could push this learner to greater performance in writing.

Participant 29- Task 1

4. As I Looked At His/Her Coffin. - -

It was October 06 2010. I was 11 years old when I lost my grandmother who happened to be my mother when ~~the~~ ^{my} real one is not around.

I looked at her coffin as she was ~~buried~~ ^{beared} on the 16th of October 2010. I saw lot and lot of people around me crying and saying all the good stuff about her. What she was, what kind of a person she used to be during the old ~~day~~ ^{times} while she was around with ~~her~~ ^{her} friends of hers. Her coffin was spot less, every one was wearing black and white for the funeral and I was the youngest. Most people were ~~her~~ ^{her} close friends of hers, they were with her from the Church some were ~~her~~ ^{her} neighbours and some were working with her.

You can try and forget how he/she died, forget that they were once part of your life, your family's ~~lives~~ but don't forget one thing, what role he/she played in your life, because where ~~he~~ she is right now, they never forget what role you played once in their life time.

I never thought I will lose grandma and never noticed that someone is not in my life and now I need her more than ever. She used to tell us stories about her past life, that how brave and strong she was, my mom reminds ^{me} not grandma. ~~In~~ her coffin she fitted well and they let us ^{see} ~~she~~ her she was beautiful something I never noticed. My mother can take care of me but not like grandma use to, it is different, then the way grandma used to.

In this essay for participant 29, the participant is lamenting that life will never be the same without his or her grandmother but not much information on the relationship that he or she shared with his or her granny was narrated on to elicit such a lamentation. The participant did not demonstrate any account of thought processes and emotions evoked by the death of his or her granny. The language command was of an acceptable standard but the depth of the topic was not fully covered.

The marks for task one for the whole sample are numerically presented in the table 4.1 below:

Table 4.1 Marks for task 1 (creative writing) (n=30)

CREATIVE WRITING	
PARTICIPANT	MARKS 50
16	40
17	38
27	38
11	37
12	37
09	35
05	35
26	33
29	33
25	32
26	31
08	30
06	28
30	28
14	27
31	26
24	26
02	25
13	20
15	20
07	20
22	18
04	18
03	17
01	17
20	17
19	17
23	16
22	16
10	12
	Median: 27.5
	Mean: 26.241

Observations: The highest mark was 40 and the lowest was 12 out of 50; the median was **27.5** and the arithmetic mean **26.241**. Feedback was given to participants after marking. It was given through comments on their scripts and also discussed in class during scheduled feedback sessions. During the discussion of feedback, participants were able to raise their concerns regarding the marks they scored in task 1. One of the participants asked this question, “How come I score below 35 marks yet my language errors are so few?” The participant’s essay lacked coherence and depth on discussion of the topic and that comment was on the script. After feedback discussions, participants realised where their weaknesses were and were advised to always follow the requirements of the rubric as it was given to them when they were given the task. The researcher also encouraged participants to go through each comment on their scripts thoroughly.

4.2.2 Task 2 (poetry)

Task two was a poem that participants had to read and answer the set question in an essay style format. The title of the poem selected was: *An abandoned bundle: by Oswald Mtshali*. The selected poem for reading and response required learners to write their views on the actions of the woman who gave birth and then dumped the baby on a rubbish heap next to a dustbin in the streets of White City Jabavu in Soweto, where the baby was eaten by scavenger dogs soon after it was abandoned. The young woman who abandoned the baby disappeared and was walking innocently in the streets. The speaker in the poem points out that the conditions under which people lived in this city were very bad and challenging. People lived in poverty and he feels that the woman who abandoned the baby was innocent. The speaker’s attempt to present dialectic for the reader seems a deliberate attempt to invite debate on the issue. This poem was considered by the researcher to be ideal as it was able to solicit many responses. Furthermore, this poem provided the scope for learners to be empathetic. The set question for this task was:

In the last stanza the speaker expresses compassion for the mother who abandoned her baby. Do you feel she deserves sympathy? Answer the question in an essay form to justify your argument.

In marking the response to the poem the researcher looked at how participants sequenced ideas, understood and appreciated the poem, interpreted the meanings inherent in the poem and argued their ideas in an essay form. The researcher used the rubric during marking of the task (see appendix E).

Given below are the paragraphs extracted from task two where participants were answering poetry question that required them to answer in an essay format.

Participant 02-Task 2

AN ABANDONED BUNDLE

No, I don't ^{think} ~~feel~~ she deserves sympathy after what she has ~~done~~ ^{to} an innocent child, who was going to be something huge one day but then she decided to end the life/path of the young one.

As we all know that a child is a blessing that comes from God so we have to love children as we love ~~our~~ ^{ourselves}, Also God ~~we~~ will not ~~going~~ to be happy about what this mother has done to the child, and if I can get a chance to confirm this to this mother I will ask her that why she decided to ~~abodoned~~ ^{abandon} her own baby, She is so cruel and she ~~don't~~ ^{does not} even have any sympathy for ~~that~~ ^{the} young one that she dumped on a rubbish heap.

I know we all make mistakes but this one is too big to be ~~understandable~~ ^{understood}, If she thinks she didn't need this child why ~~she~~ ^{did} ~~not~~ ^{not} take it to the adoption centre maybe someone ^{got} was going to take it and raise ~~in~~ it in a proper way or ^{maybe} one day this child was going to be the president or the well-known doctor but then her own mother decided to end her/his life.

The use of tenses for participant 02 has greatly improved; there is logical sequencing of tenses. Ideas were also coherently and satisfactorily presented. The participant was able to interpret the meaning contained in the poem.

Participant 07-Task 2

The mother who abandoned her baby do not deserve Sympathy

This mother ^{does} ~~do~~ not deserve Sympathy because she left her child which means she did not ~~longer~~ want ~~or~~ needed the child. In such a way that she ^{it's the part ?? who threw the brick} ~~even~~ threw a brick and scurried away ^{do} that ^{do} not show the love of her child. As a mother she should have ^{try} ~~try~~ by all means to protect her child. Abandoning a child in other words you mean you don't care about them but this mother do not deserve sympathy especially because she did it on ~~her~~ own. Can you imagine dogs draped in a red bandana of blood.

She left her child that means she did not love ~~and~~ needed her baby. She even threw a brick and scurried away, leaving a multicolored capsean infant dumped on a rubbish heap. As the mother she should had show love and ^{try} ~~try~~ by all means to protect and to take good care of her baby. Sometime it not easy as a person to Sympathise ^{with} the person but sometime it help her to see her mistakes and never do it again. This mother deserve to be punished ^{for what} ~~about~~ she did to her baby, just because she did not need a baby didn't mean! She must do this.

It is important to love and take good ^{care of} ~~for~~ baby especially because there are things that they can do. Something Sympathy it may be like you are being punished by it teach you to think before you do something not clear

This performance of participant 07 shows that there is still a lack of a strong story line; the argument on the theme is not well supported with the important aspects. The writer does not demonstrate full understanding of the poem. The rubric in appendix E required the writer to take into consideration content, logical sequencing of ideas, and interpretation of the meanings inherent in the poem and coherent argument of relevant ideas.

Participant 08-Task 2

According to ~~myself~~^{me}, I am not being mean or anything but honestly from the inner part of my heart I totally feel like the mother who abandoned her baby ~~she~~ does not deserve sympathy at all, because as a human ~~be~~ you should appreciate whatever you have no matter how it looks like. The mother should have gone to ~~health~~^{social development} department or social workers or give up the baby for adoption. ~~Then~~ ~~there~~ For whatever reason she dumped the child for, it made the city to stink because ~~well~~^{the baby} a rotten corpse.

She does not deserve sympathy because the baby was just an innocent soul, an angel from ~~the~~ above. I can imagine the braveness and gut she ~~had~~ when she did this sin of abandoning a baby it is a sin but because she did ~~not~~ it on purpose, she is out there walking around while she is a murderer because killing and abandoning is just the same. She ^{is} out there pretending to be innocent idiot. How I feel and wish it that she could never and ever again be able to give birth to a baby and the baby's spirit that she ~~abandoned~~ could ~~haunt~~^{haunt} her for the rest of her life. yooo - - - you must be very angry - - - cursing her

No sympathy at all for the mother, because it never wanted the baby there were possibly many ways of getting of her baby rather than abandoning the baby. She is the one responsible for all this mess that happened in the city namely the Hinxynes like a yellow as pus oozing ^{from} ~~at~~ a gigantic sore. ~~she do~~

The mother deserves no sympathy until she confess in front of the community of the white city.

The researcher's observation on this performance was that participant 08 has managed to present ideas coherently; the introduction of the essay was also striking which is an improvement from the first task. The participant has been cautious about not starting sentences with conjunctions.

Participant 16- Task 2

No ~~to~~ I don't think ~~the~~ mother who abandoned her baby deserves sympathy. ✓

How could she do that? I thought carrying a person for nine months is not easy at all. Even ^{though} ~~that~~ life is not easy for all of us, but it doesn't ^{mean that} ~~mean that~~ we must give up. Life is too short so do what you will be proud of in future. ✓

I know that everything we do, we do it for some reasons but I wish to know what kind of a reasons ~~were~~ ^{was} you going to say. Maybe he/she was going to be something you are proud of, maybe he was the one to sort out your problems or bring you the happiness. Remember you only live once, what a kind of a mother ~~he~~ ^{she} is to you. ~~A~~ Leaving your baby there doesn't change anything but it still makes you a mother.

From this response by participant 16, the researcher noticed that she or he still lacks consistency in using tenses in an essay but the content is adequate in terms of interpreting and responding to the question and crafting a series of ideas.

Participant 29-Task 2

No she don't deserves sympathy.

Everything happens for a reason, you first think ~~then~~ ^{before} you do ~~something~~, you plan before you do something. When you planned or thought about something you want to do, you don't regret ~~your self~~ and you don't deserve sympathy.

Some mothers have guts to just leave ~~their~~ ^{they} little ones in the trush without thinking how hard it will for the baby to cry ~~an~~ ^{all} night, day in and day out hoping that their mother will show up, but she never shows up. She should have made an abortion when she got lower months, but when the baby is born, she decides to just throw it away with one reason. I don't have money to raise the baby, that is always an excuse. Focus to the poem - talk about this mother who abandoned the baby. Sometimes people could find baby's crying at the trush some decide to keep it, some take it to the Orphanage for protection or some take it to the police. Those are lucky kids to be found because ~~cause~~ some even die in the trush crying, without food and a dirty diaper. The kids that are found by some people to keep them, some are bullied, treated differently and sometime they tell them that

Participant 29 scored lower marks compared to task one. This concerned the researcher because it showed that the participant did not consider the feedback and comments that were given for task one. The participant in task two was off point and demonstrated no clear understanding of the poem. Marks for task two for the whole sample are numerically presented in table 4.2 below:

Table 4.2 Marks for task 2 (poem) (n=30)

POETRY	
PARTICIPANT	MARKS 50
16	44
08	42
27	42
17	40
24	40
12	38
15	38
05	38
27	38
09	37
25	36
30	34
06	33
02	32
01	32
04	32
14	28
22	28
28	28
29	28
10	27
11	27
19	27
26	27
07	25
03	24
13	24
21	22
20	20
23	20
	Median: 32
	Mean: 31.689

Observations: The highest mark was 44 and the lowest mark was 20 out of 50. The median was **32** and the arithmetic mean **31.689**. The number of participants who scored above 25 marks increased from 17 to 24. The highest was 40 in task one whereas it was 44 in task two. The lowest was 12 in task one whereas it was 20 in task two. Therefore, the finding based on the observations shows that there was a general improvement between task 1 and task 2. The feedback that the researcher gave to participants through comments on their scripts and also discussed in class after marking of task 1 had a positive effect because of the improvement observed in task 2. The majority of participants in task 2 were able to consider consistency in the use of tenses, coherence in paragraphs improved and grammatical errors were no longer glaring compared to task 1. Discussion of feedback was also done for task 2; participants were free to make comments acknowledging their own carelessness mistakes as they were indicated on their scripts. The researcher emphasised the importance of considering the rubric when writing an essay task. The rubric gives clear guidance on what the marker will be looking at during marking of the task.

4.2.3 Task 3 (short story)

The third task was a short story from the prescribed texts of the grade eleven set books. The researcher gave learners two questions and they were required to choose one question and to answer it in an essay format. The title of the short story given was: *The luncheon: by William Somerset Maugham*. This short story was about two young people who had a date in the most expensive restaurant in town and they both presented a facade of enjoying an expensive life style. At the beginning the woman continually said that she did not eat much and specified that she only eats one light meal per day. In spite of her making these assertions numerous times, she went on ordering a variety of expensive dishes at the restaurant. The man was restless because he did not have enough money to foot the bill presented to him. In the end he was saddled with a huge bill that he could not afford to pay. This story was selected by the researcher because of its relevance to the lives of young people and it was envisaged that the learners would be able to understand the context as the audience who reads the story. The set questions were:

Consider the whole story. The narrator is solely responsible for the predicament he finds himself in at the restaurant. Do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer.

OR

The main theme of the story, 'The luncheon', is that in reality things are not always what they appear to be. Write an essay in which you discuss this statement that indeed in reality things are not always what they appear to be.

This story was considered by the researcher to be ideal as it had the potential to elicit a variety of responses from participants. In marking the short story task, (see rubric on appendix E), the researcher looked at how the storyline in the essay was, how participants sequenced ideas, understood and appreciated the story, interpreted the meanings inherent in the story, and argued their ideas regarding these two characters.

The extracts from the short story writing essays of five different participants will be given below to show how they performed.

Participant 02- Task 3

This story is telling us about two characters who first met ~~at~~ a theatre, ~~and~~ after that they lost details of each other then they stopped contacting each other, until now after twenty years ~~ago~~ when they found each other. This young man had a small apartment in a Latin Quarter and he was ~~was~~ earning only just enough money to keep body and soul together. The woman read a book of this young man. As days pass on he got a letter from her saying she was passing through Paris and she would like to have a chat with him. Then he agreed to meet her at ~~Fogot's~~ restaurant to have a little luncheon. And this young man does not have enough money for the whole month.

use your own words

This young man was pretending to be a rich / a cool guy who knows ~~well~~ how to treat a woman, while he does not ^{have} the enough ~~the~~ money to pay the bill. But he was "like order whatever like" but when it comes to him he ordered the cheapest dish so that he can save the money. And this woman was pretending to be a vegetarian who does not eat meat or heavy things like chops. Actually she was pretending to be a Queen or ~~some~~ top sister in the whole world. She was all over her self.

The performance demonstrated by participant 02 on task 3 showed great improvement. Language usage was satisfactory; presentation of argument was coherent and covered most of the important aspects required by the question.

Participant 07- Task 3

The narrator is solely responsible for the predicament he finds him self in, at the restaurant. I am saying this because as a person you have to say "no" where you ~~are~~ ^{found} supposed to, but we ~~find~~ ^{found} out that the narrator said he was too young to say no to a woman. The narrator knew very well that the prices were ~~a good~~ higher but he continued ~~wanted~~ ^{more than one} to eat in that restaurant while she said she will never eat ^{anything}. The narrator ^{didn't} allowed a waiter to make him interested to get something to eat while salmon was being cooked,

He said he want caviar instead of salmon while earlier on he said "I never eat more than one thing" and that shows that he don't know what he really wants exactly. He also knew that he ~~can't~~ ^{didn't} even afford caviar but he told the waiter to bring it for him. The narrator did not even noticed how much ~~did~~ he used but he continued letting her friend to order a champagne. He was even asking him self where the bill will come from but he continued ~~old~~ at the restaurant for him and her friend.

In this performance by participant 07 the researcher noticed that the participant had improved although her discussion did not clearly outline the cause of the predicament that the man finds himself in.

Participant 08 - Task 3

The narrator is the only one responsible for the unpleasant situation he finds himself in at the restaurant because he hardly knows / recognised her the ~~woman~~ lady. When the lady asks the narrator to take her out for a little luncheon, she had an idea of that the man is wealthy just because he is a writer, how unlucky he ~~wasn't~~ wasn't. The narrator should ~~not~~ have ~~not~~ agreed to go to a restaurant knowing that he has got financial problems. I am just imagining that how expensive, fancy the restaurant is because even the narrator have never been there.

The narrator agreed to take the lady out for a luncheon in a fancy so called restaurant Foyot's on his last money just to last him the rest of the month but he agreed only to impress a lady he does not even know for a short period of time, oh what kind of a man is he?? Maybe the brainless one I think. The narrator decided to lie and ordered the cheapest dish and allowed the lady to order the most expensive dish and the ~~get~~ ~~the~~ lady carried on ordering fancy / expensive dish and the lady only said small luncheon but as result he paid more and more

There is a lesson in ~~everything~~ you do. So rather stay true to yourself and others, accept who you are if you can't afford things rather don't bother about ^{them} ~~it~~. Never try to impress or fulfill others' position because you'll end up nowhere but in problems and a terrible unpleasant situation and you'll be the one to take the burden or blame.

Stay true to who you are!!!

Participant 08 had the highest mark on this last task, showing a significant improvement across three tasks that were written.

Participant 16-Task 3

Loving a person is not bad but ^{it} depends whether
is your love ^{is} for real or maybe you love ~~love~~
them for what they have not for who they are.
Well they ^{first} met in the theatre where he can not
recognized her at all. what ^{is} suprising is that
she did recognize him. Suddenly they were chatting.

There are so many ~~reason~~ reason why he could hardly
recognized her. First it was twenty years ago while
he was living in Paris. She had read the book of this ^{man}
and had written to him about it. She told him
about that she was passing through Paris and she
would like to have a chat with him. well it ^{was} not easy
for him to say no to the woman obvious that was
a yes.

Sometimes we can do things in such a way that
you wouldn't understand. He ~~had~~ to make it the
best day for the woman. He didn't have money but
their luncheon was going to ~~be~~ ^{be} at ~~the~~ ^{the} well known
restaurant and so expensive. The lady talked a lot
but he didn't mind to listen as he said
"I was prepared to be an attentive listener". ✓

Participant 16 did not show any improvement in the last task compared to tasks one and two. Instead, the participant's mark was lower than the mark obtained in task two.

Participant 29-Task 3

The narrator first saw the girl at the theatre and sat down beside her. It was 20 years ago he couldn't recognize her without hearing her name. They both went for luncheon ^{at a} restaurant. What we know about the two characters is that they have met before 20 years ago, than the narrator moved in Paris where he was living.

They both pretend to be Mr and Miss right, like they don't care what they order and how much ~~it~~ ^{it's}. The narrator pretended like he had money to pay for the bill while the girl kept on ordering more things. The narrator ~~wasn't~~ even sure that the money he came with will cover the whole food they have ordered. The girl pretended as if she doesn't eat more than one thing, but at the middle of the lunch she order more than one without thinking how much it will cost a price. The narrator didn't bother to tell the girl that it is enough he doesn't have much money for all the stuff she ordered.

In this story we find ^{lrs} ~~types~~ and liars and pretenders. If you're being ~~st~~ asked out by a guy make sure that you order the most cheapest thing in the menu, if he complains that means he is giving you a permission to order something higher than that, ~~Some~~ Just order for you.

Participant 29 in this last performance showed great improvement as he or she obtained a lower mark on task two as compared to task one but showing improvement on task three.

Marks for task three are numerically presented in table 4.3 below:

Table 4.3 Marks for task 3 (short story) (n=30)

SHORT STORY	
PARTICIPANT	MARKS
08	46
05	45
01	44
06	44
09	44
30	44
11	42
02	40
16	40
12	40
27	40
29	40
18	40
07	38
10	38
22	38
28	38
14	35
24	35
23	35
26	35
04	35
25	30
15	28
19	28
13	25
21	25
17	25
20	22
03	20
	Median:40
	Mean: 36.16

Observations: The highest mark was 46 and the lowest mark was 20 out of 50. The median was **40** and the arithmetic mean **36.16** which showed that the overall level of performance of participants in task three was better in comparison to tasks one and two. The performance demonstrated by participants in task 3 showed significant improvement between task 1, task 2 and task 3. The majority of participants were able to discuss the content of the short story showing understanding of the theme. Participants' performance in task 3 showed that they went through the rubric before tackling the essay. They were able to present ideas required by the question logically, and language usage was satisfactory. During feedback session for task 3 which was the last task, the researcher commended participants for the improvement on their performance between the three tasks. However, the researcher reviewed and revised the general weaknesses that participants had during their essay writing.

The researcher revised the weaknesses which were common to the majority of participants as follows: (i) understanding of the topic, (ii) understanding of the contents of the rubric, (iii) consistency in the use of tenses which should be in line with the topic, (iv) interpretation of poems and insight and (v) proper planning for the essay before writing. The prescripts of the reader-response theory which underpins this study state that teachers look at writing as a process, or a series of drafts, encompassing prewriting, writing and rewriting (Bowles & Oslon 1994). During the intervention the researcher encouraged participants to have proper planning for their essay writing.

Below is a full record of the performance of all the participants in the three tasks that were given. In task one 19 participants scored above 50%, whilst 11 scored below 50%. In task two 26 scored above 50% whilst 4 scored below 50%. In task three 28 scored above 50% percent, and 2 scored below 50%. Table 4.4 below shows participants' performance in all three tasks and how each improved or did not improve. The marks presented in the table 4.4 below are not numerical but are sequenced from participant 01 to 30.

Table 4.4 Performance in three tasks (n=30)

PARTICIPANTS	CREATIVE WRITING	POEM	SHORT STORY
01-30	50 MARKS	50 MARKS	50 MARKS
01	17	32	44
02	25	32	40
03	17	24	20
04	18	32	35
05	35	38	45
06	28	33	44
07	20	25	38
08	30	42	46
09	35	37	44
10	12	27	38
11	37	27	42
12	37	38	40
13	20	24	25
14	27	28	35
15	20	38	28
16	40	44	40
17	38	40	25
18	26	32	40
19	17	27	28
20	17	20	22
21	16	22	25
22	18	28	38
23	16	20	35
24	26	40	35
25	32	36	30
26	31	27	35
27	38	42	40
28	33	28	38
29	33	28	40
30	28	34	44

Table 4.5 below shows improvement of median and arithmetic mean across all tasks

Table 4.5 Levels of improvement

TASK ONE	TASK TWO	TASK THREE
Median: 27.5	Median: 32	Median: 40
Mean: 26.241	Mean: 31.689	Mean: 36.16
LEVELS OF IMPROVEMENT		
TASK ONE and TWO	TASK TWO and THREE	TASK THREE and ONE
Median: $32 - 27.5 = \mathbf{4.5}$	Median: $40 - 32 = \mathbf{8}$	Median: $40 - 27.5 = \mathbf{12.5}$
Mean: $31.689 - 26.241 = \mathbf{5.448}$	Mean: $36.16 - 31.689 = \mathbf{4.471}$	Mean: $36.16 - 26.241 = \mathbf{9.919}$

4.3 DATA FROM INTERVIEWS

The data collected by means of interviews addressed two research questions which are research questions 2 and 3. Research question 2 aimed at ascertaining the learners' previous exposure to reading-response journal writing and their views on the use of reading-response journal writing as an intervention strategy that might help FET phase learners to improve their writing skills. Research question 3 addressed the learners' views on their experiences as participants in the activities of journal writing. The interviews were conducted in order to dig information deep. These two questions represented Research Questions 2 and 3 of this study respectively. During the interview sessions, all thirty participants who were grade eleven learners were interviewed individually. These learners were the same participants who participated in task-based activities. The interview schedule had seven questions which required 'yes or no' answers; as well as open-ended questions which required them to justify their responses. The process of data analysis and presentation commenced immediately after all thirty participants were interviewed individually.

An interview involves an interviewer asking interviewees questions and for purposes of research recording their answers. The use of interviews as a data collection method begins with the assumption that the participants' perspectives are meaningful, known, and can be made explicit and that the interviewees' perspectives are important to the success of the research project (Cohen et al., 2011). The researcher asked each one of them the same semi-structured questions from the interview schedule, interviewees' answers were recorded with a voice recorder by the research assistant, and the researcher wrote down their responses to make sure that all responses are captured.

4.3.1 Learners' views on the use of reading-response journal writing in developing writing skills

The statements in the table below were formulated from the close-ended questions that were asked from interviewees. The close-ended questions in table 4.6 below relate to research question 2 which sought to find the views of learners on their previous exposure to reading-response journal writing activities in class.

Table 4.6 Views on the intervention of reading-response journal. (n=30)

STATEMENT		YES		NO		TOTAL
1.0	I enjoy reading and/or writing	19	63%	11	37%	100%
2.0	I was previously exposed to journal writing before this programme	12	40%	18	60%	100%
3.0	We get enough opportunities in class for developing our writing skills	17	57%	13	43%	100%
4.0	I enjoyed participating in journal writing sessions.	28	93%	02	7%	100%

In table 4.6, item 1.0 indicates that (63%) of the learners enjoyed reading and writing and/or only (37%) did not enjoy reading and/or writing. On item 2.0 it shows that

(40%) of learners had been exposed to journal writing before the intervention and (60%) had never been involved in journal writing activities. Item 3.0 indicates that (57%) of learners felt that they did not get enough opportunities in class for writing skills development whereas 43% indicated that they did get enough time. On item 4.0 (93%) of the learners indicated that they enjoyed being part of the journal writing sessions, and only (7%) indicated that they did not enjoy the sessions.

4.3.2 The experiences of English First Additional Language learners as participants in the activities of journal writing

The interview questions on the above heading were open-ended which required respondents to expand as they answered the questions.

4.3.2.1 Learners' experiences on their engagement during journal writing sessions

Below are some verbatim statements obtained from respondents:

I was encouraged to write essays properly for various purposes, feedback is developmental and motivating.

It helped me to be able to sequence ideas logically in essay writing. I was not judged as my teacher always does.

Frequent feedback motivated me and I realised I can always improve. I know that one needs to consider the correct tenses to use when writing an essay. Having something to write every week gave me good practice, I learnt that practice makes perfect.

I was writing without fear of failing and that motivated me to write my thoughts freely, I learnt how to sequence ideas logically. I now know how to build a story line when writing an essay.

4.3.2.2 Learners' views regarding the activities of reading-response journal writing that might be implemented in the FET phase to develop writing skills

Verbatim statements are presented below as responses to questions based on the activities of reading-response journal that were done in class, with the future intension of implementing them in the FET phase.

It should not be taken for granted that FET learners are old enough to write appropriately, writing skills need to be taught even in higher grades. There is a lot that I did not know before this programme.

Before engaging in reading-response journal writing I did not know that answering questions in an essay form can be done in all genres.

Sharing feedback with my peers reduced fear and anxiety that I always have when I am given work to write essays.

If teachers could make sure they discuss feedback in class indicating common errors all learners can benefit and improve their writing skills.

Due to feedback comments I have improved in presenting ideas logically when writing an essay. This could do the same to my classmates.

Reluctant readers and writers like me gradually gained love for writing because of a variety of activities that were given every week.

I was motivated to want to write something every day, putting my thoughts on paper for somebody to read.

It can benefit other classmates because they will learn how to write essays for different purposes, they will know how to present ideas logically. They will also be equipped with tactics of writing an essay appropriately. They will know the tactics of selecting suitable words that will make my essay reader friendly that will also benefit all learners.

I could see my writing improving every week and if I can frequently do these activities I can be a good writer even outside school.

Some verbatim responses from respondents who did not see any value from journal writing activities that might lead to its implementation as a strategy to develop writing skills:

I do not think it can help other learners to develop love for writing because they hate writing long pieces. My classmates have a lot of workload therefore, writing essays every week will be extra load to them.

I hate writing especially essays; no matter what you say to instil love for writing nothing can change my attitude.

4.3.2.3 Learners' perspectives regarding the possibility of having reading-response journal as part of their English FAL curriculum.

The majority of learners indicated that if journal writing intervention strategy could be implemented, it could assist the English FAL learners in the FET phase to improve their writing skills, and the minority felt that it was not a good strategy to be implemented and it might add workload to them.

Some verbatim responses:

"It can yield positive results for developing writing skills; we can be able to present ideas logically when writing essays."

"Language usage can gradually improve and can prepare us for future. We will be able to compete with other schools on essay writing."

"Motivating feedback sessions can develop love of writing. Improvement can be noticed within a short space of time."

"The ability to tackle any essay questions even from set books can improve even our results at the end of the year."

"Implementing this as a strategy can lead to drop outs because we hate writing essays. Other learners will dodge English periods running away from engaging in

writing. This can also add extra workload to us. I don't want this to be part of the syllabus."

4.4 SUMMARY

This chapter has presented and analysed the data in line with the research questions for this study. Data collected by research question one was statistically presented. Research question one sought to find out how the use of reading-response journal as an intervention strategy enhances the development of writing skills for English FAL learners in the FET phase. Data collected by research questions two and three were done through interviews. Research question two sought to determine learners' views on the intervention programme of reading-response journal writing, and research question three sought to find information on the learners' experiences of their participation in journal writing activities. The interview data obtained from close-ended questions were analysed in the form of tables and the data from open-ended interview questions were analysed through narratives based on categorised themes.

The results presented have shown that English FAL learners in the FET phase have the potential to improve their writing skills, but they lack exposure to writing activities. The reader-response theory which underpins this study places emphasis on the relation between reader and text while constructing meaning. The prescripts of the reader-response theory further state that teachers look at writing as a process, or a series of drafts, encompassing prewriting, writing and rewriting. The researcher's observation during the intervention was that if learners are given enough practice and frequent constructive feedback, they can develop a love for writing.

The discussion that the researcher had with the participants' English FAL teacher prior to the intervention revealed that teachers have large classes, as a result they give learners limited writing activities since it become difficult for them to finish marking and give feedback on timeously. The next chapter, which is chapter five, will deal with the interpretation and discussion of results in detail; the discussions will be supported by literature.

CHAPTER FIVE

INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher presents the discussion and interpretation of results that were presented in chapter four. The three main research objectives of this study were to ascertain whether or not the intervention strategy of using the reading-response journal can promote writing skills of FET phase learners; to explore learners' views about the reading-response journal writing programme as an intervention to promote writing skills and to construct a model of journal writing that is informed by learners' experiences in relation to the improvement of writing skills.

The data collected by means of tasks and interviews were analysed using qualitative methods proposed in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, and 2011:382. The results are going to be interpreted and discussed in the context of the three different tasks that were given to respondents and the semi-structured interviews that were conducted with the same respondents. The first research questions that guided this study sought to find out how the use of reading-response journals as an intervention strategy enhanced the development of writing skills. The results showed that learners' writing skills in the FET phase are not as critical as the outcry is from the department of education officials about low levels of writing competencies among learners. Their performance in creative writing was satisfactory but it needs improvement.

The semi-structured interviews that were conducted with the respondents addressed research questions two and three. The second research question sought to elicit the views of learners on the intervention programme of reading-response journal writing in developing writing skills, and the third research question sought to find out what the experiences of English FAL learners are as participants in the activities of journal writing. The interpretation and discussion of results have been divided into sub-headings according to the research questions.

5.2 THE READER-RESPONSE JOURNAL AS A STRATEGY FOR ENHANCING THE DEVELOPMENT OF WRITING SKILLS FOR ENGLISH FAL LEARNERS

This section presents the results on the use of the reading-response journal as an intervention to enhance the development of writing skills for English FAL learners. This sub-heading presents findings of the data that was collected by means of task-based activities which were done through reading–response journal writing. Omego (2014) emphasises the importance of language as means of communication and states that classroom activities play vital role in empowering learners with the ability to communicate confidently both verbally and in writing. In this section the researcher presents the performance of learners who participated in this study. Participants were given tasks to write; these tasks were based on various genres and all required them to answer questions through essay writing.

Van der Walt (2011) highlights the dynamic systems approaches to language FAL curricula. She states that when one acquires a second language (FAL), the meaning-making process starts with single words representing complex concepts. She further states that for communication to take place, the proposition needs to find the appropriate phonological form that will exit the brain as speech that should be comprehensible to other people. That speech could be communicated in writing for a particular audience and purpose. Specifically, it is necessary to address what teachers understand by the term ‘communicative approach to language teaching’ and on the other hand, how they make sense of the apparent contradiction between the ‘phonics’ and ‘whole language’ approaches to teaching literacy.

The confusion between these terms has found its way into classroom practices in the form of misunderstandings of how to teach reading and writing and how to develop strong language skills. It is against this background, that the researcher in this study during data collection was cognisant of the nature of challenges facing the current generic FAL curriculum at FET phase. It is important to note that the use of English FAL by learners who are not first language speakers of English creates a barrier. These learners cannot progress to the next grade without passing this English FAL. Therefore, it is of vital importance to expose those learners to a lot of practice to

prepare them for examination since this language is also used as a Language of Learning and Teaching ((LoLT) in South African schools.

The Communicative approach, which is a recommended approach in CAPS for FET phase FAL, to English FAL teaching it means that a learner should have great exposure to that language and many opportunities to practise or produce the language by communicating for social or developmental purposes (Gracia, 2009). Against this statement, the researcher looks at learning English FAL as an informal process that should be carried over to the classroom where reading, viewing, presenting and writing are learned formally. Learners learn to read appropriately by doing a great deal of reading, and learn to write competently by being exposed to a lot of writing tasks. Based on Garcia's (2009) opinion, the task-based instrument that was used by the researcher as one of data collection instruments was deemed ideal for this study, and it showed how learners can improve their writing skills when supported by teachers. The results of the three different tasks will be discussed below.

Task one was creative writing. It required participants to choose one topic from a choice of four topics. The topics encompassed a variety of genres such as narrative, discursive, descriptive, and reflective topics. All topics required participants to write an essay which was to be marked out of 50 marks. A rubric was given to all participants together with the task.

Table 5.1 ASSESSMENT RUBRICS FOR TASK ONE (CREATIVE WRITING) [50]

Criteria		Exceptional	Skillful	Moderate	Elementary	Inadequate
CONTENT & PLANNING (Response and ideas) Organisation of ideas for planning; Awareness of purpose, audience and context 30 MARKS	Upper level	28–30	22–24	16–18	10–12	4–6
		-Outstanding/Striking response beyond normal expectations -Intelligent, thought-provoking and mature ideas -Exceptionally well organised and coherent (connected), including introduction, body and conclusion/ending	-Very well-crafted response -Fully relevant and interesting ideas with evidence of maturity -Very well organised and coherent (connected), including introduction, body and conclusion/ending	-Satisfactory response -Ideas are reasonably coherent and convincing -Reasonably organised and coherent, including introduction, body and conclusion/ending	-Inconsistently coherent response -Unclear ideas and unoriginal -Little evidence of organisation and coherence	-Totally irrelevant response -Confused and unfocused ideas -Vague and repetitive -Unorganised and incoherent
	Lower level	25–27	19–21	13–15	7–9	0–3
		-Excellent response but lacks the exceptionally striking qualities of the outstanding essay -Mature and intelligent ideas -Skillfully organised and coherent (connected), including introduction, body and conclusion/ending	-Well-crafted response -Relevant and interesting ideas -Well organised and coherent (connected), including introduction, body and conclusion	-Satisfactory response but some lapses in clarity -Ideas are fairly coherent and convincing -Some degree of organisation and coherence, including introduction, body and conclusion	-Largely irrelevant response -Ideas tend to be disconnected and confusing -Hardly any evidence of organisation and coherence	-No attempt to respond to the topic -Completely irrelevant and inappropriate -Unfocused and muddled
LANGUAGE, STYLE & EDITING Tone, register, style, vocabulary appropriate to purpose/effect and context; Word choice; Language use and conventions, punctuation, grammar, spelling 15 MARKS	Upper level	14–15	11–12	8–9	5–6	0–3
		-Tone, register, style and vocabulary highly appropriate to purpose, audience and context -Language confident, exceptionally impressive -Compelling and rhetorically effective in tone -Virtually error-free in grammar and spelling -Very skillfully crafted	-Tone, register, style and vocabulary very appropriate to purpose, audience and context -Language is effective and a consistently appropriate tone is used -Largely error-free in grammar and spelling -Very well crafted	-Tone, register, style and vocabulary appropriate to purpose, audience and context -Appropriate use of language to convey meaning -Tone is appropriate -Rhetorical devices used to enhance content	-Tone, register, style and vocabulary not appropriate to purpose, audience and context -Very basic use of language -Tone and diction are inappropriate -Very limited vocabulary	-Language incomprehensible -Tone, register, style and vocabulary less appropriate to purpose, audience and context -Vocabulary limitations so extreme as to make comprehension impossible
	Lower level	13	10	7	4	
		-Language excellent and rhetorically effective in tone -Virtually error-free in grammar and spelling -Skillfully crafted	-Language engaging and generally effective -Appropriate and effective tone -Few errors in grammar and spelling -Well crafted	-Adequate use of language with some inconsistencies -Tone generally appropriate and limited	-Inadequate use of language -Little or no variety in sentence -Exceptionally limited vocabulary	
STRUCTURE Features of text; Paragraph development and sentence construction 5 MARKS		5	4	3	2	0–1
		-Excellent development of topic -Exceptional detail -Sentences, paragraphs exceptionally well-constructed	-Logical development of details -Coherent -Sentences, paragraphs logical, varied	-Relevant details developed -Sentences, paragraphs well-constructed -Essay still makes sense	-Some valid points -Sentences and paragraphs faulty -Essay still makes some sense	-Necessary points lacking -Sentences and paragraphs faulty -Essay lacks sense
MARK RANGE		43–50	33–40	23–30	13–20	0–10

The rubric was categorised according to the aspects that the researcher looked into when she marked the essays, such as content and planning, language style, presentation and argument, sequencing of ideas, original thoughts, editing, coherence in paragraphs and the structure of the essay among others. The majority of participants who scored between 30 and 40 were able to demonstrate language excellence, excellent development of topic and their essays were skilfully crafted. For those who scored between 25 and 29, the majority was able to develop their ideas logically, their essays were well organised and ideas relevant to the topic but lacked language command. The minority who scored below 25 had faulty sentences and paragraphs, though the essays made some sense and had very basic language command and ideas tended to be disconnected and confusing. They also failed to stick to one aspect of their essays, for example, descriptive, argumentative and reflective among others. Ideas were mixed, and that negatively impacted on the coherence and storyline of the essay.

The marks were numerically presented in chapter four. Out of thirty participants, the highest mark was 40 and the lowest was 12, the median was 27.5 and the arithmetic mean 26.241. Furthermore, 18 learners scored between 25 and 40 whilst 12 scored below 25. This performance showed that learners in the FET phase have acquired English FAL but their writing skills are not at the expected level as they lack regular practice in writing. Educators need to provide more essay writing activities to learners and even expose them to the rubrics that they use when marking creative writing essays. Prinsloo and Heugh (2013) confirm that successful FAL language acquisition in formal educational settings would benefit certain requirements such as reading and writing through regular practice. Tailor and Coetzee (2013) add that people write to exercise their creativity, to share what they know with as many people as possible and to entertain readers who appreciate the ability to play with words. The reader-response theory that underpins this study also highlighted certain aspects that promote good writing skills. Some of those aspects are that when the writer chooses the topic to write on, he or she is expected to know which lens he or she is using, such as, *knowledge of text, modes of experience, social context, cultural identities and psychological perspectives* (Beach, 1993). The researcher was able to mark the essays of participants with these five lenses in mind and they were identified in different essays.

Colorado (2007) in his activities of creative journal writing states that students are to be allowed to write in their own way and express their thoughts without fear of any outer or inner criticism. He further highlights that creative journal writing benefits writers to be more confident in their writing. It broadens their perspectives about topics and provides learners with an opportunity to see their writing skills improve. It was against this background that the researcher allowed participants to write in a relaxed atmosphere and provided constructive feedback sessions which made them realise that they are not judged but instead motivated to improve. The significant improvement demonstrated by learners in their performance on reading-response journal writing activities is in line with what Colorado (2007) highlighted in his view on the creative journal.

De Caso and Garcia (2014) support the provision of creative writing activities to learners in trying to develop their writing skills. They posit that participating in creative writing is an excellent vehicle to express personal perspectives and opinions, and it influences academic curriculum. Intervention in the process of writing acquisition can resolve the differences between expert and novice writers, in order to enhance the quality of written texts. The difference in participants' performances attests to the position by De Caso and Gracia (2014) that some are expert and some are reluctant and novice writers. It is, however, surprising because these learners are in the same class taught by the same teacher, but on the other hand it confirms that some people have innate writing talents.

The paragraphs that were presented in chapter four were extracted from the participants' essays. In task one the majority of participants did not do well. Their essays lacked logical sequencing of ideas; their tenses were not correctly used and there was no coherence in paragraphs. The topics from which they chose were different types, that is: narrative, discursive, reflective and descriptive. Some participants in their writing failed to stick to the one type, as a result that had a negative impact on their essays' storyline. Although participants were instructed by the researcher before the intervention on how to craft a good essay, their performance in task one was not satisfactory and it was a concern to the researcher since these participants are at grade eleven (FET phase) which is the exit phase.

Task two was a poem entitled '*An Abandoned Bundle*' by Oswald Mtshali. Participants were instructed to read and respond to the question which required them to answer in an essay form. This task was also marked out of 50 marks.

Table 5.2 Rubric for marking a poem

CRITERIA	MARKS
Content, planning and logical sequencing of ideas.	30
Interpretation of the meanings inherent in the poem.	10
Coherent argument of ideas and relevance.	10
TOTAL MARKS	50

In marking the poem, the researcher looked at how participants sequenced ideas, understood and appreciated the poem, their interpreted the meanings inherent in the poem and argued of ideas. The importance of providing a variety of texts based on different genres is echoed by Hosking (2014) in saying that some people are born with writing talent, but talent without technical development is as the same as not having it, and if it is without any instructions on how to build it. The learners' performance in task two was as follows:

The highest was 44 and the lowest 20. The majority of those who scored between 25 and 44 were able to interpret the poem, understand the content and meanings of figures of speech. Those who scored below 25 did not show proper interpretation of the poem and their argument of ideas was not coherently presented. The median was 32 and the arithmetic mean 31.689.

Furthermore, twenty five learners scored between 27 and 44 and five scored below 25. When one looks at the extracted paragraphs presented in chapter four, there is a clear indication that if learners are given writing activities and constructive feedback

regularly, they have the potential to improve. This performance showed a remarkable improvement from task 1, the median improved by 4.5 and the arithmetic mean by 5.448.

Smith (2000) states that readers need to have a particular level of literacy competence in order to read and respond to texts, and that the level of competence can be reached through a variety of classroom written activities that are regularly done. On the other hand, Probst (1994) posits that the precepts of the reader-response theory which underpins this study, is that people who engage in reading-response journal writing are likely to improve their writing skills provided they enjoy reading literature and can enthusiastically respond to it in ways that enrich their emotional and intellectual views. The improvement demonstrated by participants in task two confirms what Probst (2014) highlighted, that regular classroom written activities assist learners to develop a love for writing.

Based on the literature that has been reviewed by the researcher, the task-based approach which includes set genres such as poetry, novels, drama and short stories has not been widely researched. However, Borasi and Rose (1989) conducted a study on the use of subject journals which has a similar approach to that of reading-response journal on poetry. Participants in the study by Borasi and Rose (1989) were given writing activities as a means of encouraging them to love writing. Mathematics was used as a subject in exploring the use of subject journal to promote writing skills. Students were expected to record their reflections on the teaching of Mathematics and their progress. Recordings were done on a daily basis and students were asked to re-examine their thoughts by reviewing and reading what they had written. The results revealed that the use of subject journal writing can provide a valuable means to facilitate the learning of Mathematics.

MacManus, Goegan and Harrison (2015) recommend interactive writing. They state that interactive writing can be done through letters and journal writing, and it has proven to be good in encouraging children to write. Furthermore, MacManus *et al.* advise that writers' workshops are ideal to achieve development of writing skills. Children can compose poems, write little books of various genres with narrative short stories and autobiographies. These workshops promote independent and guided writing. It is against this background that the researcher recommends that language

teachers of FET phase learners have to be motivated to expose them to such workshops if they see value in developing their writing skills.

Task three was a short story entitled '*The Luncheon*' by William Somerset Maugham. Respondents were given this short story to read and to answer the questions. They were given two questions and they had to make a choice. The task was out of 50 marks and in both questions respondents were required to answer in an essay form. One question wanted them to answer using a socio-cultural lens and the other one wanted them to use their experiential lens. Participants answered questions, not aware of these lenses, but the researcher could identify them while marking their essays. The researcher used a rubric presented below to mark the short story task.

Table 5.3 Rubric for marking a short story

CRITERIA	MARKS
Content, interpretation of the story and planning.	30
Insight, understanding and critical thinking.	10
Argument of ideas and storyline.	10
TOTAL MARKS	50

In marking the short story task, the researcher looked at how they sequenced ideas as they interpreted the story, insight and critical thinking, understood and appreciated the story, interpreted the meanings inherent in the theme of the story, argued their ideas coherently regarding the two characters, and the storyline as they wrote an essay. These lenses that one could use when writing the essays emerged when the researcher was discussing the reader-response theory which underpins this study. Looking at their performance against the rubric, the majority of participants was able to sequence ideas coherently to build up a storyline in their essays. Very few participants were

unable to show insight and strong arguments based on their interpretation of the awkward behaviour of the two characters in the short story as presented in chapter four. The observations on their performance were: the highest was 46 and the lowest 20; furthermore, twenty eight participants scored between 25 and 46, whilst two scored below 25. The majority showed remarkable improvement. However, it was worrying to the researcher to notice that participant 16 who obtained the highest mark in task one, had shown a very good potential in task two. She scored the same mark for task three that he or she got in task one. This means that instead of showing outstanding performance, his or her performance dropped. This shows that if these tasks were all creative writing, this participant would have retained the highest mark. This is supported by Heyland, (2002: 135) who states that teaching writing skills using the composition approach only which is commonly used by teachers, may expose some challenges to learners in the performance of compositional writing skills.

The researcher noticed that in his or her essay she or he presented weak arguments and failed to cover all aspects of the short story that were required by the question although his or her language command was good. The issue of context that decides the purpose of a text as stated by Hammond and Derewianka, 2001 was not taken into consideration by this participant in the third task. In agreement, Christie (1990) also argued that learners cannot produce a particular text-type successfully if they are not taught explicitly about linguistic conventions of that text-type with regard to various language features. Students' motivation to write also suffers when teachers focus on conventions first and ideas last. Many students have little self-confidence when they write because teachers and parents have been too quick to point out their errors instead of praising their ideas first (Christie, 1990).

It is against this background that the researcher in this study used three different genres as tasks to help in developing writing skills using a wider scope. On the other hand, participant 08 showed a significant improvement and obtained the highest mark in task three. This shows that frequent engagement of learners in writing tasks through the use of journal writing strategy as an intervention could produce good writers who can write even beyond the classroom. The majority of those who scored in the 40s were able to interpret the story and related characters to real world. Those who scored below 25 failed to argue ideas and had no insight and clear understanding of the story. The median was 40 and the arithmetic mean 36.16. This showed that

their level of performance has greatly improved when all three tasks are compared. The improvement demonstrated by participants ranging from task one to task three was as follows:

Between task two and task one, median improved by 4.5 and the arithmetic mean 5.448; between task two and task three, the median improved by 8 and mean 4.471; and between task one and task three, the median improved by 12.5 and the arithmetic mean by 9.919.

Although studies that used task-based as an instrument for data collection are limited, especially on short stories, there are slight similarities between the study that was done on reflective journal by Kok and Chabeli (2002), and the short story task that was given to participants during data collection for this study. The use of reflective journal by Kok and Chabeli's (2002) study sought to determine students' perceptions on whether or not reflective journals could promote nursing students' writing skills and their critical thinking as they wrote in their journals during the period of six months of their work-based placement. They were expected to reflect on their experiences through journal writing for the entire period that they spent at their work-based placement. The results revealed that reflective journal writing in clinical nursing education promoted reflective thinking, developed writing skills and critical thinking of student nurses.

The short story that the participants had to be assessed on in this study showed that their critical thinking was limited. The majority failed to link their reflection accurately with the interpretation of the meaning inherent in the theme of the story. These results therefore open an argument that teachers do not afford learners the opportunity to do a variety of activities that require them to think critically, have insight and engage in those thoughts through writing during their language lessons. There are other significant intervention aspects to learning, which have to do with becoming motivated to want to read and to write through experiencing, appreciation and exploring the power and value of stories and other texts (Alexander, Bloch, Guzula & Mahobe, 2011:1).

Below is a table presenting the three tasks and how participants' performance improved from task one to task two and then to task three.

Table 5.4 Presenting improvement of performance in three tasks

TASK ONE	TASK TWO	TASK THREE
Median: 27.5	Median: 32	Median: 40
Mean: 26.241	Mean: 31.689	Mean: 36.16
LEVELS OF IMPROVEMENT		
TASK ONE and TWO	TASK TWO and THREE	TASK THREE and ONE
Median: $32 - 27.5 = 4.5$	Median: $40 - 32 = 8$	Median: $40 - 27.5 = 12.5$
Mean: $31.689 - 26.241 = 5.448$	Mean: $36.16 - 31.689 = 4.471$	Mean: $36.16 - 26.241 = 9.919$

The performance ranging from all three tasks showed that if learners can be afforded an opportunity to write regularly, and get feedback with constructive and motivating comments, their writing skills can develop and lead them to becoming competent writers. This is supported by Iser (2000) where he states that adopting reader-oriented strategies could be pedagogically successful if the reader's aesthetic experiences are methodically incorporated in the curriculum. The statement by Iser confirms that if teachers can provide more writing activities to learners as prescribed in the CAPS language FAL document, they could be readers who read, think critically and respond satisfactorily in writing. Wilhelm (2006) also used a variety of genres including poems and short story activities to assist reluctant readers and writers. They used participatory teaching strategies of writing skills, through reading interesting drama and short story books and summarising them in writing. Those reluctant learners started to develop a love for reading and writing.

Hyland (2002: 135) posits that teaching writing skills using the composition approach that is commonly used by teachers may expose some challenges to learners' performances in writing skills. In terms of teaching English compositions, most teachers focus on providing their learners with vocabulary, relating to the required

topic and some guiding questions in order to assist them shape ideas into completed paragraphs. He further states that teaching writing in this way only benefits learners to an extent that it can assist them in producing the error-free texts following the language rules. Hammond and Derewianka, (2001) concur with Hyland and they point out that the genre approach encourages learners to participate in the world around them and comprehend writing as a tool that they can utilise to promote logical thinking as authors when organising their writing.

Hammond and Derewianka (2001) also outline the benefits of using a different genre approach in developing writing skills. They are outlined as follows: (i) *emphasises the importance of exploring the social and cultural context of language use on a piece of writing.* (ii) *It looks beyond subject content, composing processes and linguistic forms to see a text as attempts to communicate with readers.* (iii) *It is concerned with teaching learners how to use language patterns to accomplish coherent, purposeful prose writing.* (iv) *It also emphasises the explicit teaching of the linguistic conventions of the genre for First Additional Language novice writers.* It is further argued that learners cannot produce a particular text-type successfully if they are not taught explicitly about linguistic conventions of that text-type with respect to language features and schematic structure (Christie, 1990:85-90).

The level of difficulty for the tasks that the researcher gave to participants did not differ; they were all at the same level. In these activities of essay writing, the researcher's main focus was on the learners' abilities to write appropriate essays considering coherence, storyline, logical sequencing of ideas, content and basic language command. It is against this background that the researcher used three different genres as activities of journal writing in trying to improve writing skills of English FAL learners of the FET phase.

Intervention programmes could be of great value in promoting writing skills of students. Van der Merwe (2010) suggests that intervention programmes should be infused into the teaching methodology of the subject. A study was conducted to first year university Tourism Development students after the lecturer had marked their first assignment in which he noticed insufficient writing skills among those students. Students were given a pre-test assignment, and thereafter an intervention programme was implemented. Marks were recorded for the pre-assignment during the

intervention and for post-assignment after the intervention. The findings showed that the marks improved between the pre- and post- assignment marks, as well as between their first, second and final assignments. A significant improvement was noticed and therefore, recommendations were that writing skills development presented or infused within the subject should become common practice across disciplines.

The results of the intervention programme that was implemented for this study using the tasks as data collection instrument showed that learners have the potential to write. The interview that the researcher conducted to the participants' English FAL teacher revealed that grade eleven learners writing competencies are not at the expected levels. The intervention commenced soon after the researcher had given an instruction on how to write a good essay for various purposes. Learners were very cooperative; they complied and participated in all given tasks. The researcher was able to mark and give feedback after three days. Feedback was also discussed in class highlighting errors that led to participants scoring high or low marks. During feedback sessions the researcher noticed that participants were free to engage and challenge some comments that were in their journals. This confirmed that they were relaxed and free. It was interesting for the researcher to notice that participants were very positive and willing to do more writing activities in order for them to effect corrections by avoiding the previous mistakes in their next task. Based on this, the researcher confirms that the intervention programme on writing motivated grade eleven learners to like writing.

The results revealed that an intervention can assist learners in developing love for writing. Their writing improved from task one to task two and three, there was significant improvement in logical sequencing of ideas, language use and organisation of ideas. However, some learners still lack in developing a storyline in an essay, and interpretation of the meanings inherent to poem and short story. The findings based on the results of the task-based data have addressed research question number one which was looking at the use of the reader-response journal as an intervention strategy to enhance the development of writing skills of English FAL learners.

The results showed that writing skills of learners can gradually improve if they are given writing activities regularly, and constructive feedback provided after a short

period of time. This is supported by Omego (2014) where he states that in order to improve writing skills of English FAL learners, teachers need to consider new innovative methods of instruction including journal writing. Omego (2014) also posits that current methods of teaching English FAL are not catering for teaching of writing skills as one of the language aspects; therefore, those methods currently being used are not moving the learners to the level of proficiency that is expected of them. When learners are given opportunities to write for authentic meaning-making and message-sharing purposes, they can enjoy benefits of writing even when they are beginner writers who are doing so in a language that they have not mastered (Bloem, 2004).

In this study the researcher used scores as an indicator of learners' performance and ability to write. The use of marks is a common practice in schools for both summative and formative assessments. However, the researcher is aware of other means of evaluating learners' writing skills such as a diagnostic approach where one can administer written essays and diagnose learners' problems without reference to scores. This approach was not feasible for the researcher since she was at the school for a short period.

5.3 THE VIEWS OF LEARNERS ON THE ROLE OF INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES OF JOURNAL WRITING AS A WAY OF RESPONDING TO LEARNERS' WRITING NEEDS

The process of data collection as discussed in chapter four was also done by means of semi-structured interviews. A sample size of thirty FET phase learners at Uthungulu district was used. The group of thirty learners was the same group that participated in task-based activities. These participants were interviewed individually. The strengths of interviews by Kumar (2014), as they are outlined in chapter three were considered by the researcher as the basis for using interviews as one of the instruments for data collection in this study.

The researcher in this study used a set of questions which were asked in the same order for all participants. The information solicited during interviews was based on

research questions two and three. The researcher opted for the structured interviews as compared to in-depth interviews because they differ in approach and content.

The results provided this study with views about English FAL learners' writing skills competencies in the FET phase. Responses were organised according to convergent and divergent views identified during the process of data analysis as discussed in chapter four. The summary of data was presented under themes established from data collected.

Learners' views on the intervention programme of reading-response journal writing in developing writing skills as presented in chapter four show that the majority of respondents are interested in reading and writing and very few are not interested. The wide range of purposes for which people read and write form part of what the respondents said, such as reading and writing for personal growth, entertainment and pleasure and fulfilment of academic requirements (DBE,2011:35).

The results revealed that the majority respondents have never been involved in journal writing before and only a few have been exposed to journal writing. These results indicate that teachers do not afford learners enough opportunities that expose them to journal writing and that is one of the reasons that contributed to participants' performance in journal writing activities not being at the expected level. Therefore, on the research question which sought to find out the views of learners on the intervention strategy of reading-response journal, the majority of them saw value in the intervention strategy and felt that it can be ideal for use in class. This is supported by the findings of the study that was done in Botswana by Adeyemi (2008) on journal writing which revealed that among other things, teachers' approaches to essay writing were mainly product oriented, and did not look at the teaching of other aspects to be considered when writing an essay. Some of those aspects that were ignored are feedback, constructive remarks and motivation that open room for them to see that they have the ability to improve their writing skills.

Furthermore, the results of Adeyemi's study showed that some of the respondents believe that if they can be given enough time to engage in writing activities their writing skills can improve. However, there was a minority that did not believe that getting enough time to practise writing can make them develop a love for writing. The belief of the minority is supported by Probst (1994) when highlighting the

importance of incorporating the reader-response theory into the teaching and development of writing skills. He states that the prescripts of this theory is that people who engage in reading response journal writing should be those who enjoy reading literature, who read willingly and who respond to it thinking about it in ways that enrich their emotional and intellectual views.

The researcher's position is in contrast to that of Probst (1994) who believes that only those learners who demonstrate an interest must be given opportunities to read and write. The current curriculum CAPS has prescribed the teaching of journal writing to learners in the FET phase with the aim of sharpening their writing skills, therefore, it cannot be isolated from other language aspects that are taught. Prinsloo and Heugh (2013) also believe that the absence of writing opportunities to accompany reading, results not only in poor writing, but also in poor reading development. They further emphasise that reading and writing are closely linked as students write to explore and make sense of their reading in the course of forming more effective analysis of what they have read.

On the basis of learners benefiting from journal writing sessions the results showed that respondents benefited from journal writing sessions, whilst the minority indicated that they did not benefit anything from writing sessions. Further probing question such as "why?" enabled respondents to provide reasons for saying why they enjoyed or why they did not enjoy. Some of their responses were stating that they like putting their thoughts on paper without any pressure of being judged, on the other hand other respondents stated that they hate writing essays because feedback takes very long and it is usually demotivating to see red ink all over ones script. Other respondents indicated that they never scored marks that satisfy them in essay writing as a result they developed negative attitude towards writing.

'Practice makes perfect' is a saying that fits in very well with what the respondents have highlighted. They said that they hate writing because they are not used to writing frequently. If writing was an integral part and parcel of their language teaching, they would not be saying that they panic whenever they are given an essay writing activity. Teachers therefore need to handle writing as an aspect to be given equal attention like others such as, reading, viewing and listening (DBE, 2011:16-25).

The theories of second language education evolved from the grammar-translation to the audio-lingual method. Ideas about how language proficiency develops and ought to be taught have changed. The results showing the high percentage of learners that have never been exposed to journal writing is a clear indication that teachers do not take writing as part of the language aspects of the curriculum that is a must to teach, especially in higher grades in the FET phase. This practice by teachers is supported by literature where it states that; writing has been viewed as a support skill, used to reinforce the acquisition of grammar (Bowles & Oslen, 1994). These results have addressed research question number two which sought to find the views of learners on the use of journal writing as a strategy to develop writing skills. The learners' views show that the use of journal writing as a strategy in class can motivate them to love writing and their competency in writing skills can develop.

5.4 EXPERIENCES OF ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS AS PARTICIPANTS IN THE ACTIVITIES OF JOURNAL WRITING

In this section the experiences of English FAL learners as participants in the activities of journal writing are presented and discussed. The researcher presents the experiences of respondents who were part of the journal writing intervention programme. The results revealed that the majority of respondents believed that reading-response journal writing can be an ideal strategy to be used in trying to promote writing skills in the FET phase. On the other hand, a few did not think that it could be a good idea to implement journal writing as a strategy to promote writing skills in the FET phase.

Learners' positive beliefs towards implementation of reading-response journal as a strategy to promote writing skills were identified from their responses during interviews. They believed that reading-response journal writing could yield positive results for developing writing skills. It was observed that after the intervention they were able to present ideas logically, the content was relevant to the requirements of the task during their participation in essay writing. Further the participants' language usage was observed gradually improved during the three of data collection. They believed that by the end of FET phase (grade 12) the majority of them could be competent writers and their vocabulary would improve and have positive impact to

their performance even in other subjects. However, the minority that did not like writing essays stated that implementation of the journal writing strategy could lead to dropouts because learners will avoid English FAL classes running away from writing activities. The minority also felt that it could not be a good strategy to be implemented; and might add to their workload.

The positive responses indicated that the majority of learners were motivated by the activities of journal writing. The study by Jones and East (2010) on personal journal writing supports what participants said about implementing journal writing as a strategy to develop writing skills. The study was longitudinal; it took the whole academic year, observations were made by both the teacher and the researcher. The aim was to depict students' writing growth as they were writing every day in their journals and also had discussions based on their journal entries. The findings delineated the constant growth and achievement that empowered the group of students to become good writers. Furthermore, the results indicated that journal writing with proper teacher support could empower students by increasing confidence and control over written language.

The negative responses from participants within this study are worrying as they highlight the attitude held by some participants who see the exercise of journal writing as additional workload and something that could increase drop-outs from school. The negative responses by participants are in line with what Serra (2014) highlights, she posits that the reason that students do not like writing is that they are never encouraged to do it for enjoyment in a relaxed atmosphere. She further states that writing should be done as part of language aspects to avoid learners looking at it in isolation and thinking that they can pass language as a subject without participating in writing activities. The results obtained through interviews in this section have answered research question three which sought to ascertain how participants felt as they engaged in writing activities of journal writing during the intervention sessions in their classroom. The majority regarded their participation as an opportunity that built confidence in their writing; they were also motivated to write without any fear of failure since the journal writing intervention strategy that was used gave them good practise.

5.5 SUMMARY

This chapter has discussed the results and findings of this study in detail. It is gratifying to note that literature on journal writing has studies been done widely. Most such studies indicate that the use of journal writing with the intention of developing writing skills has succeeded in yielding positive results. However, it has come to the researcher's attention that with the support of teachers, learners can engage in writing without fear and anxiety. The results lead demonstrate that teachers are not completely complying with the prescripts of CAPS which include transactional writing under which journal writing is an aspect that forms part of their English FAL syllabus.

The English FAL teacher in the school where the case study was conducted found the exercise of journal writing valuable, as the marks were discussed with him at the end of the intervention programme. However, the teacher highlighted that the challenge of large classes hinders many of the language teachers at this school from completing the marking of written work timeously. As such feedback is usually given after a long time when learners have forgotten about what they wrote in a particular task. The contribution that this study has made is that the use of journal writing in English FAL classes can yield positive results if done frequently. This is confirmed by the close alignment between the views of participants and what the literature says.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the synthesis of findings from the data analysed, discussed and summarised in chapters four and five. The theoretical framework outlined in chapter two and the conclusions drawn from this study are also presented. This study aimed to address the following three objectives:

- To ascertain whether or not the intervention strategy of using the reading-response journal can promote writing skills of learners.
- To explore learners' views about the reading-response journal writing programme as an intervention strategy to promote writing skills.
- To construct a model of journal writing that is informed by learners' experiences in relation to the improvement of writing skills.

The results shed more light on why there is a continuous outcry about the incompetency in writing skills of the FET phase learners. This is then followed by the recommendations that are made with the intention of ascertaining if there is a possibility of implementing reading-response journal writing as an intervention strategy for the English FAL learners and to inform the future studies in this field. The limitations of the study based on time constraints are pointed out and suggestions are made for further research. This is followed by an outline of the reasons for the confinement of this study in one district and one province.

This case study was conducted with a sample of 30 grade eleven learners at Uthungulu district FET phase school. The study employed the qualitative research paradigm and the process of data collection involved task-based and interviews instruments. The

instruments used in this study solicited data which were intended to answer the research questions.

This study was based on the reader-response theory. Writing has been commonly viewed as a support skill, used to reinforce grammar and its rules. Underpinning this belief is the view that when teaching writing skills there should be less attention to correction of grammatical errors but real attention should be on content and understanding of the context, that may lead to better student writing.

6.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The summary of findings is presented according to the themes in relation to research questions, literature reviewed and theoretical framework.

6.2.1 THE USE OF THE READING-RESPONSE JOURNAL IMPROVES THE WRITING SKILLS OF FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN THE FET PHASE

The data collected by means of the task-based and interviews instruments was presented and interpreted in chapters four and five which highlighted the findings about the use of reading-response journals as an intervention strategy to enhance the development of writing skills for FAL learners. Omego (2014) emphasises the importance of language as a means of communication and states that classroom activities play a vital role in empowering learners with the ability to communicate confidently both verbally and in writing. All tasks required the participants to write essays.

The findings are summarised as follows:

On task one of the interventions which focussed on creative writing, there were a low percentage of participants who were able to demonstrate satisfactory language competence and the ability to develop their essays very well. This performance showed that the English FAL educator of the grade eleven classes has taught them how to write an appropriate essay. It also showed that the teacher has taught them the important

aspects to consider when writing an essay such as, good content, correct use of grammar and coherent presentation of ideas. The majority who scored below 50% in task one was a threat though; that at grade eleven some of these learners are failing to write appropriately. Their essays had poorly constructed sentences, the paragraphs and basic language use and ideas were disconnected and confusing. The learners who scored 50% and above demonstrated understanding of how to sequence good ideas and to present content coherently with a good story line. Those who scored below 50% had essays that lacked content, had poor language command, had poor presentation of ideas and failed to sequence ideas logically to build a good story line. These learners, who at grade eleven level, are unable to write well-constructed essays with interesting content indicated that they lack frequent classroom practice in writing. The feedback was discussed in class as part of the intervention; learners were guided and cautioned about the errors they made in their first task as they were to attempt doing task two. The reader–response theory is incorporated into the curriculum (CAPS for FET phase in South Africa) for transactional texts through journal writing where it is recommended that learners must be given tasks from a variety of genres to read and respond to writing. Teachers are therefore expected to teach writing skills and not to regard these skills as support aspects in language classes.

On task two, which was a poem, an improvement was noticed. The majority of participants showed a significant improvement. It is premised that from the feedback that was given for task one, they were able to improve in sequencing their essays logically, improving on content and language use. A minority of learners did not score above 50% but many had improved from their first performance. This improvement showed that if learners are given writing tasks frequently and there is a quick, constructive feedback on how to answer an essay question based on poetry. The learners were expected to understand the poem and have insight on its meaning. They demonstrated understanding of the poem but failed to answer the question, some of them had vague answers, and they failed to support their answers with the content of the poem.

Taylor and Coetzee (2013) opine that everyone has the capacity to write, writing can be taught and teachers can help students become better writers. Writing, like most things in life, gets easier with practice. When feedback on task two was given in class learners were guided and informed that they need to focus on the requirements of the question and build a storyline as they write the answer in an essay form. They were cautioned that the language may be good but if the essay is not logical set up it may give them low scores. The feedback on task two was discussed as they were preparing to attempt task three in order to ascertain if there would be improvement on the errors that were highlighted in tasks one and two.

On task three, which was a short story, the majority of participants showed significant improvement; many of them were able to satisfy the requirements of writing an essay, content was good, ideas were coherently presented, language use was satisfactory, and they demonstrated insight in understanding the story. Only two participants scored below 50% which was an impressive performance compared to the first two tasks.

The significant improvement that was demonstrated by participants on these three tasks was in line with what MacManus, Goegan and Harrison (2015) recommend. They state that interactive writing can be done through letters and journal writing, and it has proven to be good in encouraging children to love writing. The results of this study also attest to this view expressed. The results showed improvement of performance based on the three tasks that were given to learners, as an intervention in trying to assist them to develop writing skills.

6.2.2 LEARNERS VIEW THE READING-RESPONSE JOURNAL STRATEGY POSITIVELY

The data collected by means of interviews addressed two research questions, which are research questions two and three. Research question two aimed to ascertain the learners' views on the intervention programme of reading-response journal writing as an intervention strategy that might help FET phase learners to improve their writing skills.

This study revealed that the majority of learners enjoy reading and writing although they are not at the level at which they should be. Interestingly, the DBE (2011:35) emphasises that reading and writing is not only meant for fulfilment of academic requirements, but it is for personal growth, entertainment and pleasure. This poses a challenge to English FAL teachers to treat writing skills seriously and to give learners activities that will require them to write for various purposes.

The findings showed that the majority of learners believed that they are not given enough opportunities to practise writing in the classroom, whilst the minority felt that there was no need to have regular writing activities because not everybody likes writing. Probst (1994) in support of the latter's views on writing states that the prescripts of the reader-response theory is that people who engage in reading-response journal writing should be those who enjoy reading literature, who read willingly and who respond to it thinking about it in ways that enrich their emotional and intellectual views.

The results revealed that a low percentage of learners have been exposed to journal writing before the intervention and a high percentage have never been involved in journal writing activities. Learners also feel that they do not get enough opportunities in class to develop their writing skills development whereas very few confirm that they do get enough time and they see no need of giving a lot of time to the teaching of writing skills.

The majority of participants indicated that they benefitted and some of their responses were as follows:

- *I was encouraged to write essays properly for various purposes, feedback is developmental and motivating.*
- *It helped me to be able to sequence ideas logically in essay writing. I was not judged as my teacher always does.*
- *Frequent feedback motivated me and I realised that I can always improve. Having something to write every week gave me good practice, I learnt that practice makes perfect.*
- *I was writing without fear of failing and that motivated me to write my thoughts freely.*

These responses revealed that learners feel confident to write and they see the value of developing their writing skills. The results showed that the intervention strategy that was employed has the possibility of helping them to improve their writing skills. Results also reveal that learners need adequate opportunities in class to practise writing through writing of activities.

6.2.3 THERE IS NEED TO EXPOSE LEARNERS OF ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE TO JOURNAL WRITING

The views of the learners regarding the implementation of journal writing are that they have not been exposed to journal writing yet this strategy forms part of the CAPS prescripts for the English FAL in FET phase. Some of the verbatim responses were as follows:

- *It should not be taken for granted that FET learners are old enough to write appropriately, writing skills need to be taught even in higher grades.*
- *Before engaging in reading-response journal writing I did not know that answering questions in an essay form can be done in all genres.*
- *If teachers could make sure they discuss feedback in class indicating common errors all learners can benefit and improve their writing skills.*
- *Due to feedback comments I have improved in presenting ideas logically when writing an essay. This could do the same to my grade mates.*

There were some responses which were negative, they were as follows:

- *I do not think it can benefit other learners because they hate writing long pieces.*
- *My classmates have a lot of workload therefore, writing essays every week will be extra load to them.*
- *I hate writing especially essays; no matter what you say to instil love for writing nothing can change my attitude.*

These responses revealed that some learners think that journal writing could be an ideal tool to assist them in developing their writing skills whereas others think that writing skills can be regarded as a support mechanism and that they can do without it.

The findings have revealed that learners think that if journal writing could be a compulsory exercise it could yield positive results for the development of writing skills. The responses confirm that language usage can gradually improve and can prepare them to be good writers for the future. Learners also indicated that the feedback sessions were motivating and played a vital role in their improvement. Some of their verbatim responses were as follows:

- *Motivating feedback sessions can develop love of writing. Improvement can be noticed within a short space of time.*
- *It can yield positive results for developing writing skills; we can be able to present ideas logically when writing essays.*
- *The ability to tackle any essay questions even from set books can improve even our results at the end of the year.*

However, some responses showed that some learners do not think that journal writing could develop love for writing among them. Some of the negative responses were:

- *Implementing this as a strategy can lead to drop outs because we hate writing essays. Other learners will dodge English periods running away from engaging in writing.*
- *This can also add extra workload to us. I don't want this to be part of the syllabus.*

The responses by learners as they expressed their experiences on journal writing indicate that they are positive about the activities of journal writing and they believe that it could be an ideal exercise to develop their writing skills. According to Omego (2014) in order to improve writing skills of English language learners, teachers must consider new innovative methods for their instruction. Current methods used by teachers are not moving learners to the level of writing proficiency that is expected of them. Teachers have a tendency of ignoring teaching writing skills thinking that learners will acquire them spontaneously as writing is incorporated in other language written activities in class. Scaffolding, coupled with peer work, provides English

language learners with the support they need to facilitate the writing process (Han and Ernest-Slavit, 1999). Bloem, (2004) echoes the aforementioned assertion by stating that when students are given opportunities to write for authentic meaning-making and message-sharing purposes, they can enjoy benefits of writing even when they are beginner readers and writers who are doing so in a language they have not mastered. The results based on the experiences of learners on participating in journal writing activities revealed that it yielded positive results by improving their performance from task one to tasks two and three. Therefore, journal writing can be employed as an intervention strategy to instil love for writing among FET phase learners.

6.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The research conducted had some limitations which surfaced during the data collection process. The instruments that the study employed required the researcher to be in the classroom and give writing activities to FET phase learners. Because it was a case study, only one school at Uthungulu district was used as a research area and thirty grade eleven learners as participants. The limitations were time constraints, sample size and limited area of investigation.

When the researcher approached the school where the case study was conducted, the principal and the English FAL teacher indicated that they cannot accommodate the researcher during normal teaching time, but only after teaching hours in the afternoon. The researcher had no choice but to meet learners after normal teaching time starting from 15h00 to 17h00. Some learners were exhausted and could not give their full active participation. A sample of thirty participants presents a small fraction of the entire population of learners in the Uthungulu district and the province of Kwa-Zulu Natal. A larger sample would have provided a clearer picture on the level of writing skills development. The researcher would have given more than three tasks and a second round of those tasks to gather as much information as possible but due to half yearly examinations that were to commence during the months of data collection the researcher had no option but to restrict the number of tasks to three without the second round.

The researcher acknowledges that English FAL is taught in the majority of South African schools. Hence, the findings of this study could not be inferred to other provinces in South Africa. Furthermore, the researcher used the reading-response journal only, yet there are many types of journals that could be used to encourage learners to love writing. The researcher's concern, amongst others, is that although the teaching of journal writing is part of the CAPS prescripts for English FAL, teachers regard this as a support aspect which is optional to teach in a language class.

Findings of this study should therefore be understood within the confinement of the research sample and district in which the case study was conducted. The findings were highly significant in this study as they highlighted the gaps in the use of innovative teaching methods that teachers are expected to use in their classrooms with the intention of developing writing skills. These findings can further be researched as they were found to be a threat to effective teaching of writing skills in the FET phase.

With regard to interviews, the aim was to spend more time with respondents, but time was very limited as interviews were conducted individually and were scheduled for only two days in the afternoon after normal teaching time. During the interviews some participants were not free to speak as they feared that their English language command was weak and this resulted in limited information as they were responding to questions. The researcher had to respect the examination time since the letter from the Department of Basic Education (DBE) granting permission to conduct research stated that the research project should not interfere with teaching time and examination schedule.

6.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter has extensively presented synthesis of the entire study, which includes the aims of the study and research questions. A brief overview of the theoretical framework and literature review upon which the study was based has also been presented. The methodology was briefly summarised, followed by presentation and analysis of results to the research questions. The researcher is convinced that within the scope of this study and the limitations outlined in this chapter, the research questions have been addressed satisfactorily.

The recommendations made in this study could make a significant contribution towards the implementation of the use of reading-response journal writing as an intervention strategy for the development of writing skills among secondary school learners. The use of other types of journals to promote writing skills was not used in this study due to time constraints as outlined under limitations and therefore, this could be identified as a gap for further research to be conducted in this field.

6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Drawing from the findings of this study, the researcher wishes to make recommendations for consideration by the Department of Basic Education officials, English FAL teachers and fellow researchers in the field.

- 6.5.1 It is important for the Department of Basic Education to consider increasing human resources in schools to avoid having one teacher teaching large language classes. This hinders the teachers from doing justice in terms of giving learners regular written activities and quick feedback to promote love for writing.
- 6.5.2 Teachers are encouraged to consider using innovative and new strategies for language instruction, especially for the purpose of developing writing skills. Journal writing is one of the new strategies that could be employed in teaching writing skills.
- 6.5.3 English FAL subject advisors need to monitor implementation of curriculum prescripts. According to CAPS, journal writing is one of the strategies to be used in the FET phase to develop writing skills, but teachers are making its use optional.
- 6.5.4 The use of different genres is recommended in trying to develop writing skills that will be utilised beyond the classroom. Learners should not think that essay writing is for creative or composition writing only; it is also for different genres such as poems and short stories.

6.5.5 Teachers need to afford learners adequate opportunities and practise in class for developing writing skills.

6.5.6 Lastly, it is recommended that further research on reader-response journal writing be conducted as a study that can have data collection through task-based extended to the whole academic year using the different genre approaches. The extended time of data collection would assist in tracking the development of writing skills right through the academic year to determine its effectiveness if done during normal teaching time. The two months that were used for data collection making use of the task-based instrument in this study were not sufficient time. The researcher also recommends that further studies of similar nature be done in other provinces to validate the findings.

6.6 SUGGESTED MODEL OF JOURNAL WRITING WITH THE AIM OF IMPROVING WRITING SKILLS

The teaching of writing skills in English FAL classrooms has been observed by the researcher as a challenge in secondary schools. The need to explore various strategies to overcome the challenge is imperative. The researcher recommends that educators take the following into consideration:

- Learners attributes in terms of needs, interests, attitudes and knowledge.
- Teachers' own attributes
- Instructional goals and related evaluation criteria
- Relevant response strategies and activities
- Social –cultural context
- Long term planning

For example, in planning response activities for the poem; 'An abandoned bundle' teachers may categorise and ask themselves the following questions:

Learners' attributes

- Will my learners enjoy or understand this poem?

- What do they know about the world that is relevant to responding to this poem?
- Given their everyday and reading or interests, what in the poem may intrigue them?
- What stances does the poem invite to them?

Teachers' attributes

- How do my knowledge, interest, attitudes, beliefs and stance shape my response to the poem?
- How can my responses differ from my learners' responses?

Instructional goals and related evaluation criteria

- What do I want my learners to learn from responding to the poem?
- How will I know if they have achieved these goals?

Relevant response strategies and activities

- What kind of response strategies could they employ?
- What activities would help them employ these strategies?
- How will I show or tell them how to do these activities?
- How will learners assess their own responses?

Social –cultural context

- How does social climate or roles in the classroom influence learners' willingness to articulate and share their responses?
- What activities can I employ to foster an articulation or sharing of responses in the classroom/
- How will I accommodate those differences in my learners' socio-cultural backgrounds?

Long term planning

- How do I sequence, organise and contrast texts and response activities to foster development of responses in a unit?
- How can I help students inductively infer underlying intertextual relationships between texts and response activities?
- How can I determine ways in which students have changed over time?

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APPENDIX A

LETTER SEEKING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

APPENDIX B

LETTER GRANTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

APPENDIX C

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