

**AN EXPLORATION OF THE CHALLENGES FACED BY GRADE 12 ENGLISH  
FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN CREATIVE WRITING  
IN SESHEGO CIRCUIT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE: TOWARDS  
DESIGNING INTERVENTION  
STRATEGIES**

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**PHOFELE PD**

**2021**

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STRATEGIES**

by

**PHUTI DANIEL PHOFELE**

**Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of**

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in

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in the

**FACULTY OF EDUCATION**

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**2021**

## **DEDICATION**

This study is dedicated to my late mother, Salphy Mosima Phofele, who has been a source of inspiration throughout my studies. I will forever cherish your words of wisdom and encouragement during tough times. May your soul rest in peace.

Thanks to my family for your support, more especially my boys, Maboke and Mabusela. You helped me a lot with the downloading of material that I needed to do research. Hope this research would motivate you to study hard and be successful in live.

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I would like to direct my heartfelt gratitude to:

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- Big up to my boys, Maboke and Mabusela for helping me with their technological skills. Thanks guys, may God bless you. Hope that you will one day become technical experts.
- Mosima, my daughter for keeping me company, when I was alone focusing on the study. May you grow up to become a responsible citizen in the world, mom.
- Thanks to my wife, Makoko, for giving me time to focus on the research project.
- Special thanks to the participants in the study. This is our product. May God bless you abundantly for agreeing to take part in the study.

## DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis titled, *An exploration of the challenges faced by Grade 12 English First Additional Language learners in creative writing in Seshego circuit, Limpopo province: Towards designing intervention strategies*, hereby submitted to the University of Limpopo, for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Language Education has not been previously submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university; that it is my work in design and in execution, and all material contained herein has been duly acknowledged.

.....

**Phofele PD (Mr)**

.....

**Date**

## **ABSTRACT**

Many studies in the field of English second language learning have been conducted in the past years. The studies focused on language skills such as speaking, reading, writing and language structures. In so far as the writing skill is concerned, the researchers have a consensus that it is difficult. South African English first additional language learners are no exception to the challenges posed by writing, hence this study explores these challenges which are due to learners' inability to apply process writing stages in creative writing activities. The study explores the challenges faced by Grade 12 learners in creative writing in Seshego circuit, Limpopo Province. Intervention strategies would then be designed so that learners could improve the writing challenges.

The study focuses on twelve (12) Grade 12 learners and two Grade 12 teachers using a qualitative research method. The study uses a phenomenological research design hence it is based on the participants' lived experiences. Data collection methods such as classroom observation, teacher interviews and document analysis were used in the study. Data collected from each of the above mentioned data collection methods, was coded according to emerging common themes which were further labelled into basic themes for interpretation.

The findings suggest that learners lack creativity due to poor vocabulary, and this results in L1 transfer. The findings also suggest that some learners do not have a detailed knowledge of the requirements of the process writing stages. The study recommends explicit teaching of process writing stages so that learners can familiarise themselves with what is required of them in the stages. The study also encourages collaborative learning since research indicates that learners may improve writing if they learn from their peers. More written work to learners is also recommended.

**Keywords:** Writing, process writing, creative writing, language proficiency, English first additional language.

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

ACE: Advanced Certificate in Education

B.Ed.: Bachelor of Education

CAPS: Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement

CK: Content Knowledge

DBE: Department of Basic Education

DoE: Department of Education

EFA: Education for All

ENGFAL: English First Additional Language

ESL: English Second Language

GPK: General Pedagogic Knowledge

IH: Input Hypothesis

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

LIFE: Literacy Initiative for Empowerment

LTSMs: Learner Teacher Support Materials

NCS: National Curriculum Statement

NCWASC: National Commission on Writing in American Schools and Colleges

NGOs: Non-Governmental Organizations

OBE: Outcomes Based Education

OECD: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

OH: Output Hypothesis

PCK: Pedagogical Content Knowledge

REQV: Relative Education Qualification Value

SACE: South African Council of Educators

SACMEQ: Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality

SBH: Skill-Building Hypothesis

SHL: Sepedi Home Language

STD: Senior Teachers' Diploma

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNISA: University of South Africa

UNLD: United Nations Literacy Decade

ZPD: Zone of Proximal Development

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **1.1. Background and motivation**

Writing in English First Additional Language (ENGFAL) has always posed some challenges to learners. This was evident in the observation that the researcher has made in his fifteen years' experience as a secondary school ENGFAL educator, that Grade 12 ENGFAL learners have serious challenges when they are expected to implement the writing process in creative writing tasks. The observation was also made during the researcher's marking of the learners' creative writing pieces at his school and also at marking centres where he usually marks the end of the year ENGFAL paper 3 (i.e. creative-writing) scripts. The expectation of the Department of Basic Education (DBE) is that by the time learners reach Grade 12, they would have developed their interpersonal and cognitive academic skills, like writing proficiently in ENGFAL (DBE, 2011:8). However, the written texts that learners produce seem to lack the application of the appropriate writing processes, such as pre-writing (e.g. brainstorming), drafting, revising, just to mention a few. Some of the learners' language structures and conventions skills, such as spelling, punctuation and sentence construction during writing, leave a lot to be desired.

According to Zhao (2014:53), creative writing encourages learners "to engage playfully with the target language (TL)." Graham and Sandmel (2011:396) add that "learners engage in cycles of planning (setting goals, generating ideas, organizing ideas), translating (putting a writing plan into action), and reviewing (evaluating, editing, revising) during process writing." The DBE's (2011) expectation, Zhao's (2014) opinion on creative writing, as well as Graham and Sandmel's (2011) views on process writing as stated above, seem to be just a pipe dream. According to Wright (2006:88), learners may still continue to struggle to express themselves clearly in English, particularly in writing. Writing is considered a difficult skill, particularly in English Second Language (ESL) where many learners face challenges (Fareed, Ashraf & Bilal, 2016). ESL is an equivalent of ENGFAL in the South African education system, since both of them are learned after the acquisition of a first language (L1). ESL and ENGFAL will be used interchangeably throughout the study. Learners' writing challenges have prompted various

researchers and organizations to come up with initiatives to improve their (learners') writing skills. At a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) conference, the honorary ambassador to the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD), Matsuura Koichiro, said the following:

*Through Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE), UNESCO will endeavour to raise awareness at international, regional and national levels about the importance of literacy, rally political will and mobilize resources, contribute to policy development and capacity-building through technical assistance, and develop rigorous monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to measure effectiveness... (UNESCO, 2016:6).*

Since writing forms part of language literacy, UNESCO, found it worthwhile to empower global communities that have writing challenges with necessary writing skills. Moreover, Parsons and Beauchamp (2012:1) emphasise that the central goal of English education around the globe is to develop writing and communicative abilities of ESL learners. Despite UNESCO's attempt to accelerate the improvement of learners' language literacy, especially in writing, learners seem to continue to encounter writing challenges.

Research done by international and regional bodies such as Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ, 2008) and Education for All (EFA, 2008) has revealed that half of South Africa's grade 6 ENGFAL learners are not doing well in literacy and that South Africa is one of the twenty countries that are below standard in ENGFAL writing (Ayliff, 2010:1). In spite of UNESCO's attempt to develop language writing in the world, and many researchers' studies conducted in the ESL writing, the challenges remain huge (Abongdia & Mpiti, 2015:92).

The dawn of democracy in South Africa has seen changes been made in the country's education system. The Department of Basic Education has developed and adopted different curricula for learning and teaching in both primary and secondary schools. The curricula ranged from what was known as the "curriculum 2005" to the current curriculum known as "National Curriculum Statement" (NCS), (DBE, 2011:3). The NCS has developed policy documents known as "Curriculum

and Assessment Policy Statement” (CAPS) across all learning areas, for example, Sepedi Home Language (SHL), ENGFAL, Life Sciences, just to mention a few. The CAPS documents are meant to give teachers guidelines on how to implement the DBE policies in teaching and learning, in a classroom setting. The DBE guidelines include policies on how to teach ENGFAL writing, in particular, process writing policy. Despite the interventions by various organizations and DBE as stated above, ESL learners continue to experience challenges in ESL writing, hence this study attempts to investigate ENGFAL learners’ writing challenges in process writing.

The learners are not only taught the writing process to produce texts for academic purpose, but also for lifelong learning, for example, when they write a speech to be presented at a farewell function. Bowker (2007:2) concurs with the latter assertion above, that writing is “a skill that is required in many contexts throughout life.” ENGFAL process writing may help Grade 12 learners to prepare themselves for tertiary education where formal tasks are mostly written in the English language. Due to the challenges stated in this chapter, this researcher thought that it would be worth it to investigate the learners’ inability to the writing process in ENGFAL.

## **1.2. The research problem**

According to DBE (2011: 16), “during the process writing, learners are taught how to generate ideas, to think about the purpose and audience, to write drafts, to edit their work, and to present a written product that communicates their thoughts”. It is expected of these learners to produce well planned written texts as they have been learning ENGFAL for many years, starting from primary school level. Sevgi (2016:348) refers to the term “planning”, as “the organization and management of ideas to be presented in the text”. The planning stage in process writing provides the initial motivation, purpose and plan for the piece of writing learners will be required to do (Hugo, 2016:121). DBE (2011:15) adds that in order for learners to write well, they need to have knowledge of the text. Knowing the text, however, does not always mean that a learner would write well, as this researcher has observed in his teaching experience.



Hyland (2003:10) asserts that “the process approach to writing emphasizes the writer as an independent producer of the text”. However, the texts produced by Grade 12 learners, fail to follow process writing stages. Learners fail to plan, draft, revise, edit and proofread their written texts before presenting, and this results in texts that lack cohesion.

### **1.3. Literature review**

According to Hugo (2016:119), writing is an activity or skill that has to be learned, and more critically, has to be explicitly taught by teachers to the learners. The two role players (i.e. the teacher and the learner) play an important role in the teaching and the learning of writing as a skill in a learning environment such as a classroom. The explicit teaching of learners suggests that teachers should be well prepared for the lesson in order to impart knowledge to the learners, who are willing participants in the writing activities. The teachers’ vast knowledge could be valuable assistance to the learners.

Wright (2006) defines writing as “an educational activity, interweaving language and concepts.” Wright (2006) adds that writing clarifies thought and thereby facilitates learning. The concept of writing that Wright (2006) alludes to, is supported by Hugo (2016) who believes that “writing is important because it forces learners to think about grammar and spelling.” Rahmat, Aripin, Lin, Whanchit and Khairuddin (2020) add that “writing and thinking are inter-connected”. When learners are given individual writing task, they are expected to use their creative writing skills, to brainstorm ideas that are relevant to the task at hand. They would then follow up the brainstorming stage with subsequent stages of process writing.

Muncie (2002:226) asserts that process writing is aimed at “moving away from the idea that writing was simply another way of practising grammar, to showing that successful writing is much more about generating ideas, structuring those ideas, drafting and revising.” Ariyanti (2016:75) concurs that “to produce a good writing, every writer should explore ideas, pour down our thoughts on paper...organise our writing, writing the first draft, revise the draft, and produce the final draft”. Writing well, learners must have mastered the structure, spelling, punctuation and a fairly large part of the vocabulary of the language in which they are writing.” The

learners' failure to write drafts and edit them could result in texts that have many language errors.

Bazerman and Prior (2004:2) believe that if learners were to understand writing, "they would need to explore practices that they are expected to engage in to produce texts." The practices that learners are expected to engage in, may be referred to as process writing stages which include prewriting, drafting and revising (McCarthy & Ro, 2011:274). The same views are expressed by Hayes and Flower (1980) in Simmerman, Harward, Pierce, Peterson, Morrison, Korth, Billen and Shumway (2012:293), who view writing as a form of problemsolving, and they also touch on what they think is a framework for the stages that writers go through when producing a written piece. Those stages referred to by Hayes and Flower, are process writing stages.

According to Zhao (2014:453), "creative writing activities may enable ESL learners to experience a sense of empowerment in the L2 linguistic and/or literary skills." Learners could feel empowered when they are able to communicate through writing in ESL. Empowerment may be associated with the learners' motivation to learn ESL. Learners may be motivated by their desire to be fluent in ESL writing in order to have access to education in English medium institutions of higher learning, to compete in the labour market and in the broader social spectrum.

Adas and Bakir (2013:254) contend that learners need to be personally involved in ESL writing tasks in order to make the learning experience of great value to them. Personal involvement could imply that learners have an intense desire to learn how to write in L2. The intense desire could be driven by motivation as an underlying factor. Lightbown and Spada (2006:78) add that motivation, in addition to a positive attitude, may have a positive impact in learners' ESL writing.

Learning to write in L2 should not be what Wright (2006) calls a "once-off activity", but should be an ongoing process where learners are given what Mpiti (2016:1) calls "extensive writing activities" throughout their school years. Kellogg (2008) suggests that writing is a cognitive process that tests learners' memory, thinking ability and verbal command so that they may successfully express ideas. Learners' successful composition of a text could imply that they are proficient in a second language, especially in writing. The implication of Kellogg (2008)'s

suggestion could be that learners should continue receiving writing lessons until they learn how to write appropriately. Learners should continue practising writing by learning from their mistakes through feedback from their peers and teachers.

Muncie (2002:227) believes that “while writing is an excellent opportunity for improving and consolidating vocabulary, much research has shown that vocabulary is one of the most important features of writing.” If learners lack vocabulary, they would not be able to put together a meaningful piece of writing, as they would lack appropriate words to express what they intend to write. Al-Saleem (2008:77) adds that writing is an essential component of classroom activities as it reinforces grammatical structures and vocabulary. As said before, learners may not write successfully, if they do not know the meaning of words that they use in writing, hence, it is important of them to improve their vocabulary.

Stubbs (2014) suggests that writing has features which include the following:

*spacing between words; punctuation, including parenthesis; typography, including style of typeface, italicization, underlining, upper and lower case, capitalisation to indicate sentence beginnings and proper nouns; inverted commas, for example to indicate that a term is being used critically; graphics, including lines, shapes, borders, diagrams, tables, abbreviations; logograms, for example; and layout, including paragraphing, margination, pagination, footnotes, headings and...sub-headings... (87).*

All the linguistic features mentioned above are essential in helping learners to write a meaningful text. Rao (2019) believes that writing features, as in the above paragraph, are an indication that the writing skill involves a number of complex rhetorical and linguistic features which must be taught to learners.

#### **1.4. Role of theory in the study**

This study followed the Vygotsky's (1978) social learning theory. The Vygotskian theory describes the nature of learning in the classroom setting and so is the current study. According to the Vygotskian theory, learning takes place when learners engage in tasks and activities that are manageable within their “Zone of Proximal Development” (ZPD) (Pretorius, 2000:145). The Vygotskian theory refers to the ZPD as the space that exists between what learners can do

independently and what they can do when they are assisted by a more knowledgeable person, such as a teacher (Farr, 2014: 2). Vygotsky's (1978) social learning theory was relevant to this study since the Grade 12 learners were taken through a step by step approach by their teachers on how to apply process writing during writing lessons. The teacher's step by step teaching approach is referred to as "scaffolding" (Hugo, 2016).

With regard to this study, the learning activities were based on ENGFAL process writing stages, namely; prewriting, drafting, revising, editing and proofreading. According to the Vygotskian theory, learners may enjoy the support of their teachers in doing an activity such as creative writing in class until they can do it on their own, and that is the point at which the teacher's support or scaffolding is removed (Farr, 2014:2). The learners' ability to write a process writing compliant text on their own, without the assistance of the teachers, means that they are proficient in writing. The support that teachers give to learners may, however, fail to yield results in the sense that learners fail to learn what is being taught. According to Farr (2014:2), the learners' failure to learn, is said to be outside their ZPD. The Grade 12 learners' level of writing as discussed in the research problem above, could be described as being outside their ZPD because of their failure to learn and follow ENGFAL process writing.

Krashen's (1989) hypothesis theory adds to the Vygotskian social learning theory. According to Pretorius (2000:37), Krashen argues for the Input Hypothesis (IH) which postulates that successful learning may result from comprehensible input and the Output Hypothesis (OH) which may occur through feedback. The IH may be related to scaffolding in the sense that the teacher imparts knowledge by teaching and assisting learners in a step by step approach in ENGFAL process writing classroom. The OH may be related to the Vygotskian approach in the sense that the learners produce output in the form of written texts.

Brown's (2000) teaching and learning theory, is also relevant to Vygotsky's social learning theory. Brown (2000:7) describes learning as "getting knowledge of a subject or a skill by study, experience or instruction." Just like in the Vygotskian theory and in Krashen's (1989) hypothesis theory, a teacher may serve as a

knowledgeable person who teaches learners through scaffolding in the ENGFAL writing classroom.

Another theory that complements Vygotsky's social learning theory is the creativity theory. According to Kanematsu and Barry (2016:9), the concept creativity refers to the ability to produce original work by brainstorming ideas to create a new product. The creativity theory links with the social learning theory when learners brainstorm ideas during the creative writing process. Just like in Vygotsky's social learning theory, teachers may support learners by teaching them creative writing skills such as brainstorming, editing, revising, in a step by step approach (scaffolding) during creativity lessons. Blanco-Herrera, Groves, Lewis, and Gentile (2015: 153), believe that some students may fall short of mastering process writing skills as students vary in how hard or easy they find a skill or an activity. The students' failure to learn creative writing skills may be linked to ZPD in the social learning theory.

## **1.5. Purpose of the study and the research questions**

### **1.5.1. Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study was to explore the challenges faced by Grade 12 ENGFAL learners in creative writing in Seshego Circuit, Limpopo Province and also to design intervention strategies to address the challenges explored.

### **1.5.2. The research questions**

The main research question for this study is, what are the challenges faced by grade 12 ENGFAL learners in creative writing?

The sub-questions are as follows:

1. How do teachers approach the teaching of creative writing in Grade 12?
2. How can the teaching of ENGFAL creative writing be improved?
3. Which strategies could be appropriate for teaching ENGFAL process writing?
4. Which strategies do Grade 12 ENGFAL learners employ in creative writing?
5. How can the Grade 12 learners improve their ENGFAL process writing skills?

## **1.6. Research methodology**

### **1.6.1. Research design**

This study followed the qualitative research method. The qualitative research method is more relevant in this study because it focuses on the interaction between learners and educators (Almalki, 2016). According to Linneberg and Korsgaard (2019:10), “the research design outlines the nature of the research and examines the overall elements of the research project to determine how they fit together”. The qualitative research method enabled the researcher to give an in-depth focus on the challenges experienced by participants in creative writing. The phenomenological research paradigm underpinned this study in the sense that it afforded the researcher an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the participants’ experience, thoughts and opinions regarding the application of ENGFAL writing process (Wyse, 2011:35). This phenomenological qualitative study was conducted through a case study design which also afforded the researcher an opportunity to have an in-depth exploration of these challenges by focusing on the selected schools.

### **1.6.2. Sampling**

Mandal (2018:591) states that “qualitative research aims to collect and analyse the responses of a participant at a specific time, place and context”. This study took place at two (2) secondary schools in Seshego circuit in Limpopo Province. The two schools were selected because of their close proximity (they are four kilometres apart from one another). The circuit had nine (9) secondary schools, four thousand six hundred and fifty (4650) learners and approximately one hundred and eighty (180) teachers. The learners were entirely Sepedi Home Language speakers who were studying English as a first additional language. All teachers were non-native English speakers.

The two schools selected for this study had four Grade 12 classes (i.e. two classes per school). A total of 12, Grade 12 learner participants (6 per school) and 2 ENGFAL teachers (one per school) were selected for this study. The 12 learners consisted of three (3) learners from each of the two classes per school, so that the researcher would have an in-depth focus on the 12 learner participants. The reason for the selection of Grade 12 learners in this study is that Grade 12, is the

exit grade of the DBE system, before the learners enter tertiary education where English is the common medium of communication. Moreover, Grade 12 is the grade at which the DBE expects learners to show high level of proficiency in ENGFAL writing. The 12 learner participants were selected according to their performance in a preliminary essay that all Grade 12 learners wrote at the two schools. One (1) higher achieving learner, one (1) average achieving learner and one (1) below average learner per class were selected so that the study would cover learner performance at all levels of writing.

Two Grade 12 ENGFAL writing teachers were purposefully selected from the two schools so that they could give their professional expertise in the study. Maxwell (2005:26) defines purposive sampling as decisions about where to conduct the research and whom to involve in the research process. MacMillan and Schumacher (1997:433) add that purposive sampling is a strategy that a researcher uses to choose participants that are knowledgeable and informative about the study's area of interest. One of the educators had six (6) years' ENGFAL teaching experience, while the other had sixteen (16) years' ENGFAL teaching experience.

### **1.6.3. Data collection**

This study used observation, interviews and document analysis as instruments during data collection. Heigham and Croker (2009:311) define the term "data collection", as the process of collecting information systematically through data collection techniques. Data collection has to do with how information is obtained from the participants.

The researcher used the observation schedule (**Refer to Appendix A**) as a tool to collect data from both the learner and teacher participants. This researcher was a direct participant who personally went to the classrooms and directly observed both learner and teacher activities during process writing lessons so that he would have a direct understanding of the participants' experiences in the classroom. Creswell (2013:167) says that during observation, the researcher should "describe what happened and also reflect on aspects such as personal reflections, insights, ideas, confusions, hunches, initial interpretations and breakthroughs". The researcher also observed the teacher participants' teaching methods in order to

ascertain if various stages that are applicable in process writing were taught. The researcher observed if learners were active participants and checked if they took notes which they would refer to at a later stage, when they were given creative writing tasks. The researcher took field notes during each observation session. Spradley (2016) has this to say about field notes:

*The researchers taking field notes while observing must make sure to re-write jottings into more elaborative and legible notes as soon as possible in order to retain thick data in a form that is fully retrievable even after the impressions of the moment have faded from their memory. (18).*

Rossmann and Rallis (2012:270) say that when taking field notes, researchers have to give thick descriptions, “because without the details, the descriptions will be thin and too weak to support interpretations”. Rossmann and Rallis (2012:269) add that “thick description details physical surroundings, time and place, actions, events, words, people and interactions on the scene”. The researcher immediately rewrote the field notes taken at the end of each observation session so that he would be able to refer to later, to remind himself of what transpired during the process writing lessons.

An interview schedule (**Refer to Appendix B**) was arranged with the teacher participants as a follow up to what was taught in class so that clarification would be made on issues that needed clarity and also to get teacher participants’ personal views on issues related to process writing. In-depth interviews helped the researcher to understand the teachers’ experiences in process writing. According to Beletto (2028:2623), “in-depth interviews allow the researcher to probe more deeply into the rich descriptions of experiences that participants shared”. The researcher took notes during teacher participants’ response to questions. The notes were immediately and legibly rewritten before the researcher could forget the teachers’ responses to the questions asked. Follow up interviews were made to clarify where clarification was required. An audio device such as a tape recorder was used as a back-up instrument to record the teacher participants’ responses during interviews so that the researcher would later remind himself of what transpired during the interview.



In document analysis, learner participants were asked to respond to ENGFAL creative writing tasks so that the researcher would ascertain if the learners followed or applied various stages of the writing process in the tasks given. The researcher acted as an invigilator during the writing of the tasks so as to ensure authenticity. The creative writing tasks were then marked to check if aspects related to process writing were applied. Feedback was given to learners as part of learning in process writing. According to DBE (2011:11), "it is necessary that learners receive regular and timely feedback on their writing so that they know where and how to improve". Follow up creative tasks were then given to learner participants, to check for improvement and consistency in the learners' responses. Feedback was given after the researcher marked the activities.

#### **1.6.4. Data analysis**

Wong (2008:14) suggests that data analysis entails reading a large amount of transcripts, looking for similarities or differences and ultimately finding themes and developing categories. Creswell (2013:179) concurs with Wong (2008) that "the process of data analysis involves organizing the data, conducting a preliminary re-a-through of the database, coding and organizing themes, representing the data, and forming an interpretation of them". During the analysis of data collected from observation schedule, the researcher read and reread the raw data collected and looked for recurring data patterns from the participants' ideas, experiences and expressions and then coded the patterns according to similarities and differences that emerged. Saldaña (2015:13) defines coding as "a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data". Coding helps to generate new ideas and also helps gather material by topic (Richards, 2006:103). Data that was not useful in the study was set aside, while relevant data was further coded into few themes that were then labelled into basic themes for interpretation. Dia de Figueiredo (2010:29) observes that when data is analysed, focus should not just be on data collected, but also on materials that carry relevant information. All the above mentioned steps were repeated to ensure authenticity of the findings.

Data collected from interview schedule with teacher participants was transcribed to get a general sense of the ideas and experiences presented (Maldonado,

2017:4). The researcher used direct quotations of the participants so that proper analyses of the participants' experiences could be made (Janessick, 2016). The data was then coded into common themes. Irrelevant data was discarded, while relevant data was coded into reduced common themes or categories that were then labelled into basic themes or categories for interpretation. The researcher asked the participants to read their own interview transcripts for validation and also asked them to agree or disagree with the researcher's interpretation of the data.

In document analysis, data collected from learner participants' ENGFAL creative writing tasks was read and reread, and just like in observation and interviews, emerging common themes that were relevant to this study, were labelled and then analysed. All irrelevant data was discarded while relevant data was coded to reduce emerging themes which were labelled into basic themes for interpretation. Data collected through observation and interview, was triangulated through document analysis to get a deeper understanding of the study. Triangulation of data is done when one source is checked for consistency with data from other sources (Thomas, 2003).

### **1.6.5. Quality criteria**

#### **1.6.5.1. Credibility**

According to Mpiti (2016:106), the term credibility refers to "the extent to which the data and data analysis are believable and trustworthy." Heigham and Croker (2009:310) add that "researchers use credibility to maximise the accuracy of how they define concepts and how they characterize people they are investigating, with particular focus on how the various participants feel about the interpretations that the researchers make". Credibility was done through member checking whereby teacher participants were sent transcripts of their interviews with this researcher to check for verification.

#### **1.6.5.2. Transferability**

Heigham and Croker (2009:322) refer to the term transferability as "the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be generalized or transferred to other contexts or settings." According to Bitsch (2005: 85), "the researcher facilitates the transferability judgement by a potential user through thick description and

purposeful sampling”. A detailed explanation of the research methodology and the place where this study takes place in “sampling” in the previous pages enabled other researchers to apply the study in similar situations. Purposive sampling of the teacher participants ensured replication of the study due to their experience in the teaching of ENGFAL process writing.

#### **1.6.5.3. Dependability**

According to Korstjens and Moser (2018:121), the concept ‘dependability’ “involves participants’ evaluation of the findings, interpretation and recommendations of the study such that all are supported by data as received from participants of the study”. Dependability emphasizes the need for the researcher to account for the ever-changing context and shifting conditions within which research occurs (Heigham and Croker, 2009:311). The implication of Korstjens and Moser’s (2018) and Heigham and Croker’s (2009) statements on dependability is that other researchers’ findings should be consistent with a researcher’s findings when they conduct the same research using the initial researcher’s report. The initial report would have used data collection instruments such as field notes, transcripts and audio recorder to ensure that the findings correspond with data collected from the participants. This helped eliminate biasness on the side of the researcher. In order to ensure dependability, this researcher requested a trustworthy person who was knowledgeable in phenomenological research, to analyse data collected to ascertain if the results were the same.

#### **1.6.5.4. Confirmability**

According to Heighman and Croker (2009:309), confirmability implies that “researchers should fully explain, or disclose the data that they are basing their interpretations on, or at least make those data available.” In other words, confirmability was determined by linking the data to their sources (Maldonado, 2017:5). This researcher’s findings were based on data collected from participants and not on his personal motivations or bias. Just like in dependability, data collection instruments such as an audio recorder, transcripts and field notes were used to ensure that the findings corresponded with data that had been captured.

## **1.7. Significance of the study**

There are several ways in which this study may contribute to the existing body of knowledge. This study may contribute in the following ways:

- The study in itself is a new research area focusing on historically disadvantaged secondary school English FAL learners' writing skills in Seshego area, in Limpopo. Some researches might have been conducted elsewhere in the world, but not with these learners. The findings of a research made on learners' writing skills at a former Model C school in South Africa, may not be the same as findings of the same research in Seshego, due to factors such as the participants' social background, context, culture, just to mention a few.
- The recommendations that would be listed in this study, could help to improve the participants' and other learners' writing skills in the area under investigation and elsewhere in South Africa and the world.
- The findings could help teachers and other stakeholders involved in curriculum delivery, especially in process writing teaching methods, with intervention strategies that could help to redesign the writing curriculum. The researcher will engage all stake-holders in the education sector (provincial and national curriculum design officials, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), teacher unions, publishers, just to mention a few), to disseminate information about the study findings. The dissemination of information to stakeholders would be done through articles published in education journals, discussion papers, presentations at seminars and in-service training workshops of educators. The researcher would consider approaching DBE to sponsor a pilot project at few selected schools for the experimentation of the findings. Programme and study materials would be designed for the pilot schools to follow during ENGFAL process writing lessons.

## **1.8. Ethical considerations**

### **1.8.1. Anonymity and confidentiality**

Creswell (2012:592) opines that “the researcher needs to conduct the inquiry in a way that respects the care of the participants...and is sensitive to obtaining consent and advancing the purpose of the study...”. Creswell (2012: 588) adds that “the research needs to be in the best interest of those facing the problem or

issue being addressed in the research project.” Since the findings of the research were shared with other people throughout the world, this researcher protected the identity of the participants by giving them pseudonyms and coding their schools rather than referring them by their names in order to ensure anonymity and confidentiality.

### **1.8.2. Voluntary participation**

The participants were not persuaded to take part in the study. They were advised in writing that participation in the study was voluntary and that they were free to withdraw at any time. They were advised that they might not expect compensation for participating in the study and that they might decline to answer questions asked by the researcher.

### **1.8.3. Informed Consent**

Informed consent is a way of informing and ensuring that the participants understand what a study is all about so that they make take a decision to participate or not to participate in the study (Mpiti, 2016: 108). A written consent form was given to learner participants and their parents/guardians to complete as the learner participants were below 21 years’ age of legal consent (**Refer to Appendix C**). The teacher participants were also given a consent form to fill in, so that they could agree to the terms and conditions of the study (**Refer to Appendix D**). The teacher participants were informed in writing of all data collection methods and activities. Written transcripts and interpretations of data were made available to the participants, and their rights, interests and wishes were considered.

## **1.9. Outline of the chapters**

The study is structured into five chapters, which are as follows:

**Chapter 1:** It is the chapter that has just ended which has provided background and motivation for the exploration of the challenges faced by Grade 12 learners in ENGFAL creative writing. Some of the aspects discussed were a brief overview of the research problem, purpose of the study, the research questions, review of literature and the theoretical framework, methodology used, significance thereof and ethical issues related to the study.

**Chapter 2:** It gives a detailed review of literature that is relevant to the study as well as the theoretical framework that underpins the study. The researcher presents and discusses writing theories that are related to the study.

**Chapter 3:** It gives an overview of the research methodology used in the study. The methodology includes the research design, the population and data collection methods, analysis of data collected, quality criteria and ethical considerations in the study.

**Chapter 4:** It presents and analyses data collected through classroom observations, teacher interviews and document analysis. The researcher also presents and analyses biographical information of learner and teacher participants.

**Chapter 5:** The chapter presents the findings of the data presented in chapter four of the study. It also presents the summary of the study as well as conclusions reached from the findings. It then gives recommendations to improving ENGFAL writing curriculum.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1. Introduction**

This chapter presents literature review of studies that are relevant to the challenges ESL learners experience in process writing. The chapter also gives an in-depth discussion of the studies of ENGFAL learners' writing, globally, continentally (Africa) and nationally (South Africa). In addition, it gives an in-depth discussion of writing theories and teaching approaches that are related to the current study while the last section is the conclusion.

### **2.2. Literature review**

Various researchers have come up with different definitions of the concepts “writing”, “process writing” and “writing instruction” in ENGFAL writing. Hugo (2016:119), refers to the concept ‘writing’, as an activity that has to be learned, and more critically, has to be explicitly taught by teachers to the learners. The teachers and the learners are two key role players in the writing lessons in a classroom environment. The explicit teaching of learners alluded to by Hugo (2016), suggests that teachers should be well prepared for the writing lessons in order to impart knowledge to the learners, who should be willing participants in the classroom. The explicit teaching of learners also suggests that teachers should be knowledgeable about the subject matter.

Hugo (2016:119) further states that “writing is important because it forces learners to think about grammar and spelling”. This is likely to happen during the revising and editing stages of process writing when learners reflect on their responses in creative writing tasks by doing corrections to the drafts. Wessels and Van den Burg (1998: 286) add that “to write well, learners must have mastered the structure, spelling, punctuation and a fairly large part of the vocabulary of the language in which they are writing”. The language that Wessels and Van den Burg (2016) refer to, could be ENGFAL and its language structures that Grade 12 learners should be familiar with in order to produce well written tasks. Lack of punctuation and lots of spelling errors in a creative writing task, could make the task unreadable.

Abas (2016:21) claims that “writing is recursive in nature whereby a writer shifts from one stage to another and might shift back to the beginning”. The writer would brainstorm, draft, edit, revise and revert to any of this stages anytime during

writing. Patthey-Chaves, Matsumura and Valdes (2004), Brown (2000), and Doyle (1998) concur with Abas (2016) that writers think and revise as they write. The process approach to writing is more concerned about how a creative task is written than with the final outcome (Julius 2013:18). The writers do not follow a chronological sequence of the writing process stages, hence Alhoseni (2008) argues that writing requires higher thinking abilities. Abas (2016:21) further adds that “most ESL students find writing difficult because they have to use the correct English grammar and vocabulary” in creative writing tasks. To become a good writer, one needs to know the rules of grammar (Hyland, 2008:2). Wright (2006:90) believes that writing clarifies thought and thereby facilitates learning. Nightingale (2000), De la Paz and Graham (2002), Wright (2006), Alhosani (2008), Alsamadani (2010), Adas and Bakir (2013), Raja and Zahid (2013), Aziz and Yusoff (2016), Mpiti (2016) also hold the same view as Abas (2016) that writing is the most difficult language skill. When learners are given creative writing tasks, they will be expected to use their creative writing skills, to brainstorm ideas in order to produce well written responses.

According to the Department of Basic Education (DBE, 2011: 35), “writing instruction will usually involve working through the process writing”. The term “writing instruction” refers to the writing lessons that are offered by teachers during lessons in a classroom setting as alluded to by Hugo (2016) in the above paragraph. In their lesson plans, teachers need to plan how to teach the type of text that they have selected. This would involve the following measures as stated in DBE (2011:15):

- Introducing the topic, for example, ‘Don’t do drugs!’ for a persuasive essay; this will involve introducing new vocabulary suitable to the topic and level.
- Discussing the purpose, audience and context which determine the style or register.
- Brainstorm ideas to be put on the mind map.
- Encourage learners to draft the essay.



- Encourage the learners to draft, revise, edit and proofread; checking and correcting grammar, spelling and punctuation.
- Give feedback.

Teachers need to have sufficient writing knowledge in order to develop learners' writing. Palpanadan, Salam and Ismail (2014), assert that teachers' practices in their writing instructions deeply influence learners' writing performance. Darayseh (2003) believes that writing instruction should not just be about teaching learners how to write spelling, punctuation, rules of grammar, just to mention a few, but about learners' interest, what they want to communicate to the reader and how they would write their final product. Poor writing instruction may have a negative impact on learners' poor proficiency in ENGFAL writing (Mpiti, 2016:34). Nel (2007) concurs with Mpiti (2016) that some teachers lack the training, knowledge and time to support students thereby contributing to the learners' failure to achieve their full potential in writing. The more aware a teacher is of language features and how they work, the more the learners are likely to improve their writing skills.

According to Deane (2018:288), learners' writing can improve if writing instruction does the following:

- Builds prior knowledge by encouraging learners to read intensively (Graham, Liu, Aitken, Ng, Bartlett, Harris & Holzapfel, 2018). This would help learners to write an activity based on what they already know.
- Sets clear achievement goals. When learners know what they need to do to succeed in a writing task, they are more likely to think success is under their control and therefore give more effort and time in their writing (Gillespie & Graham, 2014).
- Provides models to emulate. If teachers model an example of a good piece of writing, learners may improve their writing based on what they have observed (Graham, Harris & Santangelo, 2015).
- Provides frequent opportunities for practice. Familiarity reduces working memory demands (Klingberg, 2010). This could improve not only learners'

writing performance but also their reading comprehension, hence writing is about writing.

- Familiarizes learners with relevant vocabulary and spelling (Graham et al., 2015). This could be done when teachers encourage learners to read more English material so that they could improve their vocabulary. Teachers could teach vocabulary to learners and give them vocabulary related activities. Teachers could also help learners to improve their writing ability by teaching spelling and giving them spelling activities.
- Increases flexibility of expression through exercises like sentence combination (Graham et al., 2015). This would help in essay writing where learners would be expected to use a variety of sentences such as simple, compound and complex sentences.
- Familiarize learners with other language structures and conventions such as the use of tense, punctuation marks, concord, just to mention a few.
- Strengthens general literacy skills by interventions that improve reading comprehension (Graham et al., 2018).

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2009) believes that there are factors that may influence a teachers' pedagogy. These factors may include teachers' beliefs, practices, attitudes, just to mention a few, are crucial in improving the educational process, in particular the writing instruction. According to Melketo (2012), research has shown that teachers' beliefs may negatively affect their teaching practices and learners' outcomes. In his study of teachers' writing instruction, Julius (2013) alludes to factors such as teacher knowledge and conceptualization which may influence teacher pedagogy. These factors are discussed below:

#### **a) Teacher knowledge**

Fradd and Lee (1998:761) define teacher knowledge as "a repertoire of knowledge, skills and dispositions that teachers require to effectively carry out classroom practices". Teachers bring far more than just the latest government

thinking on how they should teach in the classroom (Cogill, 2008). Shulman (1987) identifies six categories to provide a framework for teachers' knowledge which are discussed below:

- **Content knowledge**

Shulman (1987) defines content knowledge (CK) as the knowledge of the subject matter that teachers are teaching. CK includes teachers' knowledge of linguistic features of a subject such as the rules of grammar in the subject, vocabulary, punctuation, just to mention a few. Teachers with good CK would in turn help their learners to improve their knowledge in the subject. In the current study, the teachers' CK would help the learners improve their writing skills.

- **General Pedagogical Knowledge**

General Pedagogic Knowledge (GPK) refers to broad principles and strategies of classroom management and organization (Shulman, 1987:8). GPK includes knowledge of theories of learning and general principles of instruction. Teachers who have good management skills would maintain order in their classroom so that learning and teaching would continue smoothly without hindrance.

- **Pedagogical Content Knowledge**

Shulman (1987:8) suggests that Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) is a form of practical knowledge that is used by teachers to guide their actions in a highly contextualized classroom environment. According to PCK, teachers should possess knowledge of both theory and practice in order to teach learners well, irrespective of the lesson that needs to be presented. In the context of the current study, teachers should be well acquainted with theoretical and practical knowledge of writing including process writing.

- **Knowledge of learners and their characteristics**

According to Shulman (1987), this category of knowledge refers to specific understanding of the learners' characteristics and how these characteristics can be used to specialize and adjust instructions in the classroom. Rahman, Scaife,

Yahya and Jalil (2010) mention two ways in which knowledge of learners could be realized, and they are social knowledge and cognitive knowledge. According to Rahman et al (2010:87), social knowledge refers to knowledge of how learners behave according to their age, social background and interests. The cognitive knowledge of learners refers to knowledge about theories of child development which informs practice as well as knowledge of what learners know, what they can do and what they can understand (Rahman et al., 2010:87). In other words, teachers should give each learner individual attention so that they would know their characteristics or behaviour. Large classes may however, hamper this, making it difficult if not impossible to give all learners individual attention. This could in turn affect learning as some individual learners' social or cognitive challenges may require teachers' intervention to help them focus in class.

- **Curriculum knowledge**

According to Cogill (2008), the term curriculum knowledge refers to the knowledge of what should be taught to learners and requires understanding of children's learning potential, national syllabus, school planning document and year plans. Department of basic education in South Africa through its CAPS curriculum expects all teachers to have familiarized themselves with policy documents available across all learning areas. All subject educators including ENGFAL teachers, are guided by their subject framework policy handbooks to deliver the curriculum. Learners are likely to be adversely affected if teachers fail to properly implement the curriculum as per policy handbook. If ENGFAL teacher participants in this study fail to implement the correct writing instruction as per guidelines, learners' progress in process writing could be hampered.

- **Wisdom of practice**

Shulman (1987:11) believes that wisdom of practice refers to "the maxims that guide the practices of able teachers". The term "able teachers", refers to skilful or experienced teachers. In her research paper, Rice (2010) claims that teachers who have years of teaching experience are more effective than their novice counterparts. Although Rice's (2010) claims may hold water, experience itself may not make learning and teaching effective; teachers need to also have knowledge

of the subject content (Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996). Other factors such as discipline at a school, teacher training and teachers' own experience as learners may affect teaching and learning irrespective of whether a teacher is experienced or not (Borg, 2003).

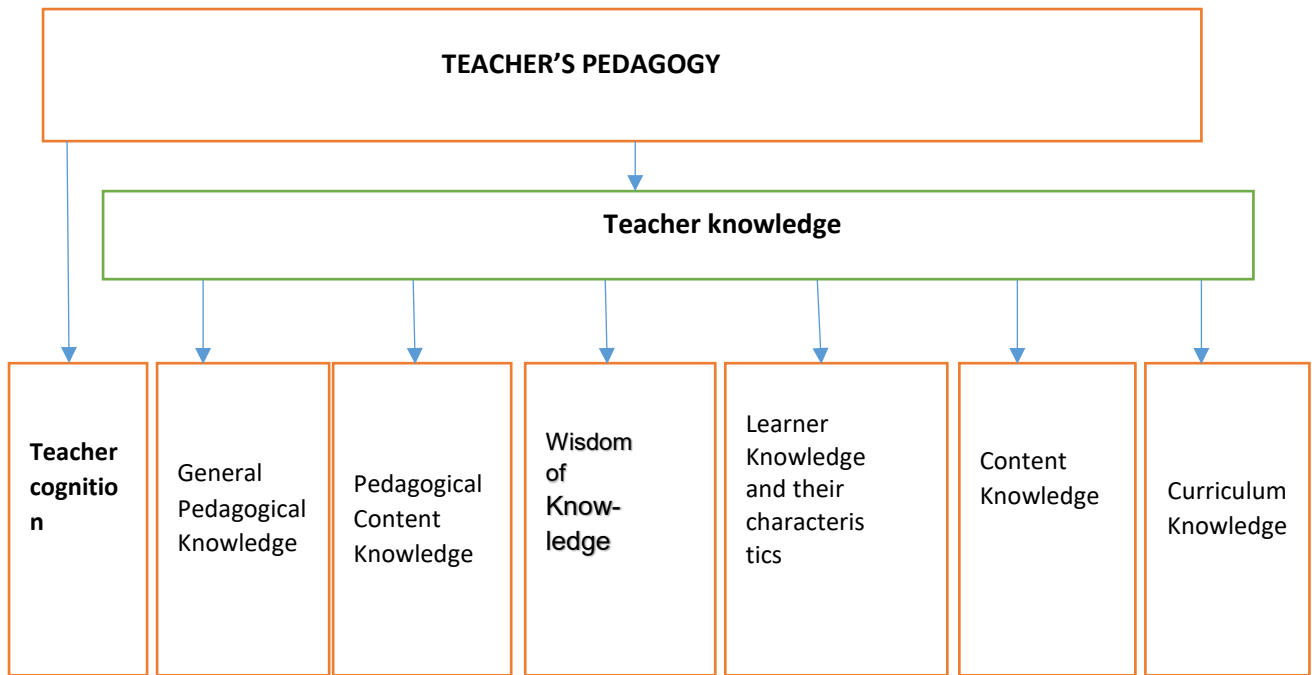
## **b) Teacher cognition**

According to Borg (2003), teacher cognition refers to what teachers think, know and believe and the relationship of these mental constructs to what teachers do in the classroom. Julius (2013:35) adds that "teacher cognition is considered to be a useful way of understanding how best teaching and learning can be improved". Teachers' beliefs, practices and attitudes are important for understanding and improving the educational process (OECD, 2009).

Below, Borg (2003) summarizes what he claims is generally accepted about the nature of teacher cognition and its relationship to what teachers do:

- teachers' cognitions can be influenced by their own experiences.
- the cognitions may influence what and how teachers learn during teacher education.
- the cognitions act as filter through which teachers interpret new information and experience.
- the cognitions outweigh the effects of teacher education in influencing what teachers do in the classroom.
- the cognition can be deep-rooted and resistant to change.
- they can exert a persistent long-term influence on teachers' instructional practices.
- they interact with experience

Factors that might influence teachers' pedagogy are summarized in figure 1 below:



**Fig.2.2. Factors that influence teachers' pedagogy**

Wright (2006:91) believes that to develop students' writing effectively, attention should be paid "to all aspects of writing form, the writer's process, content, the reader, culture, context and purpose". Muncie (2002:226) adds that process writing is aimed at "moving away from the idea that writing was simply another way of practicing grammar, to showing that successful writing is much more about generating ideas, structuring those ideas, drafting and revising". Muncie's (2002) assertion is that learners would only be regarded as successful writers if they could follow appropriate process writing stages in their creative writing tasks. Abas and Aziz (2016:22) are also of the opinion that "in the process approach classroom, the purpose of instructional activities is to allow the learners to express themselves fluently, think and organize their ideas before writing and revising drafts"

Bazerman and Prior (2004:2) maintain that if learners are to understand writing, "they would need to explore practices which they are expected to engage in, to produce texts". The practices alluded to by Bazerman and Prior (2004) that learners are expected to engage in, are writing stages in process writing (McCarthy & Ro, 2011:274). According to Hedge (2001), the process approach is based on strategies that the writers apply to compose a piece of writing. Similar views are expressed in Simmerman, Haward, Pierce, Petersen, Morrison, Korth, Billen and Shumway (2012: 293) by Hayes and Flower (1980), who view writing as a form of problem solving.

Hayes and Flower (1980) also mention a framework for the stages such as brainstorming, drafting, organizing, just to mention a few, that writers go through when producing a written piece.

Zhao (2014: 453) states that “creative writing activities may enable ESL learners to experience a sense of empowerment in the L2 linguistic and /or literary skill”. ENGFAL learners could feel empowered if they are able to produce well written creative writing tasks. Empowerment may be associated with the learners’ motivation to learn ENGFAL. Learners may be motivated by their desire to be fluent in ENGFAL writing in order to have access to education in English medium institutions of higher learning, to compete in the work market and in the broader social spectrum. Tahaineh (2010:79) adds that writing skills may be required in a classroom setting for taking notes, writing essays, answering questions, just to mention a few.

Learners’ attitudes and beliefs could influence their writing in ENGFAL creative writing tasks. Boscolo (2008), argues that attitudes and beliefs towards writing may greatly affect learners. Boscolo (2008) goes further to say that many teachers focus too much on learners’ writing skills instead of focusing on their beliefs and attitudes. If the learners have a positive attitude towards ENGFAL writing lessons, they are likely to have successful learning since they have the eagerness to learn.

Adas and Bakir (2013:254) contend that learners need to be personally involved in ESL writing tasks in order to make the learning experience of great value to them. Personal involvement could imply that learners may have an intense desire to learn how to write in L2. The intense desire could also be driven by motivation as an underlying factor as stated above. Lightbown and Spada (2006:78) add that motivation, in addition to a positive attitude, may have a positive impact in learners’ ESL writing.

Learning to write in L2 should not be what Wright (2006) calls a “once-off activity”, but should be an ongoing process where learners are given what Mpiti (2016:1) calls, “extensive writing activities” throughout their school years. Kellogg (2008) suggests that writing is a cognitive process that tests learners’ memory, thinking ability and verbal command so that they may successfully express ideas. Learners’ successful composition of a text could imply that they command high proficiency levels in L2. The implication of Kellogg’s (2008) suggestion is that

learners should continue receiving writing lessons until they learn how to write appropriately. Learners should continue practicing writing, by learning from their mistakes through positive feedback from their teachers. Negative comments on a draft by a teacher should be avoided at all costs as they may have a negative impact on a student's confidence in writing (Hyland, 2001: 45).

According to Hyland and Hyland (2006), feedback has long been regarded as essential for advancing learning. Teacher feedback as well as peer assessment that results in feedback could help learners to correct learners' mistakes in written tasks and thereby improve their learning. It is therefore essential for this researcher to find out if teachers provide feedback to learners' written work as a way of correcting their mistakes in writing. Julius (2013:26) states that "corrective feedback helps learners to see where and how they may be making errors". Some researchers believe that feedback by ENGFAL learners' peers in creative writing could help the learners to improve their writing than when feedback is given by their teachers. Hyland (2003: 18) argues that peer feedback is "an important alternative to teacher based forms of feedback in ESL contexts". Learners may relate better with their peers, and may feel free to confide and share ideas with their peers than with their teachers. Various ways of providing feedback to learners' written work are distinguished, namely, the direct, the indirect and the metalinguistic corrective feedback (Ellis, 2008).

According to Ellis (2008), in the direct feedback, the teacher corrects learners' incorrect linguistic form by crossing out an unnecessary word or phrase, inserting a missing word or morpheme and writing the correct form above the error. Direct corrective feedback is suitable for learners who have low level proficiency in the second language (L2) (Ellis, 2008).

In indirect corrective feedback, the teachers indicate where learners have made mistakes without correcting the errors, they just underline or circle the errors and expect the learners to correct them (Ellis, 2008). Ellis (2009) further states that many researchers prefer indirect corrective feedback to direct corrective feedback as the former requires learners to engage in guided learning and thus provide the type of reflection that is likely to lead to long term memory.



In metalinguistic corrective feedback, teachers write explicit comments related to the errors that learners have made by using codes which show the nature of the error and give a clue on the correction needed or a grammatical description of the errors made at the end of the text (Ellis, 2008). In the former, learners will be expected to find out the correction from the clue provided, while in the latter, learners first need to find the error and then work out the correction. Teachers should be careful of the type of language that they use when giving feedback, as negative feedback may have a detrimental effect on learners' confidence.

Muncie (2002:227) believes that "while writing is an excellent opportunity for improving and consolidating vocabulary, much research has shown that vocabulary is one of the most important features of writing." If learners lack vocabulary, they would not be able to put together a meaningful piece of writing, as they would lack appropriate words to express what they intend to write. According to Al-Saleem (2008:77), writing is an essential component of classroom activities as it reinforces grammatical structures and vocabulary. As said before, learners may not write successfully, if they do not know the meanings of words which they want to use in writing.

Stubbs (2014) suggests that writing has features which include the following:

*spacing between words; punctuation, including parenthesis; typography, including style of typeface, italicization, underlining, upper and lower case, capitalization to indicate sentence beginnings and proper nouns; inverted commas, for example to indicate that a term is being used critically; graphics, including lines, shapes, borders, diagrams, tables, abbreviations; logograms, for example; and layout, including paragraphing, margination, pagination, footnotes, headings and...sub-headings...(87).*

DBE (2011:14) refers to the above mentioned features as the basics of writing. Learners need to have knowledge of the above mentioned features in order to write a sound creative writing task. Msanjila (2005:34) agrees that many writing features, as in the above paragraph, imply that writing as a skill involves a number of complex rhetorical and linguistic features which must be taught to learners. To write well, the writers should be aware of the type of readers or the audience they are writing for. Galbraith (2009:9) concurs that writing is not about translating

preconceived ideas into text, but also involves creating content and tailoring it the way it is presented to the reader.

Several studies were conducted by various researchers in the field of English second language writing. Ilomaki (2005) conducted a cross cultural study of Finnish speaking and English speaking learners of German (Mpiti, 2016:27). Learners' written output was used to analyse errors and identify reasons why different errors may have occurred. Ilomaki (2005) concluded that learners did not make the same errors in written production, due to different processing conditions and learners with a different native language. The study also revealed that there was evidence of learners' borrowing, interference and language transfer from their first language into their ESL writing.

In his doctoral research project, Ramirez (2012) conducted a study on four ESL language students at an American University. The students were immigrant as well as visa students who have been in the United States for different periods of time (Liu, 2003:2). They were asked to write two ESL activities using think-aloud technique. The study revealed that there was a clear evidence of the participants' L1 transfer into ESL summary writing tasks. According to Hirvella and Du (2013:88), learners are expected to capture the main points of the text in ESL writing during summary writing; but that doesn't seem to be the case as learners' thinking in their mother tongue influences their writing in ESL.

De Berley (2012) also conducted a study of a ESL learners' writing at American Universities, this time with Israeli students of Islamic religion. The study investigated if the students' attitudes and religious beliefs could influence their ESL writing. The results revealed that the participants lacked paraphrasing and synthesizing skills as they used their L1 features in their L2 writing. De Berley (2012) adds that students from areas where orthodoxy is encouraged, would have difficulty in adapting to the requirements of North American and British universities particularly in creative writing as an expression of logical reasoning and argument.

The studies by Ilomaki (2005), Ramirez (2012) and De Berley (2012), could be useful in the current study since the participants in this study are ENGFAL learners and may therefore also lack paraphrasing and synthesizing skills in their writing. Moreover, these studies could help the researcher to understand the participants'

experiences in writing, more especially, the type of linguistic features that they use in ENGFAL writing.

Kowal's (2014) study focused on learners' writing fluency in a second language. Kowal (2014: 229) believes that "fluency is a commonly applied indicator of foreign or second language proficiency. It measures how well a learner has learned a second language that would be free from errors. The participants in the study were fifteen Polish students who studied Sweden as a second language. According to Kowal (2014: 234), "the participants' task was to write a narrative text that referred to their personal experiences that were not necessarily true". The study revealed that participants who were slower and less fluent at the beginning, made a substantial progress as the study continued. The study further revealed that participants who mastered fluency earlier than others did not automatically continue to outpace their fellow students. The study by Kowal (2014) is relevant to this study, since the participants are Sepedi learners who are at different levels of ENGFAL writing.

Graham and Sandmel (2011) conducted a meta-analysis study of students in grades 1-12 to examine if process writing instruction improves the quality of students' writing and motivation to write. The study aimed at finding out if process approach to writing is an effective method for teaching writing. The study also examined whether process writing improves the quality of students' writing and motivation. The conclusion was that the teaching of process writing resulted in a significant, but modest improvement in the overall quality of learning (Graham & Sandmel, 2011:403). The study concluded that more research is needed to examine the effectiveness of process writing instruction.

Another study about how writing is taught in class was conducted by Simmerman, Harward, Pierce, Peterson, Morrison, Korth, Billen & Shumway (2012). The survey was meant to describe how 112 teachers perceived process writing. According to Simmerman et al. (2012: 292), "the teachers reported valuing all aspects of writing more than using them". The survey revealed that the teachers spent less time teaching process writing. The National Commission on Writing in American Schools and Colleges (NCWASC) (2003) found out that writing is neglected at some schools and that not enough time is given to teaching writing. One of the

reasons why teachers fail to include process writing stages in their writing lessons could be that they are unsure of how the process should be implemented in a classroom setting. Such teachers are described by Grisham and Wolsey (2011), as anxious and lacking confidence in their ability to teach writing due to limited knowledge and experiences. Those who try to teach process writing, would do it in what Kare-Soteriou and Kaufman (2002) call, a rigid formulaic fashion that does not reflect how the process should be done. They would only teach writing for about 15 minutes (Gilbert & Graham, 2010). Older teachers were reported to have taught their learners, spelling and English language conventions more than their younger counterparts.

The lack of interest in writing by teachers could give one an impression that writing is declining as the learners would also lack interest in writing as future researchers. The lack of interest in writing by educators could possibly be due to their lack of confidence in their own writing abilities and lack of writing lessons they received from their own teachers. They might not have been prepared in process writing by their teachers. Research conducted by Norman and Spencer (2005), about the amount of writing instruction offered to student teachers has shown that preservice teachers received a limited training with theory and pedagogy for writing. Sharp (2016:77) adds that “teachers of writing potentially lack an understanding for the various processes at work during the acts of writing among each student writer, and writing instruction potentially becomes narrow, rigid and inflexible”. Insufficient writing instruction given to pre-service teachers would lead to poor writing instruction when such teachers start practicing in schools (Spear-Swerling & Zibulsky, 2014:1361).

Both Simmerman et al.'s (2012) and Graham and Sandmel's (2011) studies are relevant to the current study as they focused on writing instructions in ENGFAL creative writing.

McCarthy and Ro (2011) investigated 29 teachers from four American states to check and understand their approaches to writing instruction and influences on their teaching. They used classroom observation and interviews when conducting their study. The study showed that professional development as in workshops and in-service training to teachers, as well as standards of writing set by the four

states are a major influence on teachers' writing instruction. McCarthy and Ro (2011:292), assert that "it is imperative to have professional opportunities for teachers to engage in writing themselves, work with other colleagues and have input in the curriculum to provide experiences for children to engage in critique". The study by McCarthy and Ro (2011) is related to the current study as teachers' professional development in writing instruction would be critically discussed in order to find solutions to ENGFAL learners' writing challenges.

Crossley's (2020) research focused on previous studies by linguists and writing researchers on English second language learners in America. The study sought to examine how language features in texts relate to both writing quality and writing development of L2 writers. The purpose of the research was to provide an overview of how analysis of linguistic features in writing samples provided a greater understanding of predictions of both text quality and writer development. Some of the linguistic features that Crossley (2020) focused on were text cohesion and coherence. Crossley (2020:425) suggests that "cohesion is text based and refers to the presence or absence of explicit cues in the text that afford connecting segments of texts together". Cohesion has to do with how writers use linguistic features such as tense, spelling, vocabulary, just to mention a few, when writing texts. Crossley (2020) adds that "cohesion can occur at the sentence level (local cohesion), or across larger segment gaps such as paragraphs and chapters (global cohesion) or even a text level (inter-document cohesion)". On the other hand, coherence is reader based and derives from the readers' understanding of the text (Crossley, 2020). The results of the study revealed that more proficient L2 writers produced cohesive texts with a greater diversity of words while the less proficient writers produced less cohesive texts. Proficient writers used grammatical structures in writing while less proficient learners used ungrammatical features as a result of lack of phrasal knowledge. This research is relevant to the current study in the sense that learner participants' selection was based on different levels of writing development.

Another study based on English second language writers in America was conducted by Ravichandran, Kretovics, Kirby and Ghosh (2017). The study explored specific writing challenges experienced by international graduate students as well as determining strategies to overcoming the challenges. The

study was done through interviews of 15 international graduate students representing a variety of geographic backgrounds and disciplines. Results revealed that students writing showed elements of plagiarism, lacked cohesion and showed grammar and vocabulary challenges. Suggested interventions included feedback from teachers and friends as well as assistance from peer mentors on students' writing. This study could help the researcher to understand why some of the learner participants' texts lack cohesion and lack application of correct grammatical rules.

Sevgi (2016) conducted a study of 10 Turkish students who were studying English language teaching at a university in Istanbul. The study investigated whether the participants used similar cognitive strategies during planning and content generation when composing a paragraph in their L1 and L2 (English). The results showed that the participants were making use of similar cognitive strategies when they were writing a paragraph in their L1 and L2. This suggests that instruction in a written composition in L1 might influence their composition process in L2. Sevgi (2016:349) concluded that the participants followed "the traditional academic paragraph organization where they start with topic sentence, provide support, and finish with a concluding sentence". It remains to be seen in the study if the participants would also use their L1 cognitive strategies during their composition of paragraph writing in ENGFAL creative writing activities. Sevgi's (2016) study is related to the current study as the participants are Sepedi L1 learners of ENGFAL.

Zhao (2014) investigated the personal identities and cognitive writing processes of two adult ESL creative writers at a university in England. The study investigated the participants' creative writing experiences and their cognitive writing processes when engaging in writing activities. When interviewed about their views on creative writing, Sebastian (a German) and Yi (a Singaporean with a Chinese background) responded as follows as stated in Zhao (2014:452):

*Sebastian: I think creative writing is an important part I plan to do it really like till the very end [of his time in England] and further on and more English and I mean even these letters in German I sent home I want to probably do it in English, ...*

*Yi: I like to write about stories, because I had read a lot of books then I wanted to try my writing as well, ...*

The above responses by Sebastian and Yi explain the motives why these participants like to engage in ESL writing and thus give a recount of their experiences in writing. Sebastian and Yi's eagerness to improve their ESL writing by creating more writing opportunities would help them improve their ESL creative writing skills as they value ESL in their lives. Zhao (2014:452) adds that "the practice of L2 creative writing can be performed by L2 users not only for purposes of language or literacy acquisition but also as a self-empowerment tool to achieve particular social positioning and hence self-esteem". If second language writing would improve the participants' standing in the society, they would be motivated to learn more about writing as writing is about writing.

When the two participants were asked to write a creative writing activity using their think aloud process (i.e. saying out loud what they were thinking while writing), they differed according to what Zhao (2014:452) calls, "cognitive writing process which are associated with their previous cultural experiences". This suggests that the participants' cultural background could influence their ESL writing. This study is also relevant to the current study as the researcher would consider the impact of the participants' cultural background in their ENGFAL writing. The researcher would also be interested in finding out if the participants have any motive when writing in ENGFAL. According to Zhao (2014:464), "Yi and Sebastian's cases reveal that L2 creative writers' cognitive writing process could be the individual performances of their expected, desired or even imagined self-images".

Hirvela and Du (2013) conducted a study of two Chinese ESL students. The study focused on how the two students used paraphrasing practices in ESL. Academic paraphrasing is a way by which a writer uses his or her own words to capture the original words and ideas of other authors. The results showed that the two students struggled to paraphrase an original text but did not fail completely or hopelessly (Hirvela & Du, 2013:96). The students resorted to direct quoting during their ESL paraphrasing activities. This study is related to the current study as the ENGFAL learners may need to paraphrase an essay type question based on a

quotation by an author to simplify it, so that they would be able to respond positively to such a question.

Javid and Umer's (2014) study investigated 194 Saudi ESL learners, where focus was on the learners' difficulty in academic writing, the factors that caused the difficulties and the solutions to the problems faced. The findings showed that the learners had challenges in using lexical items, organization of ideas and grammar. The other areas for concern included wrong use of prepositions, spellings, verbs, articles, punctuation, suffixes, prefixes and generally lacked the skills to construct sentences. The study recommended an increased practice in academic writing activities, exploitation of modern teaching techniques and the equipment of ESL classrooms with modern teaching aids in order to improve learners' ESL writing.

Adas and Bakir (2013) conducted a study of Arab teachers of ESL where focus was on the challenges ESL learners faced during writing, the causes of the writing challenges as well as the remedies to the problems faced by the learners. The study also focused on the teaching and learning of ESL and how the learners' writing was integrated as part of the blended learning outcome. According to Adas and Bakir (2013:255), "blended learning is an approach to education that offers a learning environment to accompany the teaching process by adding more innovative modes of assessment".

Adas and Bakir (2013:254) add that "if a teacher keeps on teaching following the traditional method, the classroom activities become passive and monotonous". The teachers should therefore, consider adding new writing instruction methods as the traditional methods do not seem to help learners improve their ESL writing. Adas and Bakir (2013: 254) further add that writing in ESL is the biggest challenge for many learners. In support of the above statement by Adas and Bakir (2013), Gomaa (2010) indicated that learners' first language affects learning in their ESL and this could be the reason why they commit certain language errors repeatedly. Gomaa (2010) has identified the following language errors while teaching ESL writing to Arab learners:

- **run on sentences**



Run on sentences are accepted in Arabic. It is allowed to write sentences with no punctuation marks, which is not acceptable in English.

- **Arabic**

When learners translate Arabic into English, they sometimes use words that cause misunderstanding and confusion. For example, a sentence like “Flu infection spreads by peace with hand”, is grammatically correct, but is meaningless. The learner means “Flu infection is caused by greetings and handshakes”. The words greetings and peace means the same in Arabic, so, the learner used a wrong word instead of the correct one.

- **punctuation**

Arabic ESL learners struggle with punctuation since Arabic has few limitations in the use of commas than English. In Arabic, the semi-colon and the exclamation marks aren't commonly used in learners' writings.

- **writing organization**

In a conclusion of an English essay, learners summarize the essay or emphasize an idea but in an Arabic essay, learners may introduce something new.

Adas and Bakir (2013:254) argued that learners need to be personally involved during writing so that the learning experience could be of great value to them. To make this possible, teachers should choose topics that the learners are familiar with, so that they (learners) would have an interest in the writing instruction. Learners' interest in ESL creative writing activities would in turn encourage them to participate in the writing tasks and therefore help the researchers to identify what causes their writing problems. Dörnyei (2009:16) adds that ESL learners would engage in an ESL activity if such an activity facilitates the learners' imagination. Adas and Bakir (2013:255) have identified the following causes of writing problems of Arabic ESL learners:

- Arabic learners indicated that the teaching method and the environment are the main causes of their weaknesses in English.
- English second language learners have limited vocabulary.

- English second language learners don't use invented spelling and their written texts are restricted to words which they know.
- The present tense is the only tense used in ESL learners' writing.
- The learners' writing is difficult to understand because of the ill structured sentences.
- Learners are unwilling to share their work with other students and therefore fail to get suitable feedback from their peers.
- When the learners read their writing aloud, they couldn't distinguish whether what they read or write is right or wrong.

Adas and Bakir's (2013) study revealed that continuous exposure to ESL writing activities is the only solution to learners' writing problems. The study concluded that blended learning could be an important model of teaching as it provides learners with additional activities to reinforce the learnt material. The study also showed that blended teaching allows learners to read their peers' writing, making feedback by learners possible. Researchers' studies have shown that learners learn fast when they receive feedback from their peers who are fluent in a particular area of study. The above study by Adas and Bakir (2013) could be useful in the current study as the participants could have more or less similar experiences in their ENGFAL writing.

A study by Afshari, Amirian and Tavakoli (2020) investigated the effects of applying cumulative group dynamic assessment procedures to support EFL students' writing development at the University of Isfahan, Iran. According to Poehner (2009:471), "dynamic assessment offers a conceptual framework for teaching and assessment according to which the goals of understanding individuals' [writing] abilities and promoting their development are not only complementary but are in fact dialectically integrated." The study focused on learner achievement, patterns of mediation incidents and learners' and teachers' perceptions towards group dynamic assessment procedures. Data was collected from learners' performance on writing activities. Findings of the study revealed that group dynamic assessment was more effective than conventional explicit intervention for supporting writing development. Learner participants were

selected on the performance of a writing activity and were also given another activity to write so that the researcher could identify and understand their writing abilities in process writing.

Alfagiri's (2018) study explored the writing difficulties and challenges that Saudi Arabian English second language students experienced at different levels of proficiency. The study asked the following research questions:

- what difficulties and challenges are faced by Saudi Arabian ESL learners while writing in English?
- what strategies are used by Saudi Arabian learners to solve these difficulties and challenges based on their level of proficiency in writing scores?

The research questions not only focused on understanding the challenges presented to the students, but also the metacognitive strategies that the students used to solve these challenges (Alfagiri, 2018). The results showed that learners experienced grammar challenges such as tense, spelling, vocabulary, just to mention a few. The study is relevant to the current study as the researcher seeks to explore learners' writing challenges as the ones mentioned in the research questions.

Anh (2019) conducted a study of Vietnamese English second language students at Thai Nguyen University. The aim of the study was to look into the challenges that the students encountered when learning to write English. The study was also aimed at identifying factors that hindered students' writing skills. The research was done through a survey questionnaire. The research questions asked were as follows:

- what difficulties do students have in writing?
- What causes those difficulties?
- what are the recommendations for overcoming difficulties and improve students' English writing skills?

The findings revealed that students writing lacked vocabulary, had limited knowledge of grammar and insufficient writing skills. The study suggested the following intervention strategies:

- raising students' awareness and motivation in writing.
- developing English writing materials for learners.
- Improving the English curriculum.
- Boasting teaching methods.
- Giving regular feedback and corrections.

The research questions asked in this study are relevant to the current study since the researcher explores the writing challenges faced by ENGFAL writers and also suggests intervention strategies for improvement.

Fareed, Ashraf and Bilal (2016) conducted a study of Pakistani undergraduate ESL learners and their Pakistani ESL teachers. ESL teachers were faced with the challenge of developing their students' essays which were analysed using thematic content analysis (Abas & Aziz, 2016:22). The study was conducted with an aim to investigate the major problems in Pakistani undergraduate ESL learners' writing skills, factors that hinder learners' writing skills as well as suggestions on how to improve ESL learners' writing skills.

Learners' essay writing samples showed the following problems: lack of vocabulary, difficulties in grammar and syntax as they made mistakes in subject-verb agreement, pronouns, tenses, spelling, punctuations, articles, prepositions and basic sentence structures (Fareed et al., 2016: 85). The other problem that learners experienced in their written work, was poor organization of their text as their writing lacked coherence and cohesion.

Factors that affected learners' written work included general perception that writing is a secondary skill to speaking, it is not regarded highly in the society and is given

less time of instruction (Fareed et al., 2016: 86). Poorly trained teachers who use ineffective writing instructions methods may also be a contributing factor that hinders learners' writing skills. Dornbrack and Dixon (2014:1) acknowledge that "many teachers are less skilled in the teaching of writing". Overcrowded classrooms could also be a contributing factor as the teachers may struggle to control such classes. Instead of offering a writing lesson, the teachers could find themselves trying to keep order and discipline and therefore wasting valuable teaching time. The repeated reprimand of unruly learners by their teachers could make other learners to lose concentration in the lesson and thereby causing all learners to lose out in the writing instruction. Fareed et al. (2016:87) concur that "large classrooms and lengthy courses are also potential factors; our classrooms fail to provide conducive environment, to learners resulting in poor writing skill development".

Lack of motivation on the side of both the teachers and learners could also serve as a contributing factor. Al-Khairiy (2013) emphasizes the need of qualified, well trained and motivated teachers during ESL writing instruction. If learners do not have a motivating factor to learn ESL writing, they could find the teachers' writing instruction boring and time wasting. Teachers who lack confidence in the presentation of their writing lessons could also affect learners writing. Abas and Aziz (2016:22) observed that Pakistani ESL teachers "were faced with the challenge of developing their students' writing skill because they were not aware of the writing process, skills and knowledge that are involved in planning, drafting and revising a text".

Fareed et al. (2016:87) suggested the following solutions to learners' writing challenges:

- reading ESL material (this will help develop better writing and enrich learners' vocabulary).
- conscious teaching of vocabulary (learners should be taught word meanings).
- development of ESL learners' writing culture and providing opportunities for writing practice (learners may be given daily writing activities and encouraged to write for pleasure).

- teachers should be trained in effective teaching methods and also in providing positive and constructive feedback (teachers must provide extra courses based on tenses, articles, sentence structure and also arrange creative writing competitions).

The above studies by Adas and Bakir (2013), Javid and Umer (2014) and Fareed et al. (2016) are relevant to the current study as they focus on learners' challenges in ESL writing.

A study by Abas and Aziz (2016) investigated two Indonesian university students who were Sukarno and Suharto and it focused on the two students' perspective on ESL writing process. The study used interview questions in order to understand the learners' feelings and attitude towards writing, their learning experience in writing and their knowledge about the writing process. The study revealed the following findings:

#### **a) Feelings and attitudes towards writing in ESL**

Sukarno claimed that he liked writing in English and he enjoyed constructing sentences and paragraphs in English. He however, indicated that he was not confident writing in English as he was not yet a proficient writer. Suharto thought that English was important in his life as it was used in his daily activities when he was writing his research proposal. He initially thought that English was difficult because he did not have time to practice English writing. He would mark new words while reading and then find the meanings of the words from a dictionary. His positive attitude towards ESL has helped him to improve his writing. The feelings and attitudes of Sukarno and Suharto could have an implication in the current study as these factors could determine if the participants would ultimately become proficient in ESL writing skills.

#### **b) Learning experience in writing**

Sukarno stated that although he attended writing classes before, he did not know anything about writing strategies and process writing (Abas & Aziz, 2016: 22). He claimed that his teachers never taught him that a creative writing task such as an essay should have an introduction, body and conclusion when he was in his

primary, secondary and undergraduate school level. As a post graduate student, he now knows that creative writing tasks should have paragraphs that are cohesive and coherent. He now knows that he must brainstorm to generate ideas in his writings. Suharto also claims that he was not exposed to writing strategies in his prior studies. He stated that he learnt his writing skills from attending extra classes where he was taught writing strategies. His writing skills improved after a few years although he still didn't regard himself as a skilful writer. Sadik (2009), Mistar, Zuhairi and Parlindungan (2014) and Setyono (2014) are of the opinion that lack of writing skills by Indonesian students can be attributed to their previous education background, limited knowledge of writing and lack of writing practice. The learning experience of the two students could help the researcher to understand the participants' own learning experience in the current study. One is left wondering how the two Indonesian students would drastically improve their writing skills after a few years of learning the skills in their postgraduate studies while the participants in the current study have failed after learning the writing skills for so many years from primary school level.

### **c) Knowledge about the writing process**

The study revealed that Sukarno applied process writing stages when writing a creative writing activity. He indicated that he would do research on the topic, brainstorm ideas, write the first draft, edit and revise his work, going forth and backwards before writing the final draft. He would then submit his work to his teacher, wait for feedback from the teacher and then correct his mistakes after the feedback. Suharto would do the same as Sukarno; he would also do research on the topic, write the essay applying process writing stages, reread what he has written to make necessary changes before writing the final draft for submission. The study by Abas and Aziz (2016) is relevant to the current study as it would help the researcher to understand the participants' ENGFAL writings.

Mutwarasibo (2013) conducted a study of 34 second year students in a Rwandan university. The study examined how undergraduate university students experience collaborative process writing as an instruction method capable of helping them improve their writing abilities in ESL. Archer (2010:502) contends that "students can collaborate on brainstorming ideas at the beginning of a task".

Emphasis in the study was on the role of the individual writer and their peers -in making a successful final draft. Data in the study was collected through interviews after the students wrote an argumentative essay.

The findings were categorized as follows:

- students' understanding of the academic writing activity

The students experienced writing difficulties. They did not know what to include in their writing, how to organize their writing and the amount of time it was going to take them to complete the activity.

- experiences with the writing process

Mutwarasibo (2013:8) says that "to examine how the writing processes were experienced by individual groups of students, they were asked to explain what stages they had found most difficult, easiest and most essential and provide their reasons".

The students stated that they found the planning stage difficult and organization stage the most difficult as they did not know how to organize their ideas so that there was cohesion and coherence in their writing.

- gains from the argumentative writing exercise

Some students said that they found writing a very good exercise as it enlightens their minds. Others stated that writing was an essential skill in their lives as what they would do in the future would be centred on writing.

- academic writing problems and how to overcome them

Other challenges in addition to students' experiences as stated above, were related to content (developing convincing arguments), language interference (thinking in Kinyarwanda and writing in English) and grammatical errors (word choice, word order, use of tenses and spelling). Some students observed that their peers' writings lacked clear focus on the topic they were writing about. The students thought that they would improve if they were given more writing activities. They also thought that regular teacher feedback and peer feedback would help them improve their ESL writing.



Oluwole (2008) examined challenges associated with teaching and learning of English grammar writing in Nigerian secondary schools. Oluwole (2008:120) believes that “grammar is the spinal cord of any language and the user’s mastery of it determines his or her competence and performance in the language”. The use of the correct grammar in writing would make the written piece readable and this would encourage the readers to continue reading. A well written text engages and sustains a reader’s attention. Under achievement in English writing is a noticeable phenomenon at secondary schools in Nigerian educational system (Oluwole, 2008:120).

Oluwole’s study revealed a number of errors and deviant forms in ESL learners’ writing activities. The errors include:

- poor knowledge of tenses and sequences of tenses.
- weakness in concord.
- wrong use of prepositions.
- direct translation from mother tongue.
- spelling.

Igboanusi’s (2001) study also examined the use of English as a second language in Nigerian. The study examined Igbo English in creative writing. English has been fossilized in Nigeria hence there are various types of Nigerian English. Igboanusi (2001:365) state that “the problem with the use of English in creative writing by African writers is largely a problem of culture”. The study revealed that Nigerian ESL learners are likely to transfer some of their cultural practices when writing in English.

Olusola’s (2012) study surveyed junior secondary school English language teachers’ attitude in Nigeria. It examined the teachers’ attitudes and motivation when offering lessons to their learners. The study revealed that teachers who were self-motivated and possessed high level English skills could help their learners to improve their English in general and their writing in particular. Olusola (2012:269) states that “in Nigeria, English remains the undisputed language of school instruction”. Olusola (2012:269) further adds that if English is to be promoted in

Nigerian schools, English language teachers' attitudes have to improve. According to Lope-Pihie and Bagheri (2011), teachers' attitudes towards a subject affect their instructional performance in that subject, and these would in turn influence learners' attitudes towards the subject. If the teachers have positive attitude and have passion towards the subject they are teaching as in English writing, their learners will also be motivated to learn. If the teachers have insufficient knowledge and have low self-esteem in their areas of instruction, their learners would likely lack the desire to learn what their teachers teach them. Yara (2009) adds that how teachers teach, how they behave and how they interact with their learners, could determine the success of the lesson being taught.

Other studies were conducted by Babatunde (2001), Adedimeji (2006) and Adeniyi (2006) on Nigerian, Ghanaian and Kenyan ESL learners' writing skills respectively. These studies revealed that learners directly transferred linguistic features from their mother tongue to cover up various meanings and functions in ESL writing.

On the other hand, Sane and Sebonde's (2014) study focused on the suitability of communicative approach in teaching English language in Tanzanian secondary schools. The study involved 208 learners and 13 teachers from 13 schools in four districts. The results were that both teachers and learners code mixed between Kiswahili and English during lessons even during the English classes. This was so because both the teachers and learners were not competent in the English language (Sane & Sebonde, 2014:3). This suggests that learners' writing tasks would have serious grammatical errors as their teachers lack ESL writing skills. Of the 208 learners sampled, 76,3% of them revealed that they used a mix of both English and Kiswahili in their classroom activities including in their writing activities (Sane & Sebonde, 2014:3).

The study revealed that many of the teachers interviewed did not know what communicative teaching approach was. Communicative teaching is relevant in the current study since teachers are expected to teach learners vocabulary so that they could write meaningful sentences. Moreover, learners have to know how to use language for different purposes during writing. Sane and Sebonde (2014:4) claim that "poor English proficiency is also seen in the English student teachers in universities". These students were expected to become teachers on completion of

their studies and were also expected to produce competent English learners in the country. The teachers' poor proficiency could be transferred to writing lessons and therefore, result in learners using less proficient grammatical structures during writing activities.

Adeyemi (2004) conducted a study of 41 learners at a junior secondary school in Botswana. The study examined the learners' use of language features in their ESL essay writing activities. The study revealed that the participants struggled in grammar and proposed a shared or cooperative approach to essay writing was proposed as a solution to the learners' writing challenges. Adeyemi's (2004) study is relevant to the current study since learner participants in selected in this study experience grammar challenges in writing. Collaborative writing could also be proposed as an intervention strategy in order to improve learners' writing.

Muchemwa's (2015) study investigated 129 "form three" learners (equivalent of grade 10 in South Africa) from Solusi High school in Zimbabwe. The teaching and learning of English in Zimbabwe has a colonial history, moreover, English is one of the official languages of learning and teaching in the country. The English language is rated highly and is very important in the Zimbabwean education system. In order for one to receive an "O" level pass, learners would have to pass five subjects including English. The "O" level pass serves as a prerequisite for learners to proceed to the next level; without passing English, they would not progress in their studies (Mano, 2001). One of the two English papers "O" level learners are expected to write in their exams, is paper one which comprises of writing compositions.

According to the "O" level syllabus of Zimbabwe General Certificate of Education (2013-2017), learners are expected to demonstrate the following writing skills objectives in paper one as stipulated in the syllabus:

- Write a continuous narrative, an argument and a piece of descriptive or informative writing such as that of a process, of character, a scene or of an event.
- Write letters, both formal and informal, and a report from notes, diagrams, statistical data, pictures.

- Write in a style and register appropriate to the subject matter, displaying a range of vocabulary and idiom appropriate to that subject matter.
- Organize their work satisfactorily into paragraphs and show a sense of cohesion /coherence within a paragraph.
- Show an awareness of discourse markers that include ‘however’, ‘moreover’, ‘on the other hand’, ‘first’ and ‘thus’.
- Write with grammatical accuracy, spell accurately and punctuate their work correctly. In particular, in punctuation, they should be able to mark sentence boundaries and direct speech.

Muchemwa’s (2015) study is relevant to the current study as South African learners are expected to pass English in order to further their studies at tertiary level. As in the above study, DBE (2011) also expects learners to be proficient in ENGFAL writing by the time they reach Grade 12.

When one looks at the above objectives, it is very clear that high quality composition standards are expected of the learners. The writing skill is not naturally acquired, but learned in the classroom (Primadonnab, 2010). Teachers are therefore expected to play a crucial role in ensuring that learners meet the above objectives when presenting writing instruction in class. However, if the teachers are not competent in English in general and writing instruction in particular, learners may not achieve the above writing objectives. Unfortunately, few “O” level learners are able to reach the high writing expectations as set by ZIMSEC, as many writers fail to meet the standards (Muchemwa, 2015:144). Muchemwa (2015) adds that teachers would complain of learners’ lack of linguistic skills, use of poor registers and incoherent writing texts, forgetting that they have contributed to learners’ failures. Muchemwa (2015:144) further adds that “some teachers also lack pedagogical knowledge of writing; they can neither write nor teach composition properly”. Writing teachers should be writers. Researchers such as Elashri (2013) and Myles (2002) are worried that learners’ inability to write proficiently, is due to poor writing instructions that they receive from their teachers.

Muchemwa's (2015) study therefore, explores the two most common teaching methods in Zimbabwe, namely, the product focused approach and the process oriented approach.

In the product approach, Muchemwa's (2015) study asked learners to write a story of 350-400 words on a particular topic, and then submit their answers to be marked by the researcher. The learners were also asked to write a story of 350-400 words on a chosen topic in the process approach. The researcher exposed the participants to the process approach for the first time, helped them to plan, brainstorm and generate ideas. The individuals grouped together their ideas into composition units, i.e. the introduction, body and conclusion, with the body further divided into sub-paragraphs, each with an idea. They were then asked to revise their work before writing their final drafts for submission.

Both sets of compositions were marked by the researcher concentrating on errors, putting a line and a symbol for each error on the following items: sentence structure, spellings, punctuation, repetition, tenses, articles, prepositions, adverbs, adjectives, pronouns, omissions, paragraphs, word choice, subject-verb agreement, capitalization and word division. Error count was done and all errors of more than one were recorded.

Results revealed that the quality of learners' writing compositions in the process approach was better than learners' compositions in the product approach. The results also revealed that a factor such as learners' native language knowledge affected their writing output in both approaches as they transferred their L1 linguistic knowledge into their ESL writing.

Literature on writing instruction in South Africa highlights that many teachers feel unprepared to teach writing and rarely receive professional development focused on effective writing instruction (Taylor, Draper, Muller & Sithole, 2012). The concept 'professional development' is about teaching or guiding the teachers how to learn and transfer knowledge into practice for the benefit of the learners (Avolos, 2011). Professional development is about training teachers how to best present a topic to learners in class using latest approaches. Assaf, Ralfe and Steinbach (2016) conducted a study on the learning and classroom instruction of six South African ENGFAL teachers after attending a professional development course that

was focused on writing instruction. All the teachers were non-native English speakers who volunteered to be observed in their classroom teaching after the development course. Ethnographic and phenomenological research paradigms were used to explore the way the teachers experienced their world and their learning over an extended time in the professional development course.

During the professional development course, the teachers were given writing tasks twice a day for approximately 30-60 minutes per writing session and were asked to read a variety of articles on writing pedagogy. Timperley, Wilson, Barrar and Fung (2007) argue that it is necessary for a variety of conditions to be put in place during development training in order to advance teacher training and learning. The following conditions or permissions were given to the teachers to freely participate in the course:

- extended time to develop, absorb, discuss and practice new knowledge.
- safe spaces to explore new materials and challenge previous beliefs and practices.
- collaboratively engage in pedagogy that requires teachers to learn in ways that reflect how to teach their learners.

The teachers also participated in demonstration lessons provided by scholars and fellow teachers, and were encouraged to continue their learning by attending follow-up workshops and writing retreats (Assaf et al., 2016:174). The study revealed that the development courses have helped the teachers to improve their writing instruction. According to Assaf et al. (2016:182), “the teachers took up new identities as writers and writing teachers, because they were positioned as writers at the institute”. Teachers’ professional development workshops could help inspire learners to become generative thinkers. Teacher participants in the current study are expected to have attended teacher workshops in order to enhance their writing pedagogy.

Another South African based study was conducted by Pfeiffer and Van der Walt (2016) on fourteen first year students at a tertiary institution in the Western Cape. The study focused on ESL students’ expressive writing with the aim of developing strategies that could help them to improve their academic writing skills. Expressive writing may be defined as a type of personal writing that is intended to increase

writers' involvement in their writing (Pfeiffer & Van der Walt, 2016: 62). The participants included a mixture of South Africans and citizens from other African states. The students were asked to write a series of transactional and academic writing tasks that were used to gauge if the students were English academic writers. The writing tasks were evaluated according to content, grammar and punctuation to check if the students had made an improvement in their writing proficiency from the initial tasks given to them. The evaluation of learners' writing as stated in the sentence above, is critical to helping learners to write not only meaningful sentences, but also content that suits a specific purpose and audience.

Many students in South Africa face the daunting task of writing in a language which is not their own (Archer, 2010). The students faced the challenges of expressing their ideas in writing, as they were writing in English second language. According to Pfeiffer and Van der Walt (2016: 59), "second language writers who may still be developing fluency in writing have to contend with grammar, syntax and vocabulary problems". Myles (2002) adds that learners' writing texts in a second language generally produce texts that have varying degrees of grammatical, vocabulary and rhetorical errors. This suggests that ESL students may have ideas to write about in transactional tasks but lack words or vocabulary to express what they want to say in a clear way. The initial tasks indicated that students struggled with accuracy and fluency, but as time went on, their writing improved. They were able to express their personal feelings freely as their grammatical and syntactical challenges improved through feedback of their writings.

Nel and Müller (2010) conducted a study of 17 teachers who enrolled for an Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) course at the University of South Africa (UNISA). The teachers were required to do a practical work as part of the ACE course. They were expected to identify a group of learners who were in the same grade, from the same home language backgrounds and whose English was at approximately the same level. According to Nel and Müller (2010), the teachers were expected to compile the following practical evidence in their portfolios:

- parent teacher interview questionnaires.
- initial assessment of learners' written work.

- error analysis of the written work.
- example of learners' written work.
- eight learner support lessons based on the error analysis.
- final assessment of learners' written work during the eight support lessons.

Contents of the portfolios were examined to identify both the teachers' and the learners' written errors (Nel & Müller, 2010). The errors were compared and analysed to determine to what extent the teachers' language transference influenced their learners' written language. The study revealed that teachers' ESL forms were transferred to their learners' linguistic forms such as grammar, vocabulary, spelling, just to mention a few. The results showed that teachers' had low ESL writing proficiency. According to Nel and Müller (2010), the teachers' native language influence in learners' written work was evident in the following examples:

- phonological errors occur when ESL learners are taught by ESL teachers (incorrect sounds lead to incorrect spellings).
- spelling errors are modelled by ESL teachers and as a result, learners learn the incorrect spelling.
- native language transfer (modelled by teachers) takes place on syntactic level, for example, verb tenses in English such as the overuse of the progressive verb tense.
- overgeneralization as a result of intra-lingual transfer where an unnecessary rule is applied in ESL.
- grammatical error (omission error) such as the omission of the infinitive form, occur. For a Sepedi speaker, for example, the use of prepositions is a problem as there are no prepositions in Sepedi.



- in isiZulu language, there are no equivalent gender words for “he” or “she” and this leads to confusion with regard to gender as “he” is used in place of “she”.
- the teachers don’t know the past participle which should be used with the past perfect and the present perfect tense and use the past tense form of the verb instead. For example, the teacher would say one of “them has went home” because the action has already taken place instead of “one of them has gone home”.
- tautology in learners’ writing. For example, learners would write, “teachers they are” instead of “teachers are”.

The above examples show how teachers’ first language transfer during ENGFAL writing lessons could end up influencing learners’ written work. This study by Nel and Müller (2010) is relevant to the current study as the teacher participants’ home language is not English. Learners’ writing could also show traces of L1 transfer if the teacher participants due to their poor command of the English language, rely heavily on L1 during writing lessons.

Abongdia and Mpiti (2015) conducted a study of grade 6 isiXhosa and coloured Afrikaans speaking learners from two primary schools in East London, in the Eastern Cape Province, South Africa. The aim of the study was to investigate the learners’ experiences of writing in ENGFAL. It further aimed at exploring the causes of the difficulties in the learner’s writings and finding solutions to address the problems. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, observations and analysis of learners’ writings (exercise books and tasks). The study revealed that the isiXhosa learner participants had a smaller writing vocabulary than their coloured Afrikaans speaking counterparts. Mkoohlwa and Abongdia (2015) believe that this was due to some of the Afrikaans speaking participants’ exposure to English at home. However, both groups of participants continued to make spelling, syntax and morphology errors in their ENGFAL writing. Both groups’ writing tasks also showed challenges related to organization, capitalization, grammar and punctuation. Abongdia and Mpiti (2015:94) believe that these challenges are as a result of poor teaching. Mallozi and Malloy (2007)

are of the opinion that the learners' challenges to writing could be overcome if all stake-holders such as teachers, parents, education department and learners themselves play an active role in the development of ENGfAL writing.

The study by Abongdia and Mpiti (2015) noted that learners' pronunciation in English was problematic and these affected the way they wrote English words. This resulted in them using isiXhosa and Afrikaans writing rules when writing English words. The study also revealed that some learners in both groups could not write even short sentences let alone short paragraphs. This is again attributed to the teaching methods and style of teaching that the teachers use in class. Abongdia and Mpiti (2015) recommended the following solutions to improve learners' ENGfAL writing skills:

- teachers should be properly trained and lessons should be properly prepared.
- teachers should understand the rules of ENGfAL so that they can teach the rules to their learners.
- teachers should make the learning context less frustrating to the learners.
- teachers should develop learning programs in order to minimize learners' writing challenges and should also diversify their teaching methods.
- teachers should receive in-service training programs to assist them with new teaching methods.
- teachers should use the process approach in their teaching in order to help learners improve their creative writing skills and also teach them how to respond to different types of genres (genre approach).
- teachers should use different teaching and learning techniques and procedures to keep learners motivated to learn.
- learners should be trained to provide feedback to their peers' written work.
- learners should be given more writing activities.

- learners should be given writing tasks that are at different levels of difficulty in order to suit their different abilities.
- writing activities should be meaningful to the learners and should relate to their real lives.
- learners should be taught linguistic skills such as grammar, word meaning, spelling, just to mention a few, in order to help them write readable and meaningful texts.

Learner participants in the current study have no exposure to English at home. The only meaningful exposure that they have to English language, is when they are in the classroom where teachers present lessons.

A study by Pfeiffer (2018) focused on English second language students' writing challenges. According to Pfeiffer (2018), "the study was prompted by the fact that students who use a second language for higher education studies are often faced with the dilemma of not being able to express themselves in writing". The research looked at ways in which the writing process could be understood better when viewing students' writing against the backdrop of multilingualism in South Africa. The aim of the study was to identify the kinds of strategies that could assist L2 students with English language writing tasks. The findings showed that multilingual students benefitted from the use of expressive writing which was endorsed as a developmental tool in helping students to improve writing.

Ayliff (2010) conducted a study of South African learners who studied ENGFAL at secondary schools and the effect it has on their tertiary education. The study examined the reasons for poor written English amongst ENGFAL learners. It also examined if communicative teaching approach could have contributed to learners' challenges and then proposed solutions to learners' writing challenges. The study focused on Johnny (not the learner's real name) whose fluent spoken English language is not matched by his written discourse. Ayliff (2010:1) claims that the perception that Johnny's speech was competent could be "probably due to the fact that during linguistic utterances in his second language, he was using short sentences and behavioural gestures and facial expressions or those aspects of

his communication that fall into the pragmatic and paralinguistic domains to compensate for his ill-formed utterances”. The reason for Johnny to believe that his English was good was due to what Ayliff (2010) call an educator-conspirator who filled in omissions of information in Johnny’s spoken discourse in order to maintain mutual communication with him. In actual sense, Johnny’s spoken language was not good just like his written language; he might have been taught to express himself, albeit inaccurately, but not in written language (Ayliff, 2010: 2). Ayliff (2010) identified three reasons why Johnny’s written language was poor. The reasons were Outcome Based Education (OBE), the ENGFAL teaching method and teachers who teach ENGFAL.

The OBE was introduced in South Africa to replace the apartheid regime’s educational policy. According to the Department of Education (DoE) (2003) policy, ENGFAL is characterized by a learner-centred and activity-based approach that encourages learners to use resources such as the internet, databases, libraries and laboratories to self-discover and learn. Ayliff (2010) believes that this may be difficult to implement in rural and some township schools that do not have the above mentioned resources. Blignaut (2007:49) says that it is “difficult to translate policy into practice”. Township and rural school learners find themselves disadvantaged as compared to their urban and former model “C” schools. Thus OBE fails Johnny to learn how to write in ENGFAL as compared to other learners who have access to resources and are able to do remedial work after school. Ayliff (2010:2) believes that while OBE might work successfully in first-world countries where the numbers in the classes are relatively small, where schools are well resourced and teachers are well qualified, it is less likely to be successful in South Africa where the opposite is often the case.

English Second language learners have for many years been taught through a communicative based approach which many assume leads to grammatical accuracy and fluent written competence. Ayliff (2010) holds a different view to the above mentioned assumption as she believes that this method of teaching has failed to yield results in South Africa as ENGFAL learners like Johnny and others still struggle to write in English. Ayliff (2010:3) adds that “the NCS for English-FAL is based on a communicative or meaning-focused approach to language teaching”. Ellis, Loewen and Basturkmen (2003:151), support Ayliff (2010) when

they say that communicative based approach “is not successful in enabling learners to achieve high levels of linguistic and sociolinguistic accuracy”. The communicative approach has neither produced high levels of grammatical competence as expected in South Africa, nor produced learners who operate in a cognitively demanding academic domain in ENGFAL (Ayliff, 2010:30). This is a matter of concern as learners like Johnny who cannot write, are expected to study in English at tertiary institutions in South Africa.

Teachers in South Africa who are faced with challenges such as ill-discipline, overcrowded classrooms, lack of resources, just to mention a few, may find themselves demoralized with in profession (Ayliff, 2010). Some may lose passion in their profession and as a result, offer lessons unprepared as they would be demotivated and stressed. Steyn and Kamper (2006) have reported high levels of stress amongst teachers, and this resulted in teacher absenteeism and low or no culture of learning and teaching. So, it is not surprising that Johnny cannot write.

### **2.3. Theoretical framework**

There are three approaches that have been proved to be influential in the history of writing instruction, namely, the product approach, process approach and genre approach (Javid and Umer, 2014). Badger and White (2000), and Hyland (2007) and Grami (2010), claim that these three approaches to writing instruction complement one another. The researcher is interested in finding out if these approaches could be effective in ENGFAL process writing instruction, how they could complement one another in the teaching of writing and how they could contribute to ENGFAL learners’ writing. The approaches are discussed below:

#### **a) the product approach**

According to Gabrielatos (2002:5), the product approach is “a traditional approach in which students are encouraged to mimic a model text”. When writing a text such as an essay, the learners would look at features that their teachers have taught them, and then write a text that is similar to the text taught in class. Palpanadan, Salam and Ismail (2014: 790) add that the learners would “copy and transform the model into a new essay so that it becomes perfect as the one that they have

imitated". The emphasis in the product approach, is on the content of the end product rather than on the correct form of language.

Steele (2004:2) mentions that the product approach consists of four stages that a learner's creative writing text has to undergo before it is submitted as a final product for evaluation. The stages are summarized as follows:

#### **Stage one: Familiarization**

- the learner studies the model text and then, the features of the text are highlighted.

#### **Stage two: Controlled writing**

- this stage consists of controlled practice of the highlighted features.

#### **Stage three: Guided writing**

- the ideas are organized. The organization is more important than the ideas themselves.

#### **Stage four: Free writing**

- this is the end product of the learning process. The learners use skills, structures and vocabulary they have been taught to produce the end product. This stage is also known as "free writing" because learners write freely on a topic without worrying about the correct form of a second language. According to Bae (2011:5), "free writing approach considers content, most important instead of accurate forms of a language".

#### **b) the process approach**

Palpanadan et al. (2014:789) refer to process writing as the learners' "ability to decide what to include, what to exclude and how to order ideas" during creative writing activities. In this process, the teacher merely facilitates writing. During the process writing, the learners move back and forth while going from one stage to another. If successful writing instruction and learning were to take place, learners

would need to be able to apply appropriate process writing stages in their creative writing activities. DBE (2011:35-36) proposes the following steps in process writing that learners must comply with in their writing:

### **Prewriting/Planning**

- Analyse the structure, language features and register of the text that has been selected.
- Decide on its purpose, audience.
- Brainstorming ideas for the topic using, for example, mind maps.
- Discuss the criteria that will be used to evaluate the piece of writing.
- Research the topic, for example in a library, and select relevant information.
- Identify main ideas and supporting detail.

### **Drafting**

- Write a draft that takes into account purpose, audience, topic and text type.
- Choose appropriate words, for example, in a narrative use evocative words and phrases to make the writing vivid.
- Organize ideas in a logical sequence so that the argument flows smoothly in an essay.
- Establish an individual voice and style.
- Read drafts critically and get feedback from teachers and classmates.

### **Revising, editing, proofreading and presenting**

- Evaluate their own and others' writing for improvement using set criteria.
- Refine word choice, sentence and paragraph structure.

- Work on the sequencing and linking of paragraphs.
- Eliminate ambiguity, verbosity and any offensive language.
- Use grammar, spelling and punctuation.
- Prepare the final draft including layout, for example, headings and fonts.
- Present the text.

### c) genre approach

Hasand and Akhand (2010:81) consider this approach as a “social and a cultural practice”. In this type of writing instruction, focus is on the discourse features of a text and the social context in which the text is used. Hammond and Derewianka (2001) add that genre approach refers not only to the type of text that learners write, but also to the predictable and recurring patterns of everyday, academic and literary texts occurring within a particular culture. Javid and Umer (2014:164) believe that “the approaches to teaching writing skills vary in different academic contexts due to the indigenous specific circumstances”. This suggests that the cultural practices of the learners may influence their learning in L2 writing. Practices that are acceptable in one culture or context may be unacceptable in another context. Learners should know the roles the audience and purpose play in shaping different text types (Bean & Turbill, 2006). The emphasis is on reader expectations and product as well as how to express oneself according to social context. Genre approach puts more emphasis on the expectation of the reader in the final product than that of the writer. Hayland (2004:10-11) summarizes the advantages of genre based writing instruction as follows:

- **explicit-** makes clear what is to be learned to facilitate the acquisition of writing skills.
- **systematic-** provides a coherent framework for focusing on both language and contexts.



- **needs-based-** ensures that course objectives and content are derived from students' needs.
- **supportive-** gives a teacher a central role in scaffolding learners' learning and creativity.
- **empowering-** provides access to the patterns and possibilities of variation in valued texts.
- **critical-** provides the resources for students to understand and challenge valued discourses.
- **consciousness-** increases teacher awareness of texts and confidently advise learners on their writing.

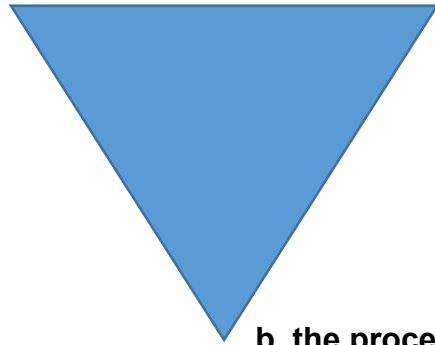
The three approaches may complement one another in the following ways:

- During the drafting stage in the process approach, learners are less concerned about the grammatical mistakes just like in the product approach during the free writing stage where grammatical errors are inconsequential. Learners know that they will correct the mistakes later during the revising and editing stages in the process approach.
- Learners construct ideas in the product approach even though the organization of the ideas are more important than ideas themselves. Construction of ideas is also applicable in the process approach and is also applicable in the genre approach.
- Writer must know the type of reader they write for in the process approach and the same could be said about the genre approach in which emphasis is on reader expectation.

A summary of the three approaches is shown in the figure below:

**c. genre approach**

- explicit
- systematic
- needs based
- supportive
- empowering
- critical
- consciousness

**a. the product approach**

- familiarisation
- controlled writing
- guided writing
- free writing

**b. the process approach**

- pre-writing
- drafting
- revising
- editing
- proofreading and presenting

**Fig. 2.1. Three approaches in writing instruction**

To add to how the three types of writing instructions stated above complement one another, Gibbons (2002) emphasizes that a combination of the genre and the process approaches is suitable to Second Language (L2) writing instruction because the two approaches provide a lot of modelling and support to learners and thus helping them become independent writers. Macken-Horarik (2002) adds that the combination of genre and process approaches allows learners to be aware of how texts are written differently according to their purpose, audience and message. Once they are aware of the above mentioned factors, learners would then start to plan, draft, revise and edit their written tasks for submission.

The current study is based on Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory of learning. The theory describes the nature of learning, mainly, in the classroom environment. Atherton (2005) emphasizes that in a sociocultural classroom, learners are active makers of meanings during lessons and the teachers' role is to guide learners to gain meaningful understanding of the material. Siyepu (2013:5) adds that learners' understanding of the material is facilitated by means of activities, classroom discussions and exercises that are done inside and outside the classroom. According to the Vygotskian theory of sociocultural learning, learning takes place when learners engage in tasks and activities that are manageable within their "Zone of Proximal Development" (ZPD) (Pretorius, 2000:145).

Shabani (2016:6) adds that the concept of ZPD implies that a less knowledgeable person such as a learner gets engaged in developmental changes through interaction with a more knowledgeable person such as a teacher.

The sociocultural theory of learning is relevant in the current study, since it describes how learners will be taken through a step by step method of teaching by their teachers during the learning process. Verenikina (2010:3) holds that the assistance provided by the teacher goes beyond the learners' competence, complementing and building on their existing abilities. Hugo (2016:16) refers to the teachers' "step by step" assistance during lessons, as "scaffolding". With regard to the current study, the teachers apply scaffolding when offering process writing lessons to learners. Learners would enjoy the teachers' assistance during the process writing activities until they (learners) could do the activities on their own, and that is when the teachers support would be withdrawn. Siyepu (2013:6) adds that "once the learners, with the benefit of assistance of the teachers, masters the task at hand, the assistance may they be removed and the learner will then be able to complete the task independently". The withdrawal of learners' assistance by the teachers would mean that the learners have now attained high or proficiency levels in process writing and are able to write a creative writing activity without the help of their teachers. The learners are now able to demonstrate high the levels of writing as expected of them by the Department of Basic Education (DBE, 2011).

The teachers' assistance of a learner in doing an activity may, however, fail to yield positive results when a learner fails to learn what is being taught. Farr (2014:2) refers to the learners' failure to learn as being outside their ZPD. This means learners are still unable to write or solve challenges (writing challenges) on their own despite the teachers' effort to give them scaffolding. According to Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural learning theory, learners' thinking and problem solving ability has three categories, namely, learners who can perform independently (scaffolding successful), learners who can perform with assistance (on-going scaffolding) and those who cannot perform even with the assistance of teachers (learners who fall outside their ZPD).

Flower and Hayes's (1981) cognitive theory of writing adds to the Vygotskian sociocultural learning theory. In this theory, the two researchers discuss what goes through the writers' mind when they compose a creative writing task. To develop their theory, Hayes and Flower engaged in protocol analysis which involves asking writers to think aloud, as they compose (Powell, 2014:1). Flower and Hayes (1981) organized their findings into four categories that are discussed below:

**a) writing is a set of distinctive thinking process**

Cognitive writing theory sees writing as a process. The writers use mental processes such as generating ideas to put together their creative writing tasks. The mental processes are dynamic and recursive in nature. The writers would also use their mental processes when writing an essay in the Vygotskian social learning theory.

**b) the process of writing is hierarchically organized**

Learners think as they write; they would brainstorm, write down ideas, draft, revise, edit and go back to any of the stages during the writing process. Each of the stages may occur at any time during the composing process. Learners who have mastered the teachers' scaffolding during process writing lessons would not find it hard to implement the stages that are applicable to process writing during creative writing activities.

**c) writing is goal directed**

Writers have goals or purpose of writing a creative task. The goals guide the writer to choose which process to use (process goals) and what to say to the audience (content goals). The writers may change what they want to say to the audience (i.e. what they want to write about in the topic) while busy writing and may also change how they want to write the task (i.e. how they organize the task). According to MacKay (2010: 2), good writers are able to achieve good quality goals and poor writers achieve poor quality goals (they have difficulty in advancing the process of writing). Learners who are good writers and do not need scaffolding, would be able to change their goal as they continue writing. Poor writers whose level of writing is outside their ZPD, would probably struggle to change their goals during writing.

**d) writers find purpose in goals and those goals evolve as the writer learns about their subject through the process of writing**

The learners readjust their initial goals as they continue writing. They explore the readjusted goals linking them with their initial goals and coming up with more goals as they develop, consolidate and regenerate ideas in the writing activity. Flower and Hayes calls the above mentioned process, “creativity”. Good independent writers who do not need scaffolding would be “creative” enough to successfully go through the above mentioned processes in writing. Poor writers would not be able to produce such “creativity” in their writing as they still need teachers’ scaffolding.

Another theory that compliments Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory is the creativity theory. According to Kanematsu and Barry (2016:9), the concept creativity refers to “the ability to produce original work by brainstorming ideas to create a new product”. Tsai (2015:2) states that creativity in education can be defined as “creative ways of teaching and learning”, where teachers, for example, give learners scaffolding in process writing. Creativity theory links with Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory of learning when learners brainstorm ideas in order to produce an original text during the creative writing activities. Just like in the sociocultural theory, a teacher may support learners by teaching them creative writing skills such as brainstorming, editing, revising and editing. Blanco-Herrera, Groves, Lewis and Gentile (2015:153), believe that some learners may fall short of mastering process writing skills as learners vary in how hard or easy they find a skill or an activity. The learners’ failure to learn creative writing skills is linked to the ZPD in the social learning theory. When teachers deliver content of information, they can use various creative teaching methods and learners may understand the content of learning via creative learning (Tsai, 2015:2). Tsai (2015), proposes the teaching and learning of three key skills that will help learners to learn across different disciplines, including writing. The skills are initiation, operation and content which are discussed below:

- **Initiation**

The initiation stage is the first stage that a learner may embark on in the process of learning. Teachers must motivate learners to learn new things. Tsai (2015:6) is of the opinion that learners’ exploratory attitude may help them to process

knowledge. The learners' motivation to learn during teachers' scaffolding in process writing, may help them to be independent good writers. Tsai (2015) identifies three behaviours in the initiation stage, and they are curiosity, openness to experience and tolerance of ambiguity.

Tamdogon (2006:140) states that "creativity in education starts with curiosity". The learners have to be curious about something so that they may have motivation to learn. Csikszentmihalyi and Nakamura (2006:253) suggest that creativity is dependent on whether a person is able to "sustain curiosity, interest and passion". Dineen, Samuel and Livesey (2005) assert that curiosity is a key element of the creative personality across different studies. Curiosity may lead to exploration, play and creativity, thus learners' eagerness and passion to learn more about the writing process, may help them to become good writers.

Openness to learning experience is the most important characteristic of self-motivating. The theoretical existence of creativity is closely tied to people's openness, courage, and risk taking behaviours (Maksic' & Pavlovic', 2011). For creators, openness to experience may be the key stage in which they assimilate useful information and knowledge which in turn will become a reservoir for later phases of generating ideas and putting them into practice (Tsai, 2015:7). The assimilated information that the learners might have gained during scaffolding by the teachers during writing instruction would help them plan their creative writing activities.

Tolerance of ambiguity may differ across cultures, and this may greatly influence the characteristics of creative production. Tsai (2015:8) however, says that "creativity is more related to adaptation of the norm; it is generally believed that before becoming a true creator, one needs to work hard at mimicry of the classic works until one deeply understands their essence, after which one can gradually transform this level of understanding into creation". Creativity is based on the idiom that practice makes perfect. Learners who have passion and motivation in process writing, would continue practicing essay writing based on scaffolding that they have received from their teachers. They would then use their knowledge about process writing to write new creative writing tasks.

- **Operation**

There are three aspects related to the dimension of operation which reflect a different perspective on creativity (Tsai, 2015:8). The three aspects are creative thinking, creative teaching and creative learning, and are discussed below:

According to Doyle (2018), creative thinking refers to the ability to think out of the box, looking at something in a new way. Tsai (2015:8) adds that creative thinking has taken two major directions in creative research, which are variables that affect individuals' creative thinking and the strategies that are useful in promoting a person's creative thinking. Variables that may affect creative thinking include memory, insight, thinking styles, intelligence, perception, self-efficacy, motivation, personality, moods, social context and culture (Tsai, 2015:9). Strategies that are useful to promote a person's creative thinking include brainstorming, creative problem solving, incubation and imagery, idea checklists, ideational skills training and play (Tsai, 2015:8). The variables and the strategies mentioned above, are related to Vygotsky's social learning theory since they are used when learners write a creative activity after their teachers' scaffolding in process writing.

Jeffrey and Craft (2004), Craft (2011) and Sawyer (2010) define creative teaching as an engaging pedagogy and a form of disciplined improvisation in which teachers use creative ways of imparting knowledge, which in turn leads to empowered learners. In creative teaching, teachers would use innovative teaching methods in order to make learning interesting, exciting and effective. In creative teaching, the teachers give scaffolding to learners using innovative methods.

Tsai (2015:10) states that "in contrast to the teacher-focus of creative teaching, the idea of creative learning is learner-centred". Creative learning encourages learners to explore and experiment learning approaches with an attitude of playfulness. Banaji (2011) adds that the ultimate goal of creative learning is to unleash an individual's potential. Wiggins (2011:322) points out that "creative learning is only elicited and developed when the learner is confronted with one challenge after another, interspersed with feedback and focused direct instruction". Feedback and direct instruction by the teacher are vital in the sociocultural theory of learning.

- **Content**

There are three stages of the creation of new knowledge and information processing that are applicable in creativity which are problem finding, problem solving and reflective inquiry.

Problem finding may be related to originality in creativity and is based on discovering challenges so that intervention strategies will be employed to come up with a new or an original idea. Problem solving may be closely related to creative thinking in the sense that one will go beyond their experience and overcome a challenge. One would be able to come up with a new way of finding a solution to a problem. Critical evaluation of one's ideas and solutions to challenges is important in the reflective inquiry. In order to secure a high quality output, one needs to make serious reflection and assessment of their creative work (Tsai, 2015:14). In order to produce high quality products during process writing, learners would be expected to brainstorm ideas, draft and make reflection and assessment of their creative work. The high quality products will of course depend on whether the learners have or have not attained proficiency levels during scaffolding.

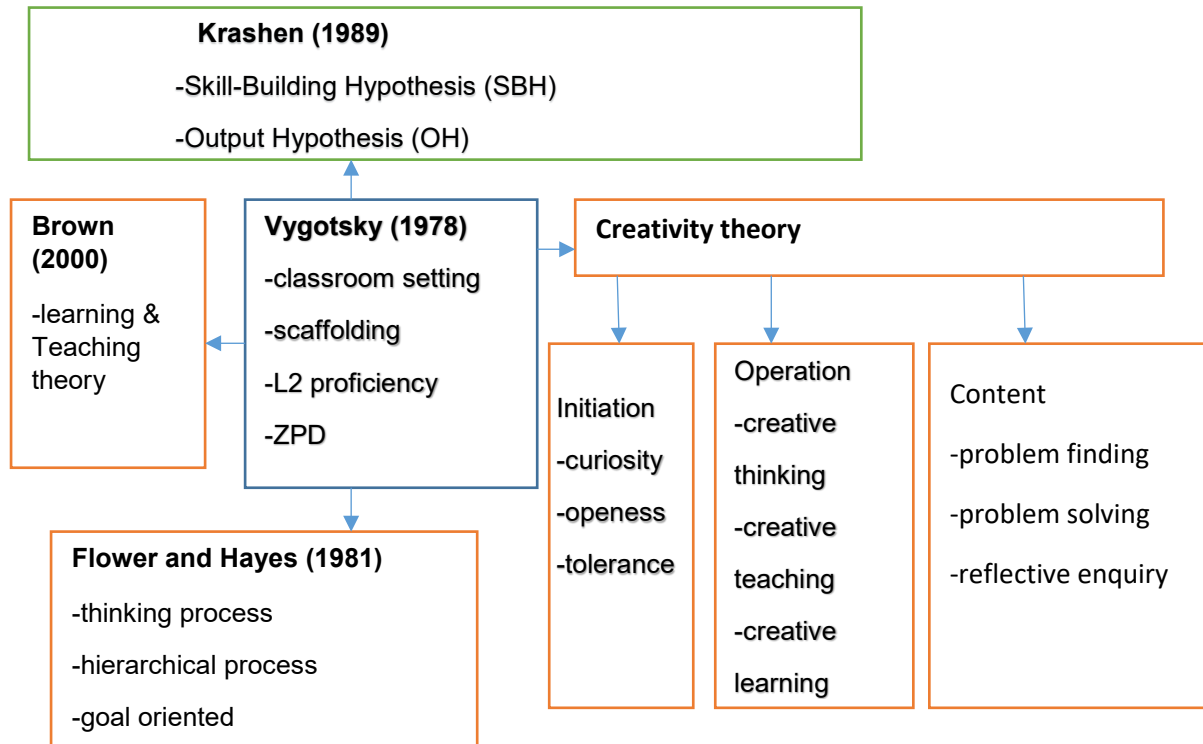
Brown's (2000) teaching and learning theory is also relevant to Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of learning. Brown (2000) describes learning as "getting knowledge of a subject or a skill by study, experience or instruction". Just like in the Vygotskian theory, a teacher may serve as a knowledgeable person who gives learners scaffolding during process writing in the ENGFAL writing classroom.

Krashen's (1989) Skill-Building Hypothesis (SBH) theory which is deductive in nature, adds to the Vygotskian sociocultural theory of learning. According to Pretorius (2000:37), the SBH "assumes that the learner consciously learns rules or items and gradually makes them automatic by drills and exercises". The exercises that Pretorius refers to are process writing activities in the current study. Krashen (1989) also hints on the Output Hypothesis (OH) which may occur through feedback after the teachers' input during the writing instruction. According to Krashen (1989), both the SBH and the OH may lead to a learned competence in ENGFAL. The SBH is similar to scaffolding, for instance, when a teacher imparts



knowledge to learners by assisting them in a step by step approach in the ENGFAL process writing classroom. The OH is also related to the Vygotskian approach in the sense that the learners would produce output by writing activities which the teacher will assess, correct and give feedback.

The theoretical framework in this study is summarized in figure 2 below:



**Fig. 2.3. Theoretical framework in the study**

## 2.4. Conclusion

The review of literature presented in this chapter will assist the researcher to understand the challenges that Grade 12 learners encounter when writing ENGFAL creative writing activities. The information from the literature review will also assist the researcher to find out the factors that contribute to the learners' challenges in ENGFAL writing as well as how the challenges could be addressed.

In this chapter, different researchers have come up with various definitions of the concepts 'writing', 'process writing' and 'writing instruction'. Consensus amongst them is that writing, especially ESL writing, is difficult. They agree that writing involves knowledge of linguistic features such as grammar, vocabulary, spelling, just to mention a few, so that there will be a flow in reading learners' writing. Process writing involves various stages that learners have to apply during creative

writing activities and that it is recursive in nature. Writing instruction refers to the writing lessons that the learners receive from their teachers.

The chapter has presented various findings from several studies conducted by the researchers. One of the findings that is common amongst most researchers is that learners' writings have evidence of L1 transfer. The learners tend to transfer their L1 linguistic features when they lack words (vocabulary) to express ideas in ENGFAL writing. The studies also revealed that learners lack ENGFAL grammar skills and as a result, show little interest in ENGFAL creative writing activities. ENGFAL teachers themselves lack writing skills. Some of the teachers are not well trained in writing, some have poor command of the English language and are not writers themselves, while others do not know the type of teaching method to use during writing instruction.

Although the studies in this chapter reveal findings from ESL learners' writings, they do not give a clear picture of the root causes of all these findings. For example, if a researcher says a learner's work has evidence of L1 transfer, it should be clearly stated why a learner, especially in Grade 12 and even at tertiary level, would have traces of L1 linguistic features in their ENGFAL writing after many years of exposure to the English language. The studies do not have recommendations to address the learners' challenges in ENGFAL writing. Therefore, there is a need for further research to be made to address the challenges that Grade 12 learners encounter in ENGFAL process writing.

Theories that are relevant to learners' writing, such as the social learning theory (Vygotsky 1978), and other theories that compliment it, namely; the hypothesis theories (Krashen 1989), cognitive theory (Flower & Hayes 1981), teaching and learning theory (Brown 2000), as well as the creative theory, will help the researcher to relate the participants' experiences in the current study to these theories.

This chapter focused on the literature review and theoretical framework pertinent to this study. The next chapter deals with the methodology used in carrying out the research project.

## **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1. Introduction**

This chapter presents the methodology used in the exploration of the challenges faced by ENGFAL learners in creative writing activities. The chapter also presents the research questions applicable in this study and discusses aspects related to research methodology, such as research design, sampling, data analysis and quality criteria. Ethical issues relevant to the study are then discussed.

### **3.2. Research design**

Gupta and Gupta (2011:32) refer to the concept 'research design' as "the arrangement of conditions for collection of and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy and procedure". Research design is a structure of a research or a glue that holds all the elements in a research project together (Akhtar, 2016:68). A study design is the most important aspect of a research project as it helps to ensure that one has the best opportunity to answer the research questions (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). This study followed the qualitative research method.

According to Mpiti (2016:82), qualitative research "involves an in-depth understanding of human behaviour and the motives that govern this behaviour". Walia (2015:124) opines that "qualitative research focuses on words rather than numbers". Almeida and Queiros (2017:369) concur that "qualitative research is not concerned with numerical representations, but with the deepening of understanding a given problem". Qualitative research method looks at the world in its natural setting, interpreting situations in order to understand the meanings that people make from day to day life (Walia, 2015; McLeod, 2017; Mohajan, 2018; Creswell, 2009). Qualitative research works with the universe of meaning, motives, aspirations, thoughts, opinions, beliefs, values and attitudes of the participants (Maxwell, 2013; De Franzo, 2011; Parkinson & Drislane, 2011; Abongdia, 2013; Tong, Flemming, McInnes, Olivier & Graig, 2012). Qualitative research involves asking participants to talk about their personal experience about a phenomenon, which they may not find easy to talk about. In a nut-shell, qualitative research is used by researchers to answer how and why a

phenomenon or behaviour is happening in a particular context. Some of the characteristics of a qualitative research study are as follows:

- seeks to explore a phenomenon
- research is participant driven
- non-numerical (uses words, concepts, phrases, just to mention a few)
- rich description of participants' experiences
- small sample
- data collected from observation, interviews, documents analysis, just to mention a few
- data analysis done through data interpretation
- inductive data analysis

All of the above mentioned characteristics are applicable in the current study. Qualitative research is relevant in this study as it focuses on the interaction between learners and educators in a classroom setting. It also enables the researcher to give an in-depth focus of the challenges experienced by participants in creative writing (Almalki, 2016:291).

This study is underpinned on the phenomenological research paradigm. Qutoshi (2018:216) believes that a phenomenological paradigm “educates our vision, to define our position, to broaden how we see the world, and to study the lived experiences at deeper level”. In this study, phenomenology affords the researcher an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences, thoughts and opinions regarding the application of the writing process in ENGFAL (Wyse, 2011:35). Heigham and Croker (2009:14) are of the opinion that a phenomenological study “describes the meanings that several individuals make from experiencing a phenomenon”. A phenomenological researcher would then create a composite experience of individual participants, to use in a study in order

to explain a phenomenon. Phenomenology emphasizes on the personal characteristics and meaning-making of each member, as the assumption is that everyone's reality is different depending on how they perceive a situation (Hill, 2010). The main task of researchers in a phenomenological research is to transform data given by the participants to their lived experiences (Sanjari, Bahramnezhad, Fomani & Shoghi, 2014; Qutoshi, 2018: 220). Moreover, the main aspect of phenomenology is to understand the essence of the experience that participants share within a common ground as in a classroom setting (Padilla-Diaz, 2015:109).

Through phenomenology (i.e. when the participants give their lived experiences in response to questions), the researcher was able to answer the main research question and the sub-questions.

### **3.3. Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study was to explore the challenges faced by Grade 12 ENGFAL learners in creative writing in Seshego Circuit, Limpopo Province and also to design intervention strategies to address the challenges explored.

### **3.4. The research questions**

The main research question for this study is, what are the challenges faced by Grade 12 ENGFAL learners in creative writing?

The sub-questions are as follows:

3.4.1. How do teachers approach the teaching of creative writing in Grade12?

3.4.2. How can the teaching of ENGFAL creative writing be improved?

3.4.3. Which strategies could be appropriate for teaching ENGFAL process writing?

3.4.4. Which strategies do grade 12 ENGFAL learners employ in creative writing?

3.4.5. How can the Grade 12 learners improve their ENGFAL process writing skills?

### 3.5. Sampling

Seshego Circuit consists of a population of nine (9) secondary schools, four thousand six hundred and fifty (4650) learners and approximately one hundred and eighty (180) teachers. A population is described as the entire set of cases from which the researchers sample (Taherdoost, 2016; Walliman, 2011). The learners are entirely Sepedi Home Language (SHL) speakers who are studying English as a first additional language. The teachers are non-native English speakers. Although there is a large number of learners and teachers in different grades at the above mentioned schools, the researcher considered only those that would make a meaningful contribution to the phenomenon explored in this study.

According to Gentles, Charles, Ploeg and McKibbin (2015:1775), the concept 'sampling', refers to "the selection of specific data sources from which data are collected to address the research objectives". On the other hand, Martinez-Mesa, Gonzalez, Chica, Duguia, Bonamigo and Bastos (2018:326) define sampling as "a finite sample as a part or subset of participants drawn from the target population". Yin (2011:54) argues that "the selection of participants or sources of data to be used in a study, is based on their anticipated richness and relevance of information in relation to the study's research questions". The purpose of sampling therefore, is to provide individual perspectives and experiences that are relevant to the research questions (Jameel, Majid & Shaheen, 2018). Taherdoost (2016:19), adds that "sampling can be used to make inference about a population or to make generalization in relation to the existing theory".

A total of twelve (12) Grade 12 learner participants and two (2) Grade 12 teacher participants were sampled from two secondary schools in the Seshego circuit to take part in this study. The schools were selected because of their close proximity (they are four kilometres apart). The two schools have four (4) Grade 12 classes (i.e. two classes per school). This means three (3) learners from each of the four classes were selected to participate in the study, so that the researcher would have an in-depth focus on the 12 learner participants. The reason for the selection of Grade 12 learners in this study is that this grade is the exit grade of the DBE, before learners enter tertiary education where English is the common medium of communication. Moreover, Grade 12 is the grade at which the DBE expects

learners to show high level of proficiency in their ENGFAL writing. The 12 learner participants were selected according to their performance in a preliminary essay that all Grade 12 learners wrote at the two selected schools. One (1) higher achieving learner, one (1) average achieving learner and one (1) below average learner per class were selected so that the study would cover learner performance at all levels of writing.

Two grade 12 ENGFAL teachers (i.e. one per school), were purposively sampled from the two selected schools so that they could give their professional expertise in the study. One of the educators had six (6) years' ENGFAL teaching experience while the other had sixteen (16) years' ENGFAL teaching experience. Maxwell (2005:26) defines purposive sampling as decisions about where to conduct the research and whom to involve in the research process. Purposive sampling is a strategy that a researcher uses to choose participants that are knowledgeable and informative about the study's area of interest (Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan & Hoagwood, 2015; Latham, 2007; Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011; Peersman, 2014; Patton, 2015). Based on their expertise, the two selected teacher participants would then be expected to contribute in answering the study's research questions since they have experienced the phenomenon related to the study (Anney, 2014; Hill, 2010).

### **3.6. Data collection**

The concept 'data collection' may be divided into two words, which are 'data' and 'collection'. Jameel et al. (2018:3) are of the opinion that "data in qualitative research consists of words, phrases, concepts, themes and categories". The word 'collection' refers to the process of gathering or obtaining information from someone like participants in a study. Heigham and Croker (2009:311) define the term data collection as "the process of collecting information systematically through data collection techniques". Data collection describes in detail how data is collected in a study. The researcher collected data using data collection methods such as classroom observation, interviews and document analysis. Baxter and Jack (2008:32) add that "data collection methods ensure that a phenomenon is not discussed or explored through one lens, but rather through a

variety of lenses which allowed for multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood”.

### **3.6.1. Classroom Observations**

The researcher used the observation schedule (**Refer to Appendix A**) as a tool to collect data from both the learner and teacher participants in a classroom setting. According to Paradis, O’Brien, Nimmon, Bandiera, and Martimianokis (2016:263), observation allows researchers to “investigate and document what people do, their everyday behaviour and to try to understand why they do it, rather than focus on their own perceptions or recollections”. Almeida and Queiros (2017: 369) add that observation is a “systematic process of collecting information, in which researchers observe a given phenomenon in its natural environment”.

Observation also allowed the researcher to study the behaviour of participants and to gain an understanding of the context at hand (Creswell, 2013). The process of observation may however change a participant’s behaviour (Heigham & Croker, 2009:176). Jameel et al. (2018:1) add that “by closely following the daily life and activities of participants, this method may reduce the discrepancy between participants’ attitudes and beliefs and their behaviours”. The researcher had prolonged participants’ observation (i.e. two months) so that the participants would get used to his presence and start behaving in their natural way. This would in turn make the data collected to be reliable (De Walt & De Walt, 2011).

The researcher was a direct observer and personally went to the classroom to observe teacher participants’ teaching methods, observed if process writing stages were taught during writing lessons and also observed if they gave learners writing activities. The researcher also observed if learners were active participants, observed if they took notes to refer to later, and also observed if they wrote activities given. The researcher was not a participant in the classroom activities during the observation. According to Kumar (2011:132) a non- participant observer in research “does not get involved in the activities of the group but remains a passive observer, watching and listening to the activities”. An audio- recorder was used to record the lessons as well as learners’ responses so that the researcher would play it back in order to remind himself of what transpired during the



observation. The recorded data was then transcribed verbatim in order to analyse the behaviour of the participants in the study.

In addition to the use of the audio-recording, field notes were taken by the researcher during each observation session so that they would be referred to later, to remind oneself of what happened during the process writing lessons. Austin and Sutton (2015:227) believe that field notes “allow the researcher to maintain and comment upon impressions, environmental contexts behaviours and nonverbal cues that may not be adequately captured through audio recording”. Austin and Sutton (2015:227) add that field notes “can provide important context to the interpretation of audio-taped data and can help remind the researcher of situational factors that may be important during data analysis”. An audio-recorder and the field notes complemented each other during the collection of data as discussed above.

### **3.6.2. Interview Schedule**

An interview schedule (**Refer to Appendix B**) was arranged with the teacher participants as a follow up to what was taught in class so that clarifications were made on issues that need clarity and also to get teacher participants’ personal views on issues related to process writing. According to Kumar (2011:137), an interview schedule is “a written list of questions, open ended or closed, prepared for use by an interviewer in a person to person interactions”. Interviews are used by the researcher to gather information from the individual participants’ lived experiences (Heigham & Croker, 2009; Paradis et al., 2016). Barbour (2014:113) opines that when conducting interviews in quality research, “the researcher was concerned with eliciting in-depth accounts from people, with room for them to select which aspects they wish to emphasize”. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews so that he would identify the participants’ emotions, feelings and opinions on the phenomenon of the study. In-depth interviews provide very rich information and offer the interviewer the opportunity to ask follow-up questions to clarify previous answers given (Langkos, 2014; Almeida & Queiros, 2017).

The researcher visited the teacher participants at their natural setting (i.e. school) to conduct one on one interviews on the research subject (i.e. process writing). Notes were taken as the participants responded to questions. An audio device

such as a tape recorder was used as a back-up instrument to notes taken during the interview. The purpose of using the audio-recorder during the teacher participants' responses during the interviews was to help the researcher to remind himself of what transpired during the interview when he makes a play-back of the recordings.

### **3.6.3. Document Analysis**

In document analysis, learner participants were asked to respond to ENGFAL creative writing tasks so that the researcher would ascertain if the learners followed or applied various stages of the writing process in the tasks given to them. Bowen (2009: 30) opines that "document analysis is a social research method and is an important research tool in its own right". Bowen (2009:31) adds that documents are "stable, non-reactive data sources, meaning, they can be read and reviewed multiple times and remain unchanged by the researcher's influence or research process". Documents are not only texts produced by learners during writing, but also photos, videos and any other materials that are relevant in a study (De Figueiredo, 2010:29). Once collected and kept safely, documents will forever remain a valuable instrument to be used by a researcher in order to explore a phenomenon. A researcher should try by all means to avoid an element of bias when analysing documents.

The researcher acted as an invigilator during the writing of creative writing tasks so as to ensure authenticity. Before the commencement of the invigilation session, the invigilator assured learners that there was nothing awkward about him invigilating them in place of their teachers. He assured the learners that it was part of research he was doing and that they should not feel intimidated. He encouraged them to do their best as they wrote the texts. The invigilation of learners' creative writing tasks by the researcher was aimed at ensuring that the tasks remained original without being tampered with. The creative writing tasks were then marked to check if stages of process writing were followed. Follow up invigilations were made where learners wrote different creative writing texts. The researcher also considered the original purpose of the learners' writing such as the target audience. Feedback was given to learners as part of learning in process writing. According to DBE (2011:11), "it is necessary that learners receive regular and

timely feedback on their writing so that they know where and how to improve”. Follow up creative tasks were then given to learner participants, and as always, regular feedback was given to learners to check for improvement and consistency in their process writing responses.

### **3.7. Data analysis**

Data analysis involves the analysis of data collected through various methods of data collection. In this study, data collected through classroom observation, interviews and document analysis was analysed by the researcher, looking particularly at common themes that emerged during the analysis. Wong (2008:14) suggests that “data analysis entails reading a large amount of transcripts, looking for similarities or differences and ultimately finding themes and developing categories”. Walia (2015:16) adds that data analysis is “a dynamic process weaving together recognition of emerging themes, identification of key ideas or units of meaning and material acquired from the literature”.

The researcher used content analysis of the data so that he would explore the phenomenon of the study and interpret data collected from both learner and teacher participants. In content analysis, a researcher puts emphasis on counting the number of times a word, a phrase or a theme occurred in order to interpret the data (Walia, 2015:16). The researcher used the inductive approach in the analysis of collected data because the inductive approach does not use predetermined framework to analyse data (Burnard, Gill, Steward, Treasure & Chadwick, 2008:429). Clarke and Braun (2018:83) concurs with Burnard et al. (2008) that inductive approach is “a process of coding the data without trying to fit into a pre-existing coding frame or the researcher’s analytic pre-conceptions”. The inductive approach strives to eliminate an element of bias by the researcher.

Triangulation of sources was made to check for the consistency of the data sources in order to ensure trustworthiness of the study (Kielmann, Cataldo & Seeley, 2012:16). The basic issue in relation to trustworthiness is to prove without doubt that the findings of a study are of value (Maponya, 2010). Triangulation may be defined as the way in which one explores different levels and perspectives of the same phenomenon (Fusch, Fusch & Ness, 2018). According to Heigham and Crocker (2009), triangulation is done:

*by using several data collection techniques and comparing what they tell you; you can determine whether your analysis and findings are well supported across different sources of information. (127)*

Triangulation involves using different techniques such as member checking, peer debriefing and data collection methods in order to avoid bias by the researcher and therefore ensuring validity of the research. Validity refers to the degree that the participants' viewpoints, thoughts, intentions, and experiences are accurately understood and reported by the researcher (Cameron, 2011:4). Anderson (2010:3) concurs with Cameron (2011) that validity of the research findings "refers to the extent to which the findings are an accurate representation of the phenomena they are intended to represent". In this study, validation of the researcher's interpretation of data was done through the triangulation of different sources of data collection methods such as observation, interview and document analysis so that the researcher would have a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of the study. Fusch, Fusch and Ness (2018), opine that "the ability to look at the data from multiple perspectives and consider a phenomenon in more than one way is mitigating the potential to see data from just one view".

### **3.7.1. Data collected from classroom observation**

Data collected through the use of an audio recording, was transcribed verbatim and typed so that the researcher would find it easy to read the data unlike when the data was still in a hastily written form. According to Almeida et al. (2017:228), a researcher should then "read it while listening to the recording and do the following: correct spelling or other errors, anonymize the transcript so that the participant cannot be identified from anything that is said". The raw data was then read and reread by the researcher, looking for recurring patterns of the participants' ideas, experiences and expressions and then coded according to similarities and differences that emerged.

Data collected from field notes was read several times to check for emerging common themes. Jameel et al. (2018:4) contend that the concept 'coding' refers to "a process of naming a portion of data with a label that describes, summarizes and categorizes the data". Theron (2015:7) defines coding as "the process of organizing chunks of information and writing a word that represents a category in

the margin". Flick (2013:11) concurs with Jameel et al. (2018) and Theron (2015) that "coding the data means to find a label that allows the grouping of several elements under one concept, so that we have a less limited number of categories rather than a large variety of diverse phenomena". Coding helps to generate new ideas and also helps gather material by topic (Richards, 2006:103).

Data that was not useful in the study was set aside, while relevant data was further coded into themes that were then labelled into a basic theme for the purpose of interpretation. Some of the items that the researcher has coded from the data collected during observation were: activities, behaviours, interactions, tactics and contributions made by the participants. De Figueiredo (2010:29) asserts that "when data is analysed, focus should not just be on data collected, but also on materials that carry relevant information". All the above mentioned steps were repeated to ensure authenticity of the findings.

### **3.7.2. Data collected from teacher interviews**

Data collected from interview schedule with teacher participants was recorded on an audiotape. McIntosh and Morse (2015), emphasises that "when using an audiotape in an interview, it is crucial that recorded interview be transcribed exactly word by word, and not paraphrased". The researcher transcribed the recorded data to get a general sense of the ideas and experiences presented by the teacher participants (Maldonado, 2017:4). The researcher read the transcription several times making notes of words and short phrases that summed up what was said in the text (Burnard et al., 2008: 431). The data was then coded into common themes. As in the analysis of data collected from the observation schedule above, irrelevant data obtained during the interview process was discarded while the relevant data was further coded into reduced common themes or categories. The themes were then labelled into a basic theme for interpretation of the teacher comments and experiences in ENGFAL process writing instruction. The field notes taken by the researcher as backup to the recorded interview were also coded in order to identify common themes.

Reliability of a research instrument is important in the analysis of data collected through the interview schedule. Reliability refers to the extent to which the measurement tool provides consistent outcomes if the measurement is repeatedly

performed (Surbhi, 2017). (Kumar, 2011:168) states that the concept reliability refers to “the degree of accuracy made by a research instrument in data analysis”. Kumar (2011:136) adds that “when you collect the same set of information more than once using the same instrument and get the same results under the same conditions, an instrument is considered reliable”.

Several factors that may affect the reliability of a research instrument during the interview process are identified. These factors are the wording of questions, the physical setting, the respondent’s mood, the interviewer’s mood, the nature of interaction and the regression effect of an instrument and are relevant in this study.

#### **a) The wording of questions**

The wording of questions is related to the researcher asking clear questions when interviewing the participants in a study. Kumar (2010:169) states that “a slight ambiguity in the wording of questions or statements may affect the reliability of a research instrument as respondents may interpret the questions differently at different times, resulting in different responses”. The researcher drafted clear questions in the interview schedule and avoided ambiguous questions when making follow-up questions with participants.

#### **b) The physical setting**

If the researcher conducts research at a different venue other than at the selected research site, especially in follow-up interviews, the respondents may respond differently. If the initial interview was conducted at a school, and a follow-up interview made at a wedding or at a family gathering, the respondents may not give an honest response to the questions posed to them as they would in the appropriate setting. Kumar (2010:169) suggests that “any change in the physical setting at the time of repeat interview, may affect the responses given by a respondent, which may affect reliability”. The interview questions in this research study were all conducted at the sampled schools.

#### **c) The respondent’s mood**

Respondents may not give an honest opinion about the interview questions posed to them if their mind is not at ease due to social or psychological factors affecting them. A change in the mood of the respondents when answering questions may

affect the reliability of a research instrument (Kumar, 2010). The researcher was mindful of the participants' state of mind when interviewing them, as they were always asked if they were available for the interviews. They were always asked if they were ready to answer questions before the commencement of the interview sessions.

#### **d) Interviewer's mood**

It is always a prerequisite for researchers to be in the right state of mind when conducting interviews with the participants as they would be expected to take notes during the interviews. If they are not focused, they may miss important points in the interview, and this may affect the reliability of a research instrument. Being in the right frame of mind helped the researcher to make relevant and appropriate follow-up questions in the interviews.

#### **e) The nature of the interaction**

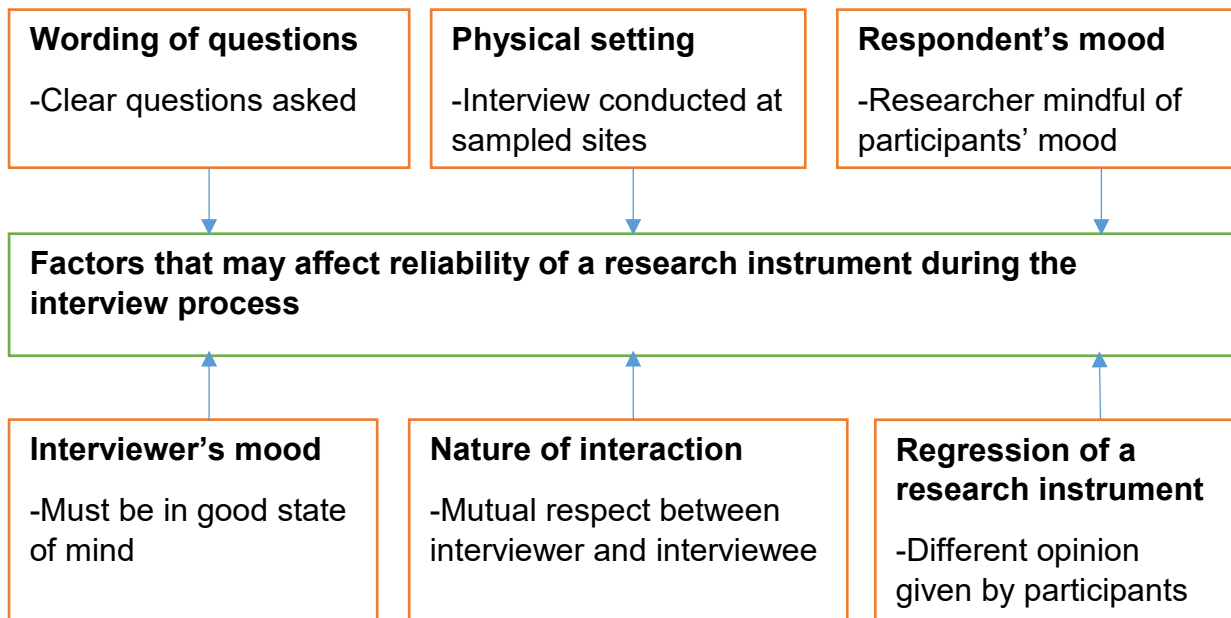
The relationship the researcher and the participant might determine the nature of interaction between the two. If the researcher and the participant have mutual respect for each other, they are likely to have progress in the research than when one of the two regards another as inferior to them. Kumar (2010:169), believes that "in an interview situation, the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee may affect responses, significantly". The researcher and the participants had mutual respect for each other.

#### **f) The regression effect of an instrument**

The participants in a research might have a different view when they are asked to validate what they might have said earlier on when they responded to interview questions. Burnard et al. (2008:433) state that when asked to validate their responds to an issue relevant to research, "some respondents may want to modify their opinions on representation of the data if they now feel that on reflections, their original comments are not socially desirable". The participants' different opinions may affect the reliability of the research. Anney (2014:277) concurs with Burnard et al. (2008) that "participants may reject an interpretation made by the researcher, either because it was socially undesirable or because of the way in which it was presented by the researcher". The participants were informed that

changing their opinion during follow up questions may affect the validity of data collected from them.

The factors that affect reliability of a research instrument during the interview process are summarised below:



**Fig. 1: Factors that may affect the reliability of a research instrument during the interview process**

### 3.7.3. Data collected from document analysis

Data collected from learners' documents in ENGFAL creative writing was read and reread, and just like in observation schedule and interviews schedule, emerging common themes that were relevant to this study, were labelled and then analysed. According to Lowe, Norris, Farris and Babbage (2018),

*a frequent requirement in qualitative data analysis is the collection of relevant material and its organization into themes that reveal emerging patterns and lead to a theoretical understanding of the phenomenon under study. (194)*

All irrelevant data was set aside and further coding was made to reduce the themes. The themes were then labelled into a basic theme for interpretation.



## **8. Quality criteria**

Trustworthiness of a project consists of components such as credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

### **3.8.1. Credibility**

The researcher's findings are said to be credible if the participants in a study agree that the findings of a study are a true reflection of their lived experiences (Bless, Higson-Smith & Sithole, 2013). According to Mpiti (2016:106), the term credibility refers to "the extent to which the data and data analysis are believable and trustworthy." Trochim and Donnelly (2007:149) concur that credibility "involves establishing that the results of a qualitative research are believable from the perspective of the participants in the research". Heigham and Croker (2009:310) add that "researchers use credibility to maximize the accuracy of how they define concepts and how they characterize people they are investigating, with particular focus on how the various participants feel about the interpretations that the researchers make".

Credibility of the current study was done through member checks, peer debriefing, and triangulation.

#### **a) Member checks**

In member checks, the researcher takes his findings to the participants of a study to find out if they agree with the interpretations of the data collected from them. The participants are the ones to determine whether or not the findings reflect their original opinions accurately through member checks. Hadi and Class (2015:1) state that member checks "involve ongoing formal and informal validation of data, analysis of themes and categories, interpretations and conclusions with those study participants from whom the data were collected". Validity may be referred to as the precision in which the findings of a study accurately reflect the data (Leung, 2015; Noble & Smith, 2015). Participants appreciate member checks process because they know that they will have a chance to verify gaps from their earlier interviews (Devault, 2018).

There could however be a negative side to member checks if a researcher takes a long time to analyse data and takes it back to participants for validation.

Participants may want to change their original views due to what Burnard et al. (2008:433) believe are participants' "changed perceptions and views because of temporal effects and potential changes in their situation, health, and perhaps even as a result of participation in the study". This researcher would ensure that data is analysed timeously while it is still fresh in the participants' minds so that changed views would be curbed or minimized. If there were to be change of views by the participants, it would be at a minimal level since not all of the 20 participants (i.e. 18 learners and two teachers) would change their views. Member checking is not only meant to have participants agreeing and validating the researcher's interpretation of their data, but also give them an opportunity to correct where the researcher might have misinterpreted them.

### **b) Peer debriefing**

Peer debriefing involves seeking the assistance of a peer or an expert researcher to give input in a study. Hadi and Class (2015:2), define peer debriefing as 'a method in which the researcher discusses the research methodology, data analysis and interpretations continuously throughout the research process with his/her peer who is not directly involved in the research project". The researcher sought the input of his supervisors who are experts in qualitative research, rather than a peer, in order to have expert advice and thereby enhancing the credibility and trustworthiness of the study. Hadi and Class (2015:2) emphasize that "for research students, their supervisors can act as de-briefers". This would eliminate an element of bias by the researcher in the interpretation of data.

Although peer review technique may help eliminate researcher bias, it also has some shortcomings just like member checking. The snack of the peer review technique is that each researcher may interpret the data or part of it, differently resulting in no definitive answer to the validity of the researcher's interpretation of data (Burnard et al., 2008). If this is the case, the researcher would be forced to re-examine his interpretation of the data or ask for a second opinion from another expert researcher. Other forms of debriefing are presentation of research findings at conferences, and presenting preliminary findings to interested groups.

### **c) Triangulation**

Triangulation was discussed in detail, in data analysis, above. The researcher used both data triangulation (i.e. of different data sources) and methodological triangulation (i.e. of data collection methods) to validate interpretation of data; for example, teacher participants were send transcripts of their response during interviews with the researcher to check for verification and validation. Methodological triangulation assists in mitigating any researcher bias (Horne & Horgan, 2011; Bekhet & Zauszniewski, 2012; Gorisson, Van Bruggen & Jochems, 2013).

#### **3.8.2. Transferability**

The findings of a study are said to be transferable if they can be applied in other contexts with the same results. Heigham and Croker (2009:322) refer to the term transferability as “the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be generalized or transferred to other contexts or settings.” Cameron (2011:6) adds that “transferability requires the researcher to provide sufficient data and context to enable the audience to judge whether the findings can be applied to other situations and contexts”. Barnes, Conrad, Demont-Heinrich, Graziano, Kaowalski, Neufeld, Zamora and Palmquist (2012:1), concur that “if researchers desire to make the results of their study transferable to another context, they must keep a detailed account of the environment surrounding their research and include a rich description of that environment in their final reports”. Readers, not the original researcher, would then use the rich description provided to determine if the findings of a study are transferable in their own settings (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). According to Hadi and Class (2015:2), rich description “requires the researcher to give sufficient details about participants, settings, data collection and analysis methods, so that the reader can evaluate the extent to which the conclusions made by the authors are transferable to other settings, situations and populations”.

If the results are similar, the audience would then infer that they are transferable and that they may be generalized in other populations. Generalizability depends on the transferability of research findings (Barnes, Conrad, Demont-Heinrich, Graziano, Kaowalski, Neufeld, Zamora & Palmquist, 2012). Purposive sampling

of both learner and teacher participants could ensure replication of the study in other situations due to their lived experiences in ENGFAL process writing.

### **3.8.3. Dependability**

Dependability is about findings of a study that are consistent and could be replicated by other researchers (Pandya-Wood, 2014). Korstjens and Moser (2018:121) add that dependability refers to “the stability of findings over time”. Other researchers’ findings should be consistent with a researcher’s findings when they conduct the same research using the initial researcher’s report. The researcher should produce an audit-trail of all material that has contributed to the findings of the study. According to Korstjens and Moser (2018:121), an audit-trail refers to “steps taken from the start of a research project to the development and reporting of the findings”. Hadi and Class (2015:1) are of the opinion that an audit-trail “makes it possible for others to understand how researchers reached their conclusions by creating detailed documentation of each aspect of the research process”. A good research report would give sufficient evidence for the reader to determine the consistency of a study. Kumar (2010:172) suggests that dependability “may be difficult to establish unless you keep an extensive and detailed record of the process for others to replicate”.

The researcher has used data collection instruments such as field notes, transcripts and audio recorder to ensure that the findings correspond with data collected from the participants. This would help eliminate bias on the side of the researcher. Bias means having only part of the truth, and using it as if it was the whole truth (Elmusharaf, 2013). The sooner a researcher is able to recognize his/her personal view of the world and learn to discern the presence of personal lenses, the better he/she is able to hear and interpret the reflections of others such as participants in a study (Fusch, Fusch & Ness, 2018). In order to ensure dependability, this researcher requested a trustworthy person, namely, the supervisor of this project, who is knowledgeable in phenomenological research, to analyse data collected in order to ascertain if the results are the same. If the results of the analysis are similar, then dependability of the inquiry is achieved (Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh & Sorensen, 2010).

### **3.8.4. Confirmability**

The concept confirmability, refers to the degree to which the results could be confirmed or corroborated by other researchers (Bless, Higson-Smith & Sithole, 2013). Kumar (2010) adds that “it is only possible if both researchers follow the process in an identical manner for the results to be compared”. In other words, confirmability will be determined by linking the data to their sources. The interpretation of the researcher’s findings would be based on data collected from participants and not on his personal motivations or bias. Korstjens and Moser (2018:121) opine that confirmability “is concerned with establishing that data and interpretations of the findings are not figments of the inquirer’s imagination, but clearly derived from the data”. Triangulation of data collection instruments such as an audio recorder, transcripts and field notes were used to ensure that the findings correspond with the captured data not the researcher’s opinion. Confirmability is concerned with the neutrality of the researcher in the interpretations of study findings. Below is the summary of the trustworthiness of a research project:

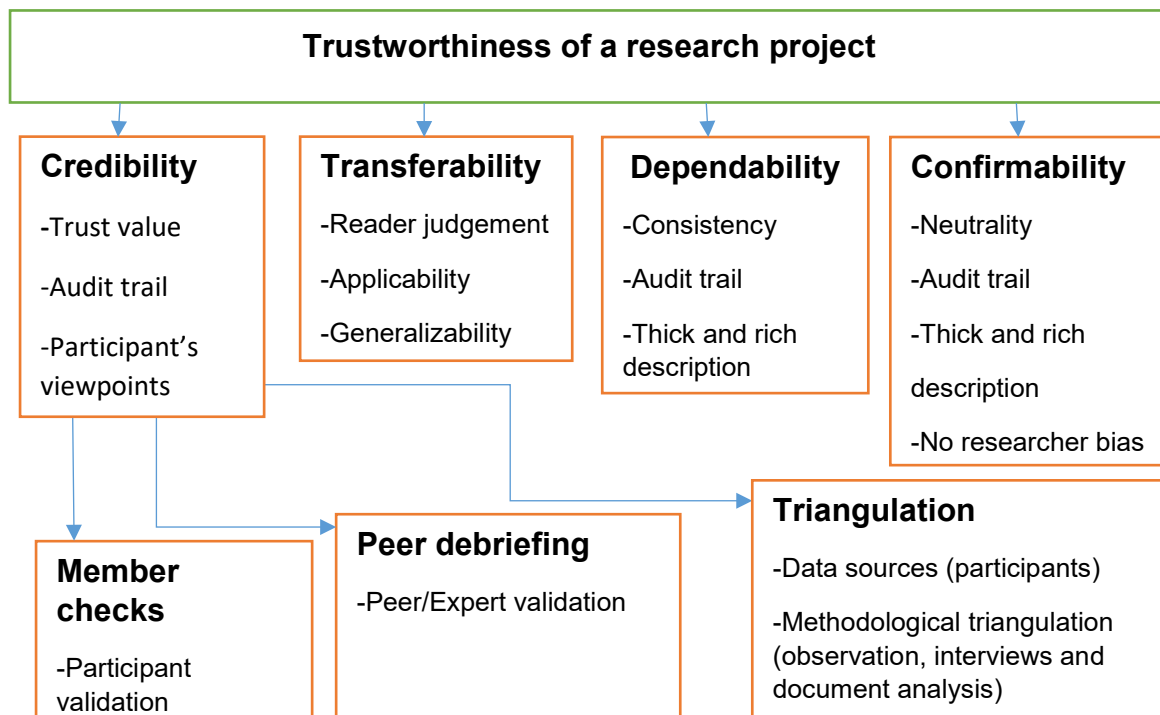


Fig. 3.1 Trustworthiness of a research project

### 3.9. Ethical considerations

Ethical issues relate to the way the researchers conduct themselves when doing research. Creswell (2012:592) states that “the researcher needs to conduct the

inquiry in a way that respects the care of the participants...and is sensitive to obtaining consent and advancing the purpose of the study...". Creswell (2012: 588) adds that "the research needs to be in the best interest of those facing the problem or issue being addressed in the research project." Ethical code focuses on informed consent, liberty to withdraw from research and protection from physical and psychological harm (Fouka & Mantzorou, 2011).

### **3.9.1. Anonymity and confidentiality**

It is expected that a research project's findings would contribute to a body of knowledge in the related field of study. Since the findings of the research are going to be shared with other people throughout the world, this researcher would not use the participants' real names, but would use pseudonyms to protect their identity to ensure their anonymity and confidentiality. Using pseudonyms would encourage the participants to freely express their lived experience without worrying that they would be recognized. Halcomb (2016:6) contends that "anonymity encourages participants to express their true feelings rather than providing what they perceive to be socially acceptable responses".

The names of sampled schools were kept by the researcher to ensure they are not identifiable to the world. This would protect the schools from being known for or associated with certain ideas that might lead to such schools being ostracized in the community. The participants would have an expectation that they would be protected from situations in which they might be harmed. The researcher should ensure that no participant suffers any adverse consequences as a result of the study (Adam, 2010). Therefore, Sanjari et al. (2014:4) maintains that "the principle of no harm to participants ought to be considered by researchers, who should be aware of the potential harms that might be inflicted upon study subjects".

Confidentiality is about ensuring that personal information which the participants share with the researcher is kept between the two of them; that it is not divulged to anyone without the permission of the participant. The researcher would make a judgement about what information from the participants should be published and what should not be published. As stated above, if the researcher was to share it with the world, he would use a pseudonym. In the learners' consent form (Appendix C) and the teachers' consent form (Appendix D), the researcher clearly

stated that the participants' confidentiality would be ensured. The researcher has ensured that the names of the participants and the names of the sampled schools were kept anonymous in order to protect their identity.

### **3.9.2. Voluntary participation**

Voluntary participation in a study means that the participants willingly decide to take part in a research project without being coerced into being part of it. The researcher merely explains to the prospective participants, in writing, what the research is about and how it would benefit them. The onus would be on the participants to take a decision on whether to participate or not. Marshall, Adebamowo, Adeyemo, Ogundiran, Strenski, Zhou and Rotimi (2014:5) state that "an important aspect of voluntary participation in research is the capacity to withdraw from an ongoing study". Marshall et al. (2014:197) add that "the ability to make one's own decision must be coupled with the absence of coercion in order for participation to be truly voluntary". In Appendixes C and D, the researcher has clearly stated that both learner and teacher participants may opt out of the research any time they wish. Voluntary participation means that the participants should not expect compensation for the data collected from them and that they may decline to answer questions asked by the researcher.

### **3.9.3. Informed Consent**

Informed consent is a way of informing the participants about a research project and ensuring that they understand what a study is all about so that they make take a decision to participate or not to participate in a study (Mpiti, 2016:108). Vanclay, Baines and Taylor (2013:243) believe that in informed consent, 'participation should be voluntary choice of the participants and should be based on sufficient information and an adequate understanding of the research and the consequences of their participation'. A written consent form was given to learner participants and their parents/guardians to complete as the learner participants were below 21 years' age of legal consent (**Refer to Appendix C**). Pillay (2014:197) emphasizes that "if the child participants are under the age of consent, then the permission of parents or legal guardians is required".

The teacher participants were also given a consent form to fill in, after they were clarified of what the study was about, so that they would agree to the terms and

conditions of the study (**Refer to Appendix D**). The teacher participants were also informed in writing of all data collection methods and activities that were to be done in the study. The researcher assured all the participants that their rights, interests and wishes would be considered. Fouka and Mantzorou (2011:5), assert that informed consent “means that a person knowingly, voluntarily and intelligently, and in a clear and manifest way, gives his consent”.

One of the languages used in drafting **Appendix C** and **Appendix D** was the vernacular (Sepedi), so that those who were not literate in English would know what the study was about as they would have read it in the vernacular language. Britz and Le Roux-Kemp (2012:4) emphasize that “informed consent must be obtained in a language that participants understand and takes into account their literacy level”. Sanjari et al. (2014) concur that “the principle of informed consent stresses the researcher’s responsibility to completely inform participants of different aspects of the research in a comprehensible language”.

### **3.10. Conclusion**

This chapter outlined the research methodology used in the study and presented the research questions critical to the study. The methodology focused on the qualitative research design, sampling strategies, trustworthiness criteria, data collection methods and how the collected data would be analysed. Research strategy was underpinned on the phenomenological research paradigm that was crucial in helping the researcher to understand the phenomenon under study. Purposeful sampling enabled the participants to give their expertise and lived experiences in ENGFAL process writing. Ethical issues about the way researchers should conduct themselves in a study were then discussed and lastly, conclusion to the research methodology was made. The next chapter provides data presentation and analysis as well as report findings on data collection.



## **CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION, DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS**

### **4.1. Introduction**

The previous chapter outlined data collection methods used in the exploration of the challenges faced by ENGFAL learners in creative writing activities. This chapter presents data collected through classroom observation, teacher interviews and document analysis. It also analyses data in order to address the purpose of the study which is to explore the challenges faced by Grade 12 ENGFAL learners in process writing activities.

The researcher presents biographical information of the learner and teacher participants as well as the background of the sampled schools. The real names of the participants as well as that of the schools were withheld in order to ensure that ethical issues such as confidentiality and anonymity were adhered to. The two teacher participants are referred to as Teacher X and Teacher Y while the two schools are referred to as School A and School B. The learner participants under each school are referred according to letters of the alphabet, for example, learner A, B, C, just to mention a few. The setting of the two schools where data was collected is given in detail below.

### **4.2. Background of the schools**

#### **4.2.1. School A**

The school has a total of 580 learners from Grades 8-12. It has a nutritional program that caters for all learners. The language of learning and teaching is ENGFAL. It has 12 electrified classrooms used for teaching and learning and has three classrooms converted into school management offices, a computer lab and a staffroom. It caters for learners from the low and middle class background. It is fenced and has a gardener who also works as a gatekeeper. It has ablution facilities and a feeding scheme.

The school falls in the quintile 3 category where parents are not expected to pay for their children's education. Being a no-fees paying school implies that the school relies on the Department of Education for the supply of human resources such as educators. The school would not be able to hire additional educators where there is a need for human resources. One of the advantages of fees-paying schools is that the schools are able to create governing body posts that could go a long way in alleviating teacher

workload which would also benefit ENGFAL teachers so that they have lesser workload during marking of creative writing activities which are very tedious.

The school was burgled several times even though it has installed the alarm system of a private security company. Resources such as laptops, stationery and learner-teacher support materials (LTSMs), were stolen during the burglaries, resulting in the school using financial resources meant for purchasing more learning and teaching aids to replace the stolen items. The theft of the above mentioned resources disadvantages learners. Financial resources meant to purchase additional teaching resources such as videos related to creative writing, overhead projectors, white-boards, just a few to mention, could be channelled towards replacing the stolen items. This could result in delaying the school to purchase additional items that would make it to meet the much talked about “Fourth Industrial Revolution” standards that would make learning and teaching easier.

The overall Grade 12 results at the school in the past four years has been on the decline, due to poor leadership at the school. The school management team blows hot and cold as they sometimes seem to be indecisive and assertive in their leadership. The ENGFAL results were in the 97-98 percent range in the past three years. The expectation of stakeholders in education is that languages including ENGFAL, would obtain 100% in the final examinations since they do not fall in the so called “challenging or difficult” subject category, like Mathematics, Physical sciences and Accounting.

The school has a learner-teacher ratio of 1:58 in Grade 12 classes. The ratio may hamper learners’ development in process writing, since it is far beyond the DBE’s pupil-teacher ratio. According to the minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga, the teacher–pupil ratio for secondary schools in South Africa is at 1:35 (Parliament of South Africa, 2012). The minister of Basic Education said this in her written reply to answer a question in parliament on teacher pupil ratio in South African schools. This means Grade 12 teachers teach overcrowded classrooms and therefore become difficult for teachers to give learners individual attention in such classes during lessons, including process writing lessons. Lack of classroom facilities at the school could be one of the contributing factors why there is overcrowding in classes. Sampling of learner participants in this study is based on learners’ performance in different levels of writing development.

Teachers may not have sufficient time to attend to learners' writing challenges due to workload, since they would be expected to mark huge batches of learners' creative writing activities in formal assessment, give feedback and give follow-up writing activities in order to assist learners who struggle in process writing. Teachers' workload may also make it hard for them to check if the struggling learners have progress in process writing after they are given expanded opportunities to write more activities. Owing to time constraints to complete the syllabi, teachers often move on with other lessons even though learners have not fully grasped process writing. If they focus more on process writing, they would disadvantage learners in other language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, viewing, language structures and conventions.

General discipline of learners at the school is worrisome. Some learners do not arrive at school on time, while some do not show urgency when they are supposed to go to class or change classes. This could delay the smooth start to lessons, including the start of writing lessons. Some teachers would sometimes arrive two to three minutes late due to exchanging of classes, for example at the end of a period when teachers have to change teaching material to use in another class and/or another grade. This results in the loss of few valuable minutes for learning and teaching, and this could therefore negatively affect teachers' contact time with learners.

The school also has gang related challenges especially boys who would belong to one gang or another at home. In most instances, the opposing gangs would continue with the differences they started at home, in the school vicinity. The members would back-up one of their own who is involved in an altercation with a learner at school resulting in retaliation by members of another group. The rivalry of gang members may affect learning and teaching at the school since they might start arguing about petty things in class, resulting in the disruption of lessons. Educators may have to spend valuable minutes of teaching, to try to control the class instead of focusing on teaching. Schools that have disciplinary challenges may lack behind in the completion of the syllabi and therefore perform poorly than those that do not have poor discipline.

The school is doing well in extramural activities such as music, soccer, debate and drum majorettes where it has won trophies at different levels of competitions in which it participated. This indicates that the school has the potential to do well in all areas if

negative factors that affect its overall performance could be addressed. Poor discipline in schools could make it difficult for educators to effectively perform their task of teaching and as a result lead to a decline in the overall performance of the schools (Simelane, 2015).

#### **4.2.2. School B**

The school is situated in a semi-urban area and has a total of 622 learners from Grades 8-12. It is also classified under quintile 3 category. The language of learning and teaching at the school is ENGFAL which it has been doing well in, in the past three years. The school has a library although it is not well resourced. It has a stable school management team but seem to lack a unity amongst educators. It boasts a soccer field and a netball ground which are meant to help learners to be physically fit for the learning and teaching activities. The majority of learners come from poor family background and the department of education runs a nutritional food program to ensure that learners do not attend lessons while hungry and therefore supposedly ensuring that they focus on their studies.

Learner-teacher ratio in Grade 12 is 1:57. There is a high crime rate in the area and the school was burgled on a number of occasions just like in the previous school mentioned above. The school has not done bad in Grade 12 results in the previous years although it is still far from being regarded as an excellent school. In 2018, it was classified as a dysfunctional school because it obtained an average of 63 percent which the Limpopo Department of Education regard as below par expectation of 65 percent. Discipline at the school is below the satisfactory standards and is also affected by lack of punctuality to class and gang violence.

The buildings are in a satisfactory condition and has no admin block. It has 15 electrified classrooms that are used for learning and teaching. Two classrooms are used for administrative purposes. One classroom has been divided into three offices, namely, the principal's office, deputy principal's office and a reception area. The other classroom has been converted into a staffroom and a strong room. The absence of an administrative block could be one of the reasons why there is lack of classrooms at the school. Other teachers use some rooms in the library as staffroom.

Factors that were mentioned in the previous school in 2.1 above, also affect learning and teaching at the current school and would therefore not be analysed again. The

factors negatively contribute to learners' process writing development as much as they would in the general learning and teaching of other subjects in the school.

### 4.3. Biographical information of teacher participants

It was mentioned in the previous chapter that teacher participants were selected purposively so that they would give their professional expertise in the study. The researcher believes that the thick description of teachers, as shown in table 1 below, and the expertise that they possess in ENGFAL teaching, could help him have an in-depth understanding of the challenges faced by Grade 12 learners in process writing. In and Lee (2017:267) assert that tables “can make an article easy to understand, attract and sustain the interest of readers...”. The reason why the researcher decided to present some information in a table format was to make it easy to read. The thick description of teacher and learner participants would ensure that the study becomes reliable if it were to be done elsewhere. According to Mandal (2018:591), a “measure is reliable to the extent that independent, but comparable measure of the same trait or construct of a given object agrees”.

The table below shows displays biographical information of teacher participants:

**Table 4.1: Summary of teachers' biographical information**

<b>Pseudo-nym</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Race</b>	<b>Home Lang.</b>	<b>Major Subj.</b>	<b>Subjects Taught</b>	<b>Experience in Teaching English</b>	<b>Qualifications</b>
Teacher X	School A	Black	Sepedi	English & Sepedi	English, Sepedi & Business Studies	8 years	B.Ed. (Senior Phase & FET)
Teacher Y	School B	Black	Sepedi	English & Sepedi	English & Sepedi	20 years	STD, ACE

The table above shows that both educators have been trained to teach English during their teacher training years. Teacher X has received four years' training in English during her Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degree studies, while Teacher Y has

received three years training specializing in English during his Secondary Teachers Diploma (STD). He has registered and completed an Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) specializing in English teaching. Both Teacher X and Teacher Y are registered with South African Council of Educators (SACE). SACE is a council where educators who meet the minimum Relative Education Qualification Value (REQV) 13, a certificate which serves as a license that allows them to teach at any South African school. The requirements for an REQV 13 is Grade 12 or matric, plus three years' training as an educator. Both Teacher X and Teacher Y meet the terms and conditions of employment of educators according to Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998 as they have minimum requirements to be employed as educators.

The two teachers' experiences in teaching English shows that they are not novice educators. Teacher X's eight years' experience suggest that she has long passed the stage fright level that is usually associated with novice educators while on the other hand Teacher Y possesses a vast experience in English teaching. One could regard him as a veteran in the teaching profession and a veteran in teaching English language in particular. One would expect the two teachers' ENGFAL teaching skills to have been enhanced by the experience they have acquired. The experiences alluded to include the enhancement of teaching writing as a skill hence they have been purposefully selected to participate in the study because of their expertise. The two teachers' expertise would help with the credibility of the study through member checking. The interpretations made from the interviews with them was taken back to them for member checking. Theron (2015:8) emphasizes that through member checking, "the researchers want to ascertain that they portray accurately what the participants conveyed". Castillo –Montoya (2016) concurs that "the purpose of obtaining feedback on the interview protocol is to enhance its reliability - its trustworthiness- as a research instrument".

Both Teacher X and Teacher Y are Sepedi HL speakers who teach English to learners whose native language is also Sepedi. Apart from being English educators, the two educators are Sepedi language educators since they have also majored in Sepedi teaching. The fact that they are not only Sepedi HL speakers but also Sepedi educators could have an influence during their English language lessons, for example, when educators spent a long time making explanations or clarifications in Sepedi.

The two educators have registered at tertiary institutions to further their studies. Teacher X indicated in an informal interview that she was studying for an honours degree in English while Teacher Y indicated that he was studying for a degree in Communication Science. One anticipates that further studies by the two educators as indicated above, would enhance their expertise in English language teaching.

#### 4.4. Biographical information of learner participants

As alluded to in the previous chapter, the reason for the purposive selection of Grade 12 learners is to help the researcher have thorough understanding of the participants' experiences in process writing so that he can understand the nature of the challenges they face in creative writing pieces. Biographical information of the learners is presented in tables 1 and 2 below. The tables show their pseudonyms, gender, age, just to mention a few.

##### 4.4.1. School A

Table 4.2: Biographical information of learner participants at school A

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Home Language	ENGFAL writing level
Learner A	17	Female	Sepedi	Good
Learner B	18	Male	Sepedi	Good
Learner C	18	Female	Sepedi	Average
Learner D	19	Female	Sepedi	Average
Learner E	17	Female	Sepedi	Poor
Learner F	19	Male	Sepedi	Poor

The table shows that the learners' ages are appropriate for Grade 12. According to the South African Schools Act 84 (1996), the school going age of a grade 1 learner is seven years. By the time learners reach Grade 12, after 11 years, they would be about 18 years provided that they had not repeated a grade. Those who had repeated a grade would be 19 years old. The table shows that the learners' ages are 18 and 19 years except two learners who were still 17 years old and had not turned 18 years at the time of collecting data. The learners are Sepedi HL speakers who learn English as a first additional language.

The table also shows that the selected learners represent both genders, i.e. male and female learners. The researcher opted to include both genders in the study in order to avoid biasness of a certain gender. The last column in the table shows the learners' development in process writing. The learners were purposefully selected according to their writing development in order to help the researcher to answer the research questions in the study.

#### 4.4.2. School B

**Table 4.3: Biographical information of learner participants at school B**

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Home Language</b>	<b>ENGFAL writing level</b>
Learner A	18	Male	Sepedi	Good
Learner B	17	Female	Sepedi	Good
Learner C	17	Female	Sepedi	Average
Learner D	18	Female	Sepedi	Average
Learner E	18	Male	Sepedi	Poor
Learner F	19	Female	Sepedi	Poor

The table shows that the school also caters for male and female learners. The learners were selected according to their ENGFAL writing development. The participants are Sepedi HL speakers like in the previous school mentioned above. The reasons for the age differences are the same as in School A above.

#### 4.5. Data presentation and analysis

The researcher presents data collected through the three data collection methods which are classroom observation, interviews and document analysis. The data collected through all the three data collection methods mentioned in the previous chapter was read several times and then coded into common themes that were labelled into basic themes for analysis. According to Vaismoradi, Jones, Turunen and Snelgrove (2016), coding “reduces the amount of raw data to that which is relevant to the research questions, breaks the data down to manageable sections”. Data that was relevant to this study was considered for analysis while irrelevant data was set aside. As mentioned in the previous chapter, data collected from classroom observation and teacher interviews was transcribed so that it would make easy reading for analysis



unlike when it was still in the audio form. The transcribed data was not paraphrased, but recorded word by word. Once transcribed, the content of the transcription was checked against the audiotape to ensure accuracy of the data (McIntosh & Morse, 2015).

Due to a limited space in the study, the researcher was unable to present all relevant data for analysis. Triangulation of data was done through the three data collection instruments mentioned earlier in order to look for consistency. Teacher participants were consulted to validate the researcher's interpretation of data. The researcher starts with the presentation and analysis of data collected in the classroom, followed by presentation of data collected through teacher interviews and lastly, through document analysis.

#### **4.5.1. Classroom observation**

In this data collection method, the researcher gives explanations of activities in the classroom. The researcher used direct quotations of both learner and teacher participants during classroom observations so that the reader would have an understanding of the information captured directly from the participants. Through direct quotations, the reader would be able to make conclusions as to whether the participants' lived experiences were relevant to the study or not. The researcher collected data at two sampled schools where classroom observations were done in four Grade 12 classrooms (i.e. two per school). Four classroom observations were made per class, with the first one in each of the classrooms not being considered for analysis. It was used to serve as what one may call, a warm up visit where the researcher was introduced to the learners so that they can get used to having someone they did not know in their mist during some ENGFAL lessons. This was done to minimize the effect of the researcher's presence in the classrooms observed so that the learners and the teachers observed would behave naturally (Mpiti, 2016).

The researcher used an observation schedule (**Appendix A**) during the classroom visits. When the researcher analysed data from observation schedule, he discovered that the results addressed the following research questions:

- What are the challenges faced by Grade 12 ENGFAL learners in creative writing?
- How do teachers approach the teaching of creative writing in Grade 12?

- Which strategies could be appropriate for teaching ENGFAL process writing?

Data collected from classroom observation is presented and analysed below:

#### **4.5.1.1. Teaching method(s) used during ENGFAL process writing lessons.**

According to Gill and Kusum (2017:6692), the concept teaching method “involves the choice of what is to be taught and in which order is to presented.” The type of teaching instruction that the teacher uses during process writing goes a long way in helping the learners to master the skill of writing. The learners are likely to be proficient if a teacher uses effective teaching methods during writing lessons (Paolini, 2015).

The following excerpt is from a writing lesson presented by Teacher X when she presented a lesson on writing an ‘agenda and minutes’ of a meeting:

***Teacher:** Today’s lesson is based on how to write an agenda and minutes of a meeting. What do you know about this topic?*

***Learner B:** An agenda is a tool that is used to control a meeting.*

***Teacher:** You are right. An agenda is used to control a meeting. What is the first item on an agenda?*

***Learner E:** Opening.*

***Teacher:** The second item?*

***Learner A:** It is welcome and remarks.*

***Teacher:** Third on the agenda?*

***Learner D:** Roll call and apologies*

***Teacher:** Next?*

***Learner:** Minutes of the previous meeting.*

***Teacher:** What is minutes of the previous meeting?*

***Learner C:** It is about reading the minutes.*

***Teacher:** Why do we record minutes?*

***Learner D:** To inform those who were not in the previous meeting of the decisions*

*taken and also to do corrections of the minutes.*

**Teacher:** *When can someone raise a point in a meeting?*

**Learner F:** *In matters arising.*

The researcher has observed that the teacher used mainly the question and answer teaching method during the lesson. The learners seemed to respond positively when the teacher was asking questions as she presented the lesson. Asking learners questions may boost their thinking skills, especially during the brainstorming stage, and therefore, encourage them to actively participate during writing lessons (Etemadzadeh, Seifi and Far, 2012). Etemadzadeh et al. (2012:1026) believe that “when questions are disciplined and carefully structured, then, students are able to slow down and examine their own thinking process.” Teacher X does not seem to have asked disciplined, structured and challenging questions that would encourage creativity and brainstorming, but, asked simple lower order questions. Question and answer teaching method is important in writing as the teacher would be able to check for learners’ understanding and keeping them engaged with the task at hand (Collier, 2018). According to Ünal (2017), the question and answer method is important in teaching writing because it offers relative ease of use and calmness in the classroom. Moreover, learners engage in activities which would help them enhance their writing skills.

The use of the question and answer method alone, may not be sufficient in teaching writing, as the lesson would be based on the educator asking questions and learners answering them. The lesson would be turned into a question and answer session like in the example above, and this could disadvantage the learners. Ngubane, Ntombela and Govender (2020) argue that lessons that focus entirely on teacher-learner interaction limit learner-learner interaction which is favoured for the second language writing classrooms. Therefore, a mixture of different teaching methods such as communicative method, question and answer method as well as collaborative method, just to mention a few, could be the way to go in teaching writing.

Consider the excerpt of a lesson presented by Teacher Y at School B school:

**Teacher:** *Today we are going to discuss types of essays. What is an essay?*

**Learner E:** *It is a piece of writing in paragraph form.*

**Teacher:** *What type of essay do you know? Define it.*

**Learner A:** *A descriptive essay. It is an essay in which an event or something is described.*

**Teacher:** *How do we start writing an essay?*

**Learner B:** *We brainstorm ideas and then draw up a mind map.*

**Learner F:** *We draw a rough sketch that shows how the essay is going to be written.*

**Teacher:** *You are correct. Now you have drawn a mind map. What is next?*

**Learner C:** *The next step is to write the first draft in paragraph form.*

**Learner D:** *Then we revise what we have written before we edit the draft.*

**Teacher:** *And that's it; you submit?*

**Learner C:** *We draw a line across the first draft, write the final draft and read it for final corrections before submitting.*

**Teacher:** *Thank you. Let's now draw a mind map together. We will use a topic suggested by you.*

The researcher observed that the Teacher Y also used the question and answer teaching method. It was noted by the researcher that Teacher Y used the modelling strategy to complement the question and answer method by demonstrating to the learners how something is done, in particular, how to draw a mind map. Teacher Y also demonstrated how to write an introduction and a conclusion. This is in line with Graham et al.'s (2015) view discussed earlier on, when they emphasised that teachers of writing should provide models that learners should emulate.

#### **4.5.1.2. Teaching of process writing stages/process writing development**

Process writing comprises of various stages such as planning, drafting, revising, editing and proofreading. The researcher's intention in observing process writing development was to ascertain if educators give detailed lessons on process writing stages or if they just do a lip service of the stages.

Teacher X presented the following lesson on essay writing:

**Teacher:** *What is the first step when you write an essay?*

**Learner A:** *The first step is to draw a mind map based on a topic.*

**Teacher:** *Correct. How do you draw a mind map?*

**Learner D:** *You first brainstorm ideas and put points on the mind-map.*

**Teacher:** *What will be the next step after drawing a mind map?*

**Learner B:** *Start with the first draft, writing in paragraph form.*

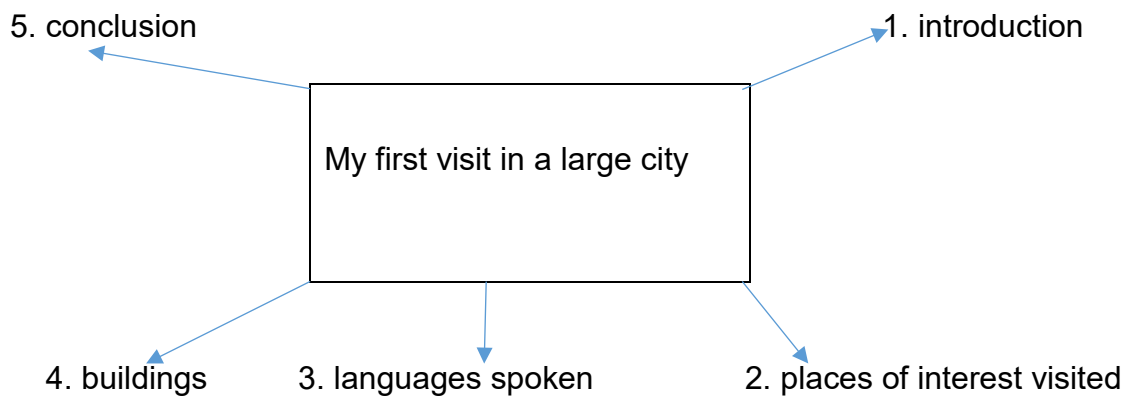
**Teacher:** *What is the next step after drafting?*

**Learner E:** *We read what we have written and then start revising and editing.*

The excerpt shows that Teacher X did not give an explicit teaching of the process writing stages. What she did was to highlight process writing stages in essay writing without discussing each of the stages. Learners should be taught what each stage entails, and should be given practical examples of how to apply the stages during writing. The way she presented the lesson, was as if she was not sure of how to approach process writing. She did not check learner's prior knowledge of the process writing stages as it is expected of her (DBE, 2011). Giving learners an opportunity to think about what they already know before a new task begins, may help them to incorporate new information into existing structures of knowledge and therefore, help them to link what they already know with the new lesson (Cole and Feng, 2015). Sharp (2016) believes some teachers of writing lack an understanding of process writing stages during writing instruction. This could lead to the same teachers giving poor writing instructions to their learners during process writing lessons. Teacher X gave a superficial lesson on process writing stages as she did not discuss the stages in detail.

As she continued with her lesson, Teacher X focused on planning which she said should be drawn before drafting could start. She asked learners to suggest a topic for discussion in class. The learners then suggested this narrative topic: "My first visit in a large city". The learners were asked to suggest items to be put on the mind map.

Below is the mind map that was discussed in class:



The discussion of the mind-map was the step in the right direction with regard to process writing stages, but unfortunately, that was the only stage discussed. Teacher X could have done well to continue giving explicit teaching of other process writing stages through demonstration as she has done with the planning stage as indicated above.

Below is part of a transcript from Teacher Y's lesson on process writing stages:

**Teacher Y:** *How would you approach essay writing?*

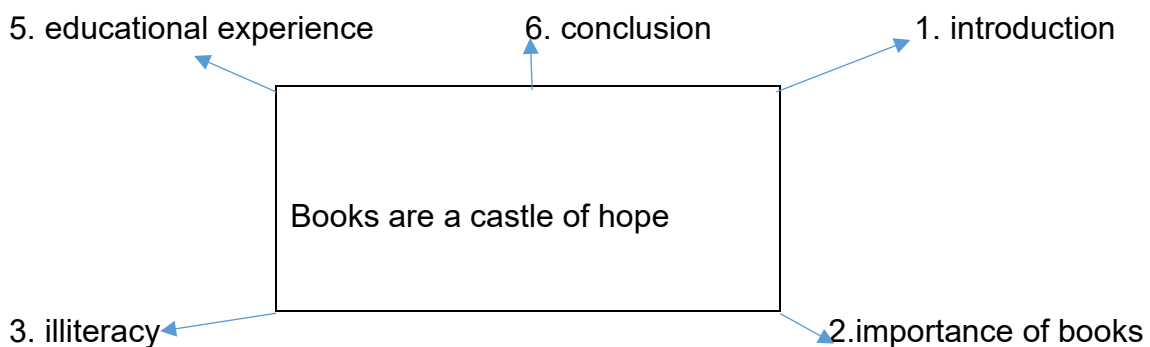
**Learner D:** *You start with a mind map after brainstorming possible ideas to be put in the mind map.*

**Teacher Y:** *Correct. The mind map may be written in point form or in the form of a sketch. What are the points that you must always have in the mind map?*

**Learner A:** *It's an introduction and a conclusion.*

**Teacher Y:** *Correct. The introduction must be striking so that it grabs the attention of the reader. Now let's draft a possible mind map of the topic "**Books are a castle of hope**".*

Below is the mind-map that was discussed in class:



Teacher Y just like Teacher X, failed to present a lesson that gives explicit details of the process writing stages. He focused on the planning stage and perhaps went a little further to explain how to write an introduction and a conclusion in creative writing tasks. He advised learners to always draft their responses, revise and edit them before making submissions even though he did not explain the details of the stages. Teacher Y, also failed to model how drafting, revising, editing, and proof-reading stages should be applied in writing. Spear-Swerling and Zibulsky (2014) suggest that insufficient instruction given to teachers would lead to poor writing instruction when such teachers start practicing in schools. If learners were taught process writing stages in the previous lessons, Teacher Y and Teacher X could have checked learners' prior knowledge to remind them of the details of the stages. Learners' prior knowledge could have been used to link the new lesson with what learners already knew.

Even though learners were actively involved in both teachers' lessons, by raising up their hands to answer questions and ask questions, some didn't seem to have grasped what the other stages such as drafting, revising, editing and proofreading entailed. Their facial expressions showed concerns and confusions when they were told about other writing stages. Some learners might have been afraid to ask questions about the stages, perhaps because they were afraid that others would think that they ask dull questions and therefore would become a laughing stock of the class (Maeda, 2017).

#### **4.5.1.3. Learner responses, notes taking and asking questions**

The researcher observed and noted that learners responded to questions asked. They took notes and asked questions where they wanted clarification. The excerpts presented in sections 5.1.1-5.1.2 above, are some of the examples of learner responses in this study.

Learners further asked the following questions during Teacher X's lesson on "Diary entry".

**Learner B:** *In which tense do we write a diary?*

**Teacher:** *A diary should be written in the past tense since one records their past experiences in the diary. Past experiences include activities or events that happened in the past few minutes.*

**Learner C:** *Why is it important to keep a diary?*

**Teacher:** *To record one's experiences. One could use a dairy to write a novel like an autobiography which is a true life story of oneself.*

The above interaction is proof of learner engagement during writing lessons even though it lacks qualities of a typical learner-centred approach. In learner-centred approach, learners play a leading role, where teachers and learners learn from one another (Gill & Kusum, 2016). The high order question “why”, asked by Learner C above, indicates the learner’s high thinking development which could help him or her during the brainstorming stage. Learner B’s question and the teacher’s response could teach and remind all the learners in class to use the past tense when they write a narrative story.

Teacher Y was asked the following question by a learner at School B when he presented a lesson on how to write an “article”:

**Learner A:** *Sir, what is the difference between an article and an informal report?*

**Teacher:** *An article is written for a newspaper or a magazine while an informal report may just be a report about something, for example, a soccer match at the weekend.*

The above examples show learner participation during writing lessons. The questions asked were however, not entirely about what the process writing stages entailed, but about the lesson presentations, for example, “features of a diary entry and an article”. This means learners would be familiar with features of the texts but lack knowledge of implementing the features in process writing. If learners have learned the process writing stages, they would know how to execute each step of the stages, and also know how to apply the stages when writing for different audiences and purposes (Graham, Bruch, Fitzgerald, Friedrich, Furgeson, Greene, Kim, Lyskawa, Olson & Smither-Wulsin, 2016). Therefore, knowledge of features of a text alone, cannot help learners to write process writing compliant activities if they have not learned process writing stages.

#### **4.5.1.4. Activities given to learners during lessons/ writing challenges**

Writing challenges relate to the problems that learner participants encounter when they write process writing tasks. Learner participants had different levels of writing competency as indicated in the presentation of biographical information of learners above. Some learners had good writing skills, while others had average and poor



writing skills. Those who had good writing skills would write good essays, those with average writing skills would write average creative tasks while those who had poor writing skills would write poorly. Results of Mukdad's (2019) study of Arab English language students revealed that the students had difficulty in revising their own writing pieces as they could not realise mistakes in the writing pieces because of poor writing proficiency. Mukdad (2019:305) adds that students would "write in their own way depending on their understanding and ability". Alfanki (2015) concurs with Mukdad (2019) that not being capable of writing, may be a result of complex nature of the writing skill. Learners who have high levels of writing anxiety may write poorly while those with low levels may perform better in writing (Senko, 2016).

Teacher X from School A asked her learners to write a paragraph on a topic, that says "My first visit in a large city" in their classwork books. The learners were given fifteen minutes to complete the task and were asked to exchange their books so that their peers could mark their work. The educator asked them to identify language errors in the tasks. During feedback some learners identified the following error:

***Learner D: I see a spelling error in the word 'lugage'.***

The educator then asked one learner to come forward to write the correct word on the chalkboard which the learner wrote correctly as 'luggage'. The learners continued with the exercise of identifying the errors and correcting them.

Teacher Y at School B gave learners an expanded opportunity to write a classwork on an article titled "A principal of a high school in hot water". He gave them twenty minutes to complete the activity. During the discussion, the teacher asked the learners to mention words which they found challenging with regard to spelling. The teacher then asked the learners to identify words, write them on the chalkboard and allowed them to correct the words. Some of the incorrect words identified were "iregular, 'immediate', 'accomodation', just a few to mention. The words were written correctly as 'irregular', 'immediate' and 'accommodation'.

The words mentioned above indicate that the learners continue to have spelling challenges even in Grade 12 after many years of learning English language. Javid and Umer's (2014) study of Saudi Arabian English Second Language learners discovered that they had serious challenges with regard to spelling in writing. The teachers gave the learners informal activities each time after presenting lessons in class. Learners

would sometimes be asked to write the activities in groups and this could encourage learners to participate actively with their peers as there would be learner to learner interaction. The researcher observed that the learners do indeed write activities when instructed to do so. The teachers moved around to check for learners' progress during the writing activities.

#### **4.5.1.5. Feedback given after writing**

The researcher observed that learners were given feedback to the writing activities given to them. The researcher noted that teachers had challenges when they were expected to mark and give feedback to learners' informal tasks, for example, essay writing. The teachers were not able to mark all the informal essays and were therefore, unable to give feedback to individual learners' work. The teacher gave general feedback based on few essays that they had marked. The reason for the teachers' failure to mark all the informal essays could be due to teachers' high workload as there were about more than fifty learners in each of the Grade 12 classes. Sometimes, a teacher would be allocated to teach English from Grade 8-12 and would therefore be difficult for them to mark all informal and formal activities in a week. Wakoli (2016) says the following on teacher workload:

*The distribution of work among the teachers was average though some incidences of overload were noted whereby majority of the teachers complained of teaching many lessons per day. They also complained [that] marking and processing of exams is a tedious exercise. (1218).*

Wakoli (2016:1218) adds that teacher overload "could be attributed to over enrolment and on the other side, teachers are under-staffed". The pupil-teacher ratio at the two sampled schools is higher than the national ratio of 1:35. The high pupil-teacher ratio at the two schools could have adverse effect on the health of the teachers as well as on learners' overall performance. Although teacher challenges should be acknowledged, individual learner feedback is very important as the learner would be able to learn and improve on the mistakes made in previous activities. The teachers could use learners' peers or groups to assess the activities. What is important that no learner's writing activity should be left unassessed as that would kill the learner's moral. Feedback should always be given after assessment failing which, the learners, might be discouraged to write activities in the future.

#### **4.5.1.6. Intervention strategies**

Intervention strategies are extra efforts taken to ensure that there is a progress or success in something.

The following intervention strategies were observed at the two schools:

The researcher noted that Teacher X discussed process writing stages with the learners during her classes although the discussion was not detailed. She gave them a writing activity (a paragraph) each time after teaching them in preparation for formal tasks. She would give struggling learners extra activities since some of them would still be showing no signs of improvement in writing. She would ask learners who had shown drastic improvement and those who were doing well to assist struggling learners. She even indicated that she would seek assistance from the learners' parents. Munje and Mncube (2018:81) emphasize that "parents ought to be directly involved in the academic, social and emotional needs of their children". Teacher X also suggested peer and group discussions to help the struggling learners.

Teacher Y also used the same intervention strategies as Teacher X. He encouraged collaborative teaching where learners taught one another. According to Du Plessis (2020:3), "learner-centred teaching encourages collaboration". Teacher Y requested learners who were good in writing to remain behind after school to help struggling learners. Teacher Y remained behind after school, to facilitate the discussion process.

#### **4.5.1.7. Writing impressions**

The word 'impressions' has to do with attitudes and feelings that participants may have in something. Learners may be inspired by motivation or desire to achieve something in writing, for example, to be good writers of literature or to be journalists in the future. With these attitudes in life, learners will be inspired to produce fluent writings and look forward to the writing lessons. Sabti, Rashid, Nimehchisalem and Darmi (2019:2) state that "research has shown that factors such as self-efficacy or motivation are associated with the enhancement of writing ability". The researcher noted in his field notes during classroom observations that learners had passion written on their faces when attending writing lessons. The researcher also observed that the majority of learners were willing participants who wanted to learn more about process writing. They participated in the writing lessons by raising up their hands to ask and answer

questions. They did not seem to mind getting written work, for as long as the work would help them achieve their desires. Learners took turns to respond to a class discussion on “giving directions” presented by Teacher Y at School B and showed interest in the discussion of a ‘narrative essay’ presented by Teacher X at School A. The lessons presented were however, not learner-centred as the teachers took the lead in the presentations.

#### **4.5.1.8. First language (L1) transfer**

Participants may sometimes use words or phrases from their home language in ENGFAL to express their views or feelings. The researcher has noted Sepedi HL transfer in ENGFAL lessons. Teachers used code-switching and code-mixing strategies when learners did not understand the content (Maluleke, 2019). Teacher X mixed her home language (Sepedi) and English when she presented a lesson on “diary entry”.

Here is the diary entry question that the class was discussing: **“You are accused of raping someone. Tell us your thoughts and feelings before and after you have appeared in court”**.

***Teacher:** Nagana ge o le mpeteng in jail thinking about what you are accused of doing. (Translation: **Imagine lying on bed** in jail thinking about what you are accused of doing).*

*The learner also code mixed.*

***Learner B:** Nkare, now I have been arrested and feel pity for myself. (Translation: **I would say**, now I have been arrested and feel pity for myself.*

After the lesson, the teacher asked the learners if they have questions.

***Learner C:** Na re ngwala date and day in the same line in diary entry? (Translation: **Do we write date and day in the same line?**)*

In communication, code mixing and code switching may be done for various reasons. Gilead (2016:10) asserts that “teachers code-mix to enhance communication between them and their students and to increase students’ understanding”. Teacher X might have been trying to create a relaxed atmosphere in the classroom by code mixing in order to make an explanation as is the case in the example above. Her teaching

strategy of code mixing could be beneficial to the learners as they may see her as one of their own, hence Learners B and C also code mixed to identify with her.

Teacher Y also used a code switching teaching strategy when the class was discussing article writing using the topic that says: “A school principal is in hot water”. Learners were giving possible ideas as to why the principal might have been in hot water. The class finally agreed that the reason why the principal was in hot water was because of sending a pregnant learner home. As the learners were suggesting the main reasons why the learner was sent home, Teacher Y chipped in and said the following:

**Teacher Y:** *One of the reasons for sending the learner home could be because yo mongwe wa bona o na le lehlatšo. (Translation: ...because **one of them has morning sickness**).*

Teacher Y might have code mixed to make the discussion humorous. Although morning sickness is common in pregnant women, talking about a learner who is nauseous in front of other learners might give them an impression that one of them is pregnant. The teacher might have been trying to mean something else. This means code mixing and code switching should be avoided at all costs as learners might have a different interpretation to what the teacher said. The misinterpretation that occurs as a result of the transfer of L1 to L2 is referred to as negative transfer. In negative transfer, the first language has negative impact on the second language (McGrath, Palmgren & Liljedahl, 2018). Rana’s (2018) study of ESL students at American universities from different language backgrounds concluded that the students used L1 features in English writing. The meaning of a word or phrase in the home language could have a completely different meaning in ENGFAL.

#### **4.5.2. Teacher interviews**

Interviews are preferable when the researcher strives to understand the interviewee’s subjective perspective of a phenomenon (McGrath et al., 2018). The researcher used an interview schedule (**Appendix B**) to pose questions on process writing to the teacher participants. During the analysis of data derived from the teacher participants’ responses, the researcher discovered that the participants gave information that would help to answer the research questions (refer to 4.5.2.1 to 4.5.2.8 below). The following research questions were addressed:

- What are the challenges faced by Grade 12 ENGFAL learners in creative writing?
- How do teachers approach the teaching of creative writing in Grade 12?
- How can the teaching of ENGFAL creative writing be improved?
- which strategies could be appropriate for teaching ENGFAL process writing?
- Which strategies do Grade 12 ENGFAL learners employ in creative writing?
- How can Grade 12 learners improve their ENGFAL process writing skills?

#### **4.5.2.1. Teaching method(s)**

The teachers were asked the following question on their teaching method.

**Question: Which teaching method do you use in process writing lessons?**

*Teacher X: I'm not sure of what to say about the type of method I use. I will tell you and you will categorize the method I use. What I normally do for example is to tell them how to do a mind map. After that, I give them a topic and they would draw a mind map for the topic then I would start checking if they understood me. But I think I mostly use the question and answer method.*

*Teacher Y: I use question and answer method. My approach is learner centred which means learners play a leading role during class discussions. I also use the communicative approach through asking questions and elaboration.*

Based on the observation made in classes, the teachers mainly used the communicative teaching method to encourage engage learners in writing activities so that learners' writing could be enhanced. According to Toro, Pinza, Camacho- Minuche and Parades (2019), communicative language teaching encourages learners "to communicate in order to express their ideas, feelings and thoughts". It is through interaction with learners that the teachers were able to discuss lessons they had presented in class. The communicative approach is supplemented by the modelling strategy in which the teachers taught learners through demonstration. Through modelling, the teachers as more knowledgeable persons get engaged in writing activities to help learners who are less knowledgeable persons (Shabani, 2016). The teachers try to assist learners to attain their proximal level of writing development.

The researcher was worried that the two teachers could not give a definite answer when asked about the teaching method they had used in their presentation. The

researcher wondered how the teachers had planned the presentations if they did not know the type of method they were going to use in the presentations. According to Gill and Kusum (2017:6694), the concept method “involves the choice of what is to be taught and in which order is to be presented”. The above excerpts suggest that the teachers did not seem to know the teaching method that they used. This raises questions about the type of training the teachers received during their student years if they can’t categorically name the teaching method they used.

#### **4.5.2.2. ENGFAL writing impressions**

The teacher participants were asked the following question on the learners’ writing impressions:

**What are your learner’s attitude to process writing? Substantiate.**

*Teacher X: So far, the learners don’t have a negative attitude towards writing; it’s just that most don’t fully express their creative side because of poor vocabulary. They show enthusiasm in writing.*

*Teacher Y: They enjoy process writing. I encourage them to go out and explore by doing research. I also encourage them to plan and organize ideas, interview people to get as much information as possible through research with regard to the topic they have been given to do research on. As a result, they give a lot of input in the discussions.*

From the responses of the teachers, the researcher has a sense that learners look forward to process writing activities even though some of them have poor vocabulary. The word ‘*enthusiasm*’ stated by Teacher X implies that learners might have motivating factors that encourage them to improve their writing proficiency, despite the writing challenges that they have. According to Zhao (2014:452), learners may write creative activities for the purpose of self-empowerment in order to achieve a particular social positioning or to have self-esteem. Learners’ eagerness to use whatever material or source they come across, to improve writing competency, is encouraging since writing is about writing.

According to Teacher Y, learners at his school would not mind going all out to collect data or information on a topic if they are asked to do so. He says that “*as a result, they give a lot of input in the discussions*”. Due to the motivation that they have, learners

would do their best to learn to master the skill of writing. Teacher Y mentioned that learners go all out to do research on their own when asked to do so. This supports Teacher Y's assertion that learners have a good impression about process writing. Moreover, learners' effort to do research on their own promotes learner-centred type of learning which is encouraged in process writing.

The researcher asked the teachers a follow up question to find out how sure they were that the learners have good impressions about process writing.

**How sure are you that the learners have good impressions about process writing?**

*Teacher X: After I have given them creative writing activities, they would often sit down and discuss amongst themselves and also come to me to ask questions.*

*Teacher Y: Many learners would not mind remaining after school to discuss the process writing activities.*

The responses by the two educators indicate that even though English is not their home language, learners have motivation to improve their writing abilities so that they are able to produce acceptable process writing activities. According to Lamb (2017:301), "motivation is recognized as a vital component in successful second language learning".

#### **4.5.2.3. Challenges in ENGFAL process writing**

The teachers were asked this question:

**What would you say are the learners' challenges in ENGFAL process writing?**

*Teacher X: The first one is lack of creativity and the second one is their inability to express themselves in ENGFAL because of their low vocabulary and challenges in spelling. Learners do not use language devices such as idiomatic expressions and figures of speech in their writing. They use ordinary English which is often flawed.*

*Teacher Y: Some have challenges with ENGFAL spelling; they write quite a lot of wrong words.*

The two teachers' responses support the claim that some learners have poor vocabulary and spelling challenges. Fareed, Ashraf and Bilal's (2016) study of



Pakistani learners' writing revealed that their English writing showed lack of vocabulary. This means that the learners would write wrong words in certain contexts unaware that the words are not suitable in such contexts. They would also write lots of incorrectly spelt words which would make their writing difficult to read and understand. The learners would therefore, not be able to show their writing creativity due to lack of words to do so.

#### **4.5.2.4. Written work given**

**Question: How often do you give learners process writing activities? Who marks the activities?**

*Teacher X: I do give them work to write, but the number of tasks depends on how well they are responding. If they respond positively, I give them two to three activities per lesson. If they don't respond positively, I take time to dwell more on the lesson resulting in less writing activities. I give more writing activities during revision in the last quarter of the year. Sometimes we do not have enough time to drill learners on process writing as we are always expected to chase the pace-setter. With regard to who marks the activities, I would say that depends on the type of task to be marked. If the task is formal, I mark it, but if it is informal like classwork or homework, we mark the activities together in class. Learners would be encouraged to mark their own activities so that they would be able to make corrections to their work. Sometimes, learners swap books.*

*Teacher Y: I always give learners a writing activity after each lesson. I would ask the learners to read their own writing while other learners are listening and taking notes so that they could help correct the mistakes made. I mark formal activities; learners individually, in pairs and in groups mark informal tasks while the teacher facilitates the process.*

The above efforts by the teachers are a step in the right direction to ensuring that the learners improve their writing skills. Giving learners more written work could help them have substantial improvement in their writing. Hapsari and Sukavatee (2018) believe that giving more written work could help learners to improve their thinking skills, manage ideas in writing and enhance their ability to conclude, analyse and criticize. Unfortunately, learners are not given more process writing activities as teachers have to move on to other language skills so that they do not find themselves lacking behind

in the syllabus as a result of focusing more on writing. Teachers are aware that the time they use for teaching writing is not enough to seriously impact on learners' quality of writing (Dockrell, Backopolou, Spencer & Lindsay, 2015).

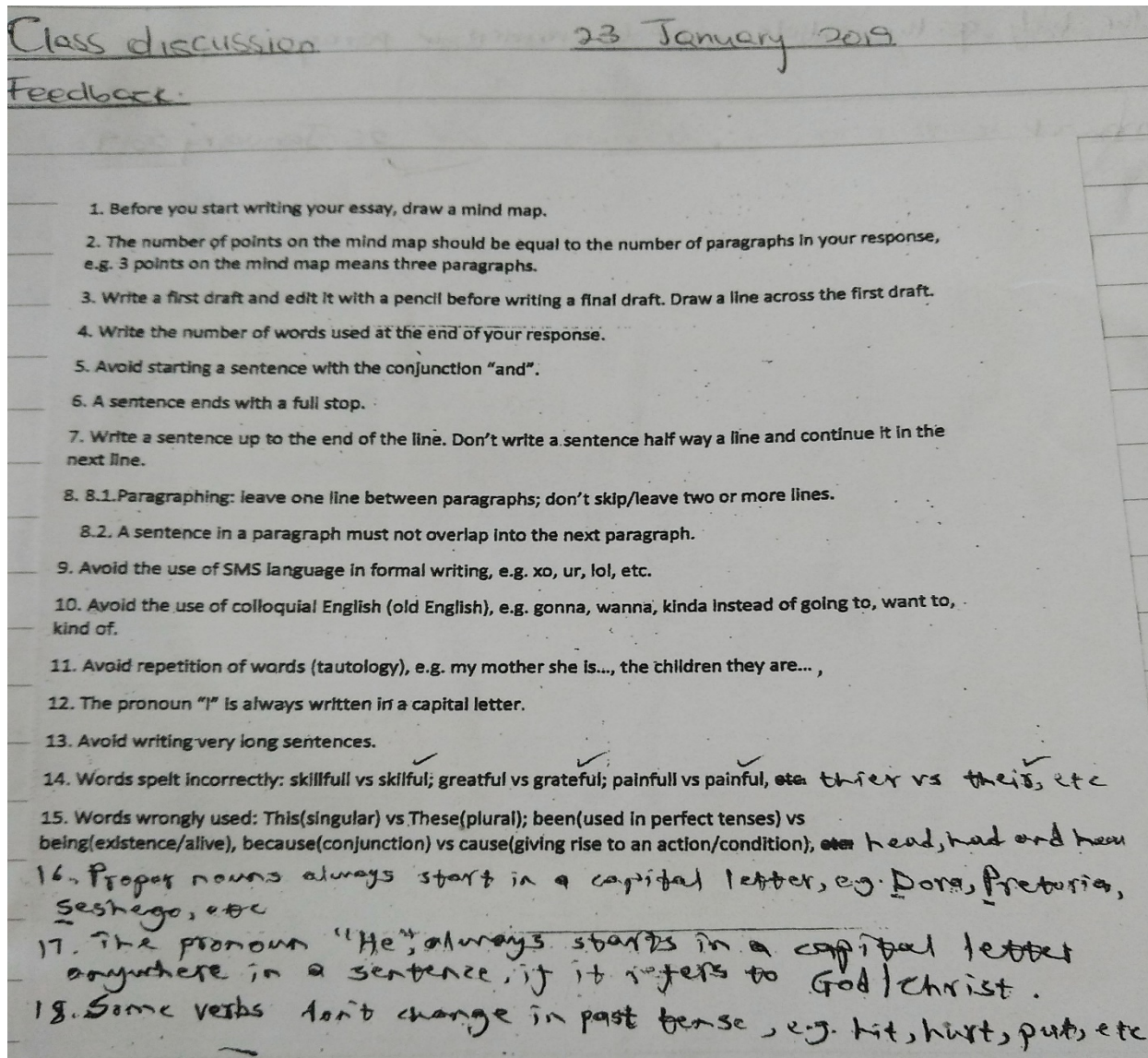
Giving learners an opportunity to assess one another's writing is a good strategy that could help learners to improve process writing skills. Some learners could improve writing if they interact with fellow learners.

#### **4.5.2.5. Intervention strategies**

**Question: How often do you give feedback to learners?**

***Teacher X:*** *Learners are given feedback for every activity given to them.*

This is an example of feedback that Teacher X gave to the learners after she marked their essays:



### Sample 1

The sample shows that Teacher X does indeed give learners feedback after marking their writing tasks. Corrective feedback helps learners to see where and how they may be making errors (Sia & Cheung, 2017). Teacher X's feedback includes critical aspects related to process writing stages as well as language structures and conventions which are related to vocabulary and sentence construction. All these aspects are critical in helping learners produce well written tasks.

**Teacher Y:** *Feedback is regular. After marking learners' tasks, I give them feedback as an intervention strategy so that they can check and correct where they went wrong.*

Below is one example of feedback that Teacher Y gave to his learners:

## Class Discussion

(feedback)

### Tips on how to write an essay

1. Go through all the essay topics set in the question paper.
2. Ask yourself if you know the requirements/features of the essay which you want to respond to.
3. If you are **sure** of the requirements of the essay, go for it.
4. Start planning your response by drawing a mind map (brainstorming).
5. The first point on the mind map must be an **introduction** and the last point must be a **conclusion**.
6. **The number of points on the mind map must be equal to the number of paragraphs** in the essay.
7. Don't rewrite the points you have on the mind map, in the essay.
8. Start writing the first draft of your essay in paragraph form using different types of sentences.
9. Then read your draft to check for spelling errors and wrong sentence construction. (editing and proofreading).
10. Correct the errors with a pencil and after that, count the number of words used and write it down.
11. Draw a line across the first draft and write the words "First Draft" at the top of the essay.
12. Then write the final draft for submission. (Write the words "Final Draft" at the top of the essay).
13. Before submitting, read the essay again to check for spelling errors.
14. Count the number of words used and write it down then submit.

## Sample 2

Feedback is solely intended to help learners improve their writing in subsequent tasks. The sample shows that Teacher Y has made it a norm to give learners feedback after marking their writing activities. Aspects mentioned in the sample above could also help learners to improve their process writing development.

The teachers were asked a follow up question in order to find out if learners' writing improved after feedback:

**Question: Do learners show an improvement after receiving feedback?**

**Teacher X:** *There is a gradual improvement, some would continue to commit the same errors. They need to be drilled and reminded about common mistakes they make. Peer and parental involvement is important to their improvement.*

**Teacher Y:** *Some show an improvement while others continue to face challenges in process writing. I know that writing is a process and it is difficult. When one marks their writing, one could see that some have improved, they have less errors.*

The responses show that some learners' process writing development improved after the teachers' intervention, while others' level of development failed to improve. The teachers should therefore continue using this strategy as a corrective measure and also as a way of improving learners' writing development. Some learners' level of writing, might have reached what Vygotsky (1978) refers to as the "Zone of Proximal Development" (ZPD), since they did not show improvement despite teachers' assistance. Those who showed improvement were still within the ZPD. The educators should consider adopting Reynolds's (2019) twenty ways to provide effective feedback for learning. A few of those ways are the following:

- feedback should be based on what students are doing write by complementing and correcting.
- feedback should be given timeously.
- teachers should be sensitive to an individual learners' needs.
- feedback can be given verbally, non-verbally or in written form.

#### **4.5.2.6. Lack of improvement in writing**

**Question:** **How would you deal with learners who would still show lack of progress in process writing after you have done all you could do?**

**Teacher X:** *I would invite parents to come to school and inform them about the challenges that their children are experiencing in writing. I would ask the parents to assist by checking their children's books and ask them to motivate their children.*

**Teacher Y:** *I would continue giving learners more work to write focusing on them individually, in pairs and in groups. I give learners remedial work and expanded opportunities to consolidate on the work given. I use continuous assessment strategy as it helps to improve their skills. Learners will be given more written work in particular, class tests. Writing is about writing, therefore more written work is a must.*

Teacher X and Teacher Y's responses show that the two teachers use all the options available at their disposal to help learners improve their writing challenges. Involving education stakeholders, parents in particular, could help the learners to overcome writing challenges especially if parents become personally involved in their children's education by motivating them to study hard and supporting them financially to attend extra lessons in writing. The strategy of giving learners more written work could help them improve their writing development. Fareed et al. (2016:87) assert that "exposure to receptive skills and writing practice are also required to develop one's writing skill". Learners do not get sufficient exposure to writing as Teacher X does not say anything about exposing learners to more writing, in particular process writing activities. Teacher Y's response of more written work may be unrelated to process writing, but to formal activities that teachers should give to learners in a particular learning area as per DBE guidelines.

#### **4.5.2.7. Process writing development**

Teacher X and Teacher Y were asked a question on cohesion and coherence in writing.

**Question: How do you teach process writing to your learners especially cohesion and coherence? Elaborate.**

*Teacher X: Drawing a mind map is important in producing a cohesive and a coherent piece of writing. Drawing a mind-map could help learners to tell a story in an understandable and a logical way. I teach them through demonstration. Most do it correctly, but a few don't. Those who do not draw a mind-map are often the ones who struggle to write logical pieces. I usually tell my learners that drawing a mind map is like a navigator. One cannot drive to Johannesburg via the N1 without passing Mokopane and Phagameng. It's the same with a mind map, which should show how something would be done step by step.*

*Teacher Y: When one teaches coherence and cohesion in writing, they are teaching learners the relationship between ideas in a text. Ideas must support one another in a particular way between paragraphs. Learners must be taught how to link ideas on the mind map so that they complement one another in a logical way. I sometimes ask learners to brainstorm a mind-map in groups so that those who struggle to draw a mind-map could learn from the examples.*

A mind-map is a structure that shows how a creative writing activity would be arranged during writing. It shows how paragraphs are structured in a text. Ideas on the mind-map should be arranged in such a way that there is a clear and a logical link between them. The responses by Teacher X and Teacher Y indicate that teachers try their best to enlighten learners on what is expected of them in process writing. However, some learners continue to fail to plan before writing the main text. Group-work strategy could assist the struggling learners in planning. Baruah and Paulus (2019:164) say “a major benefit of group interaction in problem solving is exposure to different perspectives on a given problem”. Collaborative learning could be useful in ENGFAL writing.

A follow-up question was asked to the two educators to find out how the learners will go on writing their creative writing tasks with or without mind-maps.

**Question: Do all learners in your class write and edit their drafts?**

*Teacher X: Most do it, some don't. Some of those who write and edit the first draft, do it merely for compliance. One would find out that there are more errors in the final draft than in the first draft, which should be the other way round. The reason for this is that they write a final draft first to be safe, time-wise and then use the remaining time to write the first draft which they write relaxed knowing very well that they have already written the final draft. This results in them writing fewer errors in the first draft than in the final draft.*

*Teacher Y: Almost all of them write and edit their first drafts. A handful of them don't. Others write the first draft but fail to edit it; it's like they write two similar essays.*

Although the two teachers claim that learners draft their work, there are some who do not draft, revise and edit their work. From the responses above, one has a sense that learners' ENGFAL vocabulary could be the reason why they fail to recognize language errors which they are supposed to correct during the revising, editing and proof-reading stages. Teachers should organise struggling learners into groups and give them group activities in order to give them more exposure in writing. Learners' strategy of writing the final draft before writing the first draft should be discouraged as it does not comply with process writing requirements.

#### **4.5.2.8. First language (L1) transfer**

**Question: Are there signs of L1 transfer in learners' ENGFAL writing?**

**Teacher X:** *Yes. One would sometimes find direct translations in their ENGFAL writing.*

**Teacher Y:** *Mother tongue plays a big role in learners' writing. You'll find that their writing in ENGFAL has a lot of translation from their HL. Sepedi and English do not belong to the same language group; they have different language structures.*

Once more, transfer of HL linguistic features in ENGFAL is a clear indication that learners have poor vocabulary in the target language. Learners often use language transfer in writing when they lack appropriate words in ENGFAL.

The teachers were asked if they themselves switch to the vernacular during lessons. These are their responses:

**Teacher X:** *I do it because it is the only way some learners will understand. I call that, lesson integration because teachers are encouraged to link what they are teaching with another subject. If I teach an Essay in English and the learners have also been taught how to write an essay in Sepedi, it could help them to understand my lesson if I switch to Sepedi.*

**Teacher Y:** *I sometimes code mix or code switch to a vernacular when I realize that they do not raise up their hands, to make them feel relaxed. Once they are relaxed, I switch back to English.*

Sane and Sebonde's (2014) study on teaching English in Tanzanian secondary learners revealed that both learners and educators code mixed between Kiswahili and English during lessons, and that influenced learners' understanding and writing. According to McGrath et al. (2018:2113), successful facilitation of L2 learning through L1 transfer is known as positive transfer. The two teacher participants indicated that they used code-switching and code-mixing as a strategy to help learners understand what they were teaching.

#### **4.5.3. Document analysis**

The researcher used data presentation as well as the discussion and analysis of common themes (4.5.3.1 to 4.5.3.4 below) that emerged from learner documents, to address the following research questions:



- what are the challenges faced by Grade 12 ENGFAL learners in creative writing?
- which strategies do Grade 12 ENGFAL learners employ in creative writing?

#### **4.5.3.1. Teaching method(s)**

The researcher found out that there was evidence of feedback in learners' classwork books when he checked the books. Feedback samples were pasted in the learners' classwork books (**refer to samples 1 and 2 in 5.2.5 above**).

#### **4.5.3.2. Writing impressions**

The researcher found out that the majority of learners had written informal creative writing tasks when he asked them to submit their classwork books just to check if they have the activities in their books. The researcher discovered that many learners had drawn mind maps and had written drafts when writing creative writing tasks. This, therefore, could be prove that learners had good impressions about ENGFAL process writing even though they had challenges in writing. Some learners could be motivated to be proficient in writing so that they would be able to use appropriate English linguistic features such as tense, grammar and vocabulary in written communication like when writing a letter to a friend. Ahmadi (2017:1) states that "motivation is one of the important factors which impact greatly on language learning".

#### **4.5.3.3. Writing challenges**

The researcher presents writing activities of learners writing from the two schools. **Learner F** from School A wrote the following essay:

It's not a good habit to take a 'gap' year it decreases your educational mind <sup>sp</sup> <sup>voc</sup> <sup>c</sup>, there for you will look behind <sup>time</sup> <sup>p</sup>.

Taking a 'gap' year can be very disadvantageful because you will be throwing <sup>sp</sup> away the time that you have spend through the entire years of your school days. Autometically <sup>sp</sup> you will fall behind on your educational knowledge, there for you will struggle <sup>sp</sup> when you want to continue <sup>sp</sup> with your school the following year. A 'gap' year is like when you throw away one year of your job opportunity <sup>sp</sup> in fact, you increase <sup>sp</sup> sufferings to your-self, you become a burden to your-self. It is very important to not take a 'gap' year because you will be adding something thing to your life the more you further your education is the more opportunities you will get in life <sup>p</sup>.

The implications of a 'gap' year is that when it comes to the following <sup>p</sup> it might be difficult for you to get registered in one of the institutions that you <sup>have</sup> <sup>voc</sup> <sup>might</sup> <sup>sp</sup> applying applied for. It will be a shame and unfair when they accept a person who has not taken a 'gap' year because they will be look for a new 'blood' because they <sup>no</sup> <sup>voc</sup> <sup>that</sup> with that person their institution will be lifted cause <sup>sp</sup> when they take you it will be a proct <sup>sp</sup> for you to grasp all the previous work that you have worked.

Taking a 'gap' year is not a good solution to rest your mind, get to school <sup>p</sup> further your studies <sup>work</sup> that is where you will say you have done it. [266]

### Sample 3

The essay shows that the learner has serious spelling and vocabulary challenges. The challenges make the essay difficult to read. Some of the words that have been misspelt are 'hebit', 'throghwing', 'strugle', 'autometically', just to mention a few. The correct spellings of the words are, habit, throwing, struggle and automatically. It is mind boggling that a Grade 12 learner would fail to write correct spellings of the above mentioned words many years after learning English language from primary school

level. This is a clear indication that learners were really not taught spelling. Correct spelling errors would make the writing activities readable. There are also words that have been used in wrong contexts such as 'no' instead of 'know' and 'cause' instead of 'because'. The latter example show challenges related to vocabulary. Furthermore, the learner had challenges with regard to the usage of punctuation marks, specifically the usage of a full stop and a comma. Data also revealed that the learner was struggling with tense. Two of the process writing stages are the revising and editing stages where learners are expected to check and correct grammar, spelling and punctuation (DBE, 2011:15). The sample shows that teachers might not have focused much on the learners' vocabulary, spelling and tense during lessons.

Below is an essay written by **Learner E** from School B:

(1.6) The time I felt lost  
My parents <sup>SP</sup> once abandoned me because of my  
unaccepted <sup>SP</sup> behaviors

I was a good boy, following all the instructions that <sup>SP</sup> my  
Comandent <sup>SP</sup> by my parents. I was having respect <sup>SP</sup> until I met some  
boys. <sup>SP</sup> That boys <sup>SP</sup> whose trouble <sup>SP</sup> at school even in their home they <sup>SP</sup> were  
trouble. In school they were bullying other children. When I <sup>SP</sup> friends  
with them I thought I want <sup>SP</sup> do what they are <sup>SP</sup> doing. My parent  
noticed that I <sup>SP</sup> friends <sup>SP</sup> those boys then they tried to <sup>SP</sup> warn me. <sup>SP</sup> But  
unfortunatly <sup>SP</sup> I didn't listen. I thought my parents <sup>SP</sup> doesn't <sup>SP</sup> love me.  
Then I <sup>SP</sup> choosed <sup>SP</sup> not to obey their rules and do as I like.

I started living this life, yes I agree <sup>SP</sup> but by that time it  
was nice and I was enjoying that life. Even in school I was  
a problem and my teachers <sup>SP</sup> were surprised that, why do I do this. I  
was passing every weekend with those friends of me. To be honest  
that was the time I was enjoying my-self, my life. I was  
getting every thing I want <sup>SP</sup> due to ropping. I didn't think about my  
parents by that time. I was only 17 years old doing grade  
10. I <sup>SP</sup> decided <sup>SP</sup> to leave school for good because I didn't see any  
im<sup>SP</sup>portant <sup>SP</sup> of going to school.

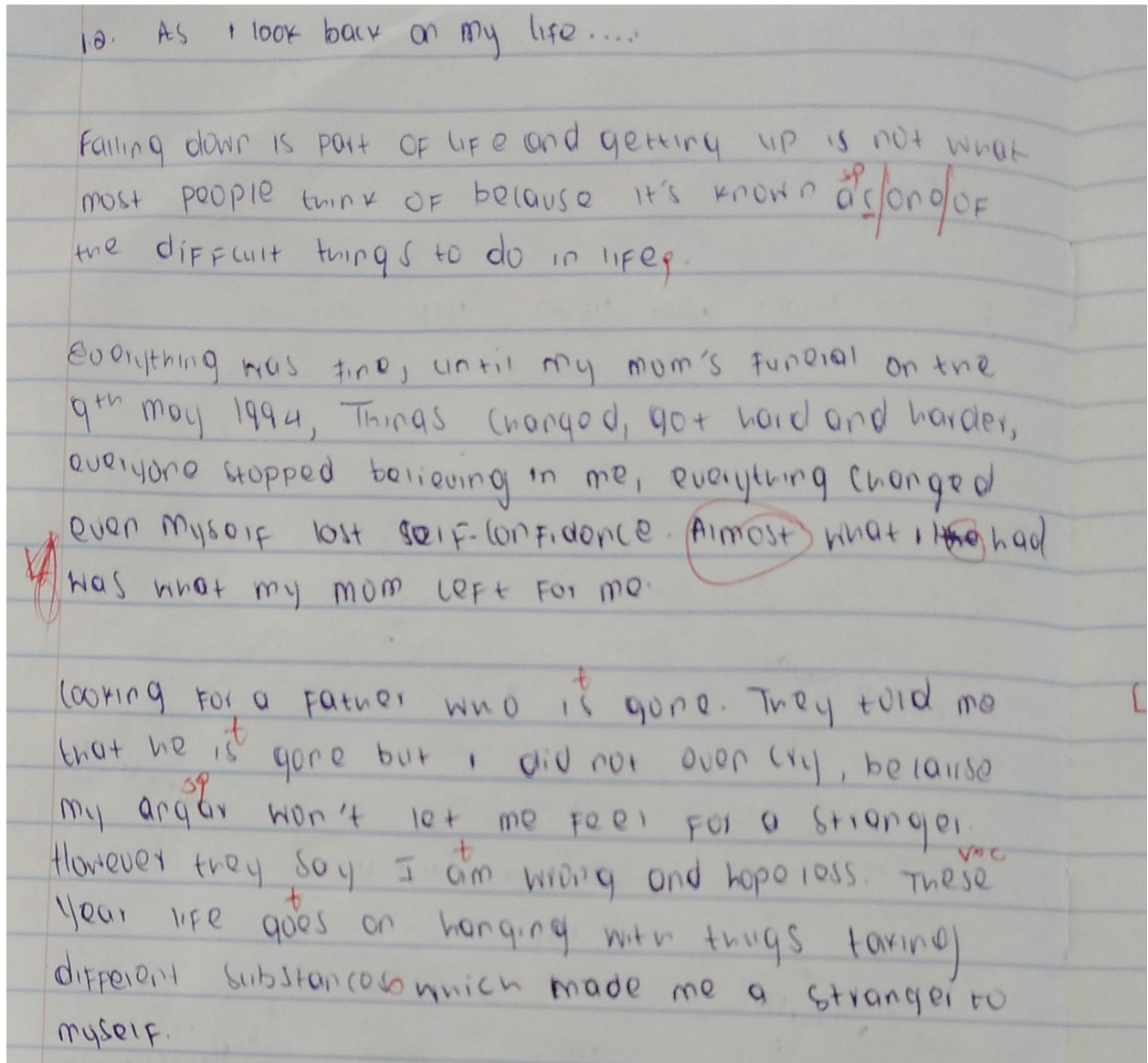
My parents <sup>SP</sup> were sick and tired of me, of my behavior. <sup>SP</sup> They decided to  
chase me from home. Then later on we <sup>SP</sup> stole a car then boom the police  
where after me. I got arrested and my parents didn't want anything  
to do with me. I was in my cell alone thinking about the time when  
my parents <sup>SP</sup> was <sup>SP</sup> warning me. I was alone with no one to <sup>SP</sup> say <sup>SP</sup> on. That  
was the time I felt lost. I was told by the police that you want  
out here any soon. I prayed, crying but <sup>SP</sup> nothing <sup>SP</sup> has happened.  
My parents didn't come to see me, they didn't even <sup>SP</sup> come <sup>SP</sup> in my  
D.D. I <sup>SP</sup> was <sup>SP</sup> sentenced <sup>SP</sup> in jail for 9 years, with no parole <sup>SP</sup>.

#### Sample 4

The essay also shows that the learner has challenges with spelling, tense and vocabulary. The learner has used words such as 'where' instead of 'were', 'that' instead of 'those' and 'important' instead of 'importance'. There is also evidence of words that were incorrectly spelt. Some examples of such words are comandent (command), troble (trouble) and ropping (robbing). Tense seems to be another

language aspect that the learner couldn't use correctly. All these challenges make the essay difficult to read and understand.

Learner D from School B wrote this essay:



### Sample 5

In the second sentence of paragraph one, the learner wrote, "They told me that he is (was) gone...". Literary translated in Sepedi "...he was gone..." means "...o ile..." which means he has passed on or has died. "...he was gone..." is a direct translation of a Sepedi idiom "...o ile..." into English. Shamsuzzaman, Everatt and McNeil's (2015) study of Chinese and non-Chinese learners, revealed that learners used words that caused misunderstanding and confusion in writing. Words or phrases such as in the examples above, may cause confusion to the reader.

In the first sentence of paragraph 2, the learner wrote “most of teenagers...” which is also a direct translation from Sepedi. Sepedi translation of “most of teenagers...” is “**bontši bja bafsa...**” “Bja” in “bontši bja bafsa” has been used correctly as concord in Sepedi. In English, it is unacceptable to use the direct translation of “bja” which is “of” as in “most of teenagers”. It’s correct for one to use a quantifying adjective like “most” without “of” to describe the noun “teenagers”. “Most teenagers” is correct in English while “most of teenagers” is incorrect. Shamsuzzaman et al.’s (2015) study stated above also revealed that learners’ first language affects learning in their ESL as they used L1 linguistic features in L2 writing. The above mentioned language errors in this section are the same as those in Shamsuzzaman et al.’s (2015) study.

Learner D from School A wrote the following text:

## 2.2 Obituary

### Obituary of the late Mary Moloto.

Deceased Mary Moloto ~~she~~ was born in March-03-2000 she was born at Seshego Zone 1 and she died on the 11<sup>th</sup> of August 2019.

Deceased Mary Moloto ~~she~~ was the second born of Alice and John Moloto. The late Mary Moloto ~~she~~ was living at Seshego Zone 1 Masakaneng.

The late Mary Moloto ~~she~~ went to Fiona Molepo pre-school and then went to Boiketlo Primary School <sup>vo</sup> where she was the best learner in the circuit when she was doing <sup>vo</sup> grade 7. She was also involved in sports where she was participating in Netball and she was considered as the best Netball player.

Deceased Mary Moloto ~~she~~ then went to M.E Makgato high school <sup>vo</sup> where she continued to ~~be~~ the best learner in the circuit and the best Netball player.

Deceased Mary Moloto ~~she~~ was a very intelligent and good hearted person. She was a committed <sup>sp</sup> and a caring <sup>sp</sup> person. Deceased Mary Moloto died after a short disease.

Rest in Peace!

\* No tribute.

\* No Key survivors.

### Sample 6

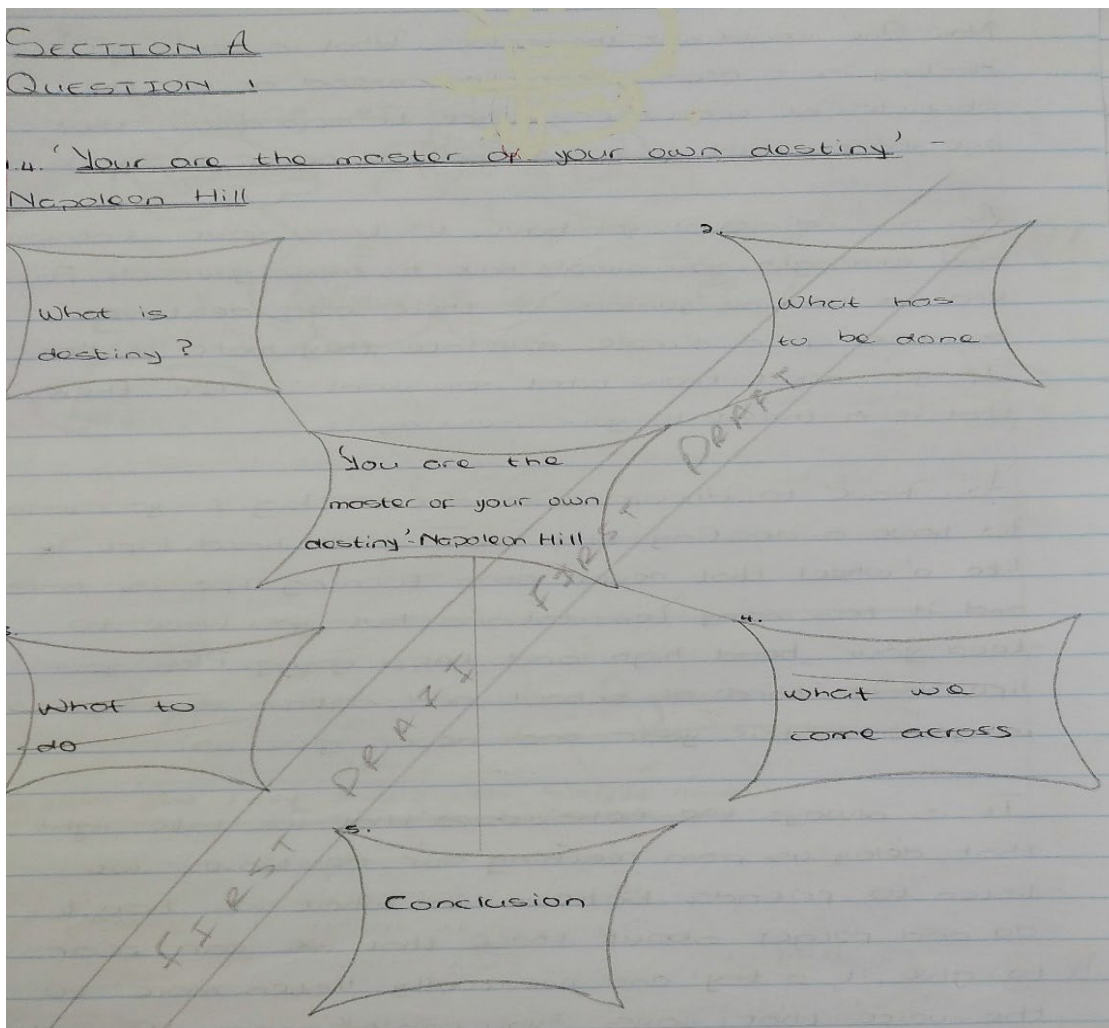
The learner has repeatedly used the pronoun 'she' as if it is an auxiliary verb. In the first sentence in paragraph two which is "the late Mary Moloto she went to...", there is an element of L1 transfer. Literally translated to Sepedi, the sentence means "**mohu Mary Moloto o ile go...**" The concord "o" in the Sepedi would refer to Mary Moloto and therefore, but the learner used "she" in English to refer to Mary Moloto. This is

unacceptable in English as it creates tautology in the sentence through the use of “she”. The above mentioned language errors are also similar to results in Shamsuzzaman et al.’s (2015) study.

#### 4.5.3.4. Process writing development

Below is a copy written by a learner from School A. The learner drew a mind map, wrote the first draft, edited and proofread his work before submitting.

The essay starts with a mind map:



#### Sample 7

Planning in the mind map shows that the essay would consist of five paragraphs as it has five points. The mind map shows that the first paragraph is an introduction as it defines the key word, “destiny”. The last paragraph is the conclusion that wraps up what was written in the essay. A good piece of writing must have an introduction and a conclusion.



Below is a rough draft and a final draft of Learner A's essay from School B.

First draft:

"You are the master of your own destiny" - Napoleon Hill

Now one would ask themselves, "What is destiny?"  
destiny is a dream that lies ahead of all the  
obstacles we encounter in life. It is a dream that  
one works hard to reach <sup>but</sup> and its never easy. 32

As an individual you have to know your weakness  
<sup>2</sup> and strength, you simply have to know yourself. People  
end up become juniors of their own destinies  
because of a simple mistake they make in life. 41

If you don't know what you want in life, then  
<sup>someone else will determine your destiny</sup> that is a threat to your destiny. 53

It is always the tough work that leads us to  
<sup>the heights of greatness</sup> you have to dream and dream big if you want  
to have a destiny and then work hard. Life is  
like a wheel that never stop turning, life is hard, 60  
and it has many temptations but you have to  
keep your head high and keep going. Plan your  
life, work hard at school and obtain distinctions  
in your matric year and never give up. 66

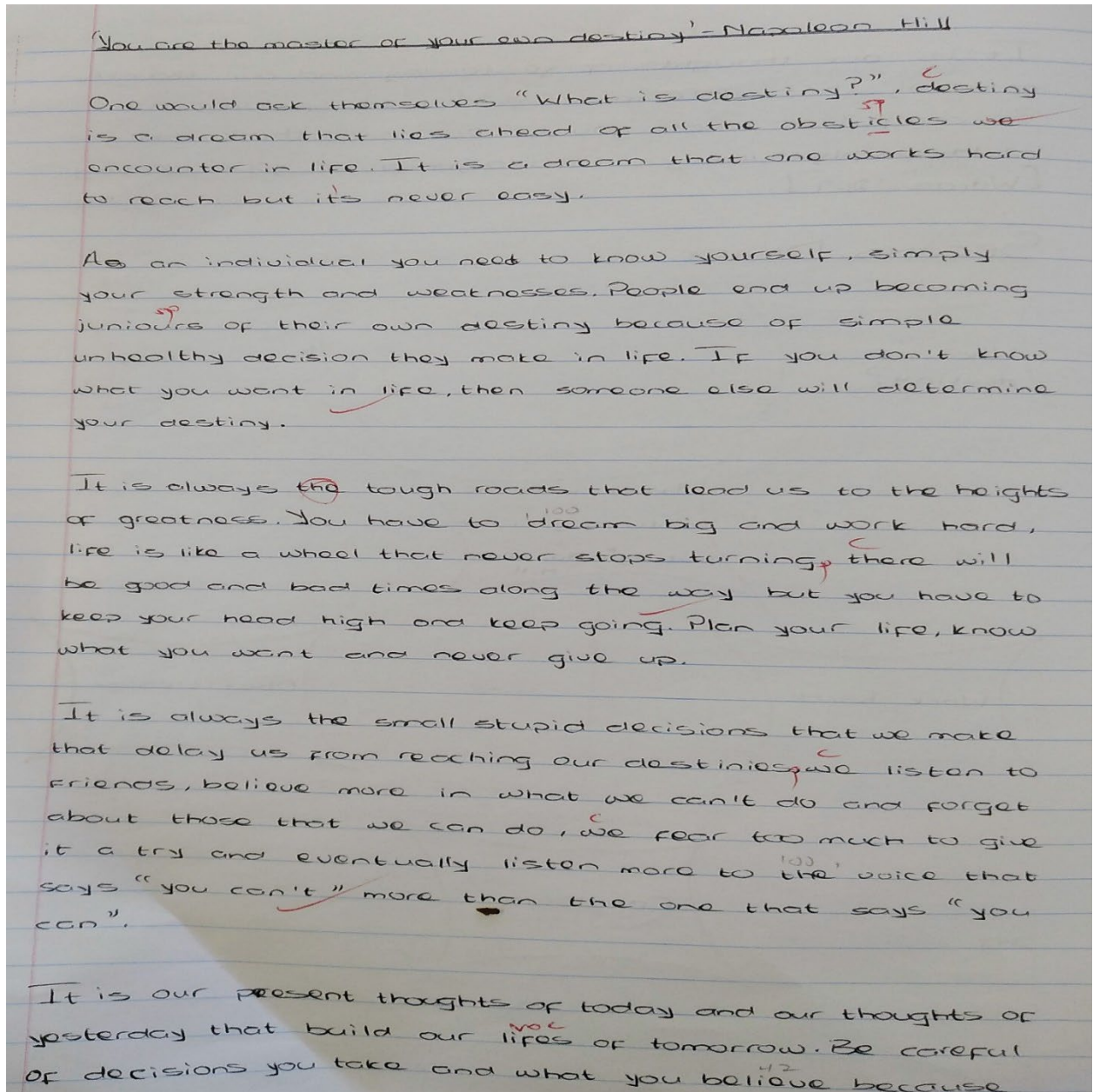
It is always the <sup>small stupid decisions that we make</sup> behaviours that we take right  
that delay us from reaching our destinies, we  
listen to friends, believe in what we can't  
do and forget about those that we can. Fear  
to give it a try and eventually listen more to  
the voice that says "you can't" more than the  
one that says "you can". We let emotions to  
take over whilst we are supposed to control  
them. 75

### Sample 8

Several changes were made in the first draft of the essay during revision. The changes were effected in the final draft. The sample shows that the learner may be proficient in

process writing. Cole and Feng's (2015) study on whether process writing improves the quality of learners' writing and motivation, revealed that the teaching of process writing resulted in a significant improvement in the overall quality of learning. The sample shows that the teacher's "scaffolding" has succeeded; the learner can now successfully write a process writing activity without a teacher's assistance.

Final draft:



## Sample 9

Changes made in the final draft are in the table below:

**Table 4.4. Language errors and corrections made by a learner in School A**

<b>First draft</b>	<b>Final draft</b>
“Now” omitted in the first line in paragraph 1	The sentence starts with “One”
“and” changed to but in paragraph 1	“but” written
Sentence no. 1 reconstructed in paragraph 2	Reconstructed sentence written
Last sentence in paragraph 2 changed	Changes effected in the paragraph
Several changes made in paragraph 3	Changes effected in the paragraph
Sentence reconstruction in paragraph 4	Changes effected in the paragraph

The final draft has few errors and this shows that the learner has done revision, edited and proof-read the draft before submitting. Few errors in the final draft are acceptable unlike a draft that is riddled with errors. The learner no longer needs scaffolding by the teacher as he/she can produce an appropriate process writing activity.

The following activity was written by **Learner E** from School A. The learner failed to edit her work.

22 Obituary  
 The late Mosima Moraka was born at 1990-06-23 in lebwakgomo. She is the first born of Branda and Zatsa Moraka.

The late Mosima Moraka started going to school at 2000 at Phaladi pro school for 5 years. The late Mosima Moraka go to her primary at AIF makaleng at 2006 from grade 1 to 5 in the same school. From there she go to Makhopotlad primary school at 2011 to 2012 she did her grade 6 to grade 7 there. From there she go to a high school at M.E. Matgato at 2013 doing grade 8 to 10. Then she moved to another school at 2015 doing grade 11 and 2019 she was doing her matric at some school.

The late Mosima Moraka she do live her mother, father, two young sister, and 3 young brothers.

cause of death, Natural disease  
 \* No tributes!  
 \* No tributes!  
 (RIP) Rest in peace  
 TIOU!!!  
 T1257

### Sample 10

The text has no evidence of editing as it has lots of spelling and grammatical errors. The first draft of the text which the researcher could not use as an example because of limited space in the study, had the same errors as the final one. The repetition of the errors by the learner is evidence that he/she has poor command of the English language as he/she is unaware of obvious tense errors, spelling mistakes and grammatical mistakes made. The learner just wrote two essays and claimed that the first one was a first draft. The sample proves the idea that writing is difficult (Aziz & Yusoff, 2016). Abas (2016) adds that most ESL learners find writing in English difficult because they have to use correct English grammar and vocabulary.

This is an essay written by **Learner D** in **Classroom D** from School B:

#### 1.4 Bullying at schools

Being inferior to someone within the same environment can lead to various types of bullying. The environment itself can promote bullying.

Bullying can be defined as using power or strength over a weaker person in an effort to hurt them. Bullying can also be regarded as abuse because they both comprise of the same characteristics. A person can be bullied physically, emotionally and through electronics commonly known as cyber bullying.

Being older than others at school often turn people into being bullies. Poor rules and regulations implementation also promotes bullying because the schools code of conduct is not adhered to. However the major contributing factor towards bullying at schools is the usage of drugs at school premises. Stress and also peer pressure can also contribute towards bullying.

Being a victim of bullying is detrimental and can cause both psychological and physical effects. This effects can cause a learner to lose concentration resulting in a learner under-performing. If not dealt with, the learner's memory is damaged and can be almost impossible to reverse the effects.

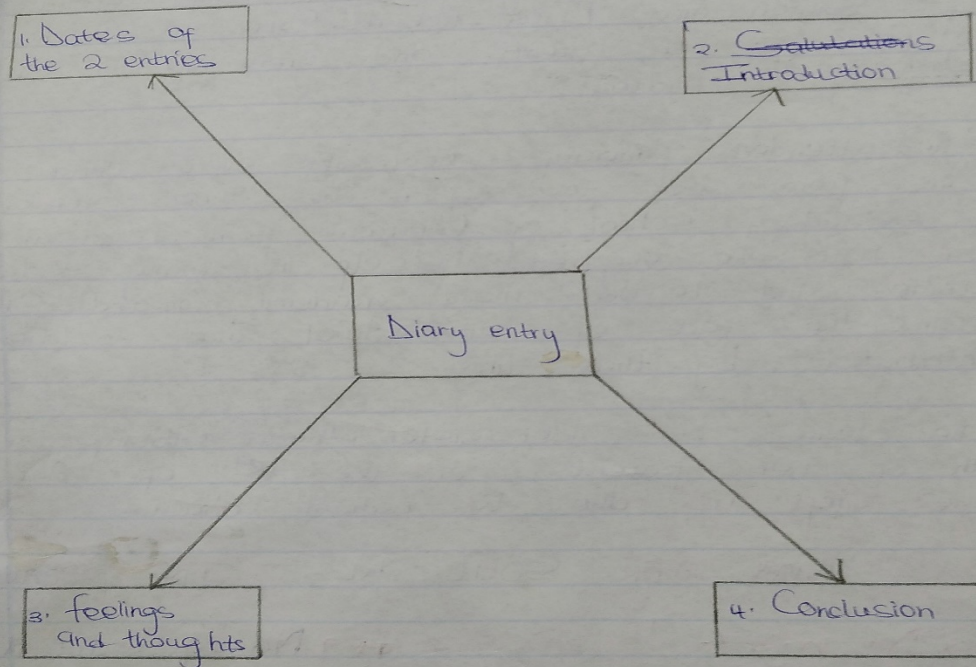
#### Sample 11

The learner has failed to write a first draft and as a result, there is no proof of editing. The mind map has an introduction and conclusion, as well as other points that have not been numbered. Numbered points tell the reader what to read about in a particular paragraph. The number of points in the mind map should tally with the number of paragraphs in the essay.

The following task was written by **Learner B** in **Classroom C** at School B:

Section C  
Question 3

3.2. Diary entry



**Sample 12**

The mind map shows that the learner has planned her work. There are four points in the mind map and so are the paragraphs in the first draft and the final draft. This proves that the learners are familiar with process writing requirements as planning comes before the drafts so that the reader would know what to expect in the body of the writing activity. **Learner B** wrote the following activity:

3.2. Diary entry  
Diary entry no.1.

18 August 2019

Dear diary

I doubted myself <sup>so much</sup> really <sup>hard</sup>. Negativity <sup>grew</sup> ~~stayed~~ in my heart. I knew that I was going to ~~be~~ <sup>live</sup> ~~at~~ <sup>be</sup> a ~~home~~ <sup>life</sup> ~~life~~ <sup>at</sup> ~~jobless~~ <sup>times</sup> ~~people~~ <sup>like these</sup>. My mind ~~grew~~ up a meaningless life.

~~The~~ <sup>My</sup> ~~fact~~ <sup>mind</sup> told me that I was going to be rejected and will thereafter contribute to a ruthless life. People <sup>looked</sup> ~~always~~ down on me and eventually told me that I'm going ~~to be~~ <sup>a</sup> ~~useless~~ <sup>someone</sup> in life so I shouldn't hope for the best. I ~~cried~~ <sup>cried</sup> day and night because I knew that I was such a ~~great~~ <sup>great</sup> ~~good~~ <sup>good</sup> loser in life.

19 August 2019

Dear diary

This amazing response made my day. I couldn't believe my ears as I had lost hope a long time ago. I felt that indeed people are ruthless and heartless.

After those pinching words they vomited, I never ever for a second thought <sup>that</sup> I would make it. My troubles ~~were~~ <sup>stopped</sup> ~~all~~ <sup>for</sup> over ~~at~~ <sup>last</sup>. ~~My~~ <sup>After</sup> ~~face~~ <sup>face</sup> I announced these words to my parents, I felt so joyful and relieved. There's always something good that repairs the broken everytime.

### Sample 13

There is evidence of revising and editing in the first draft because words have been changed and replaced with those that give a better contextual meaning in the final draft. The final draft is as follows:

3.2. Diary entry

Diary entry no. 1.

18 August 2019

Dear diary

I doubted myself so much. Negativity grew in my heart. A failure at these times was someone waiting for me. My mind only drew up a meaningless life.

I knew that I was going to be rejected and and thereafter contribute to a ruthless life. People looked down on me and eventually told me that I shouldn't hope for the best because I'm a complete loser. I cried day and night hoping that someday God will take all my problems away.

Diary entry no. 2.

19 August 2019

Dear diary

This amazing response made my day. I couldn't believe my ears as I had lost hope a long time ago.

~~This~~ After all those pinching words people vomitted on me, I couldn't believe hope anymore. My troubles were now history in my life. After I breathed out these wonderful words to my parents, I felt so relieved. I knew that there was something good that repairs the broken everytime.

No. of words: 92

### Sample 14

The changes that were made in the draft through editing were effected in the final draft. The learner did not write the first draft for compliance sake, but as part of process writing requirements. The changes are as follows:



**Table 4.5: Language errors and corrections made by a learner in School B**

<b>Changes made during revision (first draft)</b>	<b>Changes effected after editing (final draft)</b>
“really hard” in paragraph 1 changed	Change effected-“so much”
“stayed” in paragraph 1 changed	Change effected-“grew”
Sentence construction made in second line in paragraph 1	Changed sentence written in final draft
Several changes made in paragraphs 2-4	Changes effected in final draft

#### **4.6. Conclusion**

In this chapter, the researcher presented and analysed data collected from classroom observation, interviews and document analysis. More information about the research sites and the participants was presented in order to give the researcher and the reader a clear picture of the phenomenon of the study. The next chapter will attempt to answer the research questions, discuss findings and make conclusion on the data presented and suggest recommendations for learners’ improvement in process writing.

## **CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1. Introduction**

This chapter presents the summary, findings, conclusion and recommendations of the study. The researcher revisited the research questions of the study in order to answer why Grade 12 learners did not apply process writing in creative writing activities.

### **5.2. Summary of the study**

The purpose of the study was to explore the challenges faced by Grade 12 learners when writing creative writing activities. After exploring the challenges, intervention strategies were then designed to address the study's research questions which are as follows:

- What are the challenges faced by Grade 12 ENGFAL learners in creative writing?
- How do teachers approach the teaching of creative writing in Grade 12?
- How can the teaching of ENGFAL creative writing be improved?
- Which intervention strategies would be appropriate for teaching ENGFAL process writing?
- Which strategies do Grade 12 ENGFAL learners employ in creative writing?
- How can Grade 12 learners improve their ENGFAL process writing skills?

The study derives from the observation that the researcher had made during his assessment of Grade 12 learners' creative writing activities. The researcher observed that learners do not implement process writing stages such as pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing and proof-reading in creative writing tasks. This happened despite the expectation of the Department of Basic Education that by the time the learners reach Grade 12, they would be proficient in writing (DBE,2011).

The literature relevant to the study was presented and reviewed in Chapter 2. Various researchers defined the concept "process writing" in different ways. Some of them

such as Palpanadan, Salam and Ismail (2014), Abas (2016) and McCarthy and Ro (2011), are of the opinion that process writing is recurring in nature, as learners move from one stage to another and backwards during writing.

Different studies in writing were conducted. The consensus reached by many researchers such as Adas and Bakir (2013), Aziz and Yusoff (2016) as well as Raja and Zahid (2013), is that writing is difficult. Other studies in ENGFAL such as Muchemwa (2015), Pfeiffer and Van der Walt (2016) and Abongdia and Mpiti (2015) revealed that learners commit spelling errors, punctuation errors and lack vocabulary in writing. The study follows Vygotsky's (1978) social learning theory which describes the nature of learning in the classroom environment. The creativity theory, Krashen's (1989) hypothesis theory, Brown's (2000) teaching and learning theory support Vygotsky's theory.

The study followed the qualitative research method since this approach focuses on the participants' lived experiences in their natural setting, for example, the classroom setting. The qualitative research approach was more relevant in this study as it focused on a small number of participants. The study consisted of 12, Grade 12 learner participants and 2 teacher participants. The small number of participants allowed the researcher to have an in-depth focus on the participants' lived experiences. The Grade 12 learners were purposefully selected for the study since this grade is the exit grade of the DBE system, before the learners enter tertiary education where English is the medium of communication. The teacher participants were purposefully selected so that they could give a professional expertise in the study.

Data collection methods such as classroom observation, teacher interviews and document analysis were used in the study so that the researcher could have the participants' lived experiences and also ascertain if the learners apply process writing stages in document analysis. The collected data was then presented and analysed in Chapter 4 of the study. Biographical information of the selected schools and participants was presented so that the reader could have an idea of the schools' and the participants' background. Pseudonyms for both the schools and the participants were used in order to protect their identity and confidentiality.

### **5.3. Research questions and findings of the study**

The study asked the following research questions:

### **5.3.1. What are the challenges faced by Grade 12 ENGFAL learners in creative writing?**

The findings of the study revealed that learners lack creativity due to their inability to express themselves in ENGFAL. The lack of creativity is related to linguistic features such as spelling, vocabulary, sentence construction, just to mention a few. During one of the researcher's classroom observations, learners were given a creative writing activity and were asked to exchange their responses after writing. They were asked to check for spelling errors in their mates' responses. Several spelling errors were identified and corrected. The teacher participants added that learners had poor vocabulary and spelling challenges which made their creative writing tasks difficult to read. Fareed, Ashraf and Bilal (2016:85) argue that English second language learners' writing tasks often contain the following challenges: "lack of vocabulary, difficulties in grammar and syntax, tenses, spelling, punctuations, articles, prepositions and basic sentence structures".

Findings of the study further revealed that learners had cognitive challenges especially during prewriting stage where they were required to brainstorm ideas to include in the mind-map. They also experienced cognitive challenges when composing paragraphs during the drafting stage. The cognitive challenges made the learners to resort to using L1 features in L2 writing. The results of Sevgi's (2016) study revealed that English second language learners used similar cognitive strategies during planning and content generation when composing paragraphs in their L1 and L2. The findings showed that learners resorted to code-mixing and code-switching strategies when facing ENGFAL writing challenges. It should be stated that the Department of Basic Education expects the learners to be proficient in ENGFAL when they are in Grade 12. However, this is not the case as data revealed that Grade 12 learners still used first language transfer during composition of ENGFAL writing.

### **5.3.2. How do teachers approach the teaching of creative writing in Grade 12?**

The findings revealed that teachers used the question and answer teaching method when presenting writing lessons. According to Mpiti (2016:209), "the question and answer method is usually effective, interactive and learner centred because it stimulates the learners to think and express their thoughts". The effectiveness of the question and answer method is determined by the types and quality of questions

asked by the teacher (Mpiti, 2016). The teacher participants did not always ask quality questions that challenged learners thinking capabilities such as “how” and “why” questions. The teachers asked mainly “what” questions. Challenging questions or high order questions could help learners to develop important thinking skills that are crucial during the brainstorming stage (Corley & Rauscher, 2013). Teachers should therefore, ask learners both lower order and higher order questions like in six levels of Bloom’s taxonomy to cover.

Communicative teaching method could also be useful in the teaching of writing, more especially, during group discussions where there is learner to learner interaction. According to Toro, Pinza, Camacho-Minuche and Paredes (2009:111), “all human beings need to communicate in order to express their ideas, feelings and thoughts”. Learners should therefore, be encouraged to interact with one another during group discussions in order to complete writing activities (Sandberg & Norling, 2018).

### **5.3.3. How can the teaching of ENGFAL creative writing be improved?**

The findings revealed that teacher participants did not focus entirely on the teaching of process writing stages but on format or features of creative writing lessons, for example, how to write an article, agenda and minutes, directions, just to mention a few. What the teachers did was to talk about creative writing stages in passing while largely focusing on the features of the lessons as indicated in 5.1.1. and 5.1.2. above. The teachers failed to give explicit details of what is required during brainstorming, drafting, revising, editing and proof-reading. The teachers seemed to offer creative writing lessons solely for the purpose of assessment. While it is necessary for teachers to teach learners a format of a text, it is vital that they first present a lesson that focuses entirely on process writing stages before moving on to other writing lessons. This would be the foundation on which the subsequent writing lessons are built. Once the learners are familiar with the process writing stages, they would be able to implement them in all creative writing activities. In the CAPS document, the Department of Basic Education outlines the following measures teachers should consider when teaching process writing (DBE, 2011:15):

- Introducing the topic, for example, ‘Don’t do drugs!’ for a persuasive essay; this will involve introducing new vocabulary suitable to the topic and level.

- Discussing the purpose, audience and context which determine the style or register.
- Brainstorm ideas to be put on the mind map.
- Encourage learners to draft the essay.
- Encourage the learners to draft, revise, edit and proofread; checking and correcting grammar, spelling and punctuation.
- Give feedback.

The above guidelines do not give detailed information about the process writing stages and may therefore be insufficient to helping learners understand what each stage is about.

Findings also showed that some learners' writing improved after corrective feedback was given, wherein teachers demonstrated how to approach process writing. The demonstration also focused on how and when to use some linguistic features during writing. Teachers must therefore prepare themselves thoroughly before going to class, so that they would be able to demonstrate how ENGFAL process writing should be approached.

#### **5.3.4. Which strategies could be appropriate for teaching ENGFAL process writing?**

Data revealed that the teachers used the feedback strategy as a way of helping learners improve writing. Data also revealed that teachers were unable to give learners timeous feedback due to large classes that they taught. Feedback is meant to assist learners to improve the mistakes that they have made in the previous activities. The teachers' inability to give timeous feedback, disadvantages learners as they will keep on repeating the same mistakes. Julius (2013:26), states that "corrective feedback helps learners to see where and how they may be making errors". Timeous feedback is vital in creative writing since writing requires that learners be given subsequent work so that teachers can check if there are improvements made.

The findings showed that the teachers used the modelling strategy to help learners improve teaching. Salisu and Ransom (2014:54) define modelling as "an instructional

strategy in which the teacher demonstrates a concept or approach to learning and students learn by observing”. According to Basheer, Hugerat, Kortam and Hofstein (2017:565), exposure to the modelling teaching strategy “improves students’ perceptions of their learning efficiency and the importance of the subject and also enhances the students’ achievements and their understanding”. Basheer et al. (2017:569) add that the demonstration method was “found to promote thinking skills and enable students to think more creatively”. Both Teacher Y and Teacher X drew the structure of the mind-map on the chalkboard so that learners could see and learn how the mind-map is drawn. Data revealed that learners seemed to have learned how to draw the structure of a mind-map even though brainstorming ideas to put on the mind-map still posed challenges to some of them due to lack of vocabulary. The challenge with modelling as in the lessons above, is that the lessons are teacher centred. Learners were not given an opportunity to come forward and draw the mind-maps on the chalkboard.

The findings also showed that the teacher participants used the code mixing and code switching strategies in order to bring the learners on-board when they seemed to lack understanding in English. This shows that a Home Language could be useful in extending learners’ classroom knowledge through the teachers’ mediation and facilitation (Harlen & Qualter, 2014). Mpiti (2016:205) believes that although translation in the learners’ mother tongue may be used to facilitate learning, it may be one of the factors that limit learners’ exposure to English language input in the classroom. The implication of Mpiti’s (2016) assertion is that teachers should try their utmost best to ensure that the code-switching and code-mixing strategies are used minimally so that their usage may not negatively impact on the learners’ exposure to ENGFAL.

### **5.3.5. Which strategies do Grade 12 ENGFAL learners employ in creative writing?**

Findings revealed that some learners used a strategy of writing the final draft, before writing the first draft. The learners’ rationale for adopting this strategy was to minimize chances of failing to finish writing on time due to time allocated for the writing of an activity, especially during the examination. Due to the concern of failing to finish writing activities on time, some learners first wrote the final draft, in order to ensure that they have something to submit when time is up. This concern is unfounded as learners are

given sufficient time to complete the writing activities. The time allocated for the creative writing paper is two and half hours which is more than enough for them to write tasks that are compliant with the process writing approach (DBE, 2011). This strategy is not helpful as it has nothing to do with process writing but with learners' anxiety of submitting incomplete work. The anxiety could be related to what teacher participants raised as a concern about learners' failure complete their work on time.

Data also showed that some learners did not draft their work at all, while others did not revise, edit and proofread their work. The reason for all these is lack of creativity that has to do with the inability to properly use linguistic features as stated in 5.3.1 above.

### **5.3.6. How can Grade 12 learners improve their ENGFAL process writing skills?**

Adas and Bakir (2013) state that the only way to improve learners' English second language writing is the continuous exposure to writing hence writing is about writing. Findings indicate that learners are not given enough writing activities. Data showed that the teacher participants did not have the luxury of time to dwell much on writing as they had a pace-setter or a teaching plan to follow. Moreover, they were expected to complete the syllabi by the end of May of the current academic year. As a result, learners were deprived of a chance to improve their ENGFAL process writing skills.

As stated above, feedback to learners' writing, could assist them to improve their writing skills. Data shows that learners receive feedback although it is not sufficient as teachers are unable to give frequent feedback due to reasons related to teacher workload.

Group-work may also help learners to improve their writing skills as it may encourage collaborative learning. Mpiti (2015:209) asserts that group-work "encourages learners to explore and discover things on their own, and instil good values in learners (e.g. tolerance, sharing, respect, etc.) if managed properly". Group-work can also enable learners to attain their ZPD if they work in collaboration with capable peers under the teacher's guidance (Mpiti, 2016; Burke, 2011; Munyoro, 2014). Findings show that learners are given group-work but do not show if the groups consist of capable learners. Learners would not improve writing skills if group members are not capable of assisting one another.



#### **5.4. Conclusion**

The researcher believes that learners' lack of creativity in process writing activities should be addressed. The findings indicate that learners' inability to use linguistic features such as tense, spelling, vocabulary, just to mention a few, makes their writing unreadable if not difficult to read. Transfer of home language linguistic features in ENGFAL will be avoided if learners properly and successfully learn English linguistic features.

If learners are given more written work and regular feedback, they are likely to show drastic improvement in subsequent activities. Writing is about writing as stated many times before in the study. The researcher also believes that group-work is important in helping learners to improve writing skills. What is of utmost importance in group activities is to ensure that there are capable members who can help others in the group discussions.

The researcher regards the question and answer as well as the demonstrating methods as some of the teaching methods that could help learners to improve their writing proficiency. Teachers should ask learners quality questions in order to be within the question and answer method requirements and demonstrate how to approach process writing in order to comply with the teaching by demonstrating method.

#### **5.5. Recommendations**

After exploring the challenges faced by Grade 12 ENGFAL learners in creative writing in Seshego circuit, Limpopo Province, the researcher makes the following recommendations in order to improve learners' writing.

- Learners should be given more process writing activities so that they could learn through practice and moreover, writing is about writing. There is less chance that learners would learn and improve writing from a once-off writing activity. For this reason, they must be given another chance to improve on the mistakes they have made in the initial writing activities. A concern could be raised about who would assess the subsequent activities as teachers might not have time to assess the activities due to syllabi expectations as indicated in 3.5.6 above. Learner-collaboration could be encouraged where learners learn in pairs and groups. A learner could assess a peer's writing and also give

feedback on it. The same could be done when a group assess another group's writing and give feedback on it.

- Before presenting creative writing lessons in class, teachers should first teach process writing stages so that learners could familiarize themselves with the stages. Learners are expected to apply process writing stages in creative writing activities and would not be able to do so if they do not know what each stage entails. Therefore, teachers should not teach learners features of texts before teaching them how to implement the features in process writing.
- Regular corrective feedback by teachers should always be encouraged. It is through regular feedback that learners learn from their mistakes and are likely to improve on the mistakes if they revisit the feedback given before they start writing the subsequent activities.
- More time should be allocated for writing. Many researchers assert that writing is the most difficult of the four language skills. Marking creative writing activities is a tedious activity. Therefore, allocating more time to writing could assist language teachers to give more time to writing instruction without worrying about lacking behind in the syllabus.
- Parental involvement in learners' education should be a non-negotiable. Some parents however, do not have time for their children's education as they are more concerned about the results than the process leading to the results. Some parents seem to lack the ability to discipline their children, as a result, learners 'lose focus and do as they wish at home. Parents should be resolute in assisting their children to do their school work at home. Parents should also check and sign their children's school books. Learners would know that their parents are actively involved in their education if the parents check their school work. The learners would be encouraged to do all homeworks. Troublesome learners would also know that they would have no excuse for failing to write homeworks.
- Group-work should be encouraged since research has shown that learners learn fast if they interact with capable peers. Teachers should always stick around for guidance where learners encounter challenges. Struggling learners

are unlikely to improve if members of their groups are also struggling like them. Therefore, teachers should ensure that each group consists of learners from different levels of writing development.

- It has been noted that curriculum advisors do not emphasise the explicit teaching of process writing stages during ENGFAL workshops. The advisors only focus on features of a text when giving workshops on the writing paper. Therefore, curriculum advisors or curriculum support teams should give teachers workshops on process writing since the writing paper carries more marks than the language paper and the literature paper. Curriculum advisors should also give hand-outs on process writing teaching just like they do with other papers since process writing is the official writing policy of the Department of Basic Education.
- Process writing stages should be incorporated into the language curriculum of all teacher training institutions. Some teacher training institutions do not train students who are specialising in languages on how to teach process writing. If the institutions were training language students process writing, we would not be having so many learners struggling with process writing implementation. Process writing syllabus starts at primary school level, yet there are learners who still cannot write process writing compliant texts in Grade 12. Therefore, incorporating process writing in language syllabi at teacher training institutions would help language students to learn more about the importance of process writing while they are still at tertiary level.
- Teachers should be encouraged to use the CAPS document when teaching language skills including the writing curriculum. Many teachers do not follow the writing curriculum when teaching learners. They fail to teach learners process writing even though it is defined in the CAPS document. The Heads of Language Departments and Curriculum Advisors should remind teachers about teaching the whole process writing syllabus.
- Team teaching is also encouraged. Schools that are doing well in terms of performance encourage team teaching. If teachers can put personal issues aside at the workplace, and remind themselves that they are at school for the

sole purpose of implementing the curriculum, team-teaching will be possible. Teachers can plan a writing lesson together so that they share ideas. Where one teacher does not have strong points in a lesson, the other one may be of assistance.

- Learners' books should be checked and signed by their teachers at regular intervals to ensure that work given is written. Learners who have writing challenges may develop negative attitude to writing. For this reason, teachers should frequently check and sign homework books to ensure that writing activities are done.
- Teachers should encourage learners to read more English materials such as newspapers, magazines, books so that they can improve their vocabulary. Vocabulary is essential in assisting learners to write meaningful activities. More exposure to English materials would also help learners to improve their spelling.
- Encourage learners to activate their background knowledge when writing creative activities. Giving learners an opportunity to think of what they know about a topic, could help learners to link what they already know with the new lesson. Prior knowledge could help learners to have a better understanding of the topic and therefore, help them to write a meaningful text.
- Teachers should tell learners the lesson objectives before the lesson commences. Learners could have a positive attitude to the lesson if lesson objectives are clarified in advance. This would depend on the lesson being presented, how it will be presented and the expectations from the learners.
- Teachers should familiarize themselves with different teaching strategies such as modelling, collaboration, diversity, just to mention a few. The teachers would be able to switch to another strategy if learners fail to understand a lesson. The teachers could also combine the strategies during the lesson presentation if learners do not understand what is being presented.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: CLASSROOM OBSERVATION SCHEDULE (TEKOLO YA PHAPOŠI)

Name of school (**Leina la sekolo**) : \_\_\_\_\_

Date (**Letšatšikgwedi**) : \_\_\_\_\_

Class (**Mphato**) : \_\_\_\_\_

Number of learners (**Palo ya barutwana**) : \_\_\_\_\_

Name of teacher (**Leina la morutiši**) : \_\_\_\_\_

Resources (**Dithušathuto**): \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Factors to be observed (Dintlha tšeo di lekotšwego)</b>	<b>Remarks (Ditshwayo)</b>
Teaching method used during ENGFAL process writing lessons ( <b>Mokgwakabo wa go ruta go ngwala Seisemane leleme la tlaleletšo</b> )	
Teaching of various stages of process writing ( <b>Go ruta magato a go ngwala</b> )	
Learner participation by taking notes, discussing and asking questions ( <b>Go tšea karolo ga barutwana ka go ngwala dinoutse, go ahlaahla le go botšiša dipotšišo</b> )	
Activities given to learners during the teaching of various stages of process writing ( <b>Mešongwana yeo e fiwago barutwana ge go rutwa magato a go ngwala</b> )	
To observe if learners do indeed write the activities ( <b>Go lekola ge eba ka nnete barutwana ba fiwa mešomo ya go ngwala</b> )	
Feedback given to learners as part of learning in process writing	

<p><b>(Go fa barutwana diphošollo go mešomo ya bona bjalo ka karolo ya go ithuta go ngwala)</b></p>	
<p>Intervention strategies used by the teacher in the development of _____ process _____ writing  <b>(Mekgwatlhabollo ya morutiši go dithuto tša tlhabollo go magato a go ngwala)</b></p>	

## **APPENDIX B: SAMPLE TEACHER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS/**

### **DIPOTŠISO -THERIŠANO LE MORUTIŠI**

1. How do you present creative writing lessons in your class? / **Na o aba bjang dithutwana tša go ngwala ka phapošing?**
2. What is your learners' attitude to ENGFAL creative writing? Substantiate. / **Na maikutlo a barutwana ke a ma fe go dithutwana tša go ngwala ka Seisemane leleme la tlaleletšo? Fahlela.**
3. What would you say are the learners' challenges in ENGFAL process writing? / **Na ditlhotlo tša barutwana ke di fe ge go ngwala Seisemane leleme la tlaleletšo?**
4. Which intervention strategies would you apply to improve learners' performance in writing? / **Ke mekgwatlhabollo efe yeo o ka e šomišago go tlabolla bokgoni bja go ngwala bja barutwana?**
5. How often do you give learners process writing activities? Who marks the activities? / **Na o atiša ga kaakang go fa barutwana mešomo ya magato a go ngwala? Na mešomo yeo e swaya ke mang?**
6. If it is you who mark the activities, how often do you give feedback to them after marking? / **Ge e ka ba ke wena o swayago mešomo yeo, o atiša ga kaakang go fa barutwana dipoelo tša diphošollo go mešomo yeo?**
7. Is there any writing improvement from the previous feedback? Elaborate. / **Na go ba le diphetogo tša go ngwala morago ga go fa diphošollo tše? Fahlela.**
8. How do you deal with learners who lack progress in ENGFAL writing process? / **Na o šoma bjang ka barutwana bao ba sa bontšhego tšwelopele go magatong a go ngwala ka Seisemane leleme la tlaleletšo?**

**APPENDIX C: LEARNERS' CONSENT FORM TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH FOR A PHD DEGREE**

**TITLE: AN EXPLORATION OF THE CHALLENGES FACED BY GRADE 12 ENGLISH LEARNERS IN CREATIVE WRITING IN SESHEGO CIRCUIT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE: TOWARDS DESIGNING INTERVENTION STRATEGIES.**

**PART A: CONSENT BY A LEARNER/**

I \_\_\_\_\_ a learner at \_\_\_\_\_  
(Full Names and Surname)

in Grade\_\_\_\_, agree to participate in the above mentioned study. I'm aware that participation is voluntary, and therefore, no compensation will be made for participating in the study. I understand that I may opt out at any time if I so wish. I may also decline to answer questions that I am not comfortable with. My rights will be protected and that my confidentiality will be reassured.

The research itself is being conducted after the researcher has noticed that some learners have challenges when they respond to English first language creative writing tasks. The purpose of the research is therefore, to find the root causes of these challenges so that appropriate intervention strategies could be effected to help the affected learners.

Signature of a learner:

Date:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**PART B: CONSENT BY A PARENT/GUARDIAN**

I \_\_\_\_\_ the parent /guardian of \_\_\_\_\_  
(Full Names and Surname of parent/guardian)

hereby give consent for my child to participate in the above mentioned study. I'm aware that participation is voluntary and that my child may decline to answer some questions asked by the researcher. I'm also aware that my child may withdraw at any time he/she wishes. I aware that the researcher will protect my child's rights and beliefs.

Signature of parent/guardian:

Date:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## **TUMELELO YA MORUTWANA GO TŠEA KAROLO GO DINYAKIŠIŠO GO GRATA YA BONGAKA**

**HLOGO: GO NYAKIŠIŠA MABOKGONI A GO NGWALA KA SEISEMANE KA GO LEFAPHA LA THUTONLE TLHABOLOGO DIKOLONG TŠEO DI PHAGAMEGO SEDIKOTHUTONG SA SESHEGO, PROFENSENG YA LIMPOPO**

### **KAROLO A: TUMELELO KA MORUTWANA**

Nna \_\_\_\_\_, morutwana sekolong sa

(Maina ka botlalo le Sefane)

\_\_\_\_\_ ka go mphato wa \_\_\_\_\_, ke fa tumelo ya go tšea karolo go dinyakišišo tšeo di laeditšwego ka godimo. Ke ithaopa go tšea karolo ntle le tefo. Ke a tseba gore nka ikgogela morago go dinyakišišo tšeo nako efe goba efe ge ke nyaka ebile ke a tseba gore nka gana go araba dipotšišo ge ke sa nyake. Ke a tseba gore ditokelo tša ka di tla šireletšwa ebile leina la ka le ka se tsebagatšwe.

Ke a tseba gore dinyakišišo di dirwa morago ga gore monyakišiši a lemoge gore go na le ditlhotlo tšeo barutwana ba itemogelago tšona ge ba ngwala ditšweletšwa ka Seisemane leleme la tlaleletšo. Ka fao, nepekgolo ya dinyakišišo, ke go hwetša tharollo go dithlotlo tšeo le go tla ka magato ao a ka šomišwago go thuša ditlhotlong tšeo.

Mosaeno:

Letšatšikgwedi:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### **KAROLO B: TUMELELO KA MOTSWADI/MOHLOKOMEDI**

Nna \_\_\_\_\_ motswadi/mohlokamedi wa

(Maina ka botlalo le Sefane)

\_\_\_\_\_, ke fa tumelelo ya ngwana wa ka go tšea karolo go dinyakišišo tšeo di laeditšwego ka godimo. Ke a tseba gore o tšea karolo ka go ithaopa ga gagwe le gore a ka ikgogela morago dinyakišišo goba go gana go araba dipotšišo tšeo a botšišwago. Ke tseba gabotse gore monyakišiši o tla šireletša ditokelo le ditumelo tša gagwe.

Mosaeno:

Letšatšikgwedi:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX D: TEACHERS' CONSENT FORM TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH FOR A PHD DEGREE**

**TITLE: AN EXPLORATION OF THE CHALLENGES FACED BY GRADE 12 ENGLISH LEARNERS IN CREATIVE WRITING IN SESHEGO CIRCUIT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE: TOWARDS DESIGNING INTERVENTION STRATEGIES.**

I \_\_\_\_\_ a teacher at \_\_\_\_\_,  
(Full Names and Surname)

agree to participate in the above mentioned study. I'm aware that participation is voluntary, and therefore, no compensation will be made for participating in the study. I understand that I may opt out at any time if I so wish. I may also decline to answer questions that I am not comfortable with. My rights will be protected and that my confidentiality will be reassured.

The research itself is being conducted after the researcher has noticed that some learners have challenges when they respond to English first language creative writing tasks. The purpose of the research is therefore, to find the root causes of these problem so that appropriate intervention strategies could be effected to help all stakeholders including learners, teachers, department of education, just to mention a few.

Signature of a teacher:

Date:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX E: LETTER SEEKING APPROVAL FROM LIMPOPO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Box 2020  
Polokwane  
0700  
10 May 2019

The Head of Department  
Limpopo Department of Education  
Biccard street  
Polokwane  
0699

Madam

### Application for permission to collect data at schools in Seshego circuit

1. The above matter refers.
2. I'm a PhD student conducting research on this topic: "An exploration of the challenges faced by Grade 12 English learners in creative writing in Seshego circuit, Limpopo province: Towards designing intervention strategies."
3. I would like to request permission to collect data from 18 Grade 12 English First Additional Language (ENGFAL) learners and two Grade 12 ENGFAL educators at two schools in Seshego circuit.
4. Data collection would involve classroom observation of Grade 12 English writing lessons, interview of the two teacher participants and writing of a creative writing activity by the learners.
5. Both learner and teacher participants would be given a consent form to fill in before the commencement of the research (**Refer to Appendixes C and D attached: i.e. as on pages 24-26 above**).
6. The two schools identified for the research are Dr AMS Makunyane secondary school and ME Makgato secondary school.
7. The purpose of the research is to explore challenges experienced by ENGFAL learners in creative writing activities and also to design intervention strategies to address the challenges explored. The research also aims to improve ENGFAL teachers' process writing pedagogy.
8. Hoping that permission to conduct the research will be granted.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully

---

PD Phofele (Mr)



## APPENDIX F: APPROVAL LETTER FROM EDUCATION DEPARTMENT



**LIMPOPO**  
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

### DEPARTMENT OF **EDUCATION**

Ref: 2/2/2      Enq: Mabogo MG      Tel No: 015 290 9365      E-mail: [MabogoMG@edu.limpopo.gov.za](mailto:MabogoMG@edu.limpopo.gov.za)

Phofele DP  
PO Box 2020  
Polokwane  
0700

#### **RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

1. The above bears reference.
2. The Department wishes to inform you that your request to conduct research has been approved. Topic of the research proposal: **"AN EXPLORATION OF THE CHALLENGES FACED BY GRADE 12 ENGLISH LEARNERS IN CREATIVE WRITING IN SESHEGO CIRCUIT LIMPOPO PROVINCE: TOWARDS DESIGNING INTERVENTION STRATEGIES"**.
3. The following conditions should be considered:
  - 3.1 The research should not have any financial implications for Limpopo Department of Education.
  - 3.2 Arrangements should be made with the Circuit Office and the schools concerned.
  - 3.3 The conduct of research should not in anyhow disrupt the academic programs at the schools.
  - 3.4 The research should not be conducted during the time of Examinations especially the fourth term.
  - 3.5 During the study, applicable research ethics should be adhered to; in particular the principle of voluntary participation (the people involved should be respected).

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH.PHOFELE DP

CONFIDENTIAL

Cnr. 113 Bliccard & 24 Excelsior Street, POLOKWANE, 0700, Private Bag X9489, POLOKWANE, 0700  
Tel: 015 290 7600, Fax: 015 297 6920/4220/4494

***The heartland of southern Africa - development is about people!***

3.6 Upon completion of research study, the researcher shall share the final product of the research with the Department.

4 Furthermore, you are expected to produce this letter at Schools/ Offices where you intend conducting your research as an evidence that you are permitted to conduct the research.

5 The department appreciates the contribution that you wish to make and wishes you success in your investigation.

Best wishes.



**Ms NB Mutheiwana**  
**Head of Department**

03/07/2019

**Date**

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH:PHOFELE DP

CONFIDENTIAL

## APPENDIX G: FACULTY APPROVAL LETTER



**University of Limpopo**  
**Faculty of Humanities**  
**Executive Dean**

Private Bag X1106, Sovenga, 0727, South Africa  
 Tel: (015) 268 4895, Fax: (015) 268 3425, Email: Satsope.maoto@ul.ac.za

**DATE: 8 January 2019**

**NAME OF STUDENT:** PHOFELE, PD  
**STUDENT NUMBER:** [9122102]  
**DEPARTMENT:** PhD – Language Education  
**SCHOOL:** Education  
 Dear Student

### FACULTY APPROVAL OF PROPOSAL (PROPOSAL NO. FHDC2018/4516)

I have pleasure in informing you that your PhD proposal served at the Faculty Higher Degrees Meeting on 21 November 2018 and your title was approved as follows:

**TITLE:** AN EXPLORATION OF THE CHALLENGES FACED BY GRADE 12 ENGLISH LEARNERS IN CREATIVE WRITING IN SESHEGO CIRCUIT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE: TOWARDS DESIGNING INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

Note the following:

<b>Ethical Clearance</b>	<b>Tick One</b>
In principle the study requires no ethical clearance, but will need a TREC permission letter before proceeding with the study	
Requires ethical clearance (Human) (TREC) (apply online) Proceed with the study only after receipt of ethical clearance certificate	√
Requires ethical clearance (Animal) (AREC) Proceed with the study only after receipt of ethical clearance certificate	

Yours faithfully

Prof RS Maoto,

Executive Dean: Faculty of Humanities

Director: Prof TM Mabasa  
 Supervisor: Dr TW Molotja  
 Co-supervisor: Prof MW Maruma

*Finding solutions for Africa*

## APPENDIX H: ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER



**University of Limpopo**  
Department of Research Administration and Development  
Private Bag X1106, Sovenga, 0727, South Africa  
Tel: (015) 268 3935, Fax: (015) 268 2306, Email: anastasia.ngobe@ul.ac.za

**TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**  
**ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE**

**MEETING:** 5 April 2019

**PROJECT NUMBER:** TREC/93/2019:PG

**PROJECT:**

**Title:** An exploration of the challenges faced by Grade 12 English learners in creative writing in Seshego circuit, Limpopo province: Towards designing intervention strategies.

**Researcher:** PD Phofele  
**Supervisor:** Prof MW Maruma  
**Co-Supervisor/s:** Dr TW Molotja  
**School:** Education  
**Degree:** PhD in Language Education

**PROF P. MASOKO**  
**CHAIRPERSON: TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**

The Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) is registered with the National Health Research Ethics Council, Registration Number: REC-0310111-031

**Note:**

- i) This Ethics Clearance Certificate will be valid for one (1) year, as from the abovementioned date. Application for annual renewal (or annual review) need to be received by TREC one month before lapse of this period.
- ii) Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure as approved, the researcher(s) must re-submit the protocol to the committee, together with the Application for Amendment form.
- iii) PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES.

*Finding solutions for Africa*

## APPENDIX I: INTERVENTION STRATEGIES (MODEL FOR TEACHING WRITING)

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## **1. Introduction and background**

Since the inception of the field of language learning, researchers and scholars have proposed different methods for language teaching such as the Grammar Translation Method (GTM), Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Direct Method (DM), just to mention a few. The researchers and scholars held different views as to which method would be appropriate for language teaching. Over the past years, more methods and approaches to language teaching such as the learner-centred approach, teacher-centred approach, inductive and deductive approach, just to mention a few, were proposed. Once more, a debate ensued as to which approach would be suitable for language teaching including the teaching of writing. Currently, language teachers use a mixture of approaches to deliver the language curriculum, more especially, the writing curriculum to grade 12 learners.

Despite the teachers' effort to deliver the writing curriculum, grade 12 learners continue to have serious challenges when they are expected to implement process writing during creative writing activities. Learners seem to fail to follow process writing stages such as brainstorming, planning, drafting, revising, editing and proof-reading. It against this backdrop that the researcher has come up with teaching strategies that would assist teachers to improve process writing teaching.

The researcher first presents the objectives for the development of the teaching strategies, followed by the discussion of the importance of learners' prior knowledge in process writing, then discussion of the strategies for teaching process writing and lastly, conclusion about the discussion of the intervention strategies.

## **2. Objectives**

The objective of this chapter is to design intervention strategies that would assist the teachers to deliver the writing curriculum. The intervention strategies are meant to guide the teachers on how to approach process writing teaching in the writing curriculum. The intervention strategies would help teachers to provide clear instructions and clear concepts so that the learners would find it easy to understand what process writing is about. According to Manurung (2012:5), "clear concepts" help

learners “to transfer the theory into practical knowledge, hence the teaching process avoids boredom and frustration”.

### **3. Learners’ prior knowledge in process writing**

The purpose of checking learners’ prior knowledge is to find out how knowledgeable they are about a particular area of learning. Activating learners’ prior knowledge may assist teachers to know where and how to start a lesson. Giving learners an opportunity to think about what they already know before a new task begins, may help them to incorporate new information into existing structures of knowledge and therefore helping them link what they already know with the new lesson (Cole and Feng, 2015). This could help the learners stand a better chance of comprehending the new lesson. It is important and easier for a teacher to build on what learners already know by reminding them of prior knowledge which is relevant to the lesson that the teacher would like to present (Manurung, 2012). Having a clear understanding of how much learners know, would guide the teacher to adopt the intervention strategies that would be most appropriate for the new lesson. Learners’ prior knowledge is a framework that could help learners to remember and learn more about process writing.

### **4. Explicit teaching of process writing stages**

Some teachers do not give a detailed description of the process writing stages when presenting writing lessons. According to Graham, Bruch, Fitzgerald, Friedrich, Furgeson, Greene, Kim, Lyskawa, Olson and Smither-Wulsin (2016), teachers should present explicit lessons on process writing stages in order to help learners improve in writing. The explicit teaching of process writing stages could assist learners to familiarize themselves with features related to each stage and also help them to learn how to apply the process writing stages when writing for different audiences and purposes (Graham, et al, 2016). The process writing stages alluded to in the previous sentence are brainstorming, planning, drafting, revising, editing, proofreading and publishing. What is worth noting for the teacher is that process writing is recursive in nature. Hermillinda and Aziz (2018:1836) define the term “recursive” as the process “whereby the writer moves from one stage to another, going back to the beginning or the previous stage”. In other words, the writer goes back and forth as drafting or writing continues; the writer could edit and revise while he she is in the drafting stage, and

could even go back to the planning stage to do some additions or omissions to make the text readable. Although writers should follow the chronological order of writing stages such as brainstorming, planning, drafting, revising, editing and proofreading, they may revert to previous stage(s) if they want to effect changes.

#### **4.1. Brainstorming**

Brainstorming is the stage whereby learners think about possible ideas to use in a topic. Listyani (2018b:175) regards the concept brainstorming as “efforts to get or generate ideas, to explore possible topics and ideas to be developed in the essay and start thinking of finding information on it”. During the brainstorming process, the learner should let ideas flow freely about a particular topic and write down as many ideas as possible before deciding on the ones to use in planning.

To stimulate learners’ minds, teachers should give learners topics that would help them generate more ideas. Learners should write creative tasks on topics that they are familiar with (DBE, 2011). This would encourage learners to draw on their prior knowledge during brainstorming. Making sure that learners have an opportunity to think about what they already know before the task begins, could help them incorporate what the topic requires of them into what they already know and as a result, help learners to do brainstorming. The topics that teachers select for discussion during writing lessons, should be appropriate to the level of the learners’ grade or knowledge so that learners would find it easy to comprehend the topics (DBE, 2011). If the topics are too difficult, learners might become discouraged and lose interest in the discussion and thereby failing to generate many ideas that are required for planning. Learners may be asked to suggest topics for discussion.

Teachers may use audio-visual materials such as pictures, charts and a video to stimulate learners’ imagination. Looking at an audio-visual source may make learners develop interest and start generating ideas about what they see. Narrating an interesting story could also assist learners to generate as many ideas as possible. Creative strategies that teachers come up with, with the sole purpose of stimulating learners’ minds, could help them see the value of brainstorming. Creative teachers would do everything possible to actualize active learning, to achieve teaching goals (Manurung, 2012).



The following questions that learners should ask themselves during the brainstorming process, could help them generate as many ideas as possible:

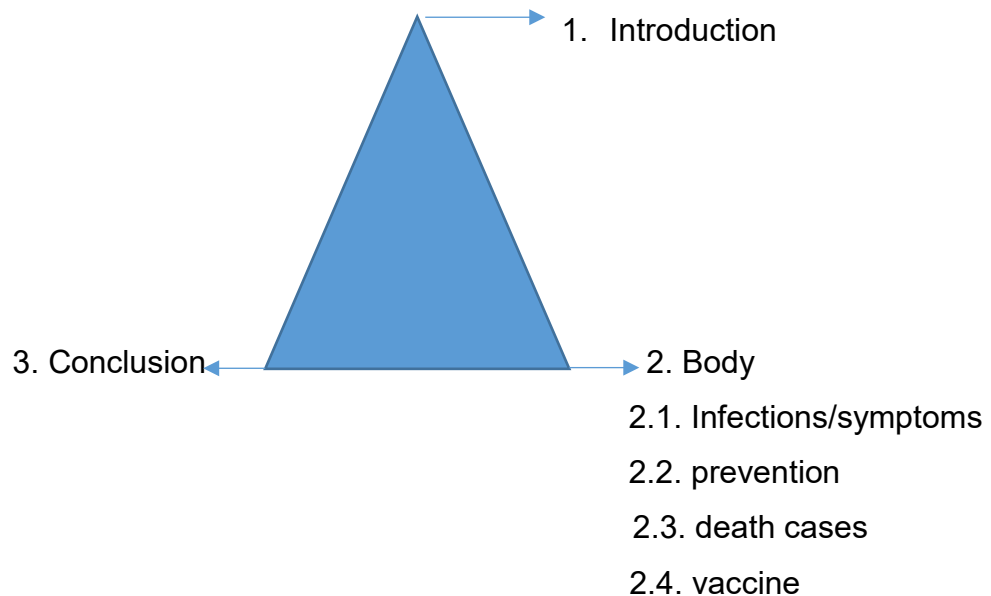
- What is the topic about?
- What do I know about the topic?
- What do I want to know about the topic?
- Which ideas are relevant to the topic?

Learners should write down every answers that comes to their mind before evaluating them and deciding which ones are relevant to the topic. Brainstorming can be done by a learner during individual writing, in pairs and in group discussion. When one does brainstorming alone (self), they would have no one to share ideas with; so individual learners would have to evaluate the ideas themselves. In peer brainstorming, learners share and discuss ideas with their peers. In group discussion, individual learners share and discuss ideas with members of the group.

## **4.2. Planning**

This is the stage in which the writer looks at the ideas noted down during the brainstorming stage, evaluates the ideas and decides which of the ideas would be used in the text. The writer would then organize the selected ideas on the mind-map in a logical sequence. Hermillinda and Aziz (2018:1818) refer to the planning stage as “reflecting on the material produced during prewriting to develop a plan to achieve the aim on paper”. The plan or the mind-map serves as a structure that shows how the text would be organized. Organization deals with how well the writers write the introduction, body and conclusion (Kartawijaya, 2018). Learners should always be encouraged to start with an introduction, followed by the body and the conclusion when drawing a mind-map. Refer to the example below:

## Topic: Covid-19 is nothing but a minor flu virus



**Fig. 1: Example of a mind-map**

The introduction of a text must grab the attention of the readers so that they can be interested in the written texts and be encouraged to read further. Words and phrases that generalize such as “everyone”, “it is obvious” and “it is clear” should be avoided as they give a reader a foregone conclusion about the text before an argument is presented. Learners could use some of the following tips that could be useful in writing a good introduction:

- use a quotation related to a topic.
- define terms in the topic and indicate the subdivision of the body of the text.
- ask a rhetoric or a thought provoking question and indicate whether you agree or disagree with a text.
- use an anecdote (i.e. a short account of someone’s experience) when writing a narrative text.
- use a scenario.

Learners are expected to present an argument on the topic in the body of the text. Paragraphs in the body of the text must be written in a cohesive way, hence planning is a must before drafting could commence. The purpose of writing the text must always be clear to the reader and so should the development of the story.

The conclusion should explain the overall significance of the text. Concluding words or phrases such as “lastly”, “in conclusion”, “to wrap up” should be avoided in a written conclusion, but may be used when a conclusion is presented verbally. Beginning a concluding paragraph with the phrase “in conclusion” is a bit redundant as the readers should not have a sense that they have come to the end of the essay; they should rather be left with an element of suspense (Moxley, 2015). Learners should avoid introducing new information in the conclusion. The learner may conclude a text in these ways:

- summarize the main ideas in the text.
- end with a compelling quotation to wrap up the ideas.
- keep the reader in suspense.

DBE (2011:35) concurs with features of the planning stage mentioned above and suggests the following measures before learners start drafting:

- decide the structure, language features and register of the text type that has been selected.
- decide the purpose, audience and context of the text.
- discuss the criteria that will be used to evaluate the piece of writing.
- research the topic, for example in a library, and select relevant information.
- identify main ideas and support detail.

The concept “purpose” as used above, refers to the objective that a writer wishes to accomplish with a particular piece of writing (Graham, et al, 2016). To determine “purpose”, the writer needs to know why they are writing a text. There are several purposes for writing, but the four general purposes are writing to inform, to persuade, to explain and to narrate.

- a) **Writing to inform-** the purpose is to share information and facts about something. Informational texts are usually supported by facts and evidence. Some examples of texts meant to inform are articles, reports and obituary.

- b) Writing to persuade-** the purpose is to express an opinion on something with reasons and supporting details. The aim is to make the reader or audience agree or disagree with the writer's argument. Some examples of persuasive texts are speech writing, argumentative essay, review and letters.
- c) Writing to explain-** the purpose is to tell why something is the way it is. The writer explains something using interrogative words such as what, how and why about the topic. Some examples of texts meant to explain are directions, instructions and descriptive essay.
- d) Writing to narrate-** the purpose is to tell a real or fictional story. Narrative writings are usually written in the past tense. Some examples of narrative stories are narrative essays, diary entries and personal recounts.

The "audience" is determined by whom the text is written for, for example, a teacher, a friend and parents. The audience would determine the type of language that learners should use in a text.

### **4.3. Drafting**

Drafting commences when the learner starts writing sentences and paragraphs from the ideas selected on the mind-map. According to Nabhan (2016:1) drafting involves "developing the meaning using ideas in pre-planning strategies, narrow down the broad focus, and remove or add information". During the drafting stage, learners are not much concerned about the correct language features such as spelling and grammar as they know that they'll correct the errors later. What is important in this stage is to write a rough draft of an argument using the selected ideas from the planning stage. This is the stage where the learners ask themselves questions such as how, who, where, why, when and so that they would present a reasonable argument.

DBE (2011) suggests the following points for learners to consider in order to complete the drafting stage:

- Write a draft that takes into account purpose, audience, topic and text type.

- Choose appropriate words, for example, in a narrative writing, use evocative words and phrases to make the writing vivid.
- Organize ideas in a logical sequence so that the argument flows smoothly in an essay.
- Establish an individual voice and style.
- Read drafts critically and get feedback from teachers and classmates.

#### **4.4. Revising**

During this stage, learners revisit their drafts to check if what they have written makes sense. In other words, learners read texts they have written, to reorganize ideas and rearrange words, sentences and paragraphs in order to make the drafts clear. During formal writing, for example, tests and exams, learners become writers and readers; they write and then revise the drafts as they would not be allowed to exchange drafts for feedback in formal writing. Hermillinda and Aziz (2018:1819 add that “revising occurs after the students have finished their first draft. It involves making changes that enhance the match between plan and text”. Determining the type of audience that they are writing for, would assist learners to revise their own work as they would consider their writing from the audience’s point of view. Unlike in formal writing, learners exchange drafts and comment on one another’s work during informal writing (Zakime, 2016).

When revising, learners should be cognizant of three factors, which are the purpose of writing the text, the type of audience they write for and the form of the text they should use. According to Bowen (2020), learners should ask themselves the following questions with regard to the three factors mentioned above when revising texts.

##### **a) Revising for audience**

- is the level of detail appropriate for my audience (not too general or too specific)?
- are my ideas presented in a logical order that will be evident to the reader?

- do I use clear transitions to help the reader follow my train of thought?
- are my sentences clear and specific?
- do I say what I mean and mean what I say?
- is my tone and style appropriate for my audience?

#### **b) Revising for purpose**

- is my purpose clearly stated for the reader?
- do I clearly maintain that purpose throughout the document?
- does my supporting information clearly relate to my purpose?
- do I organize my ideas to best fulfil my purpose?

#### **c) Revising for form**

- do I follow the established form of the document I am writing?
- do I separate ideas into paragraphs with clear topic sentence?
- do I maintain balance among my points, developing each to the same extent?

Answers to the above questions could assist learners to write texts that are appropriate for purpose, audience and style. Learners should be encouraged to do intense revision if to check if their drafts meet the above requirements. Feedback from learners' peers and teachers play an essential role in this stage, especially when peers exchange drafts and comment on each other's work (Zakime, 2018).

### **4.5. Editing and proofreading**

In this stage, the writer focuses on correcting linguistic features such as tense, incorrect sentence construction, spelling, just to mention a few. According to Miftah (2015:20), the "editing stage centres on providing the students chances to edit the drafts, and proofread the drafts for accuracy and correctness in spelling, punctuation, capitalization and grammar". Learners should ask themselves the following questions after editing, to check if their texts comply with the requirements of the editing stage:

- have I used the correct punctuation and spelling?
- have I used the correct word choice?
- Is capitalization and punctuation correct?
- have I used the correct sentence structures?
- is there cohesion of paragraphs?
- have I used the correct grammar?
- have I used other parts of speech such as pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, correctly?

Once editing is done, the learner would write the final draft and then start proofreading it. Foley (2010) describes proofreading as the process of examining the final draft to ensure that there are absolutely no errors. After proofreading, the text would be submitted to the teacher for evaluation.

### **5. Teaching language structures and conventions during the writing process**

Linguistic features such as spelling, vocabulary, tense, just to mention a few, may be taught in the context of writing. This could be done by displaying a well written essay on the white board when using an overhead projector or by giving learners copies of the essay when discussing process writing stages. The reason for the selection of a well written essay is to motivate learners to see and believe that it is possible to write a good essay since one of them has done it. The teacher may ask learners to identify parts of speech in the essay and then introduce a lesson on parts of speech. The discussion could make learners realize the importance of using correct language structures to convey meaning in writing.

A teacher may also use an essay that is riddled with errors, to discuss spelling errors. Learners could be asked to identify and correct spelling errors in the essay. Learners may be asked to come forward to write the misspelt words and the correct spellings of the words on the chalkboard for everyone to see and thereby assisting their mates in learning how words are spelt. Brown (2018) suggests that “teachers can have students write on the chalkboard to display their understanding of course material”. The lesson could become fun as learners agree and disagree with one another on the correct

spellings making the process a fantastic way of retaining knowledge. The teacher would act as a facilitator throughout the process. Brown (2018) says that “getting students to participate makes class more enjoyable for teacher and students alike [as students] take turns writing and answering questions, physically identifying areas of confusion or presenting alternative perspective on the chalkboard that may help their peers”.

## **6. Strategies for teaching process writing**

### **6.1. Reading to enhance writing**

Reading plays a crucial role in writing development. The more one reads, the more they increase their vocabulary which is important in writing a meaningful text. Oshchepkova and Alkhalidi (2018:174) contend that the “key factor in L2 writing is learners’ exposure to large amounts of L2 input material”. Many research studies in the field of English second language writing have discovered that learners’ poor vocabulary is one of the challenges that learners face in writing. Listyani (2018b:174) opines that “L2 writers have to read a lot in order to write well”. Listyani (2018a:269) adds that “a good writer also reads with an eye for writing; what we learn as readers, we use as writers”. Therefore, learners should be encouraged to read as many books, magazines and newspapers, as possible in order to increase their vocabulary which Dockrell and Connely (2015) regard as a key driver that supports text generation. They should also be encouraged to keep what one may call an “unknown words” note book in which they would write meanings of the unknown words. Learners should be encouraged to keep a dictionary which they could refer to when they see an unfamiliar word when reading. DBE (2011:11) states that “teachers should develop learners’ reading and writing strategies so that they can become independent and lifelong readers and writers”. Development of a culture of reading is the only way in which learners can improve their vocabulary which would help them write meaningful texts.

Reading more can help improve a learner’s style of writing. The more text types learners read, the more they learn about different styles of writing. Basu (2020) emphasizes that “it’s only when we have gone through various genres of reading, that a writer develops his or her style, a style which often becomes a signature of the writer”.



Benjabutr (2020) mentions the following reasons why reading could improve learners' writing:

- a) Reading inspires: motivating oneself about reading gives one something to reflect on and ponder upon to generate new ideas for one's write-ups.
- b) Reading is a repertoire of knowledge: the more one reads, the more they acquire knowledge to be used in writing.
- c) Reading improves reasoning: since reading can broaden one's imagination; one can use their creative juices during writing.

Reading helps learners to understand the essay question or transactional question they want to write about. When writing a creative task, for example, in the examination, learners would be expected to choose a question from a range of questions set in the paper. It is through reading and understanding of the questions set that the learners end up choosing a question to write about.

A comprehension passage wherein learners are asked to read and then answer questions may also enhance writing. Oshchepkova and Alkhaldi (2018:174) assert that "a reading passage can be used as a model, as a source of ideas and as a sample of language use, which eventually advances writing skills".

## **6.2. The use of communicative language during writing lessons**

Teachers use verbal communication to facilitate learning since writing lessons presented through the use of communicative language. Learners use communicative language to ask questions during writing lessons and also use it in pairs and groups to share and discuss aspects related to writing. According to Toro, Pinza, Camacho-Minuche and Paredes (2019:111), "all human beings need to communicate in order to express their ideas, feelings and thoughts". Toro et al. (2019:111) add that "activities with communicative purposes are helpful for breaking down barriers, finding information, expressing ideas about oneself and learning from others". Group discussions would not be possible if learners do not use communication when they are engaged in writing discussions. Second language learners use communicative

method to interact in order to complete writing activities (Kasumi, 2015, Tarnopolsky, 2015 and Sandberg & Norling, 2018).

### 6.3. Modelling

Salisu and Ransom (2014:54) define modelling as “an instructional strategy in which the teacher demonstrates a concept or approach to learning and students learn by observing”. Modelling could be effective in writing when a teacher after explicitly teaching learners features of process writing stages, starts demonstrating how each stage could be implemented when answering creative writing tasks. The demonstration could be made on a chalkboard or an overhead projector. Learners who have challenges in a certain writing aspect, could benefit a lot when teachers model a process writing stage, for example, the planning stage (Bobbs, Kruse, Moss, Polk, Potash, Rosenstein, Schneider, Taylor, Werner and Yannuzzi, 2017). Learners would observe the modelling strategy, then practice it on their own, and evaluate their writing and use of the strategy (Graham, et al, 2016). Teachers may alternatively have a shared writing discussion with learners before allowing them to write individually, in pairs and in groups. During the discussion, learners would have an opportunity to give input in the topic, sentence construction, spelling, just to mention a few. To encourage participation during the discussion, teachers may ask learners how a sentence can be reconstructed to make it grammatically correct (Bobbs et al., 2017).

Two types of modelling in teaching are distinguished:

- a) **Direct modelling:** this is a teacher-centred model in which learners learn from the presentations or demonstrations of the teacher. The teacher controls what is to be taught and how learners are taught (Gray, 2020; Gill & Kusum, 2016).
- b) **Indirect modelling:** this is a learner-centred model in which teachers act as facilitators while learners construct their own knowledge. The teacher has less control over what and how learners learn (Gray, 2020; Gill & Kusum, 2016).

Gray (2020) says that ‘while direct instruction allows students to gain content knowledge and foundational skills in an efficient manner, indirect instruction may take longer, but adds a greater depth of understanding’

Salisu and Ransom (2014:58) identify the following benefits of modelling that are applicable in writing:

- provides an environment for interactive learner engagement.
- can enhance learners' systems thinking abilities.

#### **6.4. Question and answer method**

Question and answer teaching method is based on asking and answering questions. Usually, the teacher would be the one who asks questions and the learners respond verbally. This type of teaching method is important in learning as the teachers check for learners' understanding and keeping them engaged with the task at hand (Collier, 2018). When the teachers prepare lesson plans, they must write down questions that they would like to ask learners and also ensure that the questions are in line with the lesson objectives. Chandramoulesc (2015) identifies the advantages and disadvantages of the question and answer method:

##### **a) Advantages**

- the teacher keeps in mind the abilities, needs and interest of the learners.
- it involves the learners' participation towards the subject and teaching acts.
- it helps in achieving cognitive objectives and bringing knowledge at conscious level.
- classroom verbal interaction is encouraged.
- it is a useful strategy at all levels of education.

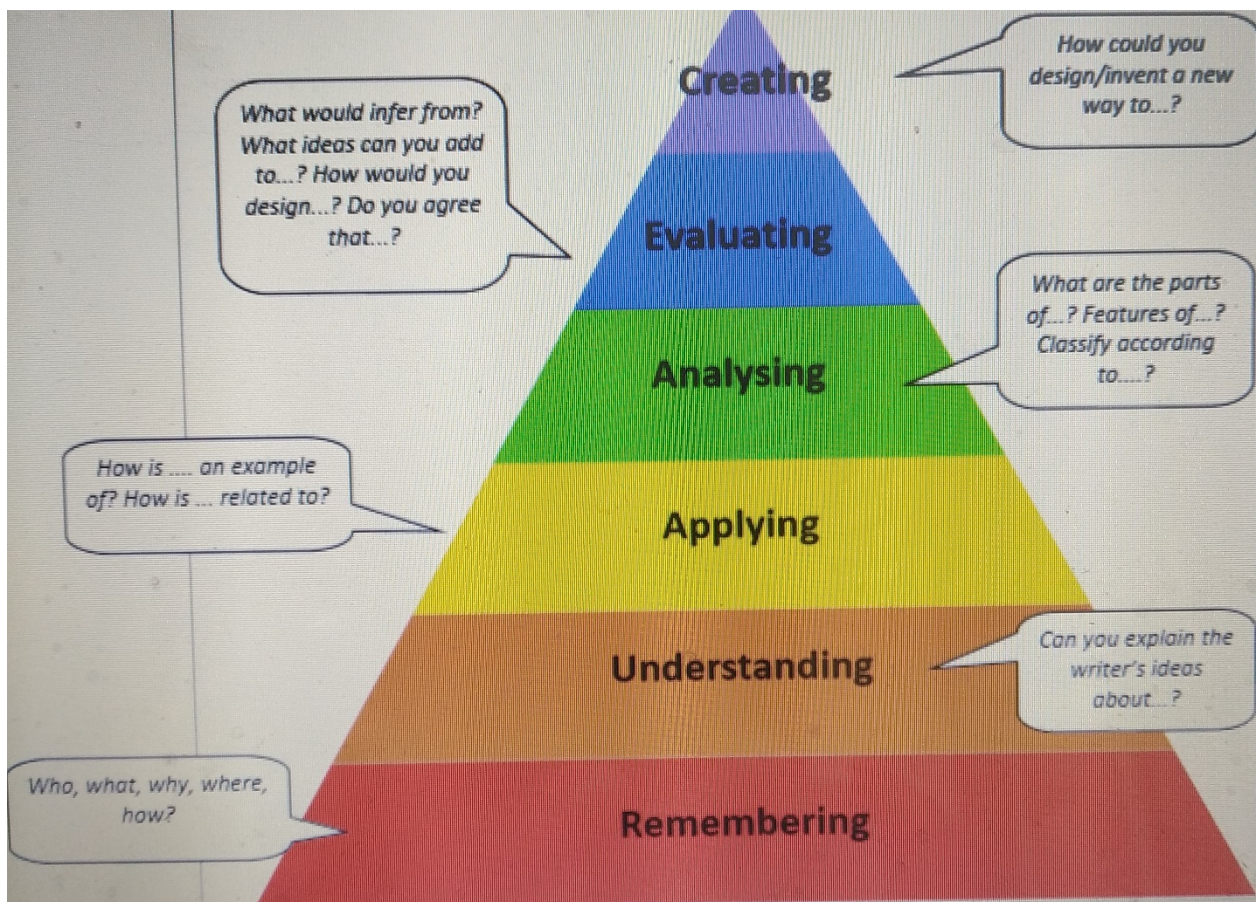
##### **b) Disadvantages**

- it is difficult to prepare good questions, and arrange them logically.
- the whole content matter cannot be taught by this strategy.
- the teacher wants the structured answers from the learners. There is no freedom for imaginative answers.

The advantages of question and answer method outweighs the disadvantages. Teachers would be able to prepare both lower order and higher order questions since they have ample time to prepare the questions. Learners would have freedom for imaginative answers when answering higher order questions. According to Corley and Rauscher (2013), higher order questions give learners opportunities to develop deep explanations. Corley and Rauscher (2013) add that higher order questions encourage explanations by learners and also help learners to develop important thinking skills. Examples of higher order questions are open ended questions which usually have more than one answer. West Lothian Council Educational Psychology Service (2020) opines that higher order questions “enrich the learning experience by encouraging links to be made by the learner from previous understanding to current situation”. In other words, the learner should be able to use prior knowledge to analyse what is asked in a question. Examples of higher order questions are why, explain, analyse and discuss questions, for example, “Explain why researchers claim that process writing is recursive in nature”. Learners would be expected to use their previous knowledge of process writing to substantiate answers to the question asked above.

Lower order questions require learners to recall and comprehend material that was previously taught by the teacher (Corley & Rauscher, 2013). Examples of lower order questions are closed questions which are used to check learners’ memory and recall of facts without giving motivation to the answers. Lower order questions usually have one correct answer, for example, in this question, “Who was the first president of the democratic South Africa?”. There is only one answer to the question, which is “Nelson Mandela”. Teachers should note that incorrect answers in lower order questions may bring humiliation to the learners. This could make the affected learners to be reluctant to attempt answering questions in future as they would not want to be laughing stock in class. Teachers should therefore, warn learners not to mock learners who give incorrect answers. Learners who fail to answer questions because they have forgotten should be protected from being mocked by their classmates who may call them “slow learners”. Simmonds (2016) posits that “forgetting is an important aspect of learning”. Therefore, teachers should instil self-believe in learners by telling them that forgetting is part of learning since one could always revisit what they have learned earlier on to do revision, thereby enhance learning.

Questions that teachers want to ask should be arranged from the lower order (i.e. general) to the higher order (the specific) level. Starting with lower order questions could help learners to relax and take it easy, building up to higher order questions that demand and challenge learners' thinking capabilities. The order of questioning should be in the form of Bloom's taxonomy which has six levels of cognitive demands. Refer to Bloom's hierarchal order of questioning below:



**Figure 2. West Lothian Council Educational Psychology Service, 2020**

The teacher should adopt strategies to use when acknowledging learners' responses to questions asked. Some of the strategies are reinforcement, probing and refocusing.

### **a) Reinforcement**

Teachers should always acknowledge learners' answers by smiling, nodding and maintaining eye irrespective of whether the answer is correct or not. Doing all these gestures would encourage learners to try answering questions in future even if they are not sure of the answers because they know that their teachers would not show them a hostile disapproval if the answers are incorrect. If learners give incorrect

answers, teachers should try to simplify the questions by paraphrasing them so that learners could comprehend the questions.

### **b) Probing**

According to Simmonds (2017), probing is about “eliciting further information by asking more questions”. A teacher may try to check if learners have not guessed the correct answer by probing or by asking a follow up question that requires learners to elaborate on a given answer.

### **c) Refocus**

If a learner answers the question irrelevantly, the teacher should try to refocus the learner to the question asked. This could be done by asking the question again or by rephrase it. Learners may also want to ask questions to the teachers during a lesson. Therefore, teachers should develop strategies to respond to the questions. The strategies are discussed below:

#### **i) answer by teacher**

A teacher may opt to answer a question asked by a learner if there is no time left in the lesson to engage learners.

#### **ii) redirecting the question to the class**

If there is still sufficient time left in a lesson or period, the teacher may redirect a question asked by a learner to the class. This would make learners know that they are active participants in the classroom, either by asking questions or answering questions. This strategy could encourage interaction amongst learners in class.

#### **iii) assisting a learner to answer own question**

This could be done by reminding a learner of what was learnt previously in relation to the question so that the learner may think of a possible answer to his/her own question. The teacher should be careful not to embarrass the learner.

#### **iv) ask the learner to remain after class or school for clarification**

If a learner seems to be the only one who does not understand an aspect of teaching, the teacher may ask the learner to come and be clarified at the end of the period or come for clarification after school. The disadvantage of this strategy is that the learner may not be the only one who does not understand; other who pretended to understand because they were afraid to indicate that they did not understand, may miss out during the consultation.

**v) refer a learner to a resource where he/she can find the answer**

The teacher may refer a learner to a resource where the learner can find the answer. This would be done to limit over-reliance on the teacher. This strategy should also be done in such a way that learners do not feel embarrassed so that they could feel free to ask questions in future lessons.

**vi) defer the question to the next class**

The teachers should defer questions that they are unsure the answers to the next lesson. They should politely ask learners to give them time to consult and do research on the questions. They can also request learners to go and do research at home. They should indeed answer the deferred questions in the next lesson so that the learners could know that their questions are taken seriously.

Teachers should be aware that sometimes learners may not raise up their hands when questions are asked in class. The following strategies could be employed to mitigate against learners' failure to raise up their hands in writing lessons:

**a) Adopting a pinpointing strategy**

A pinpointing strategy could be used if learners do not raise up their hands to answer questions. With this strategy, learners would know that they would be asked questions even if they do not raise up their hands. Collier (2018) believes that “there’ll be a higher level of engagement if learners know that you may select one of them”. Whole class participation should be encouraged at all times.

**b) Introduce a wait-time**

Wait-time refers to the time a teacher waits for a learner to give an answer (Simmonds, 2017). Collie (2018) adds that “wait time gives learners time to think and rehearse answers before speaking up”. The number of learners who do not respond to questions could decrease if teachers adopt the wait- time period in classes more especially, when higher order questions are asked. Simmonds (2017) states that “research on classroom questions and information processing indicates that learners need at least three seconds to comprehend a question, consider the available information, formulate an answer and begin to respond”. Simmonds (2017) adds that “in contrast, the same research discovered that on average, teachers allow less than one second of wait-time”. The number of learners who failed to respond when asked to give an answer after the teachers implemented the wait-time in the study dropped sharply (Simmonds, 2017). Teachers should therefore, try to implement the wait-time strategy in class to find out if it could be effective in their classes.

The wait-time strategy could have some disadvantages in learning and teaching as too much time could be lost if it not implemented correctly. A teacher may lose up to 20-30 minutes if it is implemented in all questions asked. This could result in the teacher lagging behind in the syllabus or being unable to complete a lesson. Therefore, wait time should only be implemented when learners are asked higher order questions.

Collier (2018) has identified the following benefits of effective questioning which teachers should consider implementing to help learners improve writing skills:

- encourages learners to engage with their work and each other.
- helps learners to think out aloud.
- facilitates learning through active discussion
- empowers learners to feel confident about their ideas.
- builds thinking skills.
- teaches respect for other learners’ opinions.
- helps learners to clarify their understanding.
- motivates students and develops an interest of a topic.



- allows students to check learners' understanding.

ENGFAL learners could benefit from the “question and answer method” of teaching if it is implemented effectively during writing lessons.

## **6.5. Collaboration**

The word “collaboration” means working together to achieve a goal or an objective. In language teaching, collaboration may take two forms, which are collaborative learning and collaborative teaching.

### **6.5.1. Collaborative learning**

Collaborative learning involves pairing or grouping learners together to solve a problem, complete a task or create a product (Sbertoli, 2020). Learners may collaborate to discuss and produce a piece of writing, for example, an essay. Pircon, Nell, Hughes, Dominic, Tolisano, Purdy, Le, Lambert, Ramirez and Nickow (2018) have this to say about collaborative writing, “learners must be allowed to work on a writing activity in pairs, groups or as a class [and] this would help learners to see how to structure an essay”. Collaborative learning could be an effective tool when learners generate ideas to draw a mind-map during brainstorming. An ENGFAL learner who is stuck on an idea because of poor vocabulary, may be inspired and learn from others who mention the idea in the group. Cole and Feng (2015:15) believe that “learners are more conscious of their peers’ reaction and perception than their teachers’, therefore, more opt to learn from their peers’ constructivism”. Du Plessis (2020:3) adds that “learner-centred teaching encourages collaboration”. Learning from others could be influential in helping ENGFAL learners to improve in writing.

The teacher should play the role of the facilitator during collaborative writing in class so as to ensure that learners do not deviate from the writing topic but focus on the task on hand. Abongdia and Mpiti (2015:95) emphasizes that “teachers have to encourage the learners to work together as much as possible, through group-work and in pairs”. Anggraini, Rozimela and Anwar (2020:335) add that “collaborative writing contributes to improving learners’ critical thinking and developing their writing in terms of content, organization and vocabulary, but not in terms of achieving accuracy”.

Sbertoli (2020) identifies core aspects that are applicable in collaborative learning:

**a) Positive interdependence**

- occurs when group members are aware that they share the same goals.
- members are aware that individual learning depends on the help of others. This means working together is individually and collectively beneficial.
- group success depends on the participation of all members of the team.
- learners would encourage one another if positive interdependence exists.

**b) Individual accountability**

- based on the assumption that individual participation would be observed and evaluated.
- individuals should not be afraid to participate in group discussions hence their contribution is appreciated.

**c) Promote interaction**

- interaction of group members in the activity given is vital.
- the process promotes the need for negotiation, persuasion, discussion and reaching a general consensus.

**d) Social skills**

- social skills include effective communication, interpersonal and group skills.
- soft skills such as **forming skills, functioning skills, formulating skills and fermenting skills** are needed in collaborative learning.
  - **forming skills**- needed to organize the group and develop a code of conduct for the group.
  - **functioning skills**- needed to manage group's activities to achieve results.

- **formulating skills**- needed to build deeper levels of understanding of the content being studied, to summarize reflection.
- **fermenting skills**- help learners to deal with cognitive conflict, compare information, negotiate, communicate the reasoning behind own conclusions and ultimately facilitate the progress from information gathering to knowledge construction.

#### **e) Group processing**

- refers to the need to encourage group participants to repeatedly evaluate the group's performance to discuss what needs to be changed in order to maximize the results.

All the above core aspects of collaborative learning mentioned are applicable in writing since collaborative writing in pairs and groups could help to improve learners' process writing skills. Teachers should familiarize learners with the core aspects of collaborative learning where learners have an opportunity to interact with peers, present and defend ideas, exchange diverse beliefs and question others' ideas (Sbertoli, 2020).

#### **6.5.2. Collaborative teaching**

Collaborative teaching occurs when two teachers or more come together to share ideas on how to make learning accessible and effective to learners. Collaborative teachers share expertise, decision making, lesson delivery and assessment (Taşdemir and Yildirim, 2017:632). Collaborative teachers should have a common vision in teaching, be cooperative and value one another's expertise in order to make learning effective. Teachers who are not in good terms would make collaborative teaching impossible to achieve. Collaborative teachers should tell themselves that the reason for them being at a school is to deliver the curriculum, a shared vision in their case. (Taşdemir and Yildirim, 2017:632) believe that teachers who participate in collaborative teaching should learn to foster social interaction and have conflict management and problem solving skills. This would help them to put their personal differences aside and work for the common goal, which is to help learners improve writing skills.

Mewald (2014) identifies two types of collaborative teaching, which are “One teach, One assist” (1TLA) and Parallel teaching (PT).

#### **a) One teach, One Assist (1T1A)**

In this type of collaborative teaching, one teacher has the responsibility for planning and teaching while the other plays a supporting role in class, for example issuing out study material and helping in keeping order. The teachers may exchange roles from time to time.

#### **b) Parallel teaching (PT)**

In this type of collaborative teaching, the two teachers prepare together and cover the same content in two classes from the same grade where each teacher is responsible for a class. The teachers may use different approaches during the lessons to make the lessons effective.

The PT collaborative method could be the best method to use by ENGFAL teachers during process writing lessons. This is due to the fact that the two teachers would come together and prepare a writing lesson and thereby sharing ideas and expertise in the preparation. One teacher would be able to help the other teacher in areas of the lesson where the other one has challenges. Any new strategy or deviation from the original strategy that a teacher may use in class to ensure the realization of the lesson objectives would be appreciated. Although the 1T1A method employs two teachers, it has a shortfall in the sense that it does not utilize the expertise of the second teacher in the lesson preparation. The excluded teacher might be the one who is more knowledgeable and has expertise in the lesson to be presented by the other teacher. This would adversely disadvantage the learners. In order for teacher collaboration to be effective, teachers should want to participate in the collaboration, rather than feel like they have to. Therefore, collaborative teachers should adopt the following strategies in order to make teaching effective:

#### **a) Develop and agree upon a shared vision and mutual goals**

- the level of ownership teachers feel about the process, determines how much time and energy they really put into collaborating.

- having a shared vision and mutual goals can lead to the buy-in by the teachers.

#### **b) Foster a sense of community**

- taking time to know one's colleagues and relating on personal level develops a sense of respect and trust.
- like any relationship, collaborative teams take time to develop.

#### **c) Establish group norms and expectation**

- teams should delegate roles and responsibilities, as well as protocols for communication and time management.
- it's important to develop a culture of trust, respect and humility for everyone to thrive.

#### **d) Leverage discussion to work through conflicts**

- discussions are made up of dialogue intended to build consensus.
- although dialogue opens doors to new possibilities, it can also open the door to conflict.
- it's a good idea to develop a conflict management plan, monitor emotions and always use professional judgement.

Writing teachers should develop genuine collaborative strategies such as the ones mentioned above in order to make collaborative teaching effective.

### **6.6. Lesson plan and presentation**

A lesson plan is a roadmap or guide of what learners need to learn and how the teacher intends to present the plan in class. Hady and Abdulsafi (2018) define a lesson plan as "a schedule that tells the teachers what to do in a specific time to a specific group of learners, about a specific lesson". Therefore, a lesson plan communicates to learners what they would learn and be assessed on, and also helps teachers to organize content, materials, instructional strategies and assistance in the classroom

(Teaching Excellence in Adult Literacy (TEAL), 2010). The first step of preparing a lesson is to plan it. The teacher should first identify the objectives or goals of the lesson so that the lesson could be effective. Thereafter, the teacher should design appropriate learning and teaching activities that would be used in the presentation of the lesson. The teacher should also develop strategies that would be used to find out if the learning objectives have been successful.

Milkova (2017) identifies six steps for developing a lesson plan. The steps are discussed below:

### **a) Outline learning objectives**

To outline the learning objectives, the teachers should first establish what they want the learners to achieve during the lesson. At the end of the lesson, teachers would expect learners to have learned some skills or concepts. Hady and Abdulsafi (2018:278) assert that “the objectives should be written down before planning the lesson, so that the lesson will be directed on the objectives”. Teachers should answer the following questions in order to specify the learning objectives (Milkova, 2017):

- what is the topic of the lesson?
- what do I want learners to learn?
- what do I want learners to understand and be able to do at the end of the lesson?
- what do I want them to take away from this lesson?

Specifying concrete objectives for learning could help the teachers to determine the kinds of teaching and learning activities that they could use in class, while the activities would determine if the learning objectives have been accomplished (Milkova, 2017).

### **b) Develop the introduction**

To develop an interesting introduction to the learners, teachers should check what learners already know about the topic before planning the lesson. Learners’ prior knowledge would shape the introduction of the lesson by guiding teachers to know where to start with the lesson. Dixon (2016) refers to the process of checking what learners know about the topic as the “warming up activity”. The “warming up activity”

is an activity that activates learner's background knowledge, intrigues learners, and gives them access to all that they know (Dixon, 2016). Teachers may use learners' prior knowledge to develop a creative introduction in the form of a personal anecdote, historical event, short video clip, just to mention a few (Milkova, 2017).

### **c) Plan the specific learning activities**

Teachers should explain important aspects of the lesson, using examples to clarify any confusion that learners might have in the learning activities. They should also budget time for the explanations according to the order of importance of the learning activities, so that they may not run out of time during lesson presentation. A few minutes should be allocated for answering questions at the end of the lesson.

According to Milkova (2017), teachers should ask themselves the following questions in order to design effective writing activities:

- what will I do to explain the topic?
- what will I do to illustrate the topic in a different way?
- how can I engage learners in the topic?
- what are some relevant real-time examples, analogies, or situations that can help learners to understand the topic?
- what will students need to do to help them understand the topic better?

### **d) Presenting the lesson**

This is the stage in which the content and concepts of the lesson plan are taught. Learners should be told in advance what they would be learning and doing in class so that they may be more engaged and on track during the lesson (Milkova, 2017). Learners should be reminded that each section of the lesson has been allocated time so that they know the importance of the time factor during the lesson. This could help to eliminate any disturbances that might arise from the learners during presentation of the lesson. This would help learners to develop time management skills. According to Milkova (2017), "providing a meaningful organization of the class time can help

learners not only to remember better, but also follow [the] presentation and understand the rationale behind in-class activities”.

#### **e) Plan to check for understanding**

Teachers should develop strategies to check if learners have understood the lesson. Milkova (2017) gives this advice to the teacher: “think about specific questions to ask learners in order to check for understanding, write them down, and then paraphrase them so that you are prepared to ask questions in different ways”.

A conclusion of the lesson should be developed by summarizing the main points of the lesson. This could be done by the teachers themselves or by learners, verbally or in the form of writing. Teachers may ask learners questions and use their responses to gauge their level of understanding of the topic to find out if the objectives have been met. Explanations should be made where learners lack understanding. Learners may be given further informal activities as remedial work, to assess their understanding. The conclusion may be used to preview the next lesson so that learners may know how the current lesson links with the next one.

#### **f) Reflecting on the lesson plan**

Reflection refers to the time when teachers look back at how the lesson was presented to check what worked and what did not (Ullman, 2011). By reflecting on a lesson, teachers would be able to know if the objectives were met; if not, what could have been done differently. Teachers should write down barriers that hampered them from achieving the desired lesson objectives so that the barriers would be overcome in the next lessons.

### **6.7. Assessment**

Assessment in writing is about giving learners a writing activity in order to find out how much they have learned about a writing aspect. Nunan (2015:183) defines assessment as “tools, techniques, and procedures for determining what learners know and can do in relation to a particular knowledge domain”. Hady and Abdulsafi (2018:278) add that good teachers “should check the efficiency of their teaching by asking questions about what they have taught their learners”. In writing, informal



assessment should be part of every lesson so that learners could have frequent exposure to writing hence ENGFAL writing is difficult (Khazaal, 2019; Hammadi & Sidek, 2015; Hermillinda & Aziz, 2018).

Different assessment strategies may be used to assess learners' writing. Teachers may use types of assessment such as baseline evaluation to assess learner's prior knowledge in writing, diagnostic evaluation to find out learners' challenges in writing, formative assessment to assess learners' writing in tests or exams and summative evaluation to check what learners have learned about writing at the end of a quarter or year. Informal assessment tasks are useful in assessing learners' writing when teachers encourage them to assess their own writing in self-assessment during the revision stage, in where assessment is done by learners' peers and in group assessment where a group's writing activity is assessed by another group. There must be feedback and motivation for any assessment task given.

## **6.8. Feedback**

Feedback may be defined as information provided by an agent (i.e. a teacher, peer, group and learner himself/herself) to help one improve in doing something (Karlsson, 2020). In language learning, feedback involves giving comments or remarks on someone's work so that they can make improvements to the work. Feedback may help to reinforce learning during creative writing lessons. Nagler (2016:167), asserts that "feedback during lessons could help in keeping pupils on track; minimize misunderstanding and signal areas in need of further explanation". Without feedback, learners would not know where they went wrong and where they have done well in their writing. Rusinovci (2015:703) holds that learners should "receive constant feedback to their writing throughout the writing process". The type of feedback given should be clear and easy to understand so that learners would be motivated to effect changes where they have made mistakes (Agbayahoun, 2016).

Some learners do not take effort to go through writing activities that teachers have returned to them after marking. They do not act on teachers' feedback so that they can avoid making the same mistakes in subsequent activities (Weimer, 2013). The only thing that they are interested in when feedback is given, is marks they have obtained. Teachers should encourage learners to respond to the feedback given in

order to avoid unnecessary errors in writing. Hamouda, Al-Talib and Shaibob (2020:11) insist that “taking teachers’ feedback into action has a huge positive impact on improving students’ written work, and stimulates student learning”.

Different types of feedback are applicable in language learning, for example, corrective feedback, peer feedback, teacher feedback, formative feedback and summative feedback. In this section, focus would be on corrective feedback as it is inclusive of all types of feedback mentioned above. Two types of corrective feedback are distinguished, namely, negative feedback and positive feedback. In corrective feedback teachers, peers and groups give comments on where learners have gone wrong in writing in terms of spelling, vocabulary, sentence construction, just to mention a few (negative feedback). Negative feedback could help learners to avoid making language errors in future writing activities. Teachers should try by all means not to be over-critical of learners so that they don’t become discouraged in writing. Bashir, Kabir, and Rahman (2016:39) state that “it is vital to draw the student’s attention to the less successful parts of a coursework, however, the teachers should be cautious in providing negative feedback”. During peer or group feedback, teachers should warn learners not to humiliate their classmates for the mistakes they have done in writing as this could make the learners lose interest in writing discussions (Anuzaili, 2020).

In positive feedback, peers, teachers and groups give affirming comments about where the learners have done well. Positive feedback encourages learners to keep on doing well by avoiding language errors in writing now and in the future.

Teachers should consider the following feedback strategies to improve learners’ writing:

#### **a) Use of end notes**

End notes are usually written at the end of learners’ written work or at the end of each section in learners’ work. Teachers are encouraged to make use of any space left at the end of a section or chapter, to make general comments about that section or chapter so that learners would know where they did wrong in the section or chapter.

#### **b) Marginal comments**

Marginal comments are written between the lines and outside the margin of a page. Marginal comments are used to make comments on specific areas on a particular page. Teachers' comments may be on mistakes related to tense, spelling, punctuation, just to mention a few.

### **c) Rubrics, descriptors and marking codes**

In creative writing, teachers use rubrics to assess learners' written work. Learners should be taught how teachers use rubrics to allocate marks when assessing written work. The rubrics should be pasted in the learners' classwork books so that they could familiarize themselves with the descriptors mentioned in the rubric so that they may reduce errors when writing creative activities. Knowledge of how the rubric works could assist learners to have a better understanding when feedback is given. Francis (2018)'s study on examining the link between rubrics and learners' performance revealed that learners who were engaged in a discussion of how rubrics work performed better than the ones who were just given the rubrics. Process writing learners who are knowledgeable in rubrics can assess their work on the rubrics before making submissions to the teachers. This could help them to reduce language errors in the activities.

Learners should also be taught the marking codes that teachers use when they mark creative writing activities. Learners should know what "t" (tense), "p" (punctuation), "voc." (vocabulary), just to mention a few, stand for in teachers' corrections. Description of rubrics, descriptors and marking codes to learners could help learners recognize the kind of mistakes they have made and avoid them in the next writing activities. The marking codes should also be pasted in learners' classwork books for revision and familiarization.

### **d) Individual and group feedback**

Individual feedback is about giving individual learners face to face feedback. The feedback could be done after a lesson or after school when both the learner and the teacher have time to talk about a learner's written work. Giving individual feedback could help the learner to save face as it would not be given in class, in front of other learners (Alnuzaili, 2020). However, Bashir, Kabir, and Rahman (2016:40) believe

that individual feedback “is time consuming” as it may take a teacher, a long time to finish attending to individual learners. Feedback should be given timeously. Therefore, the teacher may opt for group feedback where learners are given general comments about common errors they have made as a class. Group feedback also saves learners’ faces as the teachers would not mention learners’ names but give a summative feedback so that they could avoid similar errors when they are given writing activities.

## **6.9. Motivation**

The concept “motivation” has been defined differently by various researchers throughout the past years. However, the researchers seem to agree that “motivation” involves a desire to make one want to achieve a certain goal and the effort that they would take to realize the goal. In language learning, motivation refers to the extent to which the individual works or tries to learn the language because of a desire to do so (Kafipour, Mahmoudi & Khojasteh, 2018; Alizadeh, 2016). Anjomshoa and Sadighi (2015:126) add that motivation is “an important contributor to language achievement in terms of linguistic outcomes, which traditionally embrace the knowledge structure of the language, i.e. vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation”. Language teachers, especially teachers of writing must know the learners’ sources of motivation in writing so that they would be able to support the learners’ desire for success.

Two main types of motivation, namely, the intrinsic motivation and the extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation refers to the interest of learners and their attitude in an activity such as writing, which makes them want to learn because they think it is enjoyable (Alizadeh, 2016; Mahadi & Jafari, 2012; and Anjomshoa & Sadighi, 2015). Intrinsic motivation is integrative in the sense that the learners may look forward to personal growth so that they may fit in a cultural setting or group of people. Learners may be motivated to write good essays because people they live with and admire, for example, friends, siblings, classmates, just to mention a few, are good in creative writing. In intrinsic motivation, learners do not expect a reward from someone; achieving what they want is the only reward they look forward to. According to Anjomshoa & Sadighi (2015:126), “intrinsic motivation originates inside a person. There is no reward except the activity itself”.

Extrinsic motivation refers to the actions that learners perform in order to get a reward (Alizadeh, 2016; Mahadi & Jafari, 2012; and Anjomshoa & Sadighi, 2015). Extrinsic motivation is instrumental because it arises out of learners' desire to learn a second language for external reasons such as passing English in a certain level in order to be admitted in a faculty at a tertiary institution. Some tertiary institutions have put a prerequisite for learners to pass English in a certain level in order to stand a chance of admission in certain faculties. Extrinsic motivation originates outside a person where there is an anticipation for a reward. Learners are motivated by an outside source rather than being self-motivated.

Teachers should develop good motivational strategies in order to identify and encourage learners' desires. The motivational strategies are discussed below:

**a) Create a friendly atmosphere in the classroom**

Teachers should try to create an atmosphere in which learners would feel appreciated and valued irrespective of their level of performance. Learners should see their teacher as someone who is approachable, whom they could confide in. Learners who have social problems that impact on their classroom learning, including their performance in writing would feel free to approach their friendly teacher for assistance. All learners should have a sense of belonging. The teacher may write down friendly classroom rules and explain the importance of adhering to the rules rather than saying consequences will follow if the rules are not adhered to. Ofoghi, Sadeghi and Babaei (2016) assert that "there is a positive and active relationship along with mutual respect, cooperation and inner satisfaction" in friendly classes.

**b) Encourage learners to personalize the classroom environment**

Personalized learning is a type of learning whereby learners' needs and goals are prioritized. The classroom should be a place where each learner has an opportunity to realize his or her potential as learning would be tailored according to each learner's needs. This means learners in a classroom could have diverse needs to achieving their goals. Therefore, teachers should be knowledgeable in diversity to help learners fulfil their goals. To learners, a personalized classroom would be like home away from home. Through a friendly interaction with the learners, teachers would be able to figure

out learners' motivation to learn and start designing lessons according to their needs. Basham, Hall, Carter Jr. and Stahl (2016:134) point out that "in the implementation of personalized learning, teachers become designers or engineers of learning". Teachers should believe that every individual learner's goal is achievable as long as all the learning material are available to cater for their needs. Basham et al (2016:134) add that "for personalized learning to be operationalized in schools, environments must provide the learners and teachers with necessary capacity, tools, and strategies to support effective implementation".

### **c) Create an atmosphere in which learners would feel a sense of accomplishment**

Teachers should avoid being harsh to learners, but should give positive feedback and reinforcement. Praise should be given where learners have done well in writing. Learners would feel good if their work is appreciated. Al-Ghamdi (2017:37) claims that "praise is a powerful tool for improving academic performance and it may give students the proper strategies to apply in order to perform successful tasks". Moreover, learners value teachers if they feel their work is appreciated. This would encourage them to work hard to avoid disappointing their teachers in future when they are given writing activities. However, Al-Ghamdi (2017) warns teachers to be careful when giving praise to learners as it might end having an adverse effect on them. Learners' intrinsic motivation to be proficient in writing could end up becoming extrinsic as they might want to do well in writing just to get a reward (a praise). Where learners have not done well, teachers should correct them and urge them to avoid the mistakes in future so that they can have improved writing. Teachers should give explanations why learners might not have performed well instead of aggressively asking them why they have not done well. Asking learners why they have not done well, especially with an unfriendly face, could make them lose interest in the teacher especially if the learners cannot give reasons for their poor performance. The teacher could end up having learners at different levels of motivation instead of having the whole classroom highly motivated. According to Wallace and Leong (2020:221), "varied levels about learning can pose a significant challenge to teachers, as some learners may have little to no interest in learning L2 while sharing the same class as learners who are highly motivated". This

would negatively affect the teachers' lesson objectives and make the general writing performance of the class to drop.

#### **d) Encourage learners to set their short-term goals**

Short-term goals are stepping stones that may push one towards long-term goals (O'Neill,2018). They are plans that one may have in the interim or in the immediate future. Teachers should encourage learners to set targets that they want to achieve in the short- term. If learners' short term goal is to improve vocabulary, teachers should encourage them to read more English texts and write down at least five unfamiliar words per day in their "unknown words" book. They should also be asked to write down meanings of the words in the book. At the end of the month, learners would have many words to choose from in creative writing activities. Having goals and expectations could lead to a higher level of writing proficiency.

#### **e) Give pair and group activities to develop learners' confidence**

Pair and group activities have shown to be beneficial to learners. Moolman, Essop, Makoe, Swarts and Solomon (2020:1) categorically state that "peer education has been shown to improve young people's decision making and knowledge". Writing activities given in pairs and groups may increase learners' self-esteem and therefore encourage motivation. According to Graham and Harris (2016:359), "good writing is not a gift, it is gorged by desire, practice and assistance from others". Learners who are shy might open up and start exchanging ideas if they discuss an activity with learners they relate well, unlike when they are supposed to discuss the activity with the whole class in the presence of the teacher.

#### **f) Connect language learning to learners' interest outside the classroom**

Teachers should encourage learners to use their classroom writing knowledge to participate in activities outside the classroom. Learners may take part in compete in speech writing competitions, help in drafting an obituary of a deceased family member and draft an advertisement for a local shop owner. Learners could also use their writing skills to apply for admission at tertiary institutions. Using writing skills outside the classroom could enhance learners' writing skills.

## **6.10. Code-switching**

The concept code-switching refers to the communicative practice where the speaker switches from one language to another in the course of a text or a conversation (Maluleke, 2019 & Al-Qaysi, 2018). In language learning and teaching, teachers and learners may switch from ENGFAL to their home language for a particular reason. An English teacher may switch to learners' home language to clarify an area or an aspect in which learners lack understanding (Adriosh and Razi, 2019; Hamid, 2016 & Low, 2016; Ahmadian, Pouromid & Nickkhah). It would make no sense for English teachers to persist teaching learners in English if they do not understand an aspect of learning. Therefore, switching to learners' home language to make the clarification and switching back to continue the lesson in English would benefit the learners as the code switching strategy would be used minimally. Low (2016:58) asserts that "if teachers are not allowed to code-switch, their students will not be able to acquire content knowledge". Modupeola (2013) and Al-Qaysi (2018) add that code switching facilitates learning and teaching and ensures efficient comprehension of teachers' input.

A study on the effect of code-switching done by Simasiku, Kasanda, and Smit (2015), discovered that code switching enhanced learners' learning of the English language and improved the way they answered questions. This was possible because of the clarifications made in learners' home language. Learners' improvement in English language as stated in the study, could help them to improve their writing skills since their vocabulary would have improved.

Learners may also code switch to their home language if they lack equivalent words in the target language, especially during writing group discussions. According to Al-Qaysi (2018:4), code switching "allows learners to communicate continuously by bridging the gaps that result from foreign language incompetence". The teachers as facilitators should encourage learners to stick to the target language in their discussion and switch to home language only if they are stuck on idea that they cannot express in English. The teachers should encourage minimal use of the code switching strategy during the discussion.

## **6.11. Inclusivity**



The concept inclusivity refers to the policy whereby people of different cultures, sexual orientation, social class, just to mention a few, are treated equally. In language learning and teaching, an inclusive classroom creates a supportive environment for all learners, including those with learning differences (Unlu, 2017). An inclusive classroom, recognizes learners' diverse backgrounds, respects and values their learning rights. Learners who are in an inclusive classroom sit and learn together in a safe and collaborative learning environment. An inclusive classroom can only be successful if learners feel welcomed into a supportive environment in which they can participate freely without being discriminated (Schuelka, 2018).

Teachers use diverse teaching methods to deliver content that acknowledges and recognizes learners' diversity and gives them a sense of belonging. According to Zumbrunn, McKim, Buhs and Hawley (2014), a learners' sense of belonging promotes motivation, engagement and achievement. Inclusive teaching and learning practices discourage biases and stereotypes that undermine learners' sense of belonging.

Teachers can use strategies that are discussed below to promote an inclusive teaching and learning environment:

#### **a) Promote a positive classroom climate**

Teachers may create a welcoming environment where learners of diverse backgrounds are appreciated and valued in their class on the first day of schooling. After introducing themselves, teachers may ask learners to introduce themselves and also ask them to indicate the names in which they would like to be known. This could make the learners feel relaxed and look forward to the process of introducing themselves. The process could help the teachers and learners to develop a personal relationship that would be crucial in determining the success of an inclusive classroom. The teachers should clearly state to learners that they would be treated equally and that they believe in everyone's capabilities. Unlu (2017:1) opines that learners "respond better when they feel that their teacher has faith in their abilities and is not focusing on their inabilities".

The teacher may then set general classroom policies that would include promotion of diverse personal, cultural and religious beliefs amongst others. Other policies may

include guidelines for asking and responding to questions where it should be emphasized that no learners' ideas would be belittled and disrespected. Learners may be asked to give input in the classroom policies. Teachers must politely tell the learners that violation of the classroom policies would not be tolerated. This could encourage learners to freely participate in group and class discussions during essay writing lessons since they know that they have the protection of their teacher.

### **b) Embrace learners' diversity**

Teachers should remind and encourage learners to embrace one another even though they come from diverse backgrounds. They should learn to promote coexistence as it is not by choice that they find themselves in the same class. Teachers may suggest a topic that is discriminative which they may use to introduce a lesson on diversity. An example of such topic could be "foreigners should be deported to their countries of origin". Foreign learners in the class would become uncomfortable and discouraged while homophobic learners would agree with the topic and wish to give input along discriminatory perspectives. Everyone would calm down once they become aware of the lesson objectives and would start giving objective input that embrace diversity. Learners should be encouraged to interact across cultures and learn more about one another's cultural practices to avoid stereotyping. The teacher should inspire learners to promote equality by seeing themselves as equal to others and should shut down any sign of discrimination when it crops up (Kampen, 2019).

### **c) Foster a community approach**

Teachers should try to foster collaboration amongst learners in class. This would teach them to cooperate during learning activities and therefore promote learning. Unlu (2017:4) adds that a teacher's effort to create a supporting peer culture both inside and outside the classroom, "empowers learners to respect and trust each other, making empathy, caring and reinforcing positive and pro-social attitudes by encouraging learners to help each other". Inclusive values are developed through learners' lived experiences and their exposure to other cultures (Unlu, 2017). The teacher should remind the learners that we are all made in the image of God, therefore, acceptance of one another is next to Godliness.

Teachers may engage parents and community members on how to improve diversity in classes and at school. To do this, pastors or preachers from different church denominations should be invited to school to deliver religious sermons, not only pastors or preachers from a particular church or religion. This would encourage learners to learn about different religious practices from the sermons delivered by the preachers.

#### **d) Increase own cultural competence**

Teachers should do a self-introspection of their own cultures. Self-introspection would help remind them of multiculturalism and help eliminate any bias that they might have. This could be done by attending conferences and workshops that focus on diversity.

#### **e) Encourage a growth mind**

Teachers should be careful when giving praise to some learners. They should avoid referring to learners' good performance and bad performance as natural talent and lack of talent respectively. Doing so could make other learners to start calling others by all sorts of names and as a result, create a barrier to inclusivity in the classroom. Some learners may start associating learners who perform below average as being ungifted or learners who lack of abilities. Learners who have not performed well should be told positive words such as "there is always room for improvement" so that they would start believing in their ability to perform better.

### **6.12. Revision**

Simmonds (2016) defines revision as a process of re-examining or restudying a material that one has learned. During revision, learners revisit lessons they have previously learned, with the intention of reminding themselves what the lessons were about. Learners usually do revision when they prepare for a test or examination and when they are asked to make a presentation in class. Revision may be done individually, in pairs or in groups.

There are various strategies that learners can use when doing revision. The strategies are discussed below:

### **a) Continuous revision**

Learners should be encouraged to do revision continuously, and not wait for a test or an examination. It's better to revise work in small chunks than wait to revise large chunks of work at the end of the year. Doing revision in small chunks could help learners to manage anxiety levels in the end of year examination revision. According to Impact Teachers (2017), the more frequently learners come back to a topic, the more likely they are to remember what the topic is about. Learners should be encouraged to write down whatever they are revising, using their own words where possible. This could help them remember if the revision is written in their own sentence construction and is kept as simple as possible. Continuous revision could save learners time to look for what to revise as they already know where to find the material to revise, unlike revising a large chunk of work where learners might resort to cram work due to pressure of time when preparing for the test or exam.

### **b) Use of past question papers**

Learners should be encouraged to use as many past question papers as possible to familiarize themselves with how questions are set and therefore give them an idea of what to expect in a test or examination. They should also be encouraged to always draw mind-maps and follow process writing stages when doing writing revision using past question papers. Mind-mapping is a useful method of summarizing a topic and making it easier to recall in an examination (Simmonds, 2016). Learners should consult their teachers when they encounter challenges during revision and should handover their work to teachers for correction and feedback.

### **c) Use examiners' reports**

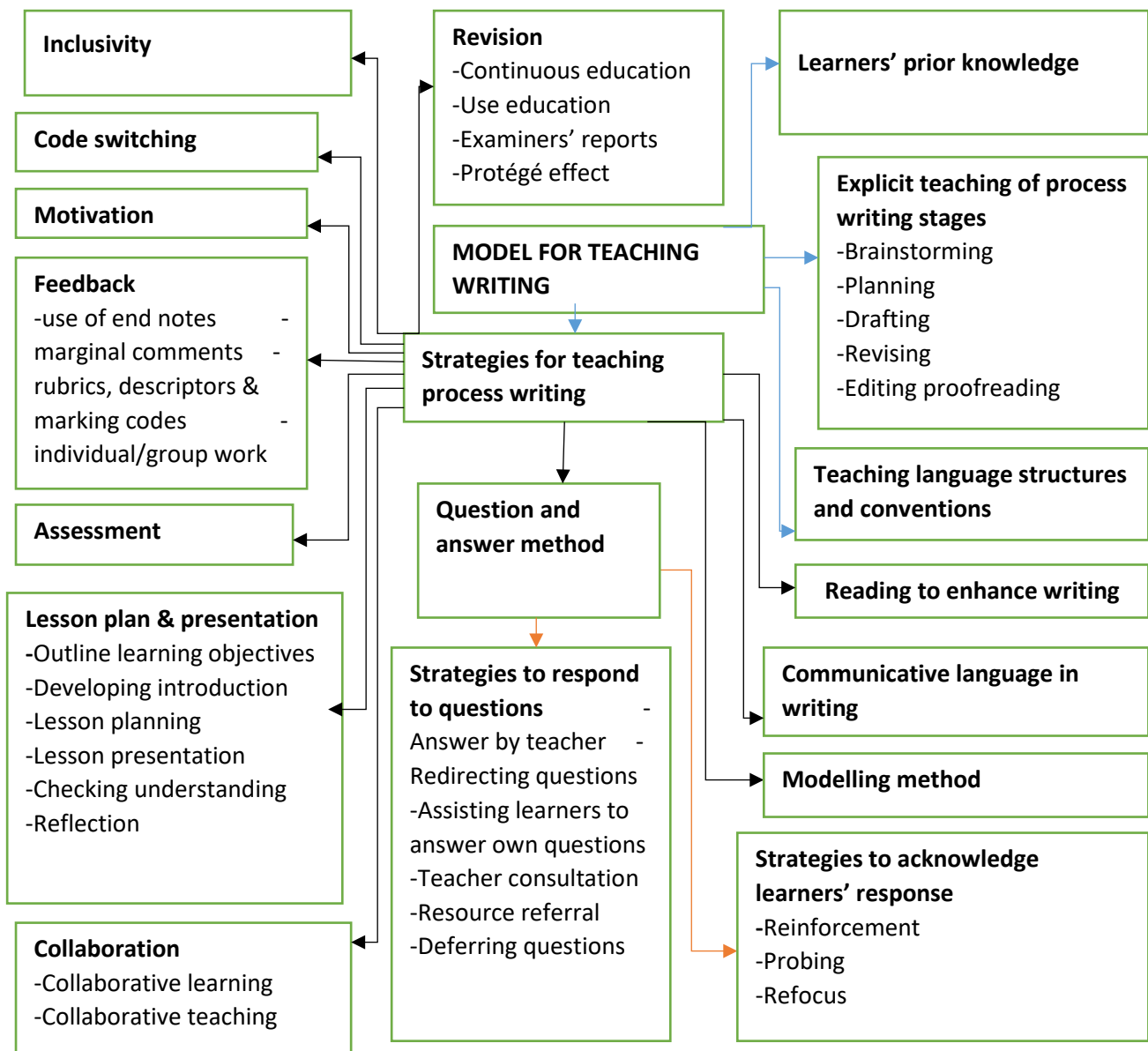
At the beginning of every year, examiners send the end of year examination reports to provincial offices who in turn send to districts, circuits and schools. Nduka and Gogo (2017:7), "the chief examiners' reports are essential study resource because [they] give useful guidance for future candidates and real insight into what the examiner is looking for in terms of examination performance". In the reports, the examiners give comments on how they expected learners to answer the questions and also give recommendations on what teachers should do to help learners to answer the

questions. Nduka and Gogo (2017:7) add that “prospective students can learn from the chief examiners’ reports [about] mistakes that candidates commonly make in the examination and how to avoid them”. ENGFAL teachers as well as teachers in other learning areas should use the reports to give learners tips on the do’s and the don’ts in the examination. The tips would be useful when learners prepare for formal writing tasks.

#### **d) The protégée or protégé effect**

A protégé is someone who does something under the guidance of an experienced person (Whitebook & Bellm, 2014). Teachers could encourage learners who have a better understanding of a topic, for example, process writing, to be their protégé. The protégé would teach learners who have less understanding in the topic, in revision activities. Teaching learners would force the protégé to prepare well for the presentation and enhance his/her own understanding in the subject matter. Moreover, learners seem to have a better understanding when they learn from their peers (Wessels, 2015). The mentor (teacher) would be in attendance, acting as an observer during the lesson presentation and would assist where there are subject content challenges and classroom management challenges.

Figure 1 below is a summary of the strategies that teachers could use to improve learners' writing:



**Figure 1. Model for teaching writing**

### 6.13. Conclusion

This chapter focused on the intervention strategies that could be useful in delivering the writing curriculum. The purpose of designing the intervention strategies was to suggest various teaching methods that teachers could use to improve learners' writing skills. Some of the teaching strategies include the explicit teaching of process writing stages, modelling, collaboration, just to mention a few. All teaching strategies mentioned in this chapter could be effective in addressing learners' writing challenges.

It is now up to the teachers to implement them in their writing classes to make changes in learners' writing capabilities.

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