

LEARNING TO WRITE BY WRITING TO LEARN

**A postgraduate intervention for the development of
academic research writing**

by

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ABSTRACT

Within postgraduate studies, learning is assessed through the examination of modules making up a taught programme and the writing of a dissertation. However, research, nationally and internationally, has shown that although students are generally able to complete the modules making up a postgraduate programme successfully, often difficulty arises in the writing of the dissertation which begins with the conceptualising and writing of the research proposal. It seems that students are considered poorly equipped for postgraduate study, which puts their academic success and completion of their studies in jeopardy, particularly those for whom English is not a first language.

Since 1994 with wider access to higher education, a concern has arisen about National figures for postgraduate throughput rates, which on average, are quite low. This current research originated with concern about the unpreparedness of some postgraduate students in a specific master's programme in a Faculty of Education at a South African university and about offering them the foundations for the development of their academic research writing, an aspect so vital to achieve success at this level. It seems that programmes which incorporate academic writing are put into place in some honours programmes (see Henning, Gravett & van Rensburg, 2005; Thomson, 2008 for South African programmes) but once the student progresses to master's or doctoral level, this does not seem to be the case.

The main aim of this study was to obtain insight and understanding of the demands of academic writing at postgraduate level and to develop an effective intervention to assist in the development of proficient academic research writing. Thus, the development of an academic research writing intervention deemed most appropriate for postgraduates in education was designed and developed to assist students during the first stages of their research, that of conceptualising, writing and successfully defending the research proposal. The premise is that during this first year of study, acquiring and developing academic literacies, in order to become competent academic writers would provide the scaffolding¹ for the move into the second phase of the research process, that of academic research writing.

Design Research was considered most appropriate for this research as it is interventionist, iterative, process-focused, utility-oriented and theory-driven (Van den

¹ The concept of scaffolding originates with Vygotsky's work where he considers scaffolding as the role of the expert assisting a novice and is underpinned by the construct of the zone of proximal development (ZPD). Later the scaffolding theory was introduced by Bruner (circa 1950s).

Akker, Gravemeijer, McKinney & Nieveen, 2006, p.5) and in addition, requires the involvement of practitioners (Plomp, 2013, p. 20). The sample for this study was drawn from a specific master's programme in education and consisted of students, the supervision team and the academic research writing practitioner. A mixed methods approach was used where data comprised quantitative data (questionnaire, evaluations and assessments) and qualitative data (personal writing, evaluative writing, interviews and assessments).

Findings emerging from the context of this particular master's programme point to a set of design principles that inform the development of a model for academic research writing which appears promising for supporting the postgraduate student effectively. It is hoped that the findings emerging from the research will fill a gap in the literature and add to the body of knowledge on postgraduate academic research writing.

KEYWORDS: postgraduate study, academic writing, academic research writing, academic literacies, community of practice, design principles, design research

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ANC	African National Congress
AQA	Assessment and Quality Assurance
ACE	Advanced Certificate of Education
ACR	Academic Research Writing
ASSAF	Academy of Science of South Africa
AZASO	Azanian Students Organisation
AZASM	Azanian Students Movement
ARW	Academic Research Writing
BC	Black Consciousness
BCM	Black Consciousness Movement
BICS	Basic Interpersonal Communicative Strategies
BIRAP	Bureau of Institutional Research and Planning
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
CALP	Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency
CATA	Cape African Teachers' Association
CEA	Centre for Evaluation and Assessment
CHE	Council for Higher Education
CNE	Christian National Education
CoPs	Communities of Practice
COSAS	Congress of South African Students
CPUT	Cape Peninsula of Technology
CYL	Congress Youth League
DET	Department of Education and Training
DRC	Dutch Reformed Church
EATAW	European Association for the Teaching of Academic Writing
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
EDT	Education Development Trust
EQ	Emotional Quotient
ETS	Educational Testing Service
ESL	English Second Language
FET	Further Education and Training
GRE	Graduate Record Exam
HBU	Historically Black Universities
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HEQF	Higher Education Qualifications Framework
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
ICELDA	Inter-institutional Centre for Language Development and Assessment

IDEALL	Integrated Development of English language and Academic Literacy and Learning
IEA	International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement
IQ	Intellectual Quotient
JC	Junior Certificate
NECC	National Education Crisis Committee
NCC	National Consultative Conference
NLG	New London Group
NLS	New Literacy Studies
NMMU	Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
NQA	Namibia Qualifications Authority
NP	National Party
NRC	National Research Council
NWU	North West University
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAC	Pan African Congress
PET	Postgraduate Enrolment Throughput
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
RPL	Recognition of prior learning
RU	Rhodes University
SACMEQ	Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
SASM	South African Students' Movement
SASO	South African Students' Organisation
SOSCO	Soweto Student Congress
SPN	Scholarly Personal Narrative
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SU	Stellenbosch University
TALL	Test of Academic Literacy Levels
TALPS	Test of Academic Literacy for Postgraduate Students
TATA	Transvaal African Teachers' Association
TED	Transvaal Education Department
TIMSS	Trends in Mathematics and Science Study
UAL	Unit for Academic Literacy
UCT	University of Cape Town
UDRAW	Unit for the Development of Rhetorical and Academic Writing
UFS	University of the Free State
UJ	University of Johannesburg
UK	United Kingdom
UKZN	University of KwaZulu Natal

UN	United Nations
UNISA	University of South Africa
UP	University of Pretoria
USA	United States of America
UWC	University of the Western Cape
WAC	Writing across the curriculum
WID	Writing within the disciplines
Wits	University of the Witwatersrand
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

CHAPTER 1: THE OVERVIEW

*Writing has been a major means used by academic staff across the disciplines
in assessment of student learning in higher education*

(Li, 2007, p. 41)

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Postgraduate students often do not know how to write in the academic way required at this level of study. Research nationally and internationally has shown that although students are generally able to successfully complete the modules required in a postgraduate programme, this is not necessarily the case with the writing of the research proposal and the dissertation (Barton, Hamilton, & Ivanič, 2000; Hendriks & Quinn, 2001; Kamler & Thomson, 2004; Leibowitz, Goodman, Hannon, & Parkerson, 1997; Lillis & Turner, 2001; Torrance & Thomas, 1994; Wadee, Keane, Dietz, & Hay, 2010), as students “do not always know how to write” (Catterall, Ross, Aitchison, & Burgin, 2011, p. 1). This jeopardises academic success, particularly with regard to those students for whom English is not a first language and could lead to the non-completion of studies, which is often exacerbated when a restrictive timeframe is put in place by institutions.

The main aim of this study is to obtain insight into and understanding of the demands of academic writing at postgraduate level and to develop an effective academic research writing intervention to support master’s students in the initial stage of their studies. Firstly, the study attempts to develop an understanding of academic research writing at master’s level, taking into account the acquisition and development of academic literacies. Thereafter, the study describes the development and implementation of an intervention deemed appropriate to ensure the development of proficient academic research writing through the process of student research. Finally, it also seeks to evaluate the intervention and its effectiveness in terms of supporting the students through the first stage of their research and provide the scaffolding for the move into the second phase of the research process, that of academic research writing.

The following section of this chapter outlines the problem and the rationale for conducting this research (1.2), describing three studies undertaken in the South African context (1.2.1) and then offering a summary of the problem (1.2.2). Thereafter, the aim of the study and the main research question is presented (1.3). An overview of the research design applied in this study is given in Section 1.4, ending with an outline of the compilation of this study in the final section (1.5).

1.2 INTRODUCING THE PROBLEM AND THE RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Transformation in higher education has created wider access for students who were previously barred from tertiary education, which was “reserved for an educated élite” (Boughey, 2000, p. 281). International and national research has reported on more multi-lingual, non-traditional students (Ganobcsik-Williams, 2004; Lillis, 2001, p. 16; Skillen & Mahony, 1997) who were previously “barred” from higher education (Leibowitz et al., 1997, p. 6) and/or considered the outsiders or “the other” (Henning, Mamiane, & PHEME, 2001, p. 113), entering into postgraduate study.

This “widening [of] the social base of higher education to include, inter alia, adult learners” (Walters & Koetsier, 2006, p. 98) is seen as a key issue influencing education reform (Hays & Marais, 2011) and has resulted in a change in student demographics. In the South African context, it has been “a deliberate attempt to broaden participation in higher education as a means of reducing the highly stratified race and class structure of the country” (Fraser & Killen, 2005, p. 26). This phenomenon has been seen not only at undergraduate but also at postgraduate level resulting in “the establishment of a multicultural, multilingual student body in place of one which is monocultural and monolingual” (Boughey, 2000, p. 281).

An increasing number of professionals have been seeking to upgrade their qualifications (Duke & Jones, 2005), a fact reported by O’Donnell, Tobell, Lawthon and Zummit (2009, p.27) who acknowledge that many adults return to postgraduate study after a significant gap, particularly seen in the fields of education, nursing and business and public administration (Osman & Castle, 2006), resulting in a more mature postgraduate student population (Giannakopoulos & Buckley, 2009; Koen, 2007). However, even though many more students are motivated to enter into postgraduate studies, they experience difficulty in adjusting to their studies. Research conducted in South Africa has raised concerns about the preparedness and abilities of such students. With the lack of exposure to academic dialogue and literacy, students face issues such as the inability to work independently, not being able to read critically and interpret skilfully, the challenge of having to write in academic English but most particularly, the lack of support in developing the necessary reading and writing competencies to understand the conventions of and effectively engage with the academic discourse, have been identified as contributing factors (Angelil-Carter, 1998; Giannakopoulos & Buckley, 2009; Hendriks & Quinn, 2001; Koen, 2007; Leibowitz, 2000; Leibowitz et al., 1997; Quinn, 1999; Thesen, 1997; Van Aswegan, 2007; Wadee et al., 2010). In addition, factors such as the inability to write coherently as students lack basic writing and literary skills (Esterhuizen, 2001; Hendriks & Quinn, 2001), being unprepared for the rigours of postgraduate study by not being

equipped with the vital literacies (Koen, 2007; Van Aswegan, 2007) and a lack of knowledge and understanding of research compounded by a low level of research development (Netswera & Mavundla, 2001) have also been identified.

Research conducted in the United States (US) has found as a result of similar factors, an almost one-third first-year attrition rate at graduate level (Bowen & Rudenstine, 1992) while New Zealand reports a more than one-third attrition rate with their success rate over a seven-year period ranging from 56-57%, and Australia reporting a 53% success rate for the whole system (Watson, 2008). These findings correspond with South African attrition rates (Mouton, 2007; Sayad et al., 1998; Watson, 2008). Figures, on average for postgraduate throughput² in South African Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), are low and do not reach the target benchmarks. The National Plan in 2001 aimed at achieving a 60%, 33% and 20% throughput rate up to honours, master's and doctoral levels for students respectively. However, for 2004 these figures were adjusted, with the aim being to achieve a throughput rate of 54% and 33% up to honours and master's levels respectively (see Letseka, Cosser, Breier, & Visser, 2010)

In reality, and depending on the programme, these range from a throughput of 10% to 69% (Cronje, 2007; Holtzhausen, 2005; Le Grange, 2002; Mouton, 2007). Findings from Watson's study revealed "results var[ying] from 0% (in the worst instance) to 74% (in the best case)" (2008, p. 735) with the success rate figures over a five-year period ranging from 41% to 69% (Watson, 2008). Cronje (2007) reports a master's completion rate of 28% at one HEI and Sayed, Kruss and Badat (1998) reveal that only 10% of master's students completed their dissertations within three years at the University of the Western Cape, pointing to the time restriction placed on completion. A drop-out rate of 20% implies that about 1.3 billion in government subsidies is spent each year on students who do not complete their study programmes (Herman, 2011; see DoE, 2001, Section 2.1.3).

As a result, a major concern with the growth in the numbers of postgraduates in the South African context has arisen and factors which cause "blockages in the graduate and postgraduate pipeline" need to be addressed (ASSAF, 2010, p. 69). It has thus become a priority to improve the success rate of postgraduate students (Watson, 2008) with the National Plan for Higher Education suggesting that only "through improving the efficiency of the higher education system" will there be an increase in the number of successful graduates (DoE, 2001, p. 14).

² *Throughput* is a term used to describe the proportion of student success rate from first year to final qualifying year - graduation rate may also be used (Watson, 2008).

Some postgraduate study programmes in faculties of education are modular-based, culminating in a dissertation of limited scope. However, with governmental change in funding policies for HEIs (NRF, 2007) favouring greater funding towards research-based programmes, there has been a shift from a modular or taught programme to independent research-based programmes with the production of a full dissertation or thesis, requiring greater levels of independent research and study. As such, it seems that there is little focus being given in programmes for the development of academic research writing³ (Lea & Street, 1998). It is assumed, thus, by the academy, that academic writing and the associated research competencies will implicitly or osmotically develop through the research and supervision process.

Taking the above concerns into account is the concept of offering developmental support to postgraduate students through the phases of their research (Catterall et al., 2011), but particularly in the first stages of conceptualising and planning their proposed research with the writing and defence of the research proposal. However, viewing student writing from a deficit approach “advance[es] the premise that the responsibility for developing students’ proficiency in academic writing lies with individual students, and not with higher education policy and institutions” (Ganobcsik-Williams, 2004, p. 26); so a shift needs to be made from a deficit approach to a developmental approach, as seen in programmes in the US, UK and Australia (see Chapter 3). Thus, by taking postgraduates’ specific needs into account, there is clearly an urgent need for the development of an intervention which focuses on supporting students and assisting them in developing as proficient and competent academic research writers.

The premise is that academic research writing, understood as a social practice which is central to the research process and not incidental (Kamler & Thomson, 2001), draws on the acquisition and development of academic literacies as described in the literature (see Chapter 3). This means that the research process should be seen as writing (Lea & Street, 1998), or alternatively, that writing should be seen as researching and one in which identity as a writer and a novice researcher is formed (Hyland, 2002; Van Rensburg, 2004).

Working within the framework of Design Research, conceptualising and developing an intervention to develop academic research writing within an academic literacies approach

³ *Academic research writing* is a term coined for this research conducted at postgraduate level which incorporates academic writing, discipline-specific content knowledge and research methodology knowledge as well as the ability to report on findings and results.

(Lea & Street, 1998; Lillis, 2001; Street, 2004) is an attempt to assist students in developing as confident and independent research writers within a specific discipline in education. The intervention draws on the theory that teaching and learning about writing occurs within a complex social context that incorporates issues of epistemology, power and identity (Lillis, 2001). However, cognisance needs to be taken of the importance of embedding such a support intervention within a specific programme “creat[ing] a space for student to make meaning of their discipline” (ASSAF, 2010, p. 357).

Research, reported by Koen (2007), found that one factor affecting student performance and as such throughput, was poor guidance during the process of proposal writing, which aligns with finding the right study leader who will guide and mentor the student in the process towards becoming “an emerging scholar” (Felder, 2010, p. 455). Giannakopoulos and Buckley argue that with

...“widening participation in higher education ... all stakeholders carry an equal responsibility ... Research showed that attrition is complex but can be combated ... requires a joint venture between the stakeholders so that factors that affect graduation can be reduced to a minimum” (2009, p. 6).

Taking this into consideration as well as the fact that the postgraduate relationship traditionally comprises the student-supervisor dyad (Paré, Starke-Meyerring & McAlpine, 2009; Strauss, 2012), a concerted effort was made to incorporate more ‘stakeholders’. Thus the intervention was conceptualised as incorporating three role players: that of the student, the supervision team and the academic research writing practitioner (Dowse & Van Rensburg, 2011; Nel, 2006) to support students during the first stage of research. This first stage of research comprises the completion and successful defence of the research proposals. For the purposes of this study, this means immediate throughput is the focus concentrating on supporting the students in writing their research proposals, taking into account that the research proposal acts not only as a gate-keeping function (Cadman, 2002), but also confirms the ‘doability’ of the proposed research as well as the students’ perceived ability to conduct the research. Distal throughput, as discussed earlier, is considered but is not the prime focus of this study.

1.2.1 Experiences from South African Postgraduate Research

Prompted by the concern over drop-out rate and completion indices of postgraduate students over a number of years at the University of Pretoria, a survey was conducted in 2006 by the University’s Unit for Research and Development. In reporting on the state of

research-based postgraduate education in the institution, many issues at postgraduate level which hamper and challenge the students were highlighted (Du Plessis, 2007). Of interest to this study was the category of adjunct support which includes academic writing skills⁴.

Students report dissatisfaction with research support which includes support in academic writing skills (34.7%), the opportunities to develop research skills (26.9%), help in the design and development of experiments and questionnaires (26.2%), support with statistical analysis (27.8%) and support with the interpretation of results (21.5%). In addition, research culture within a department or faculty was highlighted as playing a key role in contributing to the postgraduate experience. It seems that postgraduate students often experience isolation, both socially and intellectually having a need to network with other students and other researchers within the departments, in addition to being notified or included in various academic events such as presentations, workshops and conferences. To sum up, Du Plessis states that “postgraduate students experience a lack of support in the development of their proposals, academic writing, the development of research skills, statistical analyses and the interpretation of results. These elements form the crux of postgraduate studies” (2007, p. 14).

Although Du Plessis’s study did not reveal how issues raised in his report affect throughput rate⁵, figures for the Faculty of Education, taken from the Bureau of Institutional Research and Planning (BIRAP) are tabled below and reveal that over a nine-year period, a mere 30% throughput rate was achieved.

Table 1.1: Faculty of Education, UP: Postgraduate throughput rate (BIRAP)

FACULTY OF EDUCATION, UP POSTGRADUATE THROUGHPUT RATE		
YEAR	ENROLMENT	GRADUATES
2000	622	209
2001	779	215
2002	788	281
2003	994	312
2004	1002	321
2005	900	279
2006	855	279
2007	867	272
2008	950	241
	7 757	2 409

⁴ The word ‘skills’ was used in the survey and is reported in this section as such.

⁵ Response rate from students in the Faculty of Education was poor and could be as a result of this survey being conducted electronically.

The question thus arises about what can be done to address the issues raised in the report and thus, to assist with the throughput rate.

A further study investigating postgraduate writing at the University of Pretoria (Butler, 2006) has found that supervisors from a range of academic departments have voiced their concern about their postgraduates' academic writing abilities. This study recognises that students tend to be unfamiliar with academic writing conventions, are not English-language proficient and as such are not "yet fully acquired with the academic discourse needed in order to cope independently with the literacy demands of postgraduate study" (Butler, 2006, p. 10). Butler thus recommends that cognisance of the writing needs of postgraduates and how best to facilitate supporting them during their research and writing process, needs to be taken into account (2006).

The findings of these two studies are reinforced by the institutional audits conducted by the Council for Higher Education (CHE) which have revealed that support mechanisms for postgraduate students "have come under (renewed) scrutiny" (Mouton, 2007, p. 1078). Within faculties of education in the South African context, postgraduates are generally older returning students many of whom are full-time teachers and practitioners, and thus part-time students. They come equipped with knowledge, skills and values gained from life and work experience but it cannot be assumed that their prior tertiary education and experience has equipped them with the relevant academic literacies⁶ to undertake independent postgraduate studies. The profiles of postgraduate students within such a faculty reveal that they are predominantly students from a variety of African cultures, mainly born and schooled in the apartheid era, experiencing inadequate early literacy socialisation processes and literacy teaching (Thomson, 2008). If they trained to be teachers, they probably did so in Black teachers' training colleges or Historically Black Universities (HBUs) (Jeevanantham, 1999), being products of fundamental pedagogics which was the dominant education philosophy of the institutions during this era (Adler & Reed, 2002).

Thomson's study (2008), conducted with honours students at the University of KwaZulu Natal on the development of academic literacies describes the entrance requirements for the distance learning Bachelor of Education (BEd) honours programme. During the period 1998-1999 access to distance education programmes was given to teachers who held a

⁶ The term *literacies* is used instead of skills but the concept of literacies will be elaborated on in the review of literature.

four-year diploma. Although this change in admission requirements was in line with the National Committee on Higher Education's mission, it had far-reaching effects. Usually students entering the B.Ed. honours programme would have come through an undergraduate programme, hold a Bachelor's degree, a part of becoming prepared for secondary school teaching, and thus be familiar with the type of discourse required at higher education. In addition, these students almost certainly were able to write coherently and fluently and thus were capable of continuing in higher education. Thomson explains that prior to 1998, most students were English first language speakers and "had the privilege of having all their reading and writing, and social and pedagogical interactions conducted in their primary language" (2008, p. 26). Even if they were not English first language speakers, then they would have had exposure during their undergraduate degree and were considered as having the relevant social and literacy capital (Bourdieu, 1972, 1991) to cope with the demands and expectations of the programme. During their years as undergraduates, they had already been exposed to the various discourses or academic literacies used in higher education learning to read and write in the culture and had probably become enculturated (Bruffee, 1973, 1987) or acculturated into the academy (Thesen & Van Pletzen, 2006, p. 19).

However, the students accepted into this honour's programme post-1998 were predominantly primary school teachers, trained at teacher training colleges thus holding four-year teaching diplomas. During the course of the programme, these students were found to be far from competent in coping with study at this level. In particular, the history of inadequate literacy training both at school and at teacher training institutions impacted on the ability to engage and interact with academically demanding texts, conduct research expected at postgraduate level, as well as their ability to successfully complete the relevant writing tasks (Thomson, 2008).

Although students sampled for the current study may have walked a variety of educational pathways, the history of education in South Africa highlights issues with literacy and language and with unequal delivery of quality education which would have had some impact on their preparedness for study, as discussed in this chapter. In addition, political violence experienced by some students, particularly during the apartheid era (see Chapter 2), would have had an effect on their educational journeys. Attempts by the post-apartheid government of 'righting the wrongs' have led to wider access to higher education, but whether the students have the social and literacy capital described by Bourdieu (1972, 1991) to cope at this level is questionable, a point reinforced by Fraser and Killen, who argue that 'new' students enter higher education with considerable social, economic and cultural deficiencies (2005). As such, Leibowitz acknowledges that students entering

higher education may face one of or all three disadvantages: having to acquire and develop academic literacy, learn in a language that is not their first and overcome the history of poor prior education, both at school and teacher training levels (2000), and although her research relates predominantly to undergraduates, these factors can be applied to postgraduate students as well.

1.2.2 Summary of the Research Problem

A few issues emerge from the above discussion to formulate the research problem at the heart of this thesis. Firstly, there is greater access to higher education in South Africa at present, and postgraduate study within the field of education is encouraged via the call for lifelong learning among teachers (DoE, 1996) evidenced by increasing numbers hoping to upgrade their qualifications (Duke & Jones, 2005). However, as massification has resulted in a greater diversity of students, culture and language has to be taken into account, a situation which universities previously did not have to consider as most HEIs were mono-racial. Thus, language and literacy need to be considered.

Secondly, many students entering postgraduate studies are academically under-prepared because of their educational background (see Chapter 2) and need greater support and development. However, increasing numbers of postgraduate students, not only in the field of education, has had an effect on the increasing student:supervisor ratio which results in diminishing individual supervisory attention. In addition, research by Singh has cited an “inadequate number of suitably qualified and experienced supervisors” and thus “uncertainty into the quality of supervision” as added problems (2011, p. 1021). This problem is exacerbated by the reduction in university subsidies, which means fewer resources for postgraduate students including support services and supervision. Increased workload of supervisors thus negatively affects the throughput rate.

Thirdly, postgraduate study to upgrade teacher qualifications either for personal gain such as promotion, or for professional development supported financially by the various national and provincial departments of education, or for a humanistic goal of improving the education situation in South Africa, can be a wonderfully fulfilling and enriching one. However, it can also be the opposite, resulting in high student drop out and failure to complete studies, and as South African research has shown, this is a regular occurrence (Cronje, 2007; Holtzhausen, 2005; Mouton, 2007; Watson, 2008).

Finally, with HEIs allowing wider access and encouraging entrance into study at postgraduate level, a positive climate for postgraduate study should be created with developmental interventions for ensuring that students are successful in their studies. However, this is often lacking in master’s and doctoral programmes (see Du Plessis,

2007) and instead of students finding pleasure, fulfilment and benefit in their learning experiences, the journey becomes a troubled one with drop-out numbers being high (see Herman, 2011; Holtzhausen, 2005; Sayed, Kruss & Badat, 1998; Watson, 2008).

Research has previously been conducted on ways to support postgraduates in their writing (Dowse & Van Rensburg, 2011; Nel, 2006, 2008; Smith, 2000) particularly as failure to successfully complete the writing of the dissertation is a major obstacle to achieving a master's qualification. However, to date little research that details the characteristics of an appropriate intervention to develop academic research writing has been conducted. Furthermore, there is a need to deepen an understanding of the development of academic research writing particularly in the South African context.

I therefore argue that there is a need to investigate and understand academic writing needed at postgraduate level and then design and develop an intervention which may provide postgraduate students in education with a greater probability of success, ensuring that they are better equipped to complete the research and academic research writing component of their studies. At the time of writing, no academic research writing development or support was available for students within the Faculty outside of this particular master's programme.

1.3 THE PRIMARY RESEARCH QUESTION AND OVERALL AIMS OF THE STUDY

This research's primary research question is:

What are the characteristics of an intervention for developing academic research writing which will best support postgraduates in education in the first stage of their research?

In order for this question to be answered, this study sought to obtain insight and understanding of the demands of academic research writing at postgraduate level; however, various aspects needed to be considered regarding how students best develop their academic research writing. Accordingly, a review of the literature (see Chapter 3), was conducted focusing on language, literacy and discourse as well as identifying approaches to the teaching of writing. Only once understanding was underpinned by theory, and a needs analysis conducted with students sampled for the study (see Chapters 5), could an academic research writing intervention be designed and developed which would support them in the first stage of their research and prepare them for independent academic research writing. This intervention was aimed at supporting the master's students through their first year of study, in which the research proposal (a

substantial 20-30-page document) is prepared and then successfully defended within the first year of study (Faculty of Education, 2010).

1.4 AN OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN

Design Research, considered the most appropriate research design for use in this study, is an approach that has gained momentum in recent years particularly in the field of educational research (Van den Akker, Gravemeijer, McKinney, & Nieveen, 2006b). This research design is conducted in a number of phases and cycles, where a problem is identified and through a cyclical process a solution is sought. A characteristic of Design Research is that problems are addressed for which no *how to* guidelines exist with the dual aim of developing research-based interventions as solutions to these problems as well as to advance our knowledge about the characteristics of these interventions and the processes of designing and developing them (Plomp, 2009; 2013).

Design Research is characterised as interventionist, iterative, process-oriented, utility-driven and theory orientated (Van den Akker et al., 2006a; Van den Akker et al., 2006b) and is described as “a series of approaches, with the intent of producing new theories, artifacts [sic] and practices that account for and potentially impact learning and teaching in naturalistic settings” (Barab & Squire, 2004, p. 2). In addition, as this research involves active participation of practitioners at various stages of the intervention, it is considered practitioner research (Plomp, 2013).

Van den Akker explains the process of Design Research by saying that: “If you want to design intervention X (for the purpose Y in context Z), then you are best advised to give that intervention the characteristics A, B, and C [substantive emphasis] and do that via procedures K, L, and M [procedural emphasis] because of arguments P, Q, and R” (1999, p.9). Thus, in this study, an intervention (X) for the sample of education postgraduate students registered for a specific master’s programme in 2011 within the South African context (Z), was designed and developed to assist them in developing proficiency in academic research writing (Y) needed for success at this level of study. To accomplish this task, characteristics drawn from the theory on academic literacies were identified (A, B, and C). In addition, a needs analysis revealed aspects, which would inform the design and development of a programme with particular procedures to developmentally support them through the process of their research writing (K, L, and M) with the aim of successfully completing and defending their research proposals within the first year of study (P, Q, and R).

The main research question is addressed through a number of phases which constitute Design Research and where secondary questions are developed with the type of scientific judgement needed in evaluating an intervention. This development of secondary research questions (discussed in Chapter 4) leads to an identification of the characteristics required from the main research question and draws on Nieveen's (2007) criteria for high quality interventions where *relevance*, *consistency*, *practicality* and *effectiveness* are considered.

Design Research aims at placing educational events in a broader context by framing them as instances of more encompassing issues. As such, the focus of the study included a variety of aspects such as student learning, developed through a number of iterative cycles resulting in the defence of the research proposal, which effectively assisted in throughput of the first stage of the master's programme

1.5 THE ORGANISATION OF THE THESIS

The first chapter begins by delineating issues found in postgraduate study drawn from both national and international literature and then outlines experiences in working with postgraduate students. This chapter presents the research problem with the rationale for conducting this study. The main research question is presented with a brief overview of the research design applied in this study.

Chapter 2 focuses on the context of education in South Africa illustrating possible pathways that the current students may have had to travel in order to reach the postgraduate level and the way in which this impacts on their literacy proficiency and thus their academic writing proficiency. This chapter outlines the history of the education system which through the years has been influenced by education policies and particularly those of language, promulgated by the ruling parties. Of particular interest are the years of apartheid rule by the Afrikaner Nationalist government and how these policies, put in place in this era, have influenced the education journeys of the current students and the development of language and literacy.

A review of the literature is the focal point of **Chapter 3** and particularly concentrates on language, literacy and discourses, and then investigates the theory underpinning the teaching of academic research writing. Academic support is briefly investigated in countries such as the US, UK and Australia taking particular note of the move away from a deficit model to that of a developmental model. Consideration is given to various models of the teaching of academic writing which could be appropriate in the South African context particularly with education students. Once an understanding of academic research

writing was reached, a conceptual framework which underpins the study and provides the lens for viewing the findings is developed towards the end of the chapter.

Chapter 4 offers a discussion of the research design and overall methods used in this study providing the background to the design and methods elaborated on in subsequent chapters. The chapter begins with a description of Design Research which sits comfortably within the pragmatic paradigm and is most appropriate for this type of research. Design Research is cyclic and iterative and as such moves through a series of cycles and phases, each time reflecting on the results of the previous cycles and phases which inform the revision and improvement of the intervention. Therefore, each phase is summarised in this chapter. The methods are discussed in terms of sampling, the development of the instruments and their application, the data collection and analysis strategies employed.

As Design Research is cyclic, the detailed description of each cycle is described with the results of that cycle to facilitate the understanding of the research. Phase 1, which deals with identifying the problem through practice (Cycle 1) and identifying the problem through a needs analysis (Cycle 2), is discussed in **Chapter 5**. Results from both cycles in this phase inform the development of the postgraduate intervention described in Chapter 6.

Chapter 6 describes Semester 1's intervention implemented in Phase 2 (Cycle 3 and 4) The intervention, designed to develop academic research writing and support the 2011 cohort of master's students during Semester 1 while they were conceptualising and writing their research proposals, was conceptualised from the findings of the needs analysis. Qualitative and quantitative evaluations by all students form the basis for the findings of this section.

Semester 2's intervention (Cycle 5 and 6) which continues its support of students in the development of their academic research writing is described in **Chapter 7**. The reconceptualisation and design and development of the intervention draws on student evaluations, expert review and reflection. The results of the qualitative and quantitative evaluations are also presented in this chapter.

Phase 3 (Cycle 7) is the evaluation cycle, which draws from all student evaluations, assessments, the student questionnaires as well as interviews conducted with the students. In addition expert review and reflection adds to the evaluation and is reported on in **Chapter 8**.

Chapter 9 offers design principles emerging from this research which feed into the development of a model for academic research writing aimed at developing postgraduate research writing.

Chapter 10 addresses the overarching research question in addition to drawing on the findings of the empirical research and an interpretation of the data. It brings this study to a close with a concluding discussion summarising the research, offering my reflections, both methodological and conceptual, of the research conducted, making recommendations for policy, practice and further research, and drawing final conclusions.

CHAPTER 2: GENERAL SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION CONTEXT

I have seen very few countries in the world that have such inadequate educational conditions. I was shocked at what I saw in some of the rural areas and homelands

Robert McNamara, 1982 Past-president of the World Bank, on a visit to South Africa (Christie, 1996, p.13)

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The context of this study is general South African education in terms of academic literacy. South Africa is a 1.2-million square kilometre land mass situated at the extreme tip of the African continent. Its diverse peoples of almost 49-million (Statistics SA, 2013) is democratically ruled following the 1994 elections in which, for the first time in the country's history, all adult citizens were allowed to participate.



Figure 2.1: Position of South Africa in Africa

For the educational system in South Africa, this election was an historic turning point as it was only after the 1994 elections that a single and uniform education system allowed the African, Indian, Coloured and White⁷ children to be educated together, in contrast to the separate and unequal systems of the colonial and apartheid pasts.

The early education system in South Africa, where the education provided was in line to meet the needs of a particular society at a particular time, is outlined in Appendix A. What emerges from this brief history is that education was differentiated along lines of colour and social class, underpinned by the ideological doctrines of the ruling class/party and this impacted on the development of its people's literacies.

To gain an understanding of this context, Kallaway explains that "the investigation of educational issues has to be located within the broader context of political, social and economic change if we are to grasp the more general, structural significance of shift in educational policy" (1984, p. 1). This position is reinforced by Hlatshwayo who highlights the relationship between education and social processes, developing the understanding

⁷ These four categories form the major race groups delineated in the apartheid era.

that education “cannot be studied in a vacuum; it must be located within the broader context of linked political, social, and economic changes” (2000, p. 1).

The sections in this chapter centre around a discussion on the education system that developed after 1948 where education policies were put in place which resulted in formalised segregation and inequality. As these policies had an effect on the education of the postgraduate students sampled for this study, this section is illustrated with quotes taken from the students’ own autobiographical writings (cohort 2011). Section 2.3 concludes the chapter with a reflection of the lessons learnt: how the education policies and history have affected the students, who are now returning to postgraduate study, and the development of their academic literacies.

2.2 EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA POST 1948

In the years immediately prior to the National Party coming to power in 1948, South Africa experienced rapid economic growth. During World War II, local industries generated a need for more skilled and semi-skilled workers leading to mass. Consequently, both African and White moved into the towns and cities causing overcrowding, highlighting the lack of facilities such as houses and schools.

Schooling provision for Africans during the two decades prior to apartheid had seen no standardisation of administrative arrangements with most schools being operated under the auspices of the church or missions but there were some schools run by the state and community, as well as tribal schools (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1: Distribution of African schools in 1926

Province	Mission Schools	Government Schools
Cape	1 625	1
Natal	487	66
Transvaal	397	1
Orange Free State	194	0
Total	2 702	68

(Source: Horrell, 1963a, p. 27)

One does need, however, to understand the vital link between education and employment, which “was at the core of the structuring of African education” (Hlatshwayo, 2000, p. 48). Funding for African schools came from the central government and although it had seen increase over the years, in contrast to the funding of white schools, it was still inadequate. Education for Africans was thus marked by “a shortage of teachers, many of whom were poorly qualified or not qualified at all, school facilities were limited: buildings

were usually rudimentary and inadequate, and there were shortages of furniture, books, and other equipment” (Christie & Collins, 1984, p. 165).

A significant event in the political history of South Africa was the general election of 1948, which saw the National Party, a party consisting of predominantly white Afrikaans middle class workers and farmers, coming into power (Christie & Collins, 1984). One of the defining policies introduced by the National Party was the policy of apartheid which “permeated all aspects of South African life” (Fiske & Ladd, 2006, p. 97), and “produced long-lasting trauma and suffering” (Kros, 2010, p. xvii). From the time of implementation to the mid-1990s, the apartheid education system reflected the government’s segregationist racial philosophy far more clearly than any other social institution (Byrnes, 1996) and with it, literacy became increasingly politicised and a contested terrain. Under apartheid, all sections of education were affected; for example, once the Bantu Education Act of 1953 was implemented, schooling for Blacks fell under Native Affairs; from 1963, coloured education fell under the Department of Coloured Affairs; and later, in 1965, the Indian Education Act brought Indian education under the Department of Indian Affairs. White schooling too was affected. In 1967, Christian National Education (CNE) principles for white schooling were introduced after the National Education Policy Act was passed. Thus, under this system, patterns of educational inequality were entrenched (Christie, 1996) with the implementation of a national strategy for differentiated education (Atkinson, 1978) and a new ideology was introduced into the schooling systems (Atkinson, 1978; Christie & Collins, 1984).

In the following section of this chapter, I discuss only Bantu education and not education in general, the effect that the apartheid policies and resistance to these policies had on its development and the children educated in this system and hence, the development of their literacies.

2.2.1 The Introduction of the Bantu Education Act of 1953

Writing in 1994, Mohlala described apartheid education as “a system of education practised in South Africa where different population groups receive separate, unequal, and racist education based on their skin colour”, but “the worst inconvenienced population group by this education system are the Blacks” (1994, p. 8) whose literacy then developed along racial lines. This was particularly so, as Bantu Education structured education to equip Blacks for “mental and economic servitude” (Mohlala, 1994, p. 8). A participant⁸ in

⁸Student writing has contributed to this chapter with students’ reflections of their experience of schooling under Bantu Education. To ensure that the text remains authentic, editing has not been done and language errors may still be present.

this study agrees, writing: *sadly, I also understood that the type of education provided to Black South Africans was designed to produce workers rather than people who can create jobs* (P.4⁹). Hlatshwayo argues that in hindsight, the effects of segregation of education in the preceding years of the colony were “benign in comparison to the zealous restructuring of African education to Bantu Education by the Nationalist party in 1953” (2000, p. 53), which ensured that education for coloured, Asian and African children was distinctly different to that of the white child (Hlatshwayo, 2000) – *the effects of apartheid [education] on lives of Black people are huge and deep rooted* (P.6).

In 1949, the new National Party (NP) government appointed a commission led by former Transvaal Chief Inspector of Education, Dr Eiselen, to investigate African educational provision (Behr, 1984; Kros, 2010; Molteno, 1984). It recommended that in order to reform the Bantu school system radical measures were needed (cited in Kros, 2010) by ensuring that “black education [would become] an integral part of a carefully planned policy of segregated socio-economic development for the black¹⁰ people” (Christie & Collins, 1984, p. 160).

Other researchers have described Bantu Education as a type of education designed for blacks which aimed at providing separate and unequal education for the different South African races (Hlatshwayo, 2000; Nkabinde, 1997), in line with the ideology of Christian National Education (CNE), a system which sought to entrench the superiority of the white Afrikaner, underpinned by theory drawn from German fascism (Hlatshwayo, 2000). This radically restructured education system with syllabi adapted for Black education (Christie & Collins, 1984), focused primarily on equipping Blacks with practical and technical skills to work in the white economy as labourers but fell short in developing thinkers and professionals (Hlatshwayo, 2000; Mohlala, 1994; Nkabinde, 1997), the problems then encountered could be aligned with racialised literacy.

One of the recommendations of the Eiselen Commission (1949-51) was that “education be conducted in the vernacular for the first four years of schooling and thereafter, progressively year by year until it covered the full eight years of primary schooling, that is, Grades 1 and 2 and Standards 1 to 6” (Van Zyl, 1997, p. 69). In addition, the Commission recommended that the most prominent official language of the area be introduced as a subject in the second year of schooling, with the second official language following not later than the fourth year. However, the Department of Bantu Education made the

⁹ P. represents the participants who were assigned numbers to ensure anonymity.

¹⁰ I have made the decision to use the upper case for Black throughout the text; however, some direct quotes use the lower case black. In such cases, this has been left as is.

decision to introduce both official languages in the first year of schooling, with Afrikaans becoming a formal subject in the fourth year. Choosing between English or Afrikaans as a compulsory subject in secondary school was a recommendation ignored by the Department. Thus, three languages were used, a trilingual medium of instruction, which meant that examination subjects were taught on an equal basis through English and Afrikaans and non-examination subjects were taught through the vernacular. A notion to bring in here is that of Bourdieu's (1991) where language or literacy is not just a means of communication but is seen as a mechanism of power.

As can be expected, this policy was met with fervent opposition (Christie, 1996; Hlatshwayo, 2000; Van Zyl, 1997). In practice, English was used as the medium of instruction as teachers were not equipped to teach content subjects through the medium of Afrikaans. The Nationalist government consequently clamped down on the practice insisting that official languages be used on a 50/50 basis and that by 1975 this practice be adopted in all schools (Christie, 1996; Van Zyl, 1997).

In 1953, the Bantu Education Act brought African education under the Department of Native Affairs, giving control to the government and at the same time removing it from the churches and provincial authorities. Instead of strengthening the provision of education, this policy widened the gaps. The Act declared that schools needed to be registered with the government. This action saw the closing down of almost all mission schools (5 000) and the ceding of their buildings to the government, a measure which made it difficult for mission schools to remain open and independent (Christie & Collins, 1984; Horrell, 1963b, 1964, 1970). Under the new act, three types of schools for Africans were allowed and included Bantu Community schools, state-aided schools (mission schools fell into this category¹¹) and government schools but all these were primarily situated in African reserves as a result of the Group Areas Act which separated races (Christie, 1996; Horrell, 1963b, 1964, 1970).

There was church objection and resistance to the closing of mission schools, with the exception of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC). After much discussion and debate, the churches took a variety of decisions about the continued running of their schools but only some Roman Catholic mission schools (700) remained opened as state-aided schools. But even though the Church was successful in retaining their schools (by 1953 the Catholic Church was running 15% of Black schools (Abraham, 1989)), a compromise with the government had to be reached. This compromise meant that the running of the

¹¹ Some mission schools, like Inanda and St Peters, did survive.

Catholic mission schools was in according with government guidelines (Christie, 1996) which included “syllabuses ... emanating from the government and imbued with the ideas of racial inferiority” (Christie & Collins, 1984, p. 162).

The years of Bantu Education saw a great increase in the numbers of African students attending school but one should note that mass schooling of Black children did not necessarily mean quality schooling. “In fact, it perpetuated and exacerbated existing inequalities” (Burger, nd, p. 4 online) particularly as finances were not readily available, which curbed resourcing for schools (Christie, 1996). Figures show that in 1955, only 595 African language speaking students sat for the matriculation exam (Heugh, 1999) but by 1994 this number had increased to 392 434, although pass rates, hovering at around 45%, and seemed to highlight the poor provision of quality education for African students except in 1976 where the pass rate was pinned at 83.7%.

2.2.2 Resistance to the Bantu Education Act of 1953

Although the Soweto uprising of June 1976 is regarded as the highpoint of resistance to Bantu Education and became a landmark in South African history, a long continuing history of resistance from early settler days (Christie, 1996) was experienced in the education system (see Appendix A). But, after the Bantu Education Act of 1953, resistance became more overt with school boycotts and unrest at universities and teacher training colleges.

Dissatisfaction of Black students led to the development of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) whose motto was “black man you are on your own” (Cross, Carpentier, & Ait-Mehdi, 2009, p. 483) with the formation of South African Students Organisation (SASO) at universities but support for this resistance movement soon spread through the African community. Black Consciousness (BC) “stood for a rejection of white domination in all forms – political, economic, psychological and cultural” (Christie, 1996, p. 236). During the 1970s, BC played a major role with groups such as SASO and South African Students’ Movement (SASM) both of which featured prominently in resistance in schools and on campuses (Hlatshwayo, 2000).

Throughout the early 1970s, evidence of resistance was not only seen in schools but in industry as well with the re-emergence of labourer militancy with Black worker strikes and revolts in the mines in 1973-74, and political trials during 1975. The resistance seemed to be aligned to the greater political unrest both within South African as well as in neighbouring countries such as Mozambique (Christie, 1996).

With all the above happening in the 1970s, the announcement by the Minister of Bantu Education in 1975 that half the subjects in Standard 5 and Form 1 should henceforth, be taught in Afrikaans (Hlatshwayo, 2000), sparked widespread opposition, the need for literacy empowering people to rebel. It “proved to be the last straw in the on-going crisis of the previous years” (Kallaway, 1984, p. 24). SASM, in opposition to this enforcement of Afrikaans as medium of instruction, planned a demonstration which took place on 16 June 1976 with 20 000 students marching through Soweto, a Black township situated to the west of Johannesburg (Christie, 1996; Hlatshwayo, 2000). Once the police opened fire killing their first victim, Hector Petersen, the uprising escalated with students responding violently meting out damage to properties and vehicles (Hlatshwayo, 2000). The uprising soon gained momentum with townships across the greater Johannesburg and Pretoria area becoming involved. *Tembisa [on the East Rand] was also on fire, when the Soweto uprising started and spread across the country. All I remember was seeing buildings on fire, people dragging burning tires across the road, police cars sounding sirens and hearing gun shots. This was a confusing and frightening experience indeed for me. I ran from school to home as fast as I could. From that year onwards schooling for most Black children was generally disrupted (P.4).*

Violence spread to other townships across South Africa (Behr, 1984), at the Black universities where untold damage was done to buildings and in the homelands. Molteno explains that during this time “tens of thousands of men, women and children, students, parents and workers, in some 200 Black communities throughout the country, including the Bantustans, actively participated in the uprising” (1979, p. 54).

Violence over the next few years, which involved not only students but workers and ultimately the whole community, took its toll on both the people and education, with schools being burned down, houses being raided, people being attacked by police dogs, guns, teargas, armoured cars and helicopters and many being detained in custody with some, such as Steve Biko, the BC leader dying in detention in 1977 (Christie, 1996). By October 1977, virtually all BC organisations were banned and according to Kane-Berman (1993), “these bannings constituted the severest act of political suppression by the state since the outlawing of the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan African Congress (PAC) in 1960” (cited in Christie, 1996, p. 241). The costs to the people were enormous with many thousand dying, many more thousands were injured and many fled the country: “a generation of lives was disrupted” (Christie, 1996, p. 245).

On a more constructive note though, a number of changes did occur in education as a result of the Cillie Commission (Behr, 1984). Afrikaans was removed as a compulsory

medium of instruction and content was taught through English as a second language for students whose languages at home are other than English, (see Section 3(b) of the Education and Training Act 90 of 1979) (Behr, 1984). Thus, through violence, the people were given the opportunity to once again develop literacy in education. One participant in this study says that he thinks that English as an alternative was chosen not because Black people hated Afrikaans but because *Afrikaans was perceived to represent an extension of White Afrikaans domination and thus perpetuating deprivation and inequalities* (P.4).

However, change was to occur once more and in 1979, the Education and Training Act replaced the Bantu Education Act of 1953 with the Department of Education and Training (DET) taking control of education.

2.2.3 The Education and Training Act of 1979

As a result of this new act, which seemed to align literacy and skills development for entry into industry and the economic life of the country, higher levels of funding were expended on African education with schools being built, particularly secondary schools (70% more students in homelands and rural areas with 30% attending farm schools - *one challenge that I encountered was the long distance I had to travel to school. I had to walk for about 8km to get to school every day* (P.3) as school buses were not provided for transporting children from the farming areas to the farm schools.

It seems that the increase in education provision at this time resulted in more students passing matric (Van Zyl, 1997). Nonetheless, Black education was still segregated and unequal (Christie, 1996; Van Zyl, 1997). For example, *there was no crèche and pre-school (P.8) to prepare children for formal schooling and in many areas, a limited number of classrooms meant that children attended in shifts. Each shift lasted for only three and half hours including thirty minutes break. The morning shift went from half past seven to eleven o'clock while the second one went from eleven to half past two in the afternoon* (P.6). This participant loved the system *because it gave us (me and other children) more time to play*. It was only years later when qualified as a teacher herself *did I realise that learning for three hours per day was not appropriate* (P.6).

In addition, *we were aware that white children were receiving education of better quality* (P.6). In particular, *limitations of the curricular were very severe ...there was no such thing as choosing subjects for Standard 8 (Grade 10) since there were only three content subjects which were Agricultural Science, Geography and Biology in addition to the three compulsory languages (English, Sepedi and Afrikaans)[in the Department of Education and Training (DET), Transvaal]. There were very few schools which offered Mathematics and Science. Having had no choice in the subjects at school was equivalent to having no*

say in my career path. It was a given that majority who passed Standard 10 would go to a teacher training college or nursing college (P.6).

As such, all Black organisations “rejected the continuing categorisation of education on a racial basis and the retention of a separate department of black education” (Davies, 1984, p. 352). The NP government, in 1979, as part of its negotiation phase, attempted to put a strategy in place for educational reform which would offer a “dramatically improved education ‘dispensation’ for black school-children and students” (Davies, 1984, p. 341). However, participants in this study refute the claim reflecting that the DET [Act] *was well planned and executed with maximum effect on all aspects of a Black person. The impact had a devastating ripple effect on the family, economic participation and the general academic progress. My educational journey was characterised mainly by disturbances such as class boycotts (P.4).*

In 1980, school boycotts commenced once more, first in the Cape and then spreading throughout the country supported by 140 000 students involving not only Black students but students from other race groups as well. Research by Du Toit (1993) postulates that even with negotiations between the government and the ANC taking place, “inverse discourages” were seen in the development of “civil society” where movements took the lead in organising and participating in protests (cited in Graaff, 2001, pp. 112-113).

2.2.4 Resistance to the Education and Training Act of 1979

The protests, as in 1974, were about poorly equipped schools - *we went back to the school without furniture, windows, doors, fence and roof (P.1), shortage of qualified teachers - teachers were often lowly qualified (two year certificate) or unqualified (P.6), dismissals of politically-orientated teachers, corporal punishment and the presence of security police at schools - police driving around school premises and sometimes throwing teargas for no apparent reason (P.4) - all occurring within an economic recession.*

However, unlike the earlier boycotts, protestors understood the theory behind the apartheid policy. They were attempting to change the ideology of education, from one that prepared Black students for a lesser role in society to equipping them to take on an integral role in South African society, taking literacy and skills development into a political arena. In addition, these school boycotts were well-planned and organised and alternative education programmes, were put in place – and thus becoming literate in violence was the aim. *We resolved to teach each other, hence the slogan “each one teach one” was adopted by the then Soweto Students Congress (SOSCO) [of] which I was a member. That meant working twice as hard on our part. Accordingly, we started study groups that met from Monday to Thursday at our nearest high school. The school had a night school*

facility and that is how we had access to the premises. Study sessions started from six in the evening to nine at night. The unintended consequence was spending no time with family members thereby losing quality family time. Furthermore, the situation gave rise to the widening generation gap with our parents and broke communication channels between ourselves and our parents (P.4).

One result of the 1980 school boycotts was the setting up of the De Lange Commission, an in-depth investigation into education which recommended amongst other things, a single education department for South Africa with equal quality and a changed schooling structure, a recommendation rejected by the Nationalist government (Christie, 1996; Hlatshwayo, 2000; Van Zyl, 1997), but later put into practice following the democratic elections of 1994.

With an uneasy calm in schools, a number of Black organisations such as the Congress of South African Students (COSAS), the Azanian Students Organisation (AZASO) and the Azanian Students Movement (AZASM) were set up (Christie, 1996; Van Zyl, 1997). Black participants in this study all recall that by 1983, *learners in many schools started being aware of the politics of the country (P.4) ... joined organisations like the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) and the Pan Africanist Students Organisation (PASO) (P.6) and the then Soweto Student Congress (SOSCO) (P.4) as most of us including me felt anger towards the whites, so being political was a way of venting out the feelings (P.6).*

Once protests and boycotts erupted again in 1984, these organisations, as well as newly formed ones, strengthened, playing a pivotal role as the unrest spread through urban centres as well as into rural areas over the next few years. *Rural schools experienced some violence, but not as intense as in the urban areas (P.6). However, the area (like most rural places) started to embrace the politics of the country and their influence on education particularly as the limitations of the Bantu curriculum were harsher on rural children's education (P.6).*

The protest focus shifted from education alone to incorporate a broader social change with the students growing more and more revolutionary (Christie, 1996). *This was as a result of the growing awareness of what was happening (politically) throughout the country especially in urban areas. We started participating in school boycotts and other activities that were of general political nature, since the message of "Liberation before Education" grew louder every day (P.6), and becoming the guiding slogan (Du Toit, 1993; Essop, 1992, p. 4; Van Zyl, 1997). Resistance during this period became nationwide and at the*

end of 1984, half a million people took part in a stay away (Christie, 1996) which involved both students and workers.

By October 1985, the Black education system in Soweto had for all intents and purposes, collapsed (Morrow, 1990; Van Zyl, 1997) with schooling having been disrupted for almost two years. Across South Africa, Black schooling was in crisis with schools in some areas not operating at all (Christie, 1996). *In 1986 when I was in Standard 10 (matric) we lost four months of schooling because some of the COSAS members were arrested for participating in a political march. The atmosphere was very uncertain and tense and terrifying (P.6).*

With the constant disruptions in the communities, schools changed from places of learning to places of conflict (Christie, 1996), undermining literacy advancement and in addition, having a massively stressful effect on the lives of the youth. One participant explains what happened to him during this time: *As a result of these boycotts, the academic year was cut to only six months. In other words, I only attended school until June and had to repeat the then Standard 7 now Grade 9 the following year. A similar situation happened in 1986 when I was in the then Standard 8 now Grade 10. These situations inevitably extended my high school years (P.4).* John Samuel, ANC Education Desk (1990, p. 54 cited in Christie, 1996, p. 259) captures this occurrence in his statement:

For the past fifteen years, education in this country has been disrupted, undermined and underdeveloped. During this time, the basis of learning as a social activity has been destroyed. Learning as a social activity is an important ingredient in generating a sense of community. The erosion of this in urban black communities manifests itself in many different ways ...

and as a result, *student success came at a price (P.4).*

Within this context, the National Consultative Conference (NCC) was organised in December 1985 to deal with the crisis in education and the slogan “Liberation before Education” was replaced with “People’s Education for People’s Power” (Essop, 1992) urging students to return to schools and use the power of education to enact change from within. Fr Smangaliso Mkatshwa explains that:

When we speak of People’s Education, we mean one which prepares people for total human liberation; one which helps people to be creative, to develop a critical mind, to help people to analyse; one that prepares people for full participation in all social, political or cultural spheres of society (cited in Christie, 1996, p. 271).

Return to school was slow to begin after the resolutions passed at the December 1985 NCC and there were still disruptions to education delivery in the 1986 school year with continuing resistance through boycotts, particularly as the government at this stage would not unban COSAS (Christie, 1996). During the school year, The National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) was formed and a second NCC conference was held to discuss progress and future plans. This conference endorsed the return to schools for the second term setting out a list of resolutions, many of which were to do with the unbanning of COSAS and the ANC and the freeing of those who had been banned. Vital to schools was the resolution that provision for schooling facilities from crèche level be made by the state and that students be able to return to schools in the new term using schools that were closed, in an attempt to build up the youth through the ideals of People's Education (Christie, 1996). Returning to school was seen as a way of developing an organ of power with and for the people. Once students were back at school they, with their teachers, would be able to "organise and become a force for change to combine with other such forces" (Rensburg cited in Christie, 1996, p. 277). It was envisaged that People's Education for People's Power, incorporating students, parents, teachers, would drive the process in being the agents of change in the type of education foisted upon Blacks during this time. Taking this into account, the NECC attempted, with certain demands in place to ensure their safety and not be subject to detaining and banning of its members, to enter into negotiations with the DET, but there was no response.

However, disruptions continued, particularly as many schools had been closed by the DET and the demands submitted to the DET had not been met. Students once again boycotted schools in areas as KwaNdebele, Natal and at Crossroads in the Cape, and there were major clashes. In June, a state of emergency was declared with members of the NECC either being detained or going into hiding. As such, stricter controls were put in place for students in an attempt to tighten the DET's hold on education (Christie, 1996). In the 1987 school year, many students returned to schools and closed schools were re-opened. However, as issues had not been resolved, a similar pattern was seen to emerge with clashes and boycotts continuing, as further discontent was sparked. The government also attempted to exert further controls over schools with greater restrictions and even attempts to thwart the NECC's plans for a third conference, although a low-key conference did eventually take place where "non-racial, democratic and People's Education as an integral part of the overall struggle for national liberation and freedom from economic exploitation" was reaffirmed (Christie, 1996, p. 289).

In 1988, the government imposed further restrictions with the banning of the NECC and 15 other organisations. During this period, it was difficult for People's Education to

develop and sustain structures within schools, which was exacerbated as various forms of resistance continued throughout the country. DET records show that over 900 schools were affected by boycotts and a third of DET secondary schools by unrest, particularly in areas such as Soweto, the East Rand, the Eastern and Western Cape, the Durban area of Natal, KwaNdebele and Venda. Many schools experienced violence - *Our school was burnt down and closed for the rest of the year (P.1)* and their pupils suffered intimidation - *we were chased by police on several occasions and in most cases my friends were beaten up (P.1)* - and schooling was disrupted. However, students began volunteering in an effort to ensure that education continued amongst the struggles and disruptions: *I volunteered my time for Project Benevolent which offered extra lessons to students from Standards 8-10 on Saturdays (P.4).*

In response, the government attempted to contain the resistance, and imposed further controls with regards to enrolment in schools which included a ceiling age of 21 years, students needing to be accompanied by parents at registration and having various certificates in hand as well as an almost perfect pass success rate (Christie, 1996). As a result, a large number of students were excluded from the schooling system (Christie, 1996). A participant in this study describes how the unrest and school closures affected his progress through secondary school: *These situations inevitably extended my high school years. It also meant that I had to stay in school for longer while my peers dropped out. Staying longer in high school also meant growing older and that was a stark demotivational aspect considering the financial implications associated with being older and from a financially poor background. Despite the sad back [setback], I stayed on (P.4).*

2.2.5 The Winds of Change

During the early months of 1989, changes became apparent as education leaders were released from detention, enacting the Nationalist government's realisation that apartheid could no longer endure. With a regrouping of role players, it was decided that as the NECC's work had been hampered and progress within Black education had been curtailed, a further conference would be organised. The NECC separated its work into two sections: a political activist wing, which would continue under this banner and an educational development section under the Education Development Trust (EDT), which it was hoped, would strengthen their efforts. At this time, the NECC unbanned itself to continue its work in openly defying apartheid. Later that year, a full conference was scheduled where all leaders and role players could attend to map the way forward.

During this time, behind the scenes negotiations were motivated by the then State President P.W. Botha in 1986 (Byrnes, 1996). The culmination of these discussions was

the 2 February 1990 announcement by the then State President F.W. de Klerk, of a new political dispensation that was to play a major role in the dismantling of apartheid, its stranglehold on education and the unbanning of political leaders and organisations (Byrnes, 1996; Van Zyl, 1997). Thus, into the early 1990s, discussion centred on the need for a non-racial school system which would serve the diverse South African population equally (Byrnes, 1996). The 1994 democratic elections and the swearing in of Rolihlahla (Nelson) Mandela as state president brought with it an opportunity for the proponents of people's education to actively participate in establishing a new educational dispensation (Van Zyl, 1997). However, as reported by Metcalfe, this transformation "is not cosmetic reform implemented easily in one or two years, but the thorough-going transformation of what was a thoroughly despised system" (1997, p. 16), a process that has taken many years and to date, is still on going.

2.2.6 Education in post-1994 South Africa

One of the first steps taken by the newly-elected democratic government was the abolition of the large number of racially-defined education departments ensuring that race-blind policies were to be put in place (Fiske & Ladd, 2006). The newly formed nine provinces took responsibility for education in their provinces with equal funding from government. Although this seemed to work towards a system of equality, resource provision and funding was determined by the wealth of the provinces and their needs in addressing inequalities. Policies were put in place which would allow access to schooling and schools admission policies could not use race as a means of refusing access. However, as most Africans live in areas such as townships or former homelands, they continue to attend African schools although there has been an increase in Africans migrating to former White, Indian and Coloured schools in urban areas as well as teachers of colour being employed in these former White schools.

Suffice it to say, that transformation in the education system post 1994 did not directly affect the initial education and teacher training of the students registered for this master's programme but it did affect them in their professional roles as teachers and education officials and ultimately, as students registering for further education diplomas and degrees.

Drawing from the above description, where the development of appropriate literacies is affected by the legacy of the past, the discussion moves to looking at the lessons learnt and perhaps an explanation of why students face challenges when entering postgraduate studies in the post-1994 phase.

2.3 CONCLUSION

Principles encapsulated in the Bantu Education Act of 1953 have been blamed for poor education delivery for African language speaking students. Morrow (1990) outlines the type of education provision for the four population groups ‘socially engineered’ during the apartheid years. His description of schooling highlights the sharp contrast of education provision in terms of teacher qualification, teacher:pupil ratio, per capita funding, buildings, equipment, facilities, books and stationery. White schooling was similar to that found in industrialised societies; however, provision for the other three population groups – Indian, Coloured and African – show glaring inequalities with Africans receiving the poorest education provision (Morrow, 1990).

Curriculum content at both primary and secondary levels and the medium of instruction has also been highlighted. The curriculum at primary level aimed at preparing students for a subservient role within a white-dominated society and was in contrast to the more academic curricula developed for white, coloured and Indian schools (Heugh, 1999); Mohlala, 1994; Molteno, 1984). This curriculum is aligned with Freire’s exposition of the “banking” concept of education where students are viewed as empty containers waiting to receive and file information given by knowledgeable teachers (1996, p. 53). The curriculum developed for secondary schools was very similar to that used in white schools; however, it seems that only a small proportion of African students were successfully able to progress to this phase (Heugh, 1999) and it appears that those who did, have had to live with the effects of separate development, inequalities of educational expenditure, inequalities in educational facilities, poor quality of education delivery and a skewed curriculum (findings from Mohlala, 1994).

In addition, Morrow explains that

schooling for blacks in South Africa, and especially that for ‘Africans’, is a ‘site of struggle’, a political cauldron in a chronic state of crisis; it is chancy and sporadic, subject to frequent disruptions and other kinds of breakdown, and usually in radical disarray. A high proportion of students are ‘first generation students’, ‘drop-outs’ are likely to be leaving school for ever, the ‘security forces’ (police and military) keep Black schools under close surveillance, and in many cases are a constant physical presence. Students and teachers are frequently detained [*My involvements in student politics led to my arrest in 1994 with 63 other students for trespassing (P.4)*] often without being charged – and threatened, restricted and harassed in other ways. And Black students,

usually at a very young age, come to realise the political roots of their situation (1990, p. 174-175).

It is in this era of education that most of the students sampled for the current study were schooled and trained as teachers - *the teachers in today's classrooms have their professional foundation on the inferior education they received* (P.6). Their schooling thus has had to have an effect on them and even though many have through the intervening years worked through undergraduate degrees, teaching certificates and diplomas, are perhaps not as prepared for postgraduate study, as is recorded in findings from Mohlala (1994).

This study by Mohlala (1994), conducted in the early 1990s with Black South Africans studying/working in the US, reveals that the effect of education during the apartheid era has had a psychological effect leaving them feeling inadequate, incapable, inferior, less human, unable to think critically, and anxious about venturing into new avenues of study/schooling as the education system did not fully prepare them for higher education. Mohlala refers to WaThiongo who describes colonial oppressors as “annihilate[ing] a people’s belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capabilities and ultimately in themselves” (Mohlala, 1994; WaThiongo, 1986, p. 3). This description resonates with what respondents in Mohlala’s study felt had happened to them at the hands of the apartheid oppressors. They report that Bantu Education never taught critical thinking, radical approaches to learning or critical literacy, resulting in a lack of critical thinking skills and ability to conduct independent study being academically literate. These respondents, working and studying in the US felt as though they were always struggling to keep abreast as they were not prepared for life after school (Mohlala, 1994). This effect on students being educated in the apartheid era is confirmed by Christie and Collins who explain that Black education followed “the overtly ideological dimensions of schooling ... aimed specifically at the reproduction of the sort of workers demanded by the capitalist system” (1984, p. 167).

As such, apartheid education has had far-reaching and long term life effects on Africans educated in this era (Mohlala, 1994). A participant in this study recalls that *another blow on my education was the way I was taught which was memory based. Learners who could shove the contents of a textbook in their memory were regarded as intelligent* (P.6). In moving into tertiary education, *she says that I felt the first effect of Bantu Education at the college where there was a little bit of high order questions (evaluation and analysis for example) and I could not pass them. This really affected my confidence a lot and I could not fathom why suddenly I failed a particular test (I had not failed any test before)* (P.6).

Kros reaffirms Mohlala and Participant 6's view stating that Bantu Education was "a system which produced long-lasting trauma and suffering" (2010, p. xvii).

Essop, in the introduction to the Back to Learning National Education Conference of 1992, reinforces these sentiments by writing that "in the struggle against bantu education, not only have thousands of students lost their lives, but many more have stayed away from school for long periods and have fought standing battles with the army and police (Essop, 1992, p. 2). However, as Freire explains, the oppressed "will not gain ... liberation by chance but through the praxis of their quest for it, through their recognition of their fight for it" (1996, p. 27). And this indeed Black South African students did, but with dire consequences.

A further aspect of the effect of Bantu Education to consider is that of language, explicated by the ANC's Policy Framework for Education and Training: Official language policy in South Africa which has been interwoven with the politics of domination and separation, resistance and affirmation. Over the past centuries, South Africa's colonial and white minority governments have used language policy in education as an instrument of cultural and political control, first in the battle for supremacy between the British and the *Boers*, and subsequently, in maintaining white political and cultural supremacy over the Black majority ... "such struggles have been waged by Afrikaners against British cultural and political imperialism and by blacks against Afrikaner dominated white *baasskap*" (ANC, 1994, p. 61). As previously explained, Afrikaans was introduced as the language of learning, an act which triggered the Soweto riots; however, a move was made to English but as a result, the development of English language, a secondary Discourse, needed in higher education may well have been compromised.

Of interest to this research is that teachers who were schooled and trained in the apartheid eras of the Bantu Education Act and the Department of Education and Training Act are still the teachers presently teaching in the schools. Perhaps because of their training both at secondary and tertiary education levels, the effect that the apartheid policies and the times of resistance and boycotts have had on their educational journeys, they are not all fully equipped for their professional role as teachers. Kros makes the comment that "for those children obliged to go on attending township schools, Bantu Education continues to exercise its brain-numbing potency, transmitted by new generations of hapless teachers" (Kros, 2010, p. xiii) being "victims of a system of education they have no control over" (Mohlala, 1994, p. 70). However, it is these same teachers who need to become the agents of transformation that South Africa sorely needs and it seems that through registering for postgraduate study, they are motivated to do so.

But many of the teachers who are registering for postgraduate study are ill-equipped, as South Africans research has shown (Koen, 2007; Leibowitz, et al., 1997; Leibowitz & Mohamed, 2000; Netswera & Mavundla, 2001; Thesen, 1997; Van Aswegan, 2007). Because of

the treacherous legacy of Bantu Education ... they have been deprived of essential language skills: their reading and writing abilities have been almost irredeemably stunted by the time they come to the university. They have been so conditioned to rote learning and authoritarian styles of teaching that, at first, they can make no sense of a question that asks for critical evaluation or an argued response (Kros, 2010, p. xiii).

Heugh also verifies that the language policies promulgated in the era of Bantu Education did not take into account the relationship between learning and the language(s) of learning (1999) resulting in a student population that is not adequately prepared for higher education and in particular, postgraduate study.

It is clear then, that taking this history into account and the fact that students have been accepted for postgraduate study and are probably first-generation students to move into this level of study (Herman, 2011), that they are lacking in academic literacies and not well-prepared for further study. The following chapter therefore, reviews literature on language, literacy and discourse and then examines approaches to the teaching of writing with the New Literacy Studies as a significant underpinning theory. The review of the literature culminates in the development of a conceptual framework for this study.

CHAPTER 3: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

*Learning to write is learning to think.
You don't know anything clearly unless you can state it in writing.*

Samuel Hayakawa

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 3 reviews the literature on the topic of academic research writing drawing from both current and classic literature. The aim is to understand and explain academic research writing at postgraduate level from a perspective in what is now known as New Literacy Studies.

In reviewing the literature, both Research Question 1: *What constitutes academic research writing required at postgraduate level?* and Research Question 3: *How can postgraduate students be supported in the development of academic research writing?* are considered in this section from a theoretical point of view, but a final response to these questions is drawn from both the theory reported in the literature and the use of this theory in an analytical framework used to work with the data generated by the study.

In order to develop a theoretical understanding, this section begins with a discussion of what constitutes academic writing at postgraduate level (3.2). The next section of the chapter (3.3) looks at concepts of language, literacy and discourse taking in account an understanding of language as espoused by Halliday. The section then moves to a discussion on Discourse, both primary and secondary and how this leads to the acquisition of academic literacies.

Section (3.4) discusses the development of academic support, particularly writing development in the UK, US, Australia and South Africa¹² in an attempt to understand the global shift in conceptualising such support. Thereafter, the discussion moves to various models and approaches used in the teaching of academic writing and thus how postgraduates can be supported in developing their academic research writing.

Discussion of these models shows that literacy is a social practice rather than just a skill or a range of learned generic skills. From a perspective of writing as a social practice it is possible to see how the particular kinds of writing practices valued in the academic context lead to the development of learning. This then leads to the central thesis of this

¹² The US has been involved in the teaching of writing within many programmes such as writing across the curriculum and writing in the disciplines for many decades and drawing on their experience the UK, Australia and South Africa have moved this teaching into the framework of academic development particularly for English Second Language students.

study that it is only in writing to learn in a context conducive to learning where, through writing clarity of thought is developed and ideas are fertilised (Attwood, Broekman, Nichols, & Castle, 2003), that learning to write is facilitated. Research has shown that academic writing is best promoted within contexts of particular academic disciplines (Boughey, 2000, 2002; Jacobs, 2005, 2007a, 2007b; Lea, 2004; Lea & Street, 2000; Lea & Street, 1998; McKenna, 2004b; Street, 2004; Thomson, 2005, 2008) so that the acquisition and development of academic literacies is viewed as the goal of the programme (Boughey, 2000). However, of importance to this study is that writing is an integral part of the research process from the very beginning, hence the concept of academic research writing and the idea of *learning to write by writing to learn*.

Thus, the subsequent section (3.5) reviews the literature on the teaching of academic writing within the New Literacy Studies (NLS), a line of research developed by researchers such as Heath (1983; 1996), Street (1984), Gee (1990) Prinsloo and Breier (1996) and Barton and Hamilton (1998) which argues that literacy, as a set of social practices, cannot be acquired and developed in a vacuum. Different literacies are associated with different domains of life, particularly seen in written texts with some literacies being more dominant, visible and influential than others, being influenced by social institutions and their power relations (Barton, Hamilton & Ivanič, 2000, p.1-15). Focus is on Ivanič's framework of *Discourses of Writing and Learning to Write* (Ivanič, 2004) which takes into account Lea and Street's models with a discussion of the move from an autonomous to ideological model (1998; 2006). Ivanič's framework (2004) takes into account the various discourses associated with the teaching of academic writing. Thereafter, a discussion is conducted on collaboration within a community of practice and finally, the value of giving and receiving feedback is undertaken, which forms the theory of practice for the intervention implemented in this study.

Drawing from the review of the literature, the conceptual framework used in this study is presented (3.6) and then unpacked for greater understanding.

3.2 ACADEMIC WRITING AT POSTGRADUATE LEVEL

The common term used to describe writing at tertiary level is academic writing which Thaiss and Zawacki define as "writing that fulfils a purpose of education in a college or university" (2006, p. 4). These authors suggest that three aspects are considered within the concept of academic writing: "clear evidence in writing that the writer has been persistent, open-minded, and disciplined in study; the dominance of reason over emotion or sensual perception; and an imagined reader who is coolly rational, reading for

information, and intending to formulate a reasoned response” (Thaiss & Zawacki, 2006, pp. 4-8).

Taylor et al. argue that “academic writing is not fundamentally a question of applying skills. Rather, it demands the creation of meaning and the expression of understanding” (1988, p. 2) involving dialogue, reading, thinking and practice within an academic discipline. Russell (in Baker, Clay, & Fox, 1996, p. 118) explains that ‘academic’ writing is not a single thing but an aggregation of literacy practices that make and are made by the epistemologies and practices (including the use of power) of specific disciplines and other institutional formations. Lea and Stierer argue that “the privileged genres of academic writing in a subject area, constitute language forms and usages which encode the ideological positions of participants within powerful institutions” (2000, p. 4). However, the conventions of academic writing are largely transparent to instructors socialised in a discipline, but for many students entering higher education, these conventions are not as yet known and are not made explicit (Lea & Stierer, 2000).

This is seen in postgraduate study as well where students are required to write not only in specific disciplines but also within the specific genres required for writing at this level, particularly when embarking on research which is reported in a dissertation or thesis. As writing is an integral part of the research process from the very beginning, the concept of academic research writing is coined for this study as it encompasses both the idea of academic writing as well as the conducting of research and the reporting thereof.

The purpose of writing at postgraduate level is to develop research skills which will enable the communication of findings in firstly, a research proposal, then the actual thesis or dissertation and thereafter, to disseminate the results of the research in an article or conference proceeding. Therefore, focusing on the initial stages of writing helps to clarify which form to choose, how to focus and organise the writing, what kinds of evidence to cite, and how formal or informal the style should be. In the current study, the term academic research writing is used as it engages with a specific genre of writing consisting of a combination of personal experience and insights which have prompted the research, as well as primary and secondary material gathered through focused research and investigation. The writing is a combination of both argumentative and/or analytical research writing - argumentative in that the writer takes a stance and then through use of sources, debates the issue in an attempt to persuade the reader; analytical in that the writer takes no stance but remains objective throughout (Craswell, 2005).

The genre of research proposal writing¹³ is first entered into as the student puts forward the proposed research and then, based on a similar format to the research proposal, the student works within the genre of dissertation writing through the various chapters in preparation to conducting the research. Once data is collected and analysed, the final chapters of the dissertation require the student to present the findings of the empirical research and then offer a critical interpretation of the findings (see Mouton, 2001). Purdue University's online writing resource center (OWL) explains that a research paper "is the culmination and final product of an involved process of research, critical thinking, source evaluation, organization, and composition" (online).

Postgraduate study for any student is daunting and one would expect that students are prepared and well-equipped to enter postgraduate study. However, this study is situated within the field of education in South Africa and as the students entering the particular programme on which the study was conducted are not the conventional postgraduate students, various aspects needed to be taken into account.

3.3 LANGUAGE, LITERACY AND DISCOURSE

Drawing on the background of education during the apartheid years described in Chapter 2, and the years in which the students sampled for this study were educated, the discussion in this section of the chapter takes cognisance of the country's education history and culture, acknowledging that research in South Africa (see Chapter 1) has shown that many students do not have the cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) to enter postgraduate study. Bourdieu refers to cultural capital being made up of three fundamental aspects that of embodied cultural capital, objectified cultural capital and institutionalised cultural capital. Embodied capital, which includes linguistic capital, is that which is consciously acquired and passively 'inherited' through the socialisation within the family. Objectified capital refers to the physical objects which are owned and signify economic standing or economic profit. Institutionalised capital refers to the recognition given to that obtained in institutions such as academic credentials and qualifications. All aspects of cultural capital contribute to how students experience higher education drawing on value systems developed in the students' homes and their educational environments (Bourdieu, 1986). However, even though entry into postgraduate level is dependent on undergraduate qualifications, cognisance must be taken that these qualifications, in conjunction with previous life experiences and education, may not necessarily have

¹³ Cognisance has to be taken of the various levels of postgraduate study and in this case, the difference between what is expected of the writer at master's level in comparison with that expected at doctoral level. The focus of this study is at master's level.

developed the cultural capital needed to work at postgraduate level, especially in a country such as South Africa. Nomdo (2006) refers to students being aware of the different types of capital that they possess and argues that if they take this into account, they could become agents of their own development.

Included in the notion of cultural capital, is the issue of language or linguistic capital, particularly in the South African context where English for many students is not the home language, although it invariably is the language in which they completed their schooling. Linking into this issue of language is the perception that postgraduates are seen as under-prepared and lacking research knowledge and skills (Netswera & Mavundla, 2001, p. 154) in addition to being hindered by language as a result of their education history. Research conducted in some South African institutions (Henning et al., 2001; Koen, 2007; Kros, 2010; Thomson, 2005) has led researchers to argue that the language issue is a complex one. Language acquisition theory offered by Cummins could be useful in helping understand the language issue in this context. Cummins's research drew attention to the time it took immigrant children to develop fluency in their second language as compared to grade-appropriate academic proficiency in that language (Cummins, 1979). Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) refer to conversational fluency which develops through social interaction from birth and becomes differentiated from Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) after early stages of schooling. CALP (Cummins, 1979) is the ability to understand and express concepts and ideas relevant to success at school in both oral and written modes. Cummins uses the word 'academic' to explain that this is a language acquired in school - "the extent to which an individual has access to and command of the oral and written academic register of schooling" (Cummins, 2000, p.67). BICS and CALP emerge from a framework which makes a distinction between context embedded and context reduced situations and cognitively demanding and cognitively undemanding tasks (Cummins, 2000, p. 68) existing along two intersecting continua as represented in Figure 3.1.

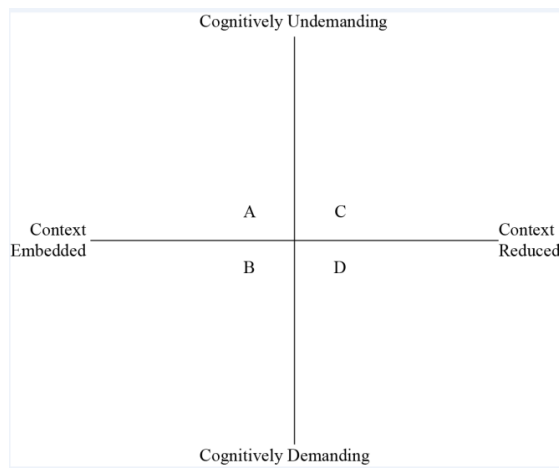


Figure 3.1: Range of contextual support and degree of cognitive involvement in language tasks and activities (Cummins, 2000)

The varied blocks (1-4) in this framework assist in understanding how language is used and what is dependent on the context and the cognitive demands. BICS would be located in quadrant A while CALP would be located in quadrant D. This understanding of language acquisition can assist language practitioners in recognising the challenges that students face in developing academic literacy. If students are speakers of English as a home language and have only developed BICS, this would mean that they would need time to develop CALP in English in order to be successful in an academic environment. In contrast, if students are speakers of English as an additional language, they will have needed time to develop BICS and CALP in their mother tongue and then in English.

The theory of language interdependence proposes that there are common mental processes underlying both first and second language learning. Cummins (1979) refers to this as the “Iceberg” theory where, on the surface, the first and second languages appear to be functioning in isolation. However, under the surface there are developing academic and intellectual processes that are common to both languages (see Figure 3.2).

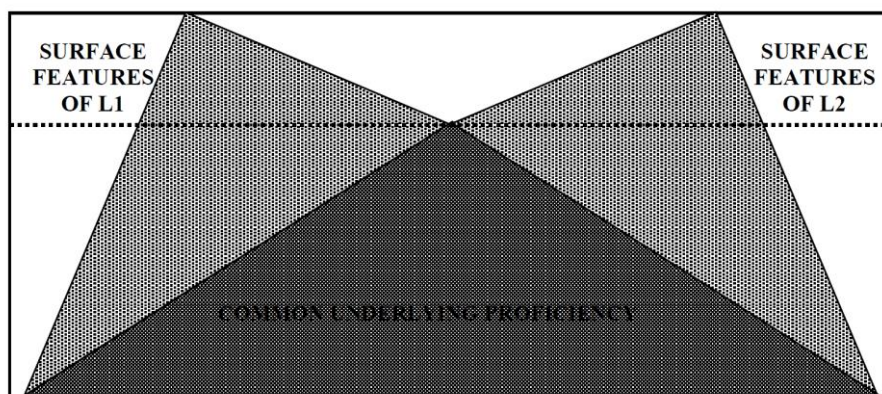


Figure 3.2: Cummins' hypothesis on interdependence of languages: the Iceberg theory (Cummins, 1979)

Cummins' work is valuable in giving some insight into the language challenges faced by South African students. With a variety of home languages, and English as the language of learning, it is important to understand that it is not just the language as such that needs to be mastered but also the underlying language proficiency necessary for the emergence of CALP. Learners' home circumstances and previous educational experiences may not have allowed them to develop this underlying competence.

Jacobs (2007) reinforces the language issue in her research in higher education in South Africa which identifies three dominant institutional discourses: language is seen as an instrument of communication rather than as a means of making meaning (see Christie, 1993); academic literacy is conflated with English proficiency and finally, students are framed in a deficit model (Jacobs, 2007a, 2007b). To avoid falling into these dominant discourses, some understanding of language, literacy and discourse needs to be developed. Of importance here is the need to consider Halliday's language theory (see Halliday 1973; 1978) and the effect that this has had on how language is viewed. Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) developed initially by Halliday and his colleagues in the 1960s, is described as a linguistic model "that is functional from two points of view: the external, that of the function of language in society, and the internal, that of the way a particular language is organised to fulfil the functions it has: to represent the world, to create relations between those communicating and to signal the structure of text" (Halliday 1985, p. 6). In short, SFL is a view of language, "a descriptive and interpretive framework for viewing language as a strategic, meaning-making resource" (Egins, 2004, p. 2).

SFL will not be discussed in-depth in this study, but viewing language as a strategic, meaning-making resource is important in the context of this discussion. SFL sees language as a system of choices made on the basis of the user's understanding of a wider 'context of culture' and a more specific 'context of situation' (see Egins, 2004). This relationship of language use to context aligns with Cummins' (1979) constructs of BICS and CALP since both acknowledge context in language use. Both the contexts of culture and situation need to be accessed, and once there is an understanding of these contexts, this would then lead into the use of 'appropriate' language. As an example, Boughey's research (2000; 2005) in the South African context has shown that students' lack of access to the context of culture of the university more broadly and the disciplines more narrowly impacts on language choices. Her research (2005), conducted with first year philosophy students, reveals that although the student might produce the correct grammatical forms of language, their choices in relation to those forms, are not

appropriate for the context and as a result, fall short of what is expected of them at this level.

Consequently, an argument can be made that language ‘problems’ in South Africa are not a matter of language per se (see Boughey, 2000) but rather a matter of the students’ lack of access to the contexts of culture and situation in the academic world. This notion links in with Bourdieu’s argument about cultural capital and how that has an influence on how students experience higher education (Bourdieu, 1986).

Literacy is inherently ideological, a notion put forward by Street (1984) who promoted the ‘ideological model’ of literacy. This argues that literacy is imbued with values, attitudes and beliefs which inform the contexts in which literacy is practised (Gee, 1990). When students enter higher education, their success is largely dependent on “cracking the cultural code” (Ballard & Clanchy, 1988, p. 11) to gain access. Thus, one needs to consider the institutional, disciplinary and social context in which the students work to assist them in their acculturation into the relevant academic literacies giving them what Morrow refers to as ‘epistemological access’ (1993).

Two distinct views of literacy have been identified by Street (1984). The first is where the development of literacy is viewed as a set of skills where people are taught to decode and encode writing systems such as the alphabet. Street (1984) refers to this conceptualisation of literacy as an ‘autonomous model’, a set of skills which “autonomously – will have effects on other social and cognitive practices” (Street, 2001, p. 7). He argues that this model “disguise[s] the cultural and ideological assumptions that underpin it and that can then be presented as though they are neutral and universal” (Street, 2001, p. 7). Ivanič refers to the autonomous conception of literacy as being “decontextualized skills located in the individual” (2004, p. 221). In this model of literacy, Western conceptions of literacy are often then imposed on other cultures. Research (as reported in Street, 2001) has found that using this model to inform literacy development, is not “an appropriate intellectual tool, either for understanding the diversity of reading and writing around the world or for designing the practical programmes this required” (Street, 2001, p. 8). Prinsloo and Breier explain that Street’s contribution to the discussion on literacy identified the autonomous model in which literacy

regardless of context, was seen as producing particular universal characteristics ... literacy *did* things to people regardless of context For example, it was said to raise cognitive skills, enable them to be detached, and develop in them a meta-cognitive understanding or rational outlook that was crucial for progress (1996, p. 16-17).

This autonomous model aligns itself with the 'Great Divide' theory (Goody & Watt, 1963; Ong, 1982). The 'Great Divide' theory argues that literacy per se bestows cognitive advantage and that there is a major difference between those who are literate and those who are not.

Gee (1990) follows up on this terming such beliefs the 'literacy myth':

The 'literacy myth' is seen to have produced claims that literacy leads to, or is correlated with, logical and analytical modes of thought: general and abstract use of language; critical and rational thought; a sceptical and questioning attitude; a distinction between myth and history; the recognition of the importance of time and space; complex and modern governments; political democracy and greater social equity; economic development; wealth and productivity; political stability; urbanisation; lower birth rates; people who are achievement oriented; productive, cosmopolitan, politically aware, more globally (nationally and internationally) and less locally oriented, who have more liberal and humane social attitudes, are less likely to commit a crime; and more likely to take the rights and duties of citizenship seriously (1990, p. 32).

In contrast to these ideas about literacy and emerging from his anthropological research in Iran, Street pinpointed the idea that although the villagers in his studies would be considered backward and illiterate by Western standards, they were actually utilising a wide variety of practices associated with literacy such as trading in the market, learning within a traditional Koranic school and learning in a state-run school. This idea of a variety of literacies was consonant with Scribner and Cole's seminal work with the Vai in Liberia which led them to identify three types of literacy in use: an Arabic literacy used in religious settings involving activities centred on the learning of the Koran, English literacy acquired in Western-type schools and the indigenous Vai script used in village life but only by some who were 'literate' in its use. Each of these literacies was used in particular contexts for particular purposes (Scribner & Cole, 1976). Scribner and Cole's work allowed them to see that cognitive developments accrued from *schooling* and not from literacy *per se* and thus debunked the 'Great Divide' theory.

Further research into varieties of literacies is reported from around the world - see for example Heath's (1983) work on three communities in the USA, Prinsloo and Breier's work (1996) with the social uses of literacy in South Africa, Papen's (2001) study on the National Literacy Programme in Namibia and Wright's (2001) ethnographical study of

literacy instruction in a rural area of Eritrea as well as a collection of other literacy-related research reported in Street (2001).

Thus, in contrast to the autonomous model, a second view of literacy was proposed as an alternative approach by Street, namely the ideological model which sees literacy as a set of socially embedded practices conceived of as “culturally situated and ideologically constructed” (Ivanič, 2004, p. 221). This view of literacy “implicated in power relations and embedded in specific cultural meanings and practices” (Street, 1995, p. 1), “highlights the power dimension of literacy” (Street, 2001, p.9). This means that researchers recognise that development is a contested issue with consideration needing to be given to what constitutes literacy and which literacy is considered dominant. Researchers, within this model, importantly regard the primary literacy as important, “suspend[ing] judgement as to what constitutes literacy among the people they are working with until they are able to understand what it means to the people themselves, and which social contexts reading and writing derive their meaning from” (Street, 2001, p.9). Street argues that

literacy is a social practice, not simply a technical and neutral skill; that it is always embedded in socially constructed epistemological principles. It is about knowledge: the ways in which people address reading and writing are themselves rooted in conceptions of knowledge, identity, being. Literacy, in this sense, is always contested, both its meanings and its practices, hence particular versions of it are always ‘ideological’, they are always rooted in a particular world-view and a desire for a view of literacy to dominate and marginalize others (Street, 2001, p. 21).

Street (1996) acknowledges that criticism has been levelled at the ideological model. This criticism centres on what he terms the ‘Three ‘Rs’. The critique of the privileging of *relativism* in the ideological model questions the value of literacies that are considered inappropriate for use in the modern globalised world and argues that empowerment comes from the acquisition of dominant literacies. Street counters that the ideological model takes into account dominant and local literacies so that access to particular literacy practice/s is facilitated. He suggests that literacy programmes, underpinned by the autonomous model, have failed in giving people the particular literacy/ies required for social mobility because they fail to take into account the socially embedded nature of literacy and the meanings ascribed to reading and writing in people’s lives. Failing to take into account the meanings ascribed to literacy means that the literacy practices, introduced as a result of a literacy programme, are not always taken up by participants.

The second criticism is that the ideological model *romanticises* local literacies and seems to want to keep the status quo. In reality, the ideological model acknowledges local literacies and works at empowering people by developing an understanding of how literacies and context relate and thus, which literacy practices are the most useful to people in a specific context. This leads into the final criticism centering on *relevance*, which argues that the dominant discourse is the most relevant and thus it rejects alternate literacies such as local literacies and those found in developing contexts (Street, 1996). Street argues that this criticism does not acknowledge the social interconnectedness of literacies and the way literacy practices identified in local literacies can be drawn upon to allow learners to make sense of those related to more dominant literacies.

Drawing on Street's ideological model, then, literacy is best understood as a set of social practices which can be inferred from events which are mediated by written texts (Barton, 1994; Barton, Hamilton, & Ivanič, 2000; Street, 1984). Literacy encompasses ways of knowing particular content, languages and practices and refers to strategies for understanding, discussing, organising and producing texts. It relates to the social context in which text is produced and the roles and communities of readers and writers (Johns, 1997). Viewing literacy from this angle illustrates the link between SFL and the ideological model, both of which acknowledge the significance of contexts.

A variety of literacies are associated with different domains of life and their practices are patterned by social institutions and determined by contexts and power relationships with some literacies being more dominant, visible and influential than others. Literacy practices are purposeful and embedded in broader, social goals and cultural practices as well as being historically situated. In addition, literacy practices change and new ones are frequently acquired through the informal learning and the meaning making process (Barton, 1994; Barton et al., 2000). Thus, literacy not only includes ways of speaking, reading and writing within particular contexts, but also ways of behaving, interacting, valuing, thinking and believing (Gee, 1990, p. 146) that is acceptable within specific groups of people in particular contexts.

Literacy practices emanate from many environments and are necessary to operate successfully within that context. Freire states in *A Pedagogy for Liberation* that the "way you speak also includes the question of power. Because of the political problem of power, you need to learn how to command the dominant language, in order for you to survive in the struggle to transform society" (1987, p. 73).

At this point, Gee's (1990) construct of Discourse becomes useful. Gee makes a distinction between 'little d' discourse and Discourse (with a capital D). The lower lettered

'discourse' he explains as connected stretches of sense-making language while capital D Discourse is a:

a socially accepted association among ways of using language, of thinking, feeling, believing, valuing, and of acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or 'social network' or to signal (that one is playing) a socially meaningful 'role' (Gee, 1990, p. 143).

Discourse then is seen as ways of talking, listening, acting, interacting, believing, valuing and using tools and objects in particular contexts at particular times to display and recognise a particular social identity (Gee, 1996, p. 128). Gee argues that Discourses are acquired as part of socialisation. Literacy, for Gee, is then the ability to demonstrate membership of a Discourse.

According to Gee (1996), all individuals master control of a primary Discourse thanks to the social group into which they are born. However, once they enter education, students are expected to acquire and develop another literacy, "mastery or fluent control over a secondary Discourse" (Gee 1990, p. 153). The primary Discourses of some students more closely match the secondary Discourses of formal education. These students are thus privileged in comparison to those whose primary Discourses can be seen to differ substantially from powerful educational Discourses. Many of the students entering postgraduate level study in South Africa draw on primary Discourses that are far removed from those of the academy. The extent to which they have been able to master the secondary Discourses which will allow them to prosper at postgraduate level as a result of their previous educational and social experiences is then questionable.

Henning et al. argue that it is acknowledged by institutions that they do not really address students' needs, trying to "socialise" students into becoming researchers without really linking their learning "to what they know, where they come from, who they are and what languages they have used throughout their life" (2001, p. 115). Thus students' primary Discourses need to be acknowledged and used as foundations for the development of the relevant secondary Discourses needed within higher education.

Further definitions of literacy are given by a number of researchers. Ballard and Clanchy define literacy within higher education as "a student's capacity to use written language to perform those functions required by the culture in ways and at a level judged acceptable by the reader" (2006, p. 8). Becoming literate in the university involves "learning to read the culture, learning to come to terms with its distinctive rituals, values, styles of language and behaviour" (Ballard & Clanchy, 1988, p.8). Academic literacy is defined in functional

terms as the attainment of professional standards of writing in specific disciplines (Bock, 1998, p. 24) and provides a framework for understanding university writing practices (Lea & Street, 1998, p. 157). If Gee's claims that literacy can only be acquired over time through socialisation into a Discourse is accepted, then time enters the equation. However, Hyland argues that "genre-based writing teaching can short-cut the long processes of situated acquisition" (2007, p. 151).

From the discussion thus far, it can be seen that academic literacies are embedded within the discourses of academic disciplines (Jacobs, 2007a, 2007b), and entail how students deal with text and their interpretation, and the construction of their own pieces of writing using strategies for selecting, arranging and generating information appropriate in argumentation. However, some researchers suggest that academic literacies need to be explicitly taught but issues to consider are demographics and linguistic diversity (Purser, Skillen, Deane, Donohue, & Peake, 2008), although this in opposition to Gee (1996) who maintains that Discourses are acquired as part of the socialisation process. In their writing, students display their mastery of academic literacies and their familiarity with academic language conventions such as register, style, tone, appropriateness and correctness of language as well as the use of argumentation in analysing and synthesising the literature. However, in many cases, students as academic research writers, are still at the novice stage, particularly in their first year of study, and these literacies are still to be acquired and developed as the student gains understanding of the ways of speaking, reading and writing embedded in academic contexts.

A chapter written by Blanton (in Zamel & Spack, 1998) describes what academic readers and writers do. This description, albeit from another perspective, is also pertinent to this discussion on Discourse and academic literacies as it identifies writing practices which the students need to develop in order to demonstrate their competence as postgraduate writers. According to Blanton, students need to:

1. Interpret texts in light of their own experience;
2. Agree or disagree with texts in light of that experience;
3. Link texts to each other;
4. Synthesise texts, and use their synthesis to build new assertions;
5. Extrapolate from texts;
6. Create their own texts, doing any or all of the above;
7. Talk and write about doing any of all of the above;

8. Do Numbers 6 and 7 in such a way as to meet the expectations of their audience (Blanton, 1998).

Of interest is the point Blanton makes in this chapter that students have to learn how to “talk reading and writing” (Blanton, 1998, p. 227) which may be a language foreign to them. Academic literacies research has shown that students need to negotiate “the complexity of the codes and conventions to become accomplished players in the academy” (Ivanič & Lea, 2006, p. 12). Thus, to be successful in academia, students need to enter an academic discourse community, but one in which they only need to be members for the duration of their stay in that institution. The concept of the discourse community stems from genre-based writing where readers, writers and text are interrelated, and where “multiple beliefs and practices of text users overlap and intersect” (Swales, 1998 cited in Hyland, 2003, p. 23). But it is within that community where the student is socialised into the Discourse (Gee, 1997). However, if writing is the prime measurement of achievement, as seen in postgraduate study, form and function needs to be made explicit (Thesen, 2001) and thus drawing on such a framework as Blanton’s could assist in supporting students in the development of their academic research writing.

The writer brings many selves to the writing such as an autobiographical self from a historical background, a discursal self, built on what has been read and perceived as well as self as author, who speaks with authority with varying degrees of confidence (Clark & Ivanič, 1997), and thus working with a multiplicity of contexts, selves and practices, one needs to talk of literacies and not literacy, a term favoured for this research. Casanave (2008), in a chapter describing her journey through graduate studies, talks about ‘learning the lingo’. She explains that it is not just familiar words that are used in a new specialised way that have to be internalised, but a new kind of language or terminology specific to a discipline which underpins the knowledge and values of that discipline. Thus, the importance of acquiring an academic discipline-specific Discourse is vital to apply it appropriately in writing (Casanave & Hubbard, 1992).

It will be clear by now that the term “discourse” is used in many different ways in the literature related to literacy. As previously reported, following Gee (1990), Discourses can be seen to make up various disciplinary communities and it is thus into these Discourses that students need to move crossing the ‘threshold’ from outsider to novice and then developing researcher. Drawing on a slightly different conception of ‘discourse’, a discourse community is seen as having a broadly agreed set of common public goals; having mechanisms of communication between members; using its participatory mechanisms primarily to provide information and feedback; using, and thus producing, one or more genres in communication to further its aims; having acquired some specific

terminology (jargon and acronyms that may be puzzling to outsiders); and having a ‘threshold level’ of members with suitable credentials (it needs to maintain a balance between novice and expert members to sustain itself) (Swales 1990, p.25).

As the discussion above shows, the concept of ‘discourse’ (however defined) is integral to understandings of academic literacies. Gee (1990) is adamant that literacy, which he defines as mastery of a Discourse, can only be acquired and not taught. From the perspective of those concerned with developing student writing, the question must be asked whether there is not some teaching which can accelerate students’ mastery of academic literacies.

Research in New Zealand conducted by Coxhead has resulted in the development of an academic vocabulary as an attempt to assist students in developing an appropriate vocabulary. Stemming from Coxhead’s research is a graded academic word list representing a specialised vocabulary list for students in higher education (Coxhead, 2000). The Academic Word List consists of 570 word families which occur most frequently in a wide range of academic texts and are grouped into 10 sub lists that reflect word frequency and range. The Academic Word list is not restricted to a specific field of study which means that words are useful for students across a range of fields of study and could be incorporated in an intervention for developing academic research writing (Coxhead, 2000).

Although this type of explicit teaching may not be aligned with some of the assumptions underpinning the New Literacy Studies, the use of such a list incorporated into and integrated with the teaching of writing could be of value particularly within the context of this study by giving the students a basic academic vocabulary to feed into the development of their secondary Discourse. Coxhead suggests that using the academic vocabulary list in “both message-focused and language-focused ways” could well assist students in developing a vocabulary which offers them a “working knowledge of the language” (Coxhead, 2000, p. 229) within a specific context and thus, facilitating entry into the academic discourse community. However, it is important to refer to Swales’ definition of a discourse community as well as Gee’s of Discourse in order to understand that writing cannot be separated from the learning of a discipline (Fergie, Beeke, McKenna, & Crème, 2011).

3.4 DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION

In South Africa, higher education under the apartheid years was “characterised by inequality legislated along racial, ethnic and regional lines” (Thesen & Pletzen, 2006, p. 3). Post 1994, wider access to all institutions was provided to students, who were previously denied access to higher education institutions not designated for their population group even if they conformed with entrance requirements. This has resulted in the number of students participating in higher education growing and in greater diversity in the student body particularly at universities previously reserved for white social groups. Widening of access to higher education has thus necessitated a rethinking of strategies to ensure that students, coming from Bantu education schooling and a wide range of socio-cultural backgrounds, would be adequately supported and socialised into the academy. Over the years, work with students has undergone a shift in conceptualisation illustrated by McKenna (2004a) but reported in other higher education institutions by language practitioners (Boughey, 2002; Boughey & Niven, 2012; Leibowitz, 2000; Leibowitz et al., 1997; Van Schalkwyk, 2008; Van Wyk, 2002). At undergraduate level, work with academic literacy practice was initially bound up with language development in English Second Language (ESL) academic support (1991-1998) as stand-alone modules focusing on grammar and language usage. This approach assumed that teaching the basic skills, or what might be termed the more technical aspects of language use, would transfer to other disciplines and in turn improve students’ reading and writing. English for Academic Purposes (EAP) (1997-1999) focused on equipping weak students with generic skills such as note-taking, writing an introduction and a conclusion, and reading strategies. This approach, underpinned by the notion that language was “the most visible marker of disparity between schooling and the University” (Thesen & Van Pletzen, 2006, p. 5) was evident in foundation programmes across universities, and although at times language work utilised subject specific materials, such approaches had limited transfer.

From around 1999, a shift occurred in some South African universities from the deficit remedial approach with universities offering academic support to an integrated approach where the development of academic literacy was infused into mainstream university teaching (McKenna, 2004a, 2004b). Volbrecht and Boughey report this shift from academic support to academic development when some institutions gradually began to take ownership of the phenomena of “disadvantaged” and “under-preparedness” (2004, p.62). Thesen and Pletzen report that at the University of Cape Town the Academic Development Programme focused on “systemic changes across the university, rather than on designing fragile bridges for non-traditional students ... and that the notion of development applied less to students than to the multiple sites of students, staff,

curriculum and institutional policy” (2006, p.7). Language practitioners thus began to work with lecturers within specific fields, integrating the teaching of writing into the curriculum, making explicit the norms and expectations for writing within the disciplines. This shift to integrating language required language practitioners to engage with ‘new’ theory, some of which has been outlined in Section 1.3 above.

During this time in South Africa, writing centres were introduced into universities to provide support to student writing predominantly at undergraduate level. A publication *Changing Spaces: writing centres and access to higher education* (Archer & Richards, 2011b) details the history of writing centres in South Africa and their work in academic writing and language development. This publication is an interesting and valuable resource for South African practitioners as a critique levelled at South African researchers is that they tend to draw from research conducted in other countries when in fact, there is rich research from which to draw within their own country both on work done in writing centres and with academic literacy development.

Of importance to this study are the key ideas represented in this collection of writings: that of writing centres and the role that they have played and continue to play in supporting access to higher education particularly to the ‘non-traditional’ students. The value of the writing centre and other language development work done in South African universities, seen as equipping students with the relevant “cultural capital of academic literacy” (Trimbur, 2011, p. 2), is portrayed in many of the chapters, with reports from a variety of South African universities being given about writing support, writing programmes and integration of the teaching of writing-across-the-curriculum.

A similar development has also been seen internationally. The teaching of academic writing or writing development in the UK, the US, and Australia has been reported on where widening access to higher education has also been experienced. The changing profiles of the student population have shown diversity “in terms of enrolment of indigenous people; foreign students; peoples from a range of social classes, races and ethnic groups; distance-learners; and students with varied experiences of educational preparation” (Ganobcsik-Williams, 2012, p. 502).

Research into the teaching of academic writing in HEIs in the UK has revealed that teaching students to write does not seem to play a major role in how universities conceive of their mission as providers of education (Bergstrom cited in Ganobcsik-Williams, 2004), particularly as most institutions have not prioritised the need to teach writing explicitly (Ganobcsik-Williams, 2004). Until recently, entrance into higher education was restricted to the academic elite, whose primary Discourses tended to match more closely those of

the academy. As a result, this elite group of students had already mastered many of the beliefs, values and practices related to academic literacy. This meant that writing development could take place in relation to the discipline in small tutorial groups (Lillis, 2001). However, with a more diverse population in higher education resulting in a move from an elitist to a mass system (Ganobcsik-Williams, 2006b), various programmes have been implemented in recent years. Initially these programmes were separate from the discipline specific programmes and thus writing or writing-related support was provided by academic support units or centres. Such provision for the teaching of academic writing include one-on-one tutoring in academic writing, study support/skills tutoring, peer tutoring in academic writing, general writing courses, teaching writing within subject disciplines, an academic writing programme, staff and postgraduate development in teaching academic writing and computerised support for student writing (Ganobcsik-Williams, 2004, 2006c).

A 2000 survey conducted with higher education academic and student support staff in universities and higher education colleges in the UK about whether academic writing should be explicitly taught, resulted in a 90% positive response (Ganobcsik-Williams, 2006a), acknowledging the need for explicit teaching. A survey conducted in 2004 investigated the state of the teaching of academic writing in higher education in the UK (Ganobcsik-Williams, 2004). In the last decade, strides have been made in higher education in the UK with writing centres or academic writing centres being developed for work with students both at undergraduate and postgraduate level, for professional development of staff and providing the space for writing development across the curriculum and within disciplines and fields of learning. This progress is reflected in the report where a number of programmes and initiatives, which include one-to-one tutoring, study support, peer tutoring, teaching writing within subject disciplines, academic writing programmes, computerised support of student writing and staff and postgraduate development in the teaching of academic writing, have been implemented in UK universities. In addition, there has been interest shown in research into classroom-based research on the teaching of academic writing particularly as it is seen as valuable in informing further pedagogy (Ganobcsik-Williams, 2006a). Recommendations emerging from the 2004 report suggest that a whole institution approach should be taken to ensure that a culture of writing is developed (Ganobcsik-Williams, 2004).

It can be seen then that what has happened within the South African context is mirrored internationally with academic development moving through various stages in an attempt to deal with wider access of non-traditional students into higher education.

In contrast, the USA has had a long history of developing writing in offering first year programmes such as freshman composition and basic writing courses (as reported in Lillis, 2001) as well as integrating the teaching of writing into the curriculum, addressing it through programmes such as writing across the curriculum (WAC) (see Bazerman & Russell, 1994) and writing within the disciplines (WID) (see Russell, 2002). However, initially higher education was ill equipped to deal with 'new' types of student, such as children of urban immigrants in the 1930s or returning World War II veterans in the 1940s (Lerner, 2003). Language laboratories, developed under the auspices of English departments, prepared freshmen students for the rigours of academic reading and writing or provided a service of remediation.

During the 1970s, universities in the USA declared that there was a 'literacy crisis' as students, entering their institutions during an open admissions period, were labelled ineffective readers and writers (Clark, nd). This period provided the catalyst for the creation of writing centres, as did the return of soldiers from Vietnam who were then encouraged to enter universities, but who were felt to be under-prepared students. Linked to the establishment of writing centres is writing centre research as from the early 1970s, the writing centre had become an ubiquitous feature of American universities, colleges and high schools (Jones, 2001).

During the 1970-80s, massification in Australian higher education necessitated the explicit teaching of literacy/writing to account for the diversity of student background in terms of language and culture (Skillen & Mahony, 1997). Initially, students perceived as not being fully equipped for learning and literacy, were considered to be a remedial problem. However, a move towards a developmental goal has been made which "allows all students to be initiated into the academic and professional discourses of academia, and which gives all students greater chances to achieve at their potential" (Skillen & Mahony, 1997, p. 1). At some universities in Australia, language centres were introduced to provide the main support to student writing predominantly at undergraduate level (Lillis, 2001), while some have adopted a more integrated approach (Skillen & Mahony, 1997). In this learning development approach, learning skills lecturers collaborate with content lecturers to work within the curriculum thus focusing on curriculum development and professional development (Skillen & Mahony, 1997) with integrating writing instruction into the subject teaching (Wingate, 2012).

It can be seen from the above discussions that most countries when accepting 'non-traditional' students into higher education, are faced with students who are perceived as 'different' to the those who had previously been the norm. These students are then seen

as being unprepared with the perceived problems being constructed as a 'language problem'. This means that the solution to this problem was dealt with by seeing language as a specific skill with rules and regulations to follow, the teaching of which is referred to by Christie (1993) as the 'Received Tradition of Language Teaching'. This pedagogy replaced the teaching of rhetoric "which focused on the use of language to construct meaning and compose persuasive arguments" (Bouhey, 2002, p. 304). As a result, the Received Tradition can be seen to be about preparing students for subordinate positions in society rather than as people who could use language to argue and challenge and construct meaning. The Received Tradition continues to dominate much school-based language teaching and is identified by Bouhey, 2002, as a dominant discourse in higher education in South Africa. As the discussion in Section 1.4 above tries to show, the ability to construct academic text is about much more than the mastery of grammar and punctuation since, if a perspective in Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday, 1985) is followed, then language emerges from language users' understanding of a value-imbued context. Focus only on the form of language without giving language users access to the values and beliefs embedded in the socio-cultural contexts in which they are seeking to use language is unlikely to allow them to produce the 'appropriate' forms of language.

Within the field of postgraduate studies programmes, which aim to teach academic writing, should take cognisance of the fact that reading and writing are social practices embedded within the intersections of language, culture, identity and power relations. By employing a developmental stance in teaching literacy practices (Curry & Oh, 2012), students are not viewed through a deficit lens (Lillis & Scott, 2008). Thus, taking cognisance of the field of academic development, this study draws on the socially situated practices and conceptions of reading and writing (Street, 1984) and engages with the New Literacy Studies as a significant underpinning theory.

3.5 THE NEW LITERACY STUDIES AND THE TEACHING OF ACADEMIC WRITING

The field now known as the 'New Literacy Studies' (NLS), emerged from some of the ground-breaking work by Street (1984, 1993) and Gee (1990) already discussed in this chapter and was developed thereafter by a number of researchers referred to as 'The New London Group'. Work done in the area of NLS stands in opposition to the autonomous model, arguing for "a multiple view of literacy (or literacies) as "a set of social practices that stand in ideological relationship among themselves" (Scollon 2001, p. 118 cited in Thesen & Pletzen, 2006, 9-10).

Heath (1983) and Street (2001) have taken the concept of literacy and looked at it from two perspectives: the literacy event and the literacy practices. Literacy events are activities where literacy plays a role in a particular situation. These events, which are observable and arise from practice, are situated within a social setting and involve texts and discussions (Barton & Hamilton, 2000). Literacy practices are “attempts both to handle the events and the patterns around literacy and to link them to something broader of a cultural and social kind” (Street, 2001, p. 11). Street suggests that if one wants to develop in-depth understanding of literacy practices one needs to get involved with the people in the event talking and listening to them to find out about their experiences which may or may not be related to reading and writing.

To understand beliefs about the teaching of writing in higher education, Lea and Street (1997;1998; see also Lea, 2004) have argued that writing in higher education falls into three approaches, namely *the study skills model*, *the academic socialisation model* and *an academic literacies model*. These three approaches to student writing in higher education as outlined above should not be seen as the development from one model to the next or the supercedence of one for the other. Rather the first two models should be seen as being “encapsulate[d] within the academic literacies approach” (Lea & Street, 1998, p. 158) focusing on the social practices of literacy which is “a more encompassing understanding of the nature of student writing within institutional practices, power relations and identities” (Lea & Street, 1998, p. 158) and takes into account discourse and processes of meaning-making (Lea, 2004). Incorporating Lea and Street’s three models, Ivanič developed a *Discourse of Writing and Learning to Write* framework (2004) which outlines six discourses: that of a *skills discourse*, a *creativity discourse*, a *process discourse*, a *genre discourse*, a *social practices discourse* and finally, a *socio-political discourse*, used in discussing approaches to the teaching of writing. Within the framework, which moves from explicitly objective and mechanical to socio-political, various aspects are highlighted: *the comprehensive view of language*, *beliefs about writing*, *beliefs about learning to write*, *approaches to the teaching of writing* and finally, *assessment criteria*.

In addition, Ivanič, drawing from Fairclough (1989, 1992) and Jones (1990) and incorporating her own research, developed a schematic multi-layered view of language consisting of text at the heart, the cognitive processes of the writer as the following layer, the event which draws on the “context of the situation” (Halliday 1994) as the next layer and finally, the outer layer is socio-political and political context, which is termed “the context of culture” by Halliday (1994). This diagram (see Figure 3.1) is included in the *Discourse of Writing and Learning to Write* framework.

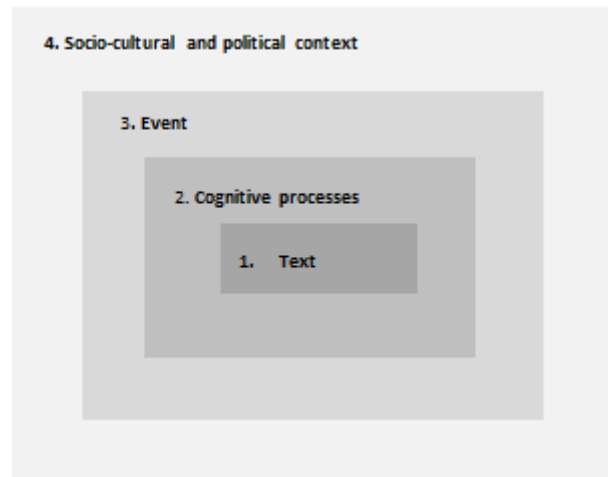


Figure 3.3: Schematic multi-layered view of language (Ivanič, 2004)

Instead of discussing Lea and Street's models and the discourses in Ivanič's framework separately, I have elected to discuss the various aspects together to gain some understanding of the teaching of academic writing, but the discussion refers to the framework (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Discourses of writing and learning to write

Discourses	Layer in the comprehensive view of language	Beliefs about writing	Beliefs about learning to write	Approaches to the teaching of writing	Assessment criteria
1. A SKILLS DISCOURSE	THE WRITTEN TEXT	Writing consists of applying knowledge of sound-symbol relationships and syntactic patterns	Learning to write involves learning sound-symbol relationships and syntactic patterns.	SKILLS APPROACHES <i>Explicit teaching</i> 'phonics'	Accuracy
2. A CREATIVITY DISCOURSE		Writing is the product of the author's creativity	You learn to write by writing on topics which interest you.	CREATIVE SELF-EXPRESSION <i>Implicit teaching</i> 'whole language' 'language experience'	Interesting content and style
3. A PROCESS DISCOURSE	THE MENTAL PROCESSES OF WRITING	Writing consists of composing processes in the writer's mind, and their practical realisation	Learning to write includes learning both the mental processes and the practical processes involved in composing a text.	THE PROCESS APPROACH <i>Explicit teaching</i>	Difficult to assess the causal link between tracking and learning
4. A GENRE DISCOURSE	THE WRITING EVENT	Writing is a set of text-types, shaped by social context	Learning to write involves learning the characteristics of different types of writing which serve specific purposes in specific contexts.	THE GENRE APPROACH <i>Explicit teaching</i>	Appropriacy
5. A SOCIAL PRACTICES DISCOURSE		Writing is purpose-driven communication in a social context	You learn to write by writing in real-life contexts, with real purposes for writing.	FUNCTIONAL APPROACHES <i>Explicit teaching</i> PURPOSEFUL COMMUNICATION <i>Implicit teaching</i> 'communicative language teaching' LEARNERS AS ETHNOGRAPHERS <i>Learning from research</i>	Effectiveness for purpose
6. A SOCIO-POLITICAL DISCOURSE	THE SOCIO-CULTURAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT OF WRITING	Writing is a socio-politically constructed practice, has consequences for identity, and is open to contestation and change.	Learning to write includes understanding why different types of writing are the way they are, and taking a position among alternatives.	CRITICAL LITERACY <i>Explicit teaching</i> 'Critical Language Awareness'	Social responsibility

Source: Ivanič, 2004, p. 225

3.5.1 A Skills Discourse of Writing

A skills discourse of writing is based on a particular body of knowledge and is underpinned by the notion that learning to write involves learning sound–symbol relationships and syntactic patterns (Ivanič, 2004). The belief is that writing means applying just a set of skills, but this activity is done without consideration for context or for genre and where the same pattern and rules are applied. This belief aligns itself with Lea and Street’s skills approach to writing within an autonomous model (see Street, 1984). The study skills model focuses on lower order concerns such as surface language, grammar and spelling, and views student writing as a set of technical and instrumental skills, or a set of atomised skills. In this discourse what is considered as good writing is “the correctness of the letter, word, sentence and text formation” (Ivanič, 2004, p. 227). These skills tend to be taught as separated from context, and are then considered to be transferable to other contexts. The ‘skills discourse’ can also be related to the ‘Received Tradition of English Teaching’ (Christie, 1993) which focuses on grammar and activities such as “exercises in parsing and analysis, in correcting ‘faulty sentences’, in rehearsing the creation of simple sentences, in copying improving tales, in writing paraphrases of the writing of others - particularly excerpts from literature” (Christie, 77).

If a skill discourse approach to the teaching of writing is followed in isolation, this approach would be seen as a deficit model of student writing, sitting within an autonomous approach, where literacy is reduced to a set of skills that one acquires and a model in which attempts are made to fix writing problems (Lea & Street, 1998). However, it is acknowledged that implicit knowledge of aspects such as sentence construction, correct spelling and appropriate punctuation is important in learning to write as linguistic ability is valued in academic text. This approach, which focuses on linguistic skills rather than meaning making, should not be taught in isolation; rather it should be considered as an aspect within other approaches (Ivanič, 2004).

3.5.2 The Creativity Discourse of Writing

The creativity discourse of writing, which seems to align itself with enjoyment of literature, focuses on learning to write by writing as much and as often as possible to develop as a writer by developing content and style (Ivanič, 2004). Using this approach to the teaching of writing, focuses on the writing of narratives, descriptions and fiction writing drawn from the writer’s own experiences. Writing, in this case, is the product of the author’s creativity.

This belief about the teaching of writing centres on the notion that, by writing on topics which interest you, you learn to write - reiterating the idea that one learns to write by writing. Reading what others have written offers a model which incorporates the

ideas of integrating the processes of reading and writing to develop writing. Ivanič does however, argue that this approach, which is often criticised as having little value in the real world, “can be complemented by more socially aware, critical views, and can have a role to play in a comprehensive conceptualisation about writing” (Ivanič, 2004, p. 230). Of importance is that this approach to the teaching of writing should be used in conjunction with the previous approach to ensure that “implicit learning, alongside explicit teaching about linguistic rules and patterns” occurs (Ivanič, p. 230), but it could also be used in relation to the process approach.

3.5.3 A Process Discourse of Writing

A process discourse of writing has the belief that learning to write includes learning both the mental processes and the practical processes involved in composing a text (Ivanič, 2004). The process approach to the teaching of writing should incorporate “either or both the cognitive and the practical processes” (Ivanič, 2004, p. 231) taking into account the mental processes involved as well as the actual writing or writing event. In the teaching of writing, using this approach allows for the explicit teaching of each element and thus promotes the development and improvement of the quality of the end product; however, cognisance should be taken for “nurturing the development of cognitive processes” (Ivanič, 2004, p. 231)

A process approach to the teaching of writing emerged in the late 1970s where three central elements: planning, translating and reviewing were central to the teaching of writing. Flower and Hayes (1981) developed a model which represented the cognitive processes writers pass through during their writing which ensured that the processes of writing were the focus, rather than the product. This model took into account the task environment, which consisted of the writing assignment and the text produced thus far, as well as knowledge stored in long-term memory, knowledge of topics, knowledge of audience, stored writing plans and knowledge of sources based on literature research. The three cognitive processes that the writer moves through are *planning* (generating, organising, goal setting), *translating* and *revising/reviewing*.

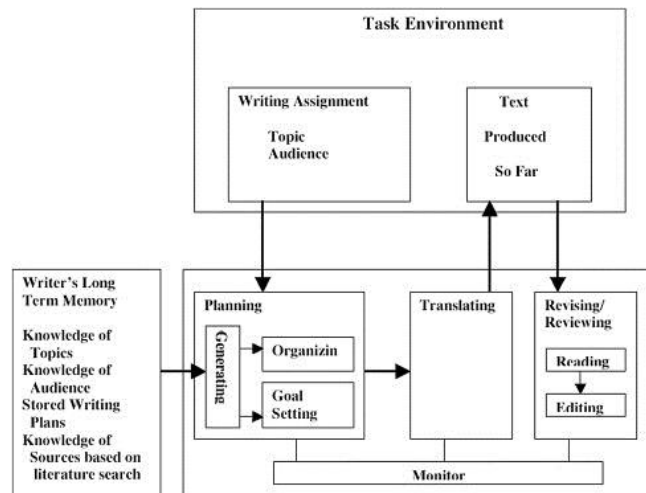


Figure 3.4: Structure of the writing model (Flower & Hayes, 1981)

In the planning stage, the writer generates ideas or in Flower and Hayes's terms, "the act of building an internal representation" (1981, p. 372). Once this is done, the ideas are organised creatively or grouped and arranged in a coherent structure with goal setting in mind. Goal setting is both procedural and substantive and if the student works at "defining one's own rhetorical problem and goal setting" (Flower & Hayes, 1981), this can assist in developing a good creative writer. Flower and Hayes use the term *translate* for the subsequent cognitive process during which ideas are written or transcribed into words but drawing on the writers' ability with the use of the English language and all its conventions. With inexperienced and novice writers, this process is challenging and requires much effort in drawing on long term memory and the knowledge of the language. The reviewing process draws on evaluating and revising the written product and may act as a springboard to further planning and translating. Underlying all three cognitive processes is the monitor which works as a regulator or co-ordinator throughout all phases mentoring as well as advising the student when to move to the next process or between the processes. This model emphasises the recursive nature of writing with each of the processes occurring at any moment.

Thus, in contrast to a linear model of writing, the multi-draft process with plan-draft-revise cycles could be seen not only as a way of improving writing but also viewed as a tool for clarifying and extending thinking (Flower & Hayes, 1981; Torrance & Thomas, 1994). It is this iterative process in the development of writing which can contribute to higher level reasoning skills and better subject understanding. The writing process and products of writing correspond to certain powerful learning strategies, and that since writing's permanence allows for re-examining of ideas, students who do not write regularly and copiously lose many opportunities for learning (Emig, 1977), particularly as writing is conceived of as learning (Dysthe, Samara, & Westheim, 2006).

An iterative process of writing was consequently developed which incorporates eight stages: prewriting, planning, drafting, reflection, review, revision, additional research or idea regeneration of the final process of editing and proofreading (Coffin, Curry, Goodman, Hewings, Lillis, & Swann, 2003) and is illustrated in Figure 3.2.

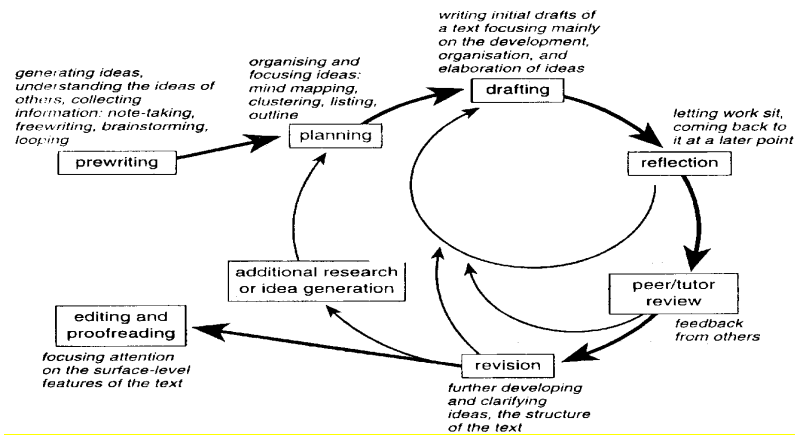


Figure 3.5: The iterative process of writing (Coffin et al., 2003, p. 34)

This iterative process of writing represents a toolkit to draw on for making meaning in different contexts to gain access to a particular way of using language and thus participating in specific social and cultural context where a specific discourse is required. The iterative process of writing (illustrated above) encourages the student to move through various stages of writing such as pre-writing, planning, drafting and reflecting to facilitate making meaning. But this process also allows the student to revisit sections of the peer writing at any stage of the process to reflect and rework them (in an iterative manner) until they are ready for the editing, proofreading and polishing stages. In editing and proofreading, the student is able to attend to the mechanics of writing or the lower order concerns such as punctuation, spelling, formatting, references and footnotes (Coffin et al., 2003, pp. 41-42).

I'm not a very good writer, but I'm an excellent rewriter.

James Michener

Of interest to understanding the writing process, is work conducted by Haas with postgraduates' experiences of the writing process (2009). Initially an almost linear process was discussed by her students as well as Flower and Hayes' representation. But as this did not truly represent the process that they were experiencing, discussions helped develop a writing process represented by five modes of writing – *exploring, structuring, polishing and publishing, unloading and incubating* - each containing specific aspects related to that mode.

The Writing Process

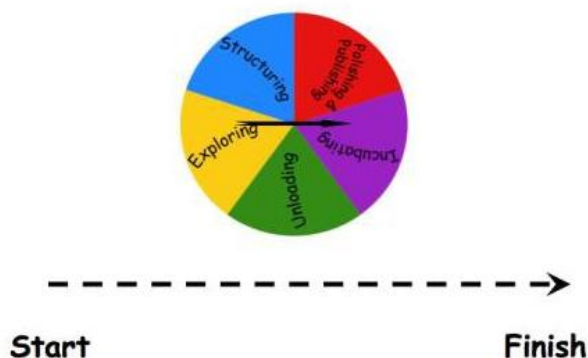


Figure 3.6: The writing process (Haas, 2009)

The writing process is represented by five cones – the five modes – which fit together to form a circle. The *Exploring* mode includes aspects such as finding a topic, searching for literature, taking notes, reading, brainstorming, listing and finding a focus. Outlining, drafting, revising and editing comprise the *Structuring* mode. *Polishing and Publishing* consists of waiting for evaluation, printing out, making graphs and charts, “making it look pretty”, submitting, copy editing and being evaluated. The *Unloading* mode, where “a writer will take the chaos that is in his/her head and attempt to get it out of his/her head” (Haas, 2009, p. 26), includes two interesting words, namely: babbling – un-monitored speaking and scribbling – un-monitored writing. Finally, the *Incubating* mode incorporates such action as ruminating which is conscious thought and steeping, considered unconscious thinking.

The arrow on the animated board represents the random movement of the students between each of the modes illustrating the interlinkedness of each of the processes. Although students begin at one stage and seem to move in a linear way towards a goal, there is constant movement between the modes, with students following different pathways depending on their ways of writing. Haas explains that “the way a writer moves from the start to the finish, however, is recursive, moving back and forth, and round and round through different modes, inching forward until the piece of writing is as complete as it is going to be” (2009, p. 28).

In reviewing literature on writing processes, Ivanič suggests recognising that these “can refer to either or both the cognitive and the practical processes” ... where the cognitive process “might be learned implicitly, while the practical ones are extremely amenable to explicit teaching” (2004, p. 231). Murray also reiterates that understanding of the writing process with its feedback stages could facilitate the teaching of writing (2007) and is seen as a behavioural dimension which could assist writers in achieving their goals and thus develop self-efficacy.

The process approach to the teaching of writing should incorporate “either or both the cognitive and the practical processes” (Ivanič, 2004, p. 231) taking into account the mental processes involved as well as the actual writing or writing event. In the teaching of writing, using this approach allows for the explicit teaching of each element and thus promotes the development and improvement of the quality of the end product; however, cognisance should be taken for “nurturing the development of cognitive processes” (Ivanič, 2004 p. 231).

A concern of this approach is that students tend to focus on the processes ‘diving’ into writing trying to produce an academic text without considering the thinking which supports meaning making. Vital to the process is the prewriting phase (Coffin et al., 2003) where generation of ideas leads the students into engaging with meaning making.

3.5.4 The Genre Discourse of Writing

The genre discourse of writing is promoted by Australian researchers as an alternate to the process approach. This approach involves learning the characteristics of different types of writing that serve specific purposes in specific contexts and focuses on the product. This approach to the teaching of writing is shaped by the event which requires the writers to “learn the linguistic characteristics of different text-types in order to be able to reproduce them appropriately” (Ivanič, 2004, p. 233). It is suggested that this is achieved through explicit teaching.

This approach falls within Lea and Streets’ academic socialisation category (1998) where students are enculturated into the discipline and the discourse “learning the established conventions for the types of writing highly valued in the academy” (Ivanič, 2004, p. 233). The academic socialisation model whose conceptualisation is “based on the belief that there are different literacies in different contexts” (Ivanič, 2004, p. 222) seeks the acculturation of the students into the academic discourse where they are inducted or initiated into a new culture (Lea & Street, 1998; Mullen, 2006). This approach to the teaching of writing, which is seen as more sensitive to the student, focuses on orientation to learning and interpretation of the learning task. A critique of the academic socialisation model is that it assumes that the higher education context is seen a relatively homogenous one “whose norms and practices have simply to be learnt to provide access to the whole institution” (Lea & Street, 1998, p. 159).

Swales (1990) in his seminal work explains genre as

“compris[ing] a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognised by the expert members of the parent discourse community, and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of

the discourse and influences and constrains choice of content and style”
(1990, p. 58).

Since the publication of Swales’ work, genre has seen increasing attention in its application in language teaching and learning (Hyland, 2007) and has been the focus in the teaching of writing particularly in the development of writing programmes and courses over a number of years (Carstens, 2009; Flowerdew, 2000; Ganobcsik-Williams, 2012; Morss & Murray, 2001; Rose & McClafferty, 2001; Skillen, Merten, Trivett, & Percy, 1998; Thaiss et al., 2012). Genre, in simple terms, refers to the type of text being written following the conventions for conveying the message for a specific context (Flowerdew, 2000), but taking into account the range of rhetorical modes or sub-genres that are incorporated within the text. Hyland (2007) builds on this depiction by explaining that the idea of genre ensures that members who work in a similar community are assisted in understanding the texts produced by other members because of their similarities of language and structure drawing on their own repeated experiences with the reading of such texts.

Although Lea and Street feel that the genre approach “fails to address the deep language, literacy and discourse issues involved in the institutional production and representation of meaning” (1998, p. 159), researchers claim that it is a perfect teaching tool as it is “a robust pedagogical approach perfectly suited to the teaching of academic writing in many contexts” (Hyland, 2008, p. 543). The use of genre assists the student in understanding what product text is expected as a communicative tool for the reader. As a result, writing instruction tends to be more successful if students are made aware of what the target texts or products should comprise. Murray (2007) posits that a structured approach to academic writing development is most likely to meet with success and suggests that institutions consider incorporating such approaches as genre, which looks beyond the content, the composing process and grammatical forms and makes explicit what the writer is to produce offering the student “keys to understanding how to participate in the actions of a community” (Lillis, 2001, p. 165). This argument aligns itself with this study where the development of academic research writing is dependent on the genre of thesis writing.

Genre pedagogy addresses gaps found in the teaching of writing by focusing on “the linguistic resources they [students] need to express themselves effectively” (Hyland, 2007, p. 150). Genres are specific to a particular culture, be that academic or social, and although supervisors and lecturers may understand the genre, students have no initial knowledge or experience of it. Thus, explicit teaching involves “incorporat[ing] into our teaching the ways language is used in specific contexts” which facilitates academic research writing by

“integrating language, content and context” and recommending “explicit explanations of the way writing works to communicate” (Hyland, 2007, p. 150).

Three approaches to the explicit teaching of writing using genre have been identified and used in the US: genre acquisition, genre awareness and the ‘New Rhetorical’ approach (see Russell, Lea, Parker, Street, & Donahue, 2009). The genre acquisition approach involves teaching in an explicit way by outlining the moves or conventions of that genre. This approach is used predominantly in second language learning involving structured writing practice. The second approach, genre awareness, encourages the analysis of familiar genres in the study of the form and aspects of the text. Finally, the ‘New Rhetorical’ approach, influenced by post-structuralism, rhetoric and first language composition, advocates the teaching of genre explicitly, targeting context and the logic of communication. This approach to the teaching of academic research writing takes into account the questions of why, where, when, what and how (Hyland, 2003, 2007; Russell et al., 2009), identifying the “functional relationship between text type and rhetorical situation” (Coe, 2002, p.195 cited in Hyland, 2003).

The discussion of these three approaches shows that none allow for critique of the genre. Novice writers are acculturated into the genre in the belief that its mastery will give them access to powerful ways of using language. However, teaching does not explicitly allow for the way, once genres have been mastered, that writers could seek to subvert them in pursuit of more equitable ways of speaking and writing about phenomena. This is important in a country such as South Africa where enormous social, cultural and linguistic diversity exists and where claims are often made for the need for the ‘Africanisation’ of academic study. In effect, then, genre approaches can be seen to perpetuate the status quo unless the possibility of critique is introduced.

Genre-based writing development is underpinned by a set of principles, which can be incorporated into curriculum planning and teaching methodology. Firstly, writing is seen as a social activity where purpose, context and intended audience is taken into account; learning to write is needs-oriented and recognises the wants, takes into consideration prior learning and current proficiencies, identifying kinds of writing needed; learning to write requires explicit outcomes and expectations drawing on a visible pedagogy¹⁴; learning to write is a social activity with familiar routines and cycles of activity linking new contexts and understandings to what students already know, making use of scaffolded developmental steps where teachers and peers play a major role; and finally, learning to write involves

¹⁴ Bernstein, 1990; Delpit 1988.

learning to use language through learning about how texts are grammatically patterned and how grammar is integrated into the exploration of texts and context (Hyland, 2007, pp. 152-153).

Paré, Starke-Meyerring, McAlpine, in their research into doctoral thesis writing note that even though most academics have completed a dissertation, “it is ironic that [this] genre is such an under-theorised, under-studied and under-taught text” (2009, p. 178). In the case of postgraduate studies, the research proposal and the dissertation is the relevant genre, “the ultimate student paper” (Paré et al., 2009, p. 179) and as such should be taught explicitly within the genre approach, particularly as the student through his research is able to make a contribution to “a disciplinary conversation” (Paré et al., 2009, p. 179). Institutional policy pressurises students, particularly postgraduate students, to write within the constraints of certain conventions, for example, for the purpose of being awarded a master’s or doctoral degree.

The genre of the dissertation has over time, become entrenched in its form with “certain similarities in structure, types of argumentation, ways of positioning claims, ways of citing others” (Paré et al., 2009, p. 220). Experienced supervisors know how a dissertation is written, what it entails having worked in this genre for years and having it embedded in their practice; however, research has shown that some supervisors, both experienced and novice, may find difficulty in communicating coherently how it is done, that is, making the practice overt. For the newcomer student, the dissertation is a genre that is foreign to them at this stage of study, and as such, is faced with the perception that writing in this new genre, with all its rules and conventions, is less accessible, possibly finding the challenge of writing in the genre insurmountable.

To further complicate matters, Paré et al. have concluded that the dissertation is not one genre but rather more complex, being “a multi-genre responding to multiple exigencies, functioning in multiple rhetorical situations, addressing multiple readers” (2009, p. 180). Thus, explicit genre teaching would support the development of academic research writing, where a conventional dissertation is required but the writing is dependent on the methodology followed. Explicit teaching would focus on the genre of the dissertation by most importantly taking into account the number of distinct sub-genres within the dissertation as well as the rhetorical modes required (Paré et al., 2009). Within the genres, these are a sequence of sub-genres or rhetorical moves but they should not be seen as a linear sequence of events but rather as the integration of reading, writing and thinking for the purpose of creating and writing the specific text.

The teaching of key elements in genre means assisting students gain access to ways of communicating in a specific community (Hyland, 2003), developing institutional capital and demystifying the writing needed at this level of study. Researchers have found that drawing on a genre approach to the teaching of writing allows for a needs analysis where students' prior learning and academic research writing proficiency is assessed. This assessment then informs sequential developmental learning while providing students with explicit rhetorical understanding of texts particularly how texts in target genres are structured and arranged (Cheng, 2008).

The research proposal, falling within the genre of dissertation or thesis writing, has an important gate-keeping function. This function has been highlighted in research conducted by Cadman (2002) in Australia, illustrating how the research proposal is seen as not only having an institutional role to play as a gate-keeping tool, but is viewed by supervisors as playing an academic role by giving them some idea of the capability of the students in terms of their development as novice researchers. In addition, Paltridge argues that the research proposal is of vital importance being “a key first step in the research process” (1997 p. 62). Thus in this study, the writing of the research proposal is the focus.

3.5.5 The Social Practices Discourse of Writing

In a social practices discourse of writing, the teaching of writing within a social context, and the writing event with its creation of the text during the process of writing, is the focus. Writing is seen as communicating for a particular purpose making use of cognitive processes and the application of literacy, learning to write by writing in real-life contexts, with real purposes for writing (Ivanič, 2004). This view of writing incorporates writing in all social and cultural contexts and tends to “overlap with, and ... is found in conjunction with, the socio-political discourse” as it takes into account “the social meanings and values of writing, and issues of power” (Ivanič, 2004, p. 234). This social practices approach aligns itself with Lea and Street's third approach to the teaching of academic writing, the ideological model (see Street, 1984), and the New Literacy Studies (Barton, 1994; Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Street, 1984) where “the view of writing as social practice is a powerful theory of writing” (Ivanič, 2004, p. 235).

The New Literacy Studies (NLS) conceptualisation of literacy, also known as an *academic literacies model*, is “based on the beliefs that literacies are heterogeneous, are shaped by interests, epistemologies and power relations” (Ivanič, 2004, p. 222). This model advocates that the teaching of writing should not isolate writing as a skill but rather understand that a range of practices are inextricably intertwined, “conceptualise[ing] learning and writing in higher education as inseparable” (Lea, 2004, p. 743).

Both process and product are considered central to this approach which is comprised functional approach, purposeful communication and learners as ethnographers. The functional approach takes into account the function of the writing – time and place for writing, audience, characteristics of the writing – but also takes into account the teaching of linguistic rules as seen in the skills approach (hence the dotted line moving between the two - see Ivanič's framework). The purposeful communication approach requires the writer to be involved in authentic writing meeting the goals or aims of the writing exercise.

Students learn to write implicitly by participating in socially situated literacy events (Ivanič, 2004) such as by working within a community of practice, where participation allows for learning with peers which promotes learning of writing through exposure to modelling of texts and review of texts. Communities of practice (CoPs) are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better through interacting with one another on a regular basis (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). Communities of practice have enormous potential to support and sustain developmental education, in particular “shifting the analytic focus from the individual as learner to learning as participation in the social world, and from the concept of cognitive process to the more-encompassing view of social practice” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 43). Bruffee (1993) explains that the role of the teacher is to facilitate the learning by creating communities where students are grouped for the purpose of learning.

Interactions within a community offer participants the opportunity to exchange and interpret information, acquire and develop skills and competencies and give voice through learning to talk and participation. Tacit knowledge is acquired through being socialised into communities of practice where learning is situated and the nature of learning draws on scaffolding (Vygotsky, 1978) through the support of experts for new members who are initially on the periphery (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Then, once the process of “polycentralised collaborative learning” (Bruffee, 1973, p. 637) is in motion, the teacher can then move away from the centre to the periphery, leaving the students to drive their own learning.

Wenger identifies three elements, which are identified within a community of practice: domain, community and practice. Domain implies a common field of interest and thus a commitment to that domain with shared competence. Community refers to engaging with those participants in joint activities and discussion to assist each other and share information. Relationships are developed through the networking and are a means of learning from each other. Wenger explains that the members of a community of practice are practitioners where they, over time and interaction, develop a shared repertoire of practice

which involves knowledge, resources, tools and ways of addressing problems (Wenger, c 2007).

Time and varied interactions bind people together which help facilitate a relationship of trust and could assist in developing cultural capital, particularly institutional cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986). In building a community of practice would counter the feelings of isolation and loneliness that sometimes pervade postgraduate study. Wenger suggests that in creating a community of practice, a variety of short and long-term values are experienced by the members such as help with challenges, access to expertise, the development of confidence, enjoyable, meaningful work, personal development and professional identity (Wenger, 2001).

Hyland talks about the difficulties that students find in “construct[ing] a credible representation of themselves” (2002, p. 1901). The development of identity is shaped by various factors such as how the students position themselves within a community. Wenger suggests that students initially as newcomers, position themselves on the periphery of the group or community (2001). But if members of the group share similar identification in that they come from similar backgrounds, are working in a similar profession and are conducting research in a similar discipline, this strong sense of identification supports the students and eases their transition from a professional into novice researchers (Aitchison & Lee, 2006).

This transition to a scholarly identity is effected through experience in the community where students participate in the discussions, positioning themselves within a discipline which assists their move through the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). As their enculturation and confidence develops, they move from the periphery towards the centre and begin speaking with increasing authority, drawing on what they had read and analysed, expressing judgements and taking up positions (Aitchison & Lee, 2006). Thus, to become a member of a community means changing one’s identity by accepting and internalising sets of practice and values, and ways of doing it to fit in and produce the genres that the community values.

However, identities are not fixed but depend on the context, the community and the need, taking on the identity for that particular time within that specific discipline or field of study. This enculturation or socialisation takes time and effort and may not be achieved (Casanave, 2002) except within increasing participation in communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

As postgraduate study involves the writing of a number of texts and academic ‘success’ is connected to writing (Kamler & Thomson, 2004, p. 195), students thus need to be part of a

community in order to learn how to write in that community. Smit (1995) upholds that writing involves a wide range of knowledge and practice beyond the sentence level that cannot be solely learned in writing classes but must be acquired by immersion in various discourse communities. Consequently, students should be trained to live in two worlds: one of composition theory and pedagogy and another of the discourse practices of particular communities. Elbow explains “there is the assumption that virtually everyone has available great skill with words. That is, everyone can, under certain conditions, speak (and write) with clarity and power” (Elbow, 1981, p. 7).

Research, however, has revealed that learning the craft of writing is not really adequate for scholarship; in addition, students need to be given the opportunity to develop advanced reading and writing and an understanding of what counts as knowledge in that specific discourse community taking into account evidence that supports it. It is within academic writing that beliefs and values about what can count as knowledge is revealed.

Costa (1983) explains that the goal of learning is thinking where thinking includes “those [skills/competences] associated with acquiring, interpreting, organising and communicating information, processing data in order to investigate questions, solving problems and making decisions, and interacting with others” (Costa, 1983 in Wilen & Phillips, 2005, p.135). Thus, postgraduate students need to be given opportunities to engage in student-to-student dialogue giving and receiving peer critique, which allows them time to internalise concepts and theories and critically think and speak about their understanding; thus applying this understanding to their practice and consequently, their writing. This interaction will assist the students in learning how to transfer their abilities and practices from one context to another (Smit, 1995) through interaction and collaboration with their peers, which means that they will learn to write by writing to learn (Boughey, 1997; 2002). Thus, writing needs to be seen as not only the practice, but the site of the production and exchange of knowledge (Walters & Koetsier, 2006).

It is thus within such a community of practice, situated in the context of an academic discipline or field of study, that literacies are best acquired and developed where talking, reading and writing is embedded in the discourse used within the discipline and best taught by insiders who have mastered the discourse (Jacobs, 2005, 2007a, 2007b). Jacobs suggests that to master a semiotic domain, a student needs to join an affinity group such as a community of practice, as an apprentice. She refers to affinity groups as groups of people who share semiotic domains such as knowledge, skills, tools and resources as well as shared sets of practices, goals, values and norms. During their interaction in the affinity groups, participants move from the position of apprentice and become ‘insiders’ where a

sense of belonging is developed and learning is crystallised through the process of engagement (Jacobs, 2007a, 2007b).

One way to consider the act of writing in different disciplines is to regard each discipline as its own discourse community. Swales discusses the components of a discourse community, considering it to be comprised of several factors (1990, pp. 24-27). These factors are an agreed set of public goals (for example, the reporting of one's research, to further knowledge, to gain external funding); communication mechanisms to provide feedback to each other (for example, written feedback on essays, conferencing with students, supervisory meetings); specific lexis and finally, a ratio between experienced insiders and novices. Modelling themselves on the insiders, such as disciplinary specialists, assists in socialising the students into the discourses of their disciplines as they need to understand and produce meaning in the disciplinary semiotic domain which is recognisable to members of that affinity group (Jacobs, 2005, 2007a, 2007b).

Thus, students are inducted into discourse communities by modelling themselves on the experts or 'insiders' (Gee, 2001), groups of people who have mastered the domain, that is the content and the language/discourse. Gee suggests that two types of teaching may be used. Teaching for acquisition occurs by apprenticing students into a Discourse through demonstrating mastery of that discourse and scaffolding students' growing ability within that Discourse. However, teaching for learning occurs where overt teaching "leads to learning by process of explanation and analysis that breaks down material into its analytic 'bits' and develops 'meta-knowledge' of the structure of the domain of knowledge" (Gee, 1990, p. 154).

This Discourse of writing for many practitioners is seen as being a situated practice and relevant to their practice, although for some whose views on literacy differ, this approach to the teaching of writing does not deal sufficiently with "the basics" (Ivanič, 2004, p. 237). Within this study, the students' writing is guided by University policy and more particularly by the field of study within which they work drawing on the genre of research proposal and dissertation writing.

3.5.6 A Socio-Political Discourse of Writing

The final discourse, a socio-political discourse of writing as previously stated, is often found in conjunction with the genre discourse and the social practices discourse. This approach which has "consequences for the identity of the writer who is represented in the writing (Ivanič, 2004, p. 238), draws on aspects such as Discourse (see Gee, 1990), representing the world in a specific way and genre, which are specific conventions to communication.

Ivanič, in discussing this particular discourse, acknowledges the writers' lack of power in that they are "not entirely free to choose how to represent the world, how to represent themselves, what social role to take, and how to address their readers when they write" (2004, p. 238). Janks (2000) argues that institutions have to provide access to dominant languages, literacies and genres and with it access to academic literacy. Students entering the context of higher education need to acknowledge their diversity, their current discourse and then the dominant discourse of the institution. Within a critical literacy approach, students are led to understand that the dominant discourse of the institution is "hegemonic and desirable" (Janks, 2000, p. 182) and although they will not lose their inherent discourse, it is necessary to enter this new discourse, a secondary one, in order to find "a position from which to speak" (Janks, 2000, p. 183) and communicate their research.

This approach to learning to write includes developing a critical awareness of the writing and should either be part of the discussion while learning to write but could also be included as a separate topic. This view of learning to write concerns explicit teaching of socio-political explanations and consequences and has led to the development of Critical Literacy or Critical Language Awareness (Clark & Ivanič, 1997; Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Janks, 2002).

Ivanič explains that even though some discourses may be opposite, a teacher "may draw on two or more discourses of writing and learning to write, incorporating two or more approaches" (2004, p.227) depending on what is needed in specific contexts or at particular times. Although Ivanič's research was conducted in Anglophone countries and she is concerned about generalising the framework to other contexts, this framework provides a clearer and comprehensive approach to the teaching of academic research writing. Ideally, this comprehensive approach would encompass the multi-layered view of language (the written text, the mental processes of writing, the writing event and the socio-cultural and political context of writing) and thus, a curriculum for the teaching of academic writing would span all six discourses of writing and learning to write – see Table 3.1 (Ivanič, 2004).

As such, the teaching of academic research writing should be seen as an integral part of disciplinary learning for all students (Mitchell & Evison, 2006) within the social context of its disciplinary community (Hewings, 2004, p. 132). Lea and Street's three approaches to student writing in higher education, as outlined above, should not be seen as the development from one model to the next or the superseding of one for the other. Rather the first two models should be seen as being "encapsulate[d] within the academic literacies approach" (Lea & Street, 1998, p. 158) focusing on the social practices of literacy which is "a more encompassing understanding of the nature of student writing within institutional practices, power relations and identities" (Lea & Street, 1998, p. 158) and takes into account

discourse and processes of meaning-making (Lea, 2004). Building on this model, Ivanič's framework provides the most comprehensive approach combining six elements which incorporates the explicit teaching of skills (if this is necessary), a creative approach to writing, explicitly teaching the process of writing (see also Coffin et al., 2003; Flower & Hayes, 1981; Haas, 2009), working within a genre-based approach (Curry, 2003; Hyland, 2003, 2007, 2008; Spack, 1998; Swales, 1990, 1993; Wingate, 2012) and working within a social practices context or discourse where writing is driven by the need to communicate and perhaps overlapping with the socio-political discourse where students subscribe to what is required by the institution. Using this framework would ultimately give exposure to a variety of literacy practices which would help students build on a literacy archive which includes many literacy practices engaged with at home and at work (Williams, 2012) and thus move the student from novice research writer to research writer with more proficiency and an emerging identity.

3.6 THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Informed by a model of language created by Breen, Hird, Milton, Olivier and Thwaite (2001), adapted by Carstens (2009, p.94) and based on Ivanič (2004), the conceptual framework used in this study draws on the reviewed literature discussion and comprises three layers: the context of culture, the context of situation and the underpinning theory of New Literacy Studies. Each of these layers is unpacked in the subsequent sections.

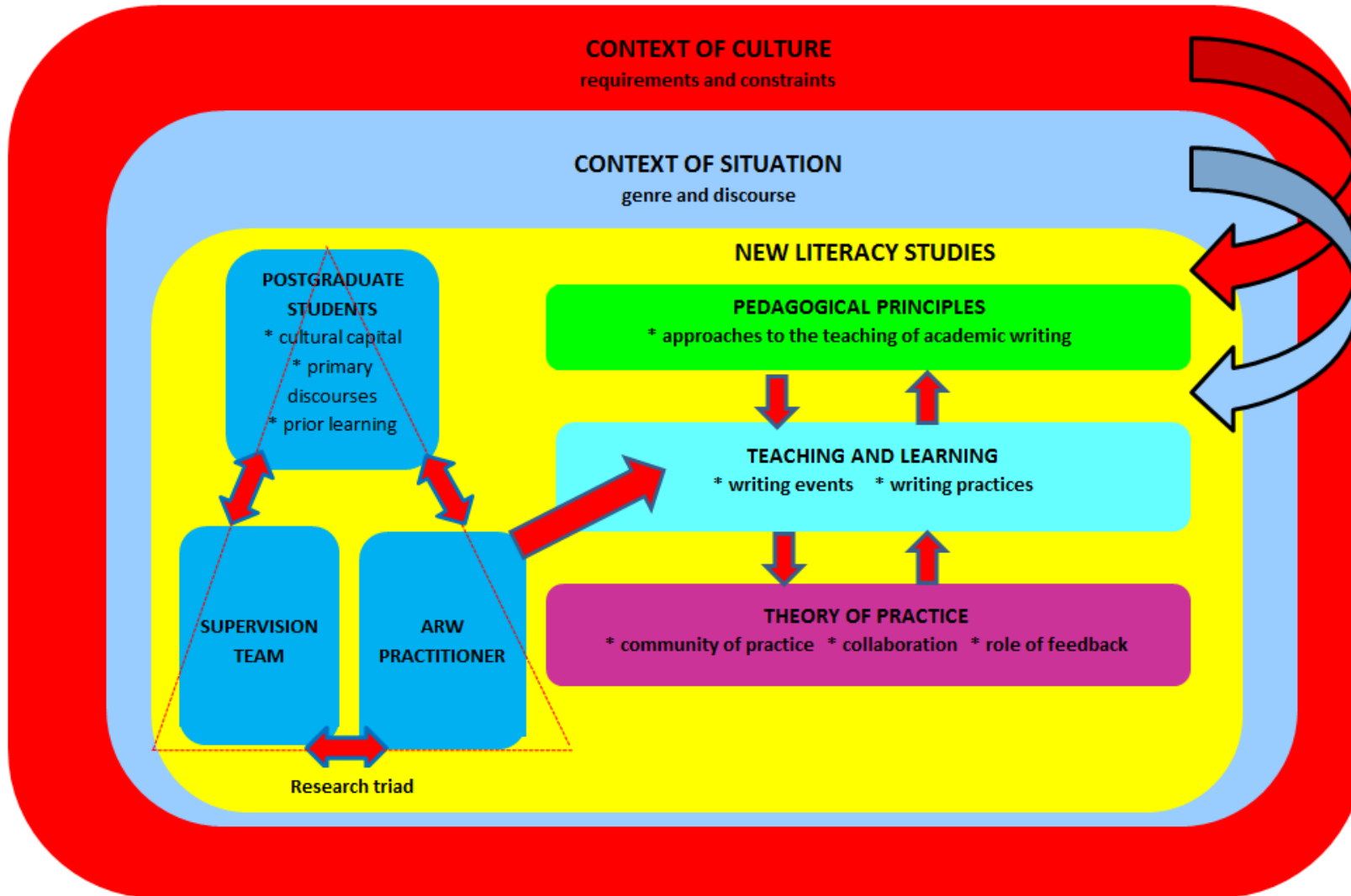


Figure 3.7: Conceptual framework for the development of an academic research writing intervention

The first layer, the *Context of Culture* is that of the University which is located within the wider academic world. To ensure comparability of student work with other universities at a global level, the institution aligns itself with the national policies for higher education in terms of requirements but it is also influenced by the constraints that these policies bring with them.

National Policy considers the Higher Education Qualifications Framework (HEQF) (see Appendix D), developed for higher education, which outlines what is expected of students at postgraduate level in the South African context, focuses on two sections, *Applied Competence* and *Autonomy of Learning*. To attain these outcomes outlined in each of the sections, the ability to undertake a research project and write up a research dissertation under supervision ensuring a comprehensive and systematic knowledge base in a discipline/field with specialist knowledge in an area at the forefront of the discipline/field or area of professional practice (9C¹⁵), is the starting point as well as the outcome for the master's programme. This outcome requires "the production of a dissertation or research report which meets the standards of scholarly/professional writing" (9F) with the end result of certification and allowing for professional mobility.

However, in order to accomplish these HEQF outcomes, the framework is unpacked to reveal those vital academic literacy practices that need to be acquired and developed during the process of academic research writing and which are incorporated in the intervention such as:

- to identify, analyse and deal with complex and/or real world problems and issues drawing systematically and creatively on the theory, research methods and literature of a discipline/field (9D);

to develop

- a comprehensive and systematic knowledge base in a discipline/field with specialist knowledge in an area at the forefront of the discipline/field or area of professional practice (9A);
- information retrieval and processing skills (9E);
- an ability to undertake a study of the literature and current research in an area of specialisation (9E);
- an ability to rigorously critique and evaluate current research (9B);
- an ability to relate theory to practice (9B);

¹⁵ Numbering taken from HEQF

- mastery of the application of research methods, techniques and technologies appropriate to an area of specialisation (9C);

to display competence in

- identification, critical analysis, synthesis and independent evaluation of quantitative and/or qualitative data (9E); and finally,
- to effectively present and communicate the results of research to specialist and non-specialist audiences using the resources of an academic/professional discourse (9F).

On analysing this framework, it seems that in the context of postgraduate study, the student needs to have as outcome autonomy of learning which requires a capacity

- to operate effectively in complex, ill-defined contexts (9G);
- to critically self-evaluate and continue to learn independently for continuing professional development (9H);
- to manage learning tasks autonomously, professionally and ethically (9I); and
- to critically evaluate own and others' work with justification (9J) (Ministry of Education, 2004).

Although it seems that the HEQF framework falls into the discourse of skills development, notice has to be taken of what is expected by policy as a guiding framework. This then was used to inform the development of an intervention for the development of academic research writing in a master' programme in education (see Chapter 6).

Also within the *Context of Culture*, the Postgraduate Policy of the Faculty of Education, developed in 2010 (Faculty of Education, 2010) (see Appendix E), aims to assist both students and supervisors in understanding what is expected of them both during the process of postgraduate study. The whole policy is not discussed in detail here; rather sections pertaining to this study of developing academic research writing with the objective of writing and successfully defending the research proposal are referred to. As stated earlier, the research proposal is seen as having "a distinct, and pivotal, role in the University's institutional assessment procedures as well as in the academic learning process" (Cadman, 2002, p. 88).

A research proposal of between 15-25 pages, "illustrat[ing] that the implementation thereof will enable the student to demonstrate the ability to conduct scientific research independently", needs to be completed within the first 12 months of registration (see Faculty of Education, 2010 Section 1.8 b):

A student enrolled for the doctoral or master's degree, irrespective of whether it is for the full dissertation or the master's by coursework, must submit a research proposal during the first year of registration and defend it successfully before a panel of examiners appointed by the Head of Department in collaboration with the supervisor, before commencing with the research such as the review of the literature and methodology literature (Faculty of Education, 2010, p. 5).

To give the student some idea of what is expected when preparing a research proposal, the following information is provided in the student guidelines of the policy (see Section 2.1):

- a. A research proposal is a document that outlines how a person proposes to undertake a specific research project.
- b. The research proposal is a crucial step in the research process and must undergo intensive scrutiny to ensure that quality assurance is built into the research process at an early stage in order to optimise the quality of the research that will emanate from the approved research proposal.
- c. The research proposal should be a substantive proposal reflecting the student's thinking about an identified problem at the start of the research process giving evidence of a firm grasp of the problem to be studied, a thorough understanding of current and relevant literature on the topic, research approach and methods to be employed, and ethical issues to be considered (Faculty of Education, 2010, pp. 6-7).

Specifications for assessment of the research proposal are outlined in Section 2.3 of the policy, which highlights specific criteria:

- Clarity in defining of the research area and relevance of the theme;
- The candidate's insight into the problem and the goals with the research;
- The candidate's knowledge of relevant literature;
- The ability of the candidate to design and describe applicable research methods;
- The ability of the candidate to consider and deal with ethical aspects of the research;
- Scientific character of the contents; and
- The language and technical editing of the proposal (Faculty of Education, 2010, pp. 8-9).

Students are also informed about the technical specifications of the research proposal (see Section 2.4) which include the length but favouring quality rather than quantity; correct language use, technical editing and use of appropriate referencing techniques (Faculty of Education, 2010, p. 9).

Although there are no fixed rules for students to follow when preparing the research proposal, the policy document states that students should be guided by including the following sections/aspects in the proposal:

- The background/rationale
- A preliminary literature review
- The aims/objectives
- The problem statement and/or research question
- The research design should clearly answer the key question:
- The research methods
- Trustworthiness
- Ethical considerations
- A timeframe
- A provisional outline of chapters
- A reference list (Faculty of Education, 2010, pp. 9-10).

In the writing of each of these sections, the students portray their knowledge gained in the discipline within which they work but being guided by the Discourse of that specific discipline and the values about what counts as knowledge and how it can be known.

However, the difficulty arises when the policy is put into practice. As the discussion has already revealed, very few programmes for the teaching of academic writing at postgraduate level, particularly master's level, are found, although the literature is tending to advocate a specific programme or curriculum for the teaching of academic writing at this level.

The second layer of the conceptual framework, encapsulated in the first, is the *Context of Situation* within which this particular masters' programme is offered. The context of situation is influenced by the context of culture and needs to subscribe to its guidelines. In addition, the research conducted by students falls within a certain field of study, that of assessment and quality assurance, and as such, subscribes to specific paradigms, research approach and research design with its relevant Discourse and lexis. On entering

the programme, students need time to learn the Discourse and develop the literacy practices that make up academic research writing. These literacy practices “make and are made by the epistemologies and practices (including the use of power) of specific disciplines” (Russell in Baker, Clay, & Fox, 1996, p. 118) such as the one within which the students in this study work.

The master’s programme in education, in which this research is situated, initially was a taught master’s with the completion of discipline-specific and research methodology modules. The research was reported in a dissertation of limited scope. In 2009, a change was made to the curriculum resulting in the master’s programme being assessed by dissertation only. Taking into account non-completion and extended periods needed for completion, it was felt that something had to be put into place to support the students through the task of researching alone and completing a full dissertation.

Areas to consider within the context of situation are the use of genre theory and the need to become socialised into the discipline-specific Discourse. In postgraduate study, the genre of a research proposal being the gatekeeping piece of writing (and dissertation or thesis writing) needs to be taken into account. Genre, as previously discussed “comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes” (Swales, 1990) which advocates the explicit teaching of academic research writing especially that of writing the research proposal. This aspect is taken into account when designing and developing the intervention. To further support the students, awareness of discipline-specific Discourse is incorporated into the intervention.

Within the context of situation is the theory of New Literacy Studies to which this study subscribes where pedagogical principles are put in place, where teaching and learning through writing events and writing practices is arranged and where the theory of practice is implemented.

As discussed previously, the teaching of academic writing incorporates a range of approaches to facilitate the development of academic writing. Thus, the development of an intervention to develop academic research writing is underpinned by the New Literacy Studies and draws on the models of the teaching of academic research writing at higher education level proposed by Ivanič (2004) as the Discourses of Writing framework (incorporating Lea and Street’s model, 1998), which outlines six discourses used in discussing models for the teaching of writing.

With the realisation of the changing social and economic necessities of a globalised, information and networked world, the emphasis has moved to incorporating

“multiliteracies”, a term coined by the New London Group (NLG), which takes into account “the context of our culturally and linguistically diverse and increasingly globalised societies” (NLG, 1996, p. 61). Within multiliteracies, the pedagogy suggested by this group includes immersion in situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing and transformed practice (NLG, 1996) with the emphasis being developing epistemological access and identities as postgraduate students using a variety of communicative forms such as genres, fields and disciplines where the students develop their own voice through meaning-making (Lea & Street, 1998, pp. 158, 172).

The development of academic research writing begins with an intervention which incorporates and integrates the teaching of academic research writing within a discipline-specific domain, as the positive effects of working within discipline-specific approaches have been noted. This belief is reinforced by Waghid (2006), Mullen (2001) and Rose and McClafferty (2001) who argue that students need to be explicitly taught to read texts meticulously and subject texts to questioning. In addition, there needs to be awareness of the level of technical competence needed in accessing information but if these practices are lacking, development should take place; and thus, on the *Discourse Of Writing and Learning To Write* framework, a move to the skills approach may need to be made.

This means that the design of the intervention should take into account the need to move between each of the approaches – the skills approach, the creative approach and the process approach as the need for the development of students’ academic writing proficiency is identified, although the genre approach with the functional approach, in the application to text, is considered the main approach particularly as “genre-based writing teaching can short-cut the long processes of situated acquisition” (Hyland, 2007, p. 151) and assist in becoming socialised into the Discourse (see Gee, 1996). The final approach to the teaching of writing that of critical literacy, involves developing awareness or explicit consciousness of the message of what is written taking into account context, both historical and political. It is in this approach that students are led into becoming reflective and reflexive writers involving questioning power relations, discourses and identities (Shor, 1999). As students enter academia and a new discourse, it is thus important for the teaching of academic writing to incorporate varied approaches to address the specific needs of the students, and ultimately, to develop academic research writing.

Within the area of teaching and learning, drawing on the literature, the literacy events and the literacy practices are highlighted. As previously discussed in the literature, literacy events are activities where literacy plays a role in a particular situation. These events, which are observable and arise from practice are situated within a social setting and

involve texts and discussions (Barton & Hamilton, 2000). Literacy practices are “attempts both to handle the events and the patterns around literacy and to link them to something broader of a cultural and social kind” (Street, 2001, p. 11). With the design and development, care is taken to create literacy events where literacy practices are put in place to support the student.

To facilitate the process of developing academic research writing, modern theories of learning proposed by Vygotsky (1978) and Bruner (1990) are drawn on. These researchers suggest theories of practice such as working within a community of practice scaffolding, and collaborating with peer interaction and the giving and receiving of feedback, thus drawing on two notions of learning: that of shared consciousness with working together to learn more effectively and borrowed consciousness with students working with knowledgeable others. Bruffee argues for the value that collaboration and working within a community offers, explaining the value of conversation between and with members. He argues that “If thought is internalised conversation, then writing is internalised conversation re-externalised” (Bruffee, 1984, p. 641). Talking about one’s writing has the ability to motivate new thought which in turn is transferred into further writing. Thus, the significance of working within a community of practice is major. Interactions within a community offer participants the opportunity to exchange and interpret information, acquire and develop skills and competencies and give voice through learning to talk and participate. Tacit knowledge is acquired through being socialised into communities of practice where learning is situated and the nature of learning draws on scaffolding (Vygotsky, 1978) through the support of experts for new members who are initially on the periphery (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Time and varied interactions bind people together which help facilitate a relationship of trust and could assist in developing cultural capital, something that has been identified in the literature. However, it is important within the community to acknowledge backgrounds, cultural, personal and professional. These strategies, *raising cultural consciousness* and *activating intuitive heuristics* recommend treating students as cultural informants, taking note of prior knowledge and experience as well as tapping into their prior knowledge and Discourse to infer from rich textual data. Wenger suggests that in creating a community of practice, a variety of short and long-term values are experienced by the members such as help with challenges, access to expertise, the development of confidence, enjoyable, meaningful work, personal development and professional identity (Wenger, 2001).

This transition from a novice to a scholarly identity is effected through experience in the community where students participate in the discussions, positioning themselves within a

discipline which assists their move through the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). As their socialisation and confidence develops, they move from the periphery towards the centre and begin speaking with increasing authority, drawing on what they have read and analysed, expressing judgements and taking up positions (Aitchison & Lee, 2006). Thus, to become a member of a community means changing one's identity by accepting and internalising sets of practice and values, and ways of thinking and doing to fit into that community.

However, identities are not fixed but depend on the context, the community and the need, taking on the identity for that particular time within that specific discipline or field of study. This socialisation takes time and effort and may not be achieved (Casanave, 2002) except within increasing participation in communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) using the notion of feedback to inform thinking and writing. Approaches to developing writing have changed and writing at this level is viewed as part of the thinking process in exploring and constructing knowledge (Quinn, 1999, p. 210). Students benefit greatly through clear, constructive developmental feedback (Carless, 2006; Lea & Street, 1998; Parkerson, 2000), particularly if they understand that writing involves producing a text that evolves over time.

Studies (reported in Hyland & Hyland, 2006) have shown that interacting with the text becomes the context for learning. This learning is then transferred into the revision of the writing informed by the feedback or using the feedback to feed forward (Hounsell, McCune, Hounsell, & Litjens, 2008). Responding to student writing has the potential to be a most influential tool particularly as it guides the writer into what needs to be done next. In fact, research into feedback into higher education has shown that "the provision of guidance and feedback to students has long been acknowledged as an indispensable part of an effective teaching-learning environment" (Hounsell, Hounsell, Litjens, & McCune, 2005, p. 2).

A positive effect derived from peer feedback is the shift in power from the teacher or supervisor to the students themselves, "giving more control and autonomy to students" (Hyland & Hyland, 2006, p. 90) reinforcing the idea that postgraduate students should develop confidence and independence in their academic research writing. Students however, tend to be reluctant to use peer feedback, seeing the supervisor as being more knowledgeable and thus this feedback is favoured. Nevertheless, peer feedback is a valuable tool but training students in how to respond to writing is essential if it is to be successful. It is thus suggested that if peer feedback is incorporated into a curriculum,

programme or intervention, students undergo some sort of training to equip them to play their role effectively (Haas, 2011).

Employing such theories of practice develops greater understanding of tasks involved in the process of writing (Hyland, 2007, p. 158) particularly in working with an incremental model of writing where a “structured approach” to the teaching of writing is argued (Murray, 2007, p.1069).

Involving students in taking responsibility for their own studies and developing a sense of agency, is done with support and guidance from the research triad through the first year of study. Research conducted within a writing centre with education postgraduates at another South African university, led to the idea of creating a triangle of support for the student which incorporates the supervisor and a writing tutor (as reported in Nel, 2006). Even though students visited the writing centre for support and development, it was felt that the tutor cannot and should not operate alone, particularly as it seemed that supervisors were passing the responsibility for writing to others, in effect, signalling to students that content is important, but process is not (Sully, 1995). Thus, it was felt that the supervisor needs to be part of that working triangle providing a stable foundation where the supervisor’s expertise supports the tutor and the student in talking through ideas, concepts and content, and consequently facilitating the move into writing. This type of practice, it was believed, would benefit the student by keeping the lines of communication open between those reading and critiquing the work and those assisting with the development of the writing, allowing for more open discourse between supervisor, student and tutor.

Drawing on Nel’s idea (2006), the creation of a research triad evolved into extending the usual dyad (Paré et al., 2009; Strauss, 2012) found in postgraduate study with supervisor and student. This triad incorporates the supervision team led by an experienced supervisor, qualified and experienced, mentoring novice supervisors who had recently completed their own doctoral studies (qualified but with little experience). The third leg of the triad is the writing teacher or academic research writing practitioner who would work with the team from an academic research writing perspective. This research triad, it was considered, would provide a good support framework for the students which would assist them developmentally (see Catterall et al., 2011; Curry & Oh, 2012; Skillen & Mahony, 1997) and incrementally (see Murray, 2007) during the writing of their research proposals, a notion which reinforces Lumadi’s notion of active supervision (2008).

Important aspects to consider are student characteristics such as home background, primary discourses (home language) and their educational backgrounds, as these may all relating the cultural capital (see Bourdieu, 1986).

This intervention is aimed at moving the students through the gatekeeping process of defending their research proposals but it also has as its objective that of equipping them, as practitioners and researchers, with relevant academic research writing which would be the foundation for their move into the second phase of their research as well as developing a sense of agency giving them the required motivation to proceed confidently to the next level of postgraduate study.

The research proposal is an important element in successful thesis and dissertation writing and, as such is a key first step in the research process (Paltridge, 1997). However, many supervisors are unaware of the importance of the research proposal in the overall thesis and dissertation writing process. Paltridge argues that time spent in preparation to assist the student in gaining “an important initial focus and to determine the parameter of their research” (1997, p. 62), is valuable which then translates to the important of the development of an intervention to support students in the first stage of their research.

3.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter outlined the relevant literature with the need to create an understanding of what constitutes academic writing at postgraduate level and the approaches to teaching academic which would be deemed appropriate in the South African context. In addition, the chapter offered a conceptual framework drawing on the reviewed literature, which would become to the lens through which to view the findings.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

There is no method except to be very intelligent.

T.S. Elliot

4.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH DESIGN

In this chapter, Design Research is discussed with justification being given for this being the most appropriate research design for the current study which investigates the characteristics of an intervention which best supports postgraduates in education in the development of their research writing. Since Design Research is a fairly new research design, not being discussed in methodology textbooks (Plomp, 2007; 2013) and not as yet widely reported, this research design is elaborated more fully drawing on various researchers' model developed in the process of their research (4.2). As Design Research is situated in the pragmatist paradigm, this particular paradigm is described and discussed in Section 4.3. The overall research design for this study is described in terms of the various phases and cycles of research for this study (4.4). Each phase in itself is a complete research process with the relevant sampling (4.5), research methods and data collection (4.4) and analysis processes (4.7). However, the intricate details for each phase of the research are specified together with the findings of that phase in the following chapters: Phase 1 in Chapter 5, Phase 2 in Chapters 6 and 7 and Phase 3 in Chapter 8.

The chapter concludes with sections on a discussion on the methodological norms (4.8), ethical considerations for the study (4.9) and my role in the research (4.10).

4.2 DESIGN RESEARCH AS A RESEARCH DESIGN

In the early 1990s in the US, Anne Brown, proposed that in contrast to laboratory research, research into education be conducted in a complex social setting, such as a classroom (Brown, 1992). This new approach to educational research, whose thinking is from and across other disciplines, entailed the design of learning interventions that were implemented in the classroom. An interesting aspect of the research design is that the intervention is able to be methodically modified in iterative cycles of design, enactment, evaluation and redesign, which can thus be compared to independent variables that are tested for their effect on learning.

In the intervening years, use of Design Research in its many forms and with its relevant terminology has seen increasing application which is evidenced by research in certain countries into education at all levels, and reported in articles in leading journals. Plomp (2013, p. 10) reports that "Design Research is used as a common label for a 'family' of

related research approaches which may vary somewhat in goals and characteristics” and includes design experiments (Brown, 1992; Cobb, Confrey, diSessa, Lehrer & Schauble, 2003), developmental research (Van den Akker, 1999), design studies (Shavelson, Phillips, Towne, & Feuer, 2003; Walker, 2003), design science (Collins, Joseph, & Bielaczyc, 2004) design-based research, 2003; Kelly, 2003), and Design Research (Reeves, Herrington, & Oliver, 2005).

An addition to this ‘family’ is participatory action research conducted by Eilks and Raulle (2002) for example. The purpose of Design Research is to blend design and research and this entails “engineering” student learning through interventions and then systematically studying those forms of learning through iterative cycles of implementation, testing, revising, re-implementing, re-testing and revising (Cobb et al., 2003, p. 9). Thus, Design Research is conducted to not only understand theory but also understand the issues of application and interpretation (Reeves, 2006).

Design Research is defined as “a systematic but flexible methodology aimed to improve educational practices through iterative analysis, design, development, and implementation, based on collaboration among researchers and practitioners in real-world settings, and leading to contextually-sensitive design principles and theories” (Wang & Hannafin, 2004, p. 6). Nieveen and Flomer (2013) explain that the purpose of Design Research is two-fold: to yield high-quality interventions to solve complex problems in education practice and to yield a set of well-articulated design principles. Thus, there exists a strong argument for the use of Design Research in education, particularly as Design Research studies involve iterative cycles of design and analysis making use of established theoretical constructs (Bannan-Ritland, 2003; Bannan, 2007; Plomp, 2007). In addition Design Research is scientific and educational (Kelly, 2003), rigorous and reflective (Reeves et al., 2005). It seeks to refine learning environments and design new principles, strengthening the knowledge base (Van den Akker, 2009) and ensuring success (Sloane & Gorard, 2003). Application of Design Research is evidenced by the increase of the relevance of research for education policy and practice, developing of empirically grounded theories and increasing the robustness of design practice (Van den Akker et al., 2006b).

Design Research and Action Research have many similar features as in both research designs a problem is identified and through a cyclical process, a solution is sought. But a particular characteristic for Design Research is that problems are addressed for which no *how to* guidelines exist with the dual aim of developing research-based interventions as

solutions to these problems as well as to advance knowledge about the characteristics of these interventions and the processes of designing and developing them (Plomp, 2013).

In the case of this study, Design Research was therefore considered the most appropriate design for this study as there were no guidelines available for developing an academic research writing intervention that would meet the needs of the students and support them in their master's research. In addition, by applying Design Research, not only a research-based writing environment would be developed, but also knowledge about characteristics of and how to design such an intervention for that particular environment emerged (Plomp, 2013), linking it to the practical relevance of being use-inspired, applied oriented and/or socially responsible research (Nieveen & Folmer, 2013, see also van den Akker, 1999; Reeves, 2000).

Design Research characteristics have been developed through investigation into research reports and summarised by Van den Akker, et al. (2006b) and Plomp (2013), and were seen as appropriate for this study as they are:

- *Interventionist* in that they involve designing interventions such as creating a learning intervention for postgraduates, an academic research writing intervention.
- *Iterative* in that research takes place through repeated cycles of design, implementation, evaluation and revision to ensure that the academic literacies needs of the postgraduates are being met by this developmental intervention.
- *Process-focused* in that they seek to understand both the learning process and the effect of a designed intervention on that learning.
- *Utility-oriented* in that they aim to produce usable knowledge for explaining how the intervention functions in the context of postgraduate studies.
- *Theory-driven* in that theoretical assumptions, which guide the design of the intervention for the promotion of academic research writing, are tested with the intention of developing educational theory through the cyclic design-implementation-evaluation-redesign of the intervention (Van den Akker et al., 2006b, p. 5).

In addition, they require the

- *Involvement* of practitioners which entails active participation of practitioners at various stages of the intervention (Plomp, 2013, p. 20).

Design Research is cyclical and iterative and consequently consists of a number of phases: preliminary research, also known as a needs or contextual analysis, a prototyping

phase (also known as a development phase) and an assessment phase (Plomp, 2007, p. 15) which includes systematic reflection and documentation in all phases (Van den Akker, 1999) - see Figure 4.1 below:



Figure 4.1: Phases in Design Research (Van den Akker, 1999)

Walker explains that in using Design Research for research, the identifying and analysis of a problem “leads to quite specific ideas for interventions” (2003, p. 11) which informs the development of an intervention to realise learning outcomes “predicted by theory and research” (2003, p. 11). This intervention then undergoes the cyclical development of a number of prototypes in the prototyping phase. Thereafter, the intervention is assessed in the final phase.

The research process of Design Research “always incorporates systematic educational design processes” (Plomp, 2013, p. 15), as illustrated below:

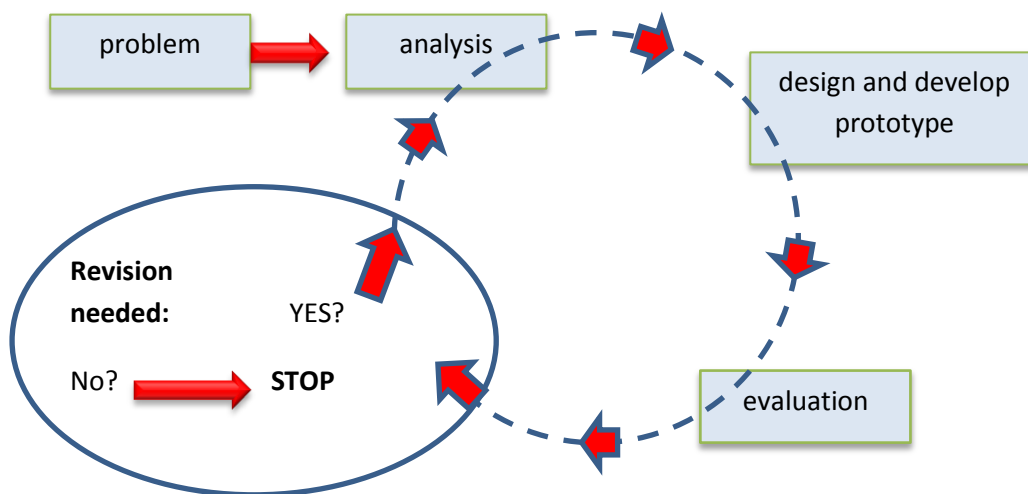


Figure 4.2: Iterations of system design cycles (Plomp, 2013, p. 17)

To conceptualise the process of Design Research further, a number of researchers have put forward their ideas in the form of models (McKenney, 2001; Reeves, 2006; Wademan, 2005) and these are discussed below:

Reeves explains design-based research as

...addressing complex problems in collaboration with practitioners; integrating known and hypothetical design principles with technological advances to render plausible solutions to these complex problems; and conducting rigorous and reflective inquiry to test and refine innovative learning environments as well as to define new design principles (2006, p. 58)

and this theoretical process is represented in the diagram (Figure 4.2) below:

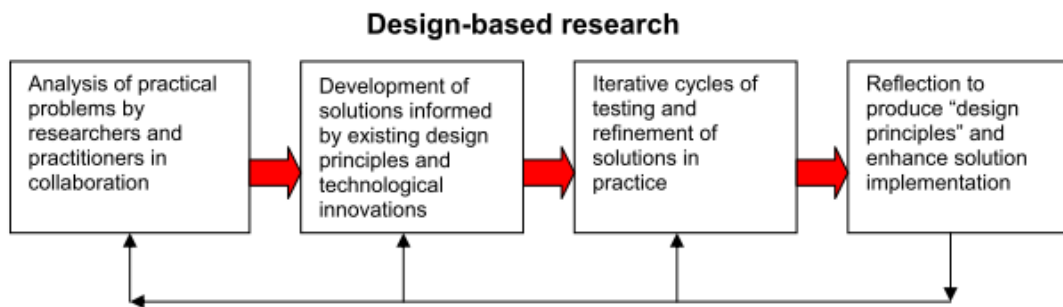


Figure 4.3: Refinement of problems, solutions, methods, and design principles (Reeves, 2006)

As opposed to Reeve's representation, McKenney (2001) devised a graphic way to describe her research process to reflect the cyclical and iterative processes of her application of Design Research. She represents the application of her research process in three major cycles: needs and context analysis, design, development and formative evaluation and finally, semi-summative evaluation (see Figure 4.3).

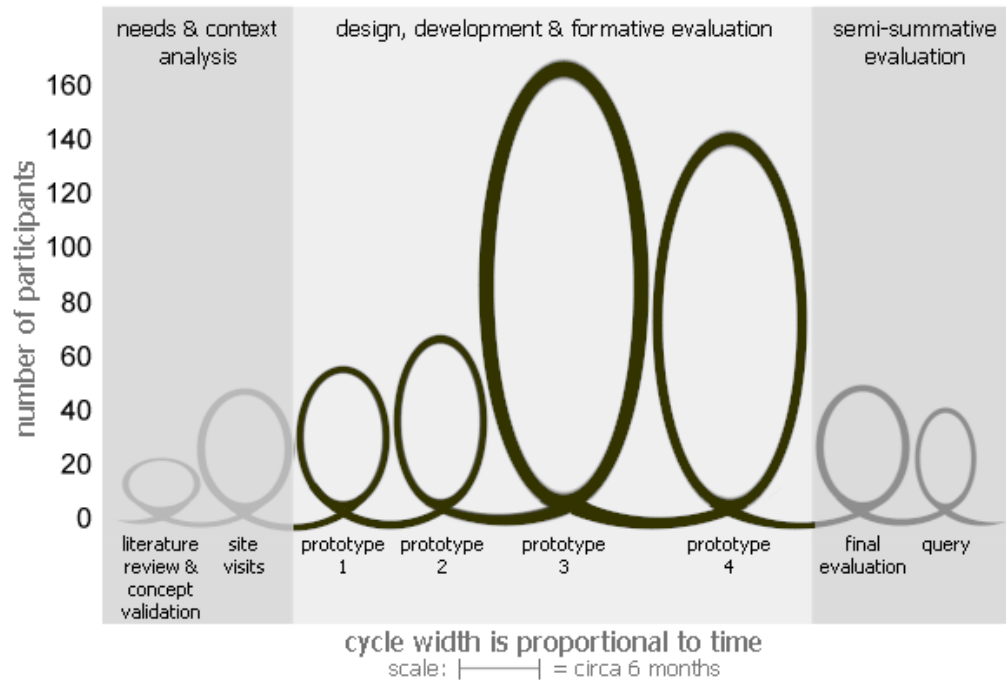
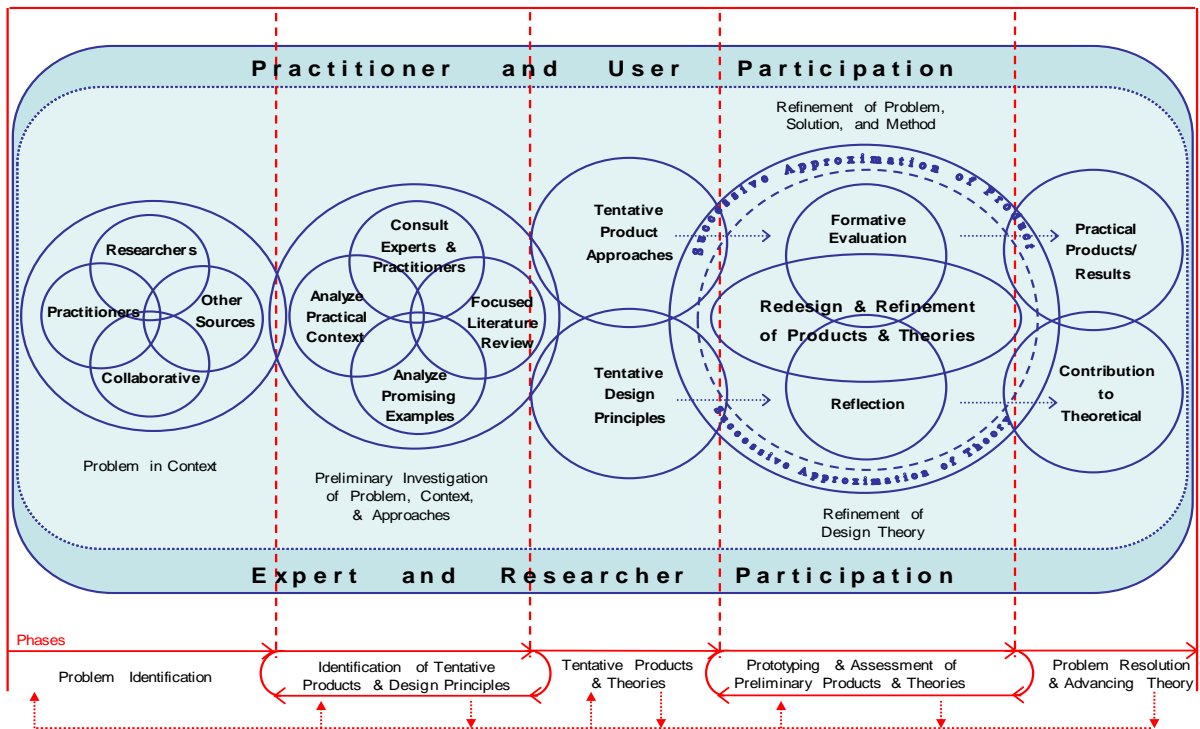


Figure 4.4: Display of the CASCADE-SEA study (McKenney, 2001)

Within each of McKenney's three major research cycles are minor cycles which constitute the literature review and concept validation and site visits in the first cycle, prototypes 1 to 4 in the second cycle (involving increasing numbers of participants as required), and in the third cycle, the final evaluation and query cycles. McKenney's model also illustrates the number of participants involved as well as the time taken in each of the three cycles (2001).

A further model entitled Generic Design Research Model was conceived by Wademan (2005). In this model (Figure 4.4), Wademan's iterative cycles emphasise the involvement of practitioners, researchers and experts in the various phases. The model also shows quite clearly the important link between theory and evaluation of the intervention with reflection, which together informs the revision and further development of the next prototype. In the final phase, practical products or results and contribution to theory is made known.

Generic Design Research Model



Revision 5, Dated: 05-20-05 based on Tom Reeves second response on 05/15/05 regarding the "initial identification of the problem" and Wademan additional iterative processing enhancements.

Figure 4.5: Generic Design Research Model (Wademan 2005)

As can be seen from the above examples, the illustration of the conceptualisation of the Design Research process may vary from researcher to researcher but all Design Research comprises a number of stages or phases and cycles:

- a *preliminary phase* where a needs and content analysis is conducted, problems are identified as well as a review of the literature leading to the development of a conceptual framework for the study;
- a *prototyping or developing phase* which is a set of iterative design phases consisting of several iterations or micro-cycles leading to an evaluation which informs the subsequent prototype aimed at improving and refining the intervention; and
- the *assessment phase* which includes an evaluation to determine whether the intervention has met the specifications determined in the first cycle of the needs analysis. This phase also may offer recommendations for the final improvement of the intervention (Plomp, 2007, p. 15)

These three phases with their many activities and evaluations give the researcher the relevant systematic documentation and when linked with reflection (see Reeves, 2006; Reeves et al., 2005) or query (see McKenney, 2001), elicits the theories or broadly

defined design principles (Nieveen, McKenney, & Van den Akker, 2006; Van den Akker, 1999) to enhance solution implementation. Plomp sums it up by explaining that “one may state that this systematic reflection and documentation makes systematic design and development of an intervention become Design Research” (2007, p. 7).

The second phase of Design Research involves the development of prototypes (see McKenney, 2001). Mafumiko (2006) in his research illustrates this second phase involving the process for the development of prototypes in diagrammatic form in Figure 4.5 (cited in Plomp, 2007, p. 30).

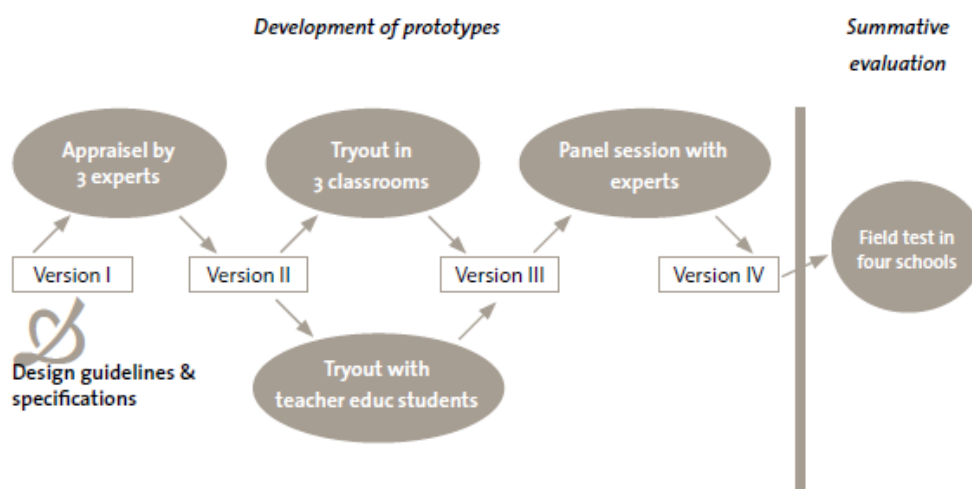


Figure 4.6: Example of the process for the development of prototypes (adapted from Mafumiko, 2006)

Mafumiko’s first version of the prototype is guided by design guidelines and specifications drawn from the first cycle of the needs analysis. This prototype is reviewed by experts and its evaluation is fed into the development of Version 2, which is then sent for a number of ‘tryouts’. Version 3 emerges from the results of the tryouts and this version then is reviewed again by experts. The refined version, Version 4, is then field tested. In the current study, Mafumiko’s process is adapted to suit the processes followed and is incorporated in the model for this study (see Figure 4.5).

In developing the intervention, focus is maintained using Nieveen’s criteria for high quality interventions (2007) (see Table 4.1). This framework of criteria refers to relevance where the design of the intervention is drawn from “state-of-the-art” knowledge, consistency ensuring that the intervention is logically designed, and has a practicality element in that the intervention is feasible in the context for which it was designed. However, once implemented, the intervention is examined for actual practicality to ascertain whether it is actually usable in the context. The final criteria is effectiveness which again has an

expected and an *actual* aspect – which means considering the expected result and then determining the actual result of using the intervention. These criteria, suggested by Nieveen (2007) (see Table 4.1) are used throughout the study to give guidance to expert review and finally, to the evaluation of the phases of research and the intervention.

Table 4.1: Criteria for high quality interventions (Nieveen, 2007)

CRITERION	
Relevance (also referred to as content validity)	There is a need for the intervention and its design is based on state-of-the-art (scientific) knowledge.
Consistency (also referred to as construct validity)	The intervention is 'logically' well-designed.
Practicality	<p>Expected The intervention is expected to be usable in the settings for which it has been designed and developed.</p> <p>Actual The intervention is usable in the settings for which it has been designed and developed.</p>
Effectiveness	<p>Expected Using the intervention is expected to result in desired outcomes.</p> <p>Actual Using the intervention results in desired outcomes.</p>

These four criteria are not used in every phase of the intervention but as the focus moved through the phases of the intervention, so the focus moves through the hierarchy of the criteria. However, *relevance* tends to be predominantly applied to Phase 1 in the needs and content analysis, while *consistency* and *practicality* is applied in Phase 2 with the design, development and implementation of the intervention. Finally, effectiveness is applied in Phase 3 where the *effectiveness* of the intervention is ascertained.

4.3 RESEARCH PARADIGM

Research has shown that postgraduate students are taking increasing numbers of years to complete their studies (reinforced by research conducted by the Council on Higher Education, 2009 – see Chapter 1). These students seem to have great difficulty in finding their way through research and writing resulting in a large attrition rate. As Design Research is interventionist, iterative and incorporates the involvement of practitioners, it was seen as being the most appropriate design for this particular research where a solution is sought to address the problem of supporting postgraduates through the research writing process. Thus Design Research is situated in the pragmatic paradigm, seeking solutions for problems through a process of iterative cycles producing usable knowledge yet drawing on theory to guide its process.

Pragmatism “debunks concepts such as truth and reality” (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003, p. 713), and focuses on what works as the truth regarding the research questions under investigation. To do this, pragmatists reject the either/or choices associated with the “paradigm wars” and support the use of mixed methods in research as these will offer the best opportunities for answering the research questions (reported in such works as Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005) while acknowledging that the values of the researcher play a large role in the interpretation of results (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Therefore, pragmatism, seen as a set of beliefs developed as a single paradigm response to the debate surrounding the “paradigm wars” (see Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) and the emergence of mixed methods and mixed models approaches (Armitage, 2007), is the paradigm providing the underlying philosophical framework for mixed-methods researchers (Creswell, 2003, 2007; Creswell & Plano, 2011; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003).

Thus, the question asked in the paradigm of pragmatism of “what works?” aligns with Plomp’s notion that an innovative intervention, as suggested in Design Research, which is most often situated within a pragmatic paradigm, should “meet a need ... in a complex, practical situation for which no ready-made solutions or guidelines are available” (2007, p. 22). Pragmatist researchers, whose research occurs in social, historical, political and other contexts, look to the what and how to research based on its intended consequences – where they want to go with it (Creswell, 2007, p. 23) focusing on the most appropriate way to answer the question irrespective of whether qualitative or quantitative methods are used (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005). Sieber (1973) argues that “because both approaches have inherent strengths and weaknesses, researchers should utilize the strengths of both techniques in order to understand better social phenomena” (cited in Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005, p. 377).

Taking the above into account, the current research lends itself to a pragmatic paradigm as this research is problem-centred, real-world orientated, in principle uses multiple methods of data collection, both qualitative and quantitative, is aware of the importance of conducting research that best addresses the research problem (MacKenzie & Knipe, 2006) and finally, has practical implications. Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2005, p. 384), drawing on a number of researchers’ ideas, offer some advantages of being a pragmatic researcher. Using mixed methods gives the pragmatic researcher flexibility in the investigative techniques used in the research where qualitative research informs quantitative and vice versa. Using both approaches then allows the researcher to have a “bi-focal lens” (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005, p. 383) with which to view the research ensuring that the quantitative data, which was motivated by researcher concerns, is

supported by qualitative data which captures the participants' voices and perspectives within a single investigation. In addition, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that being a pragmatic researcher ensures that a holistic view is taken of the research with "prolonged engagement, persistent observation and triangulation" (cited in Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005, p. 383).

Thus, Design Research, sitting comfortably in the pragmatist paradigm using a mixed methods approach, was considered most appropriate for application in this study which had as its primary goal to design, develop and implement an intervention and then evaluate its effectiveness. A myriad of mixed methods designs have been created and used over the past years (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009) which has allowed the researcher to make use of a combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods. Leech and Onwuegbuzie's typology has "provided guidance and direction for researchers to design their mixed methods field" (2009, p. 272) and thus, drawing on this typology, a fully mixed concurrent dominant status design (F2) was deemed most appropriate for this study. The F2 design "involves conducting a study that mixes qualitative and quantitative research within one or more of, or across the aforementioned three components in a single research study. In this design, the quantitative and qualitative phases are mixed concurrently at one or more stages or across the stages. However ... either the quantitative or the qualitative is given more weight" (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009, p. 271).

Note must be taken that "design-based research goes beyond merely designing and testing particular interventions" (Design-Based Research Collective, 2003, p. 6). Sandoval reiterates this statement by asking that

the field of education ... resist[s] viewing the development of learning environments, and learning technologies specifically, as simply making things and seeing if they work. Instead, both the very idea of what it means for a design to work and the ways in which its working can be shown [to] rest on the theoretical assumptions that design-based research strives to make explicit and testable (Sandoval, 2004, p. 222).

Interventions are underpinned by specific theory about teaching and learning and thus seek to understand the interaction between the theory, intervention and practice (see Section 4.2) (Design-Based Research Collective, 2003), although Sandoval also argues that working within Design Research leads to developing theories of practice which can be "translated later into practice" (Sandoval, 2004, p. 222)

4.4 THE OVERALL DESIGN OF THIS STUDY

As previously stated, one of the aims of Design Research is designing and developing an intervention as an (innovative) solution to a complex problem. The starting point is an educational problem which at this stage does seem to have a workable solution (Plomp, 2013).

The educational problem, identified in Chapter 1 from South African research, was the lack of academic research writing proficiency found in postgraduate students which resulted in them being under-equipped for study at master's level. In order to conceptualise the study, the main research question is:

What are the characteristics of an intervention for developing academic research writing which will best support postgraduates in education in the first stage of their research?

This study has a “reformist agenda, aiming to find what works within the specific cultural contexts and appropriately inform educational practice...” (Purser et al., 2008, p. 2), recognising that the characteristics of Design Research (discussed in Section 4.2) would assist in best answering the main research question. However, in order to answer this primary research question, an intervention to assist postgraduates in developing their academic research writing, a number of secondary questions were developed to operationalise the study.

In developing secondary research questions, Nieveen's (2007) criteria for high quality interventions - relevance, consistency, practicality and effectiveness - are considered. The criterion of relevance is applied to the first two secondary questions:

1. *What constitutes academic research writing required at postgraduate level?*
2. *What is the level of academic research writing of students entering postgraduate study?*

these research questions were developed to gain an understanding of what academic research writing comprises and to gain an understanding of level at which postgraduate students are with their academic research writing when entering postgraduate study and forms part of the needs analysis. These questions are addressed in Phase 1 of the research and investigates the relevance of the intervention: “there is a need for the intervention and its design to be based on state-of-the-art (scientific) knowledge” (Nieveen, 2007, p. 94).

As such an extensive literature search assisted in coming to an understanding of what academic writing is at postgraduate level and in addition, literature was reviewed on

approaches to the teaching of academic writing. Drawing from this understanding is an investigation into the changing ideas to the more recent conception of academic development and then the discourse related to the teaching of academic writing.

Drawing from the theory as well as practice, the next secondary research question interrogates ways in which postgraduates can be assisted but it also takes into consideration the criterion of consistency which seeks to ensure that the intervention is logically designed.

3. How can postgraduate students be assisted in the development of academic research writing?

In putting an intervention into place, its consistency or construct validity needs to be in place. This means that the intervention needs to be logical well-designed. In addition, the intervention's practicality also needs to be ascertained. Firstly, the expected practicality where "the intervention is expected to be usable in the settings for which it has been designed and developed" should be determined. Thereafter, the actual practicality where "the intervention is usable in the settings for which it has been designed and developed" also needs to be established (Nieveen, 2007, p. 94). Thus, the practicality of the intervention is addressed through the following secondary question:

4. How appropriate is the intervention in developing academic research writing?

If an intervention is put in place, its effectiveness should be established but again the *expected* effectiveness: "using the intervention is expected to result in desired outcomes" and *actual* effectiveness: "using the intervention results in desired outcomes" (Nieveen, 2007, p. 94) were considered. Thus, Question 4 draws on empirical research conducted with the sample of the 2011 cohort of master's students and the evaluation of the academic research writing intervention. It seems that there is currently an increasing focus on classroom-situated research which is needed to augment theoretical arguments via contextualised research (cited in Cadman, 2002). Thus, the final research question evaluates the intervention:

5. How effective is the academic research writing intervention in supporting postgraduates in education in the first stage of their research?

In this study, the characteristics of Design Research were considered (see 4.2) ensuring that practice, the support of postgraduates in higher education through an intervention for developing academic research writing, is informed by the results of the research and enhanced through iterative cycles of systematic reflection, documentation and expert

critique and review. It is hoped that theories on the development of an academic research writing intervention in the particular context of this research, emerging from both the review of literature and the empirical data, can be developed and that the design practice used within the higher education context is seen as robust.

Drawing on the research questions discussed above, the process for this study with its three phases and eight operational cycles, is outlined below and then discussed.

Table 4.2: Phases and cycles in this research

PHASE 1: Problem identification and needs analysis				
Reviewing the literature on academic writing				
	Focus of the research in the respective cycles	Research activities	Participants	Criteria
Cycle 1	Identifying the problem through practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigating experiences from postgraduate programmes and own practice Visits to selected writing centres Examining Institutional survey Examining and analysing master's programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Researcher 	RELEVANCE
Cycle 2	Identifying the problem through a needs analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selection of cohort Assessment of application proposals TALPS¹⁶ baseline assessment Evaluation of personal writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2011 Student cohort Supervision team 	
PHASE 2: Design, development and implementation				
PROTOTYPE 1				
	Focus of the research in the respective cycles	Research activities	Participants	Criteria
Cycle 3	Conceptualisation, design and development of intervention for Prototype1	<i>Development of Prototype 1 based on results of:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of application research proposal Baseline assessment of TALPS Evaluation of personal writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2011 Student cohort Supervision team 	CONSISTENCY PRACTICALITY
Cycle 4	Implementation of Prototype 1 with master's cohort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration with supervision team Development of students' personal writing Development of proposal writing Peer critique and review Student evaluations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2011 Student cohort Supervision team 	

¹⁶ TALPS = Test for Academic Literacy Proficiency

PROTOTYPE 2				
	Focus of the research in the respective cycles	Research activities	Participants	Criteria
Cycle 5	Re-conceptualisation for the design and development of intervention resulting in Prototype 2	<i>Development of Prototype 2 based on results of:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student evaluations • Expert review • Reflection • Assessment of initial proposals • Progress reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2011 Student cohort • Supervision team • Experts 	CONSISTENCY PRACTICALITY
Cycle 6	Implementation of Prototype 2 with master's cohort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration with supervision team • Refinement of research proposals • Mock defence reports • Revision of research proposals • Student evaluations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2011 Student cohort • Supervision team 	
PHASE 3: Evaluation of the intervention				
	Focus of the research in the respective cycles	Research activities	Participants	Criteria
Cycle 7	Evaluation of the intervention	<i>Development of design principles based on results of:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TALPS re-test • Assessment of final research proposals • Proposal defence reports • Student questionnaire • Student interviews • Expert review • Reflection • Assessment of academic writing proficiency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2011 Student cohort • Supervision team • Experts 	PRACTICALITY EFFECTIVENESS actual expected
PROTOTYPE 3				
Cycle 8	Identification, investigation and utilisation of design principles in a specific context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalising design principles for optimal academic research writing intervention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researcher 	

Phase 1, problem identification and a needs analysis, began with a review of the literature on academic writing and its teaching. Thereafter, an analysis was conducted, which assisted in identifying the problem through practice (Cycle 1), and then through a needs analysis (Cycle 2), discussed in Chapter 5. Phase 2, consisting of Cycles 3 and 4, 5 and 6 comprised the design, development and implementation of a number of interactions, namely support sessions and contact sessions, during Semester 1 and Semester 2 of the 2011 academic year. Assessment of initial and developing proposals and student evaluations completed after each session as well as expert review assisted in informing

the following cycle. Assessment of final research proposals and reports from the final defence, a student questionnaire, individual student interviews, a second expert review and assessment of the final proposals by an academic writing comprised Phase 3, the evaluation of the intervention.

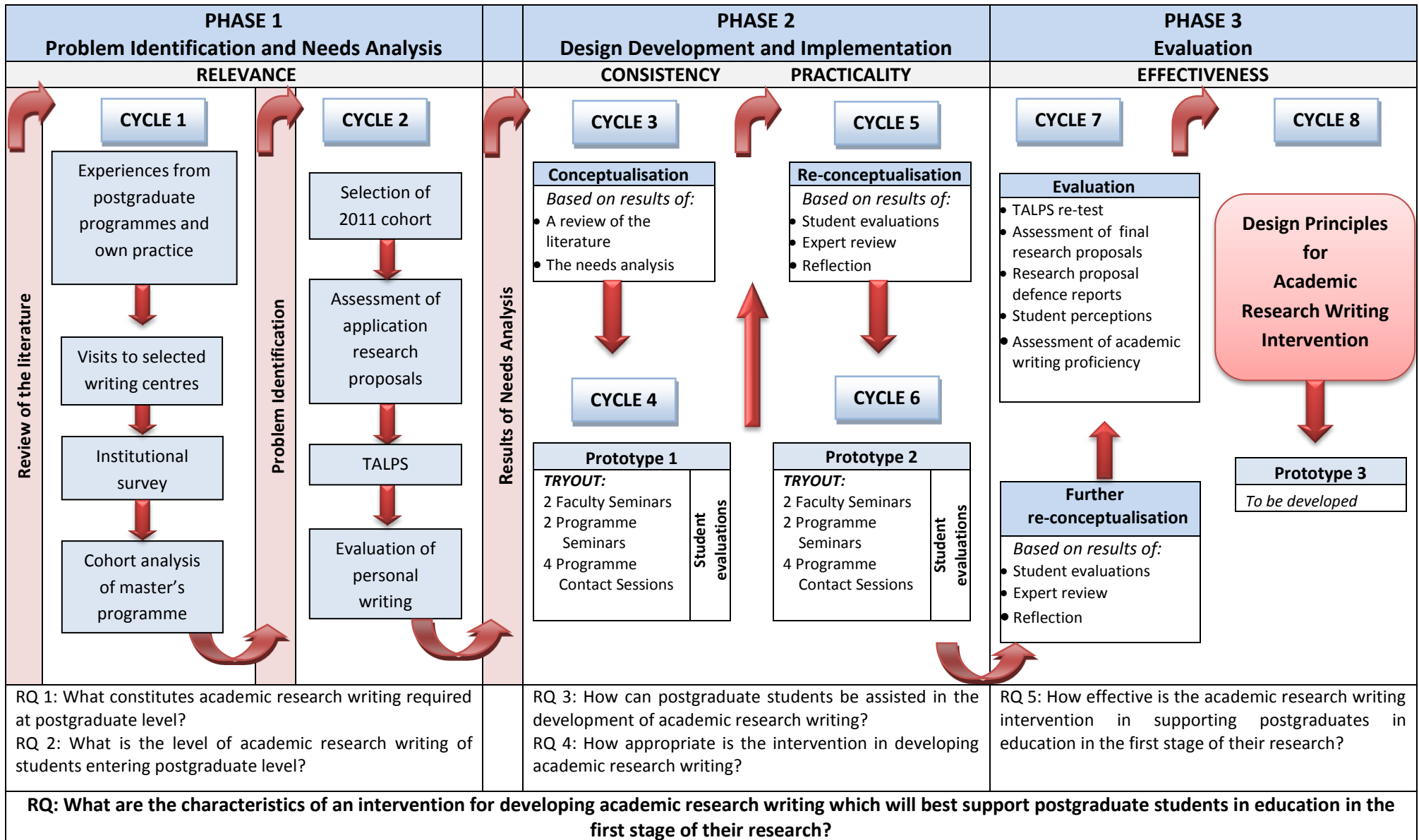
An outline as to how the main research question: ***What are the characteristics of an intervention for developing academic research writing which will best support postgraduates in education in the first stage of their research?*** was operationalised, is tabled below:

Table 4.3: Research questions, phases and instruments

	RESEARCH QUESTION	PHASE	DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES
1	What constitutes academic research writing required at postgraduate level?	1	Review of the literature
2	What is the level of academic research writing of students entering postgraduate level?	1	Assessment of application proposals TALPS Evaluation of personal writing
3	How can postgraduate students be assisted in the development of academic research writing?	1 and 2	Review of the literature
4	How appropriate is the intervention in developing academic research writing?	2	Evaluation questionnaires Student questionnaire Expert review Observation and reflection Assessment of initial and developing research proposals
5	How effective is the academic research writing intervention in supporting postgraduates in education in the first stage of their research?	2 and 3	Student questionnaire Student interviews Expert review Observation and reflection Assessment of final research proposals Academic expert assessment of final research proposals

Although Design Research is conducted in phases and may require a number of varying samples for each of its phases, one cohort was sampled for participation in each of the phases of this research. Participants for this study comprised postgraduate students registered with a faculty of education for a specific master's programme during 2011 and were thus selected purposively; however, the students were ensured of anonymity with pseudonyms being used in place of their names in the descriptions (for example, P1-P.10).

To further aid conceptualisation of this study, Mafumiko's model of the process of prototype development was taken into account as was Archer's model used in her research (2010) which was adapted to suit the research process followed in the development of 'prototypes'. The resulting model (see Figure 4.6), informed by Archer, 2011, also documents the three phases of the research, each of the cycles within each phase, the research questions as well as the criteria (advocated by Nieveen, 2007) used for the assessment of each of the phases.



Legend: TALPS = Test of Academic Literacy for Postgraduate Students

Figure 4.7: Design Research Model for the development of an academic research writing intervention

4.5 PARTICIPANTS IN THE SAMPLE

The sample for this study was purposive (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009) drawn from the students registered for a specific master's programme at the university in a particular year. With this restriction, it meant that the sample was small - initially 10 students but because of dropout, it was reduced to a final number of seven.

The students, who come from diverse backgrounds both personally and professionally, tell you about themselves through their writing, introducing themselves and describing their educational journeys. By incorporating their writing, the reader is given an insight into their literacy journeys, the challenges that they faced and the hurdles which they have overcome, all of which have had an effect of the development of their literacy and consequently their academic writing (see Conceptual Framework Chapter 3, Section 3.6). Two students dropped out during the year under study and one did not participate fully in the second half of the programme and as a result, did not defend her research proposal. The description of the sample initially included student writing as their writing sketches the background from which they came as well as the discourse/s with which they grew up and in which they were educated and speaks to the notion of cultural capital. These descriptions have now been moved to the Appendixes (see Appendix B).

Table 4.4: Participants in this study

Participant	Race	Gender	Age	Mother Tongue	Other languages spoken and written
P.1	Black	Female	40	Setswana	English *
P.2	Black	Male	42	Xitsonga	English, Afrikaans, Setswana, Sepedi
P.3	Black	Male	47	siSwati	isiZulu, English
P.4	Black	Male	44	isiZulu	English, Afrikaans, Sesotho, Xitsonga, Setswana
P.5	White	Female	25	Afrikaans	English
P.6	Black	Female	43	Sepedi	English, Setswana, Sesotho, Afrikaans
P.7	Black	Male	44	Setswana	English *
P.8	Black	Male	36	Tshivenda	English, isiZulu, Sepedi
P.9	Black	Female	41	Khoi-Khoi	Afrikaans, English
P.10	White	Female	24	English	French, Afrikaans

* missing data

These 10 students form the sample for all phases of this study and it is with this sample that data was collected.

4.6 DATA COLLECTION

Taking into account the problem identified through practice and through a needs and context analysis leading to the formulation of the main research question: *What are the characteristics of an intervention for promoting academic research writing which will best support postgraduates in education in the first stage of their research?* data for this study was collected over an 18-month period during 2011-12. The intervention, comprising two prototypes was implemented during the 2011 academic year and data collection comprised a variety of instruments and data collection strategies across the three phases of the research. Using a number of data collection instruments and methods, which Creswell refers to as concurrent triangulation, is an attempt to confirm, cross-validate or corroborate findings (2003, p. 217). These phases with their relevant instruments, data collection strategies and participants are discussed briefly below but each of the phases is described in depth in each of their own chapters (Chapter 5-8).

4.6.1 Phase 1 Data Collection

In Phase 1, during the needs analysis, to address the research question of *What is the level of academic research writing in students at postgraduate level?* data, on the level of research writing, was collected using a variety of methods. Data collection procedures for Phase 1 are tabled below:

Table 4.5: Data collection procedures for Phase 1

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES: PHASE 1			
	DATA COLLECTION	INSTRUMENT	WHO?
1	Assessment of initial proposals	Rubric for assessment of application proposals	Supervisor and researcher
2	Test of Academic Literacy for Postgraduate Students	TALPS assessment instrument	Practitioner from Centre for Academic Literacy, University of Pretoria
3	Evaluation of personal writing	Response to personal writing form	Researcher

4.6.1.1 Assessment of application proposals

The research proposals submitted by the students as part of their application for entry into the master's programme were assessed to elicit a baseline assessment of academic research writing and application of content knowledge and methodology.

These proposals were assessed by me as the researcher as well as the supervisor for this study using the rubric informed by one designed by Carstens (in Carstens & Fletcher, 2009) (see Chapter 5) and one developed over some years by the researcher and a colleague. The same rubric was used in assessing the initial research proposals, again during the course of their development and finally, once the proposal had been successfully defended. This assessment process is described more fully in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

4.6.1.2 Test of Academic Literacy for Postgraduate Students (TALPS)

Once students were registered for the programme, the Test of Academic Literacy for Postgraduate Students (TALPS) was administered. This test was administered and scored by a practitioner from the Centre for Academic Literacy at the University. Results were emailed in Excel format to the researcher as a summative assessment. The test, the students' evaluation and the results are described in greater detail in Chapter 5 (see Section 5.2.2.3).

4.6.1.3 Evaluation of personal writing

Finally, to ascertain how the students wrote, they were asked to submit some personal writing prior to a contact session. These personal writings tasks, involving writing about themselves, the educational and professional journeys and their literacy history, were evaluated using a framework drawn from Lunsford (1997) and McAndrew and Reigstad (2001) to give general guidelines of what should have been portrayed in the writing but which also identified issues with writing which could be fed forward and addressed through an interactive workshop. This process is described in more detail in Chapter 5 in Section 5.2.3. The personal writing was also drawn on to portray each of participants in the previous section (4.5)

4.6.2 Phase 2 Data Collection

In the Design, Development and Implementation Phase, data was collected to address Research Question 2: *How can postgraduate students be assisted in the development of academic research writing?* and Research Question 3: *How appropriate is the intervention in developing academic research writing?* These procedures, operationalised in Cycles 3 and 4, are tabled below:

Table 4.6: Data collection procedures for Phase 2

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES: PHASE 2			
	DATA COLLECTION	INSTRUMENT	WHO?
1	Evaluation of contact sessions	Student evaluation forms	Students
2	Assessment of initial and developing research proposals	Rubric for assessment of proposals	Supervisor and researcher
3	Student progress reports	Progress report sheet	Supervisor/s Researcher
4	Assessment at the mock oral defence	Assessment form	Supervision team

4.6.2.1 Evaluation of contact sessions

In Phase 2 during the implementation of the intervention during Semester 1 and Semester 2, students completed student evaluations electronically after each of the Programme Seminars and contact sessions and emailed them in to the researcher. These student evaluations, devised by the researcher, required the students to evaluate each of the sessions that they attended (two Programme Seminars and four contact sessions for each of Semester 1 and Semester 2) with each student evaluation being specifically designed to evaluate that particular session (see Appendix F). The evaluation most often consisted of a descriptive written explanation of what was experienced, how they found the experience and if either helped or did not help with their academic research process; for example, an extract from an evaluation form for Contact Session 2:

Please rate the following aspects of the contact session (mark with an x) and complete the comment section in detail (in much more detail than the previous form -- we want to hear your stories, reactions and experiences) addressing the following questions:

- a. What new practices did you learn?
- b. What new knowledge did you learn?
- c. What do you know now that you did not previously know?
- d. Was there an AHA moment?
- e. How does this affect your approach to your work?
- f. How will you apply these new practices in your writing?

In addition, an overall rating – excellent, very good, average, below average - was required for each of the sessions.

The student evaluations were emailed to the students the week following the seminar or contact session, completed by the student, and then returned electronically within the week. The comments, as well as the ratings for each of the sections, were captured in a *Word* file in preparation for analysis, and were used not only in the narrative of each of the

programme and contact sessions described in Chapter 6 but also used to inform revision and development of the next phase of the intervention.

4.6.2.2 Assessment of initial and developing research proposals

After Semester 1's intervention and after determining student progress, the students' research proposals were assessed by the same assessors using the identical assessment rubric (see Appendix G). Just prior to the mock oral defence, the developing proposals were again assessed in the same manner. The results of these assessments, with those collected initially, are used with the results from the assessment of the final research proposals and discussed in Chapter 7.

4.6.2.3 Student progress reports

Student progress reports (see Appendix H2) are completed for submission to the Department twice a year and track the students' progress through each of the semesters, ensuring that they are working in line with the developmental programme. To assist with the completion of the reports, students are requested to fill in a Programme Progress Sheet (see Appendix H1). Student demographic details are recorded as well as information about student progress such as results of fundamental modules, successful defence of proposal, ethical clearance given, approval of title and then which chapters are in process, in revision, completed and edited. The supervisor also has to comment on progress using such key words as satisfactory or unsatisfactory. In this research, which focused on the first stages of research, that of the developing and writing of the research proposal, the Departmental reports were substantiated with more detailed information.

4.6.2.4 Assessment at the mock oral defence

In preparation for the defence of their research proposals, students presented their proposed research in a mock oral defence presentation session. The supervision team consisting of the supervision team and the academic research writing practitioner made up the panel. A research proposal defence assessment form was created for use by each panel member for use during each of the oral presentations (see Appendix I), which was supported by slide presentations. After each student's presentation, panel members individually gave oral feedback which was drawn together by the leader of the supervision team and summarised for the student, giving him/her guidelines for revision of both the presentation slides and the actual oral presentation in preparation for the research proposal defence (see Chapter 7 Section 7.3.5 for an in-depth description).

4.6.3 Phase 3 Data Collection

Data collection in the final phase, Phase 3 Evaluation, aimed at addressing the final research question: *How effective is the academic research writing intervention in supporting postgraduates in education in the first stage of their research?* The data collection instruments are tabled below:

Table 4.7: Data collection procedures for Phase 3

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES: PHASE 3			
	DATA COLLECTION	INSTRUMENT	WHO?
1	Assessment at the research proposal defence	Record of doctoral and master's proposal defence: 2011	Chairperson and defence panel
2	Test of Academic Literacy for Postgraduate Students (re-test)	TALPS assessment instrument	Practitioner from Centre for Academic Literacy, University of Pretoria
3	Assessment of final research proposals	Rubric for assessment of proposals	Supervisor and researcher
4	Student questionnaire	Student questionnaire	Researcher
5	Student interviews	Interview schedule	Researcher
6	Expert review	Expert review form	Two expert reviewers
7	Academic writing expert assessment of final research proposals	Academic research writing evaluation sheet	Content analysis

4.6.3.1 Assessment at the research proposal defence

On an appointed day, the students presented their oral defence presentations to a panel of members of the Department (Faculty of Education, 2010 see Section 2.7). The panel consisted of the chairperson and representatives from the Department as well as critical readers. Assessment data, collected from the defence presentation, consisted of the Record of Doctoral and Master's Proposal Defence: 2011 (see Appendix J) completed by the chairperson after a collaborative discussion with the critical readers and the Departmental representatives (see Chapter 7 Section 7.3.6 for an in-depth description).

4.6.3.2 Test of Academic Literacy for Postgraduate Students (re-test)

A re-test of TALPS, seen as a post-intervention measure of their academic literacy proficiency, was conducted midway through the students' second year of study by the original administrator attached to the Centre of Academic Literacy at the University (see Chapter 7 Section 7.4).

4.6.3.3 Assessment of final research proposals

At the end of the two semesters and after the research proposal defence, students' final and revised research proposals were once again assessed by two assessors against the

same rubric used for the earlier assessments which gave a post intervention indication of the standard/competence of academic research writing. The results of each of the assessments are given in the respective chapters by the analysis of all three assessments and are presented in Chapter 8 Section 8.3.3.

4.6.3.4 Student questionnaire

At the end of the academic year, a questionnaire was developed by the researcher which required students to evaluate the academic research writing intervention taking into account Faculty Seminars, Programme Seminars and contact sessions. Discussions with the supervisor after initial development, led to the revision of the questionnaire until it was deemed ready to submit to students for completion (Appendix K).

Section 1 provided demographic information with Section B requesting information on language background to help set the scene. Section C focused on evaluating Faculty Seminars on a 1-4 scale with 1 representing not at all, 2 fair, 3 very and 4 extremely. Students were required to evaluate *Content* looking at *relevance to topic, addition of new information, assisted in understanding of next steps, and increased knowledge of research/topic, processes*. The *Teaching* section was also rated on a 1-4 scale according to *method of teaching, interaction between participants, depth of treatment of topic and time allocated*. However, in the *Teaching* section, the rating of 1 was applied if teaching was completely *insufficient*, 2 if teaching was *fairly insufficient*, 3 if teaching was *sufficient* and 4 if teaching was *sufficiently well done*. There was also a *not applicable* category if the student had not attended the session/s.

Section D was dedicated to evaluating the Programme Seminars. Students were requested to evaluate each of the sessions on a 1-4 scale with 1 representing not at all, 2 fair, 3 very and 4 extremely. Students were to rate each session according to *relevance to level of study, relevance for own dissertation, understanding of suitable approaches to research, addition of new information, understanding of next steps in the research process and increase in knowledge*. The category *not applicable* was also offered, if the student did not attend the session.

In tandem with evaluating each of the contact sessions directly after they were conducted, Section E asked for a further evaluation of these sessions through the categories *not at all useful, fairly useful, very useful and extremely useful*. Again, a *not applicable* category was offered. The open-ended questions at the end of this section asked the students to write about their experience of the mock defence as well as suggestions which could inform the revision of the process.

Section F was concerned with aspects of writing the research proposal. Students were asked to identify whether aspects were *not at all challenging*, *fairly challenging*, *very challenging* and *extremely challenging*. As this study is concerned with academic research writing, it was felt that identifying aspects of difficulty experienced by the students while writing their research proposals could inform the programme.

The final three open-ended questions related to challenges that the students faced during the year which could have had an effect on their studies. Students were also asked to reflect on their experiences and offer suggestions for aspects which they thought would be important to include in the programme for future years.

The questionnaire, accompanied by a covering letter (as suggested by Gay et al., 2009) which explained the purpose of the questionnaire with instructions on how to complete and return, were emailed to participants of the 2011 cohort for completion at home/work. Students were also asked if they were willing to be interviewed. All replies were returned electronically to the researcher within a two-week period.

4.6.3.5 Student Interviews

During Phase 3, interviews were conducted with each of the students to engage in a discussion and elicit responses on how the students viewed the development of their academic research writing, the processes that they followed, the challenges to be overcome and a reflection on how they feel now that they have successfully defended their proposals. As by this time they were well into the writing phase of their chapters of their dissertation, issues about students' academic research writing which had arisen in their questionnaires, during the defence process and the finalisation of their research proposals, were discussed (see Student Interview Schedule Appendix L). Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with each of the participants sampled for this study and the interviews were audio-recorded on a digital recorder.

4.6.3.6 Expert review

Two expert reviewers were approached to review the intervention, Prototype 1, firstly at the end of the first Semester and secondly, Prototype 2, at the end of the second Semester. A schedule (see Appendix M) was given to the reviewers for consideration when reviewing the programme, taking into account alignment with the HEQF and the need to design, develop and defend a master's research proposal within the first year of study. The expert reviewers were also asked to ascertain whether the intervention met the four criteria of relevance, consistency, practicality and effectiveness for the development

of academic research writing for postgraduate education students. The experts were asked to offer criticisms and critique, comment on omissions as well as make suggestions for improvement for the final prototype.

4.6.3.7 Academic writing expert assessment of academic research writing proficiency

Even though all seven research proposals had been completed, successfully defended and revised to the satisfaction of the supervisors, it was still felt that the essence of academic research writing had not been assessed or evaluated. The rubric used in the four assessments of the research proposal confirmed that each of the sections had been completed – there was compliance – and had been assessed on a scale of 1-4/5 – summative assessment; but, there was no indication of how the students were writing. It was thus decided to request a further evaluation of each student’s academic research writing proficiency drawing from the discussion of what constitutes academic research writing. This in-depth assessment of the writing quality of the research proposals takes into account aspects such as style, register, tone, correct genre application, structure, appropriate discourse, the development of an argument, use of hedging, integration of literature, use of discourse markers such as transitions, in-text citing and referencing. All criteria comprised the rubric which guided the assessment of academic research writing proficiency.

4.7 DATA ANALYSIS

As described in the previous section, data were collected via a variety of instruments, and therefore data were analysed in a number of ways. These analyses are discussed in the following section, drawing from the table outlining the various data collection strategies used in each phase.

Table 4.8: Data analysis strategies used in each phase

DATA ANALYSIS STRATEGIES		
PHASE 1		
	INSTRUMENT	STRATEGY
1	Rubric for assessment of application proposals	Wilcoxon signed-rank test
2	TALPS	Wilcoxon signed-rank test
3	Response to personal writing form	Diagnostic analysis
PHASE 2		
	INSTRUMENT	STRATEGY
4	Contact session evaluation form	Content analysis
5	Progress reports	Content analysis
6	Rubric for assessment of initial and developing research proposals	Wilcoxon signed-rank test
7	Mock defence critique form	Panel evaluation

PHASE 3		
	INSTRUMENT	STRATEGY
8	Research proposal defence form	Panel evaluation
9	Rubric for assessment of final research proposals	Wilcoxon signed-rank test Friedman's two-way analysis
10	Student questionnaire	Descriptive statistical analysis Content analysis
11	TALPS (re-test)	Wilcoxon signed-rank test
12	Student interview schedule	Atlas.ti Grounded theory analysis
13	Expert review schedule	Content analysis
14	Academic writing expert assessment of final research proposals	Content analysis

4.7.1 Assessment of Research Proposals

Research proposals were assessed four times during this research (see 1, 6 & 9 of Table 4.7): the application proposal, the initial proposal, a developmental proposal and a final proposal. The same rubric was used for all three assessments with the same two assessors assessing the proposals. The rubric was designed in such a way that the mark allocation totalled 100. Given that the numbers being assessed were small, a non-parametric test, the Wilcoxon signed-rank test (Field, 2009), was used. The Wilcoxon signed-rank test is used to assess the differences between sets of scores from the same participants. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences Version 20 (SPSS) was used to analyse the data as well as the Friedman's two-way analysis of variance by ranks. Friedman's is used for "testing differences between conditions when there are more than two conditions and the same participants have been used in all conditions" (Field, 2009, p. 573). The findings are reported on in Chapter 8.

4.7.2 Test of Academic Literacy for Postgraduate Students

The Wilcoxon signed-rank test (Field, 2009) was also used to analyse the results from the pre-and post-intervention TALPS (see 2 & 11 of Table 4.7). The findings are reported on in Chapter 8.

4.7.3 Response to Personal Writing

This baseline assessment ascertained how the students wrote and their writing was analysed using content analysis (Gay et al., 2009) (see 3 of Table 4.7) within three categories of golden thread, structure and language application which covered both higher order concerns as well as lower order concerns (McAndrew & Reigstad, 2001). The analysis fed into the design and development of the intervention.

4.7.4 Evaluation of Contact Sessions

The open-ended responses given by students in the evaluations of the contact sessions were combined into one file (see 4 of Table 4.7). Content analysis (Gay et al., 2009), used to determine the presence of certain words or concepts within texts or sets of texts, was

applied to analyse the responses and chosen for this analysis as the data were seen as manageable in this instance.

Student written evaluations were initially read through to assist in gaining a global view of the evaluations, and to become familiar with the data and identifying potential themes. Thereafter, the data were examined in depth to provide detailed descriptions of the setting, participants and activities; and finally, pieces of data were categorised and coded and grouped them into themes (i.e classifying) (Gay et al., 2009, p. 449).

These descriptions, in conjunction with quantitative data, were used in writing up Phase 2, Semester 1 and 2 of the intervention reported in Chapters 6 and 7 in an attempt to answer the research question related to that specific area. Henning et al., however, remind the researcher to look deeper taking into account “What are the relationships in meaning, what do they say together, what is missing, how do they address the research questions, is there a link, what has been foregrounded, what has moved to the periphery, what additional information is needed?” (2004, p. 106). This is a reminder that the steps of conducting content analysis are not linear but are inter-related (Gay et al., 2009).

4.7.5 Progress Reports

Student progress reports (see 5 of Table 4.7) are completed for submission to the Department twice a year and track the students’ progress through each of the semesters, ensuring that they are working in line with the developmental programme. These progress reports were once again analysed using content analysis taking into considering milestones achieved and considering timelines for future planning to ensure timely completion of the research proposal.

4.7.6 Assessment of the Research Proposal Defences

Assessment of the mock defence took the form of analysing the summarised responses in an attempt to identify issues which still needed to be addressed with and by students in preparation for their proposal defence. The analysis of this assessment informed firstly, student development and then, revision of the intervention.

Assessment of the research proposal defence was recorded by the chairperson on the Record of Doctoral and Master’s Proposal Defence: 2011 (see 7 & 8 of Table 4.7). A numerical value of either 1, 2, 3 or 4 was awarded to each of the students depending on whether their proposals were 1, approved, 2, approved with minor corrections, 3, provisionally approved, 4, not approved with the need to re-submit and/or re-defend and 5, referred to Postgraduate Committee for consideration.

Further comments were taken into consideration by the students to inform a final revision of their research proposals.

4.7.7 Student Questionnaires

After the electronic submission of the questionnaire by the students, the data were captured in an Excel format in preparation for data analysis (see 10 of Table 4.7). The data were cleaned by checking for outlying values and investigating missing values. Once the data were cleaned, SPSS was used to process the data for descriptive statistics. Mean scores were calculated for Faculty Seminars, specifically the categories relating to *Content* and *Teaching* out of a possible 4. Mean scores were also calculated for each item for the Departmental Seminars and Contact Sessions out of a possible 4.

A reverse scale for aspects within the research proposal that the students had to complete or attend to, were calculated. The higher the mean score meant that specific aspects were more challenging. This aspect of the questionnaire is discussed in Chapter 8 Section 8.5.

The open-ended responses were also subjected to content analysis as with responses to the student evaluation of contact sessions and the emerging ‘thick’ description (Merriam, 1998, p. 151) is found in Chapters 6 and 7.

Tables with these descriptive statistics were created and used in conjunction with the qualitative data in reporting on the effectiveness of the academic research writing intervention found for Seminars 1 and 2 in Chapters 6 and 7.

4.7.8 Student Interviews

Interviews were audio-taped and then downloaded into files on the computer (see 12 of Table 4.7). An external transcriber transcribed these interviews into the required format. Computer-aided qualitative data analysis software, Atlas.ti, was then used for analysis as this software has the ability to provide “a powerful workbench” (Henning et al., 2004, p. 126) assisting researchers in dealing with large amounts of data which could include textual graphical or audio data.

Initial coding also referred to as open coding occurs when the data are broken down into units which are then assigned a name or code. These codes reveal ideas or concepts which can then be grouped into categories but provide the opportunity for the researcher “to remain open to all possible theoretical directions” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 46). This initial coding, which should be done line-by-line, affords the opportunity for understanding and analysing what participants are saying which could assist in identifying areas and avenue

of further exploration and investigation (Saldana, 2009). In coding, process coding, which summarises the data in a short word or phrase by using the gerund to indicate, topic or descriptive coding, and in vivo coding, which means extracting a short phrase or sentence from the data itself, was applied to the data (Saldana, 2009, pp. 77-81; 70-73; 74-77).

In the second cycle of coding, the data were re-analysed and re-organised, with the splitting of some codes and then collapsing of others. During the process of comparing and contrasting the data, similar ideas and sentiments were grouped together with a similar category label, motivating thought about possible themes. This type of coding, focused coding, bases coding on a theme, and this was entered into for this stage of the process (Saldana, 2009).

4.7.9 Expert Review

The reviews completed by two reviewers (see 13 of Table 4.7) were also subjected to content analysis (Gay et al., 2009) and the emerging 'thick' description (Merriam, 1998, p. 151) is found in Chapter 8.

4.7.10 Academic Writing Expert Assessment of Final Research Proposals

After a further evaluation of each students' academic research writing (see 14 of Table 4.7) drawing from the discussion of what constitutes academic research writing and taking into account aspects such as style, register, tone, correct genre use, structure, appropriate discourse, argument, integration of literature, use of transitions, use of hedging, in-text citing and referencing, the report was analysed using content analysis. The results of this assessment are reported on in Chapter 8 Section 8.5.

4.8 ADDRESSING METHODOLOGICAL NORMS

This aspect of research, applying methodological norms over the years, has been addressed in many ways as the debate continues to rage. Initially, LeCompte and Goetze (1982) used internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity for both qualitative and quantitative studies. Lincoln and Guba (1985) looked at the trustworthiness of the study by focussing on credibility, authenticity, transferability, dependability and confirmability to apply to more naturalistic research. Eisner (1991) used alternative terms such as structural corroboration, consensual validation, referential adequacy and ironic validity to create standards for judging the credibility of research while Lather (1986) reconceptualised validity into four types: paralogic, rhizomatic, stated and voluptuous. Angen (2000) devised two types of validation, ethical and substantive validation, for use in interpretive inquiries and Whitemore, Chase and Mandle (2001) synthesised perspectives of validity to organise them into primary and secondary criteria (as quoted in

Creswell, 2007). Merriam (1998, 2002), within qualitative research, has used internal and external validity and reliability even though some researchers have argued that these are more appropriate in quantitative research.

In this study, Design Research was considered an appropriate research design in order to answer the research question and as such, a variety of qualitative and quantitative data collection instruments were used. Merriam explains that in both qualitative and quantitative research, validity and reliability should be considered carefully from the conceptualisation of the study, the way in which data are collected and then analysed and consequently, how the findings are presented (Merriam, 1998, 2002). Considering this, the current study assured internal validity, where the question of how congruent the research findings are with reality, through triangulation, member checks, and peer examination. External validity, which is concerned with the extent that the study can be applied to other situations, is assured by the rich, thick description emanating from the evaluation questionnaires and the student questionnaire evaluating the postgraduate intervention as well as data gathered in the interviews with the students themselves as well as the reflections of the supervision team. However, within qualitative data, cognisance must be taken of the researcher bias (discussed in 4.7) particularly as the researcher is interpreting the participants' views and perspectives of the phenomenon under research (Merriam, 1998, 2002).

In assessing the intervention and the effect that it had on the development of academic research writing at postgraduate level, once again Nieveen's criteria came into play by investigating the relevance of the intervention or viewing it for content validity and then consistency in design, which assesses construct validity (Nieveen, 2007). As a result, steps were taken "to check the validity of both the quantitative data and the accuracy of the qualitative findings" (Creswell, 2003, p. 221).

Overall, the idea of applying substantive validation, devised and developed by Angen, offers validity to interpretative research which taps into the "consideration of one's own understandings of the topic, understandings derived from other sources, and an accounting of this process in the written record of the study" (2000, p. 390). The notion of substantive validation is reinforced by constant self-reflection which in itself, contributes to the validation of the work (Creswell, 2007). Substantive validation also decrees that research should have a generative promise to raise new possibilities, open up new questions, and stimulate new dialogue, which is to be seen in Chapter 9 which offers suggestions and recommendations. In addition, as previously mentioned, this research has a "reformist agenda, aiming to find what works within the specific cultural contexts

and appropriately inform educational practice ...” (Purser et al., 2008, p. 2). Such research has a transformative value leading to action and change (see Skillen, 2006) and in this research, understanding the need for an academic research writing intervention even at postgraduate level. I would argue that applying substantive validation to this study has enhanced validity of the final product.

However, as Design Research is cyclical and iterative, data collection and analysis is conducted in phases and as such within each phase, issues of validity and reliability were investigated and applied to the study taking into account Nieveen’s criteria for high quality interventions (Nieveen, 2007). These are discussed in Chapters 5, 6, and 7.

4.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Permission to conduct this research was sought from the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria (Reference: SM 11/03/02) as the participants were drawn from the postgraduate students registered in 2011 for a specific master’s programme in education. Consent forms outlining the focus of the research as well as its value and ensuring that their participation is anonymous, were signed by the students (see Appendix J and K). The issue of *captive audience* was considered as the participants, as part of the programme, could have been seen to be obligated to participate in the study. However, the students all agreed to participate in the intervention and thus in the study.

This 2011 cohort of students participated in each phase of the research over a one-year period representing two prototypes of the intervention. Students’ writing, both research writing in the form of research proposals and personal writing was assessed. Students were also asked to evaluate each session attended, both at faculty level and programme level. At the end of the cycle, each student completed an evaluative questionnaire. The results of the research proposal defence and an assessment of the final research proposals also formed part of the data collection. Finally, interviews were conducted with each of the students at the end of the intervention and an assessment of the final research proposals was conducted by an expert in academic writing, thus creating an open and transparent process of evaluation.

For the purposes of reporting, each student was assigned a specific code to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. No harm was intended or affected to any individual. In fact, it was as much a learning experience for the participants as it was for me, enabling me to explain or theorise their problems with academic writing and thereby support them in developing their academic research writing.

4.10 MY ROLE IN THIS RESEARCH

Rankin posits that if done well, practitioner research can provide a rich context of experience, knowledge, theory, and reflections in which we consider and reconsider what we do as a profession. Conducting practitioner research gives practitioners a way to think about what is done in the classroom in concrete, productive terms (1996). Thus taking on the “emic perspective” (Merriam, 1998, p. 6) becoming fully immersed in the research setting (Gay et al., 2009) is valuable and particularly enhanced when a researcher spends considerable time in the research setting interacting intensely on a regular basis with the participants. In this study, I consider myself a privileged, active observer as when not teaching or interacting with the students myself, was part of the supervision team, allowing for time to observe and then question and reflect. Participant observation data, recorded in field notes, firstly provide a context for understanding the data collected, and secondly are used in supporting other types of data collected via interviews or even questionnaires.

Participant observation data, such as queries and reflections, were recorded in field notes either at the end of the day’s interaction with students either in Programme Seminars, or contact sessions (referred to as “headnotes” by Gay et al., 2009), on student evaluation forms submitted electronically and finally, after interviewing the students. These field notes, often noting ‘gut feel’ of the situation, what was said and what was not, contributed to the ‘thick’ description needed for the reporting state of this research. Jarvis explains that the practitioner-researcher’s “innermost feeling, values, beliefs and sense of identity all form part of the research as well as the learning and practical reasoning processes that the practitioner-researcher undergoes” (1999, p. 76).

Casanave (2002) argues about the importance of the insider as well as the outsider researcher, meaning that the voices of both the insider and outsider should be heard which in this case, the study participants in addition to reviewers and myself, are ‘heard’ in each of the chapters. But, in conducting research, cognisance needs to be taken of possible bias that may occur with the varied roles that the researcher plays (Barab & Squire, 2004).

In this research, I am firstly the designer of the intervention based on identifying the problem through my practice over the years in working with postgraduate students and identifying the problem through a needs analysis. Secondly, I take on the role as co-ordinator of the MEd. programme, working in conjunction with the supervision team to arrange for support sessions and contact sessions and then discussing the content to be taught or workshopped. In collaboration with the supervision team, I take on the role of

implementer, or co-implementer, of the intervention, driving the sessions through a year's cycle and working as academic writing practitioner, focusing on development of academic research writing. My final role is that of researcher, evaluating the intervention and investigating the effect of the intervention on the success of the students, thus attempting to theorise academic research writing.

Taking on multiples roles had its challenges especially with the retaining and maintaining of neutrality. However, from the early stages of the development of this research, formative assessment was put in place using a number of methods (assessments, evaluations, questionnaires, interviews) and involving both students, expert reviewers as well as myself which allowed for the triangulation of data (Nieveen, 2007).

Within Design Research, Nieveen's criteria (2007) for high quality interventions are applied although the criteria may have differing emphases in different phases of the research (Plomp, 2007), to ensure that traditional methodological norms of validity and reliability are addressed (see Figure 4.6). This aspect is discussed in each of the chapters (Chapters 5-8) involving the collection and analysis of data, but a brief description of ensuring reliability and validity and trustworthiness with each of the data collection strategies is given in the following section:

TALPS pre- and post-test: this test was seen as valid and reliable as discussed in Chapter 5 (see Section 5.2.2.3). However, due to the small numbers of participants, the results of this test could not be subjected to a reliability check such as Cronbach's Alpha.

Assessment of research proposals: the research proposals were assessed four times over the period of a year by two independent assessors. Inter-rater reliability (Gay et al., 2009) was addressed through a comparison of the assessments to ensure consistency between the scorers. Discrepancies in scoring was discussed and in some cases, assessors went back to the text to ensure inter-rater reliability (see Chapter 5 Section 5.2.2.3; Chapter 6 Section 6.4; Chapter 7 Section 7.3.4; Chapter 8 Section 8.3.3).

Evaluation of personal writing: to ensure trustworthiness of the analysis, a framework for evaluation was drawn from the literature (Lunsford, 1997; McAndrew & Reigstad, 2001) Chapter 5 (see Section 5.2.2.4).

Evaluation of contact sessions: the evaluation forms, completed after each of the sessions, were based on similar instruments used previously in the master's programme. Although not high stakes instruments, these evaluations ensured that I captured the students' perceptions of the educational value of the sessions, and as part of the iterative

process, informed the design and development of the subsequent sessions (see Chapters 6 and 7).

Both the *student questionnaire* and the *student interviews* were conducted after the completion of the intervention. This deliberate choice ensured that the students had had time to distance themselves from the intervention but yet view it critically for its educational value in promoting their academic research writing.

The student questionnaire was subject to review and so was considered to have construct validity. The interview schedule, in its development, was also subject to review. Although a schedule, it was flexible in allowing greater discussion on points that were raised in the interview.

Certain issues needed to be taken into account such as issue of power relations. Although I acknowledge that inevitably there are power relations, during the course of the year and the implementation of the intervention, I worked with the students in developing trust. However, it was only in Cycle 7 when credibility with the students and trust was assured, did I ask students to complete the questionnaire which focused on the students' experiences and their authentic perceptions of the intervention. Then drawing from the findings of the questionnaire, I developed the interview schedule which gave me the opportunity to talk to each of the students rather informally about their experiences, their journey, the challenges they faced, the difficulties which they encountered with their writing and so on. As these two data collection strategies are one of many empirical data points, they can be compared with others for triangulation and thus ensure trustworthiness.

A further issue is that of collaboration: working with colleagues on designing, developing and implementing the content-related aspects of the intervention ensured that the programme contained the necessary discipline-specific content knowledge and research methodology knowledge needed to form a holistic and encompassing programme to support the students through the first year of study. Finally, issues of confidentiality had to be assured and then I had to alternate and negotiate between the roles that I had undertaken in this research. Although I was particularly aware of bias and attempted to maintain objectivity, Kelly (2004) sees bias as unavoidable but in order for the research not to be compromised The National Research Council (NRC) (cited in Shavelson et al., 2003, p. 26) suggests several ways to ensure that there is little conflict of interests by offering the following guiding principles:

- pose significant questions that can be investigated empirically;
- link research to relevant theory;
- use methods that permit direct investigation of the questions;
- provide a coherent and explicit chain of reasoning;
- attempt to yield findings that replicate and generalize across studies; and
- disclose research data and methods to enable and encourage professional scrutiny and critique.

The NRC does suggest that not all principles will be evident in a study, but a researcher needs to strive to use these guiding principles for “elucidating or reducing biases that might affect the research process” (Shavelson et al., 2003, p. 26). In this study, principles that guided the research included opening up the research to professional scrutiny through discussions with the supervision team as to the relevance and practicality of the intervention. As designer and implementer of the intervention, through my reflection of the implementation and the evaluation and feedback from the students, I took a critical stance identifying what worked, what was lacking and what was needed in the subsequent phase, which informed the design and development of the next prototype.

In considering the research design, I used the most appropriate research design for this particular study, thereafter ensuring a strong chain of reasoning (Krathwohl, 1998, p. 64) through the process of the research.

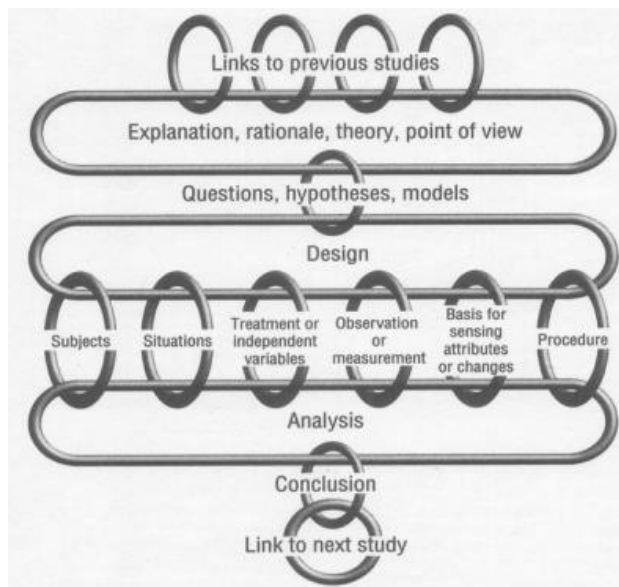


Figure 4.8: Chain of reasoning (Krathwohl, 1998)

In addition, I systematically documented the process from the design and implementation of the intervention, the documents submitted by the students as well as the instruments used for data collection keeping an audit trail (for use in member checks and peer examination) to verify and validate the process. In addition, triangulation was achieved through the variety of research approaches (qualitative and quantitative) and data collection instruments (personal writing, proposal writing, assessment rubrics, evaluation questionnaires and student questionnaires and interviews) as well as my own reflections on each of the processes, developing substantive validation. Ultimately, the quality of my research is contingent on the insights, explanations and theorising I contribute to the research topic.

4.11 CONCLUSION

This chapter outlined the research design most appropriate for this study giving an in-depth description of Design Research offering models of how a variety of researchers conceptualise their research in diagrammatic form. An extended description of the participants sampled for this study was given drawing on personal writing and interview data. Data collection was discussed with a brief description given of how the variety of qualitative and quantitative data from students, the assessors and the expert reviewers was done. Strategies applied in the analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data was also discussed in this chapter. Other aspects, the role of the researcher, methodological norms and the ethical issues, were also taken into account.

Chapter 5 begins the reporting of the first phase of Design Research, that of a needs analysis for the study.

CHAPTER 5: PHASE 1

PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION AND NEEDS ANALYSIS

*I keep six honest serving men
(They taught me all I knew);
Their names are What and Why and When
and How and Where and Who.*

Rudyard Kipling

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Design Research is conducted in phases and cycles (Plomp, 2007; Van den Akker, 1999) and this study consists of three phases: a problem identification and needs analysis as Phase 1, design, development and implementation as Phase 2 and finally, evaluation of the intervention in Phase 3, as outlined in Chapter 4 (see Table 4.2).

In this chapter, Phase 1 is discussed. This phase entails the needs and context analysis which consists of two cycles: Cycle 1 identifies the problem through practice (5.2.1) while Cycle 2 identifies the problem through a needs analysis (5.2.2) taking into account Research Question 2: *What is the level of academic research writing of students entering postgraduate study?*. The methods that were specifically applied as well as the results of Phase 1 of the Design Research intervention is also discussed. Using Nieveen's criteria (2007) for assessing high quality interventions, the criterion of relevance or content validity was taken into account, ensuring that there is a need for the intervention and its design which is based on "state-of the art" or scientific knowledge.

5.2 PHASE 1: PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION AND NEEDS ANALYSIS

Different authors refer to this phase of the Design Research process in a variety of ways. Reeves (2006) depicts this first stage as one of *identifying and analysing problems* in collaboration with the researcher and practitioners. McKenney (2001) in turn, incorporates two cycles in this phase entitled *needs and context analysis* in which the literature is reviewed (see Chapter 3), concepts are validated and sites are visited in order for the problem to be identified through practice, literature and site visits. Bannnan (2007), on the other hand, refers to this first phase as *Informed Exploration* which consists of a needs analysis, a survey of the literature and the development of theory. Wademan (2005), in his Generic Design Research Model (depicted in Chapter 4), calls this phase *the problem in context phase* which involves researchers, practitioners, collaborators and other

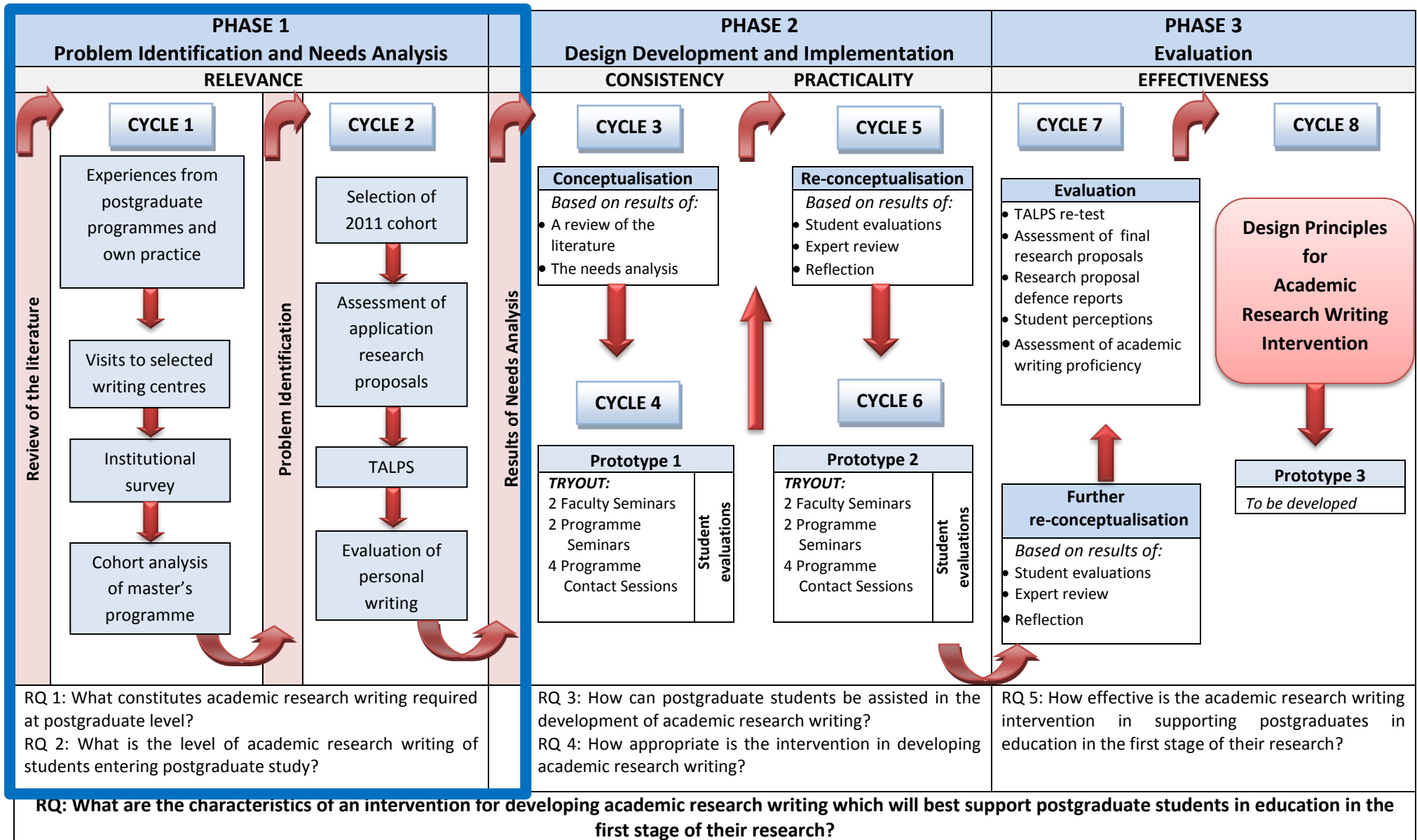
sources leading into conducting a preliminary investigation of the problem, context and approaches.

In this research, I have used the term *problem identification and needs analysis* to describe the initial phase because these two capture different, yet complementary aspects of the problem. Phase 1 consisted of two cycles: Cycle 1: identifying the problem through practice (5.2.1) and Cycle 2: identifying the problem through a needs analysis (5.2.2) as tabulated in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Phase 1 of the research

PHASE 1: Problem identification and needs analysis				
Reviewing the literature on academic writing				
	Focus of the research in the respective cycles	Research activities	Participants	Criteria
Cycle 1	Identifying the problem through practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigating experiences from graduate programmes and own practice • Visits to selected writing centres • Examining Institutional survey • Examining and analysing master's programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researcher 	RELEVANCE
Cycle 2	Identifying the problem through a needs analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection of cohort • Assessment of application proposals • TALPS baseline assessment • Evaluation of personal writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2011 Student cohort • Supervision team 	

Within each of the cycles of this phase, data is collected during various research activities such as the application of TALPS as a baseline assessment of the students' academic literacy proficiency, assessment of initial proposals and evaluation of personal writing in Phase 1 (see Table 5.1). Figure 5.1 illustrates graphically the two cycles which constitute Phase 1 of this research.



Legend: TALPS = Test of Academic Literacy for Postgraduate Students

Figure 5.1: Design Research Model for the development of an academic research writing intervention

5.2.1 Cycle 1: Identifying the Problem through Practice

The very first cycle of Design Research requires that the problem under research needs to be identified through practice. Thus, while working on my own master's study in 2004, I was invited by the faculty in which I was studying, to work as a peer tutor in the writing centre dedicated to postgraduates in education. It was during this time that I first realised the need for academic writing support to assist students, not only those who were struggling but also those who were good writers in an attempt to scaffold them in the process of the writing of their dissertations.

5.2.1.1 Own practice and previous experience

After working with postgraduate students for three years, I conducted informal conversations, *Conversations with Cilla* (Nel, 2007), with education postgraduate students who were at varying stages of their research process. The aim of the conversations was to find out how the postgraduates had experienced the research and writing process, to ascertain the need for and areas of support. During the conversations I ask the students to think of a simile to describe this process which conversations revealed a myriad of portrayals: one student compared her postgraduate studies to a very long journey with the destination seemingly being out of reach. Another student graphically explained that her journey was ***** lonely, one which she would not like to endure again. She felt alone, isolated, unsupported and as a result developed anger and hatred for what she was doing. The similes of postgraduate studies being like rowing against a rapidly flowing river and climbing a mountain reveal the difficulties, the barriers, the challenges that the students face and how ill-equipped many are to undertake this type of activity. Going to the gym was another simile that was used to describe the postgraduate journey as torturous for the body that was not used to exercising, but that over time, the body adapts. One student spoke about his studies being like an incredible journey, one filled with wonderment but also bewilderment while another like a long turbulent flight with many ups and downs and unexpected challenges and hurdles. Alternatively, some students were more prepared and found that their postgraduate experiences were like a metamorphosis, a journey of self-discovery, an unfolding of self, an awakening of parts that they did not know existed (Nel, 2007).

This image of postgraduate experiences illustrates that each of the students creates and experiences their own journeys dependent on a number of issues, as well as how well prepared they are for postgraduate study. Research, as previously explained in Chapter 1, has shown that with wider access to higher education in South African, concerns have been raised about the preparedness and abilities of students entering postgraduate study

(Angelil-Carter, 1998; Hendriks & Quinn, 2001; Koen, 2007; Leibowitz, 2000; Leibowitz et al., 1997; Netswera & Mavundla, 2001; Quinn, 1999; Thesen, 1997; Van Aswegan, 2007) students were considered as not having the relevant social and literacy capital (Bourdieu, 1972, 1991). Thus, I argue that if teachers and other professionals in education are encouraged to return to higher education to upgrade their qualifications either for personal gain such as promotion, or for a humanistic goal of improving the education situation in South Africa, their postgraduate journey needs to be one of achievement and self-fulfilment (Osman & Castle, 2006). However, if they are not fully equipped to cope with postgraduate study, HEIs are duty bound to ensure that postgraduate students are supported in acquiring and developing the academic literacies, as specified in the Higher Education Qualifications Framework, (Ministry of Education, 2004) that are needed to successfully support them through their journey.

5.2.1.2 Visits to selected university writing centres

In moving to another university, I found that the challenges encountered by education postgraduate students, identified through my practice and prior experience was supported by the research of Du Plessis (2007) and Butler (2006) (see Chapter 1). However, it was felt that additional on-site research was deemed necessary to give a more in-depth understanding of the support being offered to postgraduates. Though similar to my first university, I needed a stronger point of comparison.

In order to achieve of finding out what was being done for postgraduates in their institutions and, if possible, identifying best practice, visits to selected South African university writing centres in 2008 were conducted. These were Cape Peninsular University of Technology (CPUT), Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU), Stellenbosch University (SU), University of Cape Town (UCT), University of the Free State (UFS), University of Johannesburg (UJ), University of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN), University of the Western Cape (UWC) and the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits). I approached writing centre directors and requested permission to visit their centres and meet with them informally to discuss the support offered to postgraduate students. I also had informal discussions with peer tutors and postgraduate students who were facilitating support for other postgraduate students within the context of the writing centre. In addition, I was privileged to attend the Western Cape Writing Centre quarterly meeting, which focused on a discussion of peer support.

Drawing from my informal discussions, Table 5.2 illustrates the types of support that writing centres were offering postgraduates at the time of the visit:

Table 5.2: Support for postgraduate students

INSTI-TUTION	INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT		
	Writing centre/s	Other	Type of Support
CPUT	√		
NMMU	√		
Rhodes		Academic writing tutor for Education postgraduates	Academic writing courses on request
SU	√		Academic writing courses on request
UCT	√	Writing circles	
UFS		Unit for the Development of Rhetorical and Academic Writing (UDRAW)	Year-long academic writing course
UJ	√	Postgraduate writing support centre (Education)	Year-long academic writing course
UKZN	√		
UWC	√	Postgraduate Enrolment and Throughput (PET) Project	
WITS	√	Writing circles	

Legend: CPUT=Cape Peninsular University of Technology NMMU=Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University SU=Stellenbosch University UCT=University of Cape Town UFS=University of the Free State UJ=University of Johannesburg UKZN=University of KwaZulu Natal UWC=University of the Western Cape Wits=University of the Witwatersrand

In most universities I visited, writing centres exist and have been put in place to offer writing support at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. At some universities, such as the University of the Western Cape, Stellenbosch University and the University of the Witwatersrand, writing centres have been in existence for over a decade (Archer & Richards, 2011a). In the intervening years, writing centres¹⁷ have been established at other universities such as Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT), Fort Hare, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU), North-West University (NWU), University of South Africa (UNISA), University of Johannesburg (UJ), University of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN), University of Limpopo, Walter Sisulu University and University of the Witwatersrand (Wits). Writing centres offer support via one-on-one tutoring, group tutoring and responding to writing via email. However, conclusions drawn from my visits, led me to believe that more emphasis is placed on supporting and developing writing at undergraduate level.

In some universities, within writing centres, a variety of interventions is implemented to train the students in methodology and academic writing such as at the University of Johannesburg (Postgraduate Writing Support Centre) and the University of the Free State (UFS) within the Unit for the Development of Rhetorical and Academic Writing (UDRAW).

¹⁷ Writing centres within the South African context have a variety of names depending on the institution.

In others, postgraduate writing circles have been started (University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) and University of Cape Town (UCT)) and these form a peer support system either within similar fields of study or across disciplines.

At the time of the visit, it seemed that there was an awareness of the need to increase support and development for postgraduate students and this is substantiated by developments in postgraduate education in the intervening years. At some universities, specific postgraduate programmes/centres have been developed and institutionalised. At the University of the Western Cape (UWC) in 2001, the Postgraduate Enrolment and Throughput (PET) Project was launched to assist students in completing their theses and thus facilitate throughput rate. Its success has led to the development of the Division for Postgraduate Studies with the appointment of a fulltime Director in 2009. In 2010, a Postgraduate Centre was established at UJ and in 2011 at UFS, the Postgraduate School was developed. All these facilities provide a range of support to postgraduate students both administrative and academic, with a particular focus on offering developmental programmes to enhance the quality of postgraduate research, improve throughput rate and produce research-literate graduates.

Since 2008, a number of Research Commons have been established in libraries for use by postgraduate students. The initial Research Commons were established at the UCT, UKZN, and Wits. Latterly, a Research Commons has been established at Rhodes University (RU), Stellenbosch University (SU), and the University of Pretoria (UP). These specialised facilities are equipped with state-of-the-art technology and provide an environment for postgraduates that are conducive to research. In many of these Research Commons, short courses are offered which assist the students when writing up various sections of their dissertations.

A further initiative in an attempt to support postgraduates has been the assessment of academic literacy prior to registration, particularly as many postgraduate students are users of English as an additional language. Students are required to write a literacy test such as the test of the Test of Academic Literacy for Postgraduate Students (TALPS). This test, designed and developed by the Inter-Institutional Centre for Language Development and Assessment (ICELDA), is one being used at present by four South African universities such as Stellenbosch University, the University of the Free State, North West University and the University of Pretoria to determine academic literacy levels.

If the results indicate that the student would be at risk of not succeeding because of a low level of academic literacy, the student is asked to complete a year's academic literacy programme. At the UP, the Unit for Academic Literacy (UAL), for example offers a

module, EOT 300 – academic writing for postgraduate studies. The module focuses on the nature of academic language, the academic writing process and then applies knowledge to writing assignments. I attended this academic literacy programme in the 2009 academic year to observe what it constituted and found that it was aimed primarily at speakers of English as an additional language. There is at present no programme for native English speakers to develop their academic writing.

Do universities assume that when entering postgraduate studies, that the student is equipped with the relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes to achieve success at this level? Visits to universities conducted in 2008 led to a reflection of what could be done to assist and develop postgraduate students, especially if the literature indicates a problem with academic literacies and an un- or under-preparedness of students when enrolling for postgraduate studies. At this stage of the needs analysis, conclusions that can be drawn would be the need for a developmental programme which offers support for the students through the initial stages until they are at a point of becoming independent and confident researchers.

Taking the aspect of unpreparedness in terms of research competence and academic literacies into account in the postgraduate programme offered at my faculty, it is essential to take stock of what has happened with previous cohorts of students and note their progress through the specific master's programme.

5.2.1.3 Cohort analysis of master's programme

Work with cohorts of education students registered for a specific master's programme since 2007¹⁸ has raised concerns about their ability to complete the degree successfully within the time constraints. Although I had not conducted empirical research with each of the cohorts, I was able to table their tracking focusing on the status of the study and the time taken for completion of either the proposal and/or the full dissertation (see Table 5.3 below).

¹⁸This particular programme had been in effect from 2004 but the researcher only became involved in later years.

Table 5.3: Tracking cohorts of postgraduate students

COHORT	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	TRACKING STATUS OF STUDY	TIME TAKEN
2007	10	2 dropped out end 2008 2 dropped out 2009 (never defended proposal) 1 dropped out 2010 (never defended proposal) 5 successfully defended proposals by 2009 <i>Of the remaining 5/10 students</i> 1 completed dissertation early 2011 1 completed dissertation mid-2011 3 completed dissertation late 2011	+2 years 4 years 4.5 years 4.75 years
2008		No intake – no supervision capacity	
2009	16	2 dropped out during 2009 3 dropped out 2010 (never defended proposal) 1 dropped out 2011 (never defended proposal) 9 successfully defended proposals by 2011 1 Still to defend proposal 2012 <i>Of the remaining 10/16 students</i> 1 completed dissertation mid 2011 8 At varying stages of completing dissertation 2012	+/- 2 years 3 years 2.5 years 4 years

With the 2007 cohort, regular contact sessions, which focused on various aspects of dissertation writing, were held in the second year of study. The first year focused on compulsory modules related to the field of study and thereafter, students were to complete a dissertation of limited scope. The contact sessions supported the students through the writing process, each time focusing on a particular section of the dissertation being written at the time; for example, a workshop on how to write a literature review and how to write up the findings of a quantitative study. In addition, informal ‘buzz’ sessions were held once a month on a Saturday morning which allowed the students to meet, discuss and interact, review and critique each other’s work and generally give each other support through verbal and written feedback on all stages and aspects during the process of their research writing.

The value of this approach seemed to suggest that the enculturation of the student into the discipline of academic writing was facilitated. Students were offered an arena to share research experiences, and in the process have developed an awareness of evaluating their written texts leading to their revision and improvement.

In addition, during the writing phase, students submitted their writing via email which was commented on electronically and then sent to the supervisor for further comment before being returned to the student. In my capacity as academic research writing practitioner, I focused on commenting electronically on issues such as logic, argument, cohesion,

correct in-text referencing as well as grammar and language and the supervisor focused on content. The model was what Nel (2006) and Dowse and Van Rensburg (2011) have called a triad of student, supervisor and writing tutor where the supervisor's expertise supports successful content writing and supervision and the writing tutor supports the development of academic writing.

This practice of support continued through years three and four with the students working on their own during the extension time given by faculty, until a final edit on the complete dissertation was needed prior to submission. Of the 10 students who registered for the course in 2007, two dropped out during the second year, once the compulsory modules were completed. A further two students dropped out the following year without having defended proposals. Interestingly, a further student was allowed to continue into a fourth year but ultimately dropped out of the programme without having defended the proposal. It seems dropping out not only included academic reasons and difficulty of socialisation into postgraduate education, but work pressures, family commitments and health (Felder, 2010).

The remaining members of the cohort were granted an extension and in the fifth year successfully completed the dissertation of limited scope. Although there was a large attrition rate (50%) with this particular cohort, primarily due to personal reasons such as workload making studies untenable, instituting such practice with students has shown that even though an extended period of time was needed for completion, such a support system could become "a key determinant of the success or failure of the project" (Cross, 1999, pp. 138-139).

In 2008, there was no intake of students into the programme due to lack of supervision capacity; however, 2009 saw a cohort of 16 registering for the programme. Students met four times for contact sessions during their first year while attending faculty support sessions. To give some indication of preparedness in terms of academic literacy, students were required to complete the TALPS. The results are tabled below:

Table 5.4: TALPS result for 2009 cohort

Student	Section 1 Scrambled Text	Section 2 Visual/Graphic Literacy	Section 3 Academic Vocabulary	Section 4 Text Types	Section 5 Comprehension	Section 6 Academic Literacy Abilities	Section 7 Grammatical Knowledge	Section 8 Writing of Academic Text	TOTAL	CODE
Total marks	5	10	10	5	25	15	10	20	100	
2009/1	5	10	10	5	25	14	9	14	92	5
2009/2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2009/3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2009/4	3	10	9	3	23	15	9	12	84	5
2009/5	1	6	7	2	20	7	9	4	56	3
2009/6	1	9	7	2	20	9	6	9	63	4
2009/7	0	3	6	2	15	4	8	10	48	1
2009/8	3	4	7	0	12	5	4	7	42	1
2009/9	0	3	4	0	10	7	3	7	34	1
2009/10	3	6	7	5	19	8	4	6	58	3
2009/11	5	5	6	3	19	14	2	9	63	4
2009/12	0	2	8	2	22	8	9	6	76	5
2009/13	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2009/14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2009/15	3	10	10	5	22	10	10	6	76	5
2009/16	1	10	8	1	10	10	5	13	58	3
MEAN									62.5	

Legend: 1 extremely high risk, 2 high risk, 3 at risk, 4 low risk, 5 low risk to no risk

The results of TALPS are coded from 1-5 (see Table 5.10) with Code 1 meaning that students falling into this category are *at an extremely high risk*. Code 2 categorises the student as *high risk* with Code 3 as *at risk*. Code 4 is considered as *low risk*, while Code 5 explains that the student is either *very low risk* or *not at risk at all*.

Of the 16 students registered for the programme, only 12 completed the test. Six students were assigned Codes 4 and 5, meaning that they are considered *low risk* or *low risk to no risk*. Three students were assigned a Code 1, which means that this categorisation warns of an *extremely high risk* of academic failure, three students were assigned a Code 3 illustrating that their academic performance was *at risk*. Thus from this cohort, six of the 12 students tested (50%) were categorised as Code 1, 2 or 3 as having the potential of being at risk.

Of concern was that this specific master's was previously a taught modular master's with a dissertation of limited scope and which in itself was problematic as research has shown that students are generally able to successfully complete the modules comprising a postgraduate programme, but the problem arises in the writing of the dissertation. With this particular cohort, a Departmental decision based on the changing subsidy was made

resulting in the master's programme moving to a full dissertation with no supporting modules. Taking this into account and the results of the TALPS assessment raised concerns about whether some students would cope with the literacy demands of postgraduate study. In addition, the results did not augur well for the successful completion of this group's studies, particularly within the restricted time limits (Faculty of Education, 2010) or candidature duration currently being imposed by the institution (see also Catterall et al., 2011).

It was during the year that the students were allocated supervisors and began work on their research proposals. Unfortunately, the Department within which this particular master's programme is based did not have the capacity to supervise the large cohort and so, depending on the topic of research, the students were allocated supervisors in other departments within the Faculty of Education.

During the course of study, tracking was done with this cohort and by the end of the 2010 academic year (two years into their studies), it was found that two students had dropped out. Both these students were categorised according to the TALPS results as Code 3 – at risk. Five students were still at the proposal writing stage, five had defended their proposals and were waiting for ethical clearance to continue their research and three, who were coded 4, 5 and 5 respectively, were well into conducting their research and writing up the various chapters of their dissertations. If studies need to be completed within the restrictions of three years, the timeframe needs to be carefully thought out ensuring that the proposal is defended fairly early into the studies, leaving maximum time for the research and writing up and not the other way around, with minimum time left over for writing up.

A progress check at the beginning of the 2012 academic year revealed that only one student (Code 5) had successfully completed master's studies part time within a three-year period while teaching full time. Interestingly, the lowest coded student (Code 1) reported that he had submitted a first full draft to his supervisors and was awaiting feedback, while two other students, Code 3 and 4 respectively, had also handed in a full first draft for review. The highest achiever (Code 5) was seemingly taking a lot longer to get through the research writing and one student (not tested on TALPS), after three years, was not successful in his proposal defence and has had to terminate his studies. Table 5.3 shows that the students who have completed a successful defence of their proposals and have ethical clearance, are either in the midst of data collection, data analysis and the writing up of the research. Of concern, is the time limit put on students by the university, even though the students are registered for part-time study. Most universities,

nationally and internationally, suggest that a master's can be completed within a year, however, the time taken depends on the programme selected and whether the student is full time or part-time; thus time may range from two to three years. However, as can be seen from the attrition rate, work and family pressures are a challenge, in addition to time constraints that the students need to overcome if they are to be successful.

If a student is accepted for postgraduate study, then the university should ensure that that student is enabled and empowered to successfully complete his/her studies (see Ganobcsik-Williams, 2004). Therefore, taking into account the findings of Cycle 1 as well as a review of current literature about the needs of adult learners and attrition rates of postgraduates in South Africa, (Mouton, 2007) into account, the study moves into Cycle 2. Cycle 2 comprises a needs analysis of the master's programme, particularly focusing on the processes followed for selection, and identifying the students' levels of academic research writing.

5.2.2 Cycle 2: Identifying the Problem through a Needs Analysis

In keeping with scientific rigour of the research process, Design Research requires identifying the problem and developing a thorough understanding through a needs analysis. Thus, as the study's focus is on academic research writing at postgraduate level, the research was initiated by first, specifically identifying the problem and then clarifying it through a needs analysis.

As discussed in Chapter 1, studies conducted in South Africa have highlighted concerns about postgraduate academic research writing, an issue reinforced by the survey conducted by Du Plessis (2007) also referred to and described in Chapter 1. However, to design and develop an academic research writing intervention specific to education, identification of postgraduate students' particular needs was required.

The process, through which the needs analysis was undertaken, as well as the results, is elaborated in this section of the chapter. Here Research Question 2 is discussed: *What is the level of academic research writing of students entering postgraduate study?* Initially in Section 5.2.2.1, a description of the selection process of students for the master's programme is given. Thereafter, TALPS is discussed with its application to the students accepted for the master's programme in an effort to ascertain the level of their academic literacy (see Section 5.2.2.2). To underpin, this understanding, students' application research proposals were assessed (5.2.2.3) and their personal writing evaluated (5.2.2.4).

Again in the cycle, the concept of relevance (also referred to as content validity) is applied (Nieveen, 2007). Data gathered during the application of TALPS, the assessment of the

initial research proposals and the evaluation of the personal writing coupled with a review of the literature (see Chapter 3) on academic research writing forms the basis for the design and development of an academic research writing intervention.

5.2.2.1 Selection of students for the master's programme

Applications for the master's programme in education are called for during the academic year with a cut-off point being the end of September. Prospective students are required to complete standard university forms and submit accompanying documentation, which includes a certified copy of the identity document, certified copies of previous degrees and diplomas, an academic record as well as an initial research proposal outlining the problem, rationale for conducting the research, an initial literature review, and proposed methodology to be used.

Research both nationally and internationally has shown that selection of suitable candidates for postgraduate research varies according to the institution, the faculty and indeed the supervisors. However, literature has revealed that selection processes take into account a number of factors such as "previous experience, knowledge of the relevant subject(s), higher order cognitive skills (e.g. reasoning, analysis), critical reading skills, writing skills, capacity for self-regulated learning, motivation, emotional intelligence, creativity and application skills" (Blunt, 2009, p. 857). In universities in the USA and UK, these factors are identified through the use of standardised tests such as the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) of the Educational Testing Service (ETS) (<http://www.ets.org>) (reported in Blunt, 2009). In contrast, some South African universities administer academic literacy proficiency tests such as the National Benchmark Tests (NBTs), TALL and TALPS (discussed previously but in more depth in Section 5.2.2.2) which serve as a placement tool but also, in some instances, determines access to higher education.

However, within the South African context, the selection process is guided by the level descriptors for Autonomy of Learning of researchers for master's students (Ministry of Education, 2004) (see also Chapter 3) which explain that prospective students should demonstrate:

Table 5.5: Autonomy of Learning

AUTONOMY OF LEARNING	
G	A capacity to operate effectively in complex, ill-defined contexts.
H	A capacity to critically self-evaluate and continue to learn independently for continuing professional development.
I	A capacity to manage learning tasks autonomously, professionally and ethically.
J	A capacity to critically evaluate own and others' work with justification.

Source: Ministry of Education, 2004

Because these standards “implications for the preparedness of candidates admitted to graduate research” (Blunt, 2009, p. 853) they need to be taken into account during the selection process. In addition cognisance should be taken of the students’ emotional intelligence (EQ), a concept coined by Goleman who defines EQ as the ability “to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustrations; to control impulse and delay gratification; to regulate one’s moods and keep distress from swamping the ability to think; to empathize and to hope” (1995, p. 34). If students are at postgraduate level, are mature students, it is assumed that they would then display some of the characteristics of emotional intelligence in addition to their intellectual abilities (IQ). Research conducted by Stellenbosch University (SU) identified characteristics such as personal mastery, analytical expertise, manifestations of character and sound judgement and reasoning which should be inherent in postgraduate students and hypothesised that achieving a high score on an EQ questionnaire would show a positive correlation to their academic success (Kapp, 2000).

The selection procedure for postgraduates at this university, outlined in Section 1.5 of the Postgraduate Research Policy (Faculty of Education, 2010, pp. 3-4), after a first round of reviews by the head of department and senior academics, prospective students who meet Departmental requirements, consists of an interview. The policy document suggests the use of guidelines such as motivation for wanting to pursue postgraduate research; a firm grasp of the knowledge field of the proposed study (for example, the current “burning issues”; the most respected journals; the most respected authors); understanding of research and ability to interpret research findings; language proficiency with specific attention to academic reading and writing ability; and computer literacy and access to the Internet serve to assist the committee in their selection.

For this particular master’s programme, the student applications are reviewed by the director of the programme and members of the supervision team during which the students are either accepted on the merit of previous work, for example, in the honours programme, or students are invited for an interview with the supervision team to decide on acceptance or rejection. Some students who fail to meet the set criteria and considered unsuitable are rejected without an interview. One important criterion is the mark gained for the honour’s programme which should be 65%, and this conforms to practice in most universities (Blunt, 2009). In some cases, though, marks below 65% are considered, particularly if the student has displayed competence in honours modules such as the field of study and research methodology. Swanepoel and Moll (2004) posit that prior academic performance (that is, the average honours degree mark) is not the single best predictor of success with postgraduate students. A range of selection criteria should

be taken into account such as: marks achieved for individual modules such as research methodology, the discipline-specific module and if a research project has been undertaken, then cognisance should be taken of the mark achieved (Swanepoel & Moll, 2004). It is also suggested that the number of times a module was failed and the time lapse between honours completion and master's enrolment is also considered (Swanepoel & Moll, 2004).

A further criterion is that the student's research fits into the field of assessment and quality assurance in education. The initial research proposal is also scrutinised critically to ascertain firstly, field of research, content knowledge, some understanding of the literature and secondly, motivation for further study as well as the ability to write in an academic style (Blunt, 2009, p. 859), a point reinforced by Section 1.5 e Bullet 4 which requires "language proficiency with specific attention to academic reading and writing" (Faculty of Education, 2010, p. 3). This aspect was 'assessed' in the students' application research proposals (see Section 5.2.2.3).

Twenty-nine students applied for entrance into the 2011 programme with 15 interviews being conducted. The supervision team constituted the interview panel and was aware of the importance of selection in finding the most suitable candidates for the programme (Blunt, 2009) and had as guidelines a variety of criteria:

- the overall average honours degree mark;
- marks achieved for individual research methodology modules both qualitative and quantitative;
- the discipline-specific module/s; and
- the research project, as well as
- the research proposals.

Prior to the interviews, the supervision team considered the applications taking note of the above criteria. During the interview, each student interacted with the supervision team and answered a range of question about their backgrounds both personal and professional, and their families and their aspirations. Students were asked to explain why they wanted to be accepted into the master's programme. Their field of interest was also discussed to see if there was an appropriate match within the programme and with supervision. Students were also asked how they felt they would cope during the four years of part time study. All students are employed full time, and consequently, were asked about the support they could expect from their families as well as from their employer. It was important for the supervision team to screen students' personal qualities

in order to ascertain if they could work with particular students, as it would be a four-year commitment to this partnership. Thus, the supervision teams' personal perceptions of the student were also discussed, particularly if the student had raised any personal issues which could have an effect on the study period.

Ultimately, 10 students were accepted into the master's programme and their academic profiles are tabled below:

Table 5.6: Cohort 2011: Academic Profiles

PARTICIPANT	PROGRAMME	INSTITUTION	HON AV MARK	QUAL RESEARCH	QUAN RESEARCH	DISCIPLINE-SPECIFIC MODULE/S	RESEARCH PROJECT	YEAR COMPLETED
P.1	EMLP	UP	61%	54%	51%	69%	75%	2010
P.2	EMLP	UP	67%	59%	57%	71/68%	62%	2005
P.3	EMLP	UP	71%	73%	63%	81/78%	53%	2010
P.4	Ed Man	Unisa	69%	70%	57%	68/74%	65%	2001
P.5	AQA	UP	77%	-	93%	75/76%	76%	2010
P.5	AQA	UP	67%	-	61%	65/62%	60%	2010
P.7	AQA	UP	70%	86%	59%	68/72%	68%	2010
P.8	AQA	UP	63%	-	56%	63/76%	72%	2009
P.9	Ed Man	NWU	63%	64%	50%	71%	58%	2005
P.10	BA HONS	UP	64%	-	-	80/67% foreign language	-	2010

Legend: EMLP Education Management Law and Policy, Ed Man Educational Management, AQA Assessment and Quality Assurance

5.2.2.2 Assessment of application research proposals

In applying for entrance into a postgraduate programme at the university, the application form with a full academic record is submitted with a research proposal, which outlines the proposed research. Although this document is not the only aspect that governs access to the programme, the submission of the research proposal document is taken into account (as previously discussed in 5.2.2.1). To facilitate this assessment of the proposal, note was taken of the study conducted by Carstens (described in Carstens & Fletcher, 2009), where a rubric was used to assess academic essays (See Table 5.6 below).

Table 5.7: Analytic scoring rubric for the assessment of academic essays

ANALYTIC SCORING RUBRIC										
USE OF SOURCE MATERIAL										
1.	Relevance of source data	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	NA	
2.	Integration of source data with text	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	NA	
3.	Stance and engagement	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	NA	
STRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT										
4.	Thesis statement: clarity and focus	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	NA	
5.	Development of main argument	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	NA	
6.	Conclusion	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	NA	
7.	Paragraph development	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	NA	
ACADEMIC WRITING STYLE										
8.	Syntax :phrase and clause structure, sentence length	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	NA	
9.	Concord and tense	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	NA	
10.	Linking devices	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	NA	
11.	Technical and subtechnical lexis	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	NA	
12.	Style(formality; rhetorical mode)	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	NA	
EDITING										
13.	Spelling, capitalisation and punctuation	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	NA	
14.	Referencing technique	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	NA	
15.	Legibility and layout	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	NA	
16.	Total	good 2				poor 0				NA
17.	Overall percentage									

Source: Cartstens & Fletcher, 2009, p. 59-60

Considering the design of this rubric as well as a rubric developed and designed by a colleague and the researcher and critiqued by an expert reviewer, a rubric for use in this study for the assessment of the research proposals was designed (see Table 5.7). This rubric takes into account the structure of the research proposal, the content of each specific section as well as the academic writing proficiency of each of the sections. And finally, academic writing style is assessed.

Table 5.8: Analytic scoring rubric for research proposals

ANALYTIC SCORING RUBRIC FOR RESEARCH PROPOSALS						
1.	TITLE					
	Appropriateness of title?	4	3	2	1	0
2.	INTRODUCTION					
	Research area and key concepts introduced?	4	3	2	1	0
3.	RESEARCH PROBLEM					
	Problem clearly defined, described and argued in detail?	4	3	2	1	0
	Contexts described?	4	3	2	1	0
4.	RATIONALE					
	Importance of research and gap identified?	4	3	2	1	0
5.	RESEARCH QUESTION AND AIMS					
	Questions clearly and explicitly stated and appropriate for this research?	4	3	2	1	0
	Aims identified, linked to research questions and achievable?	4	3	2	1	0
6.	LITERATURE REVIEW					
	Logical structure of review?	4	3	2	1	0
	Relevant literature reviewed?	4	3	2	1	0
	Analysis and synthesis of literature in developing argument?	4	3	2	1	0
7.	CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK					
	Reference to /adaptation of a particular model?	4	3	2	1	0
	Appropriate framework for this study?	4	3	2	1	0
8.	RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS					
	Paradigm identified and described?	4	3	2	1	0
	Appropriate research design identified, described and linked to research question?	4	3	2	1	0
	Sample					
	Population identified, sampling technique described and choice of population argued?	4	3	2	1	0
	Instruments					
	Specification of appropriate instruments/data collection strategies?	4	3	2	1	0
	Appropriate to purpose of research?	4	3	2	1	0
	Data Collection					
	Procedures outlined?	4	3	2	1	0
	Data Analysis					
	Techniques appropriate to purpose of research and data collected outlined and described?	4	3	2	1	0
9.	METHODOLOGICAL NORMS					
	Validity/reliability/credibility/dependability described and argued?	4	3	2	1	0
10.	ETHICS					
	Appropriate ethical considerations addressed?	4	3	2	1	0
11.	ACADEMIC WRITING STYLE					
	Academic writing style: formality	4	3	2	1	0
	Syntax (paragraphs, sentences, concord and tense)	4	3	2	1	0
	Spelling, capitalisation and punctuation	4	3	2	1	0
	Referencing technique	4	3	2	1	0
	TOTAL					

4=excellent 3=good 2=fair 1=poor/incomplete 0=missing

Two independent assessors, working independently, assessed the initial proposals. Assessor 1 assessed the student slightly lower than Assessor 2 but the results were averaged for each proposal. These assessment results are tabled below:

Table 5.9: Assessment of research proposals

ASSESSMENT OF APPLICATION RESEARCH PROPOSALS			
n=7			
Participant	Assessor 1 %	Assessor 2 %	Average %
P.1	12	17	14.5
P.2	15	17	16
P.3	-	-	-
P.4	20	27	28
P.5	14	16	15
P.6	23	27	25
P.7	-	-	-
P.8	-	-	-
P.9	18	20	19
P.10	11	12	11.5
MEAN	17.4	19.4	18.4

Legend: – no submission

After the assessment process, the two assessors discussed discrepancies noted in the assessment and reviewed any concerns. These result, although low, have helped to identify what needs to be included in the design and development of an intervention. For example, the intervention needs to focus on aspects such as structure, the writing of the content in each of the specific sections, content knowledge, methodological knowledge, developing a logical flow, writing an argument, academic writing style and referencing. In short, the intervention needs to be developmental and put in place to support the students through the process of writing their research proposals with the aim of developing their academic research writing.

As a further means to assess students entering the programme, a test of their academic preparedness was conducted using the TALPS designed and developed by the UAL at UP.

5.2.2.3 Test of Academic Literacy for Postgraduate Students (TALPS)

Low academic language proficiency has been argued as one of the primary causes of lack of success at higher education level (Van Dyk & Weideman, 2004). Since wider access to education, many students registered for postgraduate study are those who are users of English as an additional language and represent the “linguistic minorities” (Cooper & Van Dyk, 2003). It is thus a concern that students entering postgraduate education are those who may fall into this category of students are thus not adequately prepared for tertiary studies as academic language proficiency remains a prerequisite for success in tertiary education (Van Rensburg & Weideman, 2002).

Using a standardised test is in line with what is being required of students entering higher education that is, the writing of literacy and numeracy tests (see National Benchmark Tests (<http://www.nbt.ac.za/>)). At certain institutions, undergraduate students write a literacy test – Test of Academic Literacy Levels (TALL) – and dependent on their results, are required to complete discipline-specific modules (see Weideman, 2006). Such tests are considered ‘placement tests’ and in addition give some indication of academic potential.

As discussed earlier (see Section 5.2.1.3) The Test of Academic Literacy for Postgraduate Students (TALPS) was developed to “assess the academic literacy levels of postgraduate students” (Butler, 2009, p. 291). Thus, in line with the current practice in higher education, a decision was made by the supervision team to apply the postgraduate test to the new cohort of master’s student to gain some understanding of their ‘potential’ and whether any needs were identified for support.

The TALPS instrument, totalling 100 marks, is divided into eight sections and is comprised 76 items. The following explanation of the sections comprising the instrument is taken directly from Butler (2009) although the mark allocation in square brackets at the end of each section has been added:

Section 1 of TALPS is a scrambled text in which sentences in a paragraph have been scrambled, and students have to rearrange the sentences so that the paragraph forms a cohesive whole. It therefore tests not only students’ ability in recognising text relations, drawing on their interpretative abilities regarding the context, but also their ability to recognise lexical clues contained in the sentences. Put differently: it assesses students’ command of various grammatical features of the text [5 marks].

Section 2 deals with visual and graphic literacy. Students are asked to interpret graphic information augmented by a short text discussion. This section mainly involves simple numerical computations and making inferences based on such calculations [10 marks].

In **Section 3**, students’ knowledge of general academic vocabulary is assessed. The context created for this section is specifically that of the postgraduate academic environment, and the words tested are a selection of items from the different levels of the Coxhead academic word list (Coxhead, 2000) [10 marks].

The **fourth section** emphasises the importance of students being able to recognise different written text types. Students are requested to match two groups of sentences with regard to similarity in text type [5 marks].

Section 5 includes a longer text that students have to read and subsequently answer comprehension type questions on the content of the text. Questions focus on students' abilities to classify and compare information, make inferences, recognise metaphorical language, recognise text relations and distinguish between essential and non-essential information [25 marks].

Section 6 of the test assesses a number of academic literacy abilities. This question on grammar and text relations firstly provides students with a text they have to read where specific words have been omitted. Students then have to choose between four options regarding the place where these words have been left out in the sentences. The second part of the question requires that students, having been provided with the specific place where a word has been left out, choose between four options as to what is the correct word. The third part combines the formats of the first two in the sense that students are required to integrate the two tasks and do both simultaneously. They therefore have to find both the position where a word has been left out and the most suitable word that would fit that position. This section of the test assesses students' functional knowledge of sentence construction, word order, vocabulary, punctuation and at times communicative function (cf. Van Dyk & Weideman, 2004), with the main focus on the former, i.e. on grammatical or structural features of the language [15 marks].

In **Section 7**, students' grammatical knowledge of English is assessed in the sense that they have to edit a short paragraph in which a number of typical language errors occur [10 marks].

The last section of the test (**Section 8**) provides students with the opportunity to produce a written academic text. Similar to TALL, the reading texts selected for use in TALPS are topical in the sense that they all relate to the same topic. Students are then required to make use of any information in the test on the topic and write an argumentative text of approximately 300 words in which they present a structured argument. The argument is within the context of Africa. They also need to ensure that they give due recognition to the sources used in the test that they choose to include in their argument (they have to include a short list of at least two sources at the end of their texts). They further have to ensure that the text adheres to generally accepted academic writing conventions (such as formality of register, logical structure, acknowledging sources, etc.) (Butler, 2009, pp. 294-295) [20 marks].

The results of the test are categorised into five codes and are reflected in Table 5.10 below.

Table 5.10: TALPS codes and interpretation

%	CODE	INTERPRETATION
0-49%	1	Extremely high risk
50-54%	2	High risk
55-59%	3	At risk
60-69%	4	Low risk
70-100%	5	Low risk to no risk

It is suggested that students categorised as a Code 1, 2 and even 3 are at an *extremely high risk*, *high risk* or *at risk* and should thus be part of an intervention to assist them in acquiring and developing their academic literacies. Students categorised as Codes 4 and 5 are at *low* or *no risk*.

In an article on the design of TALPS, Butler discusses both optimal face validity and content validity being addressed in the test. Using Davies, Brown, Elder, Hill, Lumley, and McNamara's definition of face validity where the test appears to measure the knowledge of abilities it claims to measure, he argues that TALPS "is aimed at a primarily non-expert audience [and as such] the test should, therefore, test what supervisors see as relevant regarding academic literacy" (1999, p. 292-293). Content validity refers to "key indicators of the domain being tested" (McNamara, 2000 cited in Butler, 2007, p. 293) highlighting the test's usefulness in providing information on student academic literacy.

Rambiritch's doctoral study, investigating the validity of TALPS, offers a number of claims:

- Claim 1: the test is reliable and has a low standard error of measurement score (Cronbach alpha of 0.85, 0.93 and 0.92 over three pilot tests; Standard error of measurement 3.84, 3.83 and 3.80)
- Claim 2: the inter-rater reliability measure of the writing section is of an acceptable level (0.8 with an inter-rater reliability measure of at least 7 being an acceptable standard (see Huot, 1990, p. 202)
- Claim 3: the reliability measure of the test has not been compromised by the heterogeneous items in the test (reliability measure of 0.85 in the first pilot)
- Claim 4: the items on the test discriminate well between test takers (Rit-values 0.25, 0.37 and 0.40 for three pilot tests)
- Claim 5: the test is based on a theoretically sound construct (Van Dyk & Weideman, 2004, p. 11) where the essential component illustrates what academic literacy entails (Weideman, 2003, p. 61).

- Claim 6: the internal correlations of the different test sections satisfy specific criteria (the final draft rendered an average correlation between each subtest and the whole test of 0.66, deemed acceptable although +0.7 is ideal)
- Claim 7: the test displays content validity
- Claim 8: the face validity of the test meets the expectations of potential users (Rambiritch, 2012, pp. 94-110)

At the beginning of the academic year, TALPS was administered to first year students accepted into the master's programme. In this study, the test assisted in determining whether students were found to be at risk dependent into which category they fell. However, the added value of the test is that it can be used diagnostically in that specific areas of literacy can be identified and then incorporated into the intervention. The intervention then can be seen "as addressing specifically those problem areas accentuated by the test" (Butler, 2009, p. 293) to "enable them [intervention designers] to determine timeously the relevant developmental opportunities for their students that focus on addressing specific literacy difficulties" (Butler, 2006, p. 182).

Thus, administering this test to my first year master's students, coming from a variety of cultural, educational and professional backgrounds, provided a baseline assessment of their academic literacies as well as informing the design and development of an intervention. For background information, the socio-demographic profiles of the 2011 cohort are provided in Table 5.11 below adding to the narrative of the sampled participants in Chapter 4 Section 4.5.

Table 5.11: Socio-demographic profile of the 2011 cohort

Participant	Race	Gender	Age	Mother Tongue	Other languages
P.1	Black	Female	40	Setswana	English *
P.2	Black	Male	42	Xitsonga	English, Afrikaans, Setswana, Sepedi
P.3	Black	Male	47	SiSwati	isiZulu, English
P.4	Black	Male	44	isiZulu	English, Afrikaans, Sesotho, Xitsonga, Setswana
P.5	White	Female	25	Afrikaans	English
P.6	Black	Female	43	Sepedi	English, Tswana, Sotho, Afrikaans
P.7	Black	Male	44	Setswana	English *
P.8	Black	Male	36	Tshivenda	English, Zulu, Sepedi
P.9	Black	Female	41	Khoi-Khoi	Afrikaans, English
P.10	White	Female	24	English	French, Afrikaans

Legend: *Missing information

To prepare them for the test and to ensure that they were familiar with the type of questioning, students were given access to the website, which has examples of TALPS question types. However, even with the preparations students reacted in a variety of ways

to being asked to write the test: *I thought it was a joke. Firstly, I did not know the reason of the test which I was writing, it was unprepared (P.8), and I was confused and surprised (P.3), although I later understood the intention or rather aim of the task (P.3) which resulted in each student signing a consent form to complete the test. Once the test was explained by the test administrator, the students settled down - I realised that it was like an aptitude test which I used to write while I was still doing my secondary schooling and then I understood the intention or rather aim of the task (P.8). A student commented that one sometimes doesn't need to prepare for [a] language competency test (P.9) and a further student said that he hope[d] the results will confirm my understanding of diagrams and their interpretations (P.4).*

The TALPS pre-intervention results for the 2011 cohort of master's students are tabled below:

Table 5.12: Pre-intervention TALPS results for 2011 cohort

Student	Section 1 Scrambled Text	Section 2 Visual/Graphic Literacy	Section 3 Academic Vocabulary	Section 4 Text Types	Section 5 Comprehension	Section 6 Academic Literacy Abilities	Section 7 Grammatical Knowledge	Section 8 Writing of Academic Text	TOTAL	CODE
Total marks	5	10	10	5	25	15	10	20	100	
P.1	0	5	7	0	11	11	9	12	55	3
P.2	0	7	4	0	1	7	9	8	36	1
P.3	2	5	9	0	14	4	3	13	50	2
P.4	3	9	10	0	13	7	3	13	58	4
P. 5 ¹⁹	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
P.6	5	7	10	5	15	3	5	11	61	4
P.7	5	6	9	3	17	9	7	11	67	4
P.8	1	4	5	0	17	7	9	12	55	3
P.9	5	4	6	2	13	8	4	6	48	1
P.10	0	9	9	5	19	1	9	13	65	4
MEAN	2.33	6.22	7.67	1.67	13.33	6.33	6.44	11.00	55	

Legend: 1 extremely high risk, 2 high risk, 3 at risk, 4 low risk, 5 low risk to no risk

The test results show that almost half of the students (five out of 9 tested) are not at risk although in the evaluative reflection written after the test, students highlighted areas where they felt unsure and not quite competent: *I am not good in interpreting the ratios and those questions were very difficult for me (P.8). Another said that the most challenging part was when I had to write a scholarly argument using the extracts from the*

¹⁹ Participant 5 did not participate in the TALPS assessment.

text. This was because time was not on my side the moment I started the argument. Instead of being creative I felt a lot of anxiety and then I knew I had to call it a day (P.6).

Figure 5.2 illustrates the test results in graph format highlighting the category 55-59% as Code 3 and *at risk*, indicating that very few student results fell into the two categories of *low risk* and *low risk to no risk*.

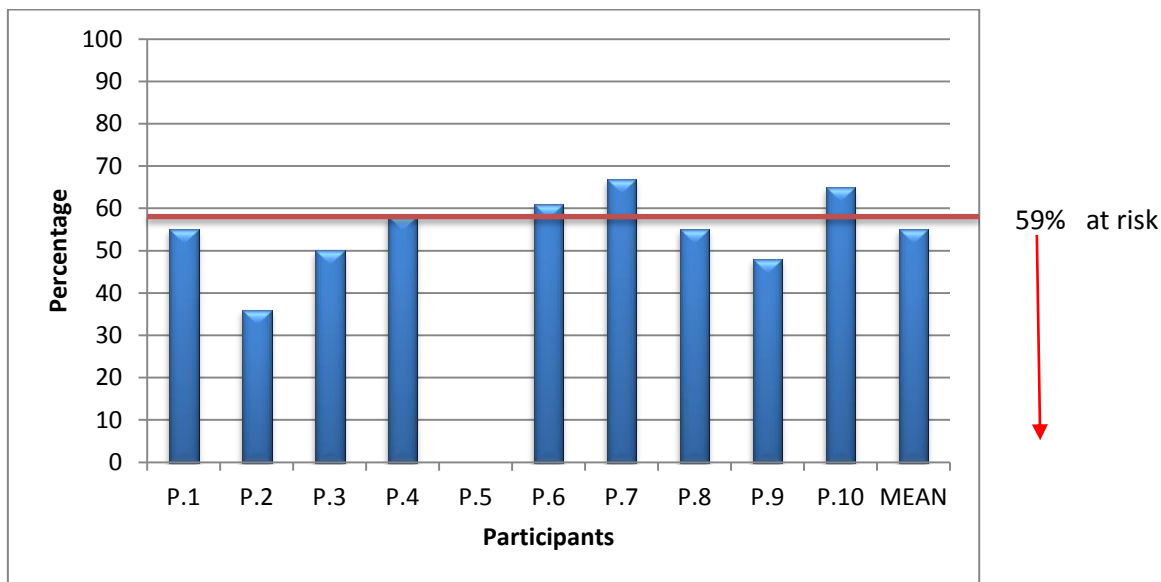


Figure 5.2: Pre-Intervention results for 2011 cohort

To help inform the design and development of the intervention, an analysis of the results was required. Each section of TALPS is reported in text (see graph format Appendix C).

In Section 1, scrambled text is where logic of the storyline is assessed. Students struggled with unravelling scrambled text. The students' challenge with working through the process of rearranging the sentences into a logical cohesive paragraph highlights the fact that they would possibly be challenged with their writing of a cohesive text which would have an effect on the writing up of their research. Three participants (P.1, P.2 and P.10) scored zero with only three of the nine participants (P.6, P.7 and P.9) managing to score five out of a possible five.

Visual and graphic literacy was assessed in Section 2, requiring students to interpret graphic information, conducting simple numerical computations and drawing inferences on these. Participants 4 and 10 both achieved almost full marks (nine out of a possible 10) in this test. However, some students (P.1, P.8 and P.9) achieved low marks (five, four and four respectively). This result implies that students working with quantitative data and its interpretation have a developing visual/graphic literacy foundation which would be

further developed during the course of their studies and inform this aspect of their academic research writing.

Section 3, Academic vocabulary, tested words common in the context of postgraduate study drawing on various levels of Coxhead's academic word lists. In this test, students performed well indicating that their academic vocabulary was reasonable. Two students (P.4 and P.6) both achieved full marks (10 out of a possible 10) with three students (P.3, P. 7 and P. 10) almost achieving full marks. Of concern are the lower marks achieved by P. 2 and P. 8 (two and eight respectively) which indicates that building an academic vocabulary is important and will assist in socialising the student into the relevant Discourse and provide the foundation of academic research writing.

The fourth section assessed students' ability to identify text types. Of nine students assessed, five were unable to achieve any score. However, two students (P.6 and P.10) both achieved full marks. In viewing the results for this section, one is alerted to the lack of exposure to this type of academic literacy which might have implications for academic research writing.

The reading of a longer text and answering questions, drawing on a range of comprehension strategies, was assessed in Section 5. In this section, most students achieved more than half marks. Achievement scores lower than the desirable given mean raises concerns as reading comprehension and the ability to read critically is prerequisite of postgraduate study and a lack of reading ability would have major implication for postgraduate study – see particularly P. 2 with a score of one out of a possible 25.

Academic literacy abilities are assessed in Section 6 of TALPS. This section uses the format of a cloze procedure requiring students to insert words into a text choosing from a number of options. According to the test description, this section assesses students' functional language knowledge. The highest scoring student was Participant 1 followed by Participant 7. This poor performance points to the students' lack of understanding of the features of a text, functional knowledge of sentence construction, its logical form and flow and the use of appropriate vocabulary and punctuation. Again this performance will have implications for the students' writing ability and thus academic research writing.

Grammatical knowledge is assessed in Section 7 calling on students to apply grammatical knowledge when editing a text. In this test, the students fared quite well with four students achieving almost full marks. Grammatical knowledge is not enough but the application to the editing of a text, which was the case in this test, is important for academic research

writing. However, four students did not perform as well (P. 3, P. 4, P.6 and P. 9 scored three, three, five and four out of a possible 10 respectively).

The final section of TALPS, Section 8, was the writing of an academic text applying knowledge gained in reading the sources. The written text was required to conform to academic writing guidelines “such as formality of register, logical structure and acknowledgement of sources” (Butler, 2006, p. 295). Thirteen out of a possible 20 was the highest score and this was achieved by three participants (P.3, P.4 and P. 10). Two students scored 12, a further two achieved 11 while Participant 2 and Participant 9 achieved an eight and a six respectively. This result is much lower than expected and needed at master’s levels especially as students had progressed through an honours programme. This result posed a real concern and if this was the level of students’ academic research writing, then the need for an intervention was indicated.

Various issues arose during the completion of the test. The time allocated to completing the test was two hours and this restricted time proved a difficulty for some students. One student said *it sounded like two hours was going to be longer than what I would need but I was so wrong* (P.6). Another student said he *could not finish, [as he had] struggle[d] with one section and waist[ed] time there [so] could not make [it] to essay writing* (P.9). As a result, this student found that *when last minutes time was introduced, I just rushed to get something on paper* (P.9). If this comment and the way it is written is correlated with the result that this student achieved in Section 8 of the text (6 out of a possible 20), one has to question the ability of this student to be successful at this level of study.

One student suggested that *if the time can be extended to something like 2.5 hours, I suppose most students may do a good job of it in the future* (P.6). In developing this test, a decision was reached for it to be a timed test, one or two hours. It seems that the longer the test, the higher the reliability measures (as explained in Rambiritch, 2012). However, after a process of piloting, both the number of items (from 173 to 76) and the time needed to complete the test (from 150 minutes to 120 minutes), was reduced (Rambiritch, 2012).

In contrast, instead of feeling out of their depth, some students felt capable of answering some sections of the test. One student said *I was able to answer some questions especially those which need analysis* (P.9) and if his results concur with his comment, this augurs well for his studies. He also said: *the summary on the last page was not difficult because I have thorough knowledge of the greenhouse effect and the global warming* (P.8). It seems that most students saw the value in taking the test, commenting that *it is very good that this test was done, to be guided and assisted at your level* (P. 9). As a result, the students thought it was *an appropriate exercise to undertake* (P.4) particularly

as writing TALPS will assist [in] identify[ing] areas of development such that he/she can cope with the demands of the course (P.3). Another student just wanted to see what the results are (P10), as the ability to read and write successfully at postgraduate level is vital and it probably did the students good to realise the level of their ability or competence.

However, one student made an interesting comment in his reflection: *I felt nervous since I knew that my chance of completing it [the test] was narrow). I have never completed such tests. I am a slow writer, but I have proved on a number of occasions that the results of those tests do not really give a true reflection of a person. I wrote a number of them and did not make it due to time factor, but when it comes to academic performance I always made it, sometimes with distinctions* (P.2). Indeed, this student did not perform well in TALPS and it was recorded that he would need assistance as do the remaining students tested (45%) who are at risk with low levels of academic literacy. Cognisance must be taken that students may have different learning styles and indeed, not all students are able to complete tests with ease, which means that alternate ways of assessment need to be used to fully evaluate students' competence.

Drawing on the results of the test, if the cut-off mark for each section was 55% (see Code 3: 55-59% at risk), it would seem that

- Three of the nine students would need help with scrambled text or developing logic,
- Two with working on visual literacy,
- Four with developing an academic vocabulary,
- Six in developing an understanding of text type,
- Two with reading comprehension,
- Six in acquiring and developing academic literacy,
- Four working on acquiring grammatical knowledge and editing, and
- Two on writing an academic text,

Using TALPS as a baseline line assessment clarified the need for a developmental intervention which takes into account the writing of the research proposal as key, and which features a variety writing opportunities or events to develop their practice.

However, to give the developers another indication of student writing, personal writing tasks were set and evaluated, taking into account three main categories for evaluation, namely matter of form, matters of content and matters that reach beyond the text itself.

5.2.2.4 Evaluation of personal writing

Samuel Hayakawa (in Hayakawa & Hayakawa, 1990) states: “Learning to write is learning to think. You don’t know anything clearly unless you can state it in writing.” With this in mind, at the beginning of the year’s programme the students were required to write about what they knew best – themselves – in an attempt to discover how each of the students wrote and whether there were any issues in their writing styles that needed addressing. The use of personal writing seemed to be a good starting point as this type of narrative writing is referred to as ‘low stakes writing’ (Elbow, 1997) and can be used in a number of ways. However, for this writing task, identification of both higher order and lower order concerns, particularly writing issues that perhaps were not explicitly taught either in earlier tertiary education or even at school would occur. It was hoped that using personal narrative writing would be a way in which students could begin to tap into “their own personal, authentic writing styles” (Bizzell, 2000, p. 113).

In evaluating the students’ personal writing, I drew from Lunsford (1997) on feedback where he suggests that a critical reader should concentrate on global concerns and direct their attention to three major categories. These categories include matter of form, matters of content and matters that reach beyond the text itself. This evaluation of the personal narrative within the three categories of golden thread, structure and language application covered both higher order concerns as well as lower order concerns (McAndrew & Reigstad, 2001) as illustrated below:

1. Golden thread – aligned with matters that reach beyond the text itself
2. Structure – aligned with matters of content
3. Language application – aligned with matters of form

Within the golden thread aspect, the student’s awareness of thesis or focus and purpose of piece was considered. Coherence or logical flow was also taken into account as well as the student’s personal experience portrayed in a narrative style of writing with the development of the narrative within the writing process.

The organisation of the text was evaluated under the category, structure, focusing on organisation of ideas, taking note of paragraphing and what constitutes a paragraph as well as the linking of paragraphs using transition words. In addition, sentences structure was considered, particularly the use of simple, complex and compound sentences.

Lower order concerns were categorised under language application such as punctuation, application of language such as word choice, correct use of prepositions, pronouns, use

of tense and concord, word choice, spelling and technical issues. Finally, any other general issues, which may have arisen, were highlighted in this section.

Generally, students were well-equipped to tell their story in an interesting manner showing good use of logic and chronology resulting in good readability. However, a number of pieces of writing lacked content depth and, indeed, had omitted important information pertinent to their narrative such as their dreams and ambitions or where they see themselves in the future. There seemed to be a lack of self-reflection or even the ability to critique their journey thus far and plan for the future.

Several texts needed to develop a better logical flow, moving some paragraphs around and joining others to expand and develop them. Examples of students' personal writing follow in the series of text boxes below:

3 I am a dedicated teacher with excellent communication skills and a fast learner with solid problem solving skills. I always make sure that I conduct myself with integrity in and out of the school and this has earned me a lot of respect from my staff members, friends and the community.

5 My goal is to become a successful person in both family and career life. One of the reasons I am studying Assessment and Quality Assurance is work in the quality assurance division of the department of education in order to play my role in improving the quality of education at another level.

A I spend most of my leisure time with my family especially during the weekends. We spend our time doing some shopping, watching movies and visiting relatives and friends.

5 I am currently working hard for my MEd studies and looking forward to the successes and challenges ahead of me during my studies.

One issue which many students need to consider is their audience and the purpose of the text. The structure of the narratives comprises three to five paragraphs. Students seemed unaware of what constituted a paragraph with one main idea and then developing that idea with supporting detail and evidence, often resulting in a mix of ideas:

I achieved a lot of awards at Khululekani Primary School as an under- 13 soccer coach. Soccer is in my hobby and I am interested in developing young blood. We have a lot of trophies and medals with the under-13. In 2003 our school was chosen to be a pilot project of the IEC project, the Electoral Democracy and Development Education. I was teaching Social Sciences that time and IEC wanted to fuse Democracy Education within the curriculum. The IEC's vision was to teach learners voter education while they are still young. I was a pioneer of the project and I ended up being a teacher trainer. I also assisted in developing learning materials for the commission.

At times, paragraphs were thin, lacking substance and under-developed and they needed advice to develop these as well as help on how to link these paragraphs ensuring cohesion and thus coherence. The example below illustrates the students' use of vocabulary and the ability to paint a picture. However, the three-line paragraph needs to be more fully developed.

Since my very first year at varsity I have aspired to become a lecturer at UP. The allure of knowledge and the limitless potential of the minds that pass in and out of these hallowed grounds year by year fascinated and intrigued me, to no end.

I knew that I had to become a part of it somehow, to become part of something much bigger than myself, much bigger than any one person can ever hope to achieve on their own.

In some cases, writing style was compromised with each sentence beginning with the same introductory words:

In 1986, I started my secondary education at Hanyani Thomo High School and completed my matric in 1990. In 1991, I started with my tertiary education at Shingwedzi College of Education where I did my Senior Primary Teachers Diploma and completed it in 1993.

In 1994, I started working as a teacher at Benson Shiviti Primary School in a deep rural village of Thomo in Giyani. I worked at the school for twelve years as a post level one teacher. In 2006, I got a promotion as a Head of Department for Intermediate phase at

Short truncated or under-developed sentences, as can be seen in the above text, also affected readability, and was found in much of the students' writing.

A further issue found in the writing was either the use of slang or simple words; for example, in the next extract:

I landed a job at my current school

instead of "I was appointed to a post at my current school".

In many instances, students used simple vocabulary such as *got, nice, good, bad, a lot of* rather than descriptive and appropriate adjectives, which resulted in writing that lacked richness and good description. Finally, sentence structure was compromised with incomplete sentences, poor tenses and incorrect word order.

Language application problems which arose from the evaluation were varied and are tabled below:

Table 5.13: Language application problems

Functional use of:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • concord – non agreement between subject and verb • prepositions – incorrect choice of preposition • pronouns – incorrect gender, inconsistent use • determiners – use of articles • possession – use of apostrophe • contractions – use of apostrophe • vocabulary use – incorrect use of words/ unawareness of a more appropriate word • punctuation • correct spelling • critically reading text and self-editing

The following extracts from the students' writing offer examples of using the present continuous tense, concord, non-use of a determiner and incorrect preposition usage:

we are ^{have} having three children.

My father's influence encourage me to study in education,

husband was working at ^{the} Teachers' Resource Centre as Resource Officer

The family background should have no bearing ^{on} in any ~~one~~ child's

The personal writing text and its evaluation was not just used as an indicator of the students' writing ability, but assisted in identifying global concerns as well as sentence-level concerns. The texts, both original and revised, in conjunction with the feedback, were used as a teaching tool, which is described in Chapter 6 Section 6.3.3. The texts were used to develop confidence in writing as well as to create an openness to discussing

writing and all aspects related to writing in an attempt to foster meta-cognition of writing practices which would feed in to the development of the students' academic research writing. However, a challenge for me as an academic writing practitioner is assisting the students in translating their personal writing into academic writing appropriate at master's level.

5.2.2.5 Summary of 2011 cohort student records

Taking into account student records submitted on application to the master's programmes as well as the assessments conducted during the early stages of the programme, a profile was developed which would inform the design and development of the intervention. Thus, the following table sums up these records and assessments:

Table 5.14: Summary of academic record and results of assessment and evaluation

SUMMARY OF ACADEMIC RECORD AND RESULTS OF ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION							
Participant	Honour's Average Mark	Qualitative Research	Quantitative Research	Discipline-Specific Module/S	Research Project	Application Proposals	TALPS
Total mark	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
1	61	54	51	69	75	14.5	55
2	67	59	57	71/68	62	16	36
3	71	73	63	81/78	53	-	50
4	69	70	57	68/74	65	28	58
5	77	-	93	75/76	76	15	--
6	67	-	61	65/62	60	25	61
7	70	86	59	68/72	68	-	67
8	63	-	56	63/76	72	-	55
9	63	64	50	71	58	19	48
10	64	-	-	80/67 foreign language	-	11.5	65

Legend: - not studied in case of Qualitative and Quantitative research and research project

Of the ten students admitted to the master's programme Participants 1, 8, 9 and 10's honours marks were under 65%. But breaking down the students' overall honour's mark into achievement in research methodology, discipline-specific modules and the research project gave a more in-depth understanding and if these individual marks were better than the overall mark, these were taken into account for admittance to the programme. Marks

for qualitative and quantitative research methodology were reviewed: of the six students who had done both qualitative and quantitative research methodology, only two had managed to achieve a mark of 65% or higher for qualitative research methodology with no student achieving 65% or higher for quantitative research methodology. Three students completed a quantitative research methodology course with only one achieving 65% or higher while one student came into the programme with no research methodology background. On average, marks for discipline-specific modules were above 65% which should have meant that the students had a fair foundation for this specific master's. However, as previously shown, only four students had completed the discipline-specific honour's programme. The remaining students had come from other programmes, with the result that they did not have a foundation in the specific field of learning for this master's programme.

The mark for the honour's research project was also considered. Only nine of the ten students completed a research project. Three students achieved a mark over 70%; two students achieved 65% or more with the remaining four achieving marks under 65%. The supervision team did not have access to the research project and had to take the marks at face value. These lower marks, it was felt, did not augur well for the academic research writing that these students would need to embark upon. In addition, the assessment on the application proposals also revealed low marks with 28% being the highest. Added to this, five students achieved 55% and lower on TALPS, which is a concern for the students moving into a master's programme which constitutes a full research dissertation.

5.3 CONCLUSION

The needs analysis for Phase 1 of this study comprised Cycle 1 and identified the problem initially through previous practice. Reviewing the literature about studies conducted in South Africa highlighted similar problems, which is reported in Chapter 1. Thereafter, visits to South African universities helped to uncover what is being done to support postgraduates during the research process. The UP survey into the state of postgraduate study highlighted aspects of the process that need to be addressed. Finally, taking an in-depth look at existing practice in the master's programme led into the final problem identification.

Cycle 2 of Phase 1 was concerned with the master's programme of 2011, taking into account the selection of the cohort. It then conducted a number of assessments, tests and evaluations in order answer the research question: *What is the level of academic research writing in students at postgraduate level?* Once this aspect was ascertained,

some understanding of what was needed to design and develop an academic research writing intervention, which would develop academic writing competence, was reached.

The first design principle to emerge for the design of the intervention, then, is that there is **a need to scaffold students** during their postgraduate studies. The summary of academic record reveals a number of issues: in selection the overall average mark was supposed to be 65% or higher; however, only six of the 10 students achieved 65% or higher, and thus the research project mark, the application proposal assessment and TALPS score needs to be taken into consideration.

A second design principle to emerge from this phase is that **of supporting in students in the acquisition of academic literacies** taking cognisance of Gee's argument (1990) that literacy can only be acquired and not taught. Thus it is the notion of socialisation into the Discourse that needs to be incorporated into the intervention. Taking into account the pre-intervention tests and assessments - TALPS, assessment of initial proposals and evaluation of personal writing – as well as taking into account the academic record, the decision was made to design and develop a developmental academic research writing intervention which would assist students through the process of their master's studies. A supervision team comprising four newly completed doctoral candidates was put together to work with the students. Their roles were co-supervisors being mentored by an experienced supervisor during the course of the year working in conjunction with the academic research writing practitioner who focused the development of academic literacies. This **research triad** became a design principle for the programme which drew on each of the member's strengths in supporting the students. A programme, in collaboration with the supervision team, was developed for the year and consisted of eight contact sessions and four support sessions. This programme, underpinned by another design principle, that of **developing a community of practice**, became the intervention, which is discussed in the following chapters (Chapter 6 and 7).

Drawing from the results of Cycles 1 and 2, as well as the reviewed literature, which includes national and institutional policy and approaches to the teaching of academic writing, the design, development and implementation of the intervention is discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 6: PHASE 2

DESIGN, DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION OF PROTOTYPE 1

Rules of academic discourse, which students need to learn, are often tacit, and thus not easily understood, and yet graduate students are expected or assumed to know them

(Angelil-Carter, 2000, p.280)

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The development of an intervention to develop academic research writing, informed and underpinned by the curriculum model proposed by Van den Akker (2003b), draws on Ivanič's *Discourse of Writing and Learning to Write* framework (2004) which incorporates the model of the teaching of academic writing at higher education level proposed by Lea and Street (1998). This intervention takes cognisance of the context of culture or institutional context both within South African higher education and the Higher Education Qualification Framework context and the context of situation or disciplinary context and what is expected of the student in postgraduate studies.

Acquiring academic literacies, which feed into the development of academic research writing, plays an important role in the successful completion of postgraduate studies. Taking this into consideration, this study, concerned with the identification of the characteristics of an academic research writing intervention to support postgraduates in education, now moves into the design and development phase. In this phase, Research Question 3 *How can postgraduates be assisted in the development of academic research writing?* and Research Question 4: *How appropriate is the intervention in developing academic research writing?* are addressed.

The next section (6.2) gives a brief overview of the results of the needs analysis which informs the conceptualisation of the intervention for its design and development. Van den Akker's curriculum components and curricular spider web (2003b) guides the intervention's development with the design principles given in Chapter 5. Thereafter, the subsequent sections discuss the intervention for Semester 1, according to the Seminars named A and B (6.3.1 and 6.3.4) and the contact sessions, named 1, 2, 3 and 4 (Sections 6.3.2, 6.3.3, 6.3.5 and 6.3.6 respectively) which the students attended and their reactions to and the student evaluations and reflections of those sessions.

6.2 CYCLE 3: CONCEPTUALISING, DESIGNING AND DEVELOPING THE INTERVENTION

The implementation stage of Design Research is described in a number of ways by various authors (see Chapter 4). Reeves discusses this next phase as involving the development of solutions informed by existing design principles and technological innovations leading to iterative cycles of testing and refinement of solutions in practice (Reeves, 2006, p. 28). In McKenney's model, this phase is design, development and formative evaluation, comprising iterative cycles in the development of a number of prototypes (McKenney, 2001). Wademan, drawing on the results of the previous phases, uses tentative product approaches and design principles for the development of prototypes which he names redesign and refinement of products and theories (Wademan, 2005).

In this study, Phase 2 moves through Cycles 3 and 4 where in-depth understanding of the qualities and characteristics needed for the conceptualisation, design and development of the academic research writing intervention for implementation with postgraduate students in Semester 1 of the academic year, is done. Table 6.1 outlines this phase:

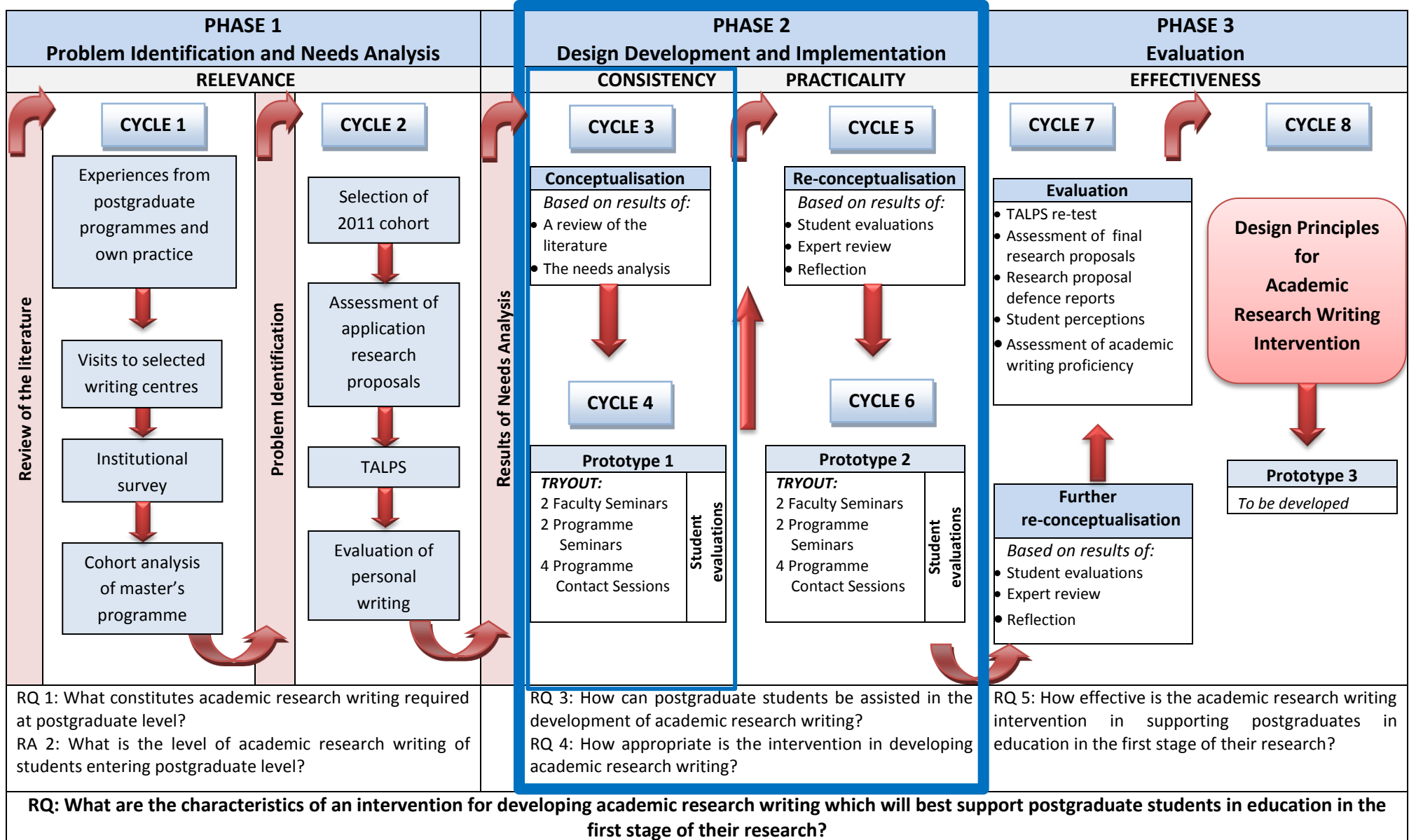
Table 6.1: Phase 2 (Cycles 3 and 4) of the research

PHASE 2: Design, development and implementation				
PROTOTYPE 1				
	Focus of the research in the respective cycles	Research activities	Participants	Criteria
Cycle 3	Conceptualisation, design and development of intervention for Prototype1	<i>Development of Prototype 1 based on results of:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of application research proposal • Baseline assessment of TALPS • Evaluation of personal writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2011 Student cohort • Supervision team 	CONSISTENCY PRACTICALITY
Cycle 4	Implementation of Prototype 1 with master's cohort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration with supervision team • Development of students' personal writing • Development of proposal writing • Peer critique and review • Student evaluations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2011 Student cohort • Supervision team 	

The model for this study is presented below (see Figure 6.1) illustrating how an investigation into the national and institutional context has led to problem identification, which in turn, has fed into the needs analysis. The needs analysis critically looked at the selection of students for a specific master's programme in education, their academic literacy assessment, assessment of application research proposal and evaluation of personal writing and also takes into account the review of the literature.

In Phase 2, the criterion of consistency or construct validity ensures that the intervention is logically designed, and has a practicality element in that the intervention is feasible in the context for which it was designed. The second criterion of practicality is applied to ascertain the *expected* practicality – that the intervention is expected to be usable in the settings for which it has been designed and developed, and the *actual* practicality - that the intervention is actually usable in the context for which it has been designed and developed (Nieveen, 2007).

The second phase, Phase 2 with its two cycles, is the focus of this chapter and is represented in the full model with particular reference to Cycles 3 and 4 of Phase 2 implemented in Semester 1 as Prototype 1.



Legend: TALPS = Test of Academic Literacy for Postgraduate Students

Figure 6.1: Design Research Model for the development of an academic research writing intervention

The background to this research was discussed in Chapter 1 revealing the unpreparedness of many students for the rigours of research and postgraduate studies in general. It seems that many students have not been able to develop “proper research and writing skills at preceding levels” (Koen, 2007). Students, in addition, are unable to communicate the findings of their research effectively, as many of them have never been taught how to write (DeLyser, 2003, p. 169). There is thus a need for some sort of support strategy as, in many cases, these writing competencies are not inherent and should be developed through teaching, discussion, support and practice, as purported by Mullen (2001). She argues that postgraduates need to be guided into learning how to write to disseminate their research findings, and that they should be given the opportunity “to learn from a formal curriculum that moves them through the phases of developing an educational study” (2001, p. 118).

6.2.1 Theory underpinning the Conceptualisation of the Intervention

In designing the intervention, cognisance was taken of curriculum theory and Van den Akker’s ten components of curriculum development (2003a). The ten components with their explanations, tabled below, are rationale or vision, aims and objectives, content, learning activities, teacher role, materials and resources, grouping, location, time and assessment.

Table 6.2: Curriculum components

Curriculum Components	
Rationale or Vision	Why are they learning?
Aims and Objectives	Toward which goals are they learning?
Content	What are they learning?
Learning activities	How are they learning?
Teacher role	How is the teacher facilitating learning?
Materials and Resources	With what are they learning?
Grouping	With whom are they learning?
Location	Where are they learning?
Time	When are they learning?
Assessment	How to measure how far learning has progressed?

Source: Van den Akker, 2003

Van den Akker illustrates the interconnectedness and the vulnerability of each of the components in the curricular spider web diagram, showing that “every chain is as strong as its weakest link” (2003a, p. 4). This interconnectedness and vulnerability of the curricular spider web means that a fine balance needs to be developed and maintained between and within each of the components for the curriculum to be successful.

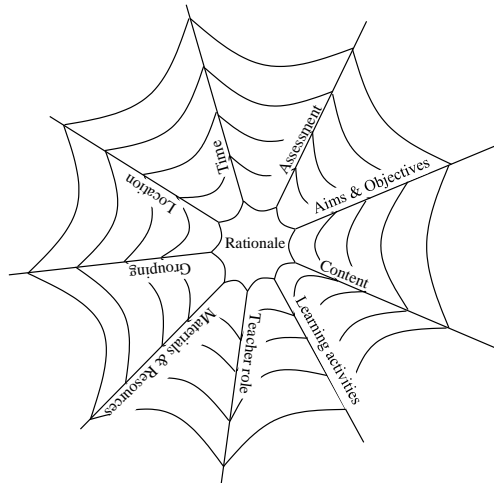


Figure 6.2: Curricular spider web (Van den Akker, 2003, p. 4)

Van den Akker (2009), however, does warn of the vulnerability of the spider web and cautions that although emphasis may shift from time to time, a balance or “alignment has to occur to maintain coherence” (2009, p. 40). The rationale for developing and conducting this intervention was to support master’s students during their first year, the year in which they write and defend their research proposal, a year which has seen a fair amount of attrition.

The content of the intervention informed the learning activities or events and was thus structured to offer support in the development of academic research writing. This aspect was facilitated by taking into consideration the Higher Education Qualifications Framework (Ministry of Education, 2004) as well as being informed by the needs analysis comprising the results of TALPS, the assessment of initial research proposals and the evaluation of personal writing (see Chapter 5).

The organisational aspects of the curriculum model consisted of grouping, location and time. The grouping was the 2011 cohort of master’s students, 10 in total initially, who met over a period of an academic year. But, added to this spider-web, I needed to take into account who the students were and what experiences they were bringing to their studies particularly taking prior experiences in writing and reading into account (Lea, 2004). Maturity was also highlighted as this cohort predominantly consisted of adult learners, older than the conventional student and from diverse racial, language and educational backgrounds.

Thus, it is important to acknowledge the diversity of today’s postgraduate students and particularly within a faculty of education where the majority of students entering postgraduate studies are adult learners referred to as the non-traditional students (Adler & Reed, 2002) and as “the other” (Henning et al., 2001, p.113). Taking into account

students' ethnicity, socio-economic statuses, world views and levels of preparation for higher education (Doss, 2000) consequently affects the way in which adults are taught or the way their needs are facilitated (Brown & Campione, 1994, p. 230). "Push/pull factors" (Walters & Koetsier, 2006, pp. 98-99) also influence and affect adults entering higher education as learners. They not only carry adult responsibilities such as economic, family and community commitments but other major life roles at work that place a burden on them. In many cases, universities, situated in urban areas, draw students from a vast area, which means that students are geographically removed from the university, having to travel long distances to attend seminars and meetings often arranged during term time. Access to information and communication is another challenge to be overcome as beyond the major cities and towns, few academic libraries exist and access to electronic sources of communication and information such as the Internet, is restricted (Du Plessis, 2007), particularly in more rural areas. As a result, students face many barriers in successfully completing their studies which results in them 'stopping out'²⁰ or even dropping out (Cronje, 2007; Holtzhausen, 2005; Mouton, 2007; Watson, 2008).

6.2.2 Theory underpinning the Design and Development of the Intervention

Reviewing the literature assisted in making the move from a deficit model in only identifying deficiencies in students and not taking responsibility for their development, to a developmental (Skillen et al., 1998) and comprehensive model involving "directed supervision" (Smeby, 2000 cited in Koen, 2007, p. 48).

This move entailed involving the supervision team in designing, developing and implementing an academic research writing intervention for the master's programme that moves away from a pedagogy that draws on inaccessible cultural knowledge and an invisible curriculum (Hyland, 2003). The intervention, building on the students' existing cultural capital (Leibowitz, 2004), would situate itself within Ivanič's framework (2004) where the teaching of academic writing is explicit. This would assist in demystifying writing to support students within a contextual framework and find ways to scaffold learning using knowledge of language to guide them (Hyland, 2003). In addition, a foundation should be laid via "a proactive program that embed[s] writing with research, acknowledging writing as knowledge-creating rather than merely knowledge-recording" (Aitchison & Lee, 2006, p. 270).

²⁰ Students request a specified time break from their studies.

Writing development should be part of the curriculum; however, time within the curriculum should be allocated for writing events to take place, focusing on writing practices, to ensure that there is a developmental move from simple tasks to those of a more complex nature (Leibowitz, 2000). To scaffold students in their writing development, modelling of writing is suggested (Harris, 1983).

As this study is situated within the New Literacy Studies (2004) the intervention took cognisance of the design principles of firstly scaffolding the students and secondly, in supporting students in the development of their academic research writing. Drawing on Lea's work the following principles are considered:

- takes account of students' present and previous literacy practices;
- acknowledges that texts do more than represent knowledge;
- recognises the relationship between epistemology and the construction of knowledge through writing and reading practices, using both written and multimodal texts;
- attempts to create spaces for exploration of different meanings and understandings by all participants;
- does not create a dichotomy between other literacies and academic literacies;
- recognises and builds upon issues of identity and how these are implicated in the creation of texts;
- acknowledges the power dimensions of institutional structures and procedures and the ways that these are implicated in text production;
- attempts to see students as engaged participants in the practices and texts which they encounter during their study;
- sees the programme as mediated by different participants. Allows spaces for this and embeds this in both the programme content and the programme design; and
- recognises the integral nature of the relationship between literacies and technologies (adapted from Lea, 2004, p. 744).

The above aspects are vital to consider in order for postgraduates to be assisted in entering the academic Discourse, developing their own academic writing identity and thus learning to write by writing to learn. However, Lea also acknowledges possible limitations such as "recognition of institutional constraints on what is possible" and of interest to this study "is it possible to go further than an 'academic socialisation' model in course design?" (2004, p. 745).

These principles dovetail with those underpinning andragogy, the art and science of teaching adults (Bezuidenhout, Van der Westhuizen, & De Beer, 2005; Gravett, 2000; Merriam & Caffarella, 1991; 1998). Andragogy shows that there is a uniqueness to adult learning styles which means that motivation, capability, experiences and skill all play a major role in the way adult learners should be taught (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991/1998, p. 306). Constructivist theories of learning proposed by Vygotsky (1978) and Bruner (1990) are seen as appropriate as the teaching of adults should be active, self-conscious, self-directed (Brown & Campione, 1994).

It has been found that support groups amongst postgraduate students “supplement the role of the academic supervisor” (Smith, 2000, p. 240). Forming and developing groups fosters a sense of belonging, a oneness with others and a place where hopes and fears can be shared. As the postgraduate journey can be a lonely one, being part of a group allows the students to discuss their experiences and support them through difficult times. In addition, being part of a group, a community of practice, gives the students the opportunities to learn with and from each other “facilitate[ing] and enhance[ing] the growth of knowledge and understanding of one’s own developmental processes” (Smith, 2000, p. 248).

Finally, a values system needed to be in place to ensure that relationships are built on trust and that an interplay of empathy, respect, fairness, responsibility and openness could develop between the students as well as between the students and facilitator, students and presenters and finally, between the students and their supervisors, as illustrated in the Values Wheel (adapted from Austin, 2010).



Figure 6.3: Values wheel (informed by Austin, 2010)

This values wheel promotes attitudes, values and ethics underpinning the categories of thinking and working with the aim of developing academic research writing.

6.2.3 Policy underpinning the Design and Development of the Intervention

In designing an intervention, literacy requirements of a specific programme need to be considered as well as the discipline within which the students are working to raise awareness of disciplinary conventions and features of academic discourse. As the HEQF informs postgraduate study within the context of culture, it was important to unpack it and apply it to the academic research writing intervention. Table 6.3 below illustrates the HEQF, its applied competence, the specific learning area aligned with the applied competence (A-F) and the interpretation thereof, and finally, how it was applied to the academic research writing intervention through the academic year.

Table 6.3: Applying the HEQF to the academic research writing intervention

Higher Education Qualification Framework						
Code	APPLIED COMPETENCE	SPECIFIC LEARNING OUTCOME	APPLICATION TO INTERVENTION			
9			FACULTY SEMINAR	PROGRAMME SEMINAR	PROGRAMME CONTACT SESSION	
E	Advanced information retrieval and processing skills.	Able to engage with information retrieval by sourcing relevant literature, reading and critiquing and applying learning to own research.	A ✓ B ✓ C D	A B C D	1 2 3 4	5 6 7 8
B	Advanced reading and thinking skills: an ability to rigorously critique and evaluate current research and participate in scholarly debates in an area of specialisation.	Able to develop reading and thinking skills and apply to own research. Able to engage in discussions and debates about own and peer research.	A ✓ B C D	A B ✓ C ✓ D	1 2 4	✓ 5 ✓ 6 ✓ 7 ✓ 8
F	An ability to effectively present and communicate the results of research to specialist and non-specialist audiences using the resources of an academic/professional discourse	Able to present various aspects of research to a variety of audiences.	A ✓ B C D	A B C D	1 3	5 6 ✓ 7 ✓ 8 ✓
D	An ability to identify, analyse and deal with complex and/or real world problems and issues drawing systematically and creatively on the theory, research methods and literature of a discipline/field.	Able to identify a problem for research purposes, underpin it with theory drawn from the literature and finding a methodology to solve the problem.	A B C D	A ✓ B ✓ C D	1 2 3 4	✓ 5 ✓ 6 ✓
E	An ability to undertake a study of the literature and current research in an area of specialisation under supervision.	Able to access and review the literature critically – analysing and synthesising.	A B ✓ C D	A B ✓ C D	3 4	5 7 ✓ 8
B	An ability to rigorously critique and evaluate current research and participate in scholarly debates in an area of specialisation.	Able to analyse and synthesise the literature using it to draw examples and arguments to underpin own research.	A B C D	A B ✓ C D	1 3	5 6 7 ✓
B	An ability to relate theory to practice and vice versa and to think epistemologically.	Able to use theory to underpin problem, research, practice, intervention.	A C D	A B ✓ C D	1 3	5 6 ✓ 7 ✓ 8 ✓
C	Mastery of the application of research methods, techniques and technologies appropriate to an area of specialisation.	Able to situate research in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A paradigm • A research design • Using a particular approach 	A B C ✓ D	A B ✓ C ✓ D	1 2 3 4	5 6 7 8

Higher Education Qualification Framework						
Code	APPLIED COMPETENCE	SPECIFIC LEARNING OUTCOME	APPLICATION TO INTERVENTION			
		Able to undertake: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sampling • develop instruments • collect valid and reliable data – qual+quan 				
E	Identification of quantitative and/or qualitative data.	Able to process and analyse data – qual+quan using packages such as SPSS/Atlas-ti.	A B C D	A B C D	1 2 3 4	5 6 7 8
E	Critical analysis, synthesis and independent evaluation of quantitative and/or qualitative data.	Able to interpret results.	A B C D	A B C D	1 3 4	5 7 8
F	The production of a dissertation or research report which meets the standards of scholarly/professional writing.	Able to complete the research proposal to the standards outlined in faculty guidelines	A B C D	A B	1 2 3 4	5 6 7 8
				√		√ √ √

The following section of the HEQF (G-J) aligns with student ability to apply learning at various levels, in varying contexts and applying a range of skills. It was envisaged that these specific learning outcomes would infuse the contact sessions and student would in fact develop these practices.

Code	AUTONOMY OF LEARNING	SPECIFIC LEARNING OUTCOME
G	A capacity to operate effectively in complex, ill-defined contexts.	Able to work in a variety of contexts and situations applying professional standards.
H	A capacity to critically self-evaluate and continue to learn independently for continuing professional development.	Able to grow academically and professionally, using self-reflection and critique as a tool.
I	A capacity to manage learning tasks autonomously, professionally and ethically.	Able to develop the ability to work in a group as well as independently maintaining ethical standards and adhering to timelines.
J	A capacity to critically evaluate own and others' work with justification.	Able to engage in peer review and be open to feedback.

6.3 CYCLE 4: IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION OF PROTOTYPE 1: SEMESTER 1

The academic year is divided into two semesters both of which plan for two four-day seminars (Seminar A and Seminar B) to be held by the Faculty as well as the Programme. Within each semester, provision was made for an additional four contact sessions (1, 2, 3 and 4) of three hours each (see Figure 6.4 below). This planning was to ensure that the intervention, Prototype 1, offered relevant support and academic input to developing academic research writing through the students' first year as master's students and the year dedicated to writing and defending their research proposals.

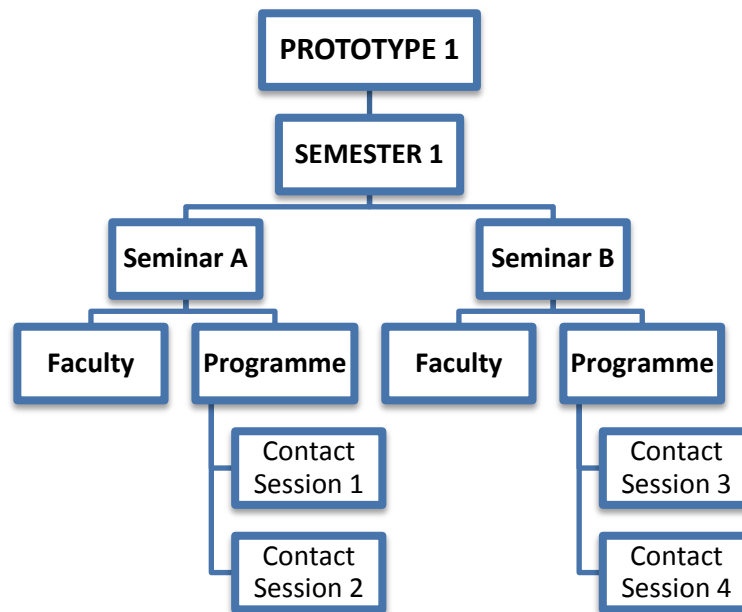


Figure 6.4: Prototype 1 incorporating seminars and contact sessions

The subsequent sections describe and discuss the two seminars (Sections 6.3.1 and 6.3.4) and the four contact sessions (Sections 6.3.2, 6.3.3, 6.3.5 and 6.3.6). A description of the six sessions is given and supported by student evaluations and comments collected in the evaluation forms. These evaluation forms were completed by students after each of the sessions. As in a mixed methods design, both quantitative and qualitative data is used in the description and evaluation of the sessions.

6.3.1 Semester 1: Seminar A

Seminar A was run by the Faculty of Education as an introductory session for the postgraduate students. Taking place over a four-day period, the seminar introduced the students to the Faculty and their relevant departments as well as administrative issues such as bursary applications, fee payments and card access. The students had training on conducting basic library searches such as catalogue use and accessing academic

databases. Two further series of sessions took place, the first being the basics of academic writing involving reading, writing and presenting. The second series covered an introduction to research, both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

The Faculty takes responsibility for offering support for students in an attempt to prepare them for postgraduate study. Thus, it was important for this study, which designed and developed an intervention for the development of academic research writing, to consider the value of the Faculty sessions particularly in how they dovetailed with the programme intervention. Although the Faculty conducts its own evaluation, the cohort sampled for this research was also asked to evaluate the sessions according to relevance to topic, addition of new information, how they were assisted in understanding of the next steps and their increased knowledge of research topic and processes.

Table 6.4: Evaluation of Faculty Seminar A

Faculty Seminar A	Relevance to topic	Addition of new information	Assistance in understanding of next steps	Increased knowledge of research topic/processes
Introduction to reading + writing	2.25	2.50	2.00	2.25
Introduction to academic writing	2.80	3.00	2.80	2.80
Presentation skills	2.80	2.80	2.60	2.40
Searching library databases	3.00	3.00	2.80	2.80
Introduction to research	2.80	3.00	2.80	3.00
Using library databases	3.29	3.29	2.86	3.00
Seminar Average	2.82	2.93	2.64	2.71

Scale: 1=not at all 2=fairly 3=very 4=extremely

Students were asked to rate the sessions on a scale of 1-4 with 4 being *extremely* and 1 being *not at all*. Thus averages for each session are reported out of 4. Overall, the students rated the addition of new information the highest (2.93), followed by relevance to the topic (2.82). This interesting result, especially at master's level where one assumes that this type of exposure to research has already been undertaken at undergraduate and honours level.

It seems that the session where knowledge was applied in practice – using library databases – was regarded most valuable by the students achieving a rating of between 3.29 and 2.80 for those applications.

During the week, as part of the departmental arm of Seminar A, the students met the master's programme supervision team and its leader, and were given a brief introduction

into the chosen field of study, and as well as being introduced to each other, contact details were exchanged and a discussion of student research interests was held.

Table 6.5: Plan for Programme Seminar A

CONTENT	Introduction to programme and general orientation
AIMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to introduce the students to the programme • to introduce the students to the supervision team • to introduce student research interests
RATIONALE	First meeting: introduction to research interests, introduction to peers
LEARNING ACTIVITIES	Interactive introductory discussion
HEQF	A capacity to operate effectively in complex, ill-defined contexts.

Students were given a handout to read which offered suggestions about conducting research (see Blaxter, Hughes, & Tight, 2001), deemed necessary as their preparation to undertake research varied. This handout, in addition to a reading list, was used in assisting the students to construct their problem statement, research question and aim. As contact time during this introductory session was limited, the decision was made to communicate regularly with the students via emailed information letters which would detail what was expected of them during the course of the year, what was needed to be prepared for the contact sessions and generally keep them informed and in contact. No evaluation was conducted of this first Programme Seminar.

During the course of Semester 1, four programme contact sessions were held, each relating to a specific aspect of writing associated with the writing of the research proposal drawing on a developmental approach to support and scaffold the students. At the end of each session, the students completed an evaluation form and their comments (written in italics) are used in the next sections to support the discussion.

6.3.2 Semester 1: Contact Session 1

The first contact session, scheduled for a Friday afternoon over a period of three hours, run by the supervision team and its leader, was concerned with the development of a research proposal and particularly focused on what is required in the writing of the problem statement, aims and research questions.

Research has shown that following a genre approach to writing makes explicit the structure and the moves that need to be made in writing a specific text. In the research proposal, prototypical structures exist which can be followed; however, they “should not be considered as rigid and prescriptive models for students to emulate blindly”

(Flowerdew, 2000, p. 370) but should rather be seen as guides. Thus, within the research proposal, specific structures were identified which needed explicit teaching: the development of a problem statement, the rationale for conducting the study and the research questions, drawing on Krathwohl's framework to establish a chain of reasoning.

Table 6.6: Plan for Contact Session 1

CONTENT	The development of a research proposal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem statement • Rationale • Aims • Research questions • Suggestions for reading/referencing • Table of literature • Research diary
AIMS	To review and critique of problem statement for development of research proposal.
RATIONALE	A comprehensive and systematic knowledge base in a discipline/field with specialist knowledge in an area at the forefront of the discipline/field or area of professional practice.
LEARNING ACTIVITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving and receiving feedback • Discussion on relevant literature and accessing of sources • Discussion on developing a research diary
HEQF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An ability to identify, analyse and deal with complex and/or real world problems and issues drawing systematically and creatively on the theory, research methods and literature of a discipline/field. • Advanced information retrieval and processing skills. • A capacity to manage learning tasks autonomously, professionally and ethically.

The session began with a slide presentation giving an overview of what is expected in the writing of a problem statement, drawing on the students' knowledge gained through their reading of the specified reading.

The presentation on developing a problem statement

Interestingly, one student in the evaluation form wrote that *all the information was necessary and new to me* (P.10), while another wrote that *the presentation was informative and served as an eye-opener on how to write a problem statement, aim and research question* (P.3). In addition to unpreparedness, it seems that even though students were given handouts to support and prepare them for the contact session, it may only work when the handouts are read and used for scaffolding their learning and subsequently their writing. Other student comments showed their appreciation and the merit of the presentation: *The presentation was detailed and I understood what I had to do from the session* (P.1) and particularly the value of firstly reading the handout and having the presentation reinforce the learning: *The presentation and the handout, "How to*

research” was very useful (P.4), making sure that during the presentation, guidance about what should constitute a problem statement was clear and straight forward (P.6).

As research has shown that students benefit greatly through constructive feedback which is central to student learning, (Carless, 2006; Hounsell et al., 2005; Hounsell et al., 2008; Quinn, 1999), students had been asked to email in the writing of their problem statement a week in advance to allow the supervision team to read through and critique. During the group discussions, feedback on student writing was given by members of the supervision team.

Group discussions and feedback on student writing

Group discussions with the supervision team who had read the students’ first draft of the problem statement took place, but with mixed reviews. One student commented that *the discussions were good but feedback from supervisors was limited. More time could be allocated for each student to outline his/her topic, problem statement, aim and research question. This could give opportunity for constructive criticism from other students and the supervision team (P.3).* This is a point well taken as one of the aims of the contact session was to develop peer critique practices where student writers read, edit and comment on each other’s work (DeLyser, 2003). Developing this competence will, in turn, help the student view his work with the same critical eye. Another student commented that having some else read the writing assists in finding gaps and even errors: *I was sure that I wrote what was asked of me, but when we held a discussion with the supervisor, I then realised how much more I still had to do. That was an eye opener (P.3).* However, one particular comment, though positive, offered advice to the supervision team about the way in which feedback is given: *It was good to have feedback on the things that I did wrong and what I did not think through. And although I understand the comments are directed at my work and not at me personally, I feel that there are ways of being direct without being attacking (P.10).* Such a comment could give rise to a discussion on students’ experience of being critiqued, a tool which if used correctly, could be effective in promoting a deeper understanding of student writing. On a positive note, Participant 6 explained that *at the end of the session, I felt very motivated (P.6)*

To assist the students with recording of their references, they were introduced to the idea of using Endnote, a computer programme for capturing their references which facilitates the insertion of references in text. Although the Endnote program is widely used by students, this cohort is of the “older” generation and not technologically equipped as can be seen by their comments: *The discussion was good but not very beneficial because*

Endnote is a new concept to most student[s] (P.3) and I do not have the software that we were advised to use - I am not advanced on computers and I think that is the disadvantage on my side (P.1). However, some students were open to finding out more about the program as *that would have made writing and referencing very easy (P.1).* Students who are technologically advanced commented that *this section was invaluable and very interesting.*

Keeping a research diary

It was suggested that the students keep a research diary (Blaxter et al., 2001) often referred to as a reflective or reflexive journal. Keeping a research diary helps the student to think, to see the development of their thinking, record their progress, and see the development of their writing (Blaxter et al., 2001, pp. 48-51). In addition, a research diary may assist in filling in the context of the research, with distilling ideas, working out concerns and fears and these may then be a trigger for reflection.

Ortlipp (2008) used a reflective journal to document her research journey. She found that the use of such a journal assisted her in firstly, creating transparency, secondly, in guiding her with the research design and choices that she made, but most importantly, documented her thinking during the research process. This point is reiterated by Crème and Lea 2003 who explains that learning journals provide spaces for students' transitional writing, and thus assist in developing a bridge between personal understanding and their formal work.

Students were interested in the idea commenting that *the importance of having a book that one writes all important information about research was clearly emphasised (P.6)* particularly as *the discussion was excellent and examples of diaries were circulated. The diary will assist [in] keep[ing] one on his/her toes and time conscious (P.3).* Other students felt *it was good to see examples of two varying types of research diaries to give us an idea of the possibilities and purposes. It changed my view of keeping a research diary (P.10).* However, some students were truthful by saying that they find it *difficult to religiously keep one (P.4)*, but it is hoped that students keep a diary to document their way through their research process. The value of keeping a research diary is that it helps to generate a history of the project, document the thinking and research (Hughes, 2011) and offer the opportunity to engage in the process of reflexivity to take note of how their approach to their discipline changes and develops over time (Lea, 2004).

Conveying of information via information letters

It was decided to convey information via information letters attached to emails to ensure that students had access to all the necessary information particularly if they were unable to attend the contact sessions. The postgraduate journey is often seen as a lonely one where the student feels isolated and cut off from what is happening at the university and such constant contact and communication counteracts the isolation that students begin to feel when working on their dissertations (Thesen, 2009). This notion was reinforced with this particular cohort of students who are part time students and full time teachers or education officials working full time, struggling to balance work and studies and in addition, some live in places other than Pretoria.

Students were asked to comment on communication use thus far, to which they replied that *communication strategies are just at their best* (P.3), *I was kept in the loop the whole time, all information was given to us when we needed it* (P.10) and finally, *the e-mails though impersonal, work wonders because I open my email box at least twice a day as a result do not miss important information, keep it up guys!* (P.4). It must be noted that some students who live in rural areas had difficulty accessing emails regularly, only achieving this when visiting the nearest towns and the internet cafe, which may only occur over the weekends.

Students' evaluation of the first contact session ranged from good to excellent although only nine of the 10 students registered for this programme attended this workshop.

Table 6.7: Evaluation of Contact Session 1

Excellent	Good	Needs improvement	Not applicable
6	3	-	-

(n=9)

One student commented that he *personally learn[s] from these sessions. All I can say is that I need these sessions very dearly* (P.4). Comments such as this reinforce the fact that it cannot be assumed that postgraduate students are equipped for research but rather that they need to participate in a formal developmental programme that "moves them through the phases of developing an educational study" (Mullen, 2001, p. 118).

It seems that students enjoyed the collaboration with the supervision team: *The complementary teamwork displayed by supervisors and the research skills that were shared with students* (P.3). Knowledge construction is facilitated by collaboration particularly in a social setting where the students learned from the supervision team's

feedback and the interactions with each other. Therefore, knowledge becomes the product as “knowledge is created, maintained and altered through an individual’s interaction with and within his/her discourse community” (Petraglia, 1991, p. 41). What was valuable for one student was feedback given on the problem statement and she even went as far as saying *I think the support that we get is beyond my expectation* (P. 6). Interestingly, when asked for ideas for improvement of future contact sessions, the students suggested that *each student [should] be given a chance to make a presentation of his/her research and criticised constructively by both supervisors and colleagues. Corrections could be made on the spot and suggestions could be given* (P.3). This aspect was taken into account for the future with a move toward peer-based sessions.

Another technique which seemed to work for the students was that of modelling where the student is able to use someone else’s example and transfer this to his own work (Harris, 1983). The act of modelling, or imitation and emulation (Shamoon & Burns, 2001) was useful because *seeing examples of what we should be doing with our literature reviews and research diaries* (P.10) assisted them in formulating their own ideas on how to construct a review of the literature and develop a research diary.

Reading the evaluation and the comments above would allow one to think that the sessions were above reproach, but it seems that issues have arisen with the students which needed to be addressed. The first issue was that supervisors had not been allocated and the students felt that they were at this stage directionless. The decision was taken that students would work with the supervision team as a whole until the students had written the beginnings of their research proposal. This would allow for the correct allocation to be made with students being aligned with supervisors and their fields of learning.

In addition, other issues of concern such as referencing style, what constitutes a proposal, how far back in the literature should they go, were also raised. It seems that even though students have come through honours programmes, at either this particular university or another, they are not really prepared enough to be independent novice researchers. All issues and concerns raised by the students during this session were taken into account and assisted in informing the following session. Of particular interest is that the students were given the opportunity to highlight aspects of the process of research writing that they would like to be discussed at future contact sessions.

6.3.3 Semester 1: Contact Session 2

In order for the students to learn how to write, they need to write. As such, it was decided to involve them in what Elbow refers to as low stakes writing (1997). Low stakes writing encourages students to become actively involved in their writing, and because they will have done lots of writing before having to hand in high stakes writing, it gets them into the mode of writing and develops fluency thus improving the quality of high stakes writing (Elbow, 1997). In addition, low stakes writing allowed me to use the piece of writing, a personal narrative, to identify strengths in the writing as well as areas of weakness. The first part of this session took the form of a workshop using personal narratives and peer review.

Table 6.8: Plan for Contact Session 2

CONTENT	The Personal Narrative: Introduction to writing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifying three aspects of writing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *the golden thread *the structure *language and syntax • Introduction to APA referencing technique
AIMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To review personal narratives, identifying strengths and weaknesses in writing and offering suggestions for revision. • To apply APA referencing techniques in practice
RATIONALE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By writing, the student learns to write and in using a personal piece of writing to identify strengths and weakness, develops meta-cognition about the writing, which can then be transferred to academic research writing.
LEARNING ACTIVITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer review and identification of the three aspects of writing assessed: golden thread, the structure and language application. • Discussion on aspects of academic writing and the improvement of personal narratives.
HEQF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A capacity to critically evaluate own and others' work with justification. • An ability to relate theory to practice

The personal narrative

Elbow (1997) suggests that low stake writing can be used for clarifying course content and reflecting on lectures and workshops, but for this cohort, low stakes freewriting, to tap into their personal narratives, was used. Theory has shown that writing informally can assist students develop and demonstrate the practice of written communication (Nightingale, 1988). Asking the students to write about themselves, I hoped, would develop in them a way of telling a story that had logic, cohesion and coherence as well as a livelier, clearer and more natural way of writing. These personal narratives were also used to highlight errors in writing and sort out writing issues that perhaps were not explicitly taught either in earlier tertiary education or even at school. In addition, I hoped that the student narratives would help me understand the students' histories and

backgrounds giving me context for this research as well as providing the rationale for conducting it.

Once the students had emailed their narratives to me, I read them and made comments focusing on firstly, the “golden thread” or logic that runs through a piece of writing, secondly, the structure of the piece, and finally, on language issues. This type of feedback is in line with writing feedback pedagogy which suggests that higher order concerns need to be addressed before lower order concerns such as sentence-level problems and language and spelling errors (Gillespie & Lerner, 2003; McAndrew & Reigstad, 2001) thus informing the development of their academic writing (Bailey, 2008). Feedback on the personal narratives was emailed to the students with a request to revise the narrative and resubmit it before the next contact session.

Although I was aware that many issues needed to be addressed, I was delighted with the personal narratives, particularly the clear personal voice that seemed to come through in the writing. Nash explains that scholarly personal narrative writing (SPN) gives the student the opportunity to practise listening to his own voice, and thus finding his own special sound and style (Nash, 2004, pp. 24-25). SPN allows the student to tell his own story in his own way using the language he chooses to use (Nash, 2004). I thought that it would be an ideal opportunity for students to learn to develop their voice firstly, with telling their own story before moving on to telling their research story (Van Rensburg, 2004).

The students’ narratives struck a chord with me because as a white English-speaking South African, I was educated during the apartheid era and gained from what was on offer in educating the white population. Many of our students found themselves on the other side of the coin, firstly, being brought up in a very different South Africa to the one being experienced by Whites and then being marginalised and educated under Bantu Education (refer to Chapter 2 for the background to education in South Africa and illustrative narratives). In addition, it gave me an understanding of the students, their backgrounds, their educational journey and their prior learning experiences.

The personal narratives were used during the contact session as a teaching tool so a pack of unrevised stories was handed to each student with a cautionary word that they were to be considered confidential and only to be used as part of the workshop. Each student was allocated a story which they were asked to read, identify the strengths of the pieces and then to highlight issues which they thought should be addressed to improve the writing. The students used the framework of higher-order concerns firstly which concentrate of the focus of the piece, its development and the structure (McAndrew & Reigstad, 2001). Then in order to highlight mistakes, the students looked at lower order

concerns, which deal with sentence structure and the mechanics of the writing. Bizzell points toward a process-centred writing classroom, in which activities such as freewriting can help students “to discover and refine their own personal, authentic writing styles” (2000, p. 113).

The students’ responses are used to explain what transpired in the workshop. *Each student was given a chance to present the writing challenges s/he picked up in the writing. This was a fantastic learning experience because getting it from one’s peers is believed to have more impact (P.3). It was good to see that other people also struggled and made mistakes with their first drafts (P.10).* This section [the identification and discussion of writing challenges] *was very thorough; I think we covered all the possible errors that could have been made (P.10).* Elbow explains that by getting students to read each other’s informal pieces and perhaps even discuss them, learning is achieved (Elbow, 1997, 1998). *The mistakes that were made in the original writing were enormous and most of them were through ignorance and recklessness. Having to read someone else’s writing made me realise the kind of errors one can make (P.3).* The discussions helped students identify their mistakes *and take constructive criticism positively (P.10).*

One of the aims of this workshop was to introduce the students to peer critique (DeLyser, 2003), and although this was a simple exercise, it was a good beginning which would assist in developing this vital practice as well as making students aware of errors in writing. *It was nice for a change to have peer reviews but still with supervision comments (P.10).* A further aim was for the students to develop an understanding about writing, a notion reinforced by Nightingale (1988) who explains that learning can be improved if students learn about their learning and develop meta-cognition.

The students were then asked to read the revised piece of writing. Again, I will let the students’ voices be heard: *it was amazing to see the difference in the second draft! There was a great improvement in the revised writing, thanks to our skilful supervisors. It was amazing to see the change from the first draft to the second. It was such a good and practical example of why we need to keep writing and rewriting over and over until the product is truly polished (P.10).* Although not an aim as such, the writing process approach to the teaching of writing (see Ivanič, 2004) emerged as being of importance and one to take into consideration: *it made me think about my mental attitude towards rewriting. I’m not used to having to write something more than once but my views have really changed towards that and I even rewrote my second problem statement three times because I realised that that’s the only way it will be even remotely good (P.10).*

What emerged for me as the facilitator of this contact session is the awakening awareness of who everyone is in the group and where they have come from: *It was so different and interesting to find out from what background my new colleagues and friends are coming from. I didn't know half of the things about them that I read in their biographies* (P.10). Nomdo (2006) raises the point that once students are aware of the different types of capital that they possess they use this knowledge to steer their journey becoming agents of their own development. In addition, it seems that *getting to know my new friends better and why they are doing a postgraduate degree* (P.10) was an important factor and a realisation that the students making up this particular group would be the ones on whom each could rely for motivation.

With the students becoming involved with each other's personal narratives and in critiquing their writing, a bond started forming between them, moving them from 10 individuals registered for a master's degree to a group working collaboratively within a social setting (Bruffee, 1973, 1987). In addition, clarity on the golden thread, structure and language application was developing assisting the students in translating what they had learned about personal writing to their academic writing.

Using the technique of referencing

"Collaboration encourages students to accept authority of helping one another learn and to acknowledge the authority of other students – their peers – to help them learn themselves" (Bruffee, 1987, p. 87). Taking cognisance of this quote, a group session was held to learn about the APA referencing technique (as a request from the students in the Programme Seminar). Research has highlighted the epistemological value of teaching referencing techniques (see Hendriks & Quinn, 2001). The students had already been issued with a copy of the referencing technique used at the university. Then using a published report on an international study, the students were led through the techniques showing the application of citing in text. Discussion were held about the use of sources, their selection and integration as a means of supporting the argument (see Angelil-Carter, 1995). In addition, through the use of various sources, the students were introduced to other's views and the way in which they share meaning, taking note of the conventions of referencing for acknowledging sources as with a long quote, a short quote as well as acknowledging ideas.

As technical practice, the students worked in pairs citing and referencing a book, an edited book, a chapter in a book, an article in a journal, a conference paper, a website and a newspaper report developing an understanding of the use of referencing. *Even*

though I knew what to do for the referencing, it was good to practice so that Cilla could see where I could use changes as well as small improvements that I didn't know about (P.3). Discussions arose about the use of et al. and ibid, ... like the fact that even in the first use of a long reference, if there are more than 8 authors it gets "et al." anyway (P.3).

It seems that most students felt the exercise worthwhile: *the explanation of utilisation on APA was quite explicit, but I wonder if students will be able to implement those theoretical skills in practice. I still have my concerns (P.3).* These students are very new to the master's programme and it is hoped that with further practice and application, that their referencing skills would develop and that as they progress, they would understand that integrating the ideas from all the research that they read, will assist the students in making meaning in the discipline within which they are working. Of concern to the supervision team is why this was not taught at undergraduate or honours level, particularly as its correct use forms a tool to acknowledge intellectual property rights and avoid plagiarism (see Swales & Feak, 2004).

Table 6.9: Evaluation of Contact Session 2

Excellent	Good	Needs improvement	Not applicable
5	2	-	-

(n=7)

Students' evaluation of the contact session ranged from good to excellent. I have always believed in the value of learning by doing and this was reinforced by the comment that *it was also good to practice and go over the referencing techniques (P.3).* Participant 10, although conversant with referencing techniques explained that *Even though I knew what to do for the referencing it was good to practice [and learn what] I didn't know about. Like the fact that even in the first use of a long reference, if there are more than 8 authors it gets "et al." anyway (P.10).* This session was rather short and conducted early on in the programme, so P.3 voiced his concerns: *The explanation of utilisation on APA was quite explicit, but I wonder if students will be able to implement those theoretical skills in practice (P.3)* and particularly when writing the literature and integrating the sources.

6.3.4 Semester 1: Seminar B

The second seminar, organised by the Faculty, was held during the school holidays in March to ensure that teachers were able to attend. The students attended a range of sessions organised and facilitated by Library Services focusing on accessing relevant sources using electronic databases, making use of inter-library loan, and then were introduced to the application of *RefWorks*, a computer-assisted referencing program.

These sessions were in line with the HEQF'S statement 9E: *Developing advanced information retrieval and processing skills*. Later, the Ethics Committee presented the new Ethics application form to be completed and approved before research can be conducted.

A guest presenter, a well-published qualitative researcher and lecturer, ran a series of workshops on the writing of the research proposal, which was introduced by an interactive lecture presented by me on how to move from personal writing to academic writing. Following a similar format as the evaluation for Seminar A, the table below illustrates student reaction to the sessions designed to assist the student in moving into academic writing and developing their research proposals.

Table 6.10: Evaluation of Faculty Seminar B

Faculty Seminar B	Relevance to topic	Addition of new information	Assistance in understanding of next steps	Increased knowledge of research topic/processes
Moving into academic writing	3.71	3.71	3.43	3.71
Developing a research proposal	3.14	3.14	3.29	3.29
Seminar Average	3.43	3.43	3.36	3.50

Scale: 1=not at all 2=fairly 3=very 4=extremely

Overall Seminar B was rated highly with a 3.50 for increased knowledge of research topic and processes, and 3.43 for relevance to topic and assistance in understanding of next steps. The session on moving into academic writing was rated fairly well by students achieving a 3.71 rating for relevance to topic, addition of new information and increased knowledge of research topic and processes. Again, an interesting feature of this rating by students is that such information is seemingly 'new' to them, an aspect which is of concern as one would assume that the undergrad and honours programme would have taught the students how to write academically.

A further eight sessions, making up Programme Seminar B, were held with the master's students during the support week. The supervision team introduced the students to various aspects of research such as how to write a literature review, conceptual frameworks, research paradigms and research designs which included survey design, case study design and Design Research.

Table 6.11: Plan for Programme Seminar B

CONTENT	Literature Review and Research Design: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to write the literature review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Critique of a review • The conceptual framework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Presentation of frameworks • Paradigms • Research Designs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Survey research *Case Studies *Design Research • Ethical considerations
AIMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To understand how to conduct and write a literature review • To present a variety of conceptual frameworks • To introduce a range of research designs • To discuss ethical considerations
RATIONALE	To ensure a comprehensive and systematic knowledge base in a discipline/field with specialist knowledge in an area at the forefront of the discipline/field or area of professional practice.
HEQF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An ability to undertake a study of the literature and current research in an area of specialisation under supervision. • Mastery of the application of research methods, techniques and technologies appropriate to an area of specialisation.

How to write the literature review

The introduction to this workshop involved a discussion of the purpose of a literature review, and the criteria to follow when developing one. Students were given guidelines on how to source material, to collect resources and validate them, how to read using various reading techniques, the questions that could be asked when reading, what to look for in each of the sources and finally, a technical issue, how to keep track of the sources.

Building on the introductory session in which students discussed the structure of a literature review, I planned to show the students how to go about writing the actual review and as before, decided to follow a hands-on method. I handed out a review of the literature taken from a previous student's research proposal. I asked the students to read through the review taking into account what they had learnt in the course of the workshops on academic writing. Once the students had completed the reading, they highlighted aspects that they felt were good as well as aspects that were not good and needed rethinking and revision. Initially, the students concentrated on lower order concerns identifying problems such as incorrect referencing, too much quoting, no headings and sub-headings, long sentences and one or two spelling mistakes. But, slowly as the discussion progressed, students began to comment on the flow and the logic that unfolded in the review. *First when I read, it was not with [a] critiquing mind but when we*

discussed it at the end and hearing different comments it was like AHA to me. It sort of gave me idea of what the supervisors are looking for (P.9). The students then noticed that the natural linking between paragraphs developed the flow leading to cohesion and subsequently, coherence. *The logic and the chain of how paragraphs interact (P.9)* was illustrated in this particular text. Students were also able to identify that an argument was being developed through various voices, those of the 'experts', which brought in showing various viewpoints not always concurring but refuting previous findings and that the use of transition words was recognised as a valuable tool. This aspect reinforced the contact session on the use of sources and referencing. One comment *was I now have some idea of what compare and contrast studies and grouping together authors who draw similar conclusions mean (P.6).*

Techniques for developing academic writing and used by Harris include thinking aloud which encourages the student to pinpoint higher order concerns such as coherence and argument, as well as lower order concerns such as concord and transcription of his/her work (Harris, 1983). This technique was used in the workshop where students thought out aloud about writing concerns which they then discussed. Such valuable discussion allowed the students to draw on the knowledge gained in previous sessions and apply it to a piece of writing. Harris also uses the technique of modelling, whereby the students are able to use application and techniques seen in someone else's writing and then transfer these to their own. Harris writes that modelling "focuses the observer's attention on processes to be used in the act of writing" (1983, p. 77). It was hoped that modelling a review of the literature would assist the students in writing their own review for the research proposal.

Another aspect that emerged was a discussion in finding the gap in the literature so that there is a need for research. One student said that reading through a model review of the literature *did proof that only if you read wide you can find a gap as in that example (P.9).* Another student felt that *discussing what was good and what was not clarified, what it should look like from a style and methodological point of view [was valuable]. I have never seen an example of a literature review before so it answered a lot of questions for me (P.10).* As practitioners we tend to forget that so much needed at postgraduate level could be new and thus should be 'made visible' by overt teaching. One student still feels that he does not *understand fully what is meant by making your own voice heard (P.6)*, but this is an aspect that would be incorporated into future contact sessions.

Table 6.12: Evaluation of Programme Seminar B: How to write a literature review

Programme Seminar B: How to write a literature review	Valid N	Mean
Relevance to level of study	7	3.9
Relevance for own dissertation	7	3.6
Understanding of suitable approaches to research	7	3.6
Addition of new information	7	3.6
Understanding of next steps in the research process	7	3.6
Increase in knowledge	7	3.7
Overall Average		3.6

Scale: 1=not at all 2=fairly 3=very 4=extremely

The evaluation of the seminar resulted in an overall mean of 3.6, illustrating the relevance and the value of the session. Building on from reviewing the literature, the students were introduced to developing a conceptual framework for their research.

The conceptual framework

The workshop on developing a conceptual framework began with discussing the need for a conceptual framework to provide a lens for the research. Thereafter, the differences between a research paradigm, a theoretical framework and a conceptual framework were discussed.

A member of the supervision team presented the process that she had followed in her doctoral research for the development of her conceptual framework. She discussed the mistakes she had made, the pitfalls that she had encountered during the various rounds of development (as compared to a boxing match) until she was able to create a framework which represented her research and which could be used for plotting her findings. One student reflected that this *presentation clearly open[ed] my mind that we actually are “standing on the giants shoulder”. I now also understand that one needs to read what others say about your topic. There must be some “theory” set up by “expects” in your field, guiding you to draw borders or [a] frame in which you plan your study, from introduction, research question, purpose statement, research design and method. My AHA (a colloquial term for moment of enlightenment) actually came out strongly here (P.9).* Another student said that *the theory behind it was well explained and made one understand how to develop a concise conceptual framework for the research (P.10).*

The theory taught in the first part of the workshop was then applied by two other members of the supervision team who presented the conceptual frameworks used in their doctoral studies. *I like the style of teaching or lecturing wherein you get three different lecturers talking about same things. This makes even the slow learner to absorb the lesson. Keep*

up that unique style (P.2) sums up that firstly, teaching the theory and then applying it to practice within a number of examples facilitates the learning. Another student said that *it was good to see it from different angles and points of view, each presenter added a new perspective* (P.10). This was particularly clear in that the first framework that was presented was one that evolved through a process and many stages of reconsideration, whereas the second one, taken from theory, fitted the research, while the third framework was also one taken from theory but adapted at the end of the research to ensure a better fit. *I think this is my AHA moment. The explanations gave me a global idea of what the conceptual framework can do to guide my study and how to arrive at a conceptual framework* (P.5). A final comment came from a student who said that *I actually enjoyed all three frameworks. It was good that you gave us various examples. It was good to see the arguments development until each one come up with their own framework* (P.9).

Although some students said that *the lesson on conceptual framework[s] was good and interesting and that we understood it the time it was taught, now I am struggling again but I hope I will make it since I am busy reading* (P.2). One other student said *I still need more help, I think. I get the picture but then it is still difficult for me to come up with my own conceptual framework for my research* (P.6) and then added that *the presentation took me from wilderness to somewhere closer to home but I still have some work to do. I can say I now have a foundation on which to build my theoretical framework* (P.6).

In conclusion, I think it is important that the theory was underpinned by practical examples given by members of the supervision team and drawn from their own research. A final comment by Participant 8 acknowledges the work done not only from a theoretical perspective but also an affective one: *It is good that I am a student at CEA ... the researchers gave me courage that nothing is impossible, if they have achieved, I can also achieve* (P.8).

Table 6.13: Evaluation of Programme Seminar B: Developing a conceptual framework

Programme Seminar B: Developing a conceptual framework with presentation of three frameworks	Valid N	Mean
Relevance to level of study	7	3.9
Relevance for own dissertation	7	3.7
Understanding of suitable approaches to research	7	3.4
Addition of new information	7	3.7
Understanding of next steps in the research process	7	3.6
Increase in knowledge	7	3.9
Overall Average		3.7

Scale: 1=not at all 2=fairly 3=very 4=extremely

This was considered a valuable session by the students (3.7). Again, the student response to the value and relevance of this session to their study as well as an increase in their knowledge was rated highly (3.9). The lower mean rating of 3.4 may illustrate the students' concern with their understanding of these varied approaches to research which would manifest in the development of conceptual framework for their own research.

The following session introduced the students to research paradigms and three particular research designs, again beginning with the theory and then seeing it applied in practice through the presentation of doctoral studies.

Research paradigms and designs

Paradigms (a term coined by Thomas Kuhn in the 1960s) are referred to by various authors as beliefs that guide action (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), a basic set of beliefs (Creswell, 2003) or a worldview (Henning et al., 2004). The supervision team introduced the students to research paradigms by discussing concepts such as ontology, epistemology and methodology showing the inter-relatedness of each. These three concepts were then discussed within various paradigms which may be appropriate lenses for the students' own research.

Responses to this session were varied: *It was well presented but more presentations will do for me* (P.1) and *I now know the types of paradigms and that different people belong to or believe in different paradigms* (P.7). However, these initial comments illustrate that this aspect was a difficult one to grasp and would need further reading and investigating. One student seemed to *understand that paradigms have something to do with how one view[s] the world (reality)* (P.6). He said that *as someone who is interested in quantitative study, I learned that my approach will be a positivist one, that there is only one reality, which is why the results from such a study are generalisable* (P.6). Another said: *I am a quantitative researcher. I am more of a positivist. After the presentation of research paradigm[s], I was able to distinguish between a positivist and a constructivist [paradigm]* (P.8).

However, it seems that understanding paradigms and the concepts of ontology, epistemology and methodology are difficult ones as students felt that they *would appreciate another presentation on this aspect* (P.9) or indeed engage in more discussion and even writing to come to a better understanding of one's ontology. Other comments illustrated that students needed further explanations: *I am not 100% clear with paradigms. I have been exposed to paradigms a number of times, but I could not understand them to the extent that when somebody speaks of them I then developed a negative attitude* (P.2).

Henning (2004, pp. 15-16) in reporting on her teaching of this aspect used another approach as her students too seemed to be confused about the concepts of ontology, epistemology and axiology. Instead, Henning, after discussing the background on the students' research topics, asked the students to identify what concerned them the most about their subject. She then asked them to write down the purpose of their study in a statement beginning with *The purpose of my study is to ...* followed by a strong verb such as *test, predict, understand, construct, improve, change*. By deconstructing the problem statements and focusing on the verbs, students were shown that verbs such as *test* and *predict* led towards situating their study within the positive paradigm, while verbs such as *understand* and *construct* identified the constructivist paradigm as being most appropriate. Finally, by using verbs such as *improve* and *change*, suggest that the study would fall within the critical paradigm.

In using this approach, Henning worked “retroductively” (2004, p. 16) and here students were thus able to discover for themselves a framework which reflected their own understandings. Perhaps this is a good approach to adopt when teaching the concept of paradigms although Henning did admit that ultimately the various paradigms would need to be explained.

Table 6.14: Evaluation of Programme Seminar B: Introduction to paradigms

Programme Seminar B: Introduction to paradigms	Valid N	Mean
Relevance to level of study	7	4.0
Relevance for own dissertation	7	3.9
Understanding of suitable approaches to research	7	3.4
Addition of new information	7	3.6
Understanding of next steps in the research process	7	3.3
Increase in knowledge	7	3.7
Overall Average		3.6

Scale: 1=not at all 2=fairly 3=very 4=extremely

In the evaluation of the session on paradigms, relevance to level of study was rated a high 4.0 and relevance for own dissertation 3.9. Understanding of suitable approaches to research, a lower 3.4, illustrates the students' need for further reading and perhaps discussion to develop a better understanding of epistemologies, ontologies and axiologies. Such a topic is a difficult one to fully understand at the beginning of one's research, and so it seems that paradigms would be a topic for further discussion during the course of the students' studies until some kind of understanding emerged.

Once students seemed to have some grasp about paradigms – tentative though it was – various designs such as survey design, case studies and Design Research, were

introduced to them by members of the supervision team who had used these particular designs in their own doctoral research eliciting a response: *The presentations were professional; The presentations were well done and interwoven such that one could see a complete picture of approaches to different designs* (P.9).

Survey design

The presentation on survey design initially explained the elements of this design to the students and then presenting the research design used for the Progress in International Study (PIRLS) of 2006 conducted in South Africa by the Centre for Evaluation and Assessment (CEA) at the University of Pretoria.

The students commented that this was the most interesting presentation, as they *understood the presentation* (P1). One student was pleased that he *got first-hand information on PIRLS 2006 because it was researched and analysed at the Centre for Evaluation and Assessment* (P.8). Another commented that most probably, *I will also be using PIRLS 2006 in my research, and that is something that I have to understand very well. I am confident and think I can use it [the design] properly and correctly* (P.1).

However, there is always a student or two for whom the design is not really appropriate: *With this one, I did not understand, may be is because my focus was more on case study. If possible, I need more exposure to this* (P.2). Or in this student's case, did not as yet have full understanding explaining that she was *doing a second hand [secondary] analysis of PIRLS* (P.10).

Table 6.15: Evaluation of Programme Seminar B: Introduction to Survey research

Programme Seminar B: Introduction to research designs: Survey research	Valid N	Mean
Relevance to level of study	7	3.9
Relevance for own dissertation	7	3.1
Understanding of suitable approaches to research	7	3.9
Addition of new information	7	3.4
Understanding of next steps in the research process	7	3.3
Increase in knowledge	7	3.6
Overall Average		3.5

Scale: 1=not at all 2=fairly 3=very 4=extremely

Students enjoyed this presentation giving it an overall average rating of 3.5. It seems that as this research design was used in reporting on an international study, PIRLS 2006, students were very aware of its relevance to the level of study (3.9). Students did seem to be aware of developing an understanding particularly in how important it is to develop

suitable approaches to research (3.9). However, as survey research would probably only be used by a few master's students if any, the rating for relevance for own dissertation was a lower 3.1.

What emerged from the comments evaluating this session of survey design was that applying the design to completed research, illustrating how the design was used in a study moves towards a deep learning experience (Henning, 2002).

Case study design

Another member of the supervision team, who used this design in her doctoral study, firstly presented the theory behind case study design then took the students through the features of case studies, the types of case study designs, and then discussed sampling and data collection. She also touched on the strengths and the limitations of using such a research design. One student was pleased that *the advantages of the [case study] research design were also made known to the students* (P.6) as this then gave credence for using this type of research design.

The doctoral study was then presented to the students by firstly highlighting the research questions which then informed the methodology. Using the PIRLS 2006 data drawn from learner achievement, principal and teacher questionnaires, this team member illustrated how she developed four case studies which investigated schooling conditions and practices of teaching which may have an effect on the achievement of the reading literacy of Grade 4 pupils.

In relating research design to actual research facilitates learning as most students said that they *understood this very well* (P.2). In addition, seeing a research design applied in authentic situations creates deep learning (Henning, 2002), which resulted in comments such as *the presentation was clear, she made it look like this is the easiest research design. The way she explained the different kinds of case studies was remarkable but I suppose presenting her own work made it easier for students to follow* (P.7).

Perhaps because the case study drew from the PIRLS 2006 results, students *enjoyed the presentation* (P.1) and said that they were *sure going to apply what [they] have learnt. It was very good for [them]* (P.2).

Table 6.16: Programme Seminar B: Introduction to Case studies

Programme Seminar B: Introduction to research designs: Case studies	Valid N	Mean
Relevance to level of study	7	3.4
Relevance for own dissertation	7	3.3
Understanding of suitable approaches to research	7	3.6
Addition of new information	7	3.6
Understanding of next steps in the research process	7	3.4
Increase in knowledge	7	3.6
Overall Average		3.5

Scale: 1=not at all 2=fairly 3=very 4=extremely

The overall average for this session was 3.5. Three factors were rated 3.6: understanding of suitable approaches to research, addition of new information and increase in knowledge. What does arise from this rating is the lower rating of 3.3 (relevance for own dissertation) and 3.4 (relevance to level of study). The previously reported study, a quantitative survey design on PIRLS 2006 was possibly overshadowed by the qualitative case study, also reporting on PIRLS 2006.

Design Research

Design Research, a design not familiar to the students, was presented by a third member of the supervision team, who again used this design in her doctoral study. This presenter followed the same approach as the other two presenters, linking the theory to the application in her research. There were mixed reviews from the student with one saying *even though it looked complicated, and unfamiliar, the presenter made it look like one of the best approaches to research* (P.1).

It is interesting that the students picked up that all presenters were passionate about the design that they felt most appropriate for their studies and perhaps this gave the students an idea of how finding the design for the research which links to the problem and the research question, will be most appropriate in answering the research questions (see Krathwohl, 1998).

To sum up, this series of presentations was to give the students some idea of three research designs and show them how these were applied in three different studies. At this early stage, I think that the students are still a little confused as can be seen from this comment: *I need another lecture on this, the reason being that I am still unstable with regards of the research approach. I sometimes think of doing quantitative research since the previous dissertation was a qualitative one* (P.2). However, with time and the

development of the problem statement and research questions, clarity will come to this student when he realises that the methodology is determined by these sections.

After the sessions, it was felt that once the students get down to reading more about research designs and methodology, and when they have successfully written their problem statements and developed research questions, only then will the appropriate design and methodology become apparent. To remind the students of the need to develop coherence between all parts of their research, reference was made to Krathwohl's chain of reasoning (1998) which should guide them through the process of writing their research proposal from the background information and rationale to the completion of the proposal.

Table 6.17: Evaluation of Programme Seminar B: Introduction to Design Research

Programme Seminar B: Introduction to research designs: Design Research	Valid N	Mean
Relevance to level of study	7	3.7
Relevance for own dissertation	7	3.3
Understanding of suitable approaches to research	7	3.6
Addition of new information	7	3.7
Understanding of next steps in the research process	7	3.6
Increase in knowledge	7	3.9
Overall Average		3.6

Scale: 1=not at all 2=fairly 3=very 4=extremely

As this research design is fairly new and not as yet widely reported in methodology textbooks, students could acknowledge that the session had increased their knowledge (3.9); however, they were not too sure if it was a design that they would use, rating relevance for own dissertation 3.3, seeing it as a rather complicated design which would require an extended time period. In addition, Design Research may well be too complex and theoretically challenging for master's students.

In bringing students in to the university for an extended period during their school holidays, it was vital to ensure that they leave with valuable learning that would support them in their writing. Comments such as *the most informative seminar I have attended thus far* (P.4), *the seminars were fruitful and energy draining. I think our centre is the best because it provided us with thorough knowledge of what should be done when writing a research* (P.8) provides some evidence of the value. However, in planning the sessions, recognition was given to the manner in which the sessions were conducted as well as the ability of the presenters in terms of their content knowledge in addition to their pedagogical content knowledge: *the academic level of the lecturers* a facet that was

acknowledged by the students: *all highly qualified and well informed* (P.2),. This characteristic is reiterated in the comments *the warmth, kindness and professionalism displayed by the team are of high standard coupled with the statement that the support that you gave and continue giving us is immeasurable* (P.6).

On the affective side, during the sessions I attempted to develop relationships with and between students, myself, the presenters and the supervision team based on an interplay of empathy, respect, fairness, responsibility and openness (see Austin, 2010). During the sessions, students were able to interact informally with both their peers and the presenters/supervision team over *tea and snacks, [which] shows you care for us* (P.2). But more important than feeding the ‘inner man’, students revealed that *the time you give to us to discuss our ideas or even ask questions outside class is appreciated* (P.4). *It seems that the students felt that the support and approach towards [them] illustrates that love and care [is] demonstrated* (P.2) and that they felt *very privileged to be part of the group* (P.6) especially as they realised the team’s *desire to see us succeed* (P.4). This student completed his reflection with the exclamation: *You Really Care!!!* (P.4)

I am aware that a once-off seminar does not allow adequate time to develop competent academic research writing, a fact that was identified by the student who said *sessions like this one should be done regularly so that we can be equipped with required researching skills* (P.8). This is the reason for four Programme Seminars and eight contact sessions throughout the academic year, taking a developmental approach to student learning while tapping into different approaches to the teaching of writing taking cognisance of the students’ needs (see Ivanič, 2004).

6.3.5 Semester 1: Contact Session 3

Table 6.18: Plan for Contact Session 3

CONTENT	Literature review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literature review checklist and conceptual framework presentation • Introduction to the use of a research proposal template
AIMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To critique the literature review using a critique sheet • To align literature review with conceptual framework presentations • To understand what is required when writing a research proposal
RATIONALE	Develop awareness of what constitutes a good literature review Develop evaluation skills both for peer review and self-review Develop awareness of what comprise a research proposal
LEARNING ACTIVITIES	Presentation of Conceptual Framework by students Discussion of the components of the research proposal.
HEQF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An ability to undertake a study of the literature and current research in an area of specialisation under supervision. • An ability to rigorously critique and evaluate current research and participate in scholarly debates in an area of specialization. • A capacity to critically evaluate own and others’ work with justification

This late afternoon contact session held on a Friday involved just the students and me. The focus of this contact session shifted from the supervision team presentations to student presentations to ensure that the theories of learning, seen as appropriate for the teaching of adults, include Dewey's ideas of discovery learning which are connected with constructivist theories of learning (Brookfield, 1995).

Student presentation of problem statements, aim and research question and literature framework

Each student was asked to present their problem statements, research questions and initial literature framework to the group. They were asked to talk it through using a white board as a visual aid. The thinking behind this strategy was that as teachers themselves, the students could 'teach' the others in the group and using the white board could map out their research problem and then their literature framework. Questions from their peers could then pinpoint aspects, which need clarification and explanation, providing a 'thinking' platform for both the presenter and the audience.

To assist the students and direct their reading, a critique guideline sheet was handed out and the students were asked to complete a form for each of the students whose work was being presented. These completed forms were then handed to the presenter as feedback to consider in the revision process.

Table 6.19: Student critique guideline sheet

ASPECT	YES	NO	COMMENT
PROBLEM STATEMENT			
Have the national, regional and local contexts in which the research will take place been stated and described?			
Has the problem been clearly identified?			
RATIONALE			
Based on the problem statement, why is the proposed research important?			
RESEARCH QUESTIONS			
Are the research questions linked to the problem statement and the aims of the research?			
LITERATURE REVIEW			
Have themes been identified?			
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK			
Will the research use a particular theory or model? What is it?			
Does this seem appropriate for the research?			

When asked about this session, one student said that *this was a pleasant experience as I was given a chance to explain my research to my colleagues and supervisors. I think at*

some stage we all need the skills and experience to stand up boldly and defend our topic [while] thinking in front of a multitude (P.3). In talking about their research and the rationale for conducting it, the students needed to thoroughly understand the problem and convey that coherently to the audience and then validate the reason for conducting it – in truth “defend” their research. One student who was still a little uncertain about her direction said *the presentation was very much beneficial. The inputs by fellow students helped me in knowing that what I wanted to do was in line with what is needed* (P.9), giving her greater clarity. This point was further emphasised with this particular student that *while I was unpacking it [the problem] I realised that it is really a problem which is affecting the learners’ performance* (P.9), resulting in an ‘AHA’ moment for her. Another said that having to explain his research and then answer searching questions about it, was really of value. *I learned so many things, for example, they (the students) advised me to narrow my research and I can now see that mine was too broad. I need to be specific* (P.2).

At times, students get caught up in their own writing and found it difficult to distance themselves. However, students discovered that talking to other students about their research gave them the opportunity to discuss their work as *verbalising my problem statement has made me realise that I am on the right track and the review from other students has helped me to refine it [problem statement]* (P.6). In addition, another student felt that this type of session was a two-way street as it *gave me the opportunity to network and to hear the different approaches to research that the others are using and I even found that I could help one of them out with some articles I have* (P.10).

In a situation where a group has worked together for some time, they become comfortable with each other and a community of practice began to develop: *Networking with a Venda-speaking person, getting feedback on how my research comes across as well as suggestions was very valuable* (this student was investigating the validity of the translation of a reading instrument into Tshivenda). *I now know exactly what to do but I’m just not ready to write yet* (P.10). It was hoped that while listening to the presentations, members of the group would identify aspects and be eager to begin a conversation to discuss and debate issues which arise, offering constructive criticism – *the criticisms that I received were very constructive as I was able to identify some loopholes in my research* (P.3). Not everyone felt equipped to enter into the conversation and a more reticent student commented that *corrections and advise which were given by other students were courageous* (P.9). It is hoped that as this community of practice develops, that students situated on the periphery will move to join in the conversation (Wenger, 1998).

Being exposed to other students' work is seen as beneficial, as *although I had that knowledge, I have improved* (P.2). It seems that students when they see and hear what other students are doing with their research are suddenly confronted with the realisation of the quality of their work either from the point that it needs improvement or that they are in fact, in line with what is expected. *Many students in our group know what they are doing. The presentations were good in such a way that I learnt many things* (P.9). Even if the presentations are not within the same field, the students found listening to the presentations useful: *most of our research proposals are somehow linked so listening to somebody's presentation was enriching* (P.9). Most importantly, *understanding what other colleagues are doing and learning from their mistakes is also gratifying* (P.3) as it seems that *it is easier to recognise mistakes when they are at a distance* (P.3). Again, the aspect of peer review came into play, developing the ability to give constructive feedback which in turn will assist the students in critiquing their own work: *With reflexivity, one can then correct or avoid similar mistakes* (P.3). However, of importance, is the opportunity to engage in conversations, one as the author and one as the reviewer and as such develop identity particularly as "dialogue is central to this kind of pedagogical text and identity work" (Kamler & Thomson, 2004, p.206).

One area of postgraduate study for which students need to be prepared, is presenting their research both in the proposal defence and later at student conferences, *so listening to other presentations was also a pleasurable experience as I learnt how presentations can be made and in the process of listening to others, I gained presentation skills* (P.3). However, another aspect occurred when one student found [she] *was not the first one to present. When I listened to the first three presenters, I was able to ask questions and by doing that, I was clearing up my own confusion* (P.1). The idea of collaboration and working as a community is a valuable experience for student learning, as Wenger explains that communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly (Wenger, 1998). However, within this community, the practice could involve aspects such as problem solving, requesting and receiving information, seeking experience, reusing or sharing assets or resources, discussing developments, mapping knowledge and identifying gaps (Wenger, 1998). How the community worked within this session is further illustrated by a student, who commented that *in another way they helped me with [my] framework. They explained their own frameworks and that was very helpful to me, and it was an eye opener. It was very helpful* (P.1).

By this stage, the students were wanting some idea of the structure of the proposal and so, at the end of the session, the proposal template, which would guide the writing of their

own research proposal, was introduced to them. Wray and Lewis, (1997) (cited in Hyland, 2007) suggest the use of writing frames to scaffold and prompt student writing. The use of a template enables the student to start, connect and develop their texts appropriately while concentrating on what they want to say. It also provides a structure for writing, helps writers envisage what is needed particularly with that blank piece of paper or computer screen and assists in developing confidence and competence (see also Singh, 2011).

Discussion of the use of the proposal template

The students were given a hard copy of the research proposal template (an electronic copy had previously been emailed – see Appendix N) that was designed for use in the writing of the research proposals. Drawing from a number of books outlining the writing of postgraduate research (Bolker, 1998; Cryer, 2006; Mouton, 2001; Trafford & Leshem, 2010), a template was designed and then critiqued by the supervision team ensuring that the template ensured adherence to relevant sections; for example, statement of the problem, rationale for conducting the research, research question/s, an initial review of the literature, research design and methodology, ethical considerations as well as expected timelines and an initial reference list. Krathwohl's chain of reasoning underpinned this design to ensure consistency throughout the proposal (1998).

Some students were able to work through this electronic template without any explanation *I practised the template using my research proposal [so that] by the time we discussed the template in class, I had already started with my proposal and the template helped me through the writing* (P.9). However, a student, perhaps speaking for many of the students, said *I went through the template on my own before I came to the session and I could not understand the whole template* (P.1).

We worked as a group looking firstly at the whole template understanding that the *use of the template made us focus on the presentation*. Each section and its requirements, aided with a dialogue text box, were discussed in depth with the students asking questions and contributing to the discussion so that they *now understand the structure and how to explain the chapters of the proposal* (P.1). It seems that once the students were able to understand the template, it *helped to re-organise [the] research proposal* (P.2). Another student commented *that the structure of the template we discussed in class helped me to develop and pursue my research proposal* (P.9), illustrating the developing confidence in moving forward with the conceptualising of their proposed research and getting it written down in the research proposal.

A criticism was levelled at the supervision team about when the template was given to the students to use and a student said *I think it should, however have been discussed such that students could have the same understanding from the onset* (P.3). This valid censure will be taken into consideration with future students who perhaps need to see the whole picture at the beginning of the process, a sentiment echoed in Singh's research (2011) where it was found that even after workshops and consultations with supervisors "students still lacked the confidence to commence with their studies" (Barton et al., 2000, p. 1023).

Table 6.20: Evaluation of Contact Session 3

Excellent	Good	Needs improvement	Not applicable
4	4	-	-

(n=8)

My overall feeling of what was experienced in this session was that students were not only beginning to take ownership of their learning, but they were also developing the ability to peer review and critique which *resulted in constructive criticisms that redirected my research. When one of the students explained to me that my conceptual framework is the National Policy on Assessment and Qualification, he also drew a playground to illustrate his point. That improved my understanding of a conceptual framework better* (P.2). Working collaboratively in an open and friendly environment has been valuable as *I have learnt that group learning and discussion is [as] beneficial [as] individual learning. Being given the opportunity to explain to the next person your research* (P.9), assisted many students in clarifying what they wanted to do and then in turn, highlighted aspects that require attention and gaps that needed to be filled. Finally, the realisation that the audience is important was brought home to students: *When I write on my own, I think that the reader will automatically get the picture that I have on the research, but that is not quiet true. Every little detail is important for me to write down and explain it* (P.1).

The research proposal template, apart from being slightly prescriptive, would give the students some basic guidelines with what was required in writing a research proposal which would encapsulate the requirements and prove to be a blueprint for the proposed research. As previously discussed, the research proposal is the gatekeeper to the second phase of research and is reviewed by critical researchers in conjunction with the research proposal defence (Faculty of Education, 2010).

As a last comment, I drew on a quote by Maxwell Perkins, 1884-1947 pleading with the students to *"just get it down on paper, and then we'll see what to do about it"*.

6.3.6 Semester 1: Contact Session 4

Table 6.21: Plan for Contact Session 4

CONTENT	Preliminary research design and methods: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and methods checklist • Use of chain of reasoning
AIMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To critique methodology section of research proposal • To check alignment with problem, rationale, research questions and aim
RATIONALE	Develop awareness of the chain of reasoning to inform the study
LEARNING ACTIVITIES	Peer critique and evaluation of research proposal thus far
HEQF	Mastery of the application of research methods, techniques and technologies appropriate to an area of specialisation; A capacity to critically evaluate own and others' work with justification.

As a community of practice was developing nicely and I felt that the students were beginning to see the importance of critique, I planned for them to work with the research proposal during this final session of the semester. Research has shown that if students have an arena to share research experiences by critiquing each other's work, in the process they will develop an awareness of evaluating texts leading to the revision and improvement of their own texts (Dysthe et al., 2006).

Peer review

This session was all about peer review of the research proposal to date. Students were asked to consider the feedback 'sandwich' offering feedback in three parts: the good news, the bad news and the encouraging news. By focusing on the strengths, the reviewer should make a general positive statement, employ descriptive feedback, refer to specific parts of the writing for praise, identify one effective idea but try not to undercut praise. In discussing negatives, reviewers were reminded to limit the amount of negative feedback, focus on not more than three critical ideals and gloss over surface errors or low order concerns. The encouraging news should focus on engaging and interacting with the student who maintains ownership of the text (Paxton, 1995). Discussion could include questioning for clarity, a general discussion or even suggestions for improvement.

In the following session, the comments given by various students are used to describe the peer review session, how they felt during the session and then, when they had time to think about it, reflect how they felt about the whole experience.

What was the brief for this session?

During our contact session, each student had to read through a colleague's proposal and evaluate it. Thereafter, the evaluator and the evaluatee had a one-on-one where feedback was given to the evaluatee (P.3).

What was your reaction to evaluating someone else's work?

The peer review session came as a surprise. I was not expecting to critically review other students' work. I must admit that it was terrifying to give feedback. I was nervous. I was engrossed by the fear of the unknown. I was hoping that the situation would not degenerate and become personal and perhaps explosive. One is never sure of the type of reaction that one will experience, because people are different and as a result react differently in different situations (P.4)

How did you feel about giving feedback?

Giving feedback made me nervous, as I did not know how the peer would receive it. When the time came to report my review, it turned out to be not stressful as the peer was so positive about the suggestions (P.6).

Giving feedback was a good experience, even though at first I was worried as to whether the evaluatee would take my feedback as positive criticism or s/he would take it personal and be angry with me (P.3)

How did the person to whom you were giving feedback react?

It took some time, however for the other student to realise that the feedback intention was not to unduly bring her down. Eventually, my fears were allayed. Consequently, the session went extremely well (P.4).

The response that I received [to my feedback] was overwhelmingly welcoming and that allowed me to give my all to the report (P.3).

What did you gain by reading someone else's writing?

I enjoyed reading my peer's research proposal. I learnt a number of things while reading the proposal. When I read the research proposal, my understanding on the development of conceptual framework was improved. I can now develop mine without any problem (P.2).

The most satisfying experience was when both the other student and I agreed on a number of areas that needed improvements. I hope to have contributed positively to the other person's academic growth (P.4).

Reading through someone else's proposal made me realise mistakes that I made in my own work. It was a great learning experience. I however wish that I was critiquing a proposal more relevant to my own topic. I think I would understand it much easier and could have given a better input (P.3).

How did you feel about receiving feedback?

The way my proposal was criticised was constructive and developmental. The mistakes that were picked up are genuine and accurate. My evaluator also gave me some advises on how to improve my proposal (P.3).

The comments given by my peer was also constructive and developmental. My peer revealed things I was not aware of (P.2).

Receiving feedback was an easier task as I was ready to learn from the peer that reviewed my work and I had realised that I was way behind others in terms of following the research template and making my ideas clearer to the reader. I accepted the criticism and they were positive as such they really helped to give me direction (P.6).

Although I got only one student giving me feedback, I appreciate the honesty with which it was presented. I definitely need to improve on technical areas (P.4).

What lessons did you learn from giving and getting feedback?

The contact session was developmental on my side. There are a number of things I learnt during the session: I came to learn how to write literature review. My literature review was full of definitions, but the one I read was full of the voices of other authors on the subject the author was researching. This opened my eyes to do a better job in the next research proposal. I also learnt how to write a conceptual or theoretical framework (P.2).

Other students' mistakes provide an opportunity for me to learn not to make the same mistake(s) in future. From now on, I will focus on ensuring that my paragraphs have one idea and one idea only and separating one paragraph from the other (P.4).

Firstly, when my work was peer reviewed, I came to learn that I need to give myself time to edit my work before submission even though I am pressurised. There were mistakes that I should have seen had I given myself time to edit my work. Mistakes such as typing errors, incomplete sentences were common in my writing. The peer review process was an eye opener for me to put my things in order before I can submit my work (P.2).

The interaction also trained me to learn to be criticised as accepting criticism is a skill that every researcher must develop (P.3).

The critical feedback session gave me a chance to see how other people do their writing. Reading another person's work gives one an opportunity to evaluate one's understanding of how research should be done (P.6).

The comment on my research timeline was also positive. This gave me confidence and courage to tackle the big task ahead of me. This comment revived my strength and confidence and I am optimistic that I will write a better research report within a stipulated time although I am still struggling to put my house in order (P.2).

What is your overall reaction to the session?

I think all of us students were open for some criticism as we knew it can only be for the best. It really brought out the best in me as I immediately felt so motivated to do my best. To tell the truth, two weeks before the session I was feeling lost and confused because I was not sure of the direction that I was taking (in as far as the topic is concerned). As such I had not done much in terms of reading, but after seeing my colleagues' work I realised that I needed to start reading and writing. That very night I started writing using my supervisor's comments on the draft that I had sent to her that week (P.6).

The session gave me a bigger picture on how other people think and probably how much time they dedicate for their studies. While some show enthusiasm, others I think do not really seem to take the time or put considerable efforts into their studies. It is rather counter-productive in view of the efforts the centre and Cilla in particular put in each session, for the student's benefit (P.6).

What suggestions can you offer?

I think having more interactive exercises will make the group even more coherent and cohesive as we begin to understand one another and share some skills, ideas and knowledge (P.3).

I would like to suggest that this kind of activity (peer review) be continuously done so that we benefit from each other. I hope the more we correct one another, the more our research proposal will be better (P.2).

And a final evaluation and comment: *Overall, I think the session helped to refuel my almost empty tank and I am grateful for that (P.6).*

Table 6.22: Evaluation of Contact Session 4

Excellent	Good	Needs improvement	Not applicable
2	5	-	-

(n=7)

In comparison to the student comments reported on earlier in this chapter, these comments show a developing maturity of students who are aware that initially they were novice researchers and not well-equipped enough to undertake the postgraduate journey alone. However, their comments in this section have illustrated how they perceive the sessions particularly drawing on the idea of the value of being with others, drawing from their experience and expertise and not taking umbrage to positive criticism of their writing.

Many aspects of value arose in these sessions which would feed into the development of the students' writing. Learning to be critical of what is read is vital and this practice is one which students could use in critiquing their own work. Reading other's work also gives the students a model of what could be done not only in content but in how the text is written: "*full of the voices of other authors on the subject*" where meaning is made and yet differing voices are identified.

The value of feedback or feed forward has been alluded to in the review of the literature but student reaction to the sessions and interactions with the supervision team and the academic research writing practitioner has confirmed that *the feedback provided by you, our lecturer is beneficial. This motivates and encourages me to see that you are very concerned about our success in this programme (P.2)*. In addition, working as a group reinforces the idea of a community where students learn with and from others. Of most importance, is the realisation of the value of the group and what benefit that brings to the students: *I must commend the team spirit that is being nurtured within the group (P.3)*.

At the end of the first semester and after two Faculty Seminars, two Programme Seminars and four contact sessions, students were requested to submit their initial proposal for assessment.

6.4 ASSESSMENT OF INITIAL PROPOSALS

The initial research proposals submitted by students had been written developmentally during the course of the first semester and even though not in a final state, were required to be submitted for evaluation.

Table 6.23: Assessment of research proposals

ASSESSMENT OF RESEARCH PROPOSALS						
Participant	Application Proposals			Initial Proposals		
	n=7			n=10		
	Assessor 1 %	Assessor 2 %	Ave %	Assessor 1 %	Assessor 2 %	Ave %
P.1	12	17	14.5	9	15	12
P.2	15	17	16	13	17	15
P.3	-	-	-	17	19	18
P.4	29	27	28	14	16	15
P.5	14	16	15	13	21	17
P.6	23	27	25	13	19	16
P.7	-	-	-	14	16	15
P.8	-	-	-	9	9	9
P.9	18	20	19	0	0	0
P.10	11	12	11.5	15	15	15
MEAN	17.4	19.4	18.4	11.7	14.7	13.2

Legend: did not submit a proposal

When compared with the results from the students' application research proposals, it would seem that some students had regressed; for example, P4 was given a score of 28% on application proposal and only 14% on the initial proposal and P.6 was awarded 16% for the initial proposal, in comparison to 25% for the application proposal.

Note must be made at this point that many of the students, after discussion with the supervisors and the supervision team, were taken right back to re-conceptualising their studies and in some cases, students changed their focus and direction to align their studies with research which is being undertaken in the CEA or to become part of an existing research project such as secondary analyses on PIRLS 2006 or SACMEQ II and III. This could be an explanation for the lower scores; however, the intervention was designed as developmental and incremental and at this stage, at the end of the first semester, most students had only completed the initial sections of the proposal and were still to write and develop the research methodology sections, once the initial sections were secure.

After the last contact session of the semester and the assessment of the initial proposals, progress reports were drafted. These progress reports (Appendix H), submitted to the Department, were to give some indication of what the student had done and achieved during the course of the semester.

Table 6.24: Student progress: Semester 1

STUDENT PROGRESS: SEMESTER 1		ASSESSMENT
P.1	Very simple first draft <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer review – Contact session 13.05.11 • Meeting with co-supervisor and given feedback • Feedback from ARW practitioner 	13%
P.2	Reasonable first draft after problems with cutting and pasting from previous master's research project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer review – Contact session 13.05.11 • Request for previous master's research report (sent in) 	15%
P.3	Comprehensive first draft <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion with supervisor and co-supervisor • Change of co-supervisor 	18%
P.4	Reasonable first draft <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer review – Contact session 13.05.11 • Meeting with co-supervisor and feedback • Discussion with supervisor and co-supervisor • Feedback from ARW practitioner on first sections 	15%
P.5	Reasonable first draft <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer review – Contact session 13.05.11 (participated in only) • Meeting with co-supervisor • Discussion with supervisor and co-supervisor 	17%
P.6	Sketchy first draft <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer review – Contact session 13.05.11 • Meeting with co-supervisor and feedback • Feedback from ARW practitioner on first sections 	16%
P.7	De-registered after submission of initial draft	15%
P.8	Sketchy first draft <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting with supervisor and co-supervisor • Peer review – Contact session 13.05.11 • Feedback from ARW practitioner 	9%
P.9	No draft at present <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no response to communication 	0%
P.10	Comprehensive first draft <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer review – Contact session 13.05.11 • Meeting with co-supervisor feedback • Discussion with supervisor and co-supervisor • Feedback from ARW practitioner 	15%

These progress reports also gave some indication of the work that lay ahead and what needed to inform the design and development of Prototype 2 to be put in place for Semester 2, particularly if the students were to defend their proposals successfully during November.

6.5 EVALUATION OF PROTOTYPE 1

The intervention was implemented within an academic year with its prime aim being to introduce the students to their chosen field of study within which they would identify a problem for research and then write a research proposal for defence. Written as one simple sentence, this aim seems easy to achieve; however, given the students entering

the programme, even though they had gone through a selection process, their prior learning seemed to be in question which meant that the intervention had to support the students in ensuring that they were equipped for working at master's level; hence the need for designing and developing an academic research writing intervention.

Evaluation of Prototype 1, the intervention implemented in Semester 1, comprised firstly expert review from two reviewers and then a reflection of the implementation of the intervention. Both these evaluations would feed into the design of the second prototype to be implemented in Semester 2.

6.5.1 Expert Review of the Academic Research Writing Intervention

Two academics, involved in student writing, academic writing, postgraduate education and supervision in education, and research at postgraduate level, were invited to review Prototype 1 taking into account the Higher Education Qualification Framework (see Chapter 6, Table 6.3) and the design of the prototypes and offer critical feedback (see Appendix M).

Expert Reviewer 1

Expert Reviewer 1, an academic and researcher, felt that during Seminar A, organised by the Faculty, there was an over-emphasis on information retrieval skills which was repeated in a later seminar. Although the introduction to reading and writing, particularly academic writing was seen as valuable, a query was raised about the need, at this stage, for a session on presentation skills. It was suggested that time could have been better utilised in introducing the students to their various departments, and with this particular cohort, sharing the goals, aims and research foci of the centre in which this master's programme is situated. This introduction would give the students a clearer idea of what research in academia entails and how they could possibly dovetail their research with that of the centre. The Programme Seminar attempted to do this but within a limited period of an hour.

The reviewer critiqued the content of the first contact session by inquiring whether rushing into writing a research proposal was not perhaps "jumping the gun". She believes that the students should firstly be introduced to the content within their fields of proposed research by working through cutting edge literature to develop their content knowledge, particularly if their honours degree had been completed within another field of study. Drawing on her experience as a supervisor, Expert Reviewer 1 said she finds that generally, students cannot write critically about their field as they have very little idea of what it is really about,

thus emphasising the need to develop a foundation within the field of research through in-depth reading.

The contact session on personal narrative writing was seen as constructive in developing writing but she felt that it should be linked to a literature-based writing task that illustrates the same principles from an academic writing perspective. In addition, the reviewer felt that discussion on and practice in what constitutes a sound academic argument was an omission from the intervention. She justifies this by referring to her own students whom she says do not know how to write from an empirical basis and thus end up making sweeping statements and generalisations.

Taking into account the content of Faculty Seminar B, the expert reviewer was concerned about the overlap of faculty and Programme Seminars and queried whether discussions had been entered into to ensure that all sessions were aligned and that the needs of the students were indeed being met.

Programme Seminar B, she felt, had too many objectives for the time allocation. The suggestion was that a better plan should be developed so that firstly, there is no overlap between Faculty and Programme Seminars and secondly, that time allocation is considered so that this introduction to and application of research designs is properly presented. A final comment from the reviewer is that introduction to and the use of the chain of reasoning (see Krathwohl, 1998) should be considered in conjunction with research proposal writing.

Expert Reviewer 2

Expert Reviewer 2 is a Research Fellow at a higher education institution with a particular interest and expertise in postgraduate academic writing. His initial critique validated the relevance of Semester 1's content for the target group citing that it *aims to promote academic writing*. He explains that it is clear that the content is structured in such a way to ensure that *academic writing is completely integrated in the content modules*. However, he highlights the fact that there seems to be a need to address a number of issues in the intervention such as *having to fill a gap in the knowledge/research skills capacity of the candidates*. He acknowledges that there seems to be a need to compensate for a lack of research skills and content knowledge with the result that the intervention, which should focus on promoting academic research writing, is compromised and limited attention is thus given to its development.

The personal narrative was considered a choice way of developing personal writing but the reviewer felt that *there is too wide a gap between the personal writing genre and*

academic writing with the result that *some theorists do not recommend this type of approach*. Again, this reviewer felt that *the inclusion of conceptual frameworks is also good as content goes*. However, he was *perplexed* that theoretical frameworks were not discussed as he feels that postgraduate studies often lack a solid theoretical framework.

Expert Reviewer 2 argues that *...the alignment between the Literature Review and the Conceptual Framework is crucial, and want[s] to suggest that the intervention includes writing activities that show the way in which the whole study – all the different parts/sections - should be aligned*.

An issue highlighted by the reviewer is that *a form of process or product writing theory is used*. He would like to see a more explicit indication of what supports the promotion of academic research writing as he misses *a clear sense of the theory of academic writing that underpins the intervention*. [This expert reviewer was not party to the literature reviewed in Chapter 3 at the time of the review].

As a final comment, the reviewer was concerned that there was not a clear enough focus on academic research writing and its development, which should be considered for the design and development of any further prototypes.

6.5.2 Reflection on the Intervention

During the course of the first semester's intervention, Prototype 1, I was constantly aware of the competence that the students brought to the programme as well as their prior knowledge. The TALPS pre-intervention test had revealed that three of the nine students displayed poor academic literacy with a further two indicating that some support would be needed. With South Africa's history of education provision and language (see Chapter 2), students' English language competence was questionable and compromised and this was manifested in their writing.

Examples of personal writing highlighted the issue that many of the students had not in either their secondary or undergraduate years been adequately taught how to write. Issues such as structure, what constitutes an introduction, the body and the conclusion, as well as developing an argument, needed attention. Application and initial proposals revealed that even though the students had come through an honours programme in which a research paper had been written as part of the requirements, very few applied what they had learned at this level to the writing of their proposals.

Reading, of course, has always been found wanting – students just do not read as is clear in the lack of depth in their writing and their inability to draw on a strong evidential basis

when writing. Paucity of reference to literature, lack of engagement with it and lack of critique was evident in the initial proposals as well as the developing proposals. As an example, on average, most students had only included an average of 10 discipline-specific articles with one or two methodology references to support their choice and discussion of methodology. Thus, it was not just the inability to read that hampered students' progress, but rather the inability to firstly, source relevant resources, deal with a vast number of literature sources, be discerning about what was relevant and then, critically engage with it.

Discipline-specific subject content knowledge was a particularly pressing issue. Only four of the 10 students had successfully completed the discipline-specific honours programme which would automatically feed into the master's programme. The rest of the cohort had completed other programmes such as Education Management, Law and Policy (3), Education Management (2) and even BA Honours majoring in a foreign language (1). This meant that students would need to work on developing discipline-specific content knowledge and Discourse in order to be equipped to conduct research in this field. A further issue to take into account was the lack of research methodology knowledge which was partially addressed by Faculty and Programme Seminars. However, these were just introductory sessions which would offer the student a glimpse into particular methodologies, but the onus was on the student to read widely and deeply to develop confidence in the research design appropriate for the study and the means of data collection and data analysis.

A final issue was the knowledge of research methodology processes. Even though students had, to some extent, been exposed to qualitative and quantitative research methods, it seemed that this issue was superficial and judging from discussions with the students, were not in a position to decide on the most appropriate methodology to follow for their master's research. It seems evident that honours courses in methodology and the compulsory master's modules are not sufficient to equip students for the master's programme. Although the methodology sessions of Seminar B aimed at building on their research methodology foundations, it was discussions with their supervisors which assisted the students in making some decisions about the appropriate research design and methodology to be followed and these discussions would feed into the writing of that particular section of the research proposal.

Reflection then on what had transpired over the first semester, gave rise to the many facets of postgraduate study which need to be taken into account. Although I initially set out to scaffold students during their postgraduate studies and develop their academic

research writing, this support had moved into providing far more than what was expected. However, what became reinforced is that writing development cannot occur within a vacuum. The development of academic literacies firstly needs to take into account conventions specified by faculties and departments and secondly, being immersed in the relevant Discourse/s.

The vital social context, developed through seminars, contact sessions and email communications, has assisted students through the first semester building a community. Even when they perceived themselves 'down and almost out', these sessions *have helped to refuel my almost empty tank* (P.6). I was very aware that this group needed to become a community of practice as suggested by Wenger (1998) and this realisation was captured by the comment that *team spirit is being nurtured within the group* (P.3) and that they would progress far more confidently in learning with and from each other.

However, issues arose during the course of the semester which needed to be taken into account when reflecting on student progress:

- P1 and P.7 de-registered at the end of Semester 1 because of work and personal pressures respectively, relaying this information to the programme co-ordinator via email (see Appendix O).
- One student (P.9) did not attend the contact sessions and did not respond to communications both email and telephone, and it seemed we had lost contact.
- Work pressures took their toll on a number of students and again they found difficulty in keeping to the timelines, attending contact sessions and submitting developing research proposals.
- Personal issues, such as a wedding and the planning thereof, arose which also interfered with completing the tasks in accordance with the timelines.

In spite of the above, this was just Semester 1 and it seemed that those students who had conscientiously worked on their reading and writing, attended the seminars and contact sessions, had made a concerted effort to engage in discussions with their supervisor and co-supervisor and had discussed their writing with the academic research writing practitioner, had made progress, as reflected in the assessment of their initial proposals.

However, the students still had Semester 2 and its intervention, Prototype 2, to support them through the process of writing to successfully defend their research proposals. This prototype, it seemed, needed continued work within the triad of student, supervisor and academic research writing practitioner focusing on the development of content knowledge

or development of knowledge in the field of research and most importantly, development of methodological knowledge which would feed into the development of the academic writing. This section of the intervention is discussed in Chapter 7.

6.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter focused on explaining and describing the conceptualisation, design and development of Prototype 1 of the academic research writing intervention. With Van den Akker's curriculum spider web being the underpinning theory of curriculum development and taking into account the HEQF, the intervention focused on introducing the students to research with the primary aim being conceptualising their research and through the writing of a research proposal for their particular study. Design principles supporting the intervention took into account that the students were adult and as a result, specific theories of learning were called into play: adult learning theory (see Bezuidenhout, van der Westhuizen, & de Beer, 2005; Gravett, 2000; Merriam & Caffarella, 1991/1998) but with the need to scaffold the students (see Vygotsky, 1978), and supporting students in the development of their academic research writing .

These design principles used in the design and development of the intervention assisted in addressing the research question *How can postgraduate students be assisted in the promotion of their academic research writing?* through Semester 1's two Faculty Seminars, two Programme Seminars and the four programme contact sessions aimed at supporting the students through the process of research. All sessions were described in this chapter and each were assessed by the students themselves and reported on. The research question *How appropriate is the intervention in developing academic research writing?* was looked at critically particularly from the aspect of *consistency* and *practicality*, as suggested by Nieveen (2007).

The findings stemming from this phase highlighted the shortfalls in the programme with a misalignment between the Faculty Seminars and the Programme Seminars. This intervention had little influence in the planning of the Faculty Seminars, but it was hoped that the Faculty Seminars would dovetail with those of the programme. However, an aspect which needed to be brought to the fore in the next prototype was a greater focus on the development of academic writing. Evaluation of the research proposals had highlighted a regression but this was justified by the need for re-conceptualisation of the research. The developmental model seemed to work in that it offered small 'safe' steps for the students to follow – what Murray (2007) refers to as incremental. However, the need to continue to support the students individually and as a group was clear, and so support

sessions, in conjunction with seminars, continued to be incorporated in the intervention for Semester 2, in conjunction with the building of a community of practice.

Thus in addition to the design principles outlined in Chapter 5, the design principle to be considered for the next prototype, then, is that **support involves a range of foci**: academic research writing, discipline-specific content knowledge, conceptualisation as well as developing knowledge of appropriate methodology (Klenowshi, Ehrich, Kapitzke, & Trigger, 2011) to ensure that a firm foundation is laid for students to work successfully at master's level. In addition, the design principle of ensuring that **writing is an integral part of the master's programme** assisted in the reconceptualisation of the intervention. Thus, it is evident that academic writing cannot be taught in isolation but needs to be integrated into the content and context in order for its development to occur.

Taking the need for developing academic writing into account, the next prototype would concentrate on completing the writing of the research proposal with focus on the writing of the methodology as well as a revisiting of previous sections of the proposal, in preparation for the oral defence scheduled for the end of the semester. Thus, the following chapter describes the second prototype, which was re-conceptualised, designed and developed for Semester 2.

CHAPTER 7: PHASE 2

DESIGN, DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION OF PROTOTYPE 2

We write to make sense of the world

Ruth Qyres and Jackey Schubitz

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In the same manner as Chapter 6, this chapter documents the design and development phase of an intervention most appropriate for postgraduates in education. However, following on from the previous chapter, this chapter looks at the *re-conceptualisation, design and development* of Prototype 2, where the students continued to work on developing a final draft of the research proposal with the aim of successfully defending a 30-page proposal by the end of their first year. As in the previous chapter, Research Question 3: *How can postgraduates be assisted in the development of academic research writing?* and Research Question 4: *How appropriate is the intervention in developing academic research writing?* are addressed.

This chapter focuses on Cycles 5 and 6 in Phase 2 with the re-conceptualising and development of the second prototype, particularly looking at the *practicality and consistency* (Nieveen, 2007) of the intervention.

7.2 CYCLE 5: RE-CONCEPTUALISING, DESIGNING AND DEVELOPING

Data emerging from the student evaluations from Prototype 1 revealed that students were extremely grateful that they were part of this particular programme as it seemed, in conversation with their peers in other departments (reported in Chapter 8 Section 8.4), that they were receiving far more support through the process of their research writing than students in other departments. Initially, the programme was informed by the supervision team's requirements and the needs analysis but consideration of student feedback had to be taken into account in the development of Prototype 2 as well as taking cognisance of the design principles outlined in the conclusion of the previous chapters (Chapters 5 and 6). As the students became more confident about their work during the first semester, developing awareness of what they needed and how they wanted it to be delivered in order to complete the writing of their research proposals, this feedback was used to inform the design and development of the intervention for the second prototype. In addition, the progress report (see Chapter 6 Table 6.24) was also borne in mind, particularly as all students were scheduled to defend their research proposals at the same

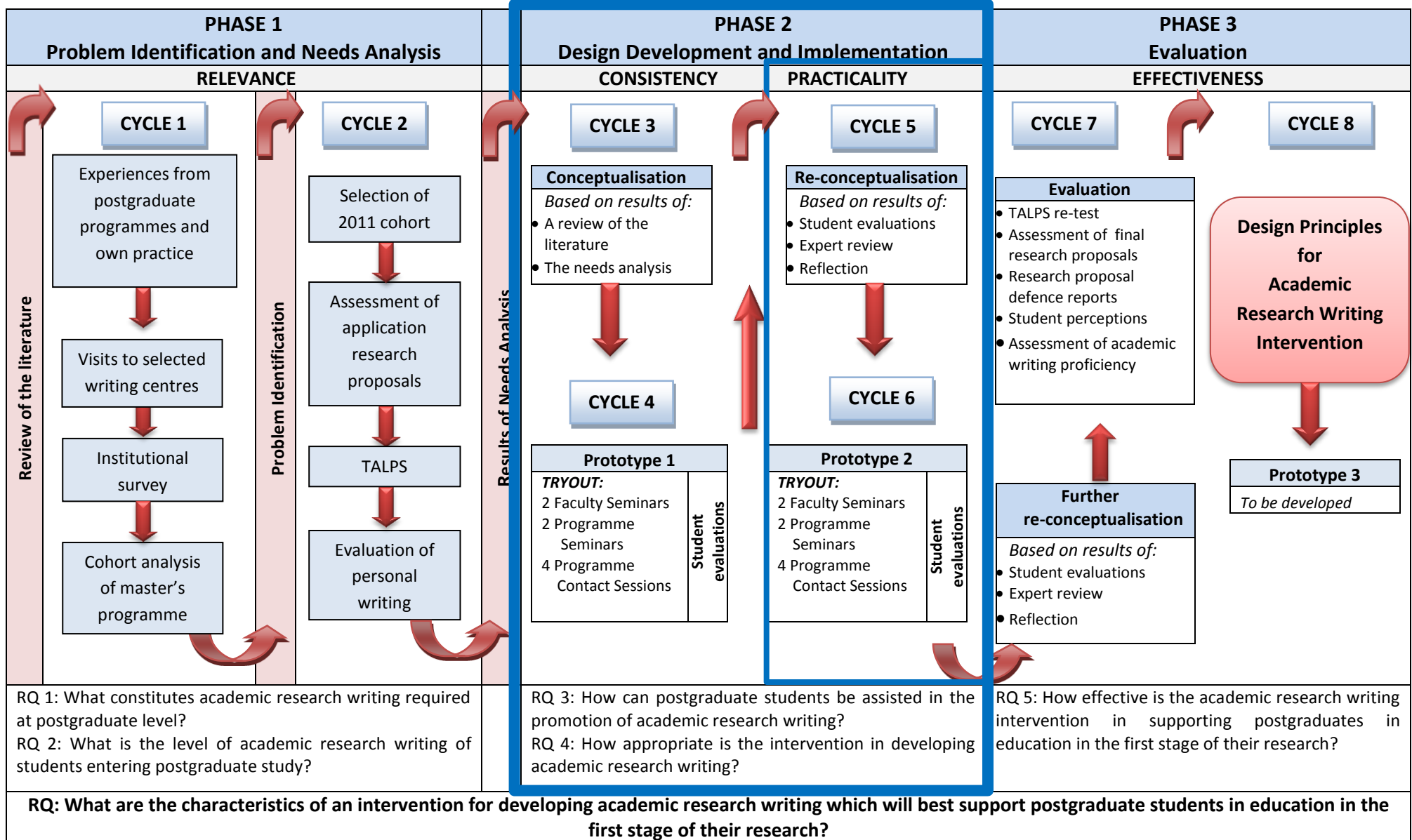
time at the end of Semester 2 and their first year of registration. Finally, expert review (see Chapter 6 Section 6.5.1) as well as my own insight and reflection (see Chapter 6 Section 6.5.2) also informed the development of Prototype 2.

Note must be made that the original plan of Semester 1 was replicated in Semester 2 in terms of Faculty Seminars, Programme Seminars and contact sessions. However, the re-conceptualisation was assisted by the design principles outlined in the conclusion of Chapter 6 (see Section 6.6) in order to facilitate the process of writing the research proposals and defending them. The scope of this phase is captured in Table 7.1

Table 7.1 Phase 2 (Cycles 5 and 6) of the research

PHASE 2: Design, development and implementation				
PROTOTYPE 2				
	Focus of the research in the respective cycles	Research activities	Participants	Criteria
Cycle 5	Re-conceptualisation for the design and development of intervention resulting in Prototype 2	<i>Development of Prototype 2 based on results of:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student evaluations • Expert review • Reflection • Assessment of initial proposals • Progress reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2011 Student cohort • Supervision team • Experts 	CONSISTENCY PRACTICALITY
Cycle 6	Implementation of Prototype 2 with master's cohort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration with supervision team • Refinement of research proposals • Mock defence reports • Revision of research proposals • Student evaluations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2011 Student cohort • Supervision team 	

The model for this study is presented below, illustrating Cycle 5 of Phase 2 which, based on student evaluations from Prototype 1, student progress reports, expert review and reflection leads into the re-conceptualisation of Prototype 2. Cycle 6, the implementation of the intervention or Prototype 2, the focus of the second part of this chapter, is portrayed in the model below (Figure 7.1).



Legend: TALPS = Test of Academic Literacy for Postgraduate Students

Figure 7.1: Design Research Model for the development of an academic research writing intervention

Planning for the second prototype was done in collaboration with the supervision team in order to achieve the outcome of research proposal defence by a particular date. Bearing in mind what had been covered during the previous semester with Prototype 1 to equip the students with the relevant content knowledge on research methodology, the focus of Prototype 2 was to be on developing discipline-specific content as well as concentrating on drawing on this content knowledge as well as the research methodology knowledge to facilitate the writing of the research proposal. The design principles that underpinned the development of Prototype 2 were the need to scaffold students during their studies within a community of practice. However, support would need to involve a range of foci such as academic research writing, discipline-specific content knowledge, conceptualisation as well as developing knowledge of appropriate methodology but added to this, writing and its development needed to be an integral part of the master's programme.

Methodology sessions, reported in Seminar B, and discussions with supervisors about appropriate research designs and methodology to consider, would feed into the writing of the methodology sections of the research proposal. The writing of this section is also incorporated into the intervention in order to facilitate the completion of the research proposal. Once completed, the students would be in a position to defend their proposals which would allow access to the next phase of their research.

With this in mind, seminars and contact sessions were scheduled which would motivate the students and facilitate their writing with the support of the supervision team making up a research triad. The only seminars over which we had no control were the Faculty Seminars, but I hoped that the content would slot in with the Programme Seminars and offer aspects of methodology to which the students had not yet been introduced.

7.3 CYCLE 6: IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION OF PROTOTYPE 2: SEMESTER 2

As with Prototype 1, Prototype 2 consisted of two seminars organised by Faculty and the Programme respectively and four contact sessions (see Figure 7.2).

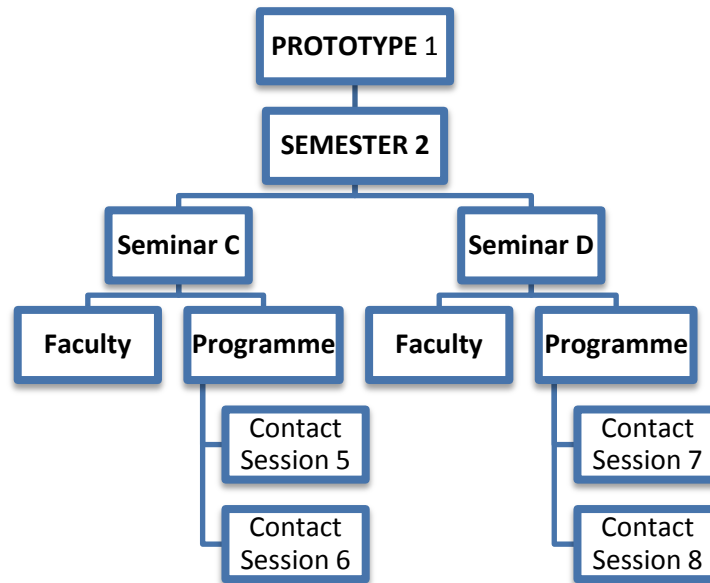


Figure 7.2: Prototype 2 seminars and contact sessions

Prototype 2 began with a Faculty Seminar scheduled during the mid-year school holidays and once again, this was coupled with a Programme Seminar designed to introduce content knowledge to the master's students. These seminars are discussed in Section 7.3.1 below.

7.3.1 Semester 2: Seminar C

As with previous seminars in Prototype 1, this three-day programme was run by the Faculty and was aimed at introducing the students to a variety of data collection strategies, both qualitative and quantitative. Although evaluation of this Faculty Seminar is not the focus of this research, it forms part of support offered to students during their postgraduate studies which dovetails with the support offered by the Programme. Thus, the cohort sampled for this research evaluated the sessions according to relevance to topic, addition of new information, how they were assisted in understanding of the next steps and their increased knowledge of research topic and processes, the results captured in Table 7.2.

Table 7.2: Evaluation of Faculty Seminar C

Faculty Seminar C	Relevance to Topic	Addition of new information	Assisted in understanding of next steps	Increased knowledge of research topic/processes
Interview scheduling	2.14	2.29	2.29	2.29
Qualitative research	2.33	2.67	2.67	2.83
Questionnaire development	2.86	2.86	2.71	2.57
Mixed methods research	2.86	2.86	2.86	3.00
Research Indaba	3.29	3.43	3.29	3.29
Seminar Average	2.70	2.82	2.76	2.80

Scale: 1=not at all 2=fairly 3=very 4=extremely

Students were asked to rate the sessions on a scale of 1-4 with 4 being extremely and 1 being not at all. Thus averages for each session are reported out of 4. Overall, the students rated the addition of new information the highest (2.82), followed by the perceived increase of knowledge for the research process (2.80).

Interestingly, the in-depth seminar on Mixed Methods research was well received with students giving a rating of between 2.86 and 3.00 for those applications even though many of the students in this cohort were using a single approach to research, that is, qualitative or quantitative. In contrast to this section on mixed methods, students did not feel that the session on interview scheduling was of relevance to their topic (2.14), increased their understanding nor added new knowledge (2.29) value as with the session on qualitative research (2.33).

The last day of the programme was dedicated to a *Research Indaba* which aimed at presenting student research both from master's and doctoral students and at varying stages of research. The *Research Indaba* was favourably received with students giving ratings of 3.29 and 3.43 for each of the applications. The students found the exposure to other student research inspiring and enlightening, positively reinforcing their own motivation for research.

Programme seminars were also planned for the duration to discuss discipline-specific topics, which in this case was assessment and quality assurance at classroom level, national level and international level. Table 7.3 offers an outline of the Programme Seminar.

Table 7.3: Plan for Programme Seminar C

CONTENT	Assessment and Quality Assurance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to assessment • Assessment for learning • Introduction to national assessments • Introduction to international assessments
AIMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop content knowledge on the nature of assessment, definitions of assessments and types of assessment • To develop knowledge about assessment at various levels: regional, national and international
RATIONALE	Development of content knowledge
LEARNING ACTIVITIES	Interactive discussions, question and answer sessions
HEQF	A comprehensive and systematic knowledge base in a discipline/field with specialist knowledge in an area at the forefront of the discipline/field or area of professional practice.

In the reporting of these seminars, qualitative data is used in conjunction with quantitative data. During the three days, the students were exposed to presentations and participated in discussions on assessment at three levels. To begin the sessions, students were introduced to the concept of assessment and the quality assurance thereof by drawing on what they already knew: *Brainstorming the terminology around assessment [such as assessment, examination and evaluation] was informative because some of us used to utilise these words indiscriminately, yet there is such a vast difference in their meaning (P.3).* One participant explained that this discussion helped iron out misconceptions illustrating that *assessment is for planning purposes and resource allocation whereas examination is for certification and progression (P.2)* while another admitted that *as for assessment in general, I realised how wrong I often practice the issue of assessment e.g. I often do not do formative assessment properly because of the question of time and work schedule. I often concentrate on completing the work schedule [rather] than making sure that every learner has learned (P.6).*

Interactive discussions revolved around the definitions of assessment, the use of assessment in the classroom, the forms of assessment and its various applications, acknowledging that *assessment must be planned. It is an integral part of teaching and learning. Planning entails different strategies that help learners to understand what is needed from them during [the] learning and teaching situation (P.8).* A presentation was given on assessment for learning referring to work by Black and William (2009), forcing the discussion to move away from assessment of learning to assessment for learning. As most students are teachers or related to education departments as district officials, the discussion drew on their prior knowledge of assessment, highlighting what they knew and were applying in their professional contexts. Participant 10 explains: *The discussion on*

assessment in general reinforced what I thought assessment to be but hearing some of the experiences and opinions of the group and especially Ann, who works in assessment, really brought new insight into the topic for me. Even for experienced teachers, deeper understanding brought comments such as: *As a teacher, I learnt that I should observe learning, give feedback to stakeholders and give support to learners during the self-assessment activities. Assessment motivates learners through positive feedback and it improves the learners' ability to learn* (P.8). To sum up, Participant 4 asserts that the role of teachers in assessment is very important and that has future ramifications to learners' mobility in social and academic life.

In support of the above discussion on Programme Seminar C, the evaluation of each of the discipline-specific sessions scheduled for the Programme Seminar is given below.

Table 7.4: Evaluation of Programme Seminar C: Assessment and assessment for learning

Programme Seminar C: Introduction to assessment and assessment for learning	Valid N	Mean
Relevance to level of study	7	4.0
Relevance for own dissertation	7	3.6
Understanding of suitable approaches to research	7	3.6
Addition of new information	7	3.9
Understanding of next steps in the research process	7	3.9
Increase in knowledge	7	3.7
Overall Average		3.8

Scale: 1=not at all 2=fairly 3=very 4=extremely

Students rated all aspects of the session on introduction to assessment and assessment for learning high with an overall average of 3.8. However, relevance to level of study was rated a very high 4.0, which is not really surprising given that this is subject-specific content knowledge. Addition of new information and understanding of next steps each received 3.9, which could indicate that students were building on the foundation of their previous studies at honours level.

Adding to the conversation on assessment was a discussion of the National Systemic Evaluation[s] and their purpose ... *to see how the policy changes that have been implemented at these grades takes place at four school exit points, which are Grades 3, 6, 9 and 12. The learners in Grade 3, 6, and 9 are assessed in Mathematics, Natural Science and Language of teaching and learning which is home language in Grade 3 while in Grade 6 and 9, it will be the school's medium of instruction* (P.6). An invited speaker from a national examining body addressed the students which *gave me a lot of insight into how our children are assessed and how this might affect them* (P.10). Of interest to most

of the students was the discussion revolving around the highly publicised Grade 12 examination or National Senior Certificate (NSC) which is a summative assessment (P.5), and the quality assurance thereof, particularly the measures put in place to ensure validity and reliability of the results. The students felt that this presentation and its interactive discussion around assessment at school and national level was valuable in that it gave an overview of the system highlighting how *the results of these four assessments give a picture of the quality of education in South Africa* (P.5). Participant 3 reported that *the information of how assessment is conducted at local, national and international level was of great value*, particularly as this student is currently placed at school level and as such, the discussion helped to put different assessments into perspective. In addition, students were convinced of the role of monitoring bodies: *The influence of national bodies such as Umalusi, and international bodies such as the United Nations (UN), the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), International Association for the Evaluations of Educational Achievement (IEA) was also put into the correct perspective. Misconceptions about adjustment of marks by the quality assurance body were also demystified* (P.3).

Table 7.5: Evaluation of Programme Seminar C: Understanding national assessments

Programme Seminar C: Taking a look at national assessments	Valid N	Mean
Relevance to level of study	6	3.7
Relevance for own dissertation	6	3.3
Understanding of suitable approaches to research	6	3.5
Addition of new information	6	3.5
Understanding of next steps in the research process	6	3.5
Increase in knowledge	6	3.5
Overall Average		3.5

Scale: 1=not at all 2=fairly 3=very 4=extremely

The overall average for this session was 3.5 with students seeing the topic very relevant to their level of study (3.7), however, not as relevant to their own dissertations (3.3). But all other aspects were rated 3.5, perhaps indicating the relevance of a discussion of national assessments, their aim and their value in the South African context.

International Assessments such as Southern and Eastern Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ), Trends in Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and PIRLS were presented to the students and the trends evolving from the studies were discussed with the students, particularly how the results inform policy and monitor practice and performance in the education system.

Table 7.6: Evaluation of Programme Seminar C: Taking a look at international assessments

Programme Seminar C: Taking a look at international assessments	Valid N	Mean
Relevance to level of study	7	4.0
Relevance for own dissertation	7	3.7
Understanding of suitable approaches to research	7	3.9
Addition of new information	7	3.9
Understanding of next steps in the research process	7	3.7
Increase in knowledge	7	3.9
Overall Average		3.8

Scale: 1=not at all 2=fairly 3=very 4=extremely

Students were particularly interested in this session on international assessments giving it an overall rating of 3.8. Of interest is the students' high rating of this session particularly for relevance to level of study (4.0). First, exposure to international assessments led the students to rate for understanding of suitable approaches to research, addition of new information and increase in knowledge a high 3.9. This rating is verified in the qualitative data below.

Participant 6 explains that *internationally, assessment is done by various organisations [which] conduct assessments with the aim of comparing the standard of education in these countries. [The] International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) runs [both studies]: TIMSS which assess[es] learners in Grades 4 and 8 in Mathematics and Science and PIRLS which tests Grade 4 and 5 in reading [literacy].*

Apart from understanding the role and function of international assessment *where countries, which take part in international assessments, [are] able to reflect and monitor their performance and compare it to other countries (P.8)*, students were introduced to other aspects of assessment and evaluation. These aspects are reflected in Participant 10's comment: *International assessments was the most interesting session for me ... but learning more about indicators, monitoring at state, national and district level gave me new insight into assessment that I didn't have before. Looking at the context, input, process and output of assessment at the system level as well as looking at the benefits of assessment helped me think of my [master's] topic from an angle I hadn't even considered before.*

Although South African teachers have been exposed to national assessments such as Systemic Evaluations and latterly, the Annual National Assessments, few had information about international assessments. *I think the international exposure on education matters was a great gain (P.3)* and seemed to give some students a jolt when they realised how poorly South African students perform: *I was deeply touched when the performances of*

countries in languages and Maths were compared, particularly that our country South Africa performed badly (P.2). Having experts or insiders leading the discussion allowed the students to ask those almost forbidden questions which led to a new understanding of the complexity of preparing for an international assessment [which] was of interest as was the degree to which education is politicised (P.11).

Table 7.7: Programme Seminar C: Workshops on school effectiveness and improvement

Programme Seminar C: Workshops on school effectiveness and improvement	Valid N	Mean
Relevance to level of study	7	4.0
Relevance for own dissertation	7	3.1
Understanding of suitable approaches to research	7	3.7
Addition of new information	7	3.6
Understanding of next steps in the research process	7	3.6
Increase in knowledge	7	3.7
Overall Average		3.6

Scale: 1=not at all 2=fairly 3=very 4=extremely

Overall, the students rated this session 3.6. However, the students' rating of 4.0 for relevance to level of study is again interesting. Understanding of suitable approaches to research and their increase in knowledge were aspects that also received a high rating of 3.7, indicating the interest in and the value seen in the presentations.

The use of external experts in presenting aspects of assessment in various contexts introduced to students to the 'people in the know' and they enjoyed the first-hand exposure that the opportunity presented them. Such interactive sessions which take into consideration prior learning and build on that foundation have great value in the construction of knowledge as portrayed by Participant 10: *The group discussions [were valuable], especially the input from Ann (P.10). As an assessment practitioner, Ann added a huge amount of extra value to the conversations and in addition, the participant learnt a lot regarding national and international assessments (P.10).*

What did emerge quite strongly from students' comments was that the *three days of interaction with academics and other students (P.10), particularly sharing knowledge with the PhD students was an invaluable experience (P.3)*. It seems that students, even if they have come through a discipline-specific honours programme, still need to continue developing content knowledge, particularly the theories underpinning the development of the changing education policies and their implementation in the schools and the effect that these have on learner achievement. *The discussion and input from the other students all from different contexts were of value (P.10)* once again, reinforcing the idea of a

constructivist approach to learning within a specific community of practice (Wenger, 1998).

A final comment from Participant 6 gives assurance that the students realise that their work in postgraduate studies is a journey, one that should not be taken lightly but one that requires time and effort if success is to be achieved: *I feel as [though] doing research is a process, I am in a process of developing my skill, and the discussions served as platforms to learn how other people view certain issues* (P.6). Incorporating the teaching of discipline-specific content knowledge in the programme ensures that the students have a base from which to work.

7.3.2 Semester 2: Contact Session 5

As this scheduled session was to take place immediately after Seminar C, it was incorporated into the seminar week and therefore no separate session was held.

7.3.3 Semester 2: Contact Session 6

The supervision team, on ‘taking stock’ of their students’ writing, planned for a day of writing – a writing event. By scheduling a day, *free from the constraints of work and personal pressures and in a neutral place to minimise external disturbance* (P.4), the supervision team hoped that the students would make good progress with their writing. It was arranged that the supervisors as well as the academic research writing practitioner were present for constructive discussions and could be called on to discuss issues which may have arisen while the students were writing. The following quote was offered as a stimulus for this session:

Get it down. Take chances. It may be bad, but it's the only way you can do anything really good.

William Faulkner

Table 7.8: Plan for Contact Session 6

CONTENT	Research proposal writing day
AIMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To meet with supervisors • To make good progress with writing • To work with academic language practitioner
RATIONALE	To give the students the opportunity for a day where the whole focus was on writing and feedback of writing.
LEARNING ACTIVITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A writing event • Continued writing • Discussions with supervisors • Feedback from supervisors and academic language practitioner
HEQF	The production of a dissertation or research report which meets the standards of scholarly/professional writing.

Two groups of students met on two separate days: *the meeting [of the one group²¹] took place at the supervisor's house (P.4)* while the second group²² met in the postgraduate lab on campus. Both groups needed to actively work at completing a first draft of their research proposal and so focused on a number of issues in the writing of the proposal. Of particular importance was *the need for more support on the methodology section of our respective research proposals (P.4)* and *time was scheduled for me to meet with my supervisors (P.6)* to discuss issues and thrash out concerns.

As writing the methodology section was high on the list of issues to be addressed: *each person brought books on methodology ... The table acted as a mini library. While each student worked on his proposal, the supervisor was able to provide personalised help and students were also able to discuss amongst themselves, thus providing an opportunity for more clarity to one's methodology and general research proposal (P.4)*. Another student found that the opportunity to meet with both supervisor and co-supervisor to discuss data collection and data analysis strategies was of immense value: *My meeting was excellent, I came to a solid understanding of where this master's is going, how I am going to investigate each aspect as well as general points (P.10)*.

The students were positive about what the day offered them in terms of the actual writing of the proposal: *the writing session gave me a good opportunity to really communicate with [my supervisor] about aspects that I didn't really understand or places where I was unsure of myself in my proposal. I could take her comments and changes and implement them, while still being able to go to her at any point in the morning if I didn't understand or agree with a comment (P.10)* and *extended time was devoted to making corrections on the part of the proposal (P.6)*.

Even at this stage, the students still felt that they had not really come to a solid understanding of what was expected of them, and so the on-going feedback and constructive criticism went a long way in building confidence. Participant 6 remarked that her *meeting was very fruitful and encouraging to me as a novice writer ... [as it] put a glow on my face (you know Cilla how difficult it can be to get a person with depression to smile let alone glow) (P.6)*.

This writing event, viewed through Ivanič's lens (2004), moved between the process approach, the genre approach and the social practices discourse. The students worked through the process of writing and rewriting drawing on their discipline-specific and

²¹The group comprised three students.

²²The group comprised two students.

methodology content knowledge. However, the writing event was also situated within the genre approach, where the genre of research proposal writing was highlighted paying special attention to appropriacy of the use of linguistic features for a particular text type. Taking into account the social practices discourse, the text and how it is written becomes a form of communication which draws on the contexts of culture and situation. The students worked at their writing within a community of practice which allowed them to draw on experienced members of that community in order to “identify themselves with the values, beliefs, goals and activities” (Ivanič, p. 235).

In addition this writing event gave supervisors and the academic research writing practitioner the opportunity to discuss their trajectories taking into account deadlines such as when the final draft was expected and the dates for both the mock defence and the actual defence. *It was a good thing that we were given the deadlines for the remainder of the semester in the sense that it indicated how limited a time one had and that served as an additional motivating factor for finishing the writing in time (P.6).* It was important to remind students about the limiting time of defending their proposals, so *the discussion on deadlines gave such a clear outline of what is expected of us in the time limit, it nicely breaks down the last bit of time before we have to defend (P.10).*

In preparation for the proposal defence, the preparation of a slide presentation was discussed as well as the guidelines for the design and development of the presentation. *The discussion on how the slide presentation should be done was also something that indicated to me [what was needed] (P.6).* Many students are *quite familiar with slides, some felt that it was good to be reminded of what is, and isn't acceptable for such a presentation (P.10).*

Also discussed during the day was the writing of the ethical considerations outlined in the research proposal as well as the need to begin preparation on the ethics application forms: *the discussion on how to complete the ethics application form made it easy to eliminate possible mistakes (P.6).* Working through the Faculty documentation on printed copy gave the students an opportunity to understand what is needed when completing these forms electronically in preparation for submission to gain approval to continue with research.

Once again, the significance of interactions with other students was highlighted: *it was good to hear from the other students as to where they each are, I could really relate to some of them and it really is encouraging to hear how and where others are struggling (because I'm going through the same) (P.10).* But more than just actually informally discussing such issues was *the importance to me [of] the discussions we had and the*

amount of time I spent with both the supervisor and fellow colleagues. More importantly, the discussions provided a chance for a better understanding of the methodology section on how it connects together the entire sections of the research proposal (P.4), reminding the students of the significance of developing a chain of reasoning such as that espoused by Krathwohl (1998) as well as the merit of working within a community of practice. The idea of a community of practice and the value of such collaboration is that it adds to student learning. This is reiterated in a comment from Participant 4: Above all, the success of such a session depends on the people involved. I found that the more people asked me clarity-seeking questions about my research, the more I understood my work better. In other words, people should embrace critical or clarity-seeking questions as it helps with focus and understanding of your own work (P.4).

Taking time out from work and away from the family is a sacrifice, and the supervision team were unsure about how the students would react and whether they would gain from the event. However, recommendations for sessions were made by Participant 4: *I would therefore recommend a personalised session such as the one we had for the future, but it should be focused, directed and have open-minded people taking part, people who are willing to learn (P.4).* Participant 9 reiterated that *we need more of sessions like the one we had ... with fellow students and our supervisor [they] are so fruitful and empowering (P.9).* Evaluation of the session is tabled below:

Table7.9: Evaluation of Contact Session 6

Excellent	Good	Needs improvement	Not applicable
4	1	-	-

(n=5)

AND SO THEY CONTINUED WRITING

The only way to learn to write is to write.

Peggy Teeters

During this time in Semester 2, the students continued with their writing and as in the previous semester, were encouraged to email in sections of their proposal for critiquing by the academic research writing practitioner. Giving students developmental feedback particularly during the draft stages (Paxton, 1995) can enhance learning (Olivier, 2005), both of content knowledge as well as an understanding of the rhetorical processes appropriate within the genre of research proposal writing.

Reviewing of sections of the research proposal was done electronically using the track changes function and the comment tools on MS Word. The track changes tool was used to make suggestions within the actual text for revision or reformulating as well as model sections for student consideration but avoiding the temptation to revert to 'edit-mode'. The comment tool allowed for comments about aspects to consider posed either as a question or as a query to ensure effective in-depth questioning. Thus, responding to the student writer for a variety of purposes is a way of starting a discussion about the content of the paper, as well as the structure and logical flow of the sections. This practice is supported by Hodges (1997) who suggests that the margins of students' written work are the ideal places for teacher-student conversations as it is here that successful on-site teaching can take place. Responding is also seen as a way of reacting as a reader or as an expert offering specific knowledge and guidance (Gillespie & Lerner, 2003).

As writing at this level is viewed as part of the thinking process in exploring and constructing knowledge, research has shown that writers benefit greatly through constructive feedback (Carless, 2006; Quinn, 1999). Feedback, which is central to student learning, has been cited as playing a decisive role in learning and development, giving the student a far clearer idea of how they are doing and where they need to improve (Carless, 2006). It is through the process of writing and revising and using the constructive criticism and suggestions that the student develops as a writer (Gillespie & Lerner, 2003, p. 163). Thus, at postgraduate level when the student is involved in writing a research proposal in stages, constructive feedback at each stage is beneficial and may greatly help the student work through the process of reviewing and revising the proposal.

During this time, a good working relationship developed between the students, the supervisors making up the supervision team and the academic research writing practitioner. As each draft was reviewed and then revised for another round of reviewing, the students finally understood the writing process with its many cycles and iterations (Coffin et al., 2003) which tends to be recursive (Torrance & Thomas, 1994). In reflection, it seems that the students became aware of the processes through which their writing was moving as they worked through the writing, revising, and rewriting of their developing research proposals.

7.3.4 Semester 2: Seminar D

For the last Faculty Seminar of the year, the students participated in workshops on data analysis which consisted of two sessions of quantitative analysis using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program and then two sessions of qualitative analysis. Although this aspect of the research process comes at a much later stage and

this cohort of students was still at the research proposal writing stage, they attended the sessions which would help them in later stages of their research. The evaluation of this seminar is revealed in Table 7.10.

Table 7.10: Evaluation of Faculty Seminar D

Faculty Seminar D	Relevance to Topic	Addition of new information	Assisted in understanding of next steps	Increased knowledge of research topic/processes
Quantitative data analysis SPSS 1	3.83	3.67	3.50	3.17
Quantitative analysis data SPSS 2	3.83	3.67	3.33	3.17
Qualitative data analysis 1	2.40	2.20	2.60	3.00
Qualitative data analysis 2	1.75	1.75	2.00	2.00
Research – series of lectures	1.80	1.80	1.60	1.60
Seminar Average	2.72	2.62	2.61	2.59

Scale: 1=not at all 2=fairly 3=very 4=extremely

An overall average rating of 2.72 was given to this seminar and although lower than the rest, was influenced by the poor rating for the series of lectures presented by an external international speaker who focused on the psychology behind research. Students found this session particularly irrelevant and where they considered themselves in the research process. However, in contrast, students attending the workshops on SPSS rated relevance to topic (3.83) and addition to new information (3.67) far higher.

The final Programme Seminar for the academic year, also arranged during school holidays for these ‘teacher’ MEd. students and in conjunction with the Faculty Seminar, reported above, allowed for the further development of content knowledge of assessment and quality assurance. This time, an expert with the Department of Basic Education who is head of the examinations section for Further Education and Training (FET) colleges was invited to discuss the processes involved in assessment at this level.

Table 7.11: Plan for Programme Seminar D

CONTENT	Introduction to national assessments at FET College level
AIMS	•To develop knowledge about assessment at a various levels: national
RATIONALE	Development of content knowledge
LEARNING ACTIVITIES	Interactive discussions, question and answer sessions
HEQF	A comprehensive and systematic knowledge base in a discipline/field with specialist knowledge in an area at the forefront of the discipline/field or area of professional practice.

This presentation aimed to outline the processes that are followed to ensure quality of the examination cycles in the FET colleges. Students were amazed at what is involved in managing such a vast undertaking, both with developing the examinations, verifying and editing them, getting them printed and distributed as well as marked. Issues with recording of marks and dissemination of reports were also discussed. Of great interest were the measures that need to be put in place to ensure quality, particularly as leakages are widely reported in the press.

Table 7.12: Programme Seminar D: Assessment at FET colleges

Programme Seminar D: Assessment at FET colleges	Valid N	Mean
Relevance to level of study	7	3.9
Relevance for own dissertation	7	3.3
Understanding of suitable approaches to research	7	3.4
Addition of new information	7	3.4
Understanding of next steps in the research process	7	3.3
Increase in knowledge	7	3.6
Overall Average		3.5

Scale: 1=not at all 2=fairly 3=very 4=extremely

With an overall average of 3.5, students found this seminar of relevance to their level of study, but as many of them do not work within this phase of education did not find it as relevant to their own dissertation (3.3) but were content with an increase in their knowledge (3.6) and addition of new information (3.4), particularly as this involved assessment and quality assurance at a particularly level in the education system. What is interesting in this set of ratings is the students' consistent high rating even when it may not be directly relevant to their research.

These Faculty and Programme Seminars overall aimed at giving the students a foundation from which to work. Simultaneously, the students were making progress with their developing research proposals. Taking into consideration the feedback from their supervisors and their peers, these proposals, using the assessment rubric, were assessed once more by two assessors to obtain an indication of the progress made on writing the research proposals in comparison to the initial proposals. The same process of assessment was followed with two assessors using the assessment rubric, resulting in an average mark for each of the students. As with the previous round of assessment, discussions were held by the two assessors to discuss discrepancies and areas of concern in an attempt to ensure a valid and reliable assessment. Table 7.13 offers the assessments for all three proposals completed thus far: the application proposals, the initial proposals, but focus at this stage was on the developing proposals.

Table 7.13: Assessment of research proposals

ASSESSMENT OF RESEARCH PROPOSALS									
Participant	Application Proposals			Initial Proposals			Developing Proposals		
	n=7			n=10			n=7		
	Ass 1 %	Ass 2 %	Ave %	Ass 1 %	Ass 2 %	Ave %	Ass 1 %	Ass 2 %	Ave %
P.1	12	17	14.5	9	15	12	-	-	-
P.2	15	17	16	13	17	15	34	30	32
P.3	-	-	-	17	19	18	28	29	28.5
P.4	29	27	28	14	16	15	21	19	20
P.5	14	16	15	13	21	17	40	41	40.5
P.6	23	27	25	13	19	16	56	55	55.5
P.7	-	-	-	14	16	15	-	-	-
P.8	-	-	-	9	9	9	22	20	21
P.9	18	20	19	0	0	0	-	-	-
P.10	11	12	11.5	15	15	15	42	38	40
MEAN	17.4	19.4	18.4	11.7	14.7	13.2	34.7	33.9	33.9

Legend: - no proposal submitted

Although the research proposals were not as yet complete, progress could be seen with a large number of students. Both P.6 and P.10 had made good progress and their assessment shows a solid increase (39.5% and 25% respectively). It must be noted that both these students had met regularly with their supervisors and had met every deadline. P. 5, P. 2, P.8 and P. 3 too had made progress (23.5%, 17% 12% and 10% respectively). Concern was with P.4 who seemed to be lagging and at this point had not made sufficient progress with the writing of the sections of the research proposal.

Feedback from these assessments as well as continuous feedback from the academic research writing practitioner, as well as the supervisor and co-supervisor, assisted the students in working towards completing their research proposals in preparation for the mock oral defence which would prepare them for the actual defence of their research proposals.

7.3.5 Semester 2: Contact Session 7

A specific day was scheduled as Mock Defence Day, a day organised for students to practise defending their research proposals as *conducting a mock defence prepares students for the final defence better than any other method* (P.3). The mock defence gave the students the opportunity *to practice on a group of peers as well as a panel and have feedback about the presentation style, the actual content and the slide presentation* (P.10) and it thus provided a platform *... to gain confidence and to accordingly plan for the actual defence* (P.4).

During this semester, the students had been working at completing the writing of their proposals with assistance from the academic research writing practitioner and critique from the supervisors who reviewed the final drafts of the proposals. In addition, the

students were required to compile a slide presentation of not more than 20 slides. In an earlier contact session, guidelines were discussed with the students about the principles of designing a slide presentation. However, one student reported that *I did not know how to write slide presentation on the computer but thanks to the guidance and assistance I got from my research buddy (P.8), he was able to create a fairly good slide for his presentation. Students had to check that their slide presentations were objective, clear and to the point ensuring that they could talk to the slides but not read from them and in addition, get through the presentation in the prescribed time allocation.*

Table 7.14: Plan for Contact Session 7

CONTENT	Mock Oral Defence Proposed field of research outlining problem, background, research questions, context, reviewed literature, methodology, ethical considerations and timelines for proposed study
AIMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •To practise the proposal defence presentation •To receive critical feedback in preparation for actual defence
RATIONALE	Ensuring that students were well prepared and confident in presenting their proposed research and were able to defend any decisions made
LEARNING ACTIVITIES	Slide presentation of proposed research
HEQF	An ability to effectively present and communicate the results [proposed plans for] of research to specialist and non-specialist audiences using the resources of an academic/professional discourse

The supervision team were invited to participate as reviewers and each were given a critique sheet (see Appendix P) to record their assessment, reviews, and any issues which might need further clarification. In preparation for the mock defence, it was noted that few guidelines existed for reviewers and so the question arises about whether assessment of proposals is fair and valid, hence the development of a critique sheet. Research has shown that a well assessed research proposal may influence the continued progress of the student into the next stage of study (Marx, 2011), particularly if that assessment informs revision and development into the next stage of academic research writing. Marx posits that “a comprehensive checklist should ... enhance the chances of them doing successful research and should contribute to fairness, validity and reliability in the process of evaluating proposals” (2011, p. 31).

The main issues which needed to be considered were the integration between all sections of the proposal, ensuring a cohesive and coherent flow of research – see Krathwohl’s chain of reasoning (1998) or narrative coherence – which would outline the problem to be investigated, the literature underpinning the research and subsequently, the methodology that would be followed in order to answer the research questions. In addition, presentation style, time of presentation and the quality of the slides was evaluated.

Although the students had spent much time in the preparation of their final proposals and the development of their slide presentations, it was interesting to find out that they *did not know what to expect on the day of the defence* (P. 8). One student made the comment that when he saw the setup with the laptop and the data projector as well as the seated supervisors, *it made me uncomfortable. I was panicking before I went before the panel* (P.2).

After each presentation, the chairperson called on the supervision team making up the panel members to give their feedback on particular items, after which she gave her critique and brought in the comments already given. In this way, the supervisor gave guidance to both the students and their co-supervisors on aspects that were well done but also issues which needed to be revised and addressed prior to the actual defence.

In conducting a mock defence, students were able to realise that even though they felt ready to defend, work still needed to be done: *[The] mock defence prepared me for the formal process of proposal defence [but] it revealed to me that I was not as ready as I thought I was* (P.6) but that it gave them *time to rectify the mistakes as well as the presentation style* (P.2). Thus, there was time to address content issues, as was the case with one student whose final defence date was postponed as revision of her work was required. The participant explains how this affected her: *my defence was postponed for two weeks. At first, I was disappointed in myself and could see that other people were as well. This troubled me since I am only a student and not perfect. I listened to my supervisors and did my best to prepare for the actual proposal defence.* (P.5). Going through the process of the mock defence was an attempt to prepare the students so that any failure with the defence itself was pre-empted.

Even though the students, as teachers, should be used to facing an audience, proposal defence presentations can be daunting and if a student is not fully prepared, then difficulties may arise. One student used this apt simile in describing how he presented, saying *I was presenting like a tsotsi,*²³ *but if you take the comments positively they will help you one day. I took the comments positively and then I went on and practised in front of my mirror and then I told myself I'm going to do it* (6:P.8). Other issues which arose during the presentation and which needed addressing included posture and body language: *my posture was annoying the panel* (P.8), the slide presentation and its coherence, with a student needing to *reorganise the sequence of the slides* (P.6). As this was the first time that students were asked to design a slide presentation, some had

²³ In South African urban slang, *tsotsi* is used to describe a dodgy character, someone who thieves and steals, a thug.

inserted too much or irrelevant information. However, the panel also acted in an advisory capacity so that after the comments, *I revised the information on most slides as somewhere I was off the mark* (P.6). Participant 10 explained that *the feedback about the order of the content and what content I had included was what prepared me for the actual defence* illustrated the importance of conducting such a mock defence.

The allocated time of 20 minutes for some students proved to be restrictive which meant that their *presentation[s] [were] too long for the allocated time* (P.6) and consequently needed to be reviewed. Even though most of the students are teachers and used to presenting to a group or a classroom of learners, the mock defence *did make [them] understand that [they] need to prepare and practice more (in front of a mirror)* (P.5). Finally, students were not explicitly aware that in addition to presenting, they would need to answer questions – in fact, defend their proposal. Participant 8 explains that *some of the questions asked by fellow students discouraged me a bit but I maintained my strength* (P.8) but *on the positive side, it gave me confidence to face the real interview* (P.2).

Building on the positives, the students were delighted to be given the opportunity to participate in a mock defence as *when you stand in front of a panel, telling them your story it makes you think about all the things that could go wrong and all the words you are pronouncing incorrectly. Confidence was not a problem however, it is very disconcerting to tell your story to your academic superiors and make them believe in your study. It was worth it and I would recommend this for all students* (P.5). Other positive comments were received from the students where they highlighted that the mock defence gave them *a chance to learn from fellow students* (P.4) and particularly the *presentation styles of fellow students* (P.6). It assisted them *in identify[ing] one's weaknesses and strengths* (P.4), become *more systematic in the presentation and be within the time limits* (P.4).

Feedback, an issue discussed in the literature, was identified by many of the students who reported on its value *not only in polish[ing] up the presentation* (P.3) and *in help[ing] to improve* (P.8) but with the content as well, particularly as it was *so very helpful to hear the suggestions of my peers and the panel* (P.10). The feedback which *I got from the panel made me strong and I felt that through hard work and dedication I can do it* (P.2) thus *boost[ing] confidence* (P.8).

Having the confidence to present proposed research in front of a panel of academics for their critique is quite a daunting task for a novice researcher, so by arranging a mock defence, the supervision team were hoping to *minimise the anxiety that goes with giving presentation* (P.6). To some extent, this was achieved and is reiterated in the evaluation table and the comments from Participants 4 and 10: *I do not think that I would have the*

confidence for the actual proposal defence without going through the mock defence (P.4).
 ... The mock defence was amazing! (P.10).

Table 7.15: Evaluation of Contact Session 7

Excellent	Good	Needs improvement	Not applicable
5	1	-	-

(n=6)

Feedback from all reviewers of the mock defence team noted on the critique sheets was summarised and forwarded to each of the students (see Appendix P) for use in the revision of their research proposals. This feedback, focusing on content and methodology, was discussed with the supervisors and issues such as the content of the slides and the length of the presentation was addressed so that the students were well-prepared for the next task in defending their proposals.

A final comment, also from Participant 4, makes the supervision team realise why they do what they do for their students: *For me what stands out is the commitment displayed by the CEA to allocate time for the mock defence and providing feedback (P.4)* to ensure that students are scaffolded and supported in their postgraduate studies.

7.3.6 Semester 2: Contact Session 8

Following on from the mock defence session, students were given a couple of weeks to incorporate the feedback, summarised and sent to them electronically, into their work with the actual proposal defence scheduled for later in the month. Faculty regulations (Faculty of Education, 2010) require that critical readers are appointed by the supervisor to review the proposal, and are present at the defence presentation to give their critique after the student's presentation. Critical readers were asked to record their assessment on a specially-developed critique sheet similar to the one used in the mock defence, so that both students and supervisors would have a written critique which could be used for the revision of the final research proposal (see Appendix Q).

Table 7.16: Plan for Contact Session 8

CONTENT	Defence of research proposal
AIMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To present the proposed research To succinctly outline the problem, background, research questions, context, reviewed literature, methodology, ethical considerations and timelines for proposed study
RATIONALE	Ensuring that proposed research meets the criteria for conducting research in the field of education
LEARNING ACTIVITIES	Oral presentation of proposed research and defence thereof
HEQF	An ability to effectively present and communicate the results of research to specialist and non-specialist audiences using the resources of an academic/professional discourse

On the appointed days, the students, with their supervisors, attended the defence presentations (see Table 7.16) chaired by the Programme Chair and the panel of critical readers. Critical readers, who were unable to attend, had sent in their reports earlier in the week either to the chairperson or the supervisor. After being introduced by the chairperson, each student was given 15 minutes to present (the supervision team and the students had previously understood this time allocation to be 20 minutes), after which the critique was given and questions raised to which the student was invited to respond. Other interested parties attending the defence were also invited to submit their questions and queries. As soon as all questions and queries were addressed by both the student and the supervisor, the panel discussed possible outcomes. These possible outcomes according to Faculty policy (see Table 7.17 below) could be:

Table 7.17: Proposal defence codes

RATING	DECISION
1	Proposal is approved
2	Proposal is approved with minor corrections (candidate to make minor revisions to the satisfaction of his/her supervisors)
3	Proposal is provisionally approved (candidate to make major revisions to the satisfaction of his/her supervisors and two panel members)
4	Proposal is not approved (need to defend again or resubmit to the supervisor, chair of proposal defence and one other academic)
5	Proposal is referred to the Postgraduate Committee for consideration

In addition to a rating being given for the defence, written comments were given to each of the students detailing what was expected in the revision of their proposals.

The rating for each 2011 student proposal defence is given in the table below (Table 7.18) and the full reporting on this aspect of the intervention is discussed in Chapter 8 Section 8.3.2.

Table 7.18: Research Proposal Defence

RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL DEFENCE	
P.1	De-registered
P.2	Rating 2
P.4	Did not defend
P.5	Rating 2
P.6	Rating 2
P.7	De-registered
P.8	Rating 2
P.9	Did not defend
P.10	Rating 2

This contact session, the research proposal defence, was the last of the contact sessions comprising the academic research writing intervention and Prototype 2, which sought to support the students through their first academic year of the master's programme with the writing and defence of their research proposals.

In order to ascertain the effectiveness of Prototype 2, the following section deals with an evaluation and reflection on this prototype.

7.4 EVALUATION OF AND REFLECTION ON PROTOTYPE 2

Taking into account the evaluation and reflection from Prototype 1, Programme Seminar C and D focused on building students' discipline-specific content knowledge, making use of specialists in the field as lecturers. Even if the students had come through an honours programme in this specific discipline, it seemed that the knowledge was limited and students needed assistance in developing this important area in order for them to successfully conduct their research.

In addition to developing students' discipline-specific content knowledge, the Programme Seminars and contact sessions focused on applying research methodology content knowledge, putting into practice what was learned in Programme Seminar A and B and applying it in the writing of the research proposal. A specific research methodology writing day was an attempt to give students a specific time and space to write this section with the support of their supervisors and the academic research writing practitioner. Its value was seen in that students enjoyed the opportunity to work in a collaborative space with their peers and learn from feedback from a number of people: students, the supervision team and the academic writing practitioner. In retrospect, more time for writing should have been scheduled allowing the students opportunities for reading and reviewing one another's work as well as concentrating on the conventions of academic research writing.

The students' academic research writing was developing and this could be seen from the improved assessments of the proposals. However, on reflection, more attention could have been paid to making the students aware of the specific academic writing conventions such as integrating the literature into the writing, developing an argument, the use of discipline-specific discourse, paraphrasing and summarising, making use of transition words, direct quotes and correct in-text citing.

The mock defence not only prepared the students for the research proposal defence but it exposed the students' proposals to the full supervision team and through their feedback, the students were able to make critical adjustments in preparation for the defence. In addition, it gave the students the opportunity to present their proposed research which in

turn, led to recognition of what worked and what was lacking. On reflection, this process was of value in preparing students for the final defence, which could be a daunting situation for a novice researcher if unprepared.

As the academic year drew to an end, the supervision team was able to reflect on the progress that the 2011 cohort had made and what milestones they had achieved. Having completed the writing of their research proposals within the first year of study meant that this milestone was achieved in accordance with Faculty policy, but most importantly, ensured that the students had a full two/three years in which to conduct and write up their research. This particular point of running out of time during postgraduate studies and moving into further years is one that is constantly raised in the literature and at tertiary level, and is one that needs to be addressed, particularly as it has an effect on funding.

Thus, in evaluating the overall aim of the intervention – the promotion of academic writing and ensuring that the students defended their research proposals within the required time frame of a year – the intervention was considered effective as seven of the 10 registered students defended and were granted either a Code one, two or three pass. Two of the students had de-registered during the course of the year and Participant 9 had indicated that personal problems were hampering her and she was unable to make progress with her writing to meet the deadline for defence.

7.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter described the Faculty and Programme seminars as well as the programme contact sessions comprising Prototype 2 offered to students during Semester 2 in an attempt to support them in a developmental manner in order to complete the writing and defending of the research proposal. The gatekeeping aspect of proposal defence is an important one to conquer so that students may continue with their research. Practice has found that the more rigorous the proposal, the more prepared and equipped the student is to move into writing the first chapters of the dissertation prior to data collection and analysis. In addition to describing the prototype, this chapter also analysed student evaluation of the seminars and support sessions as well as the results of the mock and final research proposal defences.

To have accomplished the above, is summed up in the comment from Participant 4 who captures the whole process best by saying: *Cilla [the academic research writing practitioner], you are the reason I have managed to cope throughout the year. In other words, had it not been for the emails you send to remind me and the others about the deadlines, the time you took to read our work and provide feedback, although frustrating*

sometimes, I would still be dreaming of defending my proposal. Thank you. In addition, I want to extend my gratitude to the entire staff of the CEA for their unplanned but valuable support in the corridors, kitchen and offices. Above all, the CEA support was not confined to the classroom or supervisors but it was spread around the entire building (P.4).

In summary then, development of a design principal to support such an academic research writing intervention needs to take into account that with wider access and lower admission requirements, the higher education context has changed from being an elitist environment to a more inclusive one comprising a wide diversity of students with a range of both personal, cultural and educational backgrounds. Furthermore, with this particular master's programme cognisance has to be taken that students are part time and hold down full-time professional positions and that the programme has moved from a taught master's to a master by full dissertation. In addition, in contrast to other master's in education, this programme is a professional postgraduate qualification which prepares specialists for professions related to the education system to enhance the fields of quality assurance, assessment and evaluation. Thus, the design principle to emerge from this phase is an encompassing one that **recommends a specialised, structured programme that incorporates the participation of a supervision team with the ability to scaffold and support students and their learning during the research and writing processes within a community of practice.**

The next chapter, Chapter 8, examines the effectiveness (both expected and actual) of the intervention taking into account the results of a re-test of TALPS and the development of the research proposals through the academic year with an assessment of the final research proposals. It also considers the results of the proposal defence and the feedback from the critical readers. In addition, to elicit the students' perspective, data collected throughout the implementation of the intervention – student evaluations, student questionnaires as well as student interviews – are used to give a more complete review. Expert review is once again offered. Finally, an assessment of the final proposals by an expert who evaluated the academic writing proficiency, is discussed and then I draw some conclusions about the product, the research proposal and the academic research writing competence of the students.

CHAPTER 8: PHASE 3 CYCLE 7

EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT OF INTERVENTION

*Tell the readers a story!
Because without a story, you are merely using words to prove you can string
them together in logical sentences.*

Anne McCaffrey

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Taking into account the design and the development of the academic research writing intervention and its implementation over an academic year, the next phase, Phase 3, focuses on the evaluation of the intervention. This phase consists of two cycles: Cycles 7 and 8, although the focus of this chapter is exclusively on Cycle 7.

During this cycle, the final research question of *How effective is the academic research writing intervention in supporting postgraduates in education in the first stage of their research?* is addressed by firstly, analysing the experts' reviews of the intervention (8.2.1) and secondly, reflecting on the intervention as a whole (8.2.2). Then, Section 8.3 evaluates the intervention through the TALPS re-test (8.3.1) which focuses on improvement of the students' academic literacy, the research proposal defence results and recommendations for the revision of the research proposal (8.3.2) given by critical readers and the defence panel and finally, the assessment of the final research proposals (8.3.3), assessed by two assessors.

In the second section of this chapter, student perception on the effectiveness of the academic writing intervention is given (8.4). Firstly, the evaluation of the Faculty Seminars is discussed, supported by data from the student interviews (8.4.1) which offer in-depth rich text. Secondly, evaluation of the Programme Seminars, also supported by student perception of their effectiveness, is given (8.4.2). Finally, evaluation of programme contact sessions gathered via the student questionnaires, evaluated and reported on in Chapters 6 and 7, gives further insight into the effectiveness of the academic research writing intervention (8.4.3).

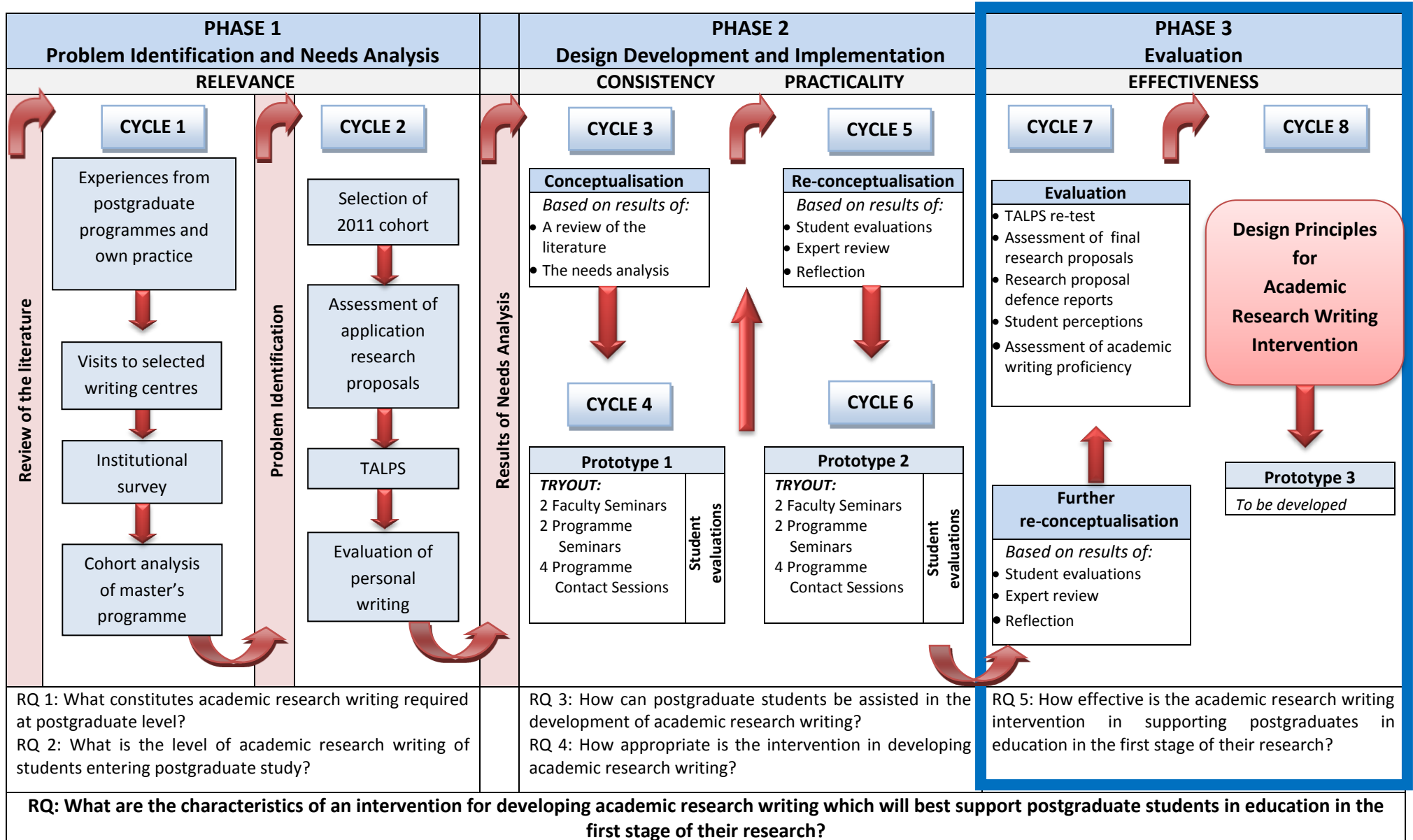
To orientate the reader, Phase 3 with Cycles 7 of the research is outlined in Table 8.1.

Table 8.1: Phase 3 (Cycle 7) of the research

PHASE 3: Evaluation of the intervention				
	Focus of the research in the respective cycles	Research activities	Participants	Criteria
Cycle 7	Evaluation of the intervention	<i>Development of design principles based on results of:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TALPS re-test • Assessment of final research proposals • Proposal defence reports • Student questionnaire • Student interviews • Expert review • Reflection • Assessment of academic writing proficiency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2011 Student cohort • Supervision team • Experts 	PRACTICALITY EFFECTIVENESS actual expected

Phase 3 Cycle 7, which focuses on evaluation, takes into account two aspects of effectiveness: the *expected effectiveness* where the intervention is expected to result in the desired outcomes and the *actual effectiveness* where the intervention results in the desired outcomes, as specified in the criteria section of Table 8.1 (Nieveen, 2007).

The overall research framework combined with the research, is presented for the final time in the Figure 8.1 with the focus in this chapter on Phase 3 Cycle 7, the evaluation phase.



Legend: TALPS = Test of Academic Literacy for Postgraduate Students

Figure 8.1: Design Research Model for the development of an academic research writing intervention

8.2 CYCLE 7: EVALUATION

8.2.1 Expert Review of the Academic Research Writing Intervention

Once again at the end of Semester 2's intervention, the same two academics were asked to review Prototype 2 and offer critical feedback and to ascertain whether it met the four criteria of relevance, consistency, practicality and effectiveness for the development of academic research writing for postgraduate education students. The experts were asked to offer criticisms and critique, identify omissions as well as make suggestions for improvement which would thus lead to the further re-conceptualisation of the intervention and the development of design principals which could inform a final prototype.

Expert Reviewer 1

Expert reviewer 1 expressed concern about the Faculty focus in Seminar C with mixed methods design suggesting that, in her opinion, as very few students at master's level rarely use this design, greater focus should be placed on designs and methods that they would use in their research. Thus, consideration should be given to introducing the students to both qualitative and quantitative research designs as a foundation for research methodology knowledge.

Taking into account Programme Seminar C with its focus on content knowledge, she felt that this was vital for developing a good basis in the specific discipline, but suggested that this content was needed far earlier in the programme to form a foundation for the students. Expert Reviewer 1 felt that it was only when students had a grasp of the content knowledge would they be able to write knowledgeably about the subject and so have the tools to develop their academic research writing.

The content of Faculty Seminar D also raised a concern in that firstly, data analysis being introduced to the students in their first year of study seemed premature, and secondly, that the major sessions offered which focused on *Lessons Learnt from research* was not relevant to students attempting to design and develop their research proposals.

The value of conducting a research proposal mock defence was confirmed by this reviewer who explained that it served to highlight issues already discussed with her own students, but with a team of reviewers *looking at their work critically*, students then had confirmation from a panel and would thus accept that particular issues needed addressing. As a new supervisor, this reviewer found the mock defence *an affirming experience*, particularly making use of combined expertise resulting in an intellectually stimulating process. As the students were nervous and unsure prior to presenting their

research, this expert reviewer felt that the process was uplifting and helped build *confidence in their presentation skills and in their emerging research.*

Nieveen's (2007) four criteria for assessing interventions – *relevance, consistency, practicality* and *effectiveness* – were considered in this expert review. In terms of relevance and consistency, the expert reviewer felt that some content may have been relevant for some of the students while other students may have been frustrated by the repetitive irrelevant content. The expert voiced her concern that the logic behind the design of the Faculty Seminars was not apparent and this in turn highlighted the disjuncture in the consistency and logical flow of the intervention. It seemed that the intervention was operating at three levels – the Faculty Seminars, Programme Seminars and programme contact sessions – which may not complement each other. A particular cause for concern is *the repetitive content and a lack of focus (particularly at Faculty level) on the fundamentals of the programme for research skill development.*

Taking the criterion of practicality into account, Expert Reviewer 1 suggests that *practicality in terms of students' needs for development as specialists in their field of interest, needs to be carefully looked at. In this sense, I do not think the programme as a whole deals with this and this will impact on their academic writing skills. To my reasoning, content/field knowledge directly links to the ability to develop a sound research argument and the writing associated with this. I think that the intervention is operating at a surface knowledge level instead of a deep learning level and this will impact on the students' ability to write a coherent, sound thesis. Thus, regardless of the writing intervention implemented, other content issues will impact students' writing progress.*

The final criterion of effectiveness is established when use of the intervention produces the expected outcome. The expert reviewer felt that once the intervention was practically and logically designed to meet the needs of the students, and addressed issues highlighted above, effectiveness for the promotion of academic writing could well be established via the intervention.

In conclusion, this reviewer suggested that Faculty and the Programme work together to try and develop a logical and cohesive “curriculum” which would support students through the various stages of their research. However, what was omitted with this review is the identification of the need for explicit teaching of academic writing, seeing the development of writing as happening by osmosis.

Expert Reviewer 2

As with Semester 1, Expert Reviewer 2 confirmed that the content of Semester 2's intervention was relevant and interesting. However, there was a concern that the Faculty Seminars only seemed to deal with Mixed Methods Research. He acknowledges that Mixed Methods Research is currently viewed as *the reigning orthodoxy*, but he feels that student *should be introduced to 'pure' qualitative research conventions and 'pure' quantitative ones. They would need this 'content' when embarking on Mixed Methods Research.*

Expert Reviewer 2 argues that a writing intervention cannot compensate for lack of subject/disciplinary knowledge. He does, however, understand the intention of the intervention in general but suggests that there should be *a clear distinction between developing the skill of writing and developing other skills as well, such as reading, defending, talking, arguing, presenting and so on.*

Nieveen's four criteria for assessing interventions (2007) were also considered in this review. The reviewer felt that the intervention was relevant, but argues that it aimed to do too much, wanting to compensate for a complete lack of knowledge/skills in graduate research, which undermined the relevance to some extent. He then reported that *the consistency of the intervention cannot be faulted: it is logical and systematically structured. I also think there are tons of very practical skills to be gained from attending this type of intervention, but I think the focus should be more on academic writing and not on research skills in general.*

The reviewer offered some suggestions on addressing this issue by incorporating writing throughout the intervention by correctly 'billing' a module for example: *billing a module as 'library', one could call it 'writing notes on the database', or 'writing summaries/paraphrases of the literature' or 'reading your way into writing', 'writing critical questions while reading', or 'writing the bibliography', and so on.* He suggests using *creative ways to foreground writing, and not all the other (essential) aspects of research skills*, thus making a case for explicit teaching of academic writing, even at master's level.

8.2.2 Reflection on the Academic Research Writing Intervention

In writing this reflection, I have allowed my mind to go back to the beginning where my concern about the preparedness of students began. As a teachers' training college graduate, I entered the teaching profession being prepared for teaching at primary school level. It was only after many years of teaching that I began the process of upgrading my qualifications which ultimately led me to this doctoral research. However, even though I

am a first language English speaker, I found the late transition into higher education extremely difficult and as the first degree was completed through distance learning, no support or scaffolding was done with reading and writing in preparation for study at this level.

However, it was once I had registered for a master's degree, that I was introduced to a writing centre specifically developed for education students. For the first time, I was exposed to having someone read my work and comment, giving critical feedback which would inform the revision process and most importantly, discussion on how to move my writing to a more academic level, but there had not been any input, advice or guidelines given prior to writing. During the course of these studies, I was invited to work as a peer tutor in the writing centre, and this became the focus of my master's research (see Nel, 2006 and Dowse & van Rensburg, 2011). Working as a peer tutor reinforced the fact that the education system had let us down by not fully preparing us for continued study in higher education – the students with whom I came into contact had trained in various teacher training institutions in a previous political era and then worked as teachers for many years. With a change in the education system and a call to lifelong learning, they were being given the opportunity to upgrade their qualifications at universities having first worked through the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) levels, then honours and finally, master's. It was with the master's students that I was particularly involved and it was here that I first realised just how much scaffolding they needed with assistance in developing reading and writing, even with developing critical thinking, encouragement at all levels and constant mentoring and monitoring of their writing until they felt secure enough to continue independently.

This work with students then was the motivation for putting something in place that would provide them with the necessary scaffolding to assist during the process of their studies particularly as the programme was by dissertation only. I felt that an intervention, which takes the students through the first phase of their studies in a systematic developmental way and which incorporates the concept of academic research writing, was called for and would give them the necessary foundation to allow them to move with assurance and self-reliance into the following stages of their research.

For further re-conceptualisation, modifications to the process of the design and development of the intervention need to be made. Firstly, as this became such a broad intervention that perhaps tried to cover too much under the banner of academic research writing, greater participation and involvement from the supervision team and the main supervisor should occur as it would enhance the design. This would mean that the

master's programme should ensure that aspects such as discipline-specific content knowledge and research methodology content knowledge are developed but are inextricably linked with the development of academic research writing.

Secondly, expert review should occur once each stage of the conceptualisation, design and development has been done prior to implementation, a step which should be undertaken in every phase (see Mafumiko, 2006 Figure 4.6). This would mean that the design principles emerging from each stage would firstly be critiqued and then, once considered, would inform and underpin the development of the next prototype.

Apart from expert evaluations and my own reflection, empirical evidence of student performance is now offered in the following section to ascertain the effectiveness of the intervention.

8.3 EVALUATION OF THE INTERVENTION: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE

This section of the chapter presents student performance in an attempt to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention taking into account a test of academic literacy as well as monitoring and assessing the research proposals at four points in their development.

At the beginning of the academic year, the students were required to complete the Test of Academic Literacy for Postgraduate Students (TALPS) as a baseline assessment. At the end of Semester 2, the students rewrote the test. Both scores were subjected to the Wilcoxon test (Field, 2009) and the results are discussed in the following section.

8.3.1 Re-test of TALPS

On completion of the academic research writing intervention and the successful defence of their proposals, students were once again requested to sit the TALPS as a post-intervention measure of the students' academic literacy competency. The procedures followed were the same as the pre-test with the same facilitator administering the test, which was then scored by Unit for Academic Literacy at the University.

Although the numbers of the cohort had by this time decreased significantly from 10 to seven participants (but with P5 writing neither the pre nor post-intervention test), the test results show that just over half of the students (three out of six) are still at high risk (Code 2) which could compromise their academic potential. One student, Participant 3, is also considered at risk; however, two of the six participants tested were assigned Codes 4 and 5 respectively, meaning that they were at low risk or no risk at all. The results of the re-test are tabled in Table 8.2, and are also compared with the pre-test.

Table 8.2: Pre- and post-intervention comparison of TALPS results

Student	Section 1 Scrambled Text		Section 2 Visual/Graphic Literacy		Section 3 Academic Vocabulary		Section 4 Text Types		Section 5 Comprehension		Section 6 Academic Literacy Abilities		Section 7 Grammatical Knowledge		Section 8 Writing of Academic Text		TOTAL		CODE	
	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post
Total marks	5		10		10		5		25		15		10		20		100			
P.1	0	-	5	-	7	-	0	-	11	-	11	-	9	-	12	-	55	-	3	-
P.2	0	3	7	8	4	9	0	2	1	14	7	0	9	9	8	8	36	53	1	2
P.3	0	0	5	9	9	8	0	1	14	18	4	7	3	5	13	11	50	59	2	3
P.4	0	0	9	6	10	8	0	5	13	17	7	11	3	7	13	9	58	63	4	4
P.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
P.6	5	5	7	8	10	8	5	5	15	14	3	2	5	3	11	9	61	54	4	2
P.7	5	-	6	-	9	-	3	-	17	-	9	-	7	-	11	-	67	-	4	-
P.8	0	3	4	2	5	5	0	1	17	16	7	8	9	4	12	11	55	50	3	2
P.9	5	-	4	-	6	-	2	-	13	-	8	-	4	-	6	-	48	-	1	-
P.10	0	5	9	9	9	10	5	5	19	24	1	15	9	9	13	13	65	90	4	5
MEAN	2.33	2.66	6.22	7	7.67	8	1.67	3.16	13.33	17.16	6.33	7.16	6.44	6.16	11.00	10.16	55	61.5		

Legend:	%	CODE	INTERPRETATION
	0-49%	1	Extremely high risk
	50-54%	2	High risk
	55-59%	3	At risk
	60-69%	4	Low risk
	70-100%	5	Low risk to no risk

In order to gain an understanding of the improvement, if any, of the academic literacy of the students, the Wilcoxon signed-rank test (Field, 2009) was used to assess the differences between sets of scores from the same participants and applied in assessing the difference between the pre- and post-intervention tests.

Overall, the post-intervention administration of TALPS revealed no statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test. The results of Participant 6, who admitted to having had a bad test, but especially Participant 8, pulled down the average. Without their scores, a different result could have been realised. However, a pre- and post-intervention comparison of each subtest reveals a mean improvement ranging from Sections 1 (+0.33%) to Section 6 (+0.83%).

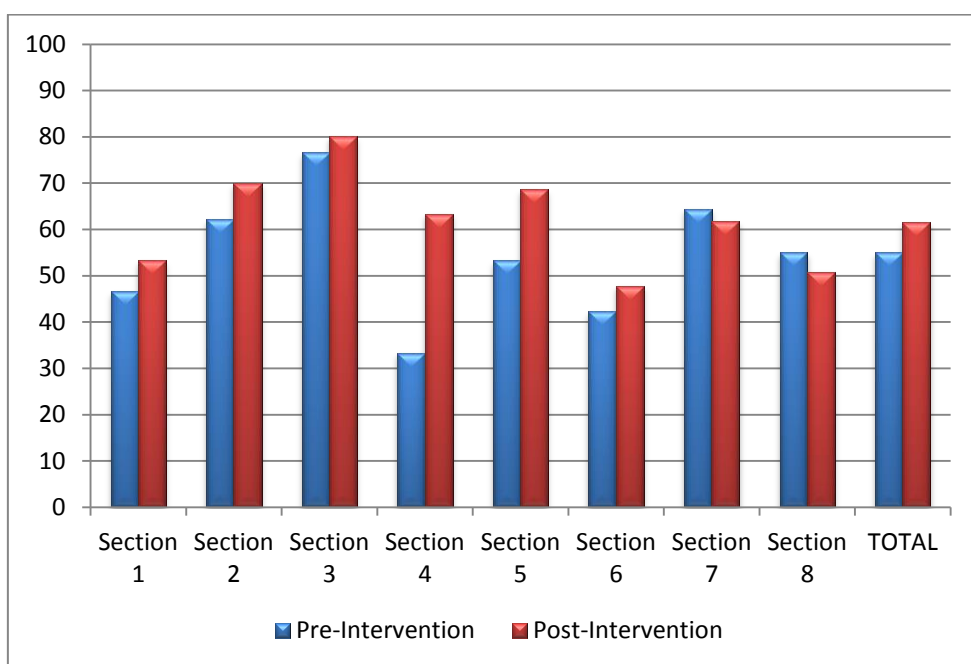


Figure 8.2: TALPS pre- and post-intervention mean scores by subtest

The category of grammatical knowledge (Section 7) and the writing of academic text (Section 8) has seen a slight decrease in attainment (-0.82% and -0.84% respectively). These categories are central to development of academic research writing particularly as this is an integral aspect in postgraduate research. Overall, however, a mean gain in academic literacy is seen (+6.5%).

Individual results revealed a considerable improvement in the TALPS results for Participants 10, 2, 3 and 4 and their scores improved from as much as 25% (P.10) to 5% (P.4). The following graphs illustrate each of the remaining seven participants' performances in the pre-intervention and post-intervention tests by subtest. As Participant 1 had deregistered from the Programme, the reporting begins with Participant 2.

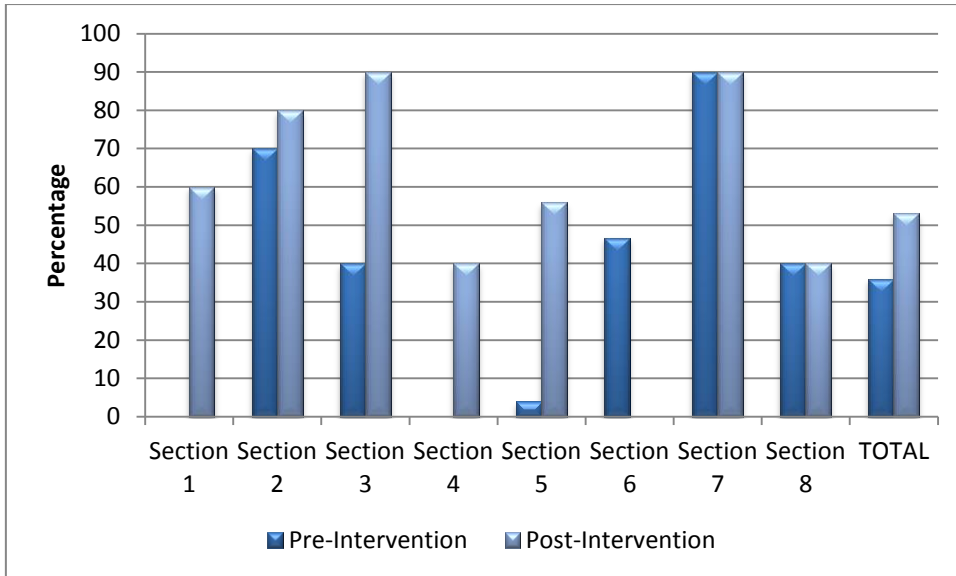


Figure 8.3: Pre- and post-intervention results for Participant 2 by subtest

Participant 2's greatest gains were in subtests in which he had not scored or scored low marks during the pre-test (Sections 1, 4 and 5). Very little improvement was seen in Sections 7 and 8; however, overall there was an increase of 17% from 36% to 53%.

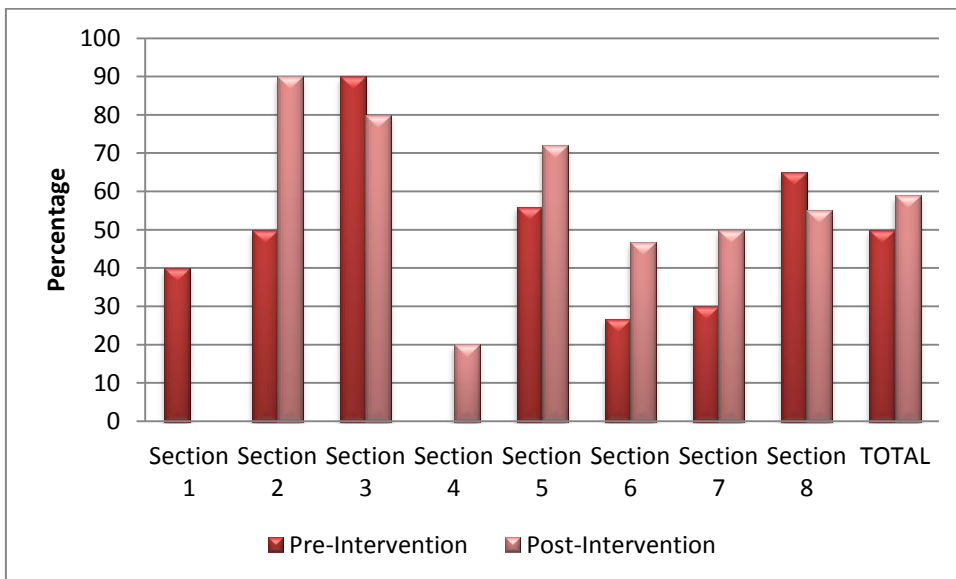


Figure 8.4: Pre- and post-intervention results for Participant 3 by subtest

Most subtests (2, 4, 5, 6 and 7) saw an improvement, although Participant 3 did not score at all on Section 1 in the re-test and with Section 8, the writing of academic text, achieved a lower assessment. However, overall Participant 3 recorded a gain of 9%.

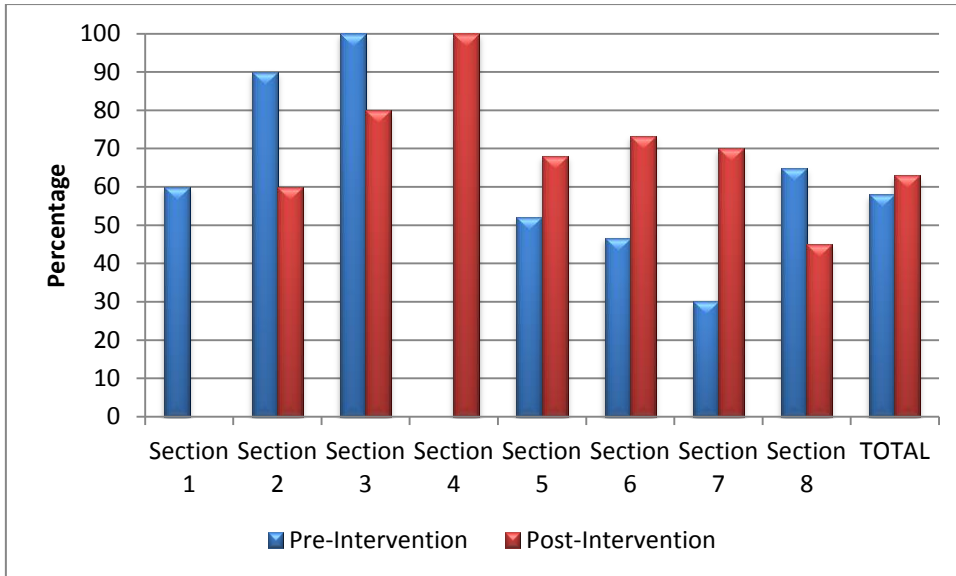


Figure 8.5: Pre- and post-intervention results for Participant 4 by subtest

Section 1 also proved a problem for Participant 4 who was unable to register a score in the re-test. In Sections 2, 3 and 8, this student achieved a lower score for each of the sections. However, in Section 4, text types, full marks were achieved in the re-test in comparison to no score in the pre-test. Overall, the student achieved a low gain of 5%.

Participant 5 did not sit the test, so the next results are those of Participant 6.

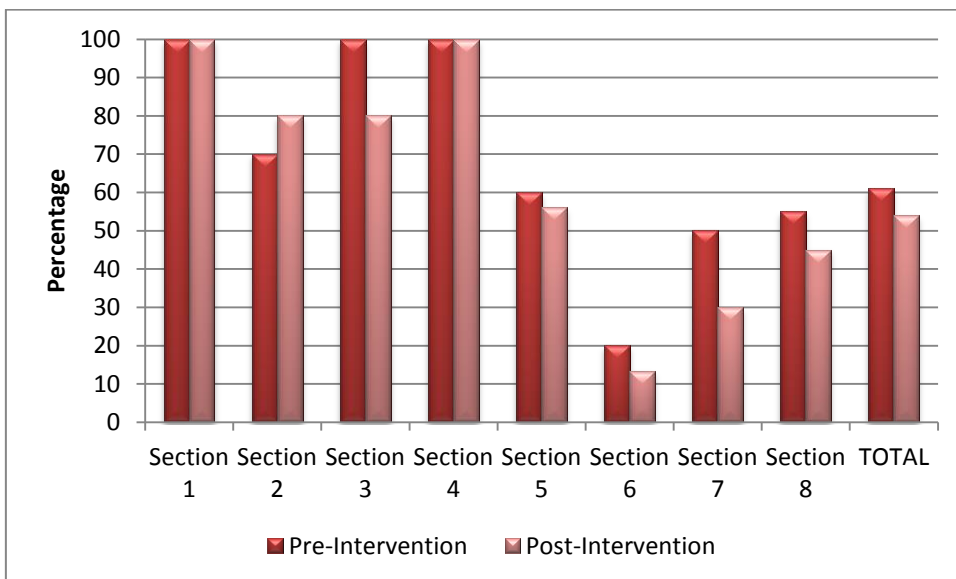


Figure 8.6: Pre- and post-intervention results for Participant 6 by subtest

Participant 6 was able to maintain good scores for both Sections 1 and 4 and achieve a higher score for Section 2. However, in the remaining sections, lower scores were recorded with an overall drop of 7% on the total score. Of concern are the lower scores on the re-test for Sections 7 and 8 which particularly refer to academic research writing.

Participant 7 had not continued on the programme, so the reporting moves to Participant 8.

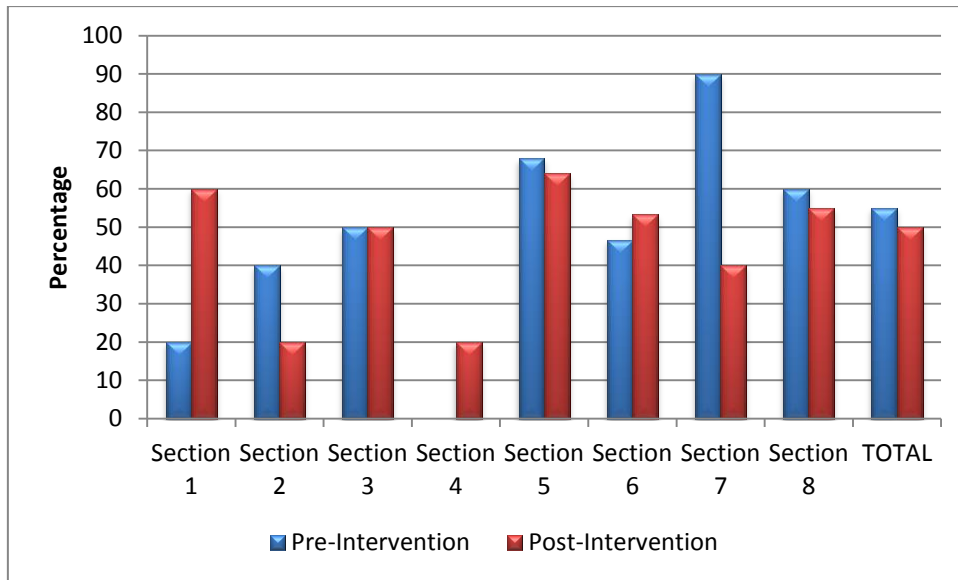


Figure 8.7: Pre- and post-intervention results for Participant 8 by subtest

Participant 8 only recorded a gain in Section 1 that of Scrambled Text and a slight gain in Section 6, Academic Literacy Abilities and Section 4, Text Types. Overall, scores remained the same (Section 3) or decreased with the overall score for the re-test registering a 5% decrease.

Participant 9 did not complete the Programme, so finally Participant 10's results are reported.

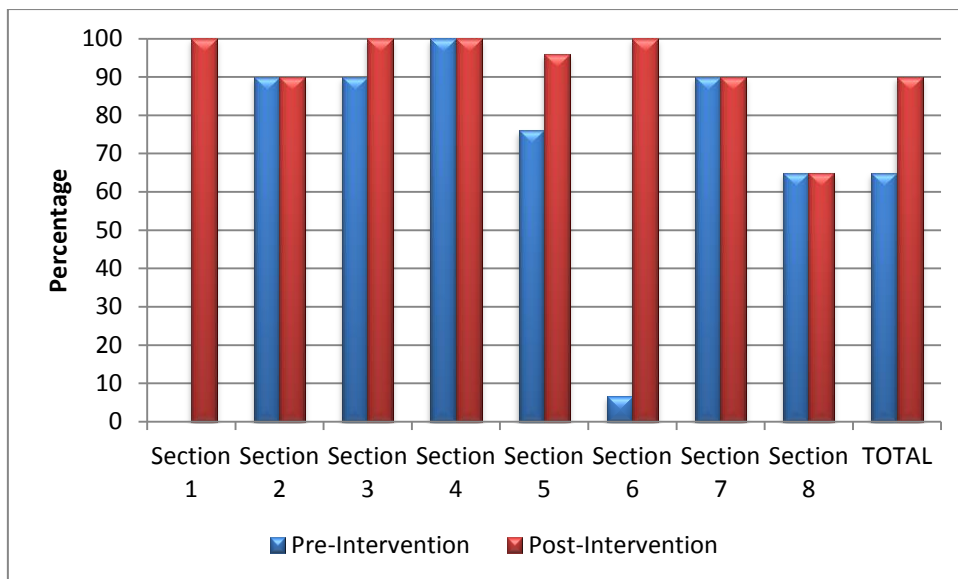


Figure 8.8: Pre- and post-intervention results for Participant 10 by subtest

Participant 10 achieved the greatest improvement with a gain of 25% overall and improvements in each of the sections, particularly Sections 1 and 6. Interestingly, even though this participant is an English first language speaker and one would have expected a high result on the pre-test, she has made the greatest improvement from a 65% to a 90% result.

It was hoped that after an academic year's research writing intervention that improvement of students' academic literacy would be seen in all categories. As previously stated there were minor gains in some subtests for almost all students. However, this was not the case in Section 7, grammatical knowledge and its application in editing a text, and Section 8 where students were required to produce an academic text making use of any information in the test on the topic and write an argumentative text of approximately 300 words in which they present a structured argument and ensure that due recognition is given to the sources used in, and included in, the argument. Thus, minor decreases in score were observed, but no specific patterns were seen and no obvious explanation is available.

The academic research writing intervention may have had some influence on improving the students' academic literacy overall in most cases. The expected outcomes of the re-test were not really met but this could be due to the fact that the sample was small ($n=7$) and biased (see Van der Slik & Weideman, 2010). However, what this test as a baseline assessment did do for the developers of the intervention is highlight aspects that needed attention and inclusion in the intervention. In addition, the re-test gave an indication of improvement in various categories for some of the students and drew attention to gaps

which students should address and which the developers should focus on in the design and development of further prototypes.

In addition to TALPS, there was a need to correlate the finding with the results of the research proposal oral defences.

8.3.2 Research Proposal Oral Defence

Each student who defended their research proposals (see Chapter 7 Section 7.3.6) was successful, being awarded a rating of 1-5 (see Legend) with comments regarding revisions to be made to the research proposals prior to a final submission. The results of the research proposal defence are given below in Table 8.4.

Table 8.3 Research proposal oral defence results

RESEARCH PROPOSAL ORAL DEFENCE		
	RATING	Revisions to be made to research proposals
P.1		De-registered
P.2	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Links between QA and learner achievement • Research articles to be added to literature review • Conceptual framework to be improved • Provide rationale for sampling – use of low-performing schools • Limit use of acronyms
P.3 ²⁴	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refine title to reflect content of study • Revisit research questions as discussed • Reconsider use of underperforming schools as sample • Reflect on ethical aspects of sampling procedure
P.4	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical problems to be addressed • Methodological problems addressed – how to deal with missing data • School climate to be addressed • Problems statement should represent a clear intellectual puzzle • Reading achievement should be prominently addressed
P.5	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Links between parental factors and reading should be clarified • Parental factors should be clearly conceptualised and defined • The problem statement should be better defined • Rationale needs stronger argument • Sub questions should be revisited • The conceptual framework needs to be reworked
P.6	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title to be improved • Editorial errors need to be addressed • Research questions revised • Mathematics to be incorporated into the study • Validity to be addressed • Clarify what part of the data set will be used • Variables to be discussed thoroughly
P.7		De-registered

²⁴This student only defended his proposal the following year, but the report is included with the 2011 cohort

RESEARCH PROPOSAL ORAL DEFENCE		
	RATING	Revisions to be made to research proposals
P.8	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical problems to be addressed • Mathematics to be incorporated into the study • Research questions revised • The conceptual framework needs to be reworked
P.9		Did not defend
P.10	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearer argument should be made regarding translation as the variable • Assumption that translation is the explanation for poor learner performance • Alignment sought between aims, research questions, methodology and data collection

Legend:

- 1 Proposal is approved
- 2 Proposal is approved with minor corrections (candidate needs to make minor revisions to the satisfaction of his/her supervisor)
- 3 Proposal is provisionally approved (candidate needs to make major revisions to the satisfaction of his/her supervisor and two panel members)
- 4 Proposal is not approved (candidate needs to defend again or resubmit to the supervisor, chair of the proposal defence and one other academic)
- 5 Proposal is referred to the Graduate Committee for consideration

Emanating from the readers' critique, were comments and suggestions for the revision of the proposals. These are categorised as reading and writing related, discipline or content-related, related to methodology and then technical and editorial issues. Some comments were made about technical and editorial issues, cautioning the student to be alert and particularly to take responsibility for the revision and editorial process prior to submission. Some comments were made in the methodology sections where alignment was missing between aims, research questions, methodology and data collection. Other issues which were raised were to do with choice of sampling, rationale for sampling and the ethical issues involved in sampling. With the application of secondary analysis, the issue of choice of variable and argument for its use was also raised with students. In looking at discipline or content related matters, readers identified gaps in the proposals which would assist in linking the problem and proposed research and support its conceptualisation.

Of interest to this study is that very little, if any, comment was given about the writing of the proposal, the register, the tone, the style, word usage, vocabulary or discourse. What did arise and what makes it interesting is how the writing is critiqued in terms of the integration of writing with the discipline-specific content and the research methodology writing. For example, comments were scattered amongst the proposals and related to issues such as:

- Refining the title to reflect or encapsulate the content of the proposal
- Writing a well-defined problem statement which would illustrate the intellectual puzzle
- Writing a stronger rationale for the study

- Crafting suitable research questions
- Writing a better synthesis of the literature
- Using the reading and writing of literature to develop an improved conceptual framework
- Caution about making assumptions but rather base their hypotheses on practice or most importantly, on the literature.

This exercise allowed the panel to raise issues with the students in terms of writing, argument, methodology, content and presentation. In other words, the panel conceives of writing as something transparent but every time that the writing was not, it drew attention to itself and the panel then commented on it.

Taking these constructive comments into consideration, students were then requested to apply the necessary revisions to their research proposals and re-submit them at the beginning of the following academic year. These final proposals were then the fourth version of the proposals to be assessed, with this assessment adding to the empirical evidence gathered to ascertain the effectiveness of the intervention in developing academic research writing.

8.3.3 Assessment of Final Proposals

Research proposals were written developmentally and during the process, were assessed using the same rubric. In each of the chapters discussing the three phases of this study, the results of the assessment of that particular research proposal (application, initial and developing) were given. Table 8.5 gives these assessments as well as the assessment of the final proposals.

Table 8.4: Assessment of research proposals

ASSESSMENT OF RESEARCH PROPOSALS												
	Application Proposals			Initial Proposals			Developing Proposals			Final Proposals		
	n=7			n=10			n=7			n=7		
Partici-pant	Ass 1 %	Ass 2 %	Ave %	Ass 1 %	Ass 2 %	Ave %	Ass 1 %	Ass 2 %	Ave %	Ass 1 %	Ass 2 %	Ave %
P.1	12	17	14.5	9	15	12	-	-	-	-	-	-
P.2	15	17	16	13	17	15	34	30	32	59	58	58.5
P.3	-	-	-	17	19	18	28	29	28.5	67	66	66.5
P.4	29	27	28	14	16	15	21	19	20	56	51	53.5
P.5	14	16	15	13	21	17	40	41	40.5	64	67	65.5
P.6	23	27	25	13	19	16	56	55	55.5	64	66	65
P.7	-	-	-	14	16	15	-	-	-	-	-	-
P.8	-	-	-	9	9	9	22	20	21	53	49	51
P.9	18	20	19	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
P.10	11	12	11.5	15	15	15	42	38	40	59	59	59
MEAN	17.4	19.4	18.4	11.7	14.7	13.2	34.7	33.1	33.9	60.2	59.4	59.8

The Wilcoxon signed-rank test (Field, 2009) was used to assess the differences between each of the research proposals. There were statistically significant differences from the developing research proposal to the final product ($p=0.017$, $p<0.05$) and between the application research proposals and the final research proposals ($p=0.039$, $p<0.05$). The Friedman's two-way analysis of variance by ranks (Field, 2009) confirms the statistically significant differences between all four proposals ($p=0.002$, $p<0.05$). This result is important information for judging the effectiveness of the intervention, particularly as the empirical data suggests that there is a significant difference between each of the proposals.

Content analysis undertaken by the supervision team and the academic research writing practitioner concludes that the students, through the process of writing their research proposals, developed meta-cognition firstly, about the genre in which they were working, secondly, about the process of their writing and finally, the varying cognitive processes involved in writing their research proposals. Thus, their writing improved, coherence was achieved, arguments were formed and readability was established. Because the academic research writing intervention aimed at supporting the students through the writing of their research proposals and the defence thereof, the intervention met the criteria of *expected effectiveness*²⁵.

²⁵ The intervention is expected to result in desired outcomes.

8.4 OVERALL EVALUATION OF THE INTERVENTION: THE STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

To gain another perspective on the effectiveness of the intervention, data gathered from the student questionnaire was used in conjunction with the qualitative data from the student interviews to evaluate Faculty Seminars, Programme Seminars, contact sessions and interactions with the supervision team and academic research writing practitioner.

When I write, I find hidden trails ... trails that lead to new vistas

Jennifer Jacobsen

8.4.1 Student Perceptions of Writing Events: Faculty Seminars

Students were asked to rate the Faculty Seminars held four times a year and aimed at providing the students with research methodology background. All students are required to attend a specific number of sessions (20) over the period of their postgraduate studies. Table 8.5 shows the results.

Table 8.5: Evaluation of Faculty Seminars by students (n=7)

Faculty Seminars	Relevance to Topic	Addition of new information	Assisted in understanding of next steps	Increased knowledge of research topic/processes	Method of teaching	Interaction between participants	Depth of treatment of topic	Time allocated
	Knowledge				Teaching			
Faculty Seminar A								
Introduction to reading and writing	2.25	2.50	2.00	2.25	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.25
Introduction to academic writing	2.80	3.00	2.80	2.80	2.60	2.40	2.60	2.60
Presentation skills	2.80	2.80	2.60	2.40	3.00	2.80	2.80	2.60
Searching library databases	3.00	3.00	2.80	2.80	2.80	2.60	2.60	2.20
Introduction to research	2.80	3.00	2.80	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.60	2.75
Using databases	3.29	3.29	2.86	3.00	2.71	2.71	2.71	2.29
Seminar Average	2.82	2.93	2.64	2.71	2.69	2.59	2.55	2.45
Faculty Seminar B								
Moving into academic writing	3.71	3.71	3.43	3.71	3.57	3.43	3.57	3.43
Developing a research proposal	3.14	3.14	3.29	3.29	3.00	3.00	3.29	3.43
Seminar Average	3.43	3.43	3.36	3.50	3.29	3.21	3.43	3.43
Faculty Seminar C								
Interview scheduling	2.14	2.29	2.29	2.29	2.29	2.14	2.71	2.71
Qualitative research	2.33	2.67	2.67	2.83	2.67	2.67	3.33	3.17
Questionnaire development	2.86	2.86	2.71	2.57	2.71	3.14	3.50	3.00

Faculty Seminars	Relevance to Topic	Addition of new information	Assisted in understanding of next steps	Increased knowledge of research topic/processes	Method of teaching	Interaction between participants	Depth of treatment of topic	Time allocated
	Knowledge				Teaching			
Mixed methods research	2.86	2.86	2.86	3.00	3.14	2.86	3.43	3.14
Research Indaba	3.29	3.43	3.29	3.29	2.83	3.33	3.33	3.33
Seminar Average	2.70	2.82	2.76	2.80	2.73	2.83	3.26	3.07
Faculty Seminar D								
Quantitative data analysis SPSS 1	3.83	3.67	3.50	3.17	3.17	3.33	3.33	2.83
Quantitative data analysis SPSS 2	3.83	3.67	3.33	3.17	3.33	3.50	3.33	2.83
Qualitative data analysis 1	2.40	2.20	2.60	3.00	2.80	2.80	3.20	3.20
Qualitative data analysis 2	1.75	1.75	2.00	2.00	2.50	2.50	2.75	3.00
Lessons learnt from research	1.80	1.80	1.60	1.60	2.00	1.75	1.75	2.25
Seminar Average	2.72	2.62	2.61	2.59	2.76	2.78	2.87	2.82
Overall Average	2.83	2.87	2.75	2.79	2.78	2.78	2.94	2.83

Overall, using a mean of 4, students rated the Faculty Seminars moderately well with regard to: Addition of new knowledge (2.87), Relevance to topic (2.83), Increased knowledge of research topic/processes (2.79) and Assisted in understanding of next steps (2.75).

A closer look at each seminar revealed that the sessions on *Academic Writing*, *Developing a research proposal*, *Accessing databases* and *Quantitative data analysis using SPSS* were the most well received and valued by the students who felt that the topics were relevant to their research and they subsequently gained from attendance at these sessions.

In evaluating the presentation of the sessions, the overall average for mode of delivery of the Faculty Seminars indicated that students felt that depth of treatment could be improved (2.94), time allocation could be re-considered (2.83) and both method of teaching and interaction between participants could be improved (2.78). However, the presentation of the session on *Academic writing* was favourably rated in all aspects, as was *Developing a research proposal* and *Quantitative data analysis using SPSS*. The lower rating for time allocation for the SPSS session indicates that students felt that more time was needed to fully grasp the application of the program.

The Research Indaba was favourably received by students particularly as they were exposed to other students' research, complete, current and preliminary. Students rated these sessions for Relevance to topic, Addition of new knowledge, Assisted in understanding of next steps and Increased knowledge of research topic/processes.

However, even though the evaluations for the Faculty Seminars were not as high as expected, they were aimed at providing the generic foundations of qualitative and quantitative research. Student P.8 felt that aspects of the Winter School added value, particularly the quantitative analysis workshops, saying that for *somebody who is interested in multiple regression or regression analysis and statistics and so on, that [session] stands out ... they've done a wonderful job* (6:P.8). However, some student comments tell a slightly different story. Some students said that their attendance at many of the sessions was for compliance only - *then I have my 20 [certificates of attendance]* (4:P.10) - rather than for actual learning. Not every seminar was seen as significant; in fact, one student said that *some of the support sessions I attended for the sake of attending because I was here* (6:P.8). Some of the students felt that Faculty Seminars offered little help being *too general, [with] something lacking or maybe it's because I'm able to compare it with something, it's not up to the standard of the [Programme Seminar] sessions* (5:P.6). One student said that even the Winter School with its quantitative analysis workshop, in which she was particularly interested, offered little ... *I sat there for a week and they didn't teach me anything* (3:P.5). Student P.10 was quite vehement in her recommendation to *scrap the general support sessions* (4:P.10) as they were repetitive, finding more value in the Programme Seminars which were discipline-specific sessions and honed in on what was needed by the students in that particular programme.

8.4.2 Student Perceptions of Writing Events: Programme Seminars

Students were also asked to rate the Programme Seminars which were held within a similar timeframe to the Faculty Seminars. These seminars built on the foundations laid by previous levels of study but with particular focus on the methodologies required for this particular master's programme as well as subject-specific content knowledge. Their rating is tabled in 8.6 below.

Table 8.6: Evaluation of Programme Seminars by students (n=7)

Session	Relevance to level of study	Relevance for own dissertation	Understanding of suitable approaches to research	Addition of new information	Understanding of next steps in the research process	Increase in knowledge
Departmental Seminar B						
Writing literature review	3.86	3.57	3.57	3.57	3.57	3.71
Developing a conceptual framework	3.86	3.71	3.43	3.71	3.57	3.86
Introduction to paradigms	4.00	3.86	3.43	3.57	3.29	3.71
Ethics panel discussion	3.86	3.71	3.71	3.86	3.57	3.57
Survey research	3.86	3.14	3.86	3.43	3.29	3.57
Case studies	3.43	3.29	3.57	3.57	3.43	3.57
Design Research	3.71	3.29	3.57	3.71	3.57	3.86
Programme Average	3.80	3.51	3.59	3.63	3.47	3.69
Departmental Seminar C						
Introduction to assessment	4.00	3.57	3.57	3.86	3.86	3.71
National assessments	3.67	3.33	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50
International assessments	4.00	3.71	3.86	3.86	3.71	3.86
School effectiveness and improvement	4.00	3.14	3.71	3.57	3.57	3.71
Programme Average	3.92	3.44	3.66	3.70	3.66	3.70
Departmental Seminar D						
Assessment at FET Colleges	3.86	3.29	3.43	3.43	3.29	3.57
Programme Average	3.86	3.29	3.43	3.43	3.29	3.57
Overall Average	3.84	3.47	3.60	3.64	3.52	3.68

In contrast to the Faculty Seminars, the students rated the Programme Seminars favourably. In particular, students felt overall that the content was particularly relevant to their level of study (3.84), that there was a noticeable increase in their knowledge (3.68) and addition of new information (3.64). Of interest is the high rating (4.00) given to the discipline-specific content knowledge Programme Seminars which were aimed at giving the students a foundation in their field of learning. The students' understanding of suitable approaches to research was developed (3.60) as well as their understanding of the next steps in the research process (3.52). Of interest, the lowest rating was that of the relevance to their dissertations (3.47).

On an individual basis, the sessions on *Introduction to paradigms*, *Introduction to assessment*, *International assessments* and *School effectiveness and improvement* were rated a very high 4.00 for relevance to level of study.

The students rated the Programme Seminars more positively than the Faculty Seminars. Student P.10 explained that *we would cover so much academically, it actually went above*

and beyond what was being taught in the general sessions (4:P.10). The programmes seminars were considered to be *unparalleled ... exceptional, they are extra ordinary, they are the best* (4:P.4) as they concentrated on what students needed in order to become socialised into the Discourse of the discipline ensuring that the students were equipped with relevant academic literacies which would be the foundation for this first phase of their studies.

It seems that the Programme Seminars were distinctive in that *other learners that we were with at the master's level who are doing different programmes, were surprised of the kind of support that we are getting* (1:P.3). Taking into account that the majority of the students in this programme are teachers or practitioners in education, this comment *what you are doing right now definitely [shows] you are helping the nation* (2:P.2) takes cognisance of the mission in this particular master's programme.

8.4.3 Student Perceptions of Writing Events: Contact Sessions

In tandem with Programme Seminars, students also attended regular contact sessions which were evaluated after each session. The qualitative responses were used in reporting on the contact sessions in Chapters 6 and 7, but the following table, Table 8.7, gives the overall evaluation of the sessions, with data being gathered from the questionnaire:

Table 8.7: Evaluation of Contact Sessions by students (n=7)

Overall Evaluation of Contact Sessions in terms of usefulness	Valid N	Mean
Workshop on aims of research, problem statement and research questions	7	3.9
How to read and annotate sources	7	3.4
Discussion of the plagiarism policy	7	2.9
Discussion of use of research diary	7	2.6
Feedback on personal writing and how to move into academic writing	7	3.6
Discussion of referencing techniques	7	3.4
Presentation of research problem and proposed review of the literature and research methods to be used	7	3.4
Peer review of early research proposal	7	3.1
Discussion of research methods as part of the chain of reasoning	7	3.1
Mock oral defence and feedback	7	3.9
Overall Average		3.3

The initial contact session on discussing aims of research, problem statement and research questions was rated a very high 3.9, as was the mock oral defence and feedback contact session, with students seeing the value of firstly, correctly conceptualising their research and finally, have a 'try-out' or 'run-through' in preparation

for the research proposal defence. Using feedback from personal writing to feed forward into learning how to write was rated 3.6 and the contact session where students worked through articles developing their proficiency in reading and analysing academic text and annotating those sources, being introduced to referencing techniques and applying them to writing and finally, the contact sessions where students presented their research problems, proposed review of the literature and research methods to be used, were all rated 3.4. The lower rated contact sessions were the discussion of the plagiarism policy (2.9) and discussion of the use of a research diary (2.6).

Students felt that the contact sessions, *moving hand in hand with the Faculty and Programme Seminars (5:P.6)*, offered *consistent support and promoted development (1:P.3)*. These sessions offered *a good foundation as you took us step by step throughout (5:P.6)*, gave the students *an opportunity for growth (5:P.6)*. Such a structured programme with overt teaching *was a good thing to start with and then you slowly kind of let us do our own things, slowly and that gradual freedom was a good thing (3:P.5)*. Even though the students were adults, they still needed encouragement and motivation. One student commented *at the beginning if you didn't push us that most of us would have slacked and just kind of left it ... but because you guys kept saying now, that authority I don't know what else to call it ... that was good it kept us on the ball (3:P.5)*. The approach taken was to build on prior knowledge (see Paltridge, 1995, 2001), ensure that the sessions were interactive, and that the students, through a cyclical, iterative process, what Murray (2007) refers to as incremental, developed as writers,.

Focusing primarily on a genre approach in the teaching of writing was a decision that made explicit what was required in the writing of the research proposal: *I still have notes ... they were good because on our proposal writing they opened our eyes as to what is expected (6:P.8)*. In addition, the use of a research proposal template scaffolded the students' learning giving clear guidelines of what was expected in each of the sections (see Singh, 2011). However, the approaches to the teaching of writing that were used in the intervention depended on the need of the students (see Ivanič, 2004) at specific times.

During the sessions, students were required to engage in peer review which offered them exposure to other student's writing: *You see how other people write, the difference, and you can learn from them ... how different your style of writing is from other people, how better or how worse and then it encourages you (5:P.6)*. However, being critical in the giving of feedback to peers, some students found it slightly daunting: *I was a little bit scared to voice out my opinions you know because other people don't take it in a very*

good light (6:P.4). But the more that students engaged in peer review, often using a rubric or guidelines to guide them, the more they developed a critical stance as a reader. *Personally, I think I've grown from peer reviewing* (6:P.8). Review from the supervision team and the academic research writing practitioner was also valued. Student P.8 was concerned about the quality of one of his first drafts and was surprised that *you [the academic research writing practitioner] didn't take it and put it in the rubbish bin* (6:P.8); rather the feedback given assisted him in taking that first draft and revising it until it was what was appropriate and acceptable. This made Participant 8 and the other students realise that *through those comments we can learn* (6:P.4) and that it is imperative to interact with student writing which requires the supervisor/supervision team to *write those comments, keep on writing those comments* (6:P.4).

Ultimately the students saw the value of the contact sessions expressing that they *learnt a lot and the group that I have they are very good, we used to discuss and help one another* (6:P.4). It is this collegiality which ensures that a postgraduate students' path is not a lonely one. Working with communities of peers ensures that knowledge is a product of collaboration during a process of socially justifying beliefs generated by peers, which is confirmed by Petraglia that "knowledge is created, maintained and altered through an individual's interaction with and within his/her discourse community" (1991, p.38).

Students were introduced to the concept of keeping a research diary quite early in the intervention. The evaluation of the session discussing keeping a research diary resulted in a mean of 2.6, quite a disappointing return. It seems that most students had elected not to keep one and just to make notes when meeting with their supervisors. However, Participant P.8 explained that he had a special cover on his research diary on which he'd *written A Long Walk to Success, it is really a long walk which I'm undertaking*. When asked by other students why he was keeping the diary, which is with him at all times, he said: *"Yes, I'm keeping this because it's giving me knowledge as to where I've started, who I met with, what did that particular person say and where I am now because I think it will be beneficial to my study ... I am keeping it going* (6:P.8). But it was not just kept as a record of meetings but rather as a more valuable tool: *using it as a thinking tool and maybe a reminder at the same time, that I'm coming from here, now I'm here, and I need to go somewhere* (6:P.8).

Students saw the significance of the contact sessions comparing their value to the message from an old television advertisement: *Remember that ad [with the] strongbow, the apple one ... you can hit the target but miss the mark. You guys have hit the target and hit the mark as well* (6:P.8).

Even though the majority of the students enjoyed the sessions and felt that they had benefitted from each, one student did not feel that she had gained much: *To be extremely honest, it probably depends on who is in your class, but I would say in my class that would have done zip for me* (4:P.10). Perhaps the diversity of student population particularly with the majority of them being speakers of English as an additional language, gave this student the impression that because their communicative language was not of the same quality as hers, does not mean that intelligence is lacking (refer to Jacobs, 2005). However, this aspect is a problem where the communities are becoming increasingly diverse with cultural norms and standards placing restrictions on full interaction. However, of concern is that this student did not take the opportunity to learn from the others as she was the only one without an education background and stood to learn the most from those who were teachers.

8.4.4 Student Perceptions of their Academic Research Writing Practice

As part of the questionnaire, students were asked to rate how they felt about writing specific aspects of the proposal according to *extremely challenging*, *very challenging*, *fairly challenging* and *not at all challenging*. The following table, Table 8.8, ranks these aspects in descending order, with the higher mean score identifying specific aspects more challenging.

Table 8.8: Aspects found most challenging while writing the proposal (n=7)

Aspects found most challenging while writing the proposal	Valid N	Mean
Identifying a suitable topic for research	7	3.0
Finding the relevant literature on the topic/problem	7	3.0
Finding and writing about the most appropriate research design and approach for the research question	7	2.7
Stating the problem and supporting it with literature	7	2.6
Defining the aim of the study	7	2.4
Synthesising the literature to write a comprehensive review	7	2.6
Outlining the rationale for conducting the study	7	2.6
Developing an appropriate main research question	7	2.4
Discussing the methodological norms which will be followed in the study	7	2.4
Thinking critically about your work	7	2.4
Designing and developing and/or adapting the conceptual framework	7	2.3
Identifying and understanding the paradigm in which your research is most suitably situated	7	2.3
Developing a realistic timeframe for the study	7	2.3
Developing your academic writing practice	7	2.3
Creating an appropriate set of sub-questions	7	2.1
Referencing in-text (including direct quotes)	7	2.0
Reading and understanding the relevant literature	7	2.0

Aspects found most challenging while writing the proposal	Valid N	Mean
Understanding and completing the ethics application	7	2.0
Outlining appropriate data analysis strategies	7	1.9
Compiling an accurate reference list using the appropriate referencing strategy	7	1.9
Selecting the sample and justifying its use	7	1.9
Explaining how the data collection instruments will be developed	7	1.7
Aligning these data collection strategies with your research questions	7	1.6
Meeting deadlines set by the supervisor	7	1.6
Describing the data collection strategies	7	1.4
Examining the ethical issues to take into consideration	7	1.4
Meeting regularly with your supervisor	7	1.4
Using feedback to constantly revise your proposal	7	1.4
Using the critical feedback given by your supervisor	7	1.4
Overall Mean Rating		2.1

Students found identifying a suitable topic for research the most challenging (3.0) which ties in with challenges of identifying and then stating the problem and supporting it with literature (2.6). Developing an appropriate main research question and defining the aim of the study gained a 2.4 mean rating with developing a set of sub-questions being rated 2.1. Students, over time, realised that the research question/s often took many revisions and refinements but initially the development and writing of a suitable research question guided them in their literature search.

Finding (3.0), reading and understanding the literature (2.0), analysing and then synthesising the literature to write a comprehensive review also needed much input and collaboration from the supervision team (2.6) as this was particularly challenging. Students as practitioners, tended to want to rely on policy documents and not explore the research related to the practice and in addition, found difficulty in analysing and synthesising the literature to critique and evaluate the current research and the debates in their areas of research. Student writing in this section of the proposal began with identifying where the research was undertaken and then reporting it via international and/or national research simple which then progressed into a form of note taking and reporting according to researcher or author. Developing a thematic literature review where all sources are analysed and then synthesised into themes and then used to develop an argument, took time and was dependent on much discussion and collaboration with peers and the supervision team. Following on from the review of the literature, the designing and developing and/or adapting the conceptual framework students found particularly challenging (2.3), an aspect that students flagged during the workshop on conceptual frameworks.

Once the students moved into writing the methodology needed to conduct their research, many found difficulty understanding paradigms and how these related to their ontologies and epistemologies (2.3) and as such, where their research most appropriately was situated. The students reported that identifying and writing about the most appropriate research design and approach for the research question was also very challenging (2.7). Moving from textbook writing (which it seems most novice researchers tend to do) to more appropriate academic writing in applying the methodology literature to their own research took some time as students were led in the development of their writing. Other aspects related to the writing of the methodology section included the selection of an appropriate the sample and justifying the choice (1.9), describing data collection strategies (1.4) and aligning these with research questions (1.6) and explaining how the data collection instruments will be developed (1.7). The discussion on data analysis strategies was also identified as reasonably challenging (1.9) while discussing the methodological norms which would be followed in the study was seen as particularly difficult (2.4).

Writing these sections in the research proposal was time consuming with many discussions with the supervision team and the academic research writing practitioner being undertaken which resulted in multi-drafts. During the course of the year's writing students were asked to meet with supervisors (1.4) which was regularly done, then to constantly revise the proposal using the feedback given by the supervision team (1.4) but most importantly, to think critically about their work (2.4).

Drawing on the table above (Table 8.8) highlighting issues with academic research writing and interviews conducted with the students, the following discussion is presented.

8.4.4.1 Writing practices

Initially, students were surprised at the type and depth of writing that needed to be done in order to complete this full dissertation in fulfilment of the master's degree in comparison to what they had done with the honours research project. One student commented that *at some stage I remember saying I don't like writing and ja, I think maybe that's the reason why I started very slowly because I realised you gonna have to love it, otherwise if you not going (sic) to love writing most definitely you [sic] not going to get your master's degree (6:P.4)*. The realisation of what was involved later prompted this student to say that in order to succeed and do well in this master's *I must fall in love with it [academic writing], that should be my second wife (6:P.4)*, conceding the time and effort that would be needed in nurturing and developing his academic research writing. It seems that at the honours level the focus was on delivering a research report, either qualitative or

quantitative (in many cases a secondary analysis) with very little attention being to the overt development of academic research writing.

Of particular interest to this study is the students' perception of developing their academic research writing, rating this aspect 2.3. One student acknowledged *that as far as academic writing is concerned, I thought all these years I was writing but it turns out I've just started learning to write now* (6:P.4). Students seemed to agree that there is a gap between the honours and master's programmes in terms of writing. Some students said that *there wasn't that much writing [in the honours programme]* (1:P.3). Even a student who has completed the honour's at another institution reported that *nothing was done in terms of the preparation about academic writing ... focus was not on the writing itself, we were focusing much on the modules because there were 16 modules that we did* (2:P.2). However, one student did concede that *in the honours class there was some attempt to guide us to write in an academic way even though everything was in a rush. The real understanding of academic writing came in the master's class where we had numerous sessions* (5:P.6). These 'sessions' were planned writing activities which were guided by the supervision team and reported on in the programme contact sessions. However, continuity of programme was seen as a strength: *Doing honours in the same institution where do you your master's I think helps a lot because every institution maybe has its own way of doing things* (5:P.6).

Even so, some students spoke about academic writing as some quite foreign and new to them: *academic writing to me is something totally different, it's something that I'm still learning* (6:P.8). The first aspect that students became aware of was that *academic writing and newspaper writing are two different things* (6:P.8). In addition, students recognised that developing their academic writing is a process, a way of writing which was new to them and would need some time to acquire and develop to ensure proficiency at the level of master's ... *academic writing – I'm coming slowly but I will be there very soon* (6:P.3).

8.4.4.2 Issues with language, literacy and discourse

When breaking down aspects of academic writing, the students raised a variety of issues. The first one was the language issue (see Cummins, 1979; Seligman, 2012) where *Afrikaans [is] my home language and it was very difficult since all the textbooks, all the information articles were in English* (3:P.6). On the advice of her supervisors, this student, writing in Afrikaans, changed to writing in English so *I had to re-write what I've written* (3:P.5). However, she did say that as *English is my second language ... at the beginning,*

I struggled (3:P.5). Changing from writing in Afrikaans to writing in English is one thing, but changing to academic writing in English at master's level is a challenge particularly as she viewed her English academic literacy as questionable. She said *I have struggled with the English language and how to write up my chapters [in the proposal] in my second language. You and [my co-supervisor] helped me in this regard. I noticed how one should write academically and how it differs from everyday English ... The exercises you gave us to do gradually helped me overcome my weakness - lack of faith in myself to read, speak and write in English. It is easier now to read an article, summarise what is important and use that in my chapters* (3:P.5).

The majority of students in the sample were African home language speakers and did not identify language, or rather the language of learning, as a challenge to overcome with their academic writing except to say that *as you know English is not something that we speak on a regular basis and every day* (6:P.6). But what were raised were issues with reading and writing. *Initially it was very difficult, it was not easy to read, it was also not easy to write* (1:P.3). Whether this student meant that it was not easy to read and write in English or read and write at master's level is not clear. However, Participant 6 did offer insight into reading in English at this level, saying *it takes time for one to be able to grasp actually the message behind the text or sometimes even behind the spoken language and as a result reading with understanding is a bit difficult* (6:P.6). Thus, it took time for them to become socialised into the discourse and to read in the manner reading expected at this level and to develop and apply those vital critical reading practices (see Du Toit, Heese, & Orr, 1995).

8.4.4.3 Accessing information

During the Faculty Seminars, students received training on finding relevant sources (see Library Information Seminars), but some still found this aspect a challenge - *I don't get the books that I want* (2:P.2). The same student later admitted that *this idea of visiting the library should have come into my mind long time ago*. His reluctance to find sources either in visiting the library physically or accessing sources electronically through the relevant data bases hindered him in his progress resulting him in acknowledging that *I think I would have written more than what I did now, because the lack of literature delayed me a lot* (2:P.2). However, his comment illustrates his realisation of the importance of reading informing writing.

8.4.4.4 Importance of reading practices which inform writing

Students found that the more they read, the better their understanding of the discipline-specific content knowledge as well as understanding the Discourse - *been reading a lot of academic work, it's been increasing my vocabulary* (3:P.5), which then assists in socialising the student into the academic discourse (see Coxhead, 2000; Seligman, 2012, pp. 53-97;). In addition, the students realised that *by reading widely, I'm able to see the politics that are taking place, where the waves seem to be going and stuff like that in terms of different writing, in terms of where people come from. But I'm saying that takes time, it takes time for you to be able to read and relate what you are reading to what is happening around you* (6:P.4). As a major emphasis is placed on reading – reading for a degree – students slowly came to the realisation that *you should have read, read, read and connect what you have read with the worlds that you live in* (6:P.4).

However, superficial reading is not adequate. Students need to develop a critical stance to their reading to ensure that their reading *requires you to be aware of what is happening in that particular field especially in the field that you are in as an educationist. I'm in an education system, I am looking around what's happening, what seems to be the problem in education. So that's one thing that I would say "read, read, read", I cannot over emphasise that one* (6:P.4). But the students found that just reading and even reading with understanding is not sufficient. The information read and gathered needs processing - *I had a lot of information ... but I had to refine it but I wasn't sure how to refine it* (3:P.5). Developing advanced reading practices, which should incorporate critical thinking, is challenging, but with a specific programme or intervention which incorporates the content, this aspect could be addressed early on (see Du Toit et al., 1995; Seligman, 2012, pp.119-154).

It was important for students to realise that they could not write without having first read, that reading informs writing. But this too proved a challenge to some: *reading has not been a problem for me. I think the problem was ... if I were to put it that way, was bringing those different components, or those elements together and see how I can use other people's ideas in my idea or [to] portray my idea[in writing]* (6:P.4). In addition, students found that *the writing part [was difficult ... especially] how to present your ideas* (6:P.6).

However, the starting point was the first hurdle to overcome as even though students had registered for the master's programme they *did not find anything interesting, anything intriguing in education that moment* (1:P.3), thus finding difficulty in identifying a topic or even a problem area to consider researching. This point is supported by the questionnaire

findings where students found identifying a topic for research that was do-able, challenging (3.0).

8.4.4.5 Writing the research proposal

As discussed in earlier chapters, writing at master's level involves the writing of a research proposal and then a dissertation or thesis. This genre of writing may be new to some or most of the students registered for the master's programme and theory suggests that explicit teaching is done (see Ivanič , 2004). Thus, the use of a template was of value (see Singh, 2011) to the students when beginning the writing of their research proposals as it gave some guidance of the genre of proposal writing as well as a specific format to follow with knowledge and understanding of what was to be included. The students planned and wrote each of the sections, submitted each for review and then revised using supervisor, peer or academic research writing practitioner feedback. *I didn't want to miss the support sessions, they were good, they were the best. They opened our eyes as to what is expected in each part* (6:P.8).

Once the writing of the proposal began, students identified certain aspects of writing that were problematic such as *constructing a sentence* (5:P.6) and *having too many short sentences* (5:P.6). It would have been expected that by this stage students were fairly competent writers but taking the evaluation of the personal writing into account, it seems as if these lower order concerns, as evidenced in the personal writing (see Chapter 5 Section 5.2.2.4) still needed to be addressed.

Students also felt that a cohesive *structure* (3:P.5) was difficult to create which would lead to the development of the *golden thread* (3:P.5) or the chain of logic. Working with the students developmentally, and then critically reviewing each section and offering feedback seemed to scaffold the students in their revision and continued writing. Students seemed to value the discussion on use of discourse markers explaining that *the list of words such as although, however, similarly, moreover, furthermore, nonetheless, etc. helped me a lot when writing my preliminary research [proposal]* (6:P.8). *Another list with words like explain, state, argue, discuss, point out, reveal, clarify, indicate, show, highlight, mention, emphasise, say, etc. also helped a lot* (6:P.8) in finding strong verbs to signal and report research conducted by experts in the field. After a session where the use of discourse markers or transition words was discussed (see Seligman, 2012, pp. 153-195), students were able to understand how *sentences inter-marry and link with each other in a very nice way, using those words that you normally use [such as] additionally, furthermore, moreover* (5:P.6).

During the course of writing the proposal, students found that actually writing the proposal was a little more involved than expected. They found *the writing part a bit more difficult because you actually have to think about what you're doing and write it and get other authors to back your story* (3:P.5). In addition, while writing ... *forgetting to insert references immediately. After some time you forget where [you] found the information, which may lead to plagiarism* (1:P.3), an issue which should be avoided at all costs.

Students found that implementing feedback was not an issue as reported in the questionnaire (1.4). However, some students found it *difficult to receive comments from supervisor and then you try and change that, but then the third time you are getting feedback, you find that you have to go back to the things, to the concept that you were having at the beginning. So there's a little bit of that moving back and forth which is discouraging* (1:P.3). In the end, it seems that the students realised that this moving back and forth was part of the process of writing and that the feedback informs the revision and thus results in better writing. Murray and Moore refer to feedback as “the beauty of criticism” (2009, op. 47), where the reader has engaged critically with the text and is willing to respond in order to make the writing better. This ‘better writing’ was one of the aims of the support sessions particularly as *writing academically was a challenge. But due to the support we received, everything became possible. The way I read, think, and write has greatly improved* (1:P.3).

Students, in writing their research proposals, used a variety of strategies to improve and develop their writing. One student reported that initially *I would actually take sentences and I would actually copy and paste them onto a page for myself and I'd save that and then I'd see, okay they prefer to use this in conjunction for sentences in academic writing or they prefer this word instead of that word. This is more academic that's more informal I actually had examples for myself* (4:P.10). This idea is termed ‘modelling’ where students use someone else’s style of writing and transfer it to their own, which “focuses the observer’s attention on processes to be used in the act of writing” (Harris, 1983, p.77). Another student explained that *reading of other peoples’ work has helped develop my academic writing. Reading with understanding entails analysing and synthesising of the text and the academic use of the English language* (6:P.4). Working within a community of practice where peer interaction and collaboration addressed the isolation to which postgraduates are prone. It motivated interaction and offered the opportunity for open discussion, problem solving, emphasising, motivation and encouragement which scaffolded the students in their postgraduate journey.

8.4.4.6 Developing an identity

Realisation of the value of reading not only for content-knowledge but also to develop an understanding of the academic discourse and how to work or write within that discourse did occur: *I didn't know what to proactively do to actually change my writing style, but I found that once again the more I read academic literature and articles for my lit review and so on, the more I took on the different voices of the different authors (4:P.10)*. As master's level, the students are encouraged 'the stand on the shoulders of giants' but it is hoped ultimately during their studies that their identity as researcher will emerge and that their voice will be heard. Participant 4's awareness of this is encapsulated in her statement: *You have to remember that you have your own voice (4:P.10)*, even at master's level.

8.4.4.7 Realisation of conventions of academic writing

Because postgraduate study is predominantly assessed in and through writing, students needed to become aware of what academic writing is comprised and then develop an understanding of its conventions. To begin with students had *to know your writing ability (5:P.6)*, then students had to be introduced to the conventions of academic writing as well as develop those critical reading and writing practices. One student admitted that *I had to really read up on academic writing and see how other people do it (4:P.10)*. *It takes time and experience to develop metacognition - in the beginning I didn't even know what I was doing wrong. People had to point it out to me (4:P.10)*. Although the aim during the intervention was on writing the research proposal with attention being given to content-knowledge as well as research methodology knowledge, the development of students' academic research writing was the focus.

Participant 3 acknowledges the value of being introduced to the conventions of writing through the strategy of using personal writing: *I think you used a basic principle of moving from the known to the unknown. Writing about oneself is the easiest thing to do. We were able to write extensively while committing academically incorrect mistakes which you were then able to pick up and correct. You made us at ease to write so that you could be able to identify our weaknesses. From the corrections you gave us, you taught us how to write academically (1:P.3)*. Once students had developed an awareness of what was expected in writing, academic writing conventions were introduced and they were able to move from personal writing to a more formal style. *I've developed some writing skills with the information which we had when we attend on Fridays, it gradually spoke to my mind and said this must be done this way not the way which I was doing it (6:P.8)*. The students found that these sessions were *very helpful and for me it served to give motivation and*

clarify where I was not sure. The two formed the cornerstones of my writing ... glad we had the programme (5:P.6).

8.4.4.8 Supervision

Although not directly related to academic research writing and its development and promotion, the issue of supervisors was also raised by the students. Students reported that meeting deadlines set by the supervisor (1:6) and meeting regularly with your supervisor (1:4) was not challenging. However, during the interviews students highlighted the issue of changing supervisors as one which could derail studies. One student during the course of a year had three supervisors and as a result *there was no continuity from one supervisor to the other (1:P.3)*. And because of three different supervisors, this student found that *working with different expectations was a challenge (1:P.3)*. Overall the students valued the work of the supervisors and the co-supervisors explaining that *they pushed me and were supportive (2:P.2)*, particularly the co-supervisors who *help[ed] us a lot which is very great and very awesome (3:P.5)*. However, the students felt that the co-supervisors were shouldering most of the work and wished that the main supervisor had taken a more central role: *just that they would be there and read our stuff and give feedback. I think that's what we all want (3:P.5)*.

A criticism levelled by one student spoke about supervisors being too in control and being biased towards what and how the research should be conducted. This participant suggests that *sometimes you shouldn't listen to your supervisors. They themselves are biased, and it happens that they actually want your study to look like theirs (4:P.10)*. Later in the interview, she did say that *your supervisor is not actually in control of your study, you are (4:P.10)*, suggesting that she wanted to ensure that her study addressed the issues that she had raised rather than result in a study that did not.

As a final remark, the participants recommended *tell[ing] new master's students to meet with their supervisors more often (4:P.10)*.

8.5 ASSESSMENT OF THE ACADEMIC RESEARCH WRITING OF THE FINAL RESEARCH PROPOSALS

The initial assessment of the final research proposals by two assessors focused on the content and research methodology (see Section 8.3.3). This assessment gave an average score for each of the students ranging from 51% at the lowest level to a high of 66.5% and an average mean of 59.8% (see Table 8.4). These assessments indicated that each of the students had been successful in completing their research proposals adequately enough to defend them in an oral defence.

Even though the students had successfully written their research proposals and defended them, which allowed entry into the next stage of their research, the academic research writing proficiency was in question. The academic research writing was not seen as developed enough for the level required to take the students into the second stage of their studies. Expert Reviewer 2 was approached to conduct a specific assessment of the final research proposals focusing on the academic research writing quality. An assessment rubric which takes into account aspects such as tone, register, argument, coherence, hedging, use of appropriate discourse, emerging voice and identity as well as lower order concerns such as writing a sentence, paragraph development, links between paragraphs, in-text citing and referencing, and editing, was created as a guideline (see Appendix R).

The assessor worked through each of the proposals making notes and comments on the scripts, which were then aligned with the assessment rubric and supported with the final comments. The reviewer found that the students, overall, were writing with relative competence, which had allowed them to complete their research proposals, the opportunity to defend their proposals and then to submit a final version for assessment. However, some concerns and issues with the students' academic research writing were highlighted.

The research proposal template, used to ensure that all content topics were included, was seen as a little restrictive, curtailing the students' creative writing ability, and *trapp[ing them] in a mould of a very prescriptive format for their proposals (e.g. a 'context' of a study comes after a general background, and as a result many candidates 'backslide' in their 'arguments')*. Of Participant 3, the reviewer reports that *the format of the proposal is so dominant that the reader is tricked into believing that the candidate has fulfilled the requirements of an academic piece of writing*, so it seems that there is compliance. However, the proposal template's use, in this instance, is not considered as an effective document as it should be. The reviewer felt that students were required to *give too much background information* making the proposal top heavy. Refining the proposal template and incorporating suggestions from the reviewer will assist in streamlining the template to make it more user-friendly and yet, still offer the students the framework to support them in their writing.

Overall, throughout the sections, writing was too descriptive with students writing expository texts rather than writing essayist text (see Lillis, 2001) with strong argument. *Generally speaking, few of the candidates understand the function of academic writing – what it is they have to achieve linguistically in their writing. As a result, their writing is descriptive in nature and not argumentative.* A case in point, motivating the rationale for

conducting the research, the reviewer commented that *few of the studies attain a unique niche for research* and in some instances he *miss[ed] a case for doing a particular research topic* (P.5). It seems that attention needs to be given to exposing the students to various types of writing, particularly the difference between descriptive or expository writing and argumentative or persuasive writing.

Of concern, was that the students' writing showed a *lack of logical reasoning skills*. The reviewer reported that many students *fail[ed] to make an argument based on evidence* and once they had reported on for example, the literature, were unable to *come to logical conclusions*. In many cases, *gaps in reasoning* were identified. This important aspect points to the very beginning of the research process where the conceptualisation of the study is a first important step and thus working with the supervision team, and drawing on Krathwohl's (1998) chain of reasoning is vital.

A concern was the reviewing of relevant and pertinent literature – *P.10 also tends to limit her references on a key concept, [she] needs to read much wider on the topic and widen her search as well*. It was felt that students need to broaden their search and read more widely and in-depth to develop a sound foundation of the content knowledge. The proposals revealed that all *candidates do a perfunctory international literature review and a local/national one without a sense of the conceptual nature of a lit[erature] review*. Building on this comment is the analysing and synthesising of literature which students find difficulty in achieving. In particular, the reviewer found that *P.8 still writes in 'bullet point' format, meaning that he is inclined to present undigested notes or loose ideas about his topic*. Most students were able to report on the literature and describe studies undertaken but were challenged in drawing conclusions from the literature and making inferences as well as being unable to identify important gaps in the literature. In addition, it seems that issues were often *presented in an atomistic way, rather than in an integrated way* without showing the relationships between concepts. It was recommended that time should be spent on finding and accessing relevant literature particularly with the supervision team offering a recommended reading list which would form the foundation for research. In addition, time needs to be spent in discussion of the literature to assist the students in not taking the literature at face value but rather engaging with it critically.

The reviewer highlighted the conflation of a theoretical framework and a conceptual framework. He suggests that discussions are entered into with the students and some understanding is reached. In the case of P.6, she offered a *mere makeshift adoption of another author's work, and she clearly has not made a conceptual shift in her own study*. The students however, are required to find a conceptual framework which could be

applied to their studies and then adapt it for their purposes. As recognised, a conceptual framework tends to develop through the process of the research period, and in the case of these students, the concept was a new one and would take some time to firstly, be understood and then, be adapted with confidence.

Research choices were not clearly articulated and argued. Interestingly, the reviewer honed in on the idea that *all candidates seem to be forced to do a 'secondary analysis' of data, whether it is applicable to their studies or not and whether a qualitative dimension would be of more value.* With this particular cohort, the students were indeed conducting studies using previously collected data from international (PIRLS 2006) and regional studies (SACMEQ II) which meant that the logical choice of research design was that of a secondary analysis. In addition, given the shortage of experienced supervisors, the decision was made to streamline the programme with many students tapping into existing data. In the case of P.10, the reviewer felt that this student *was compelled to do a secondary quantitative data analysis whereas a clear qualitative data analysis is called for.* The supervision team did work with the students to assist them in finding the most appropriate research design (in line with Krathwohl's chain of reasoning, 1998) and once the choices were made, students needed to read in order to complete the methodology section of the research proposal. A concern raised by the reviewer is that some students seemed to focus only on giving definitions – *a textbook style of reporting rather than argument or application to study (P.4)* – rather than arguing for the choice of research design and methodology and then applying it to their studies.

In terms of academic writing style, the reviewer highlighted the need for students to develop links between paragraphs to develop coherence and make use of discourse markers to develop readability. The use of academic discourse and discipline-specific discourse was noted as were lower order concerns such as sentence structure, in-text citing and referencing.

The assessor, in his individual assessments identified some students who were at the stage of developing identity and therefore their voice, a central concept in the academic literacies tradition (see Lillis & Scott, 2007). He reports that P.10 had identified a *'neat' research problem* and with time, would become more confident in researching her topic. This confidence would then be seen in her writing displaying an emerging voice. However, he does report that *of all the seven candidates, I do, however, feel that P.5 is best on her way to finding a voice and becoming a scholar [which appears] later in her proposal on the issue of parental involvement in reading literacy.* The reviewer felt that P.6 was also beginning to embark of a scholarly journey as evidenced in this proposal.

However, some students, he felt, had not as yet reached this stage. P.8, he reports, is *probably the worst of the seven in terms of academic writing and scholarship. He is clearly a very novice researcher and he has not yet begun to develop a researcher voice of his own.*

What needs to be pointed out is that Expert Reviewer 2 took on the role of the third assessor and within these two positions, he suggested focusing on the development of academic research writing. By placing more weight on the development of the writing would ensure that students were given better guidance in understanding the conventions of academic writing and so progress as writers.

The above evaluations and reviews now feed into to the following section which summarises the selection processes as well as student assessments, evaluations and progress.

8.6 A SUMMARY OF ACADEMIC RECORD, RESULTS OF STUDENT ASSESSMENTS, EVALUATIONS AND PROGRESS

Table 8.10 assists in painting a picture of how the students progressed from selection (based on their academic record), and through the needs analysis which gave a baseline assessment to the post-test and the various assessments undertaken of the research proposals. Finally, academic research writing proficiency is recorded with an indication of how the assessor viewed the students' academic identity.

Table 8.9: A summary of academic record and results of assessments, evaluations and progress per participant

SUMMARY OF ACADEMIC RECORD, RESULTS OF ASSESSMENTS, EVALUATIONS AND STUDENT PROGRESS													
Participant	Honours Average Mark	Qualitative Research	Quantitative Research	Discipline-Specific Modules	Research Project	Application Proposals	TALPS pre-test	Proposal Defence	Final Proposals	TALPS post-test	Academic Research Writing		
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	1-5	100	100	x	y	z
1	61	54	51	69	75	14.5	55	-	-	-	-		
2	67	59	57	71/68	62	16	36	2	58.5	53	√		
3	71	73	63	81/78	53	-	50	2	66.5	59	√		
4	69	70	57	68/74	65	28	58	2	53.5	63	√		
5	77	-	93	75/76	76	15	-	2	65.5	-		√	
6	67	-	61	65/62	60	25	61	2	65	54		√	
7	70	86	59	68/72	68	-	67	-	-	-	-		
8	63	-	56	63/76	72	-	55	3	51	50	√		
9	63	64	50	71	58	19	48	-	-	-	-		
10	64	-	-	80/67*	-	11.5	65	2	59	90		√	

Legend: x= novice researcher with little voice
 y= novice researcher with emerging voice
 z= novice researcher with strong voice
 *= foreign language

Blunt's research (2009) into the effective practice for the selection of research candidates, acknowledged the importance of selection with supervisors and their selection committees. He reports that spending time on and giving attention to the process is vital in order to identify students who are able to work independently and autonomously (as required in the HEQF see Chapter 6 Table 6.3 Autonomy of Learning G-J). He suggests that significant aspects are considered in the selection process: previous academic grades, personal perceptions of students, an application research proposal, and finally, some sort of test (Blunt, 2009, pp. 862-863).

Table 8.10, drawing on Blunt's conclusions, illustrates previous marks with an overall mark for the honours programme, research methodology modules (both qualitative and quantitative), then specific marks for discipline specific modules, and most importantly, a mark for the research project which is seen as incorporating content knowledge and applying research methodology in a written report, complying with academic conventions. For selection into this master's programme, each student was invited to an interview with the selection committee. This table does not record the perceptions of the selection committee developed during personal interviews with each of the students; although,

based on the interviews and discussions about the criteria, selections were made. Students were asked to submit an application research proposal and assessment of these proposals were considered in the selection process, and are recorded above. Finally, to test academic literacy proficiency, all students wrote TALPS, and this assessment is also recorded above.

A red line separates the selection process from the progress achieved in the first academic year. The first column then gives an indication of the code awarded for the oral defence. The second column giving the assessment of the final research proposals and the third, the TALPS re-test. The three columns relate to the assessment of the academic research writing proficiency. Please note that the table indicates that three candidates withdrew at various stages of the first academic year: Participants 1, 7 and 9. The final column gives a report of the students' level of academic research writing.

At the top end of the scale, although Participant 10 had done well in an honours humanities (foreign language) programme, she came into this master's programme with no research methodology. However, she was able to successfully defend her research proposal (Code 2), and increase her academic literacy score by 25%, an interesting aspect as this student is an English first language speaker, the only one in the group. Perhaps this is evidence of how important proficiency in the language of learning is in line with assisting the student in entering the academic discourse. She also achieved a 59% final score for her research proposal, an increase of 47.5% from the application proposal. In addition, the reviewer felt that with an interesting topic to research, she was showing good signs of an emerging voice in her writing which boded well for continuing research.

Participant 5 had progressed from the discipline-specific honours programme (77% overall), achieving high marks for methodology (93%) and 76% for her research project, into this master's programme. However, she did not test on the TALPS pre or post-test so there is no indication of her academic literacy before and after the intervention, which is a pity as this student initially began her writing in Afrikaans and was later persuaded to continue in English with the idea of greater exposure if she wished to continue in academia. Initially she was challenged in her writing but was successful in defending her proposal. The final research proposal mark awarded to this student was a 65.5%, a 50.5% increase from the application proposal. It was this student, the expert reviewer felt, who showed the most promise in developing identity as a researcher.

Participant 6 had achieved a good mark (67%) for the honours programme with 60% for her research project, which allowed her access to the master's. Interestingly this student did not test well on the TALPS post-test recording 7% less overall but in taking a closer

look at the test, recorded lower scores from Section 5 to the end of the test. In discussion with the student, she reported that on the day of the test was not well, having suffered from depression for the past month and as the test progressed, found difficulty in completing the sections. As such, external factors need to be taken into account when investigating test results. The expert reviewer felt that this student was showing signs of an emerging voice and identity, which would continue to strengthen during the course of her studies.

At the bottom end of the scale, Participant 8 achieved fair marks in the honours programme (63% overall), 56% for methodology and a rather high 72% for the research project. He did not submit an initial proposal. On the TALPS pre-test he scored a 55% but on the post-test was only able to manage 50%. His final proposal was awarded a 51% which tends to align with the evaluation from the expert reviewer who felt that this student was very much a novice researcher with little emerging voice at present, and as such, might find difficulty with academic research writing during the research process.

The remaining participants (P.2, P.3 and P.4) had come into the programme with high overall marks from their honours degrees (67%, 71% and 69% respectively) with research projects scoring 62%, 53% and 65% respectively. All students had increased their scores on the TALPS (+17%, +9% and +5% respectively). The final assessment of these students research proposals also gave an indication of their increasing ability and proficiency in academic research writing scoring 58.5%, 59% and 63% respectively, although the expert reviewer felt in all three cases these students were still at an initial level of scholarship but have the potential of, through the research process, developing as research writers.

Although this study was concerned with immediate throughput, that of completing and defending the research proposal, cognisance is taken of distal throughput and as such, I was included a progress update (February 2014) – see Table 8.11.

Table 8.10: Student progress since defence of research proposals

STUDENT PROGRESS SINCE DEFENCE OF RESEARCH PROPOSALS														
Participant	Ethical Clearance	Chapter 1	Chapter 2	Chapter 3	Data Collection	Data Analysis	Chapter 4	Chapter 5	Chapter 6	Reference List	Full Dissertation	Revision of full Dissertation	Final Dissertation	Dissertation Submission
1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	√	√	√	√	√	√	√							
3	√	√	√	√										
4	√	√	√	√	x	√*	√	√	√	√	√			
5	√	√	√	√	x	√*	√	√	√	√	√			
6	√	√	√	√	x	√*	√	√	√	√	√			
7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
8	√	√	√	√										
9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
10	√	√	√	√	x	√*	√	√	√	√	√			

Legend: - = deregistered

* = secondary analysis

This cohort of students registered in January 2011 and they are due to submit their dissertations in August 2014. However, an extension may be granted if further time is requested for completion.

8.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter's focus was on ascertaining the effectiveness of the academic research writing intervention in supporting master's students in education through the first phase of their research, that is, the writing and defending of their research proposals ensuring immediate throughput. A variety of evaluations and assessments were presented which included expert review, the proposal oral defence, a re-test of TALPS and a final assessment of the research proposals. In addition, the students' perspective was given with their evaluations of Faculty Seminars, Programme Seminars and Contact Sessions as well as issues which arose in their writing. The evaluation also included an assessment of the academic research writing proficiency of the research proposals, conducted by an academic writing expert, to elicit some understanding of the academic research writing proficiency of each student.

In terms of the student perspective, the intervention to promote their academic research writing was of value in that it offered the students something which they saw lacking in other programmes: an opportunity to “enter a knowledge community” (Northedge, 2003, p. 21), to be given support within that community, to be guided through the process of reading and writing, to engage in collegiality and work in a collaborative environment, and to develop a community of practice to learn with and from others. In addition, an attempt was made to engage the students in learning about their specific field, thus developing discipline-specific content knowledge, extending their understanding of research methodology, thus developing research methodology content knowledge and then promote their academic research writing.

The question now arises in making a statement about exactly how effective the intervention was taking into account *actual effectiveness* – using the intervention results in desired outcomes (Nieveen, 2007). Certainly, all remaining students were able to complete the writing and defence of their research proposals, and after assessment by two independent assessors and the third assessor, the proposals were deemed ‘good enough’ to progress to the next stage of the research, bearing in mind that the research proposal, which acts as a gatekeeper, cannot give the assurance that the student will go on to complete the research. However, “an essential element in the [proposal] is information that validates researchers as ... individuals capable of carrying out the proposed study” (Johns, 1997, p. 84).

Added at the end of the final section of this chapter is a progress table outlining the progress that the students have made to date. As their due submission date is August 2014, it is hoped that they will all meet the deadline.

The findings from the evaluations and the assessments are drawn together in the penultimate chapter, which focuses on providing some design principles (Cycle 8 of Phase 3) to guide the development of an intervention to support academic research writing.

CHAPTER 9: PHASE 3 CYCLE 8

DESIGN PRINCIPLES OF AN ACADEMIC RESEARCH WRITING

INTERVENTION

Writing is thinking on paper

William Zinsser

9.1 INTRODUCTION

The choice of Design Research in this study allowed for the identification of a complex practical problem, for which at the onset of this research and in this context, there was no solution. This complex practical problem transferred to a deep research problem (Plomp, 2013) which sought ways of understanding in an attempt to find a workable and effective solution.

A deep research problem seems to have arisen in the higher education context in recent years from a change in policy as well as a systems change. Wider access to higher education has seen an increase in numbers and every level seems to be affected as a result. At postgraduate level, supervisors are stretched and overloaded and administrative examining processes are more demanding than before. This study identified that students entering a specific postgraduate programme in education were found to be unprepared for study at this level based on an in-depth needs analysis (see Phase 1 in Chapter 5). Understanding the problem led to an attempt to find a solution to the complex practical problem. To address the deeper research problem, this study drew on Van den Akker's explanation of the process of Design Research (see Chapter 1 Section 1.4), and understanding of the deeper research problem led to the design and development of an intervention (X) for the sample of education postgraduate students registered for a specific master's programme in 2011 within the South African context (Z), to assist them in developing academic research writing (Y) needed for success at this level of study. To accomplish this task, characteristics drawn from the theory on academic literacies were identified (A, B, and C) to developmentally support them through the process of their research writing (K, L, and M) with the aim of successfully completing and defending their research proposals within the first year of study (P, Q, and R).

The analysis of the data took into account three points of view representing three aspects of curriculum development (see Van den Akker, 2003). The *substantive aspects* for each of the phases in the research was addressed through the main research question: ***What are the characteristics of an intervention for the development of academic research***

writing which will best support postgraduate students in education in the first stage of their research? In addition, *technical-professional aspects* were considered in each of the phases reporting on the procedural, contextual, and educational aspects that the development process followed; and finally, the *socio-political aspect* took into consideration the conditions and events, beliefs and actions that were seen to have influenced the process.

The pertinent issues that emerged from the findings from a systematic, formal and statistical point of view and from a student perspective are reported in Phase 3 Cycle 7 (in Chapter 7). This penultimate chapter reports on Phase 3 Cycle 8: the identification, investigation and utilisation of a set of design principles for use in a particular programme for implementation in a specific context. Table 9.1 outlines this phase.

Table 9.1: Phase 3 (Cycle 8) of the research

PHASE 3: Evaluation of the intervention				
PROTOTYPE 3				
	Focus of the research in the respective cycles	Research activities	Participants	Criteria
Cycle 8	Identification, investigation and utilisation of design principles in a specific context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalising design principles for an optimal academic research writing intervention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Researcher 	

9.2 DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR A MODEL FOR THE TEACHING OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH WRITING

A set of design principles emerged from the investigation into the context of this particular master's programme and appear to optimise a model for the teaching of academic research writing. This model:

1. comprises a *specialised* (Nieveen, 2007), *structured programme* (Morss & Murray, 2001; Murray, 2007) which is required to enable postgraduate students to improve and develop their academic research writing;
2. lays a *foundation for learning* (Vygotsky, 1978), which would provide the base for the students, initially during the early stages of their research, to develop those relevant discipline-specific content knowledge research practices and knowledge needed at master's level (HEQF, 2004 ; Mouton, 2001);

3. employs a *multi-faceted and integrated approach* to the teaching of academic research writing (Ivanič, 2004) to address the needs of the students in ensuring that the students are socialised into the Discourse;
4. focuses on *explicit teaching of academic writing* (Aitchison & Lee, 2006; Ganobscik-Williams 2006; Mullen, 2001, 2006; Skillen, 2006), to make known the unknown in academic writing (Thesen, 2001);
5. extends the supervisor dyad to a *supervision team* which has the ability to scaffold and support students and their learning (Vygotsky, 1978; Bruner, 1990) within a *research triad* (Nel, 2006); and finally,
6. operates within a *community of practice* (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998; 2001; c2007) to facilitate learning with, in and from the community.

Each of these principles are described individually and discussed critically in the following sub-sections. Note must be taken that each of the design principles are found in the literature; however, the uniqueness of this study is that all the design principles were used in a combined manner, which guided the intervention. Hargreaves & Fink's (2006) analogy of "a meal not a menu" (p. 251) is useful in understanding the new knowledge gained where each principle is not seen as an item on a menu to choose from, but rather a whole meal to be enjoyed with various courses. It is this aspect that is explored: how these design principles operated as a set of six (SoS) principles for developing academic research writing in this specific context.

9.2.1 A Specialised, Structured Programme

Suggested by this design principle is the development of a specialised, structured programme that taps into the criteria of relevance (Nieveen, 2007). Understanding that the development of writing is related to the acquisition and development of content knowledge, this programme would, using the vehicle of specialised content knowledge to develop the specialised student writing required at postgraduate level, offer students the opportunity, the time and the support needed to develop productive writing habits. This structured programme would over the period of postgraduate study, be it a year or two or three, break down the writing into manageable tasks with particular deadlines, corroborating the work of Morss & Murray (2001). The notion of 'incrementalising' writing also aligns with this study where a structured approach incorporates a range of writing opportunities or events where students are involved in "studying their writing processes in order to increase their understanding and, potentially, their output" (Murray, 2007, p. 1070).

In this study, a need for writing support was identified (see Chapter 5) and a programme was designed to run over one academic year. The aim was to support the students in conceptualising and writing their research proposals and successfully defend them so that they were able to progress with their research, as this had been identified as a major obstacle for the students, affecting immediate throughput. Use of an incremental model developed the students' understanding of the various dimensions of writing and assisted students through the various steps and stages of writing their research proposals offering developmental support (Catterall et al., 2011). Students developed understanding of the *rhetorical dimension of writing* which focuses on audience and purpose, while the *psycho-social dimension of writing* tapped into peer interaction and collaboration which assisted in developing a sense of role, identity and voice. Understanding the *behavioural dimensions* of writing led the students to become aware of not only the processes involved in writing but also take cognisance of their writing behaviours in order to develop self-efficacy and improve proficiency and thus attainment.

In this study, students who participated in the specialised, structured programme were given many teaching and learning opportunities drawing on the theory of practice to move from novice to emerging researcher. However, because product (the research proposal) drove the process (the writing of the research proposal) with time constraints being imposed by Faculty (defence to be conducted within that academic year), it was felt that students' academic research writing was compromised and students did not have sufficient time to socialise effectively into their academic Discourse, develop and improve their writing or to confidently move from novice to developing researcher. However, in the evaluation phase, students did report on the value that the intervention had added in the development of their academic research writing and in preparing them for the next phase of their studies, particularly as the intervention took them systematically through the steps required to write a research proposal.

9.2.2 Laying a common Foundation for Learning

This study acknowledged student cultural capital, their primary discourses and their prior learning, but it was felt that more stringent measures need to be put in place for the selection of students ensuring that they meet the criteria for access to study at this level and particularly with a master's by dissertation. As discussed previously (see Chapter 5 Section 5.2.2.1) access to postgraduate education is obtained on the basis of students meeting specific criteria laid down by the university which vary at master's level from faculty to faculty, within the faculty and between programmes. However, whilst the students who applied for this particular master's programme in general met almost all the requirements, only four of the ten students had a background in the field of learning which

meant that there were gaps in the students' discipline-specific foundational knowledge which had to be addressed (see Blunt, 2009). In addition, some students had completed their earlier degrees at other institutions therefore their academic preparation was different and subsequently some students were better prepared than others. One student had moved from a humanities discipline to education, and thus had little theoretical knowledge or understanding of the field of education, as well as little knowledge and experience of research methodology. Furthermore, there is a disjuncture between the honours and master's programmes in terms of content affecting the articulation of students between the two levels. In theory, the honours in the same specialised field should be the foundation for programmes to follow and this study revealed that this was not entirely the case.

If students entering a programme are considered to be under-prepared, then it is necessary that a foundation for learning, building on students' prior knowledge (Vygotsky, 1978) is laid to ensure that students are assisted, particularly as study at master's level constitutes research with writing being an integral part. In addition, if students have come through an honours programme developed in line with the HEQF, they should have the necessary foundation for learning. This study revealed that this could not be assumed. The needs analysis (see Chapter 5) identified significant gaps in their knowledge in their field of learning as well as with research methodology and academic writing. Therefore, laying a common foundation for learning was a key aspect of the specialised structured programme taking into consideration the prior learning, knowledge and competence the students brought with them.

This research pointed to the design principle of laying a common foundation which incorporates the three knowledge domains seen as fundamental at postgraduate level: that of discipline-specific content knowledge, research methodology knowledge and research writing knowledge. This study took note of the HEQF Level 9A which requires students at the master's level of postgraduate study to have *a comprehensive and systematic knowledge base in a discipline/field with specialist knowledge in an area at the forefront of the discipline/field or area of professional practice* (Ministry of Education, 2004). Thus, the first knowledge domain, *discipline-specific content knowledge*, ensures that a foundation is developed on which students can build their research, and is seen as a fundamental component. Although some of the students had completed an honours programme in this particular field in which the master's programme was situated, many had come from other fields of learning and, as a result, this aspect, incorporating discipline-specific content knowledge, was considered vital.

Because this master's programme is by dissertation, this study found that the limiting aspect of 'time' compromised the laying of a common solid foundation. In comparison to a taught master's, this intervention was dependent on the various Programme Seminars and contact sessions to lay a foundation for learning particularly with discipline-specific content knowledge, which in terms of nominal hours, was greatly reduced, so it was felt that learning was compromised. As a result a snapshot of assessment and quality assurance was given relying on the students themselves to venture into the specific content reading that they needed for their particular study. During the process of writing the proposal, the supervision team commented that the students were not really engaged in in-depth reading of their field of learning.

In addition, this study took cognisance that the HEQF Level 9B also requires students at this level to display *a coherent and critical understanding of the theory, research methodologies and techniques relevant to a discipline/field* (Ministry of Education, 2004). Evidence from the student records also highlighted the fact that while some students had been exposed to both qualitative and quantitative research methods, others had only worked within one approach. One student had not had any methodology training. This master's programme was by dissertation only, which meant that it was a research master's dependent on *research methodology knowledge* to successfully conduct the research. Hence, it was important to introduce the second knowledge domain, that of research methodology knowledge, to ensure that the main research designs and their application in authentic studies are made known to the students as part of the intervention. Inclusion of this aspect reinforces the HEQF Level 9C requirement of *mastery of the application of research methods, techniques and technologies appropriate to an area of specialisation* (Ministry of Education, 2004). This intervention with a combination of Faculty and Programme Seminars were aimed at introducing the students to various research designs and methodologies. This study, based on student evaluations, found that the most valuable teaching was seen in the form of workshops where student learning was maximised; however, the lecture-type seminar, which did not allow for student interaction and discussion, was seen as of less value.

What this study revealed was that students were selective in the research methodology sessions that they attended, focusing on those that were immediately relevant to their studies and not attending those which they perceived were of little value or direct relevance. As students had elected early on which methodology approach that they would use, they only attended sessions on qualitative, or quantitative or mixed methods and as such did not develop an overall picture of research. Of concern is that the students had come into the programme with little research methodology knowledge and with such a

narrowed view, it was felt that they were unable to judge what was relevant or irrelevant to what is needed at master's level. In addition, it is important to consider the type of student that the programme is aiming to produce – that of a professional in the field equipped for further work in research, practice or policy; but with limited exposure, the question arises about whether these students are equipped with the relevant knowledge and competencies to take with them into their professions

As a result, student attendance at Faculty and Programme Seminars and contact sessions (see Chapter 6 and 7) was not registered as full attendance. Therefore, this meant that development and construction of knowledge of the field and knowledge of research was evident in the writing of their research proposals, limiting their ability to craft their arguments regarding their choice of research designs and methods revealing a very narrow understanding, further hampered by their own limited reading.

The intention of the Faculty Seminars (known as Postgraduate Support Sessions) is to support postgraduate students but this study has shown the disjuncture between the two programmes, that of the Faculty and that of the Programme (discipline-specific). As far as this study could ascertain the Faculty Seminars (Support Sessions) do not draw on a structured core curriculum and annually are varied according to the acceptance of the visiting researchers and the willingness of Faculty members to present. This means that there is an *ad hoc* approach to research methodology curriculum provision for postgraduates in Education whereas the Programme plan was guided by the needs analysis.

9.2.3 Employing a Multi-Faceted and Integrated Approach

Drawing on the previous design principle, laying a common foundation for learning, this design principle points to three independent facets. Discipline-specific content knowledge, research methodology knowledge and academic research writing knowledge as independent knowledge domains are considered part of the whole resulting in their integration (see Figure 9.1) which leads to a multi-faceted yet integrated approach.

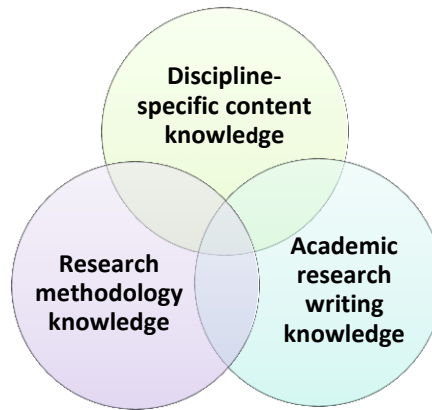


Figure 9.1: The integration of three knowledge domains

In line with the literature, this research has shown that academic writing is best promoted within the context of a specific academic discipline, understanding “that writing cannot be separated from the learning of the discipline” (Fergie et al., 2011, 236) and should thus be embedded in the teaching of that discipline, hence the importance of a common and strong foundation. This study revealed that within a master’s programme where a dissertation is required, implementing such as a multi-faceted and integrated approach assisted the students in becoming socialised into the academic Discourse appropriate to their field of study, fostered learning and knowledge making in their field of learning and led to the development of their academic research writing.

To unpack the academic research writing facet, the conceptual framework developed for this study incorporated Ivanič’s *Discourses of writing and learning to write* (2004) situated within the New Literacy Studies (see Chapter 3 Section 3.6). These approaches were incorporated into the pedagogical principles underpinning teaching and learning in the intervention (see Figure 9.2).

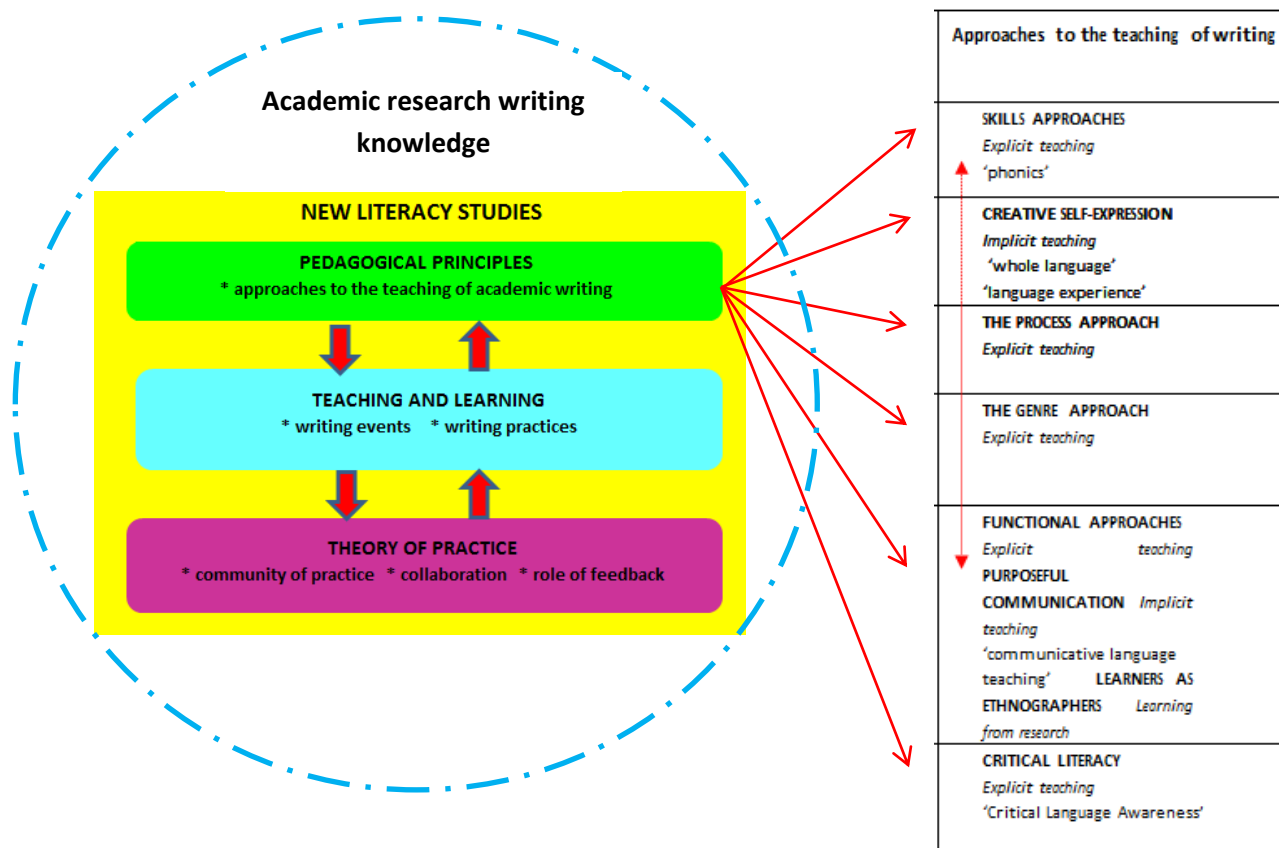


Figure 9.2: Approaches to the teaching of academic writing (adapted from Ivanič, 2004; Lea & Street, 1998)

This study experimented with the implementation of the various approaches, reinforcing the idea of multi-faceted, when deemed appropriate. For instance the **skills approach** (see Ivanič, 2004; Lea & Street, 1998) to the teaching of academic writing focuses on the mechanics of writing and took the form of teaching a set of writing skills. Within the context of this study, as students were seen to be under-prepared (see Chapters 5), this research identified that a skills approach was needed at some points to ensure that the students were explicitly taught the relevant academic writing practices and conventions to lay a good base for further development of their writing. However, this approach to the teaching of writing was not used in isolation.

The **creativity approach** tapped into the students' ability to 'tell a story' and aligned itself with both the mechanics of writing (applying linguistic rules and conventions of academic writing) and the mental process used in writing (developing a narrative line) (see Ivanič, 2004). In this study, a move needed to be made away from considering academic writing as formulaic, as writing is a very creative process (Murray & Moore, 2009) which requires the writer to make sense of thoughts, put them down on paper in a manner acceptable and interesting to the audience to ensure that effective communication takes place. This is reinforced by Nichols who argues that

... as for the stricture that we should be concerned with academic writing only, why should one be to the exclusion of the other? If academic writing cannot be creative, don't we have a problem? Let's celebrate creative intellectuals, intellectual creative writing and clear courageous language as giving the freedom to think further (2011, p. 25).

In this study, students initially tapped into their creativity by undertaking personal writing which assisted them firstly in writing about themselves and developing an understanding of writing, but also assisted them in the transition to academic writing. Although both expert reviewers felt this approach was removed from academic writing, the students reported that using this approach with personal writing assisted them in understanding how to write a story and develop the golden thread of coherence. This approach also forced them to 'unlock' their writing ability and as they were drawing from personal experience, they understood that one cannot write in a vacuum but that writing needs to be informed by experience or by one's reading.

The **process approach** to the teaching of writing (discussed in Chapter 3 Section 3.2) incorporated all iterative practical cycles and processes (see Coffin et al., 2003) through which the students worked in the conceptualising and writing of their research proposals, leading them to develop understanding about their writing and the processes through which they move. When applied in the intervention, this approach, though well entrenched in writing practice, conflicted with the practice of the students. The requirement to go through iterative cycles in the rethinking and refinement of their writing was a process that many students did not favour. However, the supervision team, with the use of feedback, worked with the students in developing an understanding that many revisions incorporating critical feedback would prepare the proposal for defence.

In postgraduate studies, a specific genre of writing is used. Thus the **genre approach** (see Hyland, 2003, 2007; Ivanič, 2004; Jacobs, 2007; Paré et al., 2009) to the teaching of writing, although focused on the final product, assists the students in understanding the conventions of the product and the "linguistics characteristic of different text-types" (Ivanič, 2004, p. 233). It is in combination with the **functional approaches** (Ivanič, 2004), situated in a social practices discourse (see Lea & Street, 1998), that the teaching of writing ensures that purposeful communication takes places. In the study, use of these approaches ensured the socialisation of students into the Discourse (see Gee, 1990) occurring with exposure to discipline-specific content knowledge and its relevant discourse, leading to an understanding of what is expected within the genre of research proposal writing. As language within higher education is still highly problematical and complex with

the majority of postgraduate students studying through English as an additional language (Butler, 2006, p. 198), as in this study, proficiency in the Discourse as well as the language of learning - that is “proficiency in the dominant language” (Leibowitz, 2011, p. 219) - had a major influence on academic writing.

In this study, a research proposal template was used and had both advantages and disadvantages. The template gave structure to the proposal and guided the students in the requirements of the various sections and thus facilitated the writing. However, the template was seen as a ‘fill in’ exercise, a point raised by Expert Reviewer B (see Chapter 8 Section 8.2.1), considering ‘what’ needed to be written instead of ‘how’ the content should be written. However, a point needs to be made that the students in this study seemed to lack even the knowledge of the ‘what’ and therefore need this before the ‘how’ can be considered. In retrospect, greater buy-in by the supervision team and collaboration with the academic writing practitioner in working with the students in the writing of their proposals might have resulted in better written proposals which argued for their research and the methodology followed (see Chapter 8 Section 8.5). It would seem that many students had not as yet developed an argumentative style of writing and rather depended on descriptive writing as seen in novice writers. Perhaps more time and effort aimed at working with the academic research writing would have helped in this area.

The final approach to the teaching of writing, as depicted on the framework, is the **critical literacy approach**. Ivanič (2004) explains that writing is a socio-politically constructed practice, and even if the students are able to take on the ‘mantle’ of academia, they need to understand that different types of writing are required in different settings – the politics of writing – with power playing a major role (see Cope & Kalantzis, 1993), and thus questioning power relations, discourses and identities (Shor, 1999).

In working with these students in this particular context, there is a need to be flexible and to draw on a variety of approaches to the teaching writing with this study showing that more focus was placed on the earlier approaches. However, it was within the critical literacy approach, when students were finalising their research proposals in preparation for defence that an identity began to emerge (see Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Van Rensburg, 2004). Jacobs reports on “the ‘becoming’ process of academic identity construction” (2007b, p. 17). Students, through interaction and engagement with discipline-specific knowledge and its discourse, reconceptualise themselves which feeds into the process of developing identity. This study found that this process takes time, an evaluation reached by the expert reviewer (see Chapter 8 Section 8.2.1), who felt that only a few of the students were beginning to embark with confidence on their scholarly journey and thus

developing identity while one or two were still at a novice level. It is the aim of universities to work within a critical literacy approach to the teaching of writing; however, given the reality of the context, this study points to a range of approaches.

9.2.4 Explicit Teaching of Academic Research Writing

Of interest to this study is that in many HEIs, academic writing or the teaching of academic literacies is seen as a stepchild, “something separate from, and marginal to, mainstream academics” (see Jacobs, 2007a, p. 875) and as reported in Ganobcsik-Williams (2004), is not considered an integral part of the teaching and learning of higher education.

Aligned with the multi-faceted and integrated approach, the literature (see Ivanič, 2004) and the results of this research point to the principle of explicit teaching of academic research writing. Internationally, research has argued that explicit teaching at all levels is vital to achieve success and that such teaching of the discourses and genres is advisable (Aitchison & Lee, 2006; Cope & Kalantzis, 1993; Hyland, 2007), even though it is not considered part of postgraduate pedagogy (see Ganobcsik-Williams, 2006).

In the South African context, language practitioners at certain universities are working closely with departments to integrate the teaching of writing into the curriculum, making explicit the norms and expectations for writing within the disciplines (see Chapter 3). However, the teaching of academic literacy is still marginalised in the academy and not seen as the ‘real’ academic job of the university (see Jacobs, 2007a). This intervention, implemented in one master’s programme, is the only one in the Faculty of Education which incorporates an academic research writing practitioner.

Guided by the literature, the study sought to explicitly teach academic writing using the vehicle of discipline-specific content knowledge and research methodology knowledge. Although it was seen as a good approach (see Aitchison & Lee, 2006; 2010; Skillen & Mahony, 1997) and incorporated the approaches to teaching academic writing, during the intervention more emphasis was given to the development of content and methodology with discussions on the conventions of writing not being the main focus. Ideally, students would have been suitably equipped with the foundation of content knowledge and research methodology knowledge to draw on and thus the intervention would have ensured a stronger focus on academic writing could have been given which would have seen greater attention to the conventions of writing.

9.2.5 Scaffolding by a Supervision Team and Research Triad

According to the traditional model of postgraduate study, the supervisor works alone in the customary supervision dyad (Paré et al., 2009; Strauss, 2012). This model is seen as an apprentice and master approach and is certainly common in the context of this study. This programme provided students with an alternate model where the student and supervisor and co-supervisors were joined by the academic research writing practitioner. Therefore, the students were scaffolded by an extended team whose strengths were optimised and incorporated into a supervision team with the language practitioner to work as a collaborative research triad.

This design principle of being scaffolded by a supervision team within a research triad is supported by theories of learning put forward by Vygotsky where scaffolding is seen to support the student drawing on the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). Incorporating scaffolding into the intervention meant that the support offered by the supervision team and language practitioner was vital in guiding the students through the first phase of research until they had built up the confidence to work independently.

This notion of a supervision team draws both from empirical data as well as literature which suggests that as choosing an advisor or supervisor could be a difficult task, compiling a dissertation committee or supervision team (Bolker, 1998), a practice common in several countries such as the US, could work successfully in such a programme. This committee could be composed of a variety of knowledge bases such as discipline, experience and background, and comprise a mentor, an expert in the field, a methodologist, a coach, an editor, or someone to advise on the reading and writing to constitute a supervision team (see Cryer, 2006, p. 45-46). In South Africa and particularly in the study's context, it is not common. In this intervention, the supervision team comprised an experienced supervisor as well as a group of novice supervisors taking on the role of co-supervisors, each with their own subject expertise and methodology knowledge, working with an academic research writing practitioner.

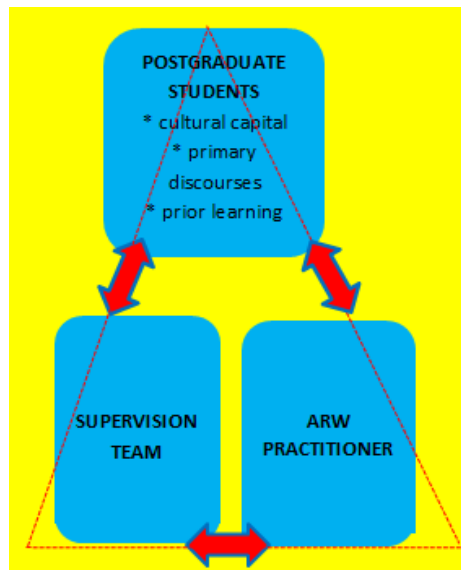


Figure 9.3: The research triad (see Nel, 2006; Dowse & Van Rensburg, 2011)

Working within a research triad was one way in which to assist with over-subscription of supervisors in addition to assist with novice supervisors needing mentoring. The notion of a supervision team comprising new supervisors being mentored by an experienced one was innovative in this specific context; however, it did have challenges. As the team comprised members with differing qualifications and experience, in addition to personalities, values and beliefs, the inner dynamics of the group needed to be carefully managed. Communication was an important aspect in this study where firstly, the identification of clear goals was necessary to facilitate the planning and implementation, and secondly, the assigning of clear demarcated roles in alignment with team member's strengths but also with the consensus of the member agreeing on what was acceptable and feasible.

One experienced supervisor, four co-supervisors made up the supervision team working in conjunction with the academic research writing practitioner in supporting ten master's students. For the supervision team to work effectively, this study clearly shows the need for leadership in guiding and mentoring the co-supervisors in the art and practice of supervision particularly as the expectation of supervision is high. This study found that the role of the experienced supervisor was key in not only driving the process but also in ensuring that all aspects and areas are covered to ensure that the research proposals are written in compliance with the requirements for this particular master's programme.

As the third member of the triad, the academic research writing practitioner's prior experience in working with postgraduates was fundamental but as writing is integral to the discipline, an understanding of writing and writing conventions in this particular discipline was important to ensure appropriate and relevant support as a bridge between students

and their writing and the supervision team and their expertise with content knowledge and research methodology knowledge.

In this study, all members were eager to participate in offering their support and expertise to the students as well as receiving mentorship; however during the year two members of the supervision team left the university, resulting in only two members picking up the load of supervision and support which put considerable strain and stress on the process.

9.2.6 Working within a Community of Practice

The principle of working within a community of practice emerged relatively strongly from this study. As discussed in Chapter 3 (see Section 3.6), a community of practice constitutes the created learning space where students learn with and from each, engaging in collegiality and collaboration. Aitchison and Lee (2006) discuss this notion as one of mutuality where know-how and expertise is shared to promote and develop writer identity with an understanding of who we are and what we should be while postgraduate students, thus changing from practitioners to students and thereafter to novice writers, finally becoming researchers.

In this study, the theory of practice drew strongly on the notion of developing a community of practice underpinned by theories of learning (Vygotsky, 1978; Bruner, 1990), where collaboration and the role of feedback played a major role. The facilitation of negotiated interaction called on the zone of proximal development to provide learning that scaffolded and encouraged students to initiate and become involved in discussion which stretched students' thinking and abilities. While some students valued the time spent in discussion and peer critique, suggesting that it clarified thinking and offered another perspective on their proposed research, others felt that little was gained by these interactions. The giving and receiving of feedback required the reading of another person's writing which gave the students the opportunity to be critical about the content but also see another style of writing. Giving and receiving of feedback assisting in developing more critical practices which the students could transfer to their own work.

What can be learnt from this study is that with a diverse student population, there are differences in competence, cultures, age, maturity and experience and as individuals each student works and reacts differently in the group. Management of the group was thus challenging in that every attempt was made so that learning and meaning making took place. What was created was a safe environment in which to work, explore, develop and find identity, which assisted in promoting learner autonomy and confidence, an important aspect as building of confidence assists in the development of the students as independent researchers (Aitchison & Lee 2006). In retrospect, greater specialist input

with discipline specific content knowledge from the supervision team could have led to more stimulating learning and writing events creating a discussion forum for the greater development of intellectual capital.

What this study did find is that student motivation, attitude and commitment to work is influenced by work commitments as well as family responsibilities and influences the students' postgraduate progression. However, if students approach their studies, which are dependent on their writing, with a positive attitude and commitment to work, the opportunities for growth and achievement are there.

This set of six (SoS) design principles for academic research writing: *developing a specialised, structured programme, building a foundation for learning, employing a multi-faceted and integrated approach, explicit teaching of academic writing with the participation of a supervision team thus creating a research triad while working within a community of practice* have emerged from this research. Based upon the evidence from this study, a model for the teaching of academic research writing is proposed (see Chapter 9 Figure 9.4) appropriate for postgraduate students within the education field of learning (see Figure 9.4).

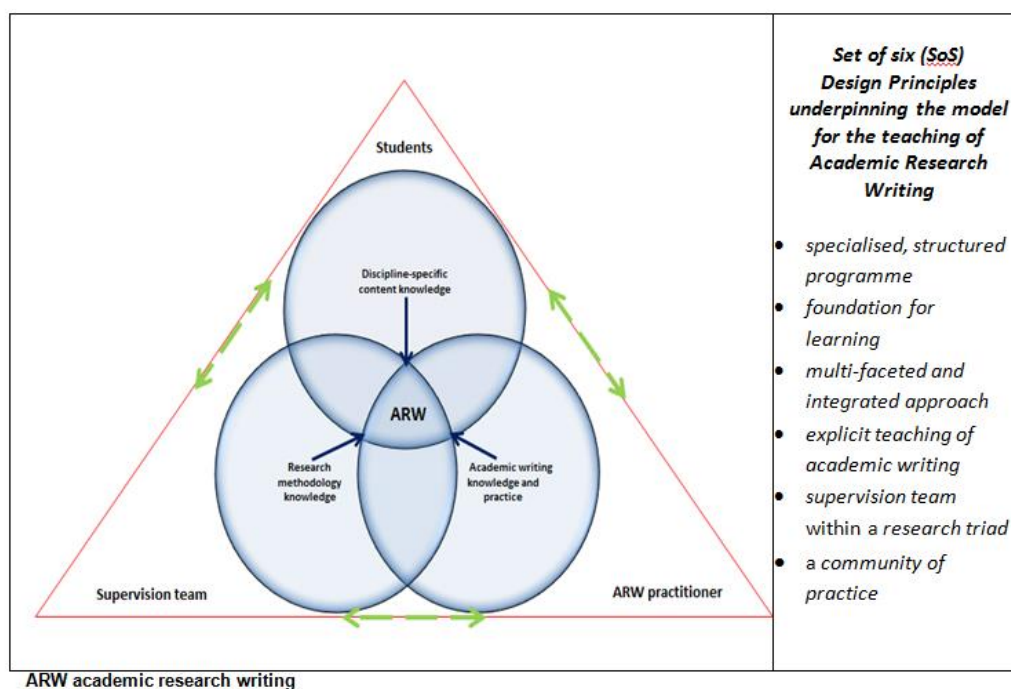


Figure 9.4: Model for the teaching of Academic Research Writing²⁶

²⁶ The first rough model, drawing on the research triad developed in my master's study (see Nel, 2006 and Dowse & Van Rensburg, 2010) was designed in consultation with my supervisor Prof Howie and used by her in a presentation at Unisa (see Howie, 2012). Development and refinement of the subsequent model has drawn on this study.

The model for the teaching of academic research writing is seen as a multi-faceted and integrated model of discipline-specific content knowledge, research methodology knowledge and knowledge of academic writing, a specialised, structured programme which lays a foundation for learning. The academic writing domain is underpinned by the New Literacy Studies which incorporates pedagogical principles drawing on Ivanič's framework of approaches to the teaching of writing and the theory of practice which feeds into the teaching and learning (see Figure 9.3). This model operates within a community of practice (CoP) where students are given the opportunity to work together in a common field of interest being committed to learning with and from each other. The community in which access to expertise, development of confidence, personal and professional development and development of academic identity is facilitated, is supported by a research triad comprising discipline-specific content and research methodology experts, language practitioners such as academic research writing practitioners and a supervision team made up of experienced and mentored supervisors. This model then is underpinned by the set of six (SoS) design principles.

9.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter reported on Cycle 3 Phase 8 in which the set of six (SoS) design principles emerged from a systematic, formal and statistical point of view and from a student perspective. Each of these principles were individually presented and critiqued, but cognisance must be taken that these design principles should be combined and together as a whole, they represent part of the characteristics for an effective intervention for the development of academic research writing. The final section of the chapter presented the model for the teaching of academic research writing which is underpinned by the set of six design principles (see Figure 9.4).

The final chapter of this thesis reflects on the study itself from a number of perspectives and in addition, it offers some recommendations for consideration before bringing the study to a close.

CHAPTER 10: DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

*We write to find out what we didn't know we knew.
We write to know deeper and finer.
We write to connect the dots, a whole new constellation*

Carolyn Coman

10.1 INTRODUCTION

This study was motivated firstly, by an identified need (in the literature, both international and national), indicating that support in the form of academic research writing was required for master's students through the early stages of their research, and secondly, by a need empirically evident in a particular master's programme. This chapter firstly presents a summary of the research (10.2), then reflections and discussions are undertaken amongst others to justify choices made and arguments put forward throughout the study, as well as a reflection on the conceptual framework about implications of findings for theory (10.3). Recommendations are offered in this chapter for consideration at policy level, for research and within the practice of facilitating the teaching of academic research writing (10.4), and finally, the conclusion is given (10.5).

10.2 OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH

In conceptualising this research, a decision was taken to apply Design Research as it was considered the most appropriate research design to address this particular research problem and research question. One function of Design Research is that of providing information about theoretical components to inform theory related to the research problem. Another is designing and developing an intervention which would offer a research-based solution to a complex, though practical problem and would lead to answering the main research question: *What are the characteristics of an intervention for promoting academic research writing which will best support postgraduates in education in the first stage of their research?* A further function is a theoretical yield, namely the design principles.

This research comprised various phases and cycles consistent with Design Research: a preliminary phase, Phase 1 where the problem was identified and a needs analysis conducted (see Chapter 5); the prototyping phase, Phase 2 included the design, development and implementation of the intervention and its implementation during two semesters (see Chapters 7 and 8); and the final phase known as the assessment phase,

Phase 3, which involved an evaluation of the intervention with the outcome of identifying characteristics, specifically design principles (see Chapter 8). Data was collected in all three phases of the research to answer the specific research questions, designed for each of the phases, which elaborate on the main research question. Methods included student evaluations, assessments, student questionnaires and interviews (see Chapter 4), but these varied dependent on what was required in each of the phases. The Design Research model which guided the research process is seen below in Figure 10.1.

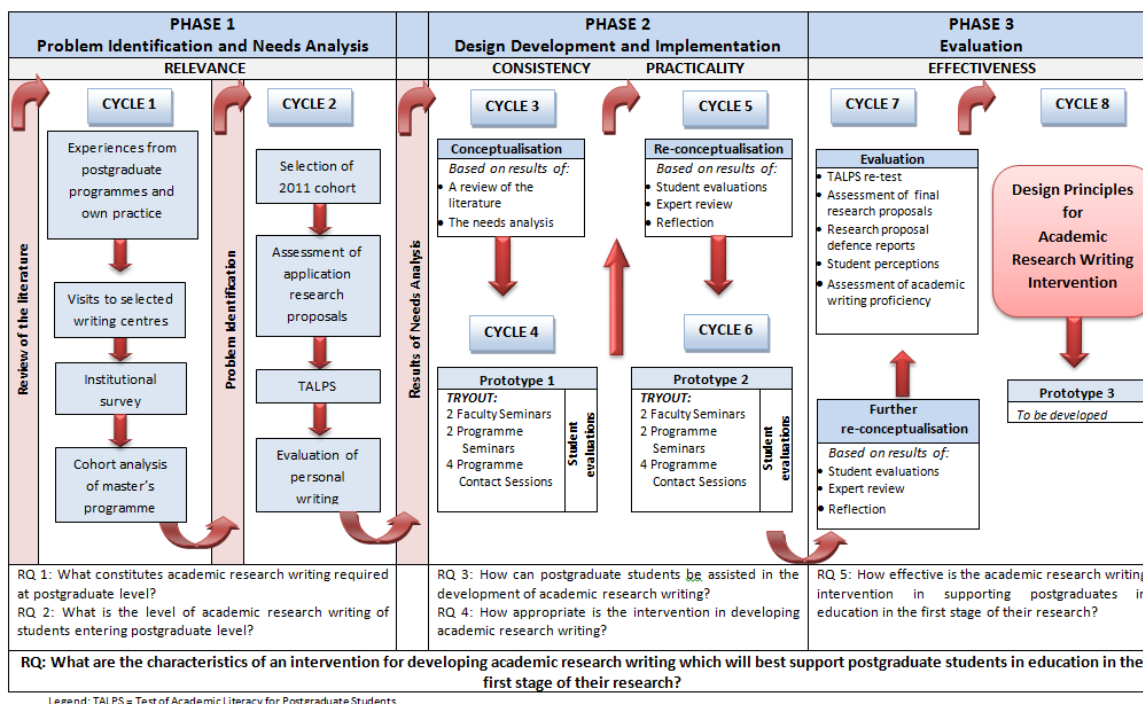


Figure 10.1 Design Research Model for the development of an academic research writing intervention

Within Phase 1, literature was reviewed on the teaching of academic writing (see Chapter 3) addressing Research Question 1 of *What constitutes academic research writing required at postgraduate level?* Unpacking academic writing at postgraduate level led to an understanding of the development of language, literacies and discourses investigating this from a Systemic Functional Linguistics as well as a New Literacies Studies perspective. An understanding of the teaching of academic writing drew on Ivanič's framework of *Discourses of Writing and Learning to Write* (Ivanič, 2004) which takes into account Lea and Street's model (1998). This framework informed the conceptual framework for the study (see Chapter 3 Section 3.6) within the contexts of culture and situation where the requirements at postgraduate level within the South African context (see Higher Education Qualifications Framework Appendix D) as well as the Faculty and Departmental requirements (see Postgraduate Policy Appendix E) were examined.

Phase 1 comprised two cycles. Cycle 1 identified the problem under study through a number of viewpoints. In working with postgraduate students over a period of time in various postgraduate programmes, my practice, as an academic research writing practitioner, alerted me to the lack of preparedness of some students for study at this level (see Chapter 5 Section 5.3.1). Visits to selected writing centres in South African universities gave an indication of programmes and systems in place to possibly support postgraduates. An institutional survey's findings (see Chapter 1 Section 1.2.1) aligned itself with the problem in that a reason for non-completion of studies at master's level could be seen as unpreparedness and lack of academic writing proficiency. An analysis of a specific cohort registered for a master's programme and tracking their progress over a number of years supported this (see Chapter 5 Section 5.2.1.3).

Cycle 2, the needs analysis, focused on the 2011 cohort of master's students, sampled for this study, and comprised a number of steps (see Chapter 5 Section 5.2.2). The selection process of the candidates for the master's programme in education was reviewed as were the application research proposals submitted as part of the selection process. The results of Test of Academic Literacy for Postgraduate Students (TALPS) and the assessment of application research proposals, used as a baseline assessment, assisted in highlighting the need for some sort of support and developmental programme for students entering the master's programme which would assist them in developing their academic literacies and facilitate the development of their academic writing. A further measure to gain some idea of the students' writing ability was an evaluation of their personal writing. Cycles 1 and 2, reported on in Chapter 5, address Research Question 2: *What is the level of academic research writing of students entering postgraduate study?*

The academic research writing intervention, informed by the needs analysis and designed to be implemented over two academic semesters (two prototypes), incorporated the compulsory Faculty Seminars, the Programme Seminars and the contact sessions. The design of Prototype 1 was informed by the design principles of the need to scaffold students during their postgraduate studies, supporting students in the acquisition of academic literacies and the development of their academic research writing within a community of practice comprising a research triad (see Cycle 3 see Chapter 6 Section 6.2). Implemented in Cycle 4 (see Chapter 6 Section 6.3), the intervention was geared to developing research methodology content knowledge and arranging writing events for students in which the writing of their research proposals was facilitated. Cycles 3 and 4 are reported on in Chapter 6.

Phase 2 Cycle 5 comprised a re-conceptualisation of the intervention to offer continuing support students through the second semester. This re-conceptualisation took cognisance of evaluations from the students, expert review as well as input from the supervision team. The emerging design principles informing this were that support should involve a range of components: discipline-specific content knowledge, conceptualisation as well as developing knowledge of appropriate methodology, and academic research writing understanding that it should be integral to the programme. This prototype continued with and included the compulsory Faculty Seminars, the Programme Seminars and contact sessions, which were seen as developmental, and worked at providing a common foundation for learning at postgraduate level. In addition, note was taken of what was required for the students to complete and defend their research proposals.

Cycle 6 comprised the implementation of Prototype 2. The intervention underpinned by the design principles of offering a multi-faceted and integrated approach to postgraduate study and incorporating explicit teaching of academic writing was aimed at supporting the students in completing the final sections of the writing of their research proposals and preparing for their defence. It entailed putting in place a number of different opportunities within a community of practice for situated learning. Supporting the students was the research triad made up of the supervision team – the main supervisor and co-supervisors as well as the academic research writing practitioner. These two cycles, Cycles 5 and 6 are reported on in Chapter 7. All four cycles in this phase address Research Questions 3 and 4: *How can postgraduate students be assisted in the development of academic research writing?* and *How appropriate is the intervention in developing academic research writing?*

Phase 3 comprised the evaluation stage. This evaluation was conducted using a variety of methods: expert review of the two prototypes, an evaluation of students' research proposals at four different points and the pre and post-test of TALPS and student evaluation of the intervention (and programme as a whole) via evaluations, questionnaires and interviews. The results of the evaluation are found in Chapter 8 and address Research Question 5: *How effective is the academic research writing intervention in supporting postgraduates in education.*

Chapter 9 focuses on the identification, investigation and utilisation of a set of six (SoS) design principles for a specific context which are incorporated into a model of academic research writing (see Chapter 9 Figure 9.4) and which will feed in to the design and development of Prototype 3.

10.3 SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

In this section, each of the research questions is discussed and findings presented. To inform the needs analysis, Research Question 1: *What constitutes academic research writing at postgraduate level?* was addressed, and through a review of the literature was able to ensure that the study was theoretically informed.

In contrast to undergraduate writing where students may be required to write expository, descriptive, narrative or argumentative essays, writing at postgraduate level requires the writing of a research paper (be it a research proposal, a dissertation, thesis or article) which “is the culmination and final product of an involved process of research, critical thinking, source evaluation, organization, and composition” (Purdue, online). Within the genre of the research proposal or the dissertation, expository, descriptive and narrative writing is used but more focus is placed on argumentative and analytical writing.

Institutions tend to assume that if a student reaches postgraduate level, this is sufficient indication of an ability to write forcefully and coherently (see Angelil-Carter, 2000). Thus, postgraduate writing is seen as self-directed, as it is assumed that students already bring with them academic research writing competence to their advanced studies, having learned to play the game of the academy (Prior, 2002, p. ix). But research has shown that many students nationally and internationally have not “had the kinds of education that required extended writing about scholarly texts (Rose & McClafferty, 2001, p. 28) and so rarely write like professionals in their discipline when first entering postgraduate studies (Garbus, 2005; Koen, 2007).

Although the conventions of academic writing are largely transparent to instructors socialised in a discipline, for many students entering postgraduate studies these conventions are not as yet known and learnt particularly as a new genre of writing is called for at postgraduate level. Paré et al. report that “it is ironic that [this] genre is such an under-theorized, under-studied and under-taught text” (2009, p. 178). As a result, the majority of students entering postgraduate study need to be part of a developmental programme to support and scaffold them during the first stage of their research and allow them time to socialise into the relevant Discourse.

As writing is central to research (Aitchison & Lee, 2006), students need to develop an understanding that *writing*, informed by *reading* is integral and consideration needs to be taken of their inter-connectedness. Taylor et al. argue that “academic writing is not fundamentally a question of applying skills. Rather, it demands the creation of meaning

and the expression of understanding” (1988, p. 2) involving dialogue, reading, thinking and practice within an academic discipline.

Drawing on the model for academic research writing (see Figure 9.4), this study found that the following components of knowledge domains, in this particular context, are needed to constitute academic research writing:

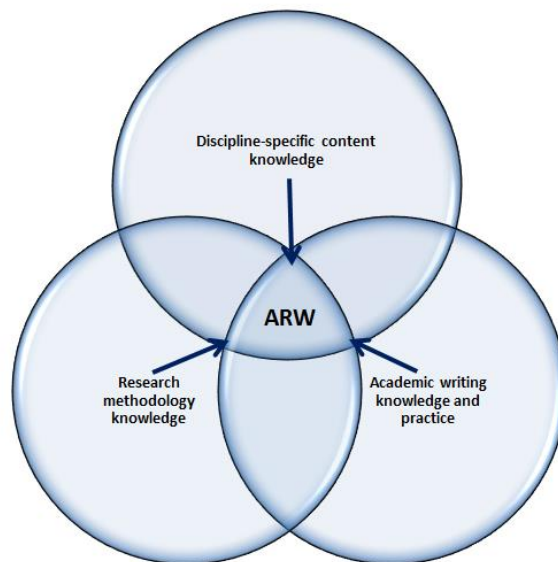


Figure 10.2: A component of the model for academic research writing

Discipline-specific content knowledge involves the ability

- to draw on a comprehensive knowledge base in a specific discipline or area of learning,
- to develop an appropriate discourse for use in this particular discipline or area of learning. Research speaks of the acculturation of the student into the academic community (Bruffee, 1993, p. 54),
- to source information, the literature, current studies to continue the development of the knowledge base,
- to critically read, analyse and synthesise the information, and
- to think deeply and based on reading, display understanding and develop new meaning/knowledge.

Research methodology content knowledge involves the ability

- to draw on a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of research designs, methods and strategies to conduct the research, and

- to select and defend the choice of the most appropriate research methodology and apply this in practice using a variety of approaches – qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods.

Academic writing knowledge involves the ability

- to read critically and write with understanding in the chosen language of teaching,
- to write within specific genres required at master's level,
- to identify a research problem, outlining the problem statement and arguing the rationale for its conduct,
- to review the literature, analysing and synthesising it to support the research,
- to report on the application of research methodology to the study and argue for its use,
- to report on the research process by being critical and reflective,
- to report objectively on the data, and
- to present the results and communicate the findings.

Drawing on these components leads to effective academic research writing where the proposed research is presented via a research proposal in the first stage of research and the results of the research are communicated via the dissertation and an article in the final stage of research. However, the presentation of both documents should meet the required standards of academic writing. The experience in this study is that the timing, frequency, intensity and chronology of the acquisition and development of components of academic research writing vary according to each participant.

The needs analysis in Phase 1 (see Chapter 5) was designed to address Research Question 2: *What is the level of academic research writing of students entering postgraduate study?* It revealed that the majority of students entering this particular graduate programme in education were practising teachers or practitioners, more mature than the average student and most often had a gap in studies at higher education level. In addition, the majority of the students had come through the education system situated in a former political era where education delivery had been unequal and inadequate for most students. All students in this cohort were seen as being underprepared for a variety of reasons: underpreparedness due to largely schooling and initial undergraduate background (primarily Black students), language background (affecting all students for whom English is an additional language) and education with insufficient content knowledge of research and discipline as well as change in discipline (the latter being only one student) and field of study.

This finding concurred with South African literature (Angelil-Carter, 1998; Giannakopoulos & Buckley, 2009; Hendriks & Quinn, 2001; Koen, 2007; Leibowitz, 2000; Leibowitz et al., 1997; Netswera & Mavundla, 2001; Quinn, 1999; Thesen, 1997; Van Aswegan, 2007), as well as literature from the United Kingdom (Ganobcsik-Williams, 2004; Lillis & Turner, 2001) and Australia (Catterall et al., 2011; Skillen & Mahony, 1997) where students, many of whom were foreign, entering graduate programmes, were seen as being underprepared for study at this level in terms of language proficiency in the dominant language as well as academic writing proficiency. The results of TALPS and the application and initial proposal assessments, assisted in highlighting the need for some sort of support and developmental programme for students entering the programme; however, cognisance was taken of the intervention being relevant for the context.

In an attempt to foster competent academic research writers who were equipped with academic literacies needed at this level to move into the next stage of their research, an academic writing framework for guiding the design and development of the intervention was required. A specialised programme in the form of a structured academic research writing intervention operating within New Literacy Studies was considered the most appropriate approach and assisted in answering Research Question 3: *How can postgraduate students be assisted in the development of academic research writing?*

The approach taken in the teaching of academic research writing was underpinned by Ivanič's framework (2004) but the focus was primarily on the specialised type of writing needed at postgraduate level for the writing of the research proposal drawing on state-of-the-art (scientific) knowledge and ensuring that it was logically designed thus displaying relevance or content validity and consistency or construct validity respectively (Nieveen, 2007). This approach formed the core to support the students in the development of their academic research writing although the teaching approaches also varied, depending on the need. The approach to the teaching of academic writing was nested within the contexts of culture and situation where the requirements at postgraduate level within the South African context (see Higher Education Framework Appendix D) as well as the faculty and departmental requirements (see Postgraduate Policy Appendix E) guided the development of the intervention; however, such requirement could also be considered constraining (see Conceptual Framework Chapter 3 Section 3.6).

An issue which arose in the literature is that the students, even though they have shortcomings, should not be viewed through a deficit model (see Chapter 3 Section 3.4) but that the intervention should support them by being developmental. What this study confirmed is that an intervention which follows a developmental model (Skillen et al.,

1998) and an incremental process (Murray, 2007), drawing on the students' prior knowledge and competence implemented within a community of practice that draws the students in, appears appropriate. This community allowed the students the space and security to find their way with and through the interactions of the other students, gaining in confidence in their reading and writing. In addition, this study acknowledges the role that feedback plays in both its giving and receiving. By being actively involved, the students were motivated to engage in critical reading of texts and offer both positive and negative feedback to their peers. This developing competence then fed into the reading and critique of the students' own writing and in turn led into the development of identity guided by Discourse and that required by the institution (see Gee, 2000).

The fourth research question wanted to ascertain: *How appropriate is the intervention in developing academic research writing?* Appropriateness was defined through the criterion of practicality (Nieveen, 2007) in terms of delivery and development with the needs analysis showing that students did not just need to develop academic research writing, but that other aspects such as discipline-specific content knowledge and research methodology knowledge were incorporated and included in the intervention as components or domains of knowledge so that academic research writing was developed.

The majority of the students gave positive feedback for the Programme Seminars (Chapter 8 Section 8.4.2) as well as the contact sessions (Chapter 8 Section 8.4.3) in contrast to the Faculty Seminars (Chapter 8 Section 8.4.1) which tended to be generic and of less value. Students found that the Programme Seminars were at a suitably high level, related to their research and that the content assisted them in developing new knowledge as well as in understanding the next steps to be taken in their research. In reflection, the supervision team were very aware of the fine balancing act needed to support the students in all three knowledge domains throughout the process. However, expert reviewers (see Chapter 6 Section 6.5.1 and Chapter 8 Section 8.2.1) both felt that more emphasis was placed on these two domains – discipline-specific content knowledge and research methodology knowledge. This emphasis, largely due to the immediate needs of the students and the time constraints, may have compromised opportunities for academic research writing development. Suggestions were given by the expert reviewers on how the focus of the programme seminars and contact sessions could shift. They suggested that writing become the nucleus with the discipline-specific content and research methodology knowledge being the vehicle through which the development of academic research writing is effected. However, within this part-time master's programme, although students attended contact sessions regularly during the year-long intervention, some were hesitant about committing to spending more time in working at

developing their academic writing proficiency, preferring to spend the time on the writing of their chapters in an effort to complete the dissertation within the set timeframe, thus focusing on the product rather than the process.

In Phase 3, Research Question 5: *How effective is the academic research writing intervention in supporting postgraduates in education during the first stage of their research?* was asked to obtain a final evaluation of the intervention. Because a specialised, structured, developmental intervention with explicit teaching focusing on incremental steps was put in place during the year, it was expected that the students would be successful in completing the writing of their research proposals and that they would successfully defend these as confirmed by the research proposal defence (see Chapter 8 Section 8.3.2), and the assessment of the final proposals (see Chapter 8 Section 8.3.3). Thus *expected effectiveness* (Nieveen, 2007) – using the intervention is expected to result in desired outcomes - of the intervention was achieved in that the academic research writing was of a high enough standard for submitting and defending the research proposal. This resulted in immediate throughput (see Chapter 1 Section 1.2) However, even though the students were allowed entry into the second phase of their research, that of conducting their research and writing their chapters, the *actual effectiveness* (Nieveen, 2007) – using the intervention results in desired outcomes – of the intervention was in question. Thus, the query arose whether the students' academic research writing proficiency was at a high enough level to carry them forward confidently or whether another support or developmental programme should be designed for the next phase or some other type of support would be necessary. Some improvement was seen in the development of the individual students' academic literacy with the results of the TALPS re-test (see Chapter 8 Section 8.3.1). Assessment of the final proposals was undertaken to generate a profile of academic research writing for each student which revealed that more than half of the students were seen as developing an identity as emerging researchers while a couple were still considered novice researchers (see Chapter 8 Section 8.5).

The overarching research question of *What are the characteristics of an intervention for developing academic research writing which will best support master's students in education in the first stage of their research?* is discussed in the following sections:

In working with postgraduate students who are mainly full-time teachers or practitioners and part-time students, the research has shown that a *learning space* or “third space” (see Curry, 2007, p. 126) which offers students not only the *physical space*, equipped with relevant IT equipment and resources, but also the *social, collegial and pedagogical*

space, should be put in place. Working within this space allows students the opportunity to interact and learn with and from peers, sharing ideas, discussing concerns and become part of a community (Fergie et al., 2011; Kamler & Thomson, 2008; Lee & Boud, 2003). Often postgraduate students feel alienated, isolated and alone, therefore a *community of practice* offers students access to and the support within the space at varying times through their studies and promotes opportunities for interaction, discussion and debate. To take the notion of access a step further, access for students should not just be an initial access to higher education, but should incorporate access to knowledge, access to discourse, and access to the academy and thus scholarship.

The concern that persisted throughout the implementation of the intervention related to the type of student entering graduate studies in education and the difficulty that many have in completing their studies. To ensure that firstly, throughput required by the institution is achieved and secondly, and most importantly, taking into account the state of schooling in South Africa, that competent and qualified practitioners in their particular fields, are equipped to take on a transformative role in education by successfully becoming change agents, this study suggests that a *specialised, structured programme* which is developmental as well as incremental is needed, especially as the master's degree for this particular programme is only offered by dissertation. It is recommended that the programme incorporate the acquisition and development of *academic writing, discipline-specific content knowledge and research methodology knowledge* to ensure that students are given a solid foundation in these key areas. It is vital that the teaching of writing be underpinned by the New Literacy Studies and draws on Ivanič's framework (2004) (see Chapter 3) of approaches to the teaching of academic writing. Developing a specialised and structure programme would form a multi-faceted, integrated writing model.

An inherent part of the characteristics of an intervention for developing academic research writing is the set of design principles. Such an intervention should be designed to meet the needs of students and support them not only through the process of writing their research proposals but continue through the duration of their studies, a recommendation made by the expert reviewers, who advocate support to the students' final year of research.

Research has suggested that because choosing an advisor or supervisor can be a difficult one, a dissertation committee which would comprise a mentor an expert in the field, a coach, an editor, someone to advise on the reading and writing (Bolker, 1998) or a supervision team (Cryer, 2006), could be more beneficial. For the implementation of this

intervention, a *research triad* comprising student, supervision team and academic research writing practitioner, was created which offered *continuous support and supervision* for the student and in addition, provided an opportunity for the experienced supervisor to offer *supervision mentoring* for the novice supervisors who made up the supervision team. On-going professional development is needed for both novice and experienced supervisors and working within a triad or a group could offer that capacity-development needed both in terms of modelling practice, mentored experience and professional development.

Thus, the characteristics of an intervention for promoting academic research writing which will best support master's students in education in the proposal stage of their research are ***an academic research writing model, underpinned by the New Literacy Studies, incorporating a framework of approaches to the teaching of academic writing, operating within a community of practice and supported by a research triad. The model draws on explicit teaching.***

10.4 REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

This section discusses what lessons can be learned from this research, reflecting on a number of different perspectives: a reflection on the methodology (procedural), a reflection on the conceptual framework (theoretical) and finally, a reflection on practical implementation of the intervention (procedural) from my point of view.

10.4.1 Reflection on the Methodology

Design Research, used in the conduct of this study, was seen as most appropriate for this research and offered a pragmatic way of addressing a problem identified in practice. The use of Design Research is to effect a change; however, the time taken over phases, cycles and many iterations means that the study needs to be conducted over an extended period which could be a disadvantage to doctoral research which needs a tighter time-schedule. A benefit though from this extended period is prolonged engagement and time for reflection. Although this study was conducted in 2011, a further six months was needed to complete data collection and in fact, a further period of time is still needed to complete the development of the final prototype for use with further cohorts of students.

An advantage of following the Design Research process, gave the opportunity for multiple points of data collection throughout the academic year in which the intervention was implemented. Quantitative data was gathered for assessment with the testing of academic literacy (TALPS), the assessment of the proposals at four stages during the year and the

student questionnaire. Qualitative data outweighed quantitative data and was seen in the gathering of data from student evaluations, student writing and interviews, expert review as well as the assessment of academic research writing.

The use of TALPS and the assessment of the application and initial research proposals as well as student writing, allowed the supervision team and myself, as the researcher, to draw on a baseline assessment which provided valuable information about where the students were with their writing (academic literacies) which was vital in informing the design and development of the intervention. As this doctoral study is situated in the field of Assessment and Quality Assurance, this practice is common, allowing a measurement which is then linked to a post-intervention assessment. However, standardised tests such as TALPS have restricted access to the items comprising the visible constructs for the test. This restricted access proved limiting in terms of developing a deeper understanding of what was being assessed and measured. The original intention of administering the test was to elicit some diagnostic information about the students' academic literacies. Given the lack of access to the items, the purpose of the test in this study was placement and assessing the level of risk in handling academic discourse which meant that the amount of useful information was limited. However, recently the Inter-institutional Centre for Language Development and Assessment (ICELDA), the developer of the test, has investigated refinement of the TALPS to provide more diagnostic information.

Although the supervision team was part of the teaching, in retrospect, their involvement from the onset should have been more substantial to gather further perspectives of the results of the assessment. This discussion may have been fruitful and given greater opportunity to engage in discussion about alternate and perhaps more creative ways of designing the programme.

Expert review occurred at two points during the year – after implementation of Prototype 1 in Semester 1 and after implementation of Prototype 2 in Semester 2 (see Chapter 6, Section 6.5.1 and Chapter 8 Section 8.2.1). Research (see Mafumiko, 2006; Niveen, 2013) has suggested that once Prototype 1 has been developed, it undergoes certain methods to ascertain whether quality criteria for the intervention have been met. One such method is appraisal by experts; thereafter the next prototype undergoes rounds of 'tryouts'. Being informed by the results of the tryouts, leads to the development of a third prototype, which is also assessed by experts before being field tested. In this study, the intervention was implemented and then reviewed by experts, which assisted in informing the round of development for the next prototype. The same process occurred with the second expert reviews. In reflection, the process suggested by Mafumiko possibly could

have yielded a more relevant and appropriate design; however, the need to implement at the beginning of the academic year can be viewed as a time constraint issue.

Student evaluations for each of the contact sessions (see Chapters 6 and 7) required a rating as well as a comment or reflection. These were emailed to the students directly after the sessions and as the sessions were still fresh in their thoughts, students were able to respond quite quickly and easily. However, it was felt that the students in general gave responses which they thought were socially appropriate in that they were positive about the sessions and very rarely critiqued or criticised the sessions. Perhaps this is the nature of the student and their background which rarely calls for criticism even constructive criticism.

In contrast to the contact session student evaluations, the student questionnaire was sent out to the students the following year requiring students to rate the faculty and programme seminars as well as the contact sessions according to a set of criteria. Of concern to this study is that time had elapsed and this could have had an influence on the evaluation, although the students could have evaluated the intervention in retrospect of the way it had prepared them for their on-going studies. The validity and reliability of the information could have been improved if the questionnaire had been completed immediately after each seminar when the experience was fresh. The student questionnaire also required the students to identify aspects of academic writing that they found challenging. Although this section of the questionnaire gave an indication of what the students considered problematic and to some extent, how challenged they were, I did not initially have an in-depth idea of the reasons that they found the aspects of writing challenging. Using the interview allowed for probing into this aspect as notes for each of the students based on their questionnaire responses were available, although again students found difficulty in articulating why the writing was a challenge. This study found that the students had difficulty in thinking deeply, critically and objectively about their writing and aligning their perceptions about their writing with the actual assessment of their academic research writing as seen in the final research proposals. However, during the course of the programme with explicit teaching and guidance, it was found that the students were moving into a more objective style of writing where their identity was beginning to emerge and perhaps with this development, students would find it a little easier understanding their writing and then articulating the challenges that they were facing. In addition, consideration could be given to discussing the students' writing with the text in front of them during the interviews in order to really uncover problems which occur in the writing.

Student data gave their perspective of the intervention and its effectiveness. Although there were regular interactions with the supervision team and awareness of their thinking

and opinions of the intervention, it may have provided a more well-balanced evaluation of the intervention had one or more focus-group interviews with the supervision team been conducted. Critique from the supervisor perspective about the intervention and its effectiveness for the students in developing their academic research writing could have offered further suggestions to feed into the design of the final prototype.

Issues which involved me being both researcher and practitioner are a challenge of conducting Design Research and it would need the researcher to understand the various roles that are undertaken and attempt to work within these boundaries. Although bias is unavoidable, objectivity was aimed for taking the National Research Council's guiding principles (cited in Shavelson et al., 2003, p. 26) into account. These principles suggest linking research to relevant theory, using multiple sources of empirical data to ensure direct investigation of questions, providing an explicit chain of reasoning and disclosing research data and methods to enable and encourage professional scrutiny and critique. In this study objectivity was enabled as much as possible with the use of peer critique, expert reviewers, an academic writing expert as an evaluator and two assessors. However, this challenge and the way it was approached was discussed fully in Chapter 4 Section 4.8.

10.4.2 Reflection on the Conceptual Framework

In developing the conceptual framework, as a pragmatist, there was a need to find a framework that would not only be used as a 'lens' for viewing the findings, but also provide the structure for the practice and thus for the intervention. There was always an awareness that the framework for the teaching of academic writing would be positioned within a context and influenced by policies. In addition, there were role players to consider such as the supervisors and the postgraduate students themselves.

As discussed in Chapter 3, the conceptual framework is underpinned by the New Literacy Studies but also take cognisance of Systemic Functional Linguistics which sees language as a system of choices made on the basis of the user's understanding of a wider context of culture and a more specific context of situation (see Eggins, 2004). Thus, the framework is nested within these two contexts: the context of culture – national and institutional policy and practice, and the context of situation – the specific master's learning programme – guided by genre and discourse.

From my position as a pragmatist, this study provides a pragmatic lens allowing for viewing the context of culture and how the policies related to this context influence the teaching of academic writing with their related requirements. Understanding what

constitutes academic research writing (RQ1) was supported not only by the literature (see Chapter 3) but guided or constrained by also by the context of culture and the guiding institutional, national and departmental policies situated within this context. This study took cognisance of the HEQF with its guiding applied competences required at master's level as well as the Faculty of Education's Postgraduate Policy. In addition to requirements of the specific programme, both policies were incorporated into the design and development of the intervention so that a specific developmental process was followed and which could take into account the criteria of relevance, consistency and practicality (Nieveen, 2007).

Consideration was given to the fact that some academic writing might have a generic content; however, of importance was that the teaching of academic writing at postgraduate level should be discipline-specific and incorporate a genre approach, as guided by the context of situation. The second lens, academic literacies, brought focus to the implementation of the intervention, the approaches that were used in the teaching and learning events. Ivanič's framework (2004) of *Discourses of Writing and Learning to Write* with Lea and Street's model (1998) for the teaching of academic writing in higher education and were incorporated as pedagogical principles, which offered a variety of approaches to the teaching of writing. The theory was aligned with the results of the needs analysis (TALPS, assessment of initial research proposals and evaluation of personal writing) (RQ2) where the approaches could be applied within this specific context, at particular times during the writing events, taking the students' needs into account (RQ3). In this study, a developmental model underpinned by pedagogical principles contingent on an integrated framework of approaches which took account of the students' cultural capital, primary discourses and prior learning and identified in the needs analysis (See Chapter 5 Section 5.2.1-5.2.2) was put in place which allowed for the application of a number of approaches to the teaching of academic writing dependent on the need (discussed in Chapter 9 Section 9.2.4).

This framework was particularly effective in this study and context for motivating and scaffolding the development of academic research writing. Incorporating the notion of collaboration and feedback with a community of practice meant the involvement of all participants. Tacit knowledge is acquired through being socialised into communities of practice where learning is situated and the nature of learning draws on scaffolding (Vygotsky, 1978) through the support of experts for new members who are initially on the peripheral (Lave & Wenger, 1991). In this study, the supervision team facilitated the learning by creating a community where students were grouped for the purpose of learning. However, once the process of "polycentralised collaborative learning" (Bruffee,

1973, p. 637) was in motion, the supervision team was able to move away from the centre to the periphery, leaving the students to drive their own learning.

Aitchison and Lee (2006) suggest that if members of the group share similar identification in that they come from similar backgrounds, are working in a similar profession and are conducting research in a similar discipline, which was the case in this study, this strong sense of identification supports them and eases their transition from a professional into a novice researcher. The study revealed that most of the students working within a community where understanding and meaning making was shared with and from others found this community valuable and profitable and as they gained in confidence, drawing on their reading and research, began to work more independently. However, they did realise that to become a member of a community means changing one's identity by accepting and internalising sets of practice and values, and ways of doing it to fit into that community, which was the change that needed to occur for the transition from teacher/practitioner to novice researcher.

In this study, some students participated reluctantly as they felt that working individually was more appropriate for their way of learning. On the whole though, the concept of a community was an important one to include in the theory of practice where collaboration and interaction with the supervision team and with their peers provided opportunity for discussion, critique and feedback and in addition, it assisted in lessening the feelings of isolation which could occur with a research-based study.

The community of practice drew on the notion of collaboration and feedback as the literature on feedback is strong revealing that students benefit greatly through clear, constructive developmental feedback (Carless, 2006; Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Lea & Street, 1998). This study found that peer engagement is a valuable tool and assisted the students in developing their autonomy and self-confidence as writers (see Hyland & Hyland, 2006) as well as an understanding of the "idea of writing as a process that is complex and [which] develops over time" (Crème & Cowan, 2005, p. 113). In addition, by developing their critical reading, the students were then able to offer each other valuable critique which in turn also fed in to the development of their own writing.

Thus, it seemed a logical step to incorporate these concepts into the theory of practice and it seemed to work well for the majority of the students, creating a "safe house" (Papay, 2002, p.11) and a "rehearsal space" (Van Rensburg, 2004, p.222) for students to develop their writing. It was in this space that students were able to "construct a credible representation of themselves" (Hyland, 2002, p. 1901) and as their socialisation and

confidence developed they began speaking with increasing authority, drawing on what they had read and analysed, expressing judgements and taking up positions (see Aitchison & Lee, 2006). Jacobs refers to this as moving from the position of apprentice and becoming 'insiders' where a sense of belonging is developed and learning is crystallised through the process of engagement (Jacobs, 2007a, 2007b).

Incorporated in this model is the research triad consisting of the student working with a supervision team as well as an academic research writing practitioner who were initially at the centre of the community of practice. The concept of a triad which would support all parties in theory is a good one where the supervisor is supported by other experienced supervisors from other fields as well as by novice co-supervisors, who in turn are mentored in supervision practices. The academic research practitioner, as a member of this triad, does not work alone but is part of the discipline-specific context and thus has the opportunity to foster and develop academic writing in context. This idea resonates with Holbrook's (2007) query about who is responsible for postgraduate writing and its development particularly as the move from writing at undergraduate level is a difficult one which requires exposure to the field of research as well as confidence in writing within the genre of scholarly writing. Working with the student in a triad is an attempt to facilitate this move and develop academic research writing and at the same time support the supervision process.

The supervision team was made up of an experienced supervisor and four newly qualified doctoral graduates, none of whom had tenured posts, who were to be the co-supervisors. A number of issues arose with the co-supervisors in that they did not really want to be 'mentored' and in one case, one person did not want to supervise. During the course of the intervention, one co-supervisor resigned from the university very early in the year and a second one left at the end of the first semester which resulted in two co-supervisors (one with greater qualitative and the other with quantitative knowledge bases) working with 12 students which proved not ideal. This resulted in one student having two co-supervisors during one semester. With reduced capacity, the situation for the remainder of the year then tended to be quite difficult with other work pressures and deadlines, as well as deadlines to meet for this intervention.

The literature on the teaching of writing reviewed for this study seemed to be aimed predominantly at undergraduate level. This meant that this study drew on a range of aspects reported on in the literature both in the teaching of academic writing at undergraduate level as well as that about the teaching of postgraduate writing. This literature was incorporated into an intervention underpinned by the New Literacy Studies,

to develop academic research writing for the specific postgraduate students to address their needs in this particular concept.

To add to the discussions above, the following section offers a reflection on my practice.

10.4.3 Reflection on my Practice

In reading Volbrecht's chapter *Changing the scene of reading and writing*, I was struck by his reflection:

In academic writing it is customary (see Swales, 1990) to survey the literature in one's field of expertise, to identify a gap, and to proceed to fill it. If one succeeds in filling the gap, one may be said to have made a 'contribution of knowledge' ... While remaining cognisant of relevant literature, I have attempted to use the act of writing narrative to attune myself to the institutional landscape (and the environment surrounding it) and what might be done to change it for the better (Volbrecht, 2000 pp. 273).

It is with this sentiment that I, in this thesis, have offered my narrative of the practice in which I am situated in the hope that I too am able to fill the 'gap' (see Volbrecht), and make a contribution to knowledge but most importantly, bring about change, albeit it minor.

Earlier discussions with postgraduate students had revealed how isolated they felt during the course of their studies and how long and lonely the research process can be (see Chapter 5, Section 5.2.1.1). As a result, my aim in conducting this study was to find a realistic and effective approach of not only supporting the development of academic research writing of education postgraduate students (see Wingate, 2012), but also for providing the environment conducive to learning and thus make a change for the better.

As previously mentioned, postgraduate students often feel alienated, isolated and alone, therefore a *community of practice* offers students the support at varying times through their studies. Collegiality and collaboration promotes opportunities for interaction, discussion and debate not only on the content of their research but also on the writing. This research has illustrated that creating a 'space', a pedagogical space, offered students the opportunity to become familiar with their field of learning and become socialised into the Discourse. Some students took full advantage of this 'space' which scaffolded them in their learning yet provided them with a neutral platform, a safe and protected environment, in which to practise and rehearse. The time spent working within this community assisted the student in developing identity and moving from a novice to an emerging and developing researcher. In contrast, one or two students were not

particularly interested in being part of the community, feeling that there was not much on offer and that they preferred to find their own way through their studies. Interestingly, they were less mature than their peers which may have caused this attitude.

The intervention comprised a *specialised, structured programme* which was developmental and this study revealed that scaffolding the students and giving them a solid foundation in key areas was pivotal. In addition, drawing on Ivanič's framework of approaches to the teaching of writing (2004) allowed for engaging with a range of approaches predominantly employing explicit teaching which suited the students found in this context, guiding them through the process of the first stage. For the implementation of this intervention, a research triad offered *continuous supervision* for the student. In addition, the research triad provided an opportunity for the experienced supervisor to offer *supervision mentoring* for the novice supervisors who made up the supervision team and ensured that all stakeholders were being supported. On-going professional development is needed for both novice and experienced supervisors and working within a triad or a group, could offer that capacity-development needed both in terms of modelling practice, skills development and mentored experience.

Even though this programme was designed to meet the needs of students and support them through the process of writing their research proposals, the validation from most of the students suggested that such support should continue through the duration of their studies. However, in order for this to be in place, the programme, the department or even the Faculty needs to take the initiative and put formalised support in place to relieve the burden placed predominantly on the supervisors.

What this research has given me personally is an appreciation of the distinctiveness of the students with whom we are privileged to work. They are mature adult learners, many of whom came through the previous regime's education system, are full time professionals in teaching and managerial positions in the South African education system, have families, and thus have limited time for studies as part time students. These students are caught in the system of the need to upgrade their knowledge and skills to ensure a transformatory role within their professions in education. Because of the type of master's programme, research-based or master's by full dissertation, students are offered limited support, four Faculty Seminars per year and interactions with their supervisors. They often feel isolated and alone which results in a concerning dropout rate. Of course, there are mitigating factors and extenuating circumstances, as seen in this research, but it is through their dedication as teachers and practitioners and part-time students that education in South Africa will benefit.

Just as their learners absorb their teaching, so too did these students engage in all that the supervision team offered – the discipline-specific content knowledge so vital to be able to write within the discipline; the research methodology knowledge imperative for guiding for the research; and finally, knowledge about writing at postgraduate level in a more formal academic way, central for communicating the research to a wider audience. It was this aspect which has guided me in developing a model for the teaching of academic research writing and which could be used in other contexts with postgraduate students.

My time with the students over the period of an academic year, has taught me a number of things, and as an experienced teacher, I was sure that I knew it all. However, some issues need to be highlighted. The fact that the students are part time and that they are adults with work and family responsibilities has to be taken into account. And if and when, the challenges become insurmountable, then it is time to offer more than just academic support; for example, during illness, a child's illness, family crises, work pressures, when data is lost or a computer with the thesis is stolen or it malfunctions.

However, my greatest lesson is in the way I work with students. On the one hand, students have recognised the motivation and academic support given in addition to the affective support: *you have been our pillar of support and support is key (1:P.3)*, as well as *you motivated and encouraged me and the way you are doing it, I think, it's very helpful (2:P.2)* and even *you have been like a mother to us (1:P.3)*. On the other, one student felt that I could soften up a little when offering feedback: *I thought maybe your English was too harsh. I thought these words are too harsh so I'm no longer going there, they were demoralising to me (6:P.8)*. I learned that cognisance needs to be taken with the way things are done and this resonates with Kumaravadivelu's macro-strategies (2003) in the theory of language teaching which suggest that being culturally conscious and promoting student autonomy ensures that students are treated in a manner which takes note of their prior learning, their knowledge and their culture and yet provide a safe space in which they can develop their learning.

Based upon the findings of this study, the following conclusions are drawn.

10.5 CONCLUSIONS

In this section, the following conclusions to this study are offered:

- 1. Many postgraduate students who meet the institutional entrance requirements nonetheless lack basic discipline specific content knowledge, basic research knowledge and skills and have insufficient academic writing competence needed to succeed in their studies.***

Research both nationally (Angelil-Carter, 1998; Giannakopoulos & Buckley, 2009; Hendriks & Quinn, 2001; Koen, 2007; Leibowitz, 2000; Leibowitz et al., 1997; Netswera & Mavundla, 2001; Quinn, 1999; Thesen, 1997; Van Aswegan, 2007), and internationally (Barton, Hamilton, & Ivanič, 2000; Catterall, Ross, Aitchison, & Burgin, 2011; Kamler & Thomson, 2004; Lillis & Turner, 2001; Torrance & Thomas, 1994; Wadee, Keane, Dietz, & Hay, 2010), confirms that many students currently entering postgraduate study are not prepared or well-equipped for study at this level particularly with what constitutes academic research writing.

The students in this study were in a master's programme in education within one of the largest Faculties of Education in South Africa with the strongest perceived research capability nationally as a top-performing university. Although they had met the admission requirements (see Chapter 5 Table 5.5), these students still entered the programme without the necessary background, knowledge and competence (cultural capital, Bourdieu, 1972, 1991) to succeed independently. This study confirms that many students currently entering postgraduate study are not prepared or well-equipped for study at this level and lack the vital academic literacies which work hand-in-hand with competence in other domains such as content knowledge and research methodology. It has been found that without a good foundation in discipline-specific content knowledge and research methodology knowledge combined with academic writing proficiency, student success in academic research writing is challenged.

The findings of the baseline assessment of the application research proposals (see Chapter 5 Table 5.8) drew attention to students' academic writing ability, and through TALPS (see Chapter 5 Table 5.11), the findings highlighted the students' academic literacy required to perform successfully at master's level. These baseline assessments, discussed in Chapter 5 Sections 5.2.2.2 and 5.2.2.3 as well as an evaluation of personal writing (see Chapter 5 Section 5.2.2.4), highlighted that some students, even though they have come through various undergraduate and honours programmes, do not have the fundamentals of content knowledge, research understanding and academic writing and even language competence in the dominant language.

Follow up assessments of the developing research proposals (see Chapter 6 Section 6.4 and Table 6.23; Chapter 7 Table 7.23) and the final research proposals (see Chapter 8 Section 8.3 Table 8.10) as well as the assessment and analysis of the academic research writing (see Chapter 8 Section 8.5) indicated that the majority of students were challenged by almost all aspects of academic research writing: that is, that the product, although developmentally better, was still not optimal because of a lack of discipline-specific content knowledge and research methodology knowledge as well as competence in academic research writing.

In this study, conducted with master's students in education, this unpreparedness and readiness for postgraduate study was particularly evident even at the selection stage (see Chapter 5 Section 5.2.2.1). Thus, the idea of a research-based master's study without coursework should be challenged.

2. Academic research writing should be taught overtly and explicitly

This finding draws on research both nationally and internationally that academic research writing should be taught overtly and explicitly (Elbow, 1981, 1998; Ivanič, 2007; Mullen, 2001; Murray, 2007; Purser, Skillen, Deane, Donohue, & Peake, 2008) within the context of academic disciplines (Boughey, 2000, 2002; Jacobs, 2005, 2007a, 2007b; Lea, 2004; Lea & Street, 2000; Lea & Street, 1998; McKenna, 2004b; Street, 2004; Thomson, 2005, 2008).

Reference was made in the literature chapter about a visible pedagogy²⁷ and thus within this visible pedagogy overt and explicit teaching is proposed. In this study, the pedagogical principles advocated for teaching and learning comprise approaches to the teaching of writing (see Ivanič, 2004). In the majority of approaches, a case is made for the teaching in each of these to be explicit, a notion supported by Cope and Kalantzis (1993) who advise that the teaching of the discourses and genres should be explicit. The research proposal and the dissertation is seen as the ultimate student paper at postgraduate level, therefore, the use of a genre approach which involves the explicit teaching of the particular kinds of processes should be followed (Lillis, 2001, p. 166), particularly as the students through their research are able to make a contribution to “a disciplinary conversation” (Paré et al. 2009, p. 179).

²⁷ Bernstein, 1990; Delpit 1988.

This research has shown that by adopting this visible pedagogical approach to the teaching of academic writing where form and function are made explicit (Thesen, 2001) has assisted in scaffolding the students in their research. The experience and the responses from the students (see Chapter 6 and 7) have confirmed that by adopting an explicit approach has assisted in the development of their academic research writing. In the process it has developed institutional capital and assisted in demystifying the writing needed at this level of study (see Hyland, 2003; 2007).

3. *Academic research writing required at postgraduate level comprises the integration of various knowledge domains: discipline-specific content knowledge, research methodology knowledge and knowledge of academic writing which incorporates academic literacies.*

Writing at postgraduate level involves working within a specific genre that of research proposal writing and that of writing the dissertation or thesis (see Chapter 3). This means that students entering this level of study need to bring with them a degree of competence in terms of academic research writing.

This study found within the context of education that there is the need for the teaching of academic research writing at a fundamental level that incorporates discipline-specific content knowledge, research methodology knowledge and academic writing knowledge and competence, even at master's level. This is to ensure that students are equipped with a solid foundation from which to build on and develop their academic research writing. Literature has confirmed the need for the writing to be taught within a specific discipline (see Boughey, 2008; Carsten, 2009; Jacobs, 2005; Skillen et al., 1998; Thesen, 1997). However, the concept of *academic research writing* has not been found to date in the research conducted previously, despite certain elements being investigated. This foundation embraces facilitating the process of socialisation into the academic Discourse and the development of academic research writing which focuses on the understanding of the genres in which postgraduates work.

What emerged from this study is a need for academic research writing being incorporated in postgraduate pedagogy and the need for academic research writing pedagogy to be interrogated.

4. The intervention achieved its short term goal in preparing students effectively enough to successfully defend their research proposals, but the students' academic research writing proficiency was still judged as insufficient for the rest of their degree and their studies were seen as at risk if they were left without a formal support structure.

The intervention was seen as appropriate with limited effectiveness as the students were able to accomplish the first task of their research journey that of successfully writing and defending their research proposals within the stipulated time period. However, because the students entered the programme with low levels of basic competence, the intervention tended to have a greater emphasis on developing discipline-specific content knowledge and research methodology knowledge whereas the teaching of academic writing should have had more prominence and which would have ensured more success in the development of their academic research writing.

The intervention was considered effective to some extent. It was expected that the intervention, following a developmental approach with its incremental steps, would support the students during the first year of their research. With each assessment, an improvement was seen in the writing of the research proposals (see Chapter 6 Section 6.4 and Table 6.23; Chapter 7 Table 7.23; Chapter 8 Section 8.3 Table 8.10) and on the whole, a re-test of TALPS (see Chapter 8 Section 8.3.1 Table 8.2) revealed some improvement in academic literacy.

However, the assessment and analysis by an expert reviewer of the students' academic research writing proficiency (see Chapter 8 Section 8.5) revealed that the students, in progressing with their postgraduate study in terms of academic research writing, might need continued support, thus the actual effectiveness (see Nieveen, 2007) was limited, pointing to the fact that prolonged engagement with an intervention is preferable.

Within this study, students in a specific master's programme in education were seen as needing support and thus such an intervention supported by a research triad offered the students the foundational support needed to be successful during this first stage of their research. To ensure that academic research writing is developed effectively and successfully, the model for the teaching of academic research writing was offered as an underpinning supportive plan. This model (see Chapter 9 Figure 9.4) illustrates the integration of discipline-specific content knowledge, research methodology knowledge and knowledge of academic writing which leads to the development of academic research writing.

Academic writing studies in the South African context have revealed that their interventions had varying degrees of success but many of the studies offer some interesting recommendations. A scaffolded intervention, focusing on the development of academic discourse and implemented with a small sample of undergraduate students, revealed some success. Of importance to this study is the recommendation which suggests collaboration with content lecturers in the teaching of academic writing might be a more effective practice (see Carstens, 2009). Documented student writing over a two-year period during participation in a master's in education coursework programme revealed that there was little if no improvement in writing competence. Students were taught *about* writing and had developed some understanding *about* writing, but they had not learned to write by writing to learn and thus had not learned how to *be*, and consequently develop academic identity (see Henning & van Rensburg, 2002). The study's hypothesis was that the curriculum did not recognise student need in developing advanced academic writing competence in entering the discourse community. A three-year integrated approach to the teaching of academic literacies involving the collaboration of a number of lecturers from a variety of disciplines working with academic language practitioners led to highlighting the value of interaction within collaborative partnerships. Recommendations suggest effecting a shift in the teaching of academic literacies in the disciplines with the collaboration of academic language practitioners and discipline specific lecturers (see Jacobs, 2005). All these studies had limited success but what does emerge is that academic writing should be taught in collaboration with lectures within the discipline and field of learning and should not be the sole responsibility of the academic language practitioner. In addition, note has to be taken of the need to incorporate academic research writing development into the postgraduate curriculum, understanding the need for students to learn to write by writing and learn and so they learn to *be* and develop the identity needed at postgraduate level.

Of interest to this study is the IDEALL model (Integrated Development of English language and Academic Literacy and Learning) developed in Australia. It is a "systemic, curriculum-based and collaborative approach" which integrates and embeds learning development into the curricula so that it becomes "contextualised, relevant and discipline-specific" (Skillen et al., 1998, p. 5). Although implemented at first-year undergraduate level, the designers of this approach contest that it is applicable at all levels providing an alternate developmental approach to which successfully supports the students' transition from secondary education to that of tertiary education. The IDEALL model followed a similar procedure to this study in determining the model: a needs analysis of student as well as curriculum requirement, an assessment of students' literacy, language and writing

levels, the designing, developing and implementation of an appropriate intervention and then the evaluation of the learning outcomes.

However, this study conducted with master's students in education went further by utilising Design Research (see Chapter 4), entailing the design and development of an intervention as a solution to a complex educational problem. This intervention with the involvement of practitioners, followed iterative phases and cycles, creating opportunities for learning with postgraduates. This study had short-term success with findings revealing that the year-long intervention did achieve its short-term goal (immediate throughput) of assisting with the socialisation of the student into the practice of academic research writing required at master's level. The students were successful in achieving the first step in the research process which would allow them access to further research with the assessors seeing some of them as emerging or developing researchers with an understanding of *being*. An outcome of using the research design is advancing knowledge and identifying characteristics. Therefore, this study identified design principles – a theoretical yield of the set of six (SoS) design principles that could be transferred to other environments indicating their applicability in other contexts (Lincoln, & Guba, 1985), demonstrating the scientific value of the design and strengthening the findings of this research.

5. *In order to design an effective intervention to develop academic research writing at postgraduate level in education, a combined set of six (SoS) are needed.*

The intervention was a specialised, structured programme designed to lay a common foundation for master's in a specific programme in education. It was underpinned by the New Literacy Studies, incorporating a framework of approaches to the teaching of academic writing operating within a community of practice and supported by a research triad. It is clear from this research that an intervention designed and developed to develop academic research writing should meet the needs of the students working at a particular level. Thus, the intervention took note of the criteria of relevance, consistency and practicality (Nieveen, 2007) (see Chapter 4 Section 4.1) in that it aligns itself with the expected outcome of the programme.

Based upon the evaluation of the intervention, the set of six (SoS) design principles, found individually in the literature were used in a combined way to guide and support the intervention. The analogy of “a meal not a menu” (see Hargreaves & Fink, 2006, p. 251), provides a useful way of viewing these principles as a combined set. It is this aspect that is explored: how these design principles operated as a set of six (SoS) principles for

developing academic research writing in this specific context to inform an *overt* and *explicit process* – overt in that the content and operation of the intervention is open/transparent and known to the students, and explicit in that students know and understand exactly what is required of them in terms of knowledge, competencies and outcomes. The intervention requires a *multifaceted* and *integrated* approach incorporating *discipline-specific content knowledge*, *research methodology knowledge* appropriate and relevant to the programme being studied and *academic writing knowledge*. Successful academic research writing needs the underpinning theory of the *New Literacy Studies* and an integrated framework for the teaching of academic writing. Furthermore, this research revealed that the *community of practice* is effective and contributes to the *applied competence* and development of *autonomy of learning* that is demanded at master's level. This aspect is underpinned by the HEQF (see Chapter 6 Section 6.3 and Appendix D) incorporating applied competence and autonomy of learning with their specific outcomes into the teaching at postgraduate level.

A multifaceted and integrated approach (see Chapter 9 Section 9.2.2) argues for the teaching of writing to be embedded in the learning of the discipline which means that there should be an integration between the teaching of discipline-specific content knowledge, research methodology knowledge and finally, academic writing knowledge. Explicit teaching of academic writing (see Chapter 9 Section 9.2.3) is underpinned by the theory of the *New Literacy Studies* (see Chapter 3 Section 3.4) which relies on an integrated framework for the teaching of academic writing (see Ivanič, 2004 Chapter 3 Section 3.4 Table 3.3 and Chapter 9 Section 9.2.3) which argues for a move between a skills approach, one of creativity, a process approach, using a genre approach and a functional approach, dependent on student need, in order to develop critical literacy (see also Figure 9.3). However, within these approaches, modes of working within a community of practice (see Chapter 3 Section 3.5.3) is proposed where interaction with and between students using such techniques as the giving and receiving of feedback (see Chapter 2 Section 3.5.4) develops engagement in a particular field of learning which assists in socialising the student into the academic discourse and thus facilitates the development of an academic identity.

Taking these conclusions into consideration, recommendations are made in the following section.

10.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

In this section, some recommendations emerging from the study are offered. These recommendations pertain firstly to policy, and then to practice with some suggestions for further research being incorporated.

10.6.1 Recommendations for Policy

In a country still coming to terms with its history, strategies are in place to ‘make amends’ and offer all peoples the education that they deserve at whatever level is considered appropriate. This applies to Higher Education as well, with the government’s goal to increase the number of people in the country with postgraduate degrees. However, the quality of postgraduate training simultaneously needs to be improved and maintained. It is suggested that in order to meet the equity and social demands of South Africa, increasing numbers of high-level Black and female graduates, who are equipped to occupy academic positions, as well as positions in the public and private sector, should be produced by HEIs (Bitzer, 2000).

Although I support the need to increase the numbers of high-level Black and female graduates, a recommendation to meet the equity and social demands is proposed. South African education should consider motivating *all* its people to take up positions which would make a difference to its economy through being fully equipped by postgraduate programmes that are valid and relevant. Thus, within the field of education, where this study is positioned, all practitioners should consider upgrading their qualifications and consider continuous professional development to ensure that education in South Africa operates within a world-class standard, a goal that will be achieved through the efforts of teachers prepared to take on the challenge.

In comparison with other countries, the number of PhD graduates in South Africa has been consistently lower. The Academy of Science South Africa report (ASSAF, 2010) suggests that by ensuring that master’s programmes are ‘good’ and thus producing well-educated and prepared students, there will be a natural move into doctoral study. However, the report cautions Higher Education to consider not massifying the doctoral degree but to consider the value of doctoral graduates taking up prime positions within the country’s economy. Within the field of education, such graduates are vital in ensuring that the challenges being experienced in education at present are addressed by well qualified and educated practitioners and that standards, at all levels of education, are achieved and maintained.

The above recommendations could inform national policy and institutional policy, which focuses on increasing the numbers of qualified postgraduates, but working with a quicker throughput and with lower attrition rates.

Two issues were highlighted in this study: that of the selection of students and that of their preparedness for postgraduate study. The importance of the **selection of students** for postgraduate programmes, at honours, master's and doctoral level, has been discussed (see Chapter 5 Section 5.2.2.1 as well as Blunt, 2009) and this study suggests that the selection process for application into a postgraduate programme such as a master's should be more stringent so that students with the relevant academic research calibre are given the opportunity to progress with higher level research.

In past years, the criterion for acceptance for a master's and a doctoral study was a 65% overall honours mark. However, within this particular faculty of education, the criterion seems to have been lowered to 60% (see Postgraduate Policy, 2010, p. 1). This lowered mark is justified by individual marks being taken into consideration such as the final mark on the honours research project, or the mark achieved for a particular course completed; for example, qualitative or quantitative research methodology. However, if a standard is set, then it needs to be adhered to. The programme has experienced a difference in the quality of student entering from a lower base. Thus, in order to ensure a steady throughput both time-wise and numbers-wise, candidates who meet the criteria set for entrance into postgraduate study should be accepted, but those who do not, should not be considered. As Blunt has reported: "there is little point in registering students who are unlikely to complete" (2009, p. 854).

The second issue is the **preparedness of the students**. At all levels, under- or unpreparedness of students has been an issue (see literature discussed throughout this study). Swanepoel and Moll (2004) suggest assessing current honours programmes as well as undergraduate programmes in terms of their suitability to prepare students to undertake further research degrees. Morrow (1993) argues for epistemological access to knowledge and academic discourse, a notion which corresponds with that of Boughey who argues that "if South Africa is to create a more equal society, the crucial issue is not of granting formal access to the institution but rather of granting epistemological access to the process of knowledge construction which sustains it" (2002, p 305).

Such development of knowledge, thinking and discourse as well as writing should occur in undergraduate programmes and thus already be in place when a student moves into an honours programme. However, within the field of education, entry into postgraduate

education may be very different from the accepted pathway. As explained in Chapter 2, students wanting to enter postgraduate programmes in education are usually qualified in-service teachers or practitioners, having trained at teacher training colleges or HBUs in the previous regime. Many are encouraged to upgrade their qualifications (see Norms and Standards for Educators, 2000) and thus first enter ACE programmes and thereafter, are allowed access to postgraduate study. However, if a wider variety of students is accepted with lower application requirements, as is currently the case, then this study offers the following recommendations: assessment and re-curricularisation of the honours programme and valid selection of students.

Assessment and re-curricularisation of the honours programme would to ensure a natural progression of students from one level to the next. In undergoing re-curricularisation of the programme, steps need to be taken to ensure that, in line with the model for postgraduate study, discipline-specific knowledge, research methodology knowledge and academic writing knowledge are three domains which are integrated and developed. Working with this model may ensure that students are given the opportunity to develop their academic research writing from an early stage and are thus “grant[ed] epistemological access” (Boughey, 2002, p 305) for study at master’s level.

In order to ensure **valid selection of students for entry** into a master’s programme, set criteria need to be adhered to, such as a set mark in the academic record. Blunt (2009) suggests that with students from other universities, in addition to the academic records, an endorsement from a previous supervisor is required. In addition to the selection criteria of a standard within the academic records, standardised tests are administered. TALPS, administered in this study (see Butler, 2010) and NBTs as well as TALL, tests for undergraduates are being increasingly used in higher education institutions in South Africa as baseline assessments for selection and for placement in particular programmes and support programmes. This is in line with the US universities where a range of standardised tests is being used in the selection of students (see Blunt, 2009). As language proficiency could still be an issue, in addition to testing for academic literacy, a **language proficiency test** could be administered in conjunction with a test to assess student’s reasoning skills (argument analysis, deductive reasoning, non-deductive reasoning) (Swanepoel & Moll, 2004). In addition, the research proposal written and included in the application should be used in two ways: to align the student with a possible supervisor and also act as a yardstick to give the supervisor some indication of the students’ knowledge and prowess in verbalising his/her proposed research, that is

his/her academic writing proficiency. This written research proposal can then be extended and refined once a potential supervisor is identified (see Blunt, 2009).

As is the case with the master's programme described in this study, it is suggested that programmes that consist of research only and no course work modules, should require the submission of an acceptable extended research proposal (see Blunt, 2009; Swanepoel & Moll, 2004), within a specified time frame. Research has suggested that students are accepted for a master's programme but are subjected to a probationary period for first 12 months with confirmation for continuation being given at the end of the first year. During this period, students will be required to present a critical review of recent work in the field, their updated research proposal, research plan and timetable for completion of thesis with a comprehensive statement of resources required to complete project. This suggestion goes hand-in-hand with students presenting and defending their research proposals before a committee such as a Confirmation Committee before being allowed to register full time and progress with their research (see Blunt, 2009). A similar plan has been put in place with this particular faculty, and with the master's programme under study (see Postgraduate Policy, 2010). This gatekeeping process (see Cadman, 2002) has advantages as well as disadvantages. On the one hand, the process eliminates students who would not be able to successfully complete the programme; on the other, the limited timeframe puts the students, and their supervisors, under enormous pressure especially as these students are predominantly part-time students who hold full-time teaching or practitioner positions in education.

10.6.2 Recommendations for Practice

Leading on from the above discussion on the need for increased numbers of postgraduates required by the state and the institution, cognisance needs to be given to the practice in which postgraduate studies occur, and then to recommendations for improved practice.

However, firstly, a question posed by Expert Reviewer 2: *Why do people have to have a master's degree or doctoral degree in education?* needs consideration. In searching for an answer to this question, one could be led to looking at the whole debate on postgraduate qualifications, particularly in the field of education, from a new angle. In many cases, students take on further study as part of their ambition to better and develop themselves or for personal satisfaction. Others, it seems are looking for alternate professional avenues to explore which would take them out of the classroom but still offer

opportunities in education. Younger students see postgraduate qualifications as being necessary for professional advancement particularly in higher education.

The discussion highlights internal motivation being matched with expectations and the delivery of the master's programme to ensure that the students' ambitions are being fulfilled. In some cases, students were motivated to progress in their careers and so were looking for promotion. Professional development was also seen as a goal for registering for postgraduate studies. Of interest, is the idea of registering for a master's having an altruistic aim in that the postgraduate studies would ensure that they were equipped to make a difference in the context in which they worked - that of education in South Africa.

Whatever the aim, it seems that teachers and education practitioners are heeding the call to lifelong learning (see Norms and Standards for Educators, 2000) even if when they register, they are perceived as being unprepared and not really ready for postgraduate education. This means then that if HEIs are to address equity in education and allow access for previously denied students to higher degrees (Blunt, 2009), then measures should be put in place to ensure that the students are supported through their research. One such measure could involve the model for the teaching of academic research writing (see Figure 9.4), but within that model is the need for **a more structured programme** challenging the research-based master's programmed currently in place. Kamler and Thomson (2008) argue that as research depends on writing, universities need to prioritise the development of a writing culture, particularly at postgraduate level, a notion reinforced by Ganobcsik-Williams (2004) who identified that HEIs were not really taking on the responsibility of ensuring that academic writing was being taught. Mullen (2001) calls for a formal curriculum which will guide students into learning how to write to disseminate their research findings, a call reiterated by Elbow (1981, 1998), Skillen and Mahony (1997) and Morss and Murray (2001). A 2102 publication entitled *Writing programs worldwide: profiles of academic writing in many places* (see Thaiss et al., 2012) highlights this call internationally for writing development by academics and professional staff for students, not only at undergraduate level but at postgraduate level as well as explicit teaching of academic writing.

Within a structured programme as suggested above, cognisance should be taken of the applied competences and specific learning outcomes required by the HEQF at master's level. Of importance is to ensure the inter-relationship of reading and writing as reading informs the thinking and thus the writing. As previously discussed, some teaching which can accelerate students' mastery of academic literacies could be considered and incorporated into interventions (see Chapter 3). Thus, the teaching of a wide variety of

reading and writing strategies should be incorporated to assist in producing independent well-prepared writers equipped with the relevant competence. Du Toit et al. (1995) offer suggestions on how to develop competent readers by explicitly teaching the application of different types of reading. Taking these reading strategies and applying them to text could assist the students in learning how to read and analyse difficult texts. This aligns with Bean's (2001) suggestion that in the application of these reading strategies to the process of reading, students can be taught how to 'unpack' the text, identify the argument, and engage with the conversation. Of importance is extending and developing the vocabulary and, in the case of academic writing, the discipline-specific discourse (see Coxhead, 2000). Bean offers many suggestions for developing thinking and writing explaining that "writing is both a process of doing critical thinking and a product communicating the results of critical thinking" (2001, p. 3). He reinforces the idea of the process of writing being iterative with the result that the revisions and re-thinking assist the student think through and learn from the process, thus developing critical thinking skills.

Using Ivanič's framework as a guide to inform the programme, Swales and Feak's *Academic Writing for Graduate Students* (2004) could be drawn on and mapped onto the framework to incorporate writing-specific tasks to develop the writing proficiency of the student which would feed into the writing needed at this level. Examples of these tasks, drawn from the book, could be writing definitions, writing the problem statement, writing a claim with its supporting evidence, writing an article critique, summarising an article, writing a review of the literature, and learning to avoid plagiarism, to name just a few. Of importance here, is that note is taken that reading, writing and thinking needs to be incorporated into the programme for master's student where explicit teaching (see Ivanič's framework) within the various approaches is called for.

In addition to a structured programme, several other supplementary interventions are offered for consideration for practice:

A **writing development group** was formed by Haas (2011) who reported that no explicit writing courses were available for postgraduates at her university. Taking into account that most of her group were international students, the idea of providing structured writing support was in line with the literature (see Morss & Murray, 2001; Mullen, 2001 and Chapter 3) particularly as it was felt that the conventions of academic writing in English might be different from those writing in their first language (see Aitchison, 2003). Of interest to this study is that feedback formed a large aspect of the working of this group, although Haas reports that the concept of feedback as well as types of feedback was discussed so that students were equipped with the necessary skills. It seems that the

group enjoyed working with other students creating a sense of community which supported and guided them in their writing.

In addition, various interactions can also be explored as a way in which to develop postgraduate writing. **Writing retreats** involve students taking time out to move into a new environment conducive to writing but away from the stresses of daily work (Singh, 2012; see also Murray & Moore, 2009). It is during the retreat that time is blocked out for a total focus on writing and with a goal in mind, work towards achieving it. The development of **writing groups** not only achieves purpose of writing for research but brings together others from varied disciplines to share expertise and support each other (Lee & Boud, 2003). Aitchison and Lee explain that writing groups “have in common a strong reliance on the pedagogical principles of identification and peer review, community, and writing as ‘normal business’ in the doing of research” (2006 p.265). Writing groups are underpinned by the principal that writing is a social act involving the interaction of others, can draw on the giving and receiving of feedback which then provides the motivation for the successful completion of the text (Murray & Moore, 2009).

Writing circles, offering students (but this can be expanded to faculty as well) a supportive forum for getting feedback on early drafts of writing by providing a first audience which is non-threatening and allowing the student “a rehearsal space” (Van Rensburg, 2004, p. 222), have the ability to help develop successful writers, particularly bringing in the idea of peer review (Murray & Moore, 2009). As a logical follow-on from writing circles, students could work with **writing buddies** (Murray & Moore, 2009). A writing buddy is a peer with whom you work, motivating and encouraging each other in their studies, reading and reviewing and offering feedback of the writing. At times, a more experienced person in the specific field is needed and thus students can link up with a **writing mentor** (Murray & Moore, 2009). This writing mentor is someone in the field, an expert, with whom you are able to bounce off ideas, talk through issues and have review your writing.

As discussed in Chapter 5, **Writing Centres**, formalised within many South Africa HEIs, also offer writing support to postgraduate students and recently, the introduction of the **Research Commons** as part of the library, has occurred in many HEIs as a way of supporting postgraduates during their research (see Chapter 5). Working with a **writing consultant** in the formalised context of a writing centre, or finding a colleague who is willing to work as a consultant to identify issues and assist in critiquing the writing in order to plan further writing and development (Murray & Moore, 2009), is another strategy which may be employed to further develop writing.

However, the prime role player in postgraduate education is that of the supervisor. In this study, a supervision team was created to work with the students during the intervention. The following section offers some recommendations which could be considered for the process of supervision.

The phrase *publish or perish* is synonymous with academia. During this time, where funding is vital, supervisors need to heed this call and ensure a regular increasing number of publications annually. Such focus on publication leads to concern about supervisors' focus – is it on their students or is it on ensuring their publications? However, because of the expectations of the student of the supervision relationship, Blunt (2009) suggests that almost immediately a research plan which outlines the idea of direction is put into place focusing on what is expected of both student and supervisor, particularly in the first phase. It is in this first phase, where the conceptualisation of the study is done and then the writing of the proposal that asks for major input from the supervisor.

With increasing numbers of students being registered for postgraduate study – particularly those who were previously side lined, where Felder (2010) has suggested that institutional support is required – it has emerged that there is a **limited number of supervisors**. Many of the 'old school' are retiring and a concern has been raised about the limited numbers of younger academics, who are capable and experienced enough, taking their places. It is then necessary to consider the preparedness of supervisors in terms of their knowledge of the field, supervision skills and resources to support the student. The literature suggests that the **training and mentoring of new supervisors** (hence the research triad used in this research), focusing on professional development for research methodology as well as academic research writing, is paramount (Lee, 2007; Swanepoel & Moll, 2004), in order to develop the next cohort of supervisors.

Partnerships between academic development specialists or learning development departments and faculties, and their discipline academics is also recommended (see Skillen, 2001) to ensure that the postgraduate as well as the supervisor is supported, particularly if the student population is in need. Swanepoel and Moll (2004) suggest that creating such a support system is conducive to research in that a research culture can be developed which includes the postgraduate who becomes involved in on-going research activities. Incorporating students into supervisors' work ensures that the students are guided in **collaborative research**, an important aspect to consider, as much postgraduate work is solitary and the student can feel isolated. Felder in her research of African-American PhD students reinforces the importance of students being incorporated into such research, the "investment of joining an academic community" (2010, p. 464)

which allows the students easier entry into the discourse community and the opportunity to gain easier access into the discipline.

A further point to consider is the plan for the faculty as a whole to ensure that there is collaboration between all departments within the faculty drawing on each other's strengths and supporting their weaknesses to ensure that students get the best possible supervision dependent on their needs. This inter-departmental collaboration would also offer hybridised research where multi-disciplines, particularly within the field of education, could be incorporated. But of prime importance, there needs to be raised awareness with faculty members of the "nature of discourse and learning to write in their disciplines" (Purser et al., 2008, p. 6-7), so that the role of literacy teaching moves into the discipline and is incorporated into the teaching and learning of that discipline.

The recommendations discussed above can also be offered as suggestions for further research into the practice of developing academic research writing.

10.6.3 Recommendations for Further Research

Emerging from this research is a suggestion to investigate whether the model for the teaching of academic research writing (see Figure 9.4) is an appropriate one to underpin the development of a curriculum to support the teaching of academic writing over the full period of writing the dissertation. This arises from the fact that there was concern about the academic research writing proficiency reached by students in this study, and thus it is suggested that the support continue, but that the research does so as well.

It would be interesting to ascertain where this model could be used as a model and indeed whether the design principals emerging from this study are generalizable to other disciplines. Thus, another suggestion for further research is to conduct such a study.

Emerging from this study further research is suggested which involves the tracking of this cohort of students to completion of study investigating the progress they make, the challenges they face and how these are overcome. As pointed out in the evaluation stage of the research, concerns were raised about the students' academic research proficiency and so of interest would be to track the students to the fruition of the studies. However, suggestions could be for similar studies to be conducted tracking student progress over the period of postgraduate study identifying why some students succeed while others do not. Of interest to research, is investigating reasons for the students dropping out of a programme. In this study, three of the sampled students withdrew from the master's programme within the first year without much explanation. Attempts to contact them for further explanation and reasons for the termination of study were unsuccessful. At

present, all remaining seven students are at various stages of their research; but it is not as yet clear the number that will successfully complete.

Further suggestions for research could include investigating the gap between undergraduate and postgraduate writing, that is honours, master's and then doctoral writing. Of interest, could be research into what academic writing should be 'taught' at undergraduate level to prepare students for their move into postgraduate studies. Research could also be conducted into identifying the support needed by supervisors in order for them to support their students effectively taking into account the three specific fields of knowledge.

A final situation to investigate is the supervision process. In informal discussions with students varied supervision practices have emerged with some being considered successful but other types of practices seem to be lacking and as such tend to compromise the students' opportunity for attainment of their postgraduate qualification. Conversely, informal discussions with supervisors have also raised issues with students and in turn compromise and query the supervisors' professionalism. As supervision is an integral part of postgraduate study, findings emerging from research of both perspectives could enhance programmes and lead to a fulfilling experience for both supervisor and student.

10.7 A FINAL WORD

The quote by Carolyn Coman which was used to begin this chapter, reminds me that I embarked on this journey to find out what I did not know. I realised that the students needed help but at the time I was not sure that I knew how. By undertaking this study with a group of students, albeit small, I have learned more, the literature has guided me, the role players – the students, the supervision team and I – have all played a part in developing and deepening the knowledge and the practice.

It is hoped that through the writing of this thesis that I have been able to connect all the dots and come to some conclusion for a whole new constellation, a model for teaching which will support students in the development of their academic research writing.

APPENDICES (see CD)

Appendix A	A brief overview of the education system pre 1948
Appendix B	Participant narratives
Appendix C	TALPS pre-test results per item
Appendix D	Higher Education Qualifications Framework
Appendix E	Postgraduate Policy 2010
Appendix F	Contact session evaluation forms
Appendix G	Research proposal assessment rubric
Appendix H	Student progress reports
Appendix I	Mock oral defence critique sheet
Appendix J	Record of doctoral and master's proposal defence: 2011
Appendix K	Student questionnaire and letter of consent
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Appendix N	Research proposal template
Appendix O	Student deregistration email
Appendix P	Mock oral defence feedback form
Appendix Q	Proposal defence critique sheet for critical readers
Appendix R	Academic research writing rubric

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APPENDIX A: A BRIEF HISTORY OF EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA PRE-1948

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The context of this study is the general South African education in terms of academic literacy. South Africa is a 1.2-million square kilometre land mass situated at the extreme tip of the African continent. Its diverse peoples of almost 49-million (Statistics SA, 2013) is democratically ruled following the 1994 elections in which, for the first time in the country's history, all adult citizens were allowed to participate.



Figure Error! No text of specified style in document..1: Position of South Africa in Africa

For the educational system in South Africa, this election was an historic turning point as it was only after the 1994 elections that a single and uniform education system allowed the African, Indian, Coloured and White¹ children to be educated together, in contrast to the separate and unequal systems of the apartheid past. The emergence of South Africa's classified racial groups and separate development may be explained by its historical roots.

Prior to the mid-17th century, the southern part of Africa was inhabited by a variety of indigenous peoples primarily nomadic hunters and gatherers. But, in 1652, at the so-called Cape of Good Hope, a refreshment station was established by the Dutch East India Company with the company's gardens replenishing their ships with supplies on their voyages to and from the East. During the latter years of 17th century, Europeans from France and Germany, fleeing religious persecution, joined the Dutch settlers and free burghers (settlers) in the Cape and established farms to the north and east of the settlement. The indigenous people, the Khoisan, were indentured as labourers joining slaves who had been brought in from Madagascar and Indonesia to develop a workforce for the refreshment station as well as the farms. Almost immediately in the establishment of this settlement, two conflicting forces were at play, with one tending to draw races together but the other, keeping them apart (Behr, 1984, p. 48) entrenching a practice of segregation (Christie, 1996).

¹ These four categories form the major race groups delineated in the apartheid era.

In the early 19th century, the British colonised the Cape and encouraged further settlement to the area. It was during these colonial times that racial segregation strengthened but was only formalised in the apartheid policy after the 1948 general elections. Apartheid, meaning separateness, was an official government policy creating a system of legal segregation and maintaining inequalities, a policy seen as “an outcome of the attitude and fears of successive generations of Boer trekkers, driven to adopt a close form of group loyalty in defence of their cultural heritage” (Atkinson, 1978, p. 221). Of interest to this research is how apartheid policies affected the education system and language in education particularly as it is the education system through which the majority of the current postgraduate students sampled for this research would have passed and developed their language skills.

1.2 EDUCATION AFTER COLONISATION

In this brief portrayal, the history of the South African education system both reflects and shapes division in society (Christie, 1996). Right from the early days of settlement, education, shaped largely by the first white settlers, was dominated by social divisions and racial classification which had an effect on literacy.

1.2.1 Education in the Early Years of the Cape

Before the arrival of settlers at the Cape, the land was inhabited by Khoisan in the south west and Bantu-speaking societies in the eastern sections. These African² societies placed strong emphasis on traditional forms of education, transmitting cultural values and skills. Education involved morals, taboos, habits and folklore, transmitted orally, tales of heroism and treachery, and finally, chores and practice in the skills necessary for survival in a changing environment (Van Zyl, 1997). Children were the responsibility of the mother up to the age of six, during which time they helped with household chores. Thereafter, girls remained with their mothers learning the skills and functions expected of a woman in African society. Boys, in turn, spent time in the veld (countryside) herding their animals and imitating the activities of the older boys who were being schooled by male adults (Atkinson, 1978; Van Zyl, 1997). When boys approached adulthood, they attended more formal schooling in the form of an initiation school for periods ranging from a few weeks to three or four months. During this time, they were schooled in tribal customs and their respect and obedience to the tribe and its customs (Atkinson, 1978; Van Zyl, 1997). This indigenous education, seen in African society, equipped the young for their then role in society, instilling in them moral

²In early documents the word coloured is used to describe the African population. Bantu was used in the context of the Eiselen report (Behr, 1984) but this was later replaced by the word Black. In this study, I have elected to use African initially and then later on convert to using Black when writing about education in the apartheid era.

values and inculcating codes of behaviour (Hlatshwayo, 2000). Records of the traditional way of life of the Khoisan are predominantly seen in rock paintings but its rich history was also passed down through the oral traditions of stories, song and dance (Van Zyl, 1997). This type of literacy, although not as yet educational literacy, is viewed in terms of socialisation and culture, an important aspect to consider.

In 1652, the Dutch set up a refreshment station at the Cape of Good Hope, and from these early years up to the 1800s, formal schooling for settler children was in hands of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) and was conducted in Dutch (Behr, 1984; Van Zyl, 1997). This provision of education was a common phenomenon throughout Europe and its colonies until well into the 19th century with schooling being regulated by the church (Behr, 1984) and this was mirrored in the settlement at the Cape. Schooling had a religious content and purpose but what was provided was enough to meet the needs of that particular society (Atkinson, 1978; Christie, 1996). There were very few schools in the towns and not all white children went to school, as payment was required. The 'written word' was brought to the Cape by the Dutch (Van Zyl, 1997) and children learnt to read using the Bible as text, reading passages from the Bible for reading practice. They learned prayers and the doctrines of the DRC, which they recited to the teacher, and singing lessons prepared them to sing hymns during church services. In addition to these practices, there was some teaching of the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic (Christie, 1996; Van Zyl, 1997) indicating a basic reading literacy for whites, particularly the Dutch-speaking.

In the countryside, there were no established schools. In certain areas of the Cape wine and grain farms were established but some farmers, known as *trekboers* (nomadic farmers), continually moved with their herds in search of grazing. All farmers wanted their children to be able to read the Bible and parents either taught their children or sometimes travelling teachers were employed to move from family to family or farm to farm; however, these teachers were not always well qualified (Christie, 1996). Again, basic reading, with the predominant text being the Bible, writing and arithmetic was taught. During the latter half of the 19th century private schools were established by farmers in outlying areas to ensure that their children did not grow up completely illiterate (Behr, 1984). However, these schools were transitory, their establishment being dictated by circumstances, but their existence did reinforce the idea that education was the responsibility of parents and the church rather than the state.

Initially no schools existed for the indigenous Khoisan or the slaves, but in 1658 a school was started for young adolescent slaves to "induce them to learn the Christian prayers" (Horrell, 1970, p. 3) and to learn the basics of the Dutch language to facilitate

communication with their owners (Molteno, 1984; Van Zyl, 1997). It was thus the slaves who learnt the masters' language and not the masters who learnt to communicate in the slaves' language (Molteno, 1984), thus introducing verbal literacy among the non-Dutch inhabitants.

In 1663, a second school opened for children of all races which included lower class whites, slaves and the indigenous Khoisan (Christie, 1996; Molteno, 1984). In 1685, the Dutch commissioner Van Rheeede visited the Cape and reinforced the fact that slave children, "these poor and ignorant people who were alienated from God" (translated by Coetzee, 1975, p. 5 in Van Zyl, 1997, p. 52), and those of mixed race were to be educated separately from the white children³. Although some schools, both in towns and the rural areas, provided schooling for both white and slave children, the norm was separate education (Atkinson, 1978), with schools for slave children being seen as a tool of "social control ... to reproduce a docile labo[u]r force" (Hlatshwayo, 2000, p. 1).

In summary, during this time of initial settlement in the Cape, early schooling, which was described as "in so bad a state that our youth can scarcely be grounded in spelling, reading, writing and the elements of arithmetic ..." (cited in Atkinson, 1978, p. 21) was conducted in Dutch. Schooling (developing an elementary school literacy) was based on a religious doctrine and was largely segregated, illustrating that social class, race, language, and religion, even at this early stage in the history of South Africa, formed a pattern for what was to follow (Behr, 1984), even with a change in governance.

1.2.2 Education after British Annexation of the Cape Colony in 1806

The British ruled the Cape from 1795 to 1803 and then once they had annexed the Cape in 1806, more attention was paid to education, particularly as a way to spread the English language and traditions in the colony (Atkinson, 1978; Van Zyl, 1997). Education became the means of reinforcing the move from Dutch to English and anglicising the church and government through the establishment of free English schools, also called Somerset Schools (Van Zyl, 1997), prompted by Lord Charles Somerset's 1822 decree (Behr, 1984). New schools for slaves were also established under Somerset's dispensation, but when in 1834 free education was discontinued, slaves were barred from attending white schools. It was, however, at this time that a number of schools following the British tradition were established with teachers being brought from Britain (Atkinson, 1978; Behr, 1984; Christie, 1996; Van Zyl, 1997) to reinforce such traditions. It was in this era that the link development of literacy and mother-tongue instruction became evident.

³Ironically, it was to be the Dutch who in the 20th century were to become South Africa's most outspoken opponents of apartheid

However, the Dutch resisted the policy of replacing the Dutch language in their schools with English. Initially both languages were used, but this changed in 1828 with instruction only being in English. In answer to this dictate, by 1839, the Dutch had developed their own schools where Dutch was the medium of instruction (Van Zyl, 1997), reinforcing the need for mother-tongue instruction in the development of literacy.

In 1839, a Department of Education was established in the Cape, which meant that control of schooling moved from church to state. This schooling system, under the leadership of a full-time official, James Rose-Innes as the first Superintendent of Education, was better organised on a more systematic basis, and funding was made available to local schools (Atkinson, 1978; Christie, 1996). At this point in the development of the colony, education consisted of free primary schooling and fee-paying secondary education; however, schooling was not compulsory. English was the medium of instruction and religious instruction was non-denominational (Behr, 1984). Individuals were also allowed to set up their own schools illustrating local community involvement. Thus, the emergence of private schools, adding to the variety of state, state-aided and mission schools (Behr, 1984; Christie, 1996) found in the colony in the latter half of the 1800s, highlights the development of an elitist literacy.

Attendance at each of these types of schools soon developed class lines, which meant that the richer children attended private schools, while secondary education, because it was only attended by those who could afford it, was not free. However, even at this early stage in the settlement of South Africa, inequalities between town and country areas emerged as well as along lines of race, religion and language. Some schools were set up in the country but many farming children, as well as the Khoisan and slaves, received no education at all. In time, this prompted the establishment of a one-teacher farm school system in remote rural areas. Schools were established in areas where no school existed within a radius of five miles and where five children could assemble (Behr, 1984) making use of itinerant teachers (Van Zyl, 1997). The development of literacy broadened to farm schools and became a multi-level concept, as is typical in farm schools, even today.

Early attempts to provide education for the indigenous inhabitants of the Cape had been relatively unsuccessful and so little progress was made with development of schooling until the Khoisan and coloured peoples who had been slaves were freed from slavery in 1834 (Atkinson, 1978). Thereafter, schooling was seen as a way of instilling social discipline, preparing this social stratum to be subordinate labourers in a society run by the white settlers (Hlatshwayo, 2000; Molteno, 1984), an example then of social literacy. From around the 1840s, mission schools, established by missionaries from a wide variety of European countries and representing different churches, were set up initially in the Cape, to convert

the 'heathens' (that is, the Khoisan, the coloured ex-slaves, children of mixed race and Africans) to Christianity and to teach them how to live a western life and participate in church activities (Hlatshwayo, 2000). Elementary schooling taught reading, writing and arithmetic and some industrial education, discipline, obedience and the value of work. However, this group of people were largely seen as not being fully or properly educated and thus could not enjoy equal economic and political rights (Christie, 1996); however, schooling was seen to play a role in "contributing to the social consolidation of conquest and the control of the conquered" (Molteno, 1984, p. 49). In the latter part of the 1890s, the government began funding mission schools (Behr, 1984) which ultimately became the major provider of education to Africans prior to 1953 and provided education for the poorer white community (Behr, 1984; Christie, 1996; Van Zyl, 1997). Hlatshwayo is critical in his discussion of mission schools, which he says prepared the native people for work as manual labourers using "religion as a rationale" (2000, p. 32).

In the mid-1800s, the British reviewed their language policy with regard to Dutch, and as a result, Dutch was 'allowed' in first-class schools in cities and big towns, as well as in second-class schools in smaller towns (Van Zyl, 1997). In reality, Dutch was used only to familiarise children with the English language. In the latter 19th century, schools were only given a government subsidy if English was taught and used as the medium of instruction (Van Zyl, 1997). Thus until 1882, English remained a medium of instruction until Proclamation 113 of 1882 (c) recommended that Dutch be acknowledged as an alternative because it was the home language of the majority of the population (Van Zyl, 1997). This policy, which surprisingly reflected theories pertaining to the theory behind the development of language (Cummins, 1979) and reinforced by the efforts of the Society of True Afrikaners (*Die Genootskap van Regte Afrikaners*) established in 1875, recommended that English be taught only once Dutch had been mastered properly. Unfortunately, even though the proclamation gave parents the right to determine the medium of instruction, "departmental regulations and administrative procedures prevented Dutch parents from exercising that right in practice" (Van Zyl, 1997, p. 61). At this stage, literacy becomes a contested political concept which contributes to the movement of people into different parts of the country.

1.2.3 Education within the Trekker States

Dutch farmers, or *trekkers*, began moving inland from the Cape from 1836 to escape British rule. Parties of Dutch farmers broke away from the main trek, moving eastwards over the Drakensberg mountains to establish a trekker state in Natal after brokering agreements with local chiefs.

1.2.3.1 Education in Natal during the years 1848 to 1910

During their nomadic existence, education became the responsibility of the trekker parents with emphasis on the teaching of Dutch and the development of basic reading skills in order to read the Bible (Christie, 1996), once again with basic literacy being developed albeit within a mobile mode. Later, once laagers (settlements using ox-wagons arranged in a circle) were established, simple schools were set up (Van Zyl, 1997) teaching basic reading, writing and arithmetic.

The British annexation of Natal in the 1840s prompted many trekkers to move out of Natal into the area between the Orange and Vaal Rivers. Thereafter, education in Natal became a government responsibility (Christie, 1996) with the first state school being established in 1849. English was deemed the language of instruction with Dutch only being taught as a language when desired (Van Zyl, 1997). For the *Boer* (farmer) children living in outlying areas of the colony, travelling school teachers were given a subsidy only if English was taught as a subject. This was an attempt to anglicise the schools. As a final resort, British teachers were placed in *Boer* schools, thus ensuring that they became more English with Dutch no longer playing an important role. The British were insistent on anglicising the colony and ignored pleas from the *Boers* for Afrikaans to be used as a medium of instruction (Van Zyl, 1997). Eventually, a request was granted to a community in Greyville, Durban in mid-1883 and later expanded to several other areas. Ultimately, the Educational Board decided that Dutch could be taught in primary state schools if six or more pupils were interested. Once more than 50 pupils were in favour, Dutch was taught as a subject and thereafter as a medium of instruction, a decree⁴ agreed to by the Education Department which replaced the Education Board in 1894 (Van Zyl, 1997). It seems that in areas where *Boers* lived, Christian National Education (CNE) schools were established to protect Dutch as a subject (Atkinson, 1978) but once it was clear that Dutch, as a language, would not be endangered in Natal, these schools closed. Thus by 1908, 12 state schools, 22 state-subsidised schools and many farm schools were teaching Dutch (Van Zyl, 1997), although the issue of language, culture and race still continued to play a role in education policy.

With the arrival of the Indians in Natal in the 1860s, and later the arrival of Indian traders, Britain once again demonstrated its favouring of racially separate education. Indian children, whose parents as immigrants had brought with them “ancient cultural tradition, and a well-defined social order” (Atkinson, 1978, p. 206), had to complete primary school in Indian government-subsidised primary schools before being eligible for admittance to white secondary schools, a policy promulgated by Act 20 of 1878 (N). However, this edict was

⁴One of the early bilingual language policies.

repealed in 1899 for Indian boys and in 1905 for girls with their dismissal from white secondary schools, which completed the process of separation (Van Zyl, 1997). With an increasing multilingual population, multi-literacy is becoming evident.

Schooling for Africans in Natal took place in reserves where the government granted land to missionaries for the building of residential mission stations, hospitals and schools. Mission schools included Adams College (1853), Inanda Seminary (1869) and Marianhill Mission (1882) which offered more than basic education, providing an academic education based on European-type curricula in addition to practical work and technical skills. Certain missions, like Adams College, had teacher training colleges attached to them. These schools had little money and few resources but played an important role in offering some basic education to Africans in Natal. Initially tribes moved away from the missions not wanting to be converted to Christianity. Later many Africans came to the mission stations looking for work and leaders of African tribes sent their sons to be educated at the mission schools so they could act as intermediaries between the colonial government and African chiefdoms (Christie, 1996), an illustration of how Eurocentric literacies developed locally. Mission schools were subsequently given state aid, but this further demonstrated the overlying attitude of the government towards developing separate education (Christie, 1996; Hlatshwayo, 2000; Van Zyl, 1997).

1.2.3.2 Education in the Orange River Colony during the years 1880 to 1910

Trekkers moved across the Orange River into what became known as the Orange River Colony, and settled on farms from the 1830s. Formal education was non-existent for some time and once again education lay in the hands of parents who continued a primitive type of education using the scriptures of the Bible for the teaching of reading. Elementary arithmetic was also taught (Van Zyl, 1997). Schooling was also seen as a tool for instilling the doctrine of the DRC church and preparing the children for church membership, informing a moral literacy. Once settled on the farms, visiting school teachers provided some education for Boer children, but this was not of a high standard (Christie, 1996; Van Zyl, 1997).

In 1848, Sir Harry Smith annexed the Orange River Colony and renamed it the Orange River Sovereignty, a state that only continued until 1854. Two years prior to annexation, the first formal school was established in Bloemfontein (Van Zyl, 1997). Reading, writing and arithmetic, geography, English and Dutch were taught with Dutch being the medium of instruction (Van Zyl, 1997). Sir George Grey, Governor of the Cape Colony, provided funds for the creation of a school in Bloemfontein named Grey College, which would provide advanced education to scholars. The school, opened in 1859, was to be controlled by a

committee of the DRC and both English and Dutch was to be taught (Van Zyl, 1997); however, once again a language issue arose with funding not being forthcoming from the government of the Orange Free State until it was clarified that Dutch would be the main language. Conversely, when English-speaking Rev. Geo Brown took over as principal, Dutch was grossly neglected. Later, the government school was amalgamated with Grey College, given a fixed subsidy and Dutch became the medium of instruction; ironically, it was the Dutch-speaking citizens who opposed this move claiming that as English dominated the business world, they wanted their children to be taught in English (Van Zyl, 1997) “in order to meet the widening economic opportunities in the southern African territories” (Atkinson, 1978, p. 114), and thus developing literacy for economic advancement.

The first educational law of the Orange Free State Republic, promulgated in 1864, required Dutch to be the medium of instruction with English also being taught to encourage bilingualism⁵ (Van Zyl, 1997). A period of confusion about the medium of instruction followed and was only clarified when Ordinance Policy 1 of 1874 declared that both Dutch and English be taught at all state schools. However, most textbooks were written in English and as such, there was once again a practical move to use English as the medium of instruction. During the subsequent years, the government requested all schools to teach subjects in Dutch, but in reality this did not occur. In 1891, once again the issue of language arose with the suggestion that Dutch be taught in rural schools while in town schools, parents could chose the medium of instruction up to and including Standard 2, after which Dutch would be used for at least half of the subjects (Van Zyl, 1997); however, the ideal was hindered by the lack of Dutch textbooks which meant that further development of literacy was tied to learning materials.

It seems that British teachers dominated the education scene in the Orange Free State even teaching through the medium of English in Boer-controlled schools. The English-speaking population, who made up the majority of the population in Bloemfontein, were at pains to protect their cultural heritage, and with the help of the church, established private schools in the town as well as smaller villages (Van Zyl, 1997).

Although the provision of schooling for whites was limited, even less schooling was provided for African children. As previously stated, mission schools provided a basic education for Africans in the trekker states (Behr, 1984; Hlatshwayo, 2000). In the Orange Free State, some mission stations were established but at that time, few roads existed in the rural areas

⁵South Africa's first bilingual policy which preceded that of Natal.

and missionaries found difficulty communicating with the African tribes in these areas (Atkinson, 1978). Mission stations were established at Imperani with the Koranna tribe, at Platberg with a group of Griquas, and the Paris Evangelical Mission established a number of stations at Bethulie, Korannaberg, Beersheba, Carmel and Hebron. Two other societies, the Berlin and the London Missionary, also moved into the area to establish missions and later on, the DRC and Anglican Church set up missions at Witsieshoek and Modderport (Atkinson, 1978). There was no initial funding provision and mission schools had to use their own funds to run their schools; however, records show that most Africans in this area did not attend school (Christie, 1996). Those who did attend learned the fundamentals of reading, writing and arithmetic with some skills for agriculture being included which shows a widening of literacy to include knowledge about a trade as well. However, most time was spent on religious instruction (Atkinson, 1978). To gain an understanding of the development of separate education within a greater South African context, education provision in another Boer republic and its ramifications, needs to be discussed.

The movement of trekkers into other areas of South Africa was initially motivated by a desire to be free of British rule; however, the discovery of diamonds in the Kimberley area, initially in the Orange Free State but later annexed by the Cape Colony and the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand in the Transvaal, prompted further movement into and settlement within these areas.

1.2.3.3 Education in the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1880 to 1910

As mines were established in areas across the Vaal River, towns grew up around them and businesses developed. Initially the schooling system, based on religious conviction (Van Zyl, 1997), was not well organised as many children did not go to school at all and those that did, only received basic education. Dutch was the medium of instruction promoted by the trekkers, reinforced by the Van der Linden Education Regulation of 1852 (Z) and the Education Regulation of 1859 (Z) (Van Zyl, 1997, p. 61). With developments in mining, schooling, which was still mainly the responsibility of the church and parents, was seen as inadequate as many new jobs in this sector demanded skills such as reading and writing. The government, in response, gave grants to schools which prompted expansion and consideration of the teaching of English (Education Act 6 of 1866 (Z)), its use seen as vital for commercial interactions with the British who were being drawn into the area now known as the South African Republic (ZAR) (Van Zyl, 1997). An inspection system for education was provided (Christie, 1996), parallel-medium schools were developed but schools were still separated by race (Van Zyl, 1997). In addition, a system of church schools subsidised by the government for middle class children, came into existence.

In times of social change, new demands are placed on the education system to meet society's changing needs (Christie, 1996). Thus, the newly industrialised society demanded new skills and schooling was seen as the means to teach working class children work skills and work discipline. In 1902, free compulsory education was introduced for white children between seven and 14 years, later increased to 16. However, free compulsory education did not extend to African children. In fact, there was at the time, little state schooling at all for African children. Mission schools set up by the Berlin Mission and the DRC, Swiss Protestant and Wesleyan missionaries at places such as Kilnerton (1855), Botshabelo (1860), Grace Dieu (1906) Lemana (1906) and later in 1922, St Peter's which was established in Rosettenville, Johannesburg (Atkinson, 1978; Christie, 1996), provided a basic education.

In these areas, mission schools were the sole providers of education for Africans (Hlatshwayo, 2000). Africans did not initially take education (based on a Western ideal) seriously nor did they see the value in learning to read and write and thus develop their literacy. However, towards the end of the 19th century with the development of towns, the discovery of minerals and the expansion of economic activities, Africans changed their attitude to education seeing education and the development of literacy as a way into the dominant economic and social systems (Christie, 1996), and becoming skilled for industry (Atkinson, 1978). More mission schools were set up offering a broader base of education not only in rural areas but also in compounds and locations outside towns and by the turn of the century, 184 mission schools were scattered throughout South Africa providing education for over 10 000 African pupils (Appel, 1989; Behr, 1984; Christie, 1996; Nkabinde, 1997).

Concomitantly, the Dutch established CNE schools which were neither free nor compulsory (Atkinson, 1978). However, the issue of CNE schools became less significant as Dutch, and later Afrikaans was given more recognition in the ZAR and Orange Free State. The struggle between English and Dutch as language of instruction continued in schooling with English becoming the medium of instruction during British rule of the Transvaal from 1877-81 as an attempt to "assimilate the Dutch into the British Empire" (Van Zyl, 1997, p. 62). Thereafter, Boer rule from 1881-99 attempted to protect and further their cultural heritage with the proclamation of the Du Toit Education Act 1 of 1882 (Z) stating that hereafter, Dutch was to be the medium of instruction (Van Zyl, 1997).

Most schooling at this time was only at primary level; for example, in 1892, 92% of scholars in the Transvaal were attending school at primary level with less than 1% making it to secondary level, which means that some children did not attend school at all. Wealthy parents tended to send their children to the Cape or abroad to Holland or England for their

schooling (Christie, 1996). Advanced literacy was thus only achieved through entering a secondary phase of education.

The Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902 resulted in many Boer families being interned in concentration camps, and it was during this time that the medium of instruction in all schools reverted to English with the exception of the teaching of religion (Atkinson, 1978; Van Zyl, 1997).

1.3 EDUCATION AFTER UNIFICATION

After unification in 1910, four provinces, namely the Cape, Natal, the Orange Free State and the Transvaal were established. Each of these provinces was given control over primary and secondary education with both English and Dutch languages being the official languages of the Union, although from as early as 1860s, there had been a move in the development of a new Afrikaans language (Atkinson, 1978) and thus development of literacy in mother-tongue.

The dominant educational patterns of the time, where a system of free compulsory education existed for whites, continued to expand providing education at increasing higher levels of education with the majority of children completing some secondary education and then continuing into technical or tertiary education. Simultaneously, private schools were providing high quality education for more privileged children and CNE schools were established to maintain the Afrikaans language and culture (Atkinson, 1978), aligning literacy development and ideology.

However, issues with language soon arose even though Article 137 of the Union Constitution stated that both English and Afrikaans languages were to be the official languages of the Union (Atkinson, 1978; Van Zyl, 1997). The Cape determined that children were to be taught in mother-tongue up to Standard 4, and thereafter, could choose either or the two official languages for instruction. In 1925, mother-tongue instruction was extended to Standard 6 and thereafter in 1956, it was suggested that English or Afrikaans, depending on which language the child knew best, would be the medium of instruction up to and including Standard 8. The Transvaal followed a similar pattern with mother-tongue being used up to Standard 4, after which parents could choose either English or Afrikaans. In 1949, however, Ordinance 19 ruled for mother-tongue instruction up to and including Standard 8. In the Orange Free State, mother-tongue had been introduced before 1910 and this was reinforced by legislation and eventually extended to Standard 8. In Natal, it was decided that both official languages were available for instruction (1916 ordinance) (Van Zyl, 1997).

African or Black education initially remained in the hands of the mission societies (Atkinson, 1978; Behr, 1984; Christie, 1996) as their role was recognised by the government which saw

the need to centralise education under the Union. However, money shortages resulted in a limited number of Africans receiving high levels of education with many Africans receiving no education at all. The table below gives some indication of the numbers of mission and government schools across the four provinces in 1926.

Table Error! No text of specified style in document..1: Distribution of African Schools in 1926

Province	Mission Schools	Government Schools
Cape	1 625	1
Natal	487	66
Transvaal	397	1
Orange Free State	194	0
Total	2 702	68

(Source: Horrell, 1963a, p. 27)

Although mission schools were educating a large number of Africans at this time, taking on the role of the government in educating Africans and even training teachers, certain criticisms were levelled at this system of education. These criticisms included industrial and manual education, racism and subordination, and sexism and women's subordination (Atkinson, 1978; Christie, 1996; Molteno, 1984).

Boys, it seems in the mission education system, received some reading, writing and arithmetic learning but the focus was on skilling them to take up a trade or to do manual labour, although this shows a bias of class and gender on the development of literacy. African culture and values were superseded by Christian values and beliefs (attitudes such as patience, humility, piety, discipline and the value of hard work) which critics argue, prepared Africans for a subordinate position in society (Fiske & Ladd, 2006). This then was reinforced by the fact that education consisted of only two to three years of schooling, which limited their opportunities in the workplace (Christie, 1996) to lowly and subservient tasks (Hlatshwayo, 2000; Letseka et al., 2010). Western values about a woman's place in society were also taught in mission schools and at that time, girls were trained for domesticity, again entrenching gender divisions. Thus, African girls were trained for a subordinate domestic role both in their own homes and as servants in other people's homes (Christie, 1996).

In the late 1920s and early 1930s with an urban influx, there was a marked rise in enrolment of African pupils at schools in the towns but few teachers were employed to deal with the increasing influx (Kros, 2010). The development of the Native Development Fund for financing African education saw even greater increases in enrolment and by 1933, 78 599 African pupils, for example, were enrolled in schools in the Transvaal (Kros, 2010). However, issues arose with quality delivery of education as around 97% of schools were primary schools with 30% of those pupils being found in the beginners' class preceding Grade 1. By

Standard 1 (Grade 3), the drop-out rate was high as almost 34% of teachers were uncertified (Kros, 2010). A mere 2% of pupils progressed as far as Standard 6 (Grade 8) where a handful of teachers taught.

During the depression of the late 1920 and early 1930s, limited funds saw the reduction of teacher salaries with newly qualified teachers being paid well below the agreed-upon amount. For example, a male teacher received three pounds instead of five pound and ten shillings per month, and a woman teacher was paid two pounds ten shillings a month instead of four pounds ten shillings (Kros, 2010, p. 47).

Language has always been an issue in education in South Africa, a trend which continues to this day. The choice of the medium of instruction is crucial as language “is the tool we use to express our thoughts and our most treasured ideas” and in addition, language “also constitutes a major component of cultural identity” (Van Zyl, 1997, p. 58), illustrating the strong link of literacy to cultural identity. Teaching through the vernacular was a stance favoured by continental missionaries particularly as these missionaries did not want their converts to be seen as “ripe for British citizenship” (Kros, 2010, p. 17). In contrast, British missionaries favoured teaching in English (Van Zyl, 1997). However, over the years more emphasis was placed on teaching through the medium of English but building on a foundation of the vernacular, a theory reinforced by researchers such as Cummins (1979), although researchers such as Mamdani (1996) saw the National Party’s use of mother-tongue instruction in schools as a tool of ethnicising Africans (cited in Graaff, 2001).

Initially in the early years of union, it seemed that the government of the time did not concern itself with African education and the language/s being used as a medium of instruction (Van Zyl, 1997). This, however, changed in the 1940s with the growth of Afrikaner nationalism illustrated by O’Meara who describes this growth as a painstaking construction by extremely well-organised groups of petty bourgeois militants of, firstly a new “Christian national ideology and then a broad Afrikaner social and political alliance” (cited in Kros, 2010, p. 5) resulting in a change of attitude towards the current language policy in place at schools. The struggle for language recognition and Afrikaner nationalism resulted in the view that Afrikaans rather than English should be promoted as a second language with the vernacular remaining as the first medium of instruction (Kros, 2010).

In the Transvaal, the Chief Inspector of Education, Dr Eiselen introduced African languages into teacher training programmes and as media for instruction (Kros, 2010), and encouraged missionary societies to participate in the production of books in African languages. By 1935, various scenarios of teaching in the vernacular were to be found in the four provinces: in Natal, teaching took place in the vernacular for the first six years of schooling, in the Cape

and Free State for the first four years and in the Transvaal, teaching in the vernacular only took place in the first two years of schooling. Thereafter, English or Afrikaans almost always became the medium of instruction (Van Zyl, 1997).

A pattern of education in South Africa during this period after unification thus emerged which showed differentiation not only along lines of colour but also along lines of social class severely hampering the development of African education. In addition, an increase in the African population after World War I saw an increased need for education. Financial under-provision coupled with an influx of the African population to urban areas doubling between 1921 and 1946 (Burger, nd online), led to a severe lack of schooling facilities, teachers, and educational materials resulting in an “extremely impoverished” system (Fiske & Ladd, 2006, p. 97). In a foreword to Chapter 4 of *The Seeds of Separate Development: Origins of Bantu Education*, Kros quotes from the Transvaal Education Department (TED) Report for the year ended 1942: “We [Native Education] have managed to keep existing schools going; a few new schools have been registered; the teachers have again had to be told that owing to shortage of funds no increments can be paid; hundreds of children were refused admission, especially in the larger towns because there were no rooms in which they could have been taught, because even if there had been adequate accommodation there would have been no teachers to teach them, and because even if there had been enough teachers there would have been no money to pay them for their work” (2010, p. 45).

However, this pattern of segregated and unequal education with issues of language, culture and race was not a new one: it had its origins during the early years of settlement of the Cape and then continued through the settlement of the trekker states and unification into 1930s and 1940s and finally, the apartheid era from 1948 (Christie & Collins, 1984; Hlatshwayo, 2000).

1.4 EDUCATION AFTER COLONISATION

In this brief portrayal, the history of the South African education system both reflects and shapes division in society (Christie, 1996). Right from the early days of settlement, education, shaped largely by the first white settlers, was dominated by social divisions and racial classification which had an effect on literacy.

1.4.1 Education in the Early Years of the Cape

Before the arrival of settlers at the Cape, the land was inhabited by Khoisan in the south west and Bantu-speaking societies in the eastern sections. These African⁶ societies placed

⁶In early documents the word coloured is used to describe the African population. Bantu was used in the context of the Eiselen report (Behr, 1984) but this was later replaced by the word Black.

strong emphasis on traditional forms of education, transmitting cultural values and skills. Education involved morals, taboos, habits and folklore, transmitted orally, tales of heroism and treachery, and finally, chores and practice in the skills necessary for survival in a changing environment (Van Zyl, 1997). Children were the responsibility of the mother up to the age of six, during which time they helped with household chores. Thereafter, girls remained with their mothers learning the skills and functions expected of a woman in African society. Boys, in turn, spent time in the veld (countryside) herding their animals and imitating the activities of the older boys who were being schooled by male adults (Atkinson, 1978; Van Zyl, 1997). When boys approached adulthood, they attended more formal schooling in the form of an initiation school for periods ranging from a few weeks to three or four months. During this time, they were schooled in tribal customs and their respect and obedience to the tribe and its customs (Atkinson, 1978; Van Zyl, 1997). This indigenous education, seen in African society, equipped the young for their then role in society, instilling in them moral values and inculcating codes of behaviour (Hlatshwayo, 2000). Records of the traditional way of life of the Khoisan are predominantly seen in rock paintings but its rich history was also passed down through the oral traditions of stories, song and dance (Van Zyl, 1997). This type of literacy, although not as yet educational literacy, is viewed in terms of socialisation and culture, an important aspect to consider.

In 1652, the Dutch set up a refreshment station at the Cape of Good Hope, and from these early years up to the 1800s, formal schooling for settler children was in hands of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) and was conducted in Dutch (Behr, 1984; Van Zyl, 1997). This provision of education was a common phenomenon throughout Europe and its colonies until well into the 19th century with schooling being regulated by the church (Behr, 1984) and this was mirrored in the settlement at the Cape. Schooling had a religious content and purpose but what was provided was enough to meet the needs of that particular society (Atkinson, 1978; Christie, 1996). There were very few schools in the towns and not all white children went to school, as payment was required. The 'written word' was brought to the Cape by the Dutch (Van Zyl, 1997) and children learnt to read using the Bible as text, reading passages from the Bible for reading practice. They learned prayers and the doctrines of the DRC, which they recited to the teacher, and singing lessons prepared them to sing hymns during church services. In addition to these practices, there was some teaching of the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic (Christie, 1996; Van Zyl, 1997) indicating a basic reading literacy for whites, particularly the Dutch-speaking.

In this study, I have elected to use African initially and then later on convert to using Black when writing about education in the apartheid era.

In the countryside, there were no established schools. In certain areas of the Cape wine and grain farms were established but some farmers, known as *trekboers* (nomadic farmers), continually moved with their herds in search of grazing. All farmers wanted their children to be able to read the Bible and parents either taught their children or sometimes travelling teachers were employed to move from family to family or farm to farm; however, these teachers were not always well qualified (Christie, 1996). Again, basic reading, with the predominant text being the Bible, writing and arithmetic was taught. During the latter half of the 19th century private schools were established by farmers in outlying areas to ensure that their children did not grow up completely illiterate (Behr, 1984). However, these schools were transitory, their establishment being dictated by circumstances, but their existence did reinforce the idea that education was the responsibility of parents and the church rather than the state.

Initially no schools existed for the indigenous Khoisan or the slaves, but in 1658 a school was started for young adolescent slaves to “induce them to learn the Christian prayers” (Horrell, 1970, p. 3) and to learn the basics of the Dutch language to facilitate communication with their owners (Molteno, 1984; Van Zyl, 1997). It was thus the slaves who learnt the masters’ language and not the masters who learnt to communicate in the slaves’ language (Molteno, 1984), thus introducing verbal literacy among the non-Dutch inhabitants.

In 1663, a second school opened for children of all races which included lower class whites, slaves and the indigenous Khoisan (Christie, 1996; Molteno, 1984). In 1685, the Dutch commissioner Van Rheeede visited the Cape and reinforced the fact that slave children, “these poor and ignorant people who were alienated from God” (translated by Coetzee, 1975, p. 5 in Van Zyl, 1997, p. 52), and those of mixed race were to be educated separately from the white children⁷. Although some schools, both in towns and the rural areas, provided schooling for both white and slave children, the norm was separate education (Atkinson, 1978), with schools for slave children being seen as a tool of “social control ... to reproduce a docile labo[u]r force” (Hlatshwayo, 2000, p. 1).

In summary, during this time of initial settlement in the Cape, early schooling, which was described as “in so bad a state that our youth can scarcely be grounded in spelling, reading, writing and the elements of arithmetic ...” (cited in Atkinson, 1978, p. 21) was conducted in Dutch. Schooling (developing an elementary school literacy) was based on a religious doctrine and was largely segregated, illustrating that social class, race, language, and

⁷Ironically, it was to be the Dutch who in the 20th century were to become South Africa’s most outspoken opponents of apartheid

religion, even at this early stage in the history of South Africa, formed a pattern for what was to follow (Behr, 1984), even with a change in governance.

1.4.2 Education after British Annexation of the Cape Colony in 1806

The British ruled the Cape from 1795 to 1803 and then once they had annexed the Cape in 1806, more attention was paid to education, particularly as a way to spread the English language and traditions in the colony (Atkinson, 1978; Van Zyl, 1997). Education became the means of reinforcing the move from Dutch to English and anglicising the church and government through the establishment of free English schools, also called Somerset Schools (Van Zyl, 1997), prompted by Lord Charles Somerset's 1822 decree (Behr, 1984). New schools for slaves were also established under Somerset's dispensation, but when in 1834 free education was discontinued, slaves were barred from attending white schools. It was, however, at this time that a number of schools following the British tradition were established with teachers being brought from Britain (Atkinson, 1978; Behr, 1984; Christie, 1996; Van Zyl, 1997) to reinforce such traditions. It was in this era that the link development of literacy and mother-tongue instruction became evident.

However, the Dutch resisted the policy of replacing the Dutch language in their schools with English. Initially both languages were used, but this changed in 1828 with instruction only being in English. In answer to this dictate, by 1839, the Dutch had developed their own schools where Dutch was the medium of instruction (Van Zyl, 1997), reinforcing the need for mother-tongue instruction in the development of literacy.

In 1839, a Department of Education was established in the Cape, which meant that control of schooling moved from church to state. This schooling system, under the leadership of a full-time official, James Rose-Innes as the first Superintendent of Education, was better organised on a more systematic basis, and funding was made available to local schools (Atkinson, 1978; Christie, 1996). At this point in the development of the colony, education consisted of free primary schooling and fee-paying secondary education; however, schooling was not compulsory. English was the medium of instruction and religious instruction was non-denominational (Behr, 1984). Individuals were also allowed to set up their own schools illustrating local community involvement. Thus, the emergence of private schools, adding to the variety of state, state-aided and mission schools (Behr, 1984; Christie, 1996) found in the colony in the latter half of the 1800s, highlights the development of an elitist literacy.

Attendance at each of these types of schools soon developed class lines, which meant that the richer children attended private schools, while secondary education, because it was only attended by those who could afford it, was not free. However, even at this early stage in the

settlement of South Africa, inequalities between town and country areas emerged as well as along lines of race, religion and language. Some schools were set up in the country but many farming children, as well as the Khoisan and slaves, received no education at all. In time, this prompted the establishment of a one-teacher farm school system in remote rural areas. Schools were established in areas where no school existed within a radius of five miles and where five children could assemble (Behr, 1984) making use of itinerant teachers (Van Zyl, 1997). The development of literacy broadened to farm schools and became a multi-level concept, as is typical in farm schools, even today.

Early attempts to provide education for the indigenous inhabitants of the Cape had been relatively unsuccessful and so little progress was made with development of schooling until the Khoisan and coloured peoples who had been slaves were freed from slavery in 1834 (Atkinson, 1978). Thereafter, schooling was seen as a way of instilling social discipline, preparing this social stratum to be subordinate labourers in a society run by the white settlers (Hlatshwayo, 2000; Molteno, 1984), an example then of social literacy. From around the 1840s, mission schools, established by missionaries from a wide variety of European countries and representing different churches, were set up initially in the Cape, to convert the 'heathens' (that is, the Khoisan, the coloured ex-slaves, children of mixed race and Africans) to Christianity and to teach them how to live a western life and participate in church activities (Hlatshwayo, 2000). Elementary schooling taught reading, writing and arithmetic and some industrial education, discipline, obedience and the value of work. However, this group of people were largely seen as not being fully or properly educated and thus could not enjoy equal economic and political rights (Christie, 1996); however, schooling was seen to play a role in "contributing to the social consolidation of conquest and the control of the conquered" (Molteno, 1984, p. 49). In the latter part of the 1890s, the government began funding mission schools (Behr, 1984) which ultimately became the major provider of education to Africans prior to 1953 and provided education for the poorer white community (Behr, 1984; Christie, 1996; Van Zyl, 1997). Hlatshwayo is critical in his discussion of mission schools, which he says prepared the native people for work as manual labourers using "religion as a rationale" (2000, p. 32).

In the mid-1800s, the British reviewed their language policy with regard to Dutch, and as a result, Dutch was 'allowed' in first-class schools in cities and big towns, as well as in second-class schools in smaller towns (Van Zyl, 1997). In reality, Dutch was used only to familiarise children with the English language. In the latter 19th century, schools were only given a government subsidy if English was taught and used as the medium of instruction (Van Zyl, 1997). Thus until 1882, English remained a medium of instruction until Proclamation 113 of 1882 (c) recommended that Dutch be acknowledged as an alternative because it was the

home language of the majority of the population (Van Zyl, 1997). This policy, which surprisingly reflected theories pertaining to the theory behind the development of language (Cummins, 1979) and reinforced by the efforts of the Society of True Afrikaners (*Die Genootskap van Regte Afrikaners*) established in 1875, recommended that English be taught only once Dutch had been mastered properly. Unfortunately, even though the proclamation gave parents the right to determine the medium of instruction, “departmental regulations and administrative procedures prevented Dutch parents from exercising that right in practice” (Van Zyl, 1997, p. 61). At this stage, literacy becomes a contested political concept which contributes to the movement of people into different parts of the country.

1.4.3 Education within the Trekker States

Dutch farmers, or *trekkers*, began moving inland from the Cape from 1836 to escape British rule. Parties of Dutch farmers broke away from the main trek, moving eastwards over the Drakensberg mountains to establish a trekker state in Natal after brokering agreements with local chiefs.

1.4.3.1 Education in Natal during the years 1848 to 1910

During their nomadic existence, education became the responsibility of the trekker parents with emphasis on the teaching of Dutch and the development of basic reading skills in order to read the Bible (Christie, 1996), once again with basic literacy being developed albeit within a mobile mode. Later, once laagers (settlements using ox-wagons arranged in a circle) were established, simple schools were set up (Van Zyl, 1997) teaching basic reading, writing and arithmetic.

The British annexation of Natal in the 1840s prompted many trekkers to move out of Natal into the area between the Orange and Vaal Rivers. Thereafter, education in Natal became a government responsibility (Christie, 1996) with the first state school being established in 1849. English was deemed the language of instruction with Dutch only being taught as a language when desired (Van Zyl, 1997). For the *Boer* (farmer) children living in outlying areas of the colony, travelling school teachers were given a subsidy only if English was taught as a subject. This was an attempt to anglicise the schools. As a final resort, British teachers were placed in *Boer* schools, thus ensuring that they became more English with Dutch no longer playing an important role. The British were insistent on anglicising the colony and ignored pleas from the *Boers* for Afrikaans to be used as a medium of instruction (Van Zyl, 1997). Eventually, a request was granted to a community in Greyville, Durban in mid-1883 and later expanded to several other areas. Ultimately, the Educational Board decided that Dutch could be taught in primary state schools if six or more pupils were

interested. Once more than 50 pupils were in favour, Dutch was taught as a subject and thereafter as a medium of instruction, a decree⁸ agreed to by the Education Department which replaced the Education Board in 1894 (Van Zyl, 1997). It seems that in areas where *Boers* lived, Christian National Education (CNE) schools were established to protect Dutch as a subject (Atkinson, 1978) but once it was clear that Dutch, as a language, would not be endangered in Natal, these schools closed. Thus by 1908, 12 state schools, 22 state-subsidised schools and many farm schools were teaching Dutch (Van Zyl, 1997), although the issue of language, culture and race still continued to play a role in education policy.

With the arrival of the Indians in Natal in the 1860s, and later the arrival of Indian traders, Britain once again demonstrated its favouring of racially separate education. Indian children, whose parents as immigrants had brought with them “ancient cultural tradition, and a well-defined social order” (Atkinson, 1978, p. 206), had to complete primary school in Indian government-subsidised primary schools before being eligible for admittance to white secondary schools, a policy promulgated by Act 20 of 1878 (N). However, this edict was repealed in 1899 for Indian boys and in 1905 for girls with their dismissal from white secondary schools, which completed the process of separation (Van Zyl, 1997). With an increasing multilingual population, multi-literacy is becoming evident.

Schooling for Africans in Natal took place in reserves where the government granted land to missionaries for the building of residential mission stations, hospitals and schools. Mission schools included Adams College (1853), Inanda Seminary (1869) and Marianhill Mission (1882) which offered more than basic education, providing an academic education based on European-type curricula in addition to practical work and technical skills. Certain missions, like Adams College, had teacher training colleges attached to them. These schools had little money and few resources but played an important role in offering some basic education to Africans in Natal. Initially tribes moved away from the missions not wanting to be converted to Christianity. Later many Africans came to the mission stations looking for work and leaders of African tribes sent their sons to be educated at the mission schools so they could act as intermediaries between the colonial government and African chiefdoms (Christie, 1996), an illustration of how Eurocentric literacies developed locally. Mission schools were subsequently given state aid, but this further demonstrated the overlying attitude of the government towards developing separate education (Christie, 1996; Hlatshwayo, 2000; Van Zyl, 1997).

⁸One of the early bilingual language policies.

1.4.3.2 Education in the Orange River Colony during the years 1880 to 1910

Trekkers moved across the Orange River into what became known as the Orange River Colony, and settled on farms from the 1830s. Formal education was non-existent for some time and once again education lay in the hands of parents who continued a primitive type of education using the scriptures of the Bible for the teaching of reading. Elementary arithmetic was also taught (Van Zyl, 1997). Schooling was also seen as a tool for instilling the doctrine of the DRC church and preparing the children for church membership, informing a moral literacy. Once settled on the farms, visiting school teachers provided some education for Boer children, but this was not of a high standard (Christie, 1996; Van Zyl, 1997).

In 1848, Sir Harry Smith annexed the Orange River Colony and renamed it the Orange River Sovereignty, a state that only continued until 1854. Two years prior to annexation, the first formal school was established in Bloemfontein (Van Zyl, 1997). Reading, writing and arithmetic, geography, English and Dutch were taught with Dutch being the medium of instruction (Van Zyl, 1997). Sir George Grey, Governor of the Cape Colony, provided funds for the creation of a school in Bloemfontein named Grey College, which would provide advanced education to scholars. The school, opened in 1859, was to be controlled by a committee of the DRC and both English and Dutch was to be taught (Van Zyl, 1997); however, once again a language issue arose with funding not being forthcoming from the government of the Orange Free State until it was clarified that Dutch would be the main language. Conversely, when English-speaking Rev. Geo Brown took over as principal, Dutch was grossly neglected. Later, the government school was amalgamated with Grey College, given a fixed subsidy and Dutch became the medium of instruction; ironically, it was the Dutch-speaking citizens who opposed this move claiming that as English dominated the business world, they wanted their children to be taught in English (Van Zyl, 1997) “in order to meet the widening economic opportunities in the southern African territories” (Atkinson, 1978, p. 114), and thus developing literacy for economic advancement.

The first educational law of the Orange Free State Republic, promulgated in 1864, required Dutch to be the medium of instruction with English also being taught to encourage bilingualism⁹ (Van Zyl, 1997). A period of confusion about the medium of instruction followed and was only clarified when Ordinance Policy 1 of 1874 declared that both Dutch and English be taught at all state schools. However, most textbooks were written in English and as such, there was once again a practical move to use English as the medium of instruction. During the subsequent years, the government requested all schools to teach subjects in Dutch, but in reality this did not occur. In 1891, once again the issue of language arose with

⁹South Africa's first bilingual policy which preceded that of Natal.

the suggestion that Dutch be taught in rural schools while in town schools, parents could chose the medium of instruction up to and including Standard 2, after which Dutch would be used for at least half of the subjects (Van Zyl, 1997); however, the ideal was hindered by the lack of Dutch textbooks which meant that further development of literacy was tied to learning materials.

It seems that British teachers dominated the education scene in the Orange Free State even teaching through the medium of English in Boer-controlled schools. The English-speaking population, who made up the majority of the population in Bloemfontein, were at pains to protect their cultural heritage, and with the help of the church, established private schools in the town as well as smaller villages (Van Zyl, 1997).

Although the provision of schooling for whites was limited, even less schooling was provided for African children. As previously stated, mission schools provided a basic education for Africans in the trekker states (Behr, 1984; Hlatshwayo, 2000). In the Orange Free State, some mission stations were established but at that time, few roads existed in the rural areas and missionaries found difficulty communicating with the African tribes in these areas (Atkinson, 1978). Mission stations were established at Imperani with the Koranna tribe, at Platberg with a group of Griquas, and the Paris Evangelical Mission established a number of stations at Bethulie, Korannaberg, Beersheba, Carmel and Hebron. Two other societies, the Berlin and the London Missionary, also moved into the area to establish missions and later on, the DRC and Anglican Church set up missions at Witsieshoek and Modderport (Atkinson, 1978). There was no initial funding provision and mission schools had to use their own funds to run their schools; however, records show that most Africans in this area did not attend school (Christie, 1996). Those who did attend learned the fundamentals of reading, writing and arithmetic with some skills for agriculture being included which shows a widening of literacy to include knowledge about a trade as well. However, most time was spent on religious instruction (Atkinson, 1978). To gain an understanding of the development of separate education within a greater South African context, education provision in another Boer republic and its ramifications, needs to be discussed.

The movement of trekkers into other areas of South Africa was initially motivated by a desire to be free of British rule; however, the discovery of diamonds in the Kimberley area, initially in the Orange Free State but later annexed by the Cape Colony and the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand in the Transvaal, prompted further movement into and settlement within these areas.

1.4.3.3 Education in the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1880 to 1910

As mines were established in areas across the Vaal River, towns grew up around them and businesses developed. Initially the schooling system, based on religious conviction (Van Zyl, 1997), was not well organised as many children did not go to school at all and those that did, only received basic education. Dutch was the medium of instruction promoted by the trekkers, reinforced by the Van der Linden Education Regulation of 1852 (Z) and the Education Regulation of 1859 (Z) (Van Zyl, 1997, p. 61). With developments in mining, schooling, which was still mainly the responsibility of the church and parents, was seen as inadequate as many new jobs in this sector demanded skills such as reading and writing. The government, in response, gave grants to schools which prompted expansion and consideration of the teaching of English (Education Act 6 of 1866 (Z)), its use seen as vital for commercial interactions with the British who were being drawn into the area now known as the South African Republic (ZAR) (Van Zyl, 1997). An inspection system for education was provided (Christie, 1996), parallel-medium schools were developed but schools were still separated by race (Van Zyl, 1997). In addition, a system of church schools subsidised by the government for middle class children, came into existence.

In times of social change, new demands are placed on the education system to meet society's changing needs (Christie, 1996). Thus, the newly industrialised society demanded new skills and schooling was seen as the means to teach working class children work skills and work discipline. In 1902, free compulsory education was introduced for white children between seven and 14 years, later increased to 16. However, free compulsory education did not extend to African children. In fact, there was at the time, little state schooling at all for African children. Mission schools set up by the Berlin Mission and the DRC, Swiss Protestant and Wesleyan missionaries at places such as Kilnerton (1855), Botshabelo (1860), Grace Dieu (1906) Lemana (1906) and later in 1922, St Peter's which was established in Rosettenville, Johannesburg (Atkinson, 1978; Christie, 1996), provided a basic education.

In these areas, mission schools were the sole providers of education for Africans (Hlatshwayo, 2000). Africans did not initially take education (based on a Western ideal) seriously nor did they see the value in learning to read and write and thus develop their literacy. However, towards the end of the 19th century with the development of towns, the discovery of minerals and the expansion of economic activities, Africans changed their attitude to education seeing education and the development of literacy as a way into the dominant economic and social systems (Christie, 1996), and becoming skilled for industry (Atkinson, 1978). More mission schools were set up offering a broader base of education not

only in rural areas but also in compounds and locations outside towns and by the turn of the century, 184 mission schools were scattered throughout South Africa providing education for over 10 000 African pupils (Appel, 1989; Behr, 1984; Christie, 1996; Nkabinde, 1997).

Concomitantly, the Dutch established CNE schools which were neither free nor compulsory (Atkinson, 1978). However, the issue of CNE schools became less significant as Dutch, and later Afrikaans was given more recognition in the ZAR and Orange Free State. The struggle between English and Dutch as language of instruction continued in schooling with English becoming the medium of instruction during British rule of the Transvaal from 1877-81 as an attempt to “assimilate the Dutch into the British Empire” (Van Zyl, 1997, p. 62). Thereafter, Boer rule from 1881-99 attempted to protect and further their cultural heritage with the proclamation of the Du Toit Education Act 1 of 1882 (Z) stating that hereafter, Dutch was to be the medium of instruction (Van Zyl, 1997).

Most schooling at this time was only at primary level; for example, in 1892, 92% of scholars in the Transvaal were attending school at primary level with less than 1% making it to secondary level, which means that some children did not attend school at all. Wealthy parents tended to send their children to the Cape or abroad to Holland or England for their schooling (Christie, 1996). Advanced literacy was thus only achieved through entering a secondary phase of education.

The Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902 resulted in many Boer families being interned in concentration camps, and it was during this time that the medium of instruction in all schools reverted to English with the exception of the teaching of religion (Atkinson, 1978; Van Zyl, 1997).

1.5 EDUCATION AFTER UNIFICATION

After unification in 1910, four provinces, namely the Cape, Natal, the Orange Free State and the Transvaal were established. Each of these provinces was given control over primary and secondary education with both English and Dutch languages being the official languages of the Union, although from as early as 1860s, there had been a move in the development of a new Afrikaans language (Atkinson, 1978) and thus development of literacy in mother-tongue.

The dominant educational patterns of the time, where a system of free compulsory education existed for whites, continued to expand providing education at increasing higher levels of education with the majority of children completing some secondary education and then continuing into technical or tertiary education. Simultaneously, private schools were providing high quality education for more privileged children and CNE schools were

established to maintain the Afrikaans language and culture (Atkinson, 1978), aligning literacy development and ideology.

However, issues with language soon arose even though Article 137 of the Union Constitution stated that both English and Afrikaans languages were to be the official languages of the Union (Atkinson, 1978; Van Zyl, 1997). The Cape determined that children were to be taught in mother-tongue up to Standard 4, and thereafter, could choose either or the two official languages for instruction. In 1925, mother-tongue instruction was extended to Standard 6 and thereafter in 1956, it was suggested that English or Afrikaans, depending on which language the child knew best, would be the medium of instruction up to and including Standard 8. The Transvaal followed a similar pattern with mother-tongue being used up to Standard 4, after which parents could choose either English or Afrikaans. In 1949, however, Ordinance 19 ruled for mother-tongue instruction up to and including Standard 8. In the Orange Free State, mother-tongue had been introduced before 1910 and this was reinforced by legislation and eventually extended to Standard 8. In Natal, it was decided that both official languages were available for instruction (1916 ordinance) (Van Zyl, 1997).

African or Black education initially remained in the hands of the mission societies (Atkinson, 1978; Behr, 1984; Christie, 1996) as their role was recognised by the government which saw the need to centralise education under the Union. However, money shortages resulted in a limited number of Africans receiving high levels of education with many Africans receiving no education at all. The table below gives some indication of the numbers of mission and government schools across the four provinces in 1926.

Table Error! No text of specified style in document..2: Distribution of African Schools in 1926

Province	Mission Schools	Government Schools
Cape	1 625	1
Natal	487	66
Transvaal	397	1
Orange Free State	194	0
Total	2 702	68

(Source: Horrell, 1963a, p. 27)

Although mission schools were educating a large number of Africans at this time, taking on the role of the government in educating Africans and even training teachers, certain criticisms were levelled at this system of education. These criticisms included industrial and manual education, racism and subordination, and sexism and women's subordination (Atkinson, 1978; Christie, 1996; Molteno, 1984).

Boys, it seems in the mission education system, received some reading, writing and arithmetic learning but the focus was on skilling them to take up a trade or to do manual labour, although this shows a bias of class and gender on the development of literacy. African culture and values were superseded by Christian values and beliefs (attitudes such as patience, humility, piety, discipline and the value of hard work) which critics argue, prepared Africans for a subordinate position in society (Fiske & Ladd, 2006). This then was reinforced by the fact that education consisted of only two to three years of schooling, which limited their opportunities in the workplace (Christie, 1996) to lowly and subservient tasks (Hlatshwayo, 2000; Letseka et al., 2010). Western values about a woman's place in society were also taught in mission schools and at that time, girls were trained for domesticity, again entrenching gender divisions. Thus, African girls were trained for a subordinate domestic role both in their own homes and as servants in other people's homes (Christie, 1996).

In the late 1920s and early 1930s with an urban influx, there was a marked rise in enrolment of African pupils at schools in the towns but few teachers were employed to deal with the increasing influx (Kros, 2010). The development of the Native Development Fund for financing African education saw even greater increases in enrolment and by 1933, 78 599 African pupils, for example, were enrolled in schools in the Transvaal (Kros, 2010). However, issues arose with quality delivery of education as around 97% of schools were primary schools with 30% of those pupils being found in the beginners' class preceding Grade 1. By Standard 1 (Grade 3), the drop-out rate was high as almost 34% of teachers were uncertified (Kros, 2010). A mere 2% of pupils progressed as far as Standard 6 (Grade 8) where a handful of teachers taught.

During the depression of the late 1920 and early 1930s, limited funds saw the reduction of teacher salaries with newly qualified teachers being paid well below the agreed-upon amount. For example, a male teacher received three pounds instead of five pounds and ten shillings per month, and a woman teacher was paid two pounds ten shillings a month instead of four pounds ten shillings (Kros, 2010, p. 47).

Language has always been an issue in education in South Africa, a trend which continues to this day. The choice of the medium of instruction is crucial as language "is the tool we use to express our thoughts and our most treasured ideas" and in addition, language "also constitutes a major component of cultural identity" (Van Zyl, 1997, p. 58), illustrating the strong link of literacy to cultural identity. Teaching through the vernacular was a stance favoured by continental missionaries particularly as these missionaries did not want their converts to be seen as "ripe for British citizenship" (Kros, 2010, p. 17). In contrast, British missionaries favoured teaching in English (Van Zyl, 1997). However, over the years more

emphasis was placed on teaching through the medium of English but building on a foundation of the vernacular, a theory reinforced by researchers such as Cummins (1979), although researchers such as Mamdani (1996) saw the National Party's use of mother-tongue instruction in schools as a tool of ethnicising Africans (cited in Graaff, 2001).

Initially in the early years of union, it seemed that the government of the time did not concern itself with African education and the language/s being used as a medium of instruction (Van Zyl, 1997). This, however, changed in the 1940s with the growth of Afrikaner nationalism illustrated by O'Meara who describes this growth as a painstaking construction by extremely well-organised groups of petty bourgeois militants of, firstly a new "Christian national ideology and then a broad Afrikaner social and political alliance" (cited in Kros, 2010, p. 5) resulting in a change of attitude towards the current language policy in place at schools. The struggle for language recognition and Afrikaner nationalism resulted in the view that Afrikaans rather than English should be promoted as a second language with the vernacular remaining as the first medium of instruction (Kros, 2010).

In the Transvaal, the Chief Inspector of Education, Dr Eiselen introduced African languages into teacher training programmes and as media for instruction (Kros, 2010), and encouraged missionary societies to participate in the production of books in African languages. By 1935, various scenarios of teaching in the vernacular were to be found in the four provinces: in Natal, teaching took place in the vernacular for the first six years of schooling, in the Cape and Free State for the first four years and in the Transvaal, teaching in the vernacular only took place in the first two years of schooling. Thereafter, English or Afrikaans almost always became the medium of instruction (Van Zyl, 1997).

A pattern of education in South Africa during this period after unification thus emerged which showed differentiation not only along lines of colour but also along lines of social class severely hampering the development of African education. In addition, an increase in the African population after World War I saw an increased need for education. Financial under-provision coupled with an influx of the African population to urban areas doubling between 1921 and 1946 (Burger, nd online), led to a severe lack of schooling facilities, teachers, and educational materials resulting in an "extremely impoverished" system (Fiske & Ladd, 2006, p. 97). In a foreword to Chapter 4 of *The Seeds of Separate Development: Origins of Bantu Education*, Kros quotes from the Transvaal Education Department (TED) Report for the year ended 1942: "We [Native Education] have managed to keep existing schools going; a few new schools have been registered; the teachers have again had to be told that owing to shortage of funds no increments can be paid; hundreds of children were refused admission, especially in the larger towns because there were no rooms in which they could have been

taught, because even if there had been adequate accommodation there would have been no teachers to teach them, and because even if there had been enough teachers there would have been no money to pay them for their work” (2010, p. 45).

However, this pattern of segregated and unequal education with issues of language, culture and race was not a new one: it had its origins during the early years of settlement of the Cape and then continued through the settlement of the trekker states and unification into 1930s and 1940s and finally, the apartheid era from 1948 (Christie & Collins, 1984; Hlatshwayo, 2000).

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE FOR THE STUDY

PARTICIPANT 1

Participant	Race	Gender	Age	Mother Tongue	Other languages spoken and written
P.1	Black	Female	40	Setswana	English *

* missing data

Participant 1, a female in the 36-45 age category, was born in North West Province, South Africa, the second child and daughter in a family of two girls and one boy. She is a member of the Tswana cultural group whose language is Setswana. As a family, they moved to Soshanguve in Pretoria, Gauteng Province in 1974 where she grew up.

Her early schooling took place in Soshanguve but she does say *I do not remember anything about my first day at school but I know that I started in 1978 at a primary school in Soshanguve*. After completing her senior primary years she moved on to high school where she obtained her senior certificate. She does narrate that *Secondary school life was not warm at all to me. First I had to deal with bullies and furthermore, the school riots (reported on in Chapter 2). We went back to the school without furniture, windows, doors, fence and roof. We made a plan to sit and went through very cold winter seasons in those conditions. Regardless of these conditions, I obtained my senior certificate in 1990*. In an attempt to improve her Grade 12 results, she studied mathematics and accounting with a correspondence college.

Her career preference was becoming an accounting technician. However, even though her application to university was successful, her parents could not afford the fees *and I did not qualify for the bursary. There was no money saved for further education at home. I spend the following two years working here and there temporarily just so that I do not stay at home*.

In 1993, she registered with the Transvaal College of Education in Soshanguve to study for the Junior Primary Teachers Diploma. Participant 1 explains that *Bored to tears as I was at home, I went with my friend to Transvaal College of Education. She was going to fill in application forms into the college. When we got there, I took a form as well and completed it. I, likewise was invited to the aptitude test with my friend and we went. After a week, the results were displayed at the entrance of the college and I was amongst the successful applicants*. After obtaining her diploma in 1995, she taught at Witkoppen Farm School. In 2002, she was promoted to a Foundation Phase HOD post at Diepsloot Combined School and eight year later was offered the deputy principal post. In early 2009, in collaboration with the co-deputy principal, Participant 1 was asked to act as principal of the school.

Even though Participant 1 is a very busy woman, not only with her professional career but also as a leader in the community, working with the youth - *equipping youth with life skills, is my passion – and her church - the word of God is my daily soul food - she maintains that challenges groom me and curiosity drives me. Reading quenches my thirst for knowledge and sustains my mind.* She felt that as she was in a promotional post, she had to study further even though *studying after such a long break was not easy at all, however that was not going to be a barrier to me.* She completed an Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) Management, Law and Policy in 2004. The following year, she completed Fundamentals of Project Management with Damelin College and in 2007, completed a course on Middle Management with the Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance. Finally, in 2010, she completed a BEd (Hons) Management, Law and Policy with the University of Pretoria.

Participant 1 explains that she *has many questions about the Foundations for Learning [policy]. I am in the senior position at work, and when my colleagues expect answers from me in this regard and [I] could not give them the correct answers, it makes me feel very incompetent. I want to find out more about our curriculum and be at the position to help others.* She says that one of the reasons for wanting to move into a master's programme is to *make sure that the quality of our education is not compromised.* One way of doing this is to ensure that she is *abreast with the changes in the curriculum, and for me to do that I have to know the present curriculum and identify its shortfall.* Her final comment about registering for the programme is *working and studying has its ups and downs but with marriage and family on top, it is even harder.*

PARTICIPANT 2

Participant	Race	Gender	Age	Mother Tongue	Other languages spoken and written
P.2	Black	Male	42	Xitsonga	English, Afrikaans, Setswana, Sepedi

In the 36-45 age group, Participant 2 is a male of the Xitsonga cultural group born in the province of Limpopo into a family of five. Participant 2 says *was he born in a very poor family as both my parents were unskilled labourers. In 1971, my family moved to reside in a village, just 10 kilometres away from Giyani Township. My parents could not afford to provide us with the basic needs of life such as food and clothing. I did not read poverty, but lived it.*

As such, this participant's parents did not take education seriously and he was put to work as a shepherd looking after neighbours' cattle and goats. Eventually he started school in 1976 but his parents put a stop to his education so *that I could focus on looking after our neighbour's cattle.* He eventually was able to complete his primary schooling but needed to repeat some

grades. It seems however, that this slow start to schooling did not deter this participant as he completed secondary schooling with a successful matric in 1990. Thereafter, he entered the Shingwedzi College of Education completing a Senior Primary Teachers Diploma within three years.

For 12 years, this participant worked as a post level one teacher in the deep rural area of Giyani. In 2006, he was promoted to a Head of Department post for the Intermediate Phase at Nhlalala Primary School in Giyani Township, where he taught for almost four years. Thereafter, he was appointed to the Gauteng Education Department as a subject advisor for English and Xitsonga in the Intermediate Phase.

Participant 2 has continued with his studies enrolling with the then University of the North (now University of Limpopo) as a part-time student. He completed a BA degree majoring in Geography and English in 1996, and then completed a Further Diploma in Education, with English as a major, at the University of Witwatersrand. In 2001, he resumed his studies with Intec College obtaining a Tourism Management Diploma. He then went on to complete a BEd (Hons) degree in Education Management, Law and Policy at the University of Pretoria in 2005 and finally, in 2010, successfully completed a Master's Degree in the field of Public and Development Management at the University of Witwatersrand.

In an initial piece of writing, this participant who reads and writes English, Afrikaans, Setswana and Sepedi in addition to his mother tongue of Xitshonga, stated that *First and foremost, I would [like] to indicate that I am furthering my studies for personal and professional development. I intend to be an expert in the line of assessment and quality assurance. My focus is to help the Department of Education because I have a quest for quality, more especially the teaching and assessment aspects. I have realised that even if I can have that desire to transform my department, if I do not have the relevant knowledge and skills, my dreams will remain a nightmare.*

PARTICIPANT 3:

Participant	Race	Gender	Age	Mother Tongue	Other languages spoken and written
P.3	Black	Male	47	siSwati	isiZulu, English

Participant 3, a siSwati male, and in the over 46-year category, was *born into a Christian family consisting of a church-leading father and a school-teaching mother* living in Swaziland. He had dreamt of being a medical doctor from his youth, but he ended up being a school teacher, taking after his late mother, a decision he has not regretted.

Participant 3 cannot remember how he learnt his mother tongue language, siSwati, *but I can faintly remember that I was introduced to my first additional language, i.e. English as early as in Grade 1. We used to make rhymes, sing songs and poems in the language, which was accompanied by action. Even though our teacher had already aged, she was very active in class, more especially when demonstrating these activities. Maths (numeracy) and health (life skills) were also taught in English. Literature books had pictures and words and were written legibly next to the pictures of a particular item. At home, the only available book was the Bible which was written in Xhosa so I therefore was not exposed to reading for leisure.*

When he began schooling in Swaziland, there were no pre-Grade R classes in the neighbourhood at the time, so his schooling began with Grade 1. What stands out for this participant is *being punished for not using the correct hand as prescribed by the African culture, that is, the right hand.* On completing Grade 7 with a first class pass, he moved into the next phase of schooling, completing a Junior Certificate (JC) also with a first class. As the nearest high school was in the city, about 35km away from home, he was admitted to boarding school for this period of his schooling. After completing Grade 12, with a first class, he entered the University of Swaziland enrolling for a B.Sc degree and a concurrent diploma in education.

His teaching career commenced in 1989 at a high school situated in what is now Mpumalanga. By 1996, he transferred to a Combined School *where I was appointed as a Biology subject head.* Since 1999, he has furthered his studies, enrolling for a Further Diploma in biology teaching at Rand Afrikaans University (RAU), attaining an International Computer Driving Licence (ICDL), a master's diploma in human resource management at RAU and in 2008, enrolled for an honours degree in education management at the University of Pretoria. Commensurate with his studies has been his advancement in his professional career. *In 2001, I was promoted to science head of department at my school and in 2006, was promoted to principal of a primary school with an enrolment of about 1 200 learners, where I am currently.*

Participant 3 explains his reasons for registering for this particular master's programme: *The quality of results that the Mpumalanga province obtains is a cause for serious concern to many citizens of the province. It is my dream to find out how I could contribute to the termination of this vicious cycle of low performance. It is for this reason that I developed an interest in quality assurance, hence my dissertation is based on whole school evaluation. One of the seven roles of an educator is to be a life-long learner and I ascribe to this principle being a life-long learner and a role model to children, both at home and at work. If children are inspired and given direction, they take their school work with enthusiasm. My*

wish is to see every young citizen receiving quality education, irrespective of his or her socio-economic background. I believe that everyone deserves the best in life as long as he or she is committed to follow a dream. The family background should have no bearing on any child's future prospects.

Registering for this master's programme was an important step for this participant. He feels that the programme *will assist me develop quality assurance skills. Underperformance is an outcry in every government institution, not only in South Africa, but throughout the whole world. The country needs quality assurance academics and experts that will positively contribute to service delivery to the public service at the required standards.*

PARTICIPANT 4

Participant	Race	Gender	Age	Mother Tongue	Other languages spoken and written
P.4	Black	Male	44	isiZulu	English, Afrikaans, Sesotho, Xitsonga, Setswana

Born in Alexandra Township, Johannesburg, Participant 4 is an isiZulu male in the 36-45 year age group. After attending nursery school in the township, he began his primary school education but as no school buildings were available, he *attended in a church building. This participant explains that they did not use books to write on, but used what was referred to as a 'slate' that which looks like a blackboard, [and is still] found in some schools today. [The slate broke] on impact. It had a special pencil that also broke very easily.*

After his parent's divorce, which he thinks may have *had a bearing in my schooling or the outcome thereof*, he lived with his parental grandparents until his Std 7 year, *the same year schooling lasted until June, [as] student boycotts were the order of the day.* He says that having to repeat a grade *made me to concentrate in my school work and the report cards were very impressive.* However, in 1974, forced removals meant a move to another primary school, this time situated in the township of Tembisa on the East Rand.

A couple of moves between relatives followed and ultimately Participant 5 moved from Alexandra to Klipspruit in Soweto, to his maternal grandparents where he lived *until I got my BSc. Ed degree from Vista University.* During his high school education, he became active in student politics under the then SOSCO, now COSAS (see Chapter 2). Of interest, Participant 5 *was the only candidate in the school to obtain a university entrance in matric, moreover, in a science class. It was then that a collective decision was taken that each person should identify his or her strengths and pursue that direction until tertiary if possible. I*

took it upon myself to challenge the myth that blacks are not or cannot be good at Mathematics.

Participant 4 applied for a bursary from Anglo American to study for a Commerce Degree, which was granted pending the matric pass. He had applied to the University of Witwatersrand (Wits), at that time one South African University that accepted Black students. He writes that *there was no stopping the ugly face of discrimination from surfacing. Wits rejected my admission stating that I did not make the grade. At the time they used a point system based on your Matric Symbols. They even went so far as advising me to go back and re-write my Matric. Age was no longer on my side as I was 21 years old, as a result, I did not consider their advice.*

Per chance, Participant 4 found out that *Vista University Soweto Campus (a university that was designed for Black people and was in the township) was looking at enrolling more Black students and so invited students to apply in January 1990. I applied, wrote the entrance test and was accepted* and registered for a Bachelor's Degree in Education (BA Ed). However, when the university introduced a Science Degree, he changed focus taking Mathematics as a major subject. This change meant spending five years instead of four years at the university. In his final year, he was appointed as a Mathematics tutor at the university, helping first year students in Mathematics, qualifying as a Mathematics teacher with a BSc. Ed Degree.

He began his teaching career in 1995, at a high school falling under the House of Delegates (HOD), the Indian Department of Education. The school population was predominantly Indian and Coloured, with a minority of blacks. The staff composition was similar with only four black teachers, one male and three female out of 16 staff members. Participant 4 continued with his political involvement and joined the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) Johannesburg branch, participating *in labour action challenging the non-compliance by the School Governing Body to a Circular on interviews procedures, in particular, the invitation of union reps as observers. The boycott resulted in the re-advertising of the promotional posts.*

On promotion to a Head of Department post for Maths and Science at a school in Soweto, this participant realised that he needed *a qualification in Educational Management, so I enrolled for a BEd Educational Management with Vista in 1999.* In 2001, he was promoted to the District Office in the Intermediate and Senior Phase (Intersen Phase) as a Mathematics Facilitator (First Education Specialist). His duties were to monitor and support educators on curriculum delivery including assessment. He explains that *I do not like to participate, especially in a leading position, in an area that I know less about* which resulted in him

completing an assessor course. A couple of years later, however, he resigned being despondent about what was happening in schools particularly *with teachers making excuses for not doing their work - hiding their incompetencies behind apartheid. The era of resistance was, according to me, over and we urgently needed to start building our nation.*

He started his own consultancy and *service provider business offering facilitation services for the Plan and Conduct Assessment of Outcomes Based Education unit standard* where he increasingly came across the concept of quality related concepts. During this time to extend his knowledge, this participant completed a Postgraduate Diploma in Marketing Management with the University of South Africa (Unisa).

Participant 4 says that *Registering for a Master's Degree in Assessment and Quality Assurance is no mistake. I hope to inspire my children to value education and probably consult in higher education sector.*

PARTICIPANT 5

Participant	Race	Gender	Age	Mother Tongue	Other languages spoken and written
P.5	White	Female	25	Afrikaans	English

In comparison to the previous students, this student, Participant 5, is under the age of 25, born into a white Afrikaans family in the Potchefstroom farming area of the former Transvaal. Her parent encouraged her language development *teaching me my mother tongue language which is Afrikaans. I remember both of them reading to me and speaking to me, however, I do not remember any singing. My mother also used flash cards, building blocks and children books to help me with my development of the Afrikaans language. These books included all the Disney fantasy books and the Children's Bible.*

Participant 5 says she was *petrified to begin school and meet new friends but soon enough I realised that this will be a journey filled with new discoveries, hopes, dreams and despair.* Her early grade teachers were *impressed by my reading and writing skills. We had to write a lot in the Afrikaans and English classes and the teachers were happy enough with my work.* She does say that her mother's health problems meant that she was not there for the Grade 1 year; however, her teachers were supportive during this time. On her recovery, Participant 5's mother was once able to support her daughter through her early school years. She recalls that *my primary years were not those of a very happy child.* However, Mathematics seemed to be a strong subject - *I received awards for mathematics - as well as being a good-all-rounder.*

On entering high school, this participant found that many of her friends had also made the decision to attend the same high school. The early grades were wonderful years with *No worries, no real troubles, just me, myself and I*, and good achievements both academically and on the sports field. Interestingly this participant, at the end of Grade 9, chose the subjects for matric based on her father's choice. Even so, it seems that she was successful in achieving a good matric, which enabled her to enrol at university, although once again family problems challenged her.

Initially she wanted to study law but changed to a BEd Senior Phase where she *bloomed academically during all the years, even receiv[ing] membership to the Golden Key society and an award for excellence in one module*. After completing this degree, her parents encouraged her to enrol for an honour's degrees particularly *as I could not find work as a teacher in schools. At one point I realised that an honours degree can elevate me from where I am and allow me to strive higher*.

As a final comment, Participant 5 explains that *when I finished my honour's degree I was offered a job at the university and I finally felt like everything that I had worked for was falling in place. Ever since then it became apparent to me that life can only get better from here on. Sure work would get more but so would the possibilities of what to do with my life – and I would not have it any other way. New doors open up and I can make the decision, either I grab it with all my might or let it slip away into the abyss*.

PARTICIPANT 6

Participant	Race	Gender	Age	Mother Tongue	Other languages spoken and written
P.6	Black	Female	43	Sepedi	English, Setswana, Sesotho, Afrikaans

Participant 6, a female member of the Sepedi culture was born in Sekhukhuneland in Limpopo province, the youngest of four siblings. Growing up in the 1970s, *very few elderly people could read and write, therefore all the stories were oral and [the] printed word did not form part of my life before school*. She explains that *younger children [rather] engaged in a variety of traditional games in which language played the main role. One of those games was called "Banana" (translated little people) in which stones were used to represent people whose everyday interactions were narrated by one player while others listened. Creativity and being good in using language were the main components of the game*. When she started her schooling, *at a highly populated school with limited number of classrooms, [they] attended in shifts* (see Chapter 2). *Each shift lasted for only three and half hours including 30 minutes break*. It was only once that she began school that she was exposed to books which

teachers then used to read to the students; however, *outside school, I was exposed to very few reading materials.*

As a young child she had to deal with a couple of hard knocks: *I lost my parents when I was very young. My mother passed away when I was six years old due to sugar diabetes and my dad died in a car accident in 1983, when I was 14 years old. My father [had] married again and I have a stepmother whom I love very much. She naturally took over the ropes of bringing me (and my siblings) up and I can say she did a wonderful job.*

Participant 6's years of lower and higher primary went well academically well as with other extra activities such as *athletics, netball and to a limited extend singing.* On entering secondary education, the expectation was a five-year plan, but because her Standard 6 results were good, after the first term of Standard 7, *the principal asked me to inform my stepmother to visit his office. Though I was not a naughty learner, I was very nervous and I could not eat or sleep properly. When the principal came he asked me to go to class and he invited my mother (step) to his office. I was called in about twenty minutes later and was given the news that I would be moved from Standard 7 to Standard 8. My body went from total fright to total excitement and I just broke down and cried all the tension out. On that day, I took my books and desk to a Standard 8 classroom.*

The skipping of a standard meant that this participant *completed my high school education in four years (1983-1986).* After matric she enrolled at the then Sekhukhune College of Education for a three year diploma in secondary school teaching successfully completing it in 1989 aged 20 years and six months. This participant *was excited about the prospect of being a teacher, but I also felt that it could be a wonderful achievement if I could obtain a degree before I turned 25 years of age.*

She began her teaching in a village situated close to the town of Groblersdal for a period of two years. Then she moved to Benoni (Daveyton) where she enrolled for a B.A degree in the then Vista University. Moving to a more urban environment, afforded her the opportunity to study further with an institution which offered better quality education. However, *the adaptation from rural to urban education environment was not easy but the dream of professional self-development was my source of motivation.* Participant 6 decided to remain in the area and found a teaching position in the mornings which allowed her to attend the afternoon (part-time student) sessions at the university. On completion of the degree, she went through a period of confusion with her teaching career which was exacerbated by tragic personal circumstances. *Four years after the completion of my degree I felt a need to leave teaching and with the thought of a change of career in mind, enrolled for a three year Marketing Diploma with the Institute of Marketing Management. I took lectures at Damelin*

College in Benoni and the whole exercise was not easy in terms of finance and time (the classes were in the evening).

However, she decided that I love teaching and I was going to stay in the profession. The funny part is that even when I was not fully committed to my work emotionally, the results of my learners improved. I was honoured with the Teacher of the Year award for the years 2000, 2001, 2003 and 2004. During that time, I had begun marking matric economics examination papers and in 2006, the chief marker offered me a senior marker position, an opportunity I accepted with both hands.

Once again personal tragedy struck which led to the need to seek professional help for severe depression. One way of coping was *to keep myself busy and maybe to distract myself from being in my head, I enrolled for a BEd (Hons) AQA at the University of Pretoria. I was certain from the onset that I wanted to do assessment and quality assurance. With my involvement in matric examination, I realised that I enjoy assessment-related assignments. Quality is something I have always striven for in my work, so I felt AQA was tailored for me.*

Participant 6 explains that professionally she would like to move out of the classroom and work either for a quality assurance body like Umalusi or the Department of Education on provincial or national level. Her goal then with her studies *is to do well in a master's course and obtain good results to allow me access to a PhD. From the rural village in Limpopo to one of the best universities in South Africa, the academic road I travelled was a mixture of fun, hard work, anxiety, desperation, sacrifice, excitement and success. At the end I can say it was worth the energy and the time invested.*

PARTICIPANT 7

Participant	Race	Gender	Age	Mother Tongue	Other languages spoken and written
P.7	Black	Male	44	Setswana	English *

* missing data

A 42-year old, male from the Setswana culture, Participant 7 is married with two children. He completed his secondary schooling in 1987 and afterwards worked for the then Bophuthatswana Transport Holdings for four years. He subsequently studied for a University Diploma in Education at Marapyane College of Education and on completion of the diplomas, began his teaching career in a middle school where he relieved for a period of three months. After a second period of temporary employment at a primary school, he managed to secure a permanent position at another primary school. In January 2000 he was promoted to a head of department position and in 2010 was promoted to a deputy principal position at a new primary school.

He has continued with his studies and *in the year 2000, I enrolled for a Further Diploma in Education Management with the University of Pretoria* and which he completed in 2001. In January 2009, he registered for a BEd. (Hons), which was successfully completed in December 2010.

He explains that he has *16 years of teaching experience and have good management and leadership skills based on the knowledge I have acquired. I am a self-driven person who is highly motivated. I am learner centred and taking the wellbeing of learners into consideration. I have the in-depth knowledge of the curriculum especially when coming to implementing, monitoring and evaluating National Curriculum Statement. I am very proud to be a teacher and very passionate about my profession.* He currently teaches Economic and Management Sciences, Social Sciences and Arts and Culture in the Intermediate and Senior phases.

Being *inspired by my performance in the honours degree, I decided to pursue a master's Degree in Assessment and Quality Assurance with the University of Pretoria from 2011. One of my core duties as a deputy principal is to manage curriculum implementation in the school and assessment and quality assurance are the integral part of curriculum implementation. One of the reasons for studying Assessment and Quality Assurance is the aim to work in the Quality Assurance division of the Department of Education in order to play my role in improving the quality of education at another level.*

PARTICIPANT 8:

Participant	Race	Gender	Age	Mother Tongue	Other languages spoken and written
P.8	Black	Male	36	Tshivenda	English, isiZulu, Sepedi

The last born in a large Tshivenda family, Participant 8 grew up in Tshiheni, Limpopo province. Being part of a large family afforded him the opportunity of an *informal education at home, growing amongst brothers and sisters in the same yard. Before I started school, I used to admire my brothers. I grew up in the rural areas where there was no crèche and pre-school, the only schooling was the primary school nearby. I remember when my mother took me to school for registration. I was so excited but nervous thinking about the challenges which I will face at school. Going to school is a dream for every young child.*

However, when schools reopened the following January, he refused to go to school. *My mother woke me up very early in the morning but I resisted. She forced me, washed me and took me to school and I arrived very late.* Most of the teachers at the school were from our village but were also experienced and as a result, this participant was given a *solid*

foundation at my primary school level. I grew up in an environment where a teacher was given respect and honour. Our neighbour was my Afrikaans and History teacher from Standards 2-5. He was very strict and he made my life difficult at home and even at school. Whatever I did, I was under the watchful eye of an eagle. This participant's English teacher was also the principal and arrived at school every morning at 6.30am for English study. Interestingly, *corporal punishment was his way of encouraging us to wake up for study time as well as the Saturday classes for History and Afrikaans. The dedication, perseverance, hard work and the challenges which I met while attending at the primary were the building blocks of my educational life. They taught me that there are dividends and success for hard work. I obtained first class in Standard 5.*

With such good grounding, this participant moved into secondary school receiving his *Standard 8 certificate with a distinction*. Thereafter, for the final years of schooling he moved to a new school. Participant 8 explains that the standard in that secondary school was high and he was thus challenged. But he grabbed a second chance at passing Matric *better than the previous year*, where students were required to attend afternoon classes, Saturday classes and winter school.

On deciding to become a teacher, he entered *tertiary education at the then Venda College of Education* enrolling for a *Secondary Teachers Diploma*. This was a good choice as the participant *acquired a lot of skills, namely, communication, computer, teamwork, decision-making, and self-reliance* during his studies at the college. Being very young at the time, and having to fend for himself, this participant looked up to his older classmates *who taught me respect and tolerance* and in addition, he became independent and self-reliant. He very proudly completed his diploma with a *distinction in Special Afrikaans*.

Being armed with a teaching qualification did not mean that a teaching position was available. *Facing the real world, looking for a job as I was a graduate, I came to Johannesburg looking for greener pasture because Limpopo had no teaching posts those years.* Luckily he found work at a family business for two years, all the while applying for teaching posts.

He was finally employed at Khululekani Primary School where he, *through the help of the principal, developed mentally and educationally*. He was given the opportunity of enrolling for an assessor's course run by the Independent Examination Board in Auckland Park, Johannesburg. Continuing with his interest in assessment, he registered for the Advanced Certificate in Education specialising in Assessment and Quality Assurance at the University of Pretoria and on completion, went on to complete a Total Quality Management course, *which was so challenging*, at Unisa. Two year later, this participant embarked on a BEd.

Honours degree in Assessment and Quality Assurance, and once he had successfully graduated, continued with a master's programme. He says: *This year is my first year doing MEd degree at the same university. It is not yet frustrating and I hope the course will not frustrate me as I am enjoying the support I am getting from the supervisory team.*

PARTICIPANT 9

Participant	Race	Gender	Age	Mother Tongue	Other languages spoken and written
P.9	Black	Female	41	Khoi-Khoi	Afrikaans, English

Participant 9, a female in the 36-45 year age group, was born in Usakos, situated in the western part of Namibia. She is a member of the Damara cultural group speaking Khoi-khoi as a home language but also being fluent in Afrikaans and English. Her mother is a housewife tending the large family of six children of which this participant is the third eldest. She started her primary education in Usakos but her father's new career in politics necessitated the family's move to Khorixas where she continued her secondary education.

After matriculation in 1990 my father's influence encouraged me to study in education. Registering at University of Namibia (UNAM) in January 1993, she graduated with a four-year Higher Education Diploma (Secondary) in April 1997. She began her teaching career in her home town, teaching Geography and Business Management to Grades 8 and 9. However, when she married, she transferred to Swakopmund, about 140km from Usakos where she was later promoted to Head of Department. During this time, I enrolled part-time at the North-West University in South Africa and completed the BEd. (Hons) in May 2006.

In April 2009, she joined Namibia Qualifications Authority (NQA) as Quality Assurance Officer (RPL-Recognition of Prior Learning). Her current position at NQA includes conducting research on education systems and foreign qualifications, evaluating foreign qualifications, critiquing new local qualifications to be registered at the National Framework and conducting workshops and information seminars.

My expectations for myself are to work hard, discipline myself to read and read. The course must brighten up my mind to think outside the box regarding assessment and quality assurance in education. I must be able to perform on debates regarding assessment and quality assurance therefore I must master the skills.

PARTICIPANT 10:

Participant	Race	Gender	Age	Mother Tongue	Other languages spoken and written
P.10	White	Female	24	English	French, Afrikaans

Participant 10 is one of the youngest students of this cohort born to an English speaking mother and a father of Dutch origin, *who always spoke English to me*, but spoke *Dutch/Afrikaans to my grandmother*. This participant has one sister who is two years older and is a primary school English teacher. She says *from the earliest moment I can remember I always heard my mother speaking English the most. It was my mother who read to us every night, in English, to help us fall asleep. She would sometimes read us fairy tales but mostly Enid Blyton's books such as The Faraway Tree. My mother also used to read to us when we were on holiday, especially books by Gerald Durrell.*

This participant attended nursery school where a lot of the children were Afrikaans. But because she could not understand what the children were saying, they did not want to play with her. It was then that the grandmother became involved in teaching her about Afrikaans and how to speak it. She was introduced to the concept of reading every week and doing reading homework, and it was her grandmother who always helped with homework. She says *I would finish the books faster than was required and then one day my mother gave me the thickest book I had ever been given to read, it was Shadow the Sheepdog. I surprised everyone by finishing it in one day and from then on I began to devour more and more books every week. Eventually my family became members of the local library so that we could all have access to a greater variety of books, a prerequisite when developing reading literacy.*

She went on to attend a local primary school, a co-ed primary school in a racially mixed area, which in the 'new' South Africa allowed for the interaction of multi-cultures, not previously experienced in pre-1994 South Africa. Her best subject was English where she found that all the rules, regulations and conventions came easily and naturally, an aspect she discovered was not so for all native English speakers and even less for children for whom English was an additional language. During her primary school years, she spent more time reading and at an early age was reading advanced literature. Her writing literacy developed during this phase of schooling with regular writing topics being given. She says her short stories used to make the teachers laugh and often were given good merit. She also kept a journal as a teenager, writing down everything that she thought, felt or experienced. She often thought that her career should be journalism because writing came so easily and she enjoyed it so much.

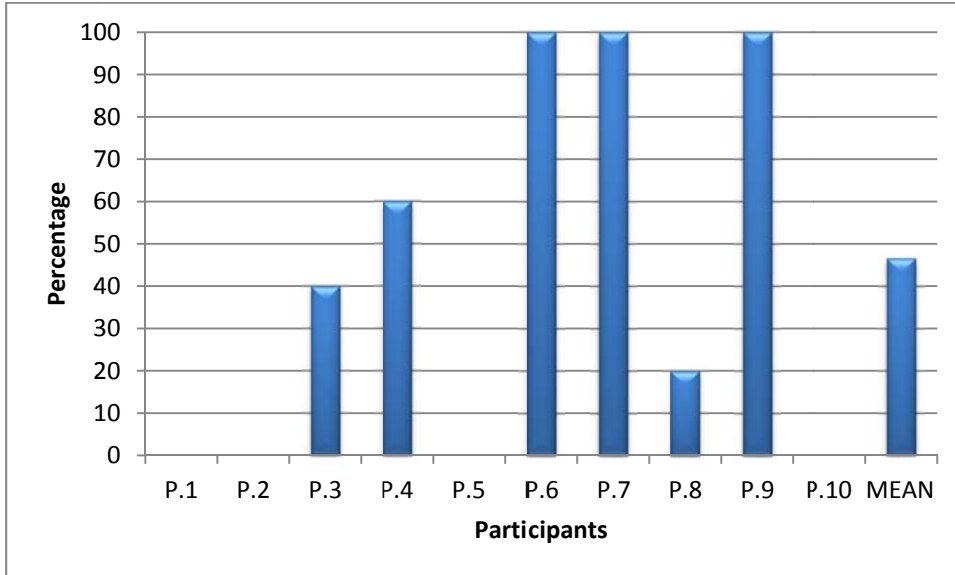
She enjoyed the academic side of primary school and achieved good results which allowed her to move on to the high school of choice: Pretoria High School for Girls where she befriended a number of African girls whose home language was French. Having heard her mother speak *French and lov[ing] the sound of it*, she was motivated to include this language, which became a favourite, as a major subject, *d[oing] quite well in it*.

After high school she continued with French as a major at university because she loved speaking it so much and hoped to have a career in it. However, to her dismay, she applied too late for BA Languages. But in her second year was able to transfer from a general BA to BA Languages, specifically French and English. Thereafter she completed an honours degree in French translation and interpretation. At first she did not want to do a master's but enrolled to do a master's in a totally different field to French. She was invited to move into education focusing a selected topic which incorporated translation studies and reading literacy. She *realised that it is quite important to society in general but also to my own development academically and knowledge-wise*.

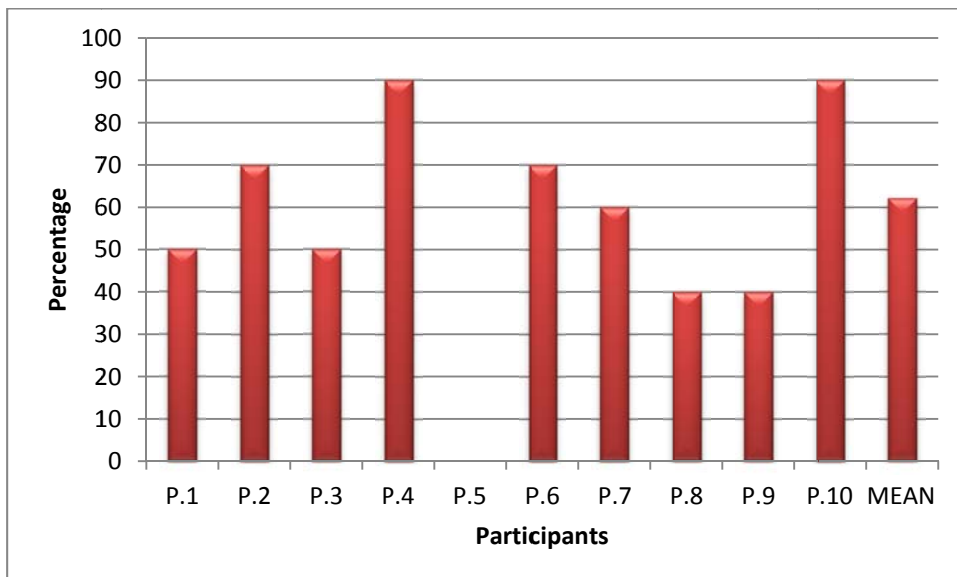
Although this student seems suitably equipped with the necessary 'skills' for success at this level, she explains that this master's has been a struggle with due to the numerous assignments, exercises, expected reading and the writing. *I really do hope it gets better as I continue with it. I do not want my family to lose out on time with me as well as my true, positive, personality. I have realised that it is all about choices; I have to choose to balance everything in my life and still maintain a positive outlook about it all*.

APPENDIX C: TALPS PRE-TEST RESULTS PER SECTION

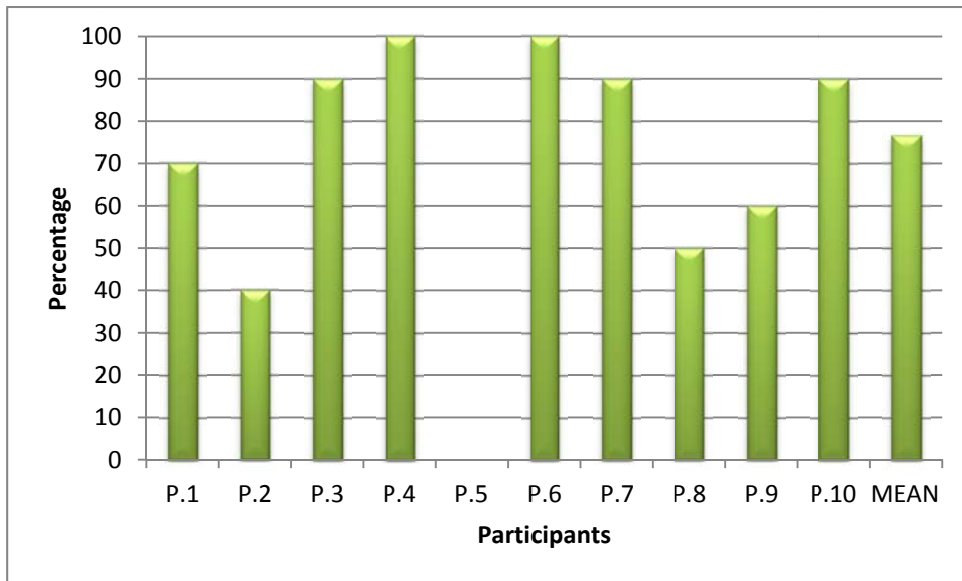
SECTION 1: SCRAMBLED TEXT



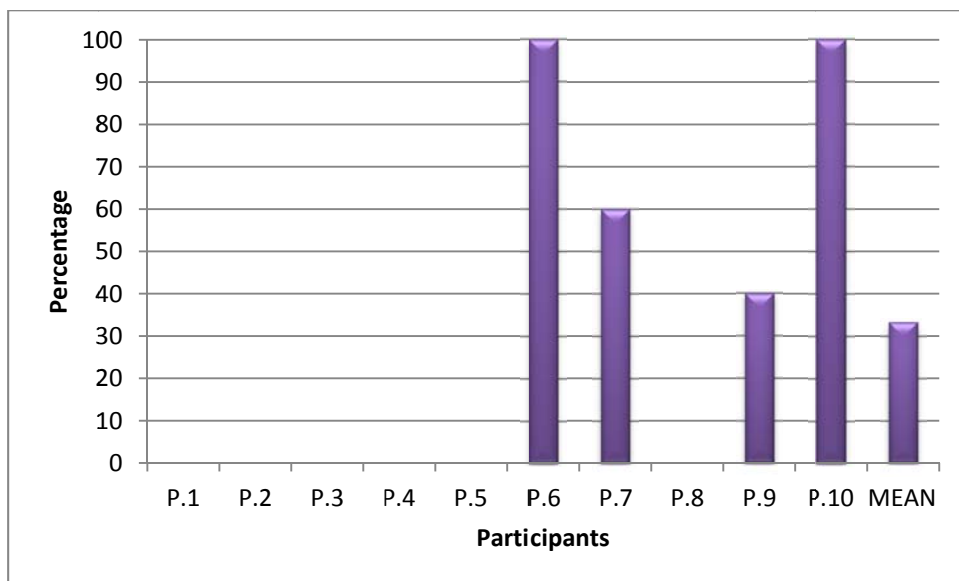
SECTION 2: VISUAL/GRAPHIC LITERACY



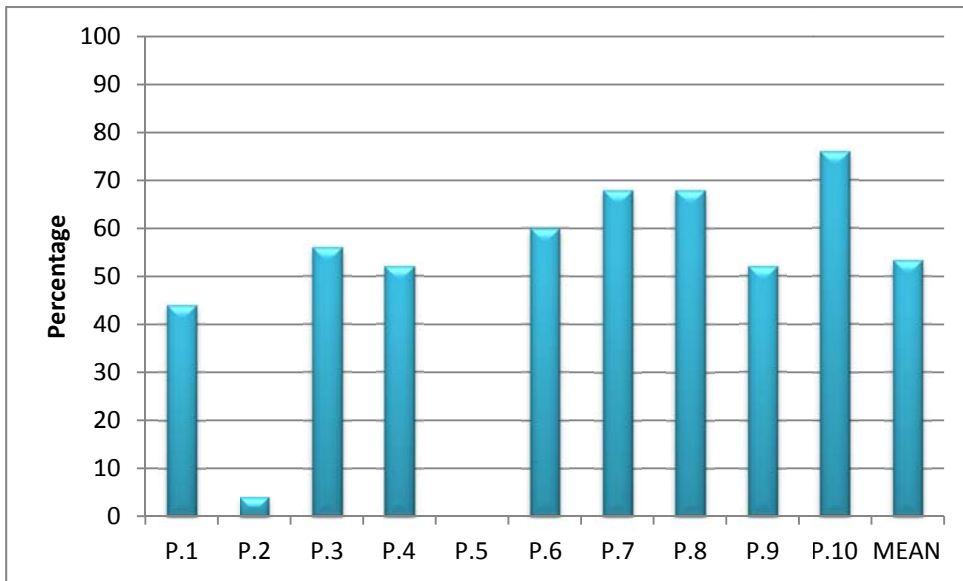
SECTION 3: ACADEMIC VOCABULARY



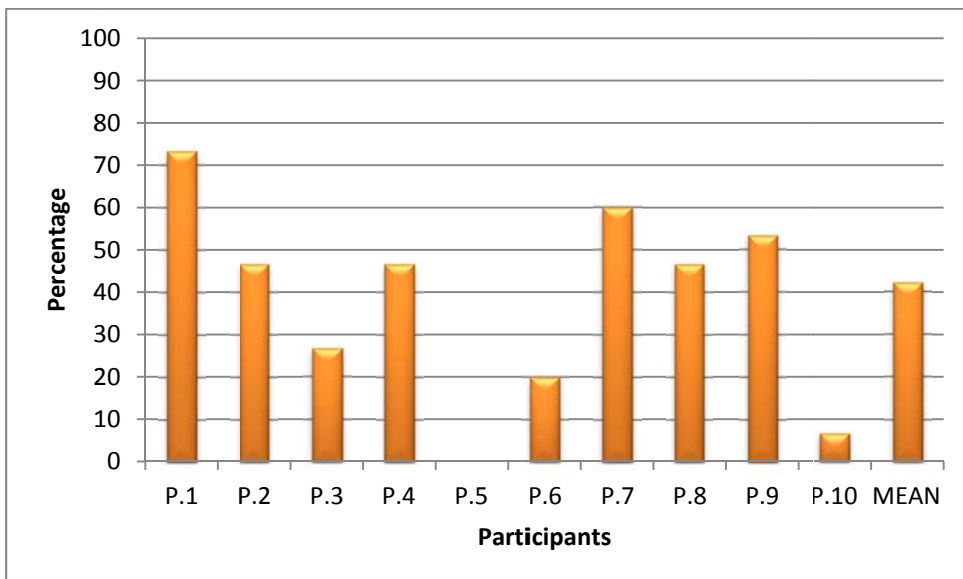
SECTION 4: TEXT TYPES



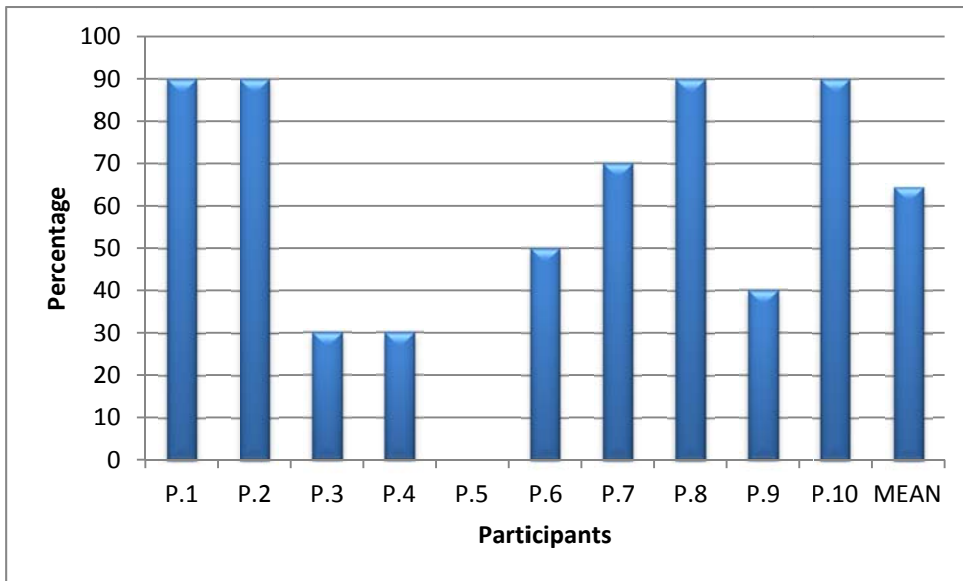
SECTION 5: COMPREHENSION



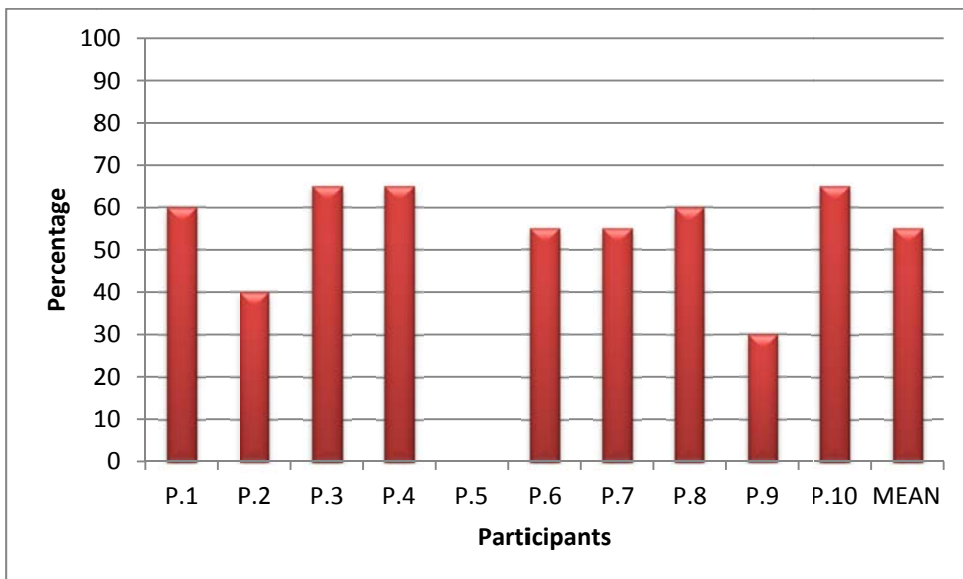
SECTION 6: ACADEMIC LITERACY ABILITIES



SECTION 7: GRAMMATICAL KNOWLEDGE



SECTION 8: WRITING OF ACADEMIC TEXT



APPENDIX B: HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

MASTER'S DEGREE Level 9*			
	APPLIED COMPETENCE		AUTONOMY OF LEARNING
A*	A comprehensive and systematic knowledge base in a discipline/field with specialist knowledge in an area at the forefront of the discipline/field or area of professional practice.	G*	A capacity to operate effectively in complex, ill-defined contexts.
B*	A coherent and critical understanding of the theory, research methodologies and techniques relevant to a discipline/field; an ability to rigorously critique and evaluate current research and participate in scholarly debates in an area of specialization; an ability to relate theory to practice and vice versa and to think epistemologically.	H*	A capacity to critically self-evaluate and continue to learn independently for continuing professional development.
C*	Mastery of the application of research methods, techniques and technologies appropriate to an area of specialization; an ability to undertake a research project and write up a research dissertation under supervision.	I*	A capacity to manage learning tasks autonomously, professionally and ethically.
D*	An ability to identify, analyse and deal with complex and/or real world problems and issues drawing systematically and creatively on the theory, research methods and literature of a discipline/field.	J*	A capacity to critically evaluate own and others' work with justification.
E*	Advanced information retrieval and processing skills; identification, critical analysis, synthesis and independent evaluation of quantitative and/or qualitative data; an ability to undertake a study of the literature and current research in an area of specialization under supervision.		
F*	An ability to effectively present and communicate the results of research to specialist and non-specialist audiences using the resources of an academic/professional discourse; the production of a dissertation or research report which meets the standards of scholarly/professional writing.		

Legend: * the digit and the letter are used in the text to describe the level and the competence or aspect of learning.

(Ministry of Education, 2004)

Higher Education Qualification Framework

LO	APPLIED COMPETENCE	SPECIFIC LEARNING OUTCOME	APPLICATION TO INTERVENTION		
			FACULTY SEMINAR	PROGRAMME SEMINAR	PROGRAMME CONTACT SESSION
E	Advanced information retrieval and processing skills.	Able to engage with information retrieval by sourcing relevant literature, reading and critiquing and applying learning to own research	A ✓ B ✓ C D	A B C D	1 5 2 6 3 7 4 8
B	Advanced reading and thinking skills: an ability to rigorously critique and evaluate current research and participate in scholarly debates in an area of specialization.	Able to develop reading and thinking skills and apply to own research Able to engage in discussions and debates about own and peer research	A ✓ B C D	A B ✓ C ✓ D	1 ✓ 5 2 ✓ 6 3 ✓ 7 4 ✓ 8
F	An ability to effectively present and communicate the results of research to specialist and non-specialist audiences using the resources of an academic/professional discourse	Able to present various aspects of research to a variety of audiences	A ✓ B C D	A B C D	1 5 6 ✓ 7 ✓ 8 ✓
D	An ability to identify, analyse and deal with complex and/or real world problems and issues drawing systematically and creatively on the theory, research methods and literature of a discipline/field.	Able to identify a problem for research purposes, underpin it with theory drawn from the literature and finding a methodology to solve the problem	A B C D	A ✓ B ✓ C D	1 ✓ 5 2 ✓ 6 3 ✓ 7 4 8
E	An ability to undertake a study of the literature and current research in an area of specialization under supervision.	Able to access and review the literature critically – analysing and synthesising	A B ✓ C D	A B ✓ C D	1 5 2 6 3 ✓ 7 4 8
B	An ability to rigorously critique and evaluate current research and participate in scholarly debates in an area of specialization.	Able to analyse and synthesise the literature using it to draw examples and arguments to underpin own research	A B C D	A B ✓ C D	1 5 6 3 ✓ 7 4 8
B	An ability to relate theory to practice and vice versa and to think epistemologically.	Able to use theory to underpin problem, research, practice, intervention	A B C D	A B ✓ C D	1 5 6 ✓ 3 ✓ 7 ✓ 8 ✓
C	Mastery of the application of research methods, techniques and technologies appropriate to an area of specialization.	Able to situate research in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A paradigm • A research design • Using a particular approach Able to undertake: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sampling • develop instruments 	A B C ✓ D	A B ✓ C ✓ D	1 5 2 6 3 7 4 ✓ 8

Higher Education Qualification Framework

LO	APPLIED COMPETENCE	SPECIFIC LEARNING OUTCOME	APPLICATION TO INTERVENTION			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> collect valid and reliable data – qual+quan 				
E	Identification of quantitative and/or qualitative data.	Able to process and analyse data – qual+quan using packages such as SPSS/Atlas-ti	A B C D	A B C D	1 2 3 4	5 6 7 8
E	Critical analysis, synthesis and independent evaluation of quantitative and/or qualitative data.	Able to interpret results	A B C D	A B C D	1 3 4	5 7 8
F	The production of a dissertation or research report which meets the standards of scholarly/professional writing.	Able to complete the research proposal to the standards outlined in Faculty guidelines	A B C D	A B	1 2 3 4	5 6 7 8
						√ √ √

	AUTONOMY OF LEARNING	SPECIFIC LEARNING OUTCOME
G	A capacity to operate effectively in complex, ill-defined contexts.	Able to work in a variety of contexts and situations applying professional standards
H	A capacity to critically self-evaluate and continue to learn independently for continuing professional development.	Able to grow academically and professionally, using self-reflection and critique as a tool
I	A capacity to manage learning tasks autonomously, professionally and ethically.	Able to develop the ability to work in a group as well as independently maintaining ethical standards and adhering to timelines
J	A capacity to critically evaluate own and others' work with justification.	Able to engage in peer review and be open to feedback

CONTACT SESSION 1 EVALUATION FORM

Instructions: Please complete the following evaluation form electronically, save it under **your** name and document title (e.g. Jim Smith Evaluation Form 1) and return it to cilla.nel@up.ac.za as soon as possible.

Please rate the following aspects of the contact session (mark with an x) and complete the comment section in detail:

Presentation and discussion of what is required in the writing of the problem statement, aims and research questions

Excellent	Good	Needs improvement	Not applicable
Please provide an explanation of the rating given explaining what was valuable and what was not:			

Group discussion of feedback from supervisory team

Excellent	Good	Needs improvement	Not applicable
Please provide an explanation of the rating given explaining what was valuable and what was not:			

Discussion of how to read, annotate and record the literature

Excellent	Good	Needs improvement	Not applicable
Please provide an explanation of the rating given explaining what was valuable and what was not:			

Discussion of the value of keeping a research diary and the importance of setting goals and deadlines for yourself

Excellent	Good	Needs improvement	Not applicable
Please provide an explanation of the rating given explaining what was valuable and what was not:			

The conveying of information to you (e.g. via email, info letter, telephonically and so on)

Excellent	Good	Needs improvement	Not applicable
Please provide an explanation of the rating given explaining what was valuable and what was not:			

--

General questions:

What was the best feature of the contact session?			
How do you think the contact session can be improved?			
What would you like to be discussed at future sessions?			
Overall, how would you evaluate the contact session?			
Excellent	Good	Needs improvement	Not applicable

Thank you for taking the time to complete this evaluation.

CONTACT SESSION 2 EVALUATION FORM

Instructions: Please complete the following evaluation form electronically, save it under **your** name and document title (e.g. Jim Smith Evaluation Form 2) and return it to cilla.nel@up.ac.za as soon as possible after the session.

Please rate the following aspects of the contact session (mark with an x) and complete the comment section in detail (much more detail than the previous form – we want to hear your stories, reactions and experiences) addressing the following questions:

- a. What new skills did you learn?
- b. What new knowledge did you learn?
- c. What do you know now that you did not previously know?
- d. Was there an AHA moment?
- e. How does this affect your approach to your work?
- f. How will you apply these new skills in your writing?

Reading of original pieces of writing

Excellent	Good	Needs improvement	Not applicable

Identification and discussion of writing challenges

Excellent	Good	Needs improvement	Not applicable

Discussion of feedback and what is expected in 'good' writing

Excellent	Good	Needs improvement	Not applicable

Reading of revised pieces of writing

Excellent	Good	Needs improvement	Not applicable

APA referencing techniques – explanation and example application

Excellent	Good	Needs improvement	Not applicable

General questions:

What did you gain the most from this contact session?			
How questions are still not really answered for you as scholar?			
What aspects would you like to be discussed at future sessions?			
Overall, how would you evaluate the contact session?			
Excellent	Good	Needs improvement	Not applicable

CONTACT SESSION 3 EVALUATION FORM

Instructions: Please complete the following evaluation form electronically, save it under **your** name and document title (e.g. Jim Smith Evaluation Form 2) and return it to cilla.nel@up.ac.za as soon as possible after the session.

Please complete the comment section in detail, and then rate the various aspects of the contact session (mark with an x)

Presentation of problem statements, research questions and literature framework

- You presented your problem statements, research questions and literature framework to the group. Explain whether this was of value? How? Why? What did you learn about these aspects that was new or unclear?
- You listened to other students' problem statements, research questions and literature framework. Was this of value? How? Why? What did you learn about these aspects that was new or unclear?
- Rate this particular part of the session:

Excellent	Good	Needs improvement	Not applicable

We discussed the content of the research proposal using the template.

- Of what value was this to you? How has it helped? Are you ready to write?
- Rate this particular part of the session:

Excellent	Good	Needs improvement	Not applicable

General questions:

a. What did you gain the most from this contact session?			
b. Which questions are still not really answered for you as scholar?			
c. What aspects would you like to be discussed at future sessions?			
Excellent	Good	Needs improvement	Not applicable

Thank you for taking the time to complete this evaluation.

CONTACT SESSION 4 EVALUATION FORM

Instructions: Please complete the following evaluation form electronically, save it under **your** name and document title (e.g. Jim Smith Evaluation Form 4) and return it to cilla.nel@up.ac.za as soon as possible after the session.

Please complete the comment section in detail, and then rate the contact session (mark with an x)

I would like you to reflect on what we did during this contact session taking into account and elaborating on the discussion after our interactions and review with our peers. Please reflect on what critical feedback is, giving feedback, receiving feedback and the value of it - how it helped or hindered you with seeing the bigger picture and perhaps what you need to aim for, avoid, take care of, strive for or even prepare for in your own writing. Please think deeply about this and write from the heart (about 1 page of typing – remember to use paragraphs).

(Begin here)

Now that you have completed your evaluative reflection, please rate the session:

Excellent	Good	Needs improvement	Not applicable

Thank you for taking the time to complete this evaluation.

CONTACT SESSION 5 EVALUATION FORM

Instructions: Please complete the following evaluation form electronically, save it under **your** name and document title (e.g. Jim Smith Evaluation Form 5) and return it to cilla.dowse@up.ac.za as soon as possible by Monday 12 August at the latest.

Please complete the comment section in detail, and then rate the contact session (mark with an x)

I would like you to reflect on what we did during this contact session taking into account the following:

1. The writing session and meeting with your supervisor and co-supervisor
2. Update from each student and where they are with their writing
3. Discussion on deadlines for 2011
4. Discussion on powerpoint development for your defence
5. Discussion on completion of Ethics Application forms.

Please write a good in-depth account of how you felt about each of these aspects and of what value (or not) they were to you. (about 1-2 pages of typing – and this time you may write using each of the points as your starting point).

I realise that some of you attended Dr. Van Staden's writing day and did not meet with Prof. Howie – but please write about your writing day earlier in the month. And the rest of you did attend on Friday 19 August, so you can deal with both aspects in Point.

Now that you have completed your evaluative reflection, please rate the session:

Excellent	Good	Needs improvement	Not applicable

Thank you for taking the time to complete this evaluation.



FACULTY OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

**POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH POLICY, GUIDELINES
AND PROCEDURES FOR MASTER'S AND DOCTORAL
STUDENTS AND SUPERVISORS**

FEBRUARY 2010

NEW FACULTY POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH POLICY, GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES FOR MASTER'S AND DOCTORAL STUDENTS AND SUPERVISORS

February 2010

In the past number of years the Faculty of Education has experienced a constant upward growth in the number of post-graduate students enrolling for and completing master and doctoral degree studies. This trend is a positive achievement and we would like to sustain this growth while maintaining and enhancing high academic standards. For this reason it is important to ensure that students and academic staff across the departments within the Faculty adopt procedures and processes that will contribute to excellence in postgraduate research. This Postgraduate Research Policy aligns the policies and procedures of the Faculty with those of the University of Pretoria and brings all the stipulations and requirements together in a single document for ease of reference and to ensure standardization of our processes and procedures.

The Policy document discusses a much more rigorous process for selecting students so that only the best students are admitted to these advanced programmes in educational theory and research. Accordingly, no student will be selected for master or PhD studies without passing through an in-depth personal interview with senior academics in the Faculty. Furthermore, every postgraduate student will be required to pass a defence of a comprehensive research proposal at the end of the first year of studies. In short, the Faculty endeavours from its side to ensure that when you graduate, you will be proud to carry with you a world-class degree in education that should enable you to compete in any university or professional setting with competence and confidence. We commit ourselves to render you the support and supervision that will make this possible. In return, we expect you to follow closely the 'guidelines and procedures' documented in this document for it will enable you to enjoy and take the maximum benefits out of this training programme.

Signed:

**Dean of Education
University of Pretoria**

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IMPORTANT NOTE:

The Postgraduate Research Policy document and the relevant guidelines should be read in conjunction with

- **General Regulations**
<http://web.up.ac.za/sitefiles/file/1/25Jan2010%20General%20Regulations%20en%20information%202010%20.pdf>
- **Faculty Regulations and Syllabi**
<http://web.up.ac.za/sitefiles/file/1%20Jaarboeke%202010/Education%202010%20wb.pdf>

1. PROCEDURES FOR APPLICATION, SELECTION AND ADMISSION TO MASTER'S AND DOCTORAL DEGREE STUDIES

1.1 ENROLMENT PLANNING

- a. During September every year, each Academic Department within the Faculty of Education will conduct an annual audit of its capacity to take in new master's and doctoral students for the following academic year.
- b. In conducting an annual audit, the Department needs to take into account the available expertise within the Department, the workload of academic staff in terms of postgraduate supervision, the need to develop the capacity of young academic staff in the Department, the envisaged successful completion rates of students, as well as the possible attrition rates of students as a result of poor progress and/or other factors.
- c. Each Department should refrain from automatically taking in new students in any specific year, but should base its intake on the enrolment planning envisaged in Sections 1.1a and b.

1.2 ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- a. Admission requirements are set out in the *General Regulations* and in the *Regulations and Syllabi for the Faculty of Education* (Yearbook). Additional requirements set out by the Faculty are indicated in Sections 1.2 b and c.
- b. Applicants for the master's degree are required to have obtained an average mark of at least 60% at honours or related degree level and those applying for doctorate studies, at least 60% for the dissertation at master's degree level.
- c. The selection process is an integral part of quality assurance in the Faculty and a student will not be admitted to postgraduate studies purely on meeting the stipulated minimum requirements.

- d. All students applying for admission to master's or doctoral studies will be screened and selected by the relevant academic department on behalf of the Faculty of Education based on merit. Selection will take into consideration documentation submitted by the candidate as well as personal interviews conducted by the relevant department. The final selection decision rests with the Faculty and a student will not be admitted without an in-depth interview to judge academic readiness and quality of the candidate.
- e. All decisions pertaining to the selection and admission of students will be fair and transparent.

1.3 PROCEDURES FOR THE RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

- a. Applicants who are not in possession of the minimum academic qualifications set out in the *Faculty Regulations and Syllabi* policy may apply for the recognition of prior learning.
- b. The stipulations and procedures set out in *General Regulation (G.62)* will apply in these cases.
- c. Applications must be directed to the relevant Head of Department.

1.4 APPLICATION PROCEDURES

- a. Applicants are required to apply for admission into master's (coursework and research options) or doctoral degree studies before 30 September¹ of the preceding year on the appropriate application and selection forms obtainable from Student Administration (Groenkloof Campus).
- b. The application form is to be accompanied by a typed two-page outline of the theme/topic of the proposed study, the problem statement, and a preliminary indication of the importance of the intended research as well as the methodology to be used in the research. The purpose of this preliminary proposal is to assist each department in the selection process.
- c. A complete transcript of previous studies should accompany the application.
- d. The application form must clearly indicate the department of choice for the proposed postgraduate study.

¹ 31 July in the case of MEd (Educational Psychology) and 31 August for international students

- e. All applications should be handed in at Student Administration where the selection form will be attached to the application form and then forwarded to the relevant department for selection purposes.
- f. Applicants are requested not to submit their applications directly to an academic department.
- g. Applications received after the closing date for applications will be not considered.
- h. Incomplete applications will also not be considered.

1.5 SELECTION PROCEDURES

- a. Application and selection forms will be sent to the Heads of Department.
- b. Each Head of Department will convene a meeting with senior academics in the department to do a *coarse sieve* selection. This implies that candidates who do not meet the minimum requirements set by the Department will not be considered.
- c. The Head of Department will appoint selection committees to undertake the final selection.
- d. Candidates who meet the requirements set by the Department will be invited for an interview with the selection committee. The task of the committee is to assess the potential of the candidate to successfully complete his/her studies within the required time frame and of a quality required by the department.
- e. During the interview, the selection committee will establish the potential student's field of interest in order to identify a possible supervisor and mentor. The following guidelines may serve as a basis for the selection of students:
 - Motivation for wanting to pursue postgraduate research.
 - A firm grasp of the knowledge field of the proposed study (for example, the current "burning issues"; the most respected journals; the most respected authors).
 - Understanding of research and ability to interpret research findings.
 - Language proficiency with specific attention to academic reading and writing ability.
 - Computer literacy and access to the Internet.
- f. Departments may also request the supervisor of the master's degree or a doctoral candidate or a lecturer from the institution where the applicant completed his/her honours degree, to submit a confidential report.

- g. After the interview, the chairperson of the departmental selection committee will complete the *Admission to postgraduate studies*. This document, signed by the Head of Department and accompanied by the student's completed documentation, should be forwarded to Student Administration.
- h. The selection committee will recommend a suitable supervisor and or co-supervisor for the selected candidate.
- i. The number of candidates to be enrolled will be determined by the enrolment planning for a specific year (see Section 1.1).

1.6 APPOINTMENT OF SUPERVISORS AND CO-SUPERVISORS

- a. During or shortly after the screening and selection process, the Head of Department, in consultation with academic staff members, will nominate a suitable supervisor and co-supervisor (if necessary) and complete the *Registration of a supervisor* form (Annexure A).
- b. The Postgraduate Committee, on the recommendation of the Head of Department concerned, nominates a supervisor and/or co-supervisor for a particular candidate.
- c. Should the Postgraduate Committee refuse to confirm the recommendation by the Head of Department, the matter is referred to the Dean for a final decision.
- d. A person appointed as supervisor should hold the necessary qualifications and have the appropriate academic stature and experience to supervise postgraduate candidates. Academic staff members who have not co-supervised at least three students to completion of their studies may not be appointed as supervisor without a co-supervisor as mentor.
- e. A person appointed as supervisor, must be associated with the University as a full-time lecturer, unless adequate justification can be submitted to the committee as to the reason for appointing an external supervisor.
- f. On the retirement or resignation from University service, a supervisor may, with approval of the Postgraduate Committee concerned, and after consultation with the Head of Department, for a period of no longer than two years after retirement or resignation, still act as the appointed supervisor in order to enable the student to complete his/her dissertation/thesis. During this period and for the purpose of supervision, such a supervisor will be deemed to be an approved lecturer of the University. If on the retirement or resignation from University service, a supervisor is no longer prepared to

act as the appointed supervisor for the student, a new supervisor will be appointed (see Section G 57.3)

- g. The names of all selected candidates and the approved supervisors must be submitted to the Faculty Board for notification.

1.7 ADMISSION

- a. Student Administration will finalise the admission of the student on receipt of the approved forms from the Head of Department.
- b. Student Administration will inform the student in writing of the outcome of the application.
- c. All students are to register during the registration period as communicated during December of the preceding year. This requirement also applies for registration in subsequent years.
- d. A student will only be supervised if registered for that year of study.

1.8 ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR MASTER AND DOCTORAL DEGREE STUDIES

- a. After registration, the supervisor and student will enter a *memorandum of understanding* in terms of their expectations and planning for the studies and it is the student's responsibility to manage his/her studies in accordance with this agreement (see Annexure B or consult UP website at <http://web.up.ac.za/default.asp?ipkCategoryID=8768>).
- b. A student enrolled for the doctoral or master's degree, irrespective of whether it is for the full dissertation or the master's by coursework, must submit a research proposal during the first year of registration and defend it successfully before a panel of examiners appointed by the Head of Department in collaboration with the supervisor, before commencing with the research such as the review of the literature and methodology literature.
- c. On approval of the research proposal, a student must then apply for ethical clearance to the Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee (see Annexure C) and may only commence with fieldwork once the application for ethical clearance has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee.
- d. Fieldwork may not be undertaken without prior ethical clearance.
- e. Attendance of research support sessions is compulsory for all master's and doctoral students throughout the registration period. An attendance certificate will be issued at the

conclusion of a session. These certificates of attendance must be signed by the coordinator of the research support sessions and included when the dissertation is submitted for examination as the Postgraduate Committee will take such certification into consideration when discussing the progress of the student.

- f. In addition, the Faculty encourages all master and doctoral students to:
 - form “theme groups” in which students with similar theoretical or methodological interests meet on a regular basis; and
 - participate actively in Research Seminars and the Annual Research Indaba.
- g. All master's students must pass Research Methodology (NMQ 810) and Education, Development and Globalisation (OOG 810) and submit a dissertation or a mini-dissertation. A student may apply for exemption from the requirement of completing these modules if these or similar modules have recently been passed at NQF level 8 (HEQF 9).
- h. Each student is to submit an annual progress report indicating the progress made during the year of registration (see Section 4.1). The Postgraduate Committee of the Faculty may refuse a student permission to continue with postgraduate studies if satisfactory progress cannot be demonstrated or if the requirements stated in Sections 1.8 b and c have not been met.
- i. On completion of the research each master and doctoral degree student should submit a copy of one publishable article based on the research conducted for the dissertation or the mini-dissertation and approved by the supervisor. In the case of a PhD proof that it was submitted to an accredited academic journal must be submitted (see Section 4.4). The copy of the article must be submitted at Student Administration before 15 February for the Autumn-graduation ceremonies and before 15 July for the Spring graduation ceremonies. It remains the responsibility of the student and supervisor to oversee the process of ensuring that the article is published in an accredited journal. Failure to meet these deadlines will result in the degree being awarded during a subsequent series of graduation ceremonies.

2. PROCEDURES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL OF THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

2.1 PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

- a. A research proposal is a document that outlines how a postgraduate student proposes to undertake a specific research project.

- b. The research proposal is a crucial step in the research process and must undergo intensive scrutiny to ensure that quality assurance is built into the research process at an early stage in order to optimise the quality of the research that will emanate from the approved research proposal.
- c. The research proposal should be a substantive proposal reflecting the student's thinking about an identified problem at the start of the research process giving evidence of a firm grasp of the problem to be studied, a thorough understanding of current and relevant literature on the topic, research approach and methods to be employed, and ethical issues to be considered.

2.2 DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN DISSERTATIONS, MINI-DISSERTATIONS AND THESES

2.2.1 Master's degree

- a. The main purpose of a master's degree is to train and educate researchers who are able to contribute to the development of knowledge at an advanced level.
- b. A master's degree may be earned either by completing a single advanced research project, culminating in the production and acceptance of a dissertation or by successfully completing a coursework programme requiring a high level of theoretical and intellectual engagement and a research project of limited scope.
- c. Master's degree graduates must be able to deal with complex issues systematically and creatively, make sound research judgements based on data and information, and communicate their conclusions clearly in a dissertation of high quality.
- d. The research proposal of approximately 20-30 pages at **master's degree level** should illustrate that the implementation thereof will enable the student to demonstrate the ability to conduct scientific research independently.
- e. A **dissertation of full scope** should be indicative of the ability of the student to conduct research at a master's degree level and should reflect a critical understanding of the theoretical underpinning of the area of focus and of the apposite research methodologies needed to generate data, apply sound data analysis techniques and report comprehensively on the findings of the research in a document of approximately 150 pages.
- f. A **mini-dissertation** should reflect the student's ability to conduct research at a master's degree level and should display insight and understanding in the theoretical underpinning of the field of study and the research approach needed to execute the research and report on the findings in a dissertation of approximately 75 pages. The units of analysis, the variables, the number of participants/respondents, may be less,

but the scientific rigour and standard of work produced must be of comparable standard to that of a full dissertation.

2.2.2 Doctoral degree

- a. At doctoral degree level, a student must be able to undertake research at the most advanced level and with scholarly excellence to produce, defend and have the thesis accepted by the examining committee. The defining characteristic of this qualification is that the student must demonstrate high-level research capability and make a significant and original contribution at the cutting edge of education applicable to the field of specialisation.
- b. At a doctoral level, the research proposal of approximately 30-40 pages, should be indicative of more advanced work that engages critical philosophical reflection and will enable the student to make a contribution to the knowledge or understanding of a specific phenomenon within the field of specialisation or that will lead to the development of educational technology (for example, the development of a new teaching strategy or assessment method, the development of a measuring instrument, or the development of new interactive computer teaching).
- c. A thesis is a high quality scientific research study that reflects the ability to deal with concepts and data at an advanced level depicting the thorough grounding of the student in the theoretical underpinning of the field of study. In addition, a thesis should illustrate the student's research competence to deal with research at a doctoral level and to report comprehensively in approximately 240 pages on the new knowledge and insights gained through the study.

2.3 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA FOR A RESEARCH PROPOSAL

- a. The following criteria will be considered when assessing the research proposal:
 - Clarity in defining of the research area and relevance of the theme;
 - The candidate's insight into the problem and the goals with the research;
 - The candidate's knowledge of relevant literature;
 - The ability of the candidate to design and describe applicable research methods;
 - The ability of the candidate to consider and deal with ethical aspects of the research;
 - Scientific character of the contents;
 - The language and technical editing of the proposal.

2.4 TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS FOR A RESEARCH PROPOSAL

- a. The length of a research proposal for master's degree studies should be approximately 15-25 pages and for doctoral studies, 25-40 pages. The quality of the proposal is the key aspect to be considered rather than the actual length of a proposal.
- b. The proposal must demonstrate the student's ability to engage in academic writing and attention must be paid to the use of language in the proposal. Not only should the proposal be free of grammatical errors, but the scientific and technical language used must be apposite to the standard set for a good proposal.
- c. All research proposals must be typed in 12pt font and 1.5 spacing with 2.5cm margins.
- d. All sources referred to and cited in text, must be correctly referenced according to Harvard or APA and listed under *References* at the end of the proposal.

2.5 CONTENT OF A RESEARCH PROPOSAL

- a. Although there are no fixed guidelines for a research proposal, most research proposals will include at least the following aspects:

The proposed title must be sufficiently clear to reflect the nature and intention of the research.

The background/rationale provides a succinct outline of the reasons why the study should be undertaken and the general objectives of the study.

The preliminary literature review should reflect the student's reading on the topic that helped narrow down and formulate the research problem.

The aims/objectives of the study answers the question: What is it that you want to achieve? A student should guard against over ambitious or exaggerated statements of what he/she wants to achieve and should rather focus on tangible concrete outcomes for the research that are appropriate and in line with the level at which the study is conducted.

The problem statement and/or research question must be stated in clear and unambiguous terms and is often formulated in terms of a central research question with a number of sub-questions or as a number of research hypotheses.

The research design should clearly answer the key question: What type of research and methodological approach would be best suited to study the problem identified in the problem statement? This is a vital part of the proposal as it maps out the process that will emanate from the research proposal.

The research methods should give specific attention to the unit(s) of analysis, the research techniques such as data gathering instruments and data-collection methods to be used, sampling, data analysis and the presentation of data.

Trustworthiness of the study requires that attention is given to ensuring reliability and validity in quantitative studies or trustworthiness and credibility if a qualitative study is proposed.

Ethical considerations should be in line with the ethical requirements set by the Faculty of Education, University of Pretoria and the ethical codes of professions which are recognised by the University.

The timeframe should be a realistic outline of the milestones to be achieved in the research specifying the dates on which these milestones will be achieved. This will form the basis of the contract between the supervisor and the student.

A provisional outline of chapters for the dissertation

The references consist of a list of the sources referred to in the text of the research proposal and not a reading list of possible sources that the student will consult.

2.6 RESEARCH SUPPORT AT POSTGRADUATE LEVEL

- a. The purposes and intent of postgraduate studies (especially at doctoral level) is not only to do research of a specific research topic, but also to contribute to the scholarly development of the student. This will be achieved through the creation of opportunities to advance the student's development such as research seminars and a research support programme.
- b. The purpose of the research support programme for master's and doctoral students in the Faculty of Education is to enhance and promote quality research at postgraduate level. It offers opportunities for the student to interact with academics from the Faculty and other students with the view to developing a community of scholars. In creating such a forum, the student will be able to interact and share research experiences, engage in discussion of topics relevant to research and education in general, which will encourage critical thinking and develop and promote academic writing.
- c. The research support programme focuses on the following aspects:
 - Grounding in advanced topics in educational theory and educational issues.
 - Improved understanding of research methodological aspects.
 - Epistemological and ontological aspects in educational research.
 - Qualitative and quantitative research approaches.

- Data analysis and presentation of data.
 - Academic reading and writing skills.
- d. Departments and supervisors responsible for the supervision of postgraduate students must ensure adequate supervisor guidance and support to assist students. The guidance and support could be linked to the research support programme offered, but should not be limited to the support programme.
 - e. Student progress should be carefully monitored by the supervisor to ensure that each student is able to defend the research proposal during the first year of registration and be able to complete the studies within the timeframe suggested for postgraduate studies.
 - f. An at risk student should be identified by the supervisor and discussed with the Head of Department.

2.7 PROCEDURES FOR APPROVAL OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL

2.7.1 General

- a. The objective of establishing procedures for the approval of research proposals is to enhance the quality of postgraduate studies and all inputs and constructive criticisms should be aimed at improving the quality of the end product. This does not absolve the supervisor and the student from the responsibility of ensuring the production of a quality proposal. It is not the task of any appointed committee to write the proposal on behalf of a student.
- b. It is recommended that the research proposal and the ethical clearance application are drafted simultaneously to ensure that ethical issues are considered at the drafting stage of the research proposal (see Section 3).
- c. All students must successfully complete and defend their research proposals during the first year of registration. Students defending during the first semester of the second year of study should be the exception rather than the norm.

2.7.2 Master's degree (coursework and full dissertation)

- a. The student, with the help and guidance of the supervisor, must draft a research proposal of an acceptable standard.
- b. Once the supervisor and student are satisfied with the proposal, the student is requested to defend the proposal before an academic panel of assessors appointed by the Head of Department in collaboration with the supervisor and research co-ordinator (an internal departmental committee).

- c. The research proposal should be made available to the panel members **one week prior** to the defence meeting.
- d. All academic staff from the department will be invited to attend the **defence** of the proposal, but each department must ensure the appointment of a committee of academics to act as assessors.
- e. At the meeting, the student will be given the opportunity to present the proposal and time will be allocated for questions and discussions. The aim of the question and discussion session is to cross-examine the student, gain clarity and offer suggestions for improvements which will inform the quality of the proposal.
- f. The departmental defence panel should include **at least** the following staff members to ensure that the proposal is successfully defended:
 - Chair (Head of Department or appointed chair)
 - Co-ordinator of MEd studies
 - Research Ethics Committee Reviewer
 - One other academic from the department or from the field of specialisation who acted as critical reader for the proposal.
 - Supervisor (and co-supervisor)
- g. At the conclusion of the departmental defence, the panel will decide whether the proposal is:
 - Approved
 - Approved with minor corrections (candidate to make minor revisions to the satisfaction of the supervisor)
 - Provisionally approved (candidate to make major revisions to the satisfaction of the supervisor and two panel members)
 - Not approved (need to defend again or resubmit to the supervisor, chair of proposal defence and one other academic)
 - Referred to Postgraduate Committee for consideration.
- h. The outcome of the defence must be reported on the *Proposal Defence* Form (see Annexure D). This form may be adapted to the needs of the Department.
- i. The Department must inform the student in writing of the outcome of the research proposal defence except in cases where the decision was referred to the Postgraduate Committee. A copy of this letter should be sent to chair of the Research Ethics Committee and the supervisor of the student for record purposes.
- j. On approval of the proposal at the departmental meeting, the student is required to submit an application for ethical clearance (see Annexure C). However, fieldwork may not commence before ethical clearance is granted (See Section 3).

- k. The supervisor will register the approved title by completing the *Registration of Title* form (see Annexure E) and submitting it to Head of Department (also see Section 2.8 regarding the process for approval of titles). Please note that the recommendation for the appointment of examiners need not be submitted at this stage. Annexure E should only be submitted after submission of an application for ethical clearance.

2.7.3 Doctoral degree

- a. The student, with the help and guidance of the supervisor, must draft a research proposal of an acceptable standard.
- b. Once the supervisor and student are satisfied with the proposal, two critical readers are appointed to evaluate and report on the proposal. The critical readers will scrutinise the proposal and make recommendations for the improvement of the proposal. The critical readers should be from the field of specialisation and may include external experts.
- c. The student must defend the research proposal before an academic panel of assessors appointed by the Head of Department in collaboration with the supervisor and research co-ordinator.
- d. The research proposal must be made available to panel members not later than **one week prior** to the departmental defence date.
- e. Academic staff and doctoral students will be invited to attend the defence of the proposal.
- f. At the meeting, the student will be given the opportunity to present his/her proposal and time will be allocated for questions and discussions.
- g. The academic panel for the proposal defence should consist of **at least** the following staff members to ensure that the proposal is successfully defended:
 - Chair (Head of Department or designate).
 - Critical readers appointed by the HOD on nomination of the supervisor. If the external critical readers are unable to attend the proposal defence, their reports must be tabled and discussed at the defence.
 - Research Ethics Committee Reviewer
 - Experienced academic (with PhD) from another department in the Faculty as observer
 - Academics from within the department
 - Supervisor (and co-supervisor).
- h. At the conclusion of the departmental defence, the panel will decide whether the proposal is:
 - Approved

- Approved with minor corrections (candidate to make minor revisions to the satisfaction of the supervisor)
 - Provisionally approved (candidate to make major revisions to the satisfaction of the supervisor and two panel members)
 - Not approved (need to defend again or resubmit to the supervisor, chair of proposal defence and one other academic)
 - Referred to Postgraduate Committee for consideration.
- i. The outcome of the defence must be reported on the *Proposal Defence Form* (see Annexure D). This form may be adapted to the needs of the Department.
 - j. The Department must inform the student in writing of the outcome of the research proposal defence. A copy of this letter should be sent to Chairperson of the Research Ethics Committee and the supervisor for record purposes.
 - k. On approval of the proposal at the departmental meeting, the student is required to submit an application for ethical clearance and receive approval before commencing with fieldwork.
 - l. The supervisor will register the approved title by completing the *Registration of Title* form (see Annexure E) and submitting it to the Head of Department (also see Section 2.8 regarding the process for approval of titles). Please note that the recommendation for the appointment of examiners need not be submitted at this stage. Annexure E should only be submitted after an application for ethical clearance has been submitted.

2.8 PROCEDURES FOR THE REGISTRATION OF A TITLE FOR A DISSERTATION/ THESIS

- a. On approval of the research proposal of the student and after an application for ethical clearance has been submitted, the supervisor must complete the *Registration of Title* form (Annexure E) and submit it to the Head of Department for approval.
- b. The Head of Department must ensure that the title and nominated external examiners meet the criteria set for the title as well as those set for external examiners before signing the *Registration of Title* form.
- c. In the case of a master's degree, three external examiners must be nominated on the *Registration of Title* form (Annexure E) and in the case of a doctoral study, four external examiners of which at least one must be a recognised international expert in the field of specialisation from outside South Africa (See Section 5.1 for the number of examiners who will be appointed).
- d. The Head of Department submits the *Registration of Title* form (Annexure E) to the Postgraduate Committee for approval of the title.

- e. Student Administration submits the approved titles to the Faculty Board for ratification.
- f. Administration will inform the student and supervisor in writing of the approved title.
- g. The student and supervisor must ensure that the exact wording of the approved title appears on the dissertation/thesis.
- h. Should the need arise to change an approved title, the same procedure as set out in Section 2.8 a-d must be followed and the Research Ethics Committee must be notified for amendments to the ethical clearance certificate.
- i. Please note that the application for the approval of external examiners by the Postgraduate Committee must be submitted by the Head of Department six months prior to the student submitting the dissertation for examination.

3. PROCEDURES FOR THE APPLICATION OF ETHICAL CLEARANCE AND THE PREVENTION OF PLAGIARISM

3.1 THE PURPOSE OF ETHICS REVIEW

This Section must be read in conjunction with the UP Code of Ethics for Research and the UP policy and procedures for responsible research (S4083/00 amended).

- a. The purpose of ethics review at the University of Pretoria is to ensure that research at the University takes place within an academic value system that emphasises ethical principles such as justice and credibility. To determine whether research takes place within this value system, the University provides for a system of disclosure, pre-approval, recordkeeping, accountability and evaluation.
- b. The process of ethics review is intended to fulfil the University's social responsibility to the participants in the communities that it serves by assessing the ethical compliance of proposed research. An ethics review contributes to elevating the quality of research in the Faculty of Education, where research is conceived not simply as a set of techniques, but as a well-considered, ethically grounded process that builds values such as trust, respect, empathy and dignity among both the researcher and the researched. In such a process, participants are treated as authentic "respondents" in the research endeavour and not simply as "objects" to be studied.
- c. The broader goals of the ethics review of research in the Faculty of Education are:
 - to develop a high standard of ethics and ethical practice in the conceptualisation and conduct of educational research among students and researchers;
 - to cultivate an ethical consciousness among scholars especially in research involving human respondents; and

- to promote, among researchers, a respect for the human rights and dignity of human respondents in the research process.
- d. The ethics review process is guided by the following principles common to research involving human respondents:
- the principle of *voluntary participation* in research, implying that the participants may withdraw from the research at any time;
 - the principle of *informed consent*, meaning that research participants must at all times be fully informed about the research process and purposes, and must give consent to their participation in the research;
 - the principle of *safety in participation*; put differently, that the human respondents must not be placed at risk or harm of any kind, for example, research with young children;
 - the principle of *privacy*, meaning that the *confidentiality* and *anonymity* of human respondents must be protected at all times; and
 - the principle of *trust*, which implies that human respondents will not be respondent to any acts of deception or betrayal in the research process or its published outcomes.

3.2 PROCEDURES FOR COMPLETING AND SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL CLEARANCE

- a. The student should consider the application for ethical clearance simultaneously with the drafting of the research proposal to ensure that ethical issues are considered at the drafting stage of the proposal. Students should submit their application for ethical clearance after successful defence of the research proposal. Application for ethical clearance is submitted by the student, via the supervisor and Head of Department to the Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee (see Annexure C).
- b. The student has the responsibility to obtain ethical clearance before commencing with fieldwork and the supervisor must ensure that ethical clearance has been obtained before supervising the student's fieldwork. The Head of Department's responsibility is to ensure that all research in the Department undergoes ethical clearance.
- c. Once the supervisor is satisfied with the application for ethical clearance, it must be signed by the supervisor and Head of Department before submission to the Research Ethics Committee.

- d. Three hard copies of the completed application for ethical clearance, with supporting documentation, must be submitted to the Research Ethics Committee for approval.
- e. The Research Ethics Committee communicates the outcome of the application to the student and supervisor and if the outcome is successful, the student may proceed with fieldwork.
- f. At the conclusion of fieldwork, and before submission of the dissertation or thesis, an ethical clearance certificate is issued provided that:
 - the student and supervisor declare that the research was conducted according to the conditions of approval by the Research Ethics Committee and that no significant changes occurred which necessitate a new review;
 - the raw data in the research project has been submitted to the supervisor or Head of Department for safekeeping; and
 - the title, registered with the Postgraduate Committee of the Faculty of Education, is submitted.
- g. The Chairperson of the Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee is also a member of the UP Sub-Senate Committee for Research Ethics and Integrity. The Chairperson is bi-annually required to compile a report on the research projects which received ethical clearance as well as those that were rejected or for which amendments were requested.

3.3 PREVENTING PLAGIARISM

3.3.1 General

In terms of the *UP policy and procedures for responsible research* (S4083/00 amended) research plagiarism is included in the definition of research misconduct at the University. Please consult the following information on the UP Anti-Plagiarism website:

<http://upetd.up.ac.za/authors/create/plagiarism.htm>

The following information is also available:

Guidelines for Staff: <http://upetd.up.ac.za/authors/create/plagiarism/staff.htm>

Guidelines for Students: <http://upetd.up.ac.za/authors/create/plagiarism/students.htm>

4. PROCEDURES FOR FINALISATION OF DISSERTATIONS AND THESES

4.1 MONITORING AND ENSURING PROGRESS OF STUDENTS

- a. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to ensure that the following approvals have been secured as stipulated in Sections 2.7, 2.8 and 3:
 - The research proposal has been approved.
 - The application for ethical clearance has been submitted and approved.
 - The title and external examiners have been approved.
- b. The supervisor should ensure that regular contact with the student is maintained throughout the year so that progress is monitored. A student who does not make satisfactory progress, should be reminded of the fact that continued participation in the programme is dependent on the progress demonstrated during the year.
- c. All supervisors and students are required to submit a progress report to the Head of Department before the end of August of each academic year. The supervisor verifies the contents of the report and recommends whether or not the student be allowed to continue with the studies based on progress made during the year (see Annexure F).
- d. Each Head of Department is required to submit an annual integrated progress report of all postgraduate students registered in the department to the Postgraduate Committee. The Postgraduate Committee will then prepare a yearly report for the Faculty Board detailing/outlining the progress of postgraduate students.
- e. In deciding on the continuation of a student's studies, the annual progress report will be taken into account to verify or negate student progress.
- f. Progress report forms, with the recommendation of the Head of Department, will be submitted to the Postgraduate Committee. The Postgraduate Committee has the authority to recommend that because of insufficient progress, a student's postgraduate studies are terminated.
- g. Students may appeal the decision to the Dean of the Faculty. The Dean's decision is final.

4.2 SUBMISSION OF A MINI-DISSERTATION, A DISSERTATION, OR A THESIS

- a. The supervisor has the responsibility to ensure that a mini-dissertation, a dissertation or a thesis satisfies the minimum standards set for a dissertation/thesis and are of the required technical quality to be submitted for examination.

- b. A student is not permitted to submit a dissertation or thesis for examination before the supervisor has given final approval. In cases where a student disputes the decision of the supervisor, the student may appeal to the Postgraduate Committee to review the decision. However, the decision of the Postgraduate Committee is final.
- c. The student must inform Student Administration in writing (three months in advance) of the intention to submit the dissertation or thesis. Student Administration will verify that the external examiners are still available and will provide the student with the relevant forms needed to submit the dissertation/ thesis (see Annexure G).
- d. Before the student submits the dissertation/thesis, the supervisor is required to check the documentation and sign the required checklist as well as the declaration that must accompany the submission.
- e. Before submission of the work, the student must ensure that the work has been language edited by a competent language editor and a letter from the language editor certifying that the work has been edited, must be submitted with the final copies of the dissertation/ thesis.
- f. For examination purposes, a student must, in consultation with the supervisor, submit a sufficient number of bound copies of the dissertation/thesis, printed on good quality paper and of good letter quality, to the Head: Student Administration, before the closing date for the various graduation ceremonies as announced annually.
- g. A master's or doctoral degree student has to sign the following declaration for inclusion in the dissertation: *I declare that the dissertation/thesis, which I hereby submit for the degree at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other higher education institution.*
- h. If a dissertation/thesis is accepted, but the student is required to make certain amendments in accordance with the examiners' decisions, the amendments should be made to all copies to the satisfaction of the supervisor. The supervisor then submits a declaration to this effect to the Head: Student Administration by 15 February for the Autumn ceremony and 15 July for the Spring ceremony at which the degree is to be conferred.
- i. In addition to the copies mentioned in Section 4.2 f above, the student must submit a bound paper copy as well as two electronic copies of the approved dissertation/thesis to the Head: Student Administration in the format specified by the Faculty and in accordance with the minimum standards set by the Department of Library Services by 15

February for the Autumn ceremony and 15 July for the Spring ceremony, failing which the degree will not be conferred.

4.3 TECHNICAL EDITING OF THE DISSERTATION AND THESIS

The technical editing of a dissertation/thesis should comply with the requirements set out in *General Regulations G58 and Annexure G*.

4.4 DRAFT ARTICLE FOR PUBLICATION

- a. The Faculty places emphasis on the importance and need for the wider dissemination of research results to the research audience. This can best be achieved by publishing research findings in accredited journals. It is therefore important that postgraduate students realise that the publication of a research article based on their studies is essential.
- b. A student, before or on submission of a dissertation must submit at least one draft article for publication in an accredited academic journal and in the case of a thesis, must submit proof of receipt of an article by an accredited journal, to the Head: Student Administration. Conferment of the degree is subject to compliance with the stipulations of this regulation.
- c. The draft or accepted article, as the case may be, should be based on the research that the student has conducted for the dissertation/thesis and be approved by the supervisor.
- d. Generally, the student is the principal author of the article and the supervisor the co-author. Circumstances may require that authorship is structured differently. However, authorship needs to be resolved prior to submission of the article to the journal.
- e. The supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the draft article is taken through the processes of revision and resubmission, as may be necessary.
- f. The procedures for the submission of the draft article:
 - A master's student: submits an article within six (6) weeks after submission of the examination copies but not later than 15 February for the Autumn ceremony and 15 July for the Spring ceremony;
 - A doctoral student: submits proof that an article has been submitted to an accredited journal within three (3) months after submission of the examination copies but not later than 15 February for the Autumn ceremony and 15 July for the Spring ceremony;
 - The student submits proof of submission from a recognised academic journal to which the article was submitted.

4.5 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHT

- a. All rights with regard to intellectual property produced by a student during postgraduate studies or as a result of any research project conducted at the University or through the use of the equipment of the University are vested in the University, in terms of the contract entered into by the student at registration. This stipulation applies *inter alia* where the student works under study guidance or as a member of a project team at the University.
- b. The University and a student may negotiate an agreement regarding the publication of an essay, a dissertation, thesis and/or draft article for publication. Should the copyright of the essay, dissertation, thesis and/or draft article for publication be the only exploitable intellectual property that arises from such essay, dissertation, thesis and/or draft article for publication, the University would transfer the copyright to the student, subject to certain conditions.
- c. The University has the right to reproduce and/or publish, in any manner it may deem fit, the essay, dissertation, thesis and/or draft article for publication and to distribute such reproduction.
- d. On publication of the essay, dissertation, thesis or the draft article, or an adaptation thereof, it should be stated that it emanates from a bachelor's/master's/doctoral study at the University. The name of the supervisor/promoter and the department in which the study was completed, should also be acknowledged. Reprints should state the title and date of the original publication.

5. EXAMINATION OF THE DISSERTATION/THESIS

5.1 APPOINTMENT OF EXAMINERS

- a. The supervisor in consultation with the Head of Department compiles a list of names of potential examiners both inside and outside of South Africa (see Annexure E) from which the Postgraduate Committee appoints examiners in the following manner:
 - **For dissertation:** At least one internal examiner (supervisor) and at least one external examiner from another university other than the University of Pretoria.
 - **For thesis:** At least one internal examiner (supervisor) and at least three external examiners from universities other than the University of Pretoria, of whom at least one must be an international university.

- b. An internal examiner should not be associated in any way with the student other than as supervisor of the research.
- c. An external examiner should not be associated in any way with the student or in any way be involved in the research that the student has done previously.
- d. External examiners must be from different institutions.
- e. As far as possible external examiners should hold an academic position at another University.
- f. The external examiner should preferably not be an ex-Faculty member or a former student of the supervisor, or in cases where an ex-Faculty member is appointed, he/she should not have been a staff member of the Faculty of Education for the previous two years.
- g. As soon as a potential external examiner has accepted his/her appointment as examiner, he/she is supplied with a formal letter of appointment, an abstract of the research as well as documentation on the policy of the University concerning examinations. Examiners must sign an acceptance form which is to be returned to the Head: Student Administration.
- h. The identity of the examiners, other than the internal examiners, may not be revealed to the candidate until the examination process has been completed and then only with the consent of the examiner and the Postgraduate Committee.
- i. The information contained in the report submitted by an examiner on a dissertation or thesis may be disclosed to the student with the aim of effecting the recommended changes.

5.2 CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

- a. Master's degree: A dissertation must provide evidence of a candidate's ability to conduct research independently and contribute to the development of knowledge at an advanced level.
- b. Doctoral degree: A thesis must demonstrate high-level research capability and make a significant and original contribution at the cutting edge of education applicable to the field of specialisation.
- c. A dissertation/thesis should comply with the requirements stipulated by the Faculty of Education and is also evaluated in terms of the aspects set out in Annexure I.

- d. The Faculty of Education assessment criteria and assessment standards for dissertations and theses are revised periodically.

5.3 THE EXAMINER REPORTS

- a. Every examiner independently and individually submits a report to the Head: Student Administration (Annexure I).
- b. In the case where a co-supervisor is appointed, the average mark of the supervisor and the co-supervisor is calculated and submitted as the internal assessment mark. The internal assessment mark is added to the marks of the external examiners to calculate the final mark.
- c. All examiner reports are treated confidentially, but information sections contained in a report submitted by an examiner may be disclosed to the student with the aim of effecting the recommended changes.
- d. Every report has to contain one of the following recommendations (as per *UP General Regulations G60, 4B*), namely:
- that the degree be conferred without any changes to the dissertation/thesis;
 - that the degree be conferred after minor changes have been made to the dissertation/thesis by the candidate, to the satisfaction of the Head of Department;
 - that the degree be conferred after the candidate has made major changes to the dissertation/thesis to the satisfaction of the examination panel;
 - that the dissertation/thesis is not of the required standard and that the candidate be invited to resubmit it for re-examination after reviewing the dissertation/ thesis;
 - that the dissertation/thesis be rejected and that the candidate does not pass;
 - that the candidate should be called for oral questioning by the examination panel prior to finalisation of the result;
 - in the case of a dissertation, the mark that the candidate has achieved, at least 50% being regarded as a pass mark and 75% as a pass with distinction.
- e. The examiner reports are made available to the Dean and the Head of Department by the Head: Student Administration.
- f. In the case of a dissertation, the supervisor and the Head of Department review the examiner reports and submit a consolidated report with recommendations to the Postgraduate Committee.

- g. In cases where examiners differ on the outcome of the evaluation, the concerns raised by the examiner must be addressed in the consolidated report and it must be indicated how these concerns will be addressed. A minority recommendation by an examiner need not be accepted as the outcome of the examination, but the consolidated report must indicate that due consideration was given to the concerns raised. No examiner report may be ignored.
- h. In the event of a dispute regarding the outcome of an examination, the Dean, in consultation with the Postgraduate Committee and the Head of Department, will appoint an additional external examiner of standing on the topic of the research. The appointed examiner will submit a report to the Postgraduate Committee who will then submit a recommendation to the Dean for approval. Thereafter, the Dean, in consultation with the Postgraduate Committee, will reach a final decision on the outcome of the examination.
- i. In the case of a thesis, the examiner recommendations are preliminary in nature and subject to the successful completion of an oral examination by the candidate. The Head of Department and the supervisor arrange an oral examination chaired by the Dean or a senior academic designated by the Dean during which the candidate is required to defend the thesis. The appointed examiners constitute the examination commission for the oral examination.
- j. The oral defence panel will consist of the following people:
- The Dean or a senior academic representative appointed by the Dean to serve as chair.
 - All the external examiners (if available). External examiners may participate by means of a telephone conference.
 - The supervisor (and co-supervisor)
 - The Head of Department
 - Departmental Representative
 - The panel will have the following documentation at their disposal:
 - All the external examiner reports
 - The supervisor reports
- k. The duration of the oral defence is generally 90 – 120 minutes.
- l. After the examination of the student by the panel, the examination commission constitutes a closed meeting to consider the success of the candidate's presentation, to

review all the examiner reports and then submit a recommendation to the Postgraduate Committee.

5.4 PURPOSE AND RATIONALE FOR DEFENCE

The purpose of the doctoral degree defence is to provide a final opportunity for assessment of the doctoral study. This may include:

- a presentation of findings;
- responses to written reports by external examiners on the thesis; and
- an extension of the intellectual discussion related to the thesis.

The doctoral degree defence provides a forum for interaction between the doctoral student and the examination panel.

6. THE ROLE AND FUNCTION OF THE SUPERVISOR AND STUDENT

6.1 THE ROLE AND FUNCTION OF SUPERVISOR

6.1.1 Supervising students' academic work

Academic institutions are responsible for teaching students and preparing them to enter society and to practise their disciplines according to high ethical standards. However, this applies not only to the formal presentation of courses. The University and its staff have an obligation towards the broad academic community, the students and the public to ensure that all students involved in academic and research activities do so with responsibility and with respect for the highest professional standards.

Study leaders, research leaders and administrative heads share the responsibility for providing an open and equal research environment which protects the interests of students, assistants and other vulnerable persons undergoing training. They must ensure that students are given fair acknowledgement for original work, that students are not taken advantage of for the study leader's own research purposes, that demands made on students are reasonable and that they are treated as peers with the same professional courtesy.

Opportunities should be created for students who feel that their supervision or training is inadequate, to bring the matter to the attention of the study leader, research leader or, where

necessary, the administrative head concerned. Study and research leaders should regularly meet with students, colleagues and other collaborators to evaluate the work and progress being made. Study and research leaders should serve as role models and should maintain the highest standards in the performance of research. They should encourage students to critical and independent thought and to share ideas and information with other members of the academic community. They should ensure that the experience gained by the students will contribute to preparing them for their future as independent researchers.

6.1.2 Training of postgraduate students in research ethics and integrity

Ethical issues in the carrying out of research should form an integral part of the training of all senior undergraduate and postgraduate students. Study and research leaders are responsible for providing a training environment in which issues relating to ethical values are discussed freely. A study leader should require students to have at least a basic understanding of research ethics and should encourage them to be able to identify and deal with the ethical issues relating to their research, results and publications.

Every lecturer is responsible for the establishment and execution of the principles of research ethics among students and research staff under his/her supervision. An introduction to the concepts and principles of research ethics should form part of the orientation of all postgraduate students. Study and project leaders should also serve as role models for students for the manner in which they conduct their research.

6.2 RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS

- a. Postgraduate studies remain the primary responsibility of the student. This includes initiating contact with the supervisor, knowing and understanding University and Faculty administrative requirements, and maintaining interest and commitment.
- b. A postgraduate student registered in the Faculty of Education is expected to be computer literate. One of the primary means of communication between the supervisor and student is electronic, thus creating the need for Internet access.
- c. A student must ensure that sufficient progress is made annually to be allowed to continue with postgraduate studies. Every student must submit a progress report (Annexure F) to the supervisor before the end of August of each academic year that will serve as a basis in deciding whether the student has demonstrated progress during the year under review.

- d. A postgraduate student, registering for the first time for the MEd or PhD, is expected to attend the Orientation day at the start of the academic year. During this event, students will be introduced to the Postgraduate Research Centre, the Education Library, Faculty research foci, funding opportunities, and supervisors.
- e. Specific research support sessions will be held during the course of the year. It is compulsory to attend these sessions, as the main objective is to assist the student in scholarly development (see Section 2.6).
- f. Each student must defend the research proposal successfully before being allowed to continue with studies. This exercise is aimed at sharpening research skills and improving the quality of research. A student who is unsuccessful in defending the proposal, will not be allowed to continue with postgraduate studies.
- g. Every student must apply for ethical clearance once the research proposal has been successfully defended.
- h. Conducting the fieldwork for the research is the main responsibility of the student, but all data gathering instruments must be approved by the supervisor and the departmental defence committee prior to commencement of fieldwork.
- i. The Head of Department must ensure the safe keeping and storage of all data collected during the research process and supervisors must sign an agreement to this effect (see Annexure J).
- j. Each student, on completion of the studies, is required to write and submit an article for publication in a journal. The authorship of the article will be negotiated before submission of the article and should preferably include the names of the student, supervisor and co-supervisor.

7. APPROVAL OF POLICY

This policy, *Postgraduate Research Policy: guidelines and procedures for master's and doctoral students and supervisors*, was approved by the Faculty Board of the Faculty of Education on of 2010.

8. DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION

The policy will become effective from 1 January 2010.

9. REVISION OF POLICY

The policy may be revised annually and amendments submitted for approval by the Faculty Board at its first meeting of the year.

ANNEXURES



ANNEXURE A

REGISTRATION OF SUPERVISOR

PURPOSE (Tick appropriate block)	Registration of supervisor/co-supervisor	
	Change of supervisor/co-supervisor Was:	

STUDENT DETAILS:				
NAME AND INITIALS:				
STUDENT NUMBER:				
DEGREE ENROLLED FOR MEd/PhD IN:				
TOPIC/THEME:				
.....				
.....				
YEAR				Other (Specify)

DEPARTMENT:
SUPERVISOR:
Details of supervisor if not a fulltime UP staff member:
Highest qualification:
Name of institution where employed(if any):
Postal address:
Telephone number:
E-mail address:
Motivation (if not using a fulltime UP staff member):
.....
.....
CO-SUPERVISOR:
DEPARTMENT:
Details of co-supervisor if not a fulltime UP staff member:
Highest qualification:
Name of institution where employed(if any):
Postal address:
Telephone number:
E-mail address:
Motivation (if not using a fulltime UP staff member):
.....
.....

Head of Department:

Date:

Dean/Postgraduate Committee:

Date:

Recommendation:

.....



ANNEXURE B

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ACADEMIC SUPERVISION REGISTERED POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS²

The role and responsibilities of both a candidate and a supervisor

CANDIDATE INFORMATION

STUDENT NUMBER:

NAME OF CANDIDATE:

CELLPHONE NUMBER:

EMAIL ADDRESS:

PROGRAMME FOR WHICH CANDIDATE IS REGISTERED:
.....

SUPERVISOR INFORMATION

NAME OF SUPERVISOR:

EMAIL ADDRESS:

DEPARTMENT:

CO-SUPERVISOR INFORMATION (if applicable)

NAME OF CO-SUPERVISOR:

EMAIL ADDRESS:

UNIVERSITY:

DEPARTMENT:

DATE OF REGISTRATION OF THE RESEARCH COMPONENT OF THE PROGRAMME:

.....

This document must be signed by both the candidate and the supervisor and be submitted to the office of the Head: Student Administration within two months after the date of registration for the research component of the programme.

² Acknowledgement: Documents from the faculties of Natural and Agricultural Sciences and Economic and Management Sciences, as well as a document from the University of Cape Town were used in compiling this document.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Candidate supplied with the Code of Research Ethics of the University of Pretoria and agrees to abide by this code. The Code of Research Ethics is available at www.up.ac.za/intranet/registrar/index.html#R. Go to *Research Ethics* and then to *Code of ethics for research*. Please attach the letter of the Research Ethics Committee to this document if applicable.

Yes		No		Signature	
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Candidate supplied with the Plagiarism Policy of the University of Pretoria and agrees to abide by this policy. The Plagiarism Policy Agreement document is attached to this document and must be signed and submitted with this document to the office of the Head: Student Administration within two months after registering for the research component of the programme. Also attached to this document is the Declaration of Originality document which must be submitted with every essay, report, project, assignment, dissertation and/or thesis. The Plagiarism Policy is available at www.up.ac.za/intranet/registrar/index.html#R. Go to Plagiarism

Yes		No		Signature	
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Candidate supplied with the contact details of the Library's relevant information specialist.

Yes		No		Information Specialist:
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Candidate referred to General Regulations G.16 to G.61 of the University of Pretoria pertaining to postgraduate matters and agrees to abide by these regulations.

Yes		No		Signature	
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Specific regulations that must be noted:

G.61.

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Any other administrative matters:

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EXPECTATIONS

Supervisor's expectations:

1. Regular scheduled meetings (at least once every three months) punctually attended by the candidate. Meetings to be scheduled in advance by the candidate. More frequent meetings may be arranged.
2. Candidate to make contact via email (at least once a month).
3. Candidate to provide an indication of the time to be spent on each phase of the research project (time chart). The project should be completed as soon as possible within the minimum time period as allowed by the University. The University's General Regulations regarding the renewal of registration per degree should be consulted in this regard. The time chart could be drawn up with reference to the following:
 - literature review (critical evaluation of existing knowledge)
 - drafting of the research proposal (what the research is intended to accomplish, including a protocol on how the research will be undertaken, ie research design and methods)

The suggested outline for a research proposal is as follows:

- Title/Area
 - Abstract
 - Introduction/Background
 - Research problem
 - Research objective(s)
 - Conceptual framework
 - Previous work – comprehensive and critical appraisal of literature
 - Proposal of new model/technique/idea/approach
 - Suitability of the approach for the level
 - Hypothesis and anticipated results
 - Milestones and timelines for completion
 - Conclusion
 - References
- the actual research, and
 - recording research findings.
4. Quarterly written reports from the candidate on his/her progress in terms of the indicated time frame/time chart.
 5. Candidate to ensure that all submitted work is written in an acceptable standard of English or Afrikaans. It is not the supervisor's duty to do "rough editing" and (s)he will merely concentrate on contents and structure.
 6. Any revisions suggested by the supervisor to be resubmitted by the candidate within one calendar month (along with the copy of the previous manuscript where comments were made by the supervisor).
 7. Any class, workshop or course that the candidate **must attend as a prerequisite:**

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8. Candidate has to demonstrate his/her research competence in order to be awarded a degree.
9. Other expectations:

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10. Comments by candidate on the abovementioned:

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POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH POLICY

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ISSUES

(Refer to the General Regulations and Information of the University, Regulation G.57.6)

Authorship: Authorship should be discussed and agreed upon by all parties concerned. Any additional remarks regarding authorship must be noted by the supervisor*:

.....

The intellectual property rights of the outcome of the research will be determined by the agreement that the candidate has with the University of Pretoria and which is in line with the policy of the University of Pretoria.

.....

*in the case that the candidate is employed by an institution other than the University of Pretoria an agreement as to which address is used on the publication needs to be signed. If such an agreement does not exist, the candidate must publish under the name of the University of Pretoria in line with the General Regulations of the University of Pretoria.

DEREGISTRATION

Should a candidate fail to maintain satisfactory academic progress at any phase of his/her period of study, the supervisor may, in consultation with the candidate, send the candidate a warning letter indicating the seriousness of the matter. This letter should also include written instructions on the conditions that need to be met in order to achieve/accomplish satisfactory progress/performance. The candidate will then be placed on probation and be monitored for a period of three months. Should the candidate fail to rectify his/her progress and/or improve his/her performance, he or she will have his/her registration terminated by the Dean on the recommendation of the Postgraduate Committee (General Regulation G.4).

A candidate can appeal the decision to terminate his/her registration. An Appeals Committee would be formed consisting of the Vice-Principal responsible for Research and Postgraduate Studies and two members of the Senate Committee for Research. The two members of the Senate Committee for Research are appointed by the Vice-Principal. The candidate must state his/her case in writing and a written response should be solicited from the supervisor. The Appeals Committee must base its judgement on these written submissions. The decision of the Appeals Committee is final.

Candidate's comments:

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.....

SIGNATURE OF THE CANDIDATE

Name	Signed	Date

SIGNATURE OF THE SUPERVISOR

Name	Signed	Date

OBSERVATIONS BY THE HOD

I have reviewed this completed Memorandum of Understanding and I am satisfied that it reflects the shared understanding of the supervisor and the candidate and that the Department is able to meet the obligations to the candidate set out in this Memorandum of Understanding:

Name	Signed	Date

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
PLAGIARISM POLICY AGREEMENT

The University of Pretoria places great emphasis upon integrity and ethical conduct in the preparation of all written work submitted for academic evaluation.

While academic staff teaches you about referencing techniques and how to avoid plagiarism, you too have a responsibility in this regard. If you are at any stage uncertain as to what is required, you should speak to your lecturer before any written work is submitted.

You are guilty of plagiarism if you copy something from another author's work (eg a book, an article or a website) without acknowledging the source and pass it off as your own. In effect you are stealing something that belongs to someone else. This is not only the case when you copy work word-for-word (verbatim), but also when you submit someone else's work in a slightly altered form (paraphrase) or use a line of argument without acknowledging it. You are not allowed to use work previously produced by another student. You are also not allowed to let anybody copy your work with the intention of passing it off as his/her work.

Students who commit plagiarism will not be given any credit for plagiarised work. The matter may also be referred to the Student Disciplinary Committee for a ruling. Plagiarism is regarded as a serious contravention of the University's rules and can lead to expulsion from the University.

The declaration which follows must accompany all written work submitted while you are a student of the University of Pretoria. No written work will be accepted unless the declaration has been completed and attached.

Full names of candidate:

Student number:

Date:

Declaration

1. I understand what plagiarism is and am aware of the University's policy in this regard.

SIGNATURE OF CANDIDATE:

SIGNATURE OF SUPERVISOR:

This document must be signed and submitted to the Head: Student Administration within two months of registering for the research component of the programme.

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

**This document must be signed and submitted with every
essay, report, project, assignment, dissertation and/or thesis**

Full names of student:

Student number:

Declaration

1. I understand what plagiarism is and am aware of the University's policy in this regard.
2. I declare that this (eg essay, report, project, assignment, dissertation, thesis, etc) is my own original work. Where other people's work has been used (either from a printed source, Internet or any other source), this has been properly acknowledged and referenced in accordance with departmental requirements.
3. I have not used work previously produced by another student or any other person to hand in as my own.
4. I have not allowed, and will not allow, anyone to copy my work with the intention of passing it off as his or her own work.

SIGNATURE STUDENT:

SIGNATURE SUPERVISOR:



ANNEXURE C

Reference:	
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RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

This application form must be read together with the Code of Ethics for Research (Rt 429/99); Committee for Research Ethics and Integrity Policy and Procedures for Responsible Research (S 4083/00 - amended) and the Postgraduate Policy of the Faculty of Education

APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL OF CONFIDENTIAL RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN RESPONDENTS

APPLICANT DETAILS						
Surname:				Name:		
Applicant e-mail:				Supervisor e-mail:		
Type of application	PhD	M.Ed	Honours	Class approval	Staff	Student/Personnel number:
Degree:						Contact number:
Supervisor:				Co-supervisor:		
Department:	ECE	EMP	EP	HE	SMTE	1st registered: YYYY/MM/DD
QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERTISE OF THE RESEARCHER						
Please provide information regarding your experience and qualifications in research						
Relevant prior experience:						
Previous academic training:						
Is professional registration required for any part of the research?	Yes			No		
Provide details of registration authority and registration number						
DETAILS OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT						
Title of project						
Research design (Mark with x)	Qualitative		Quantitative		Mixed methods	Other
Data collection (Mark appropriate boxes with an x)	Questionnaires Survey	Document Analysis	Structured interviews	Semi-structured interviews	Open ended interviews	
	Non-participatory Observation	Participatory Observation	Intervention/ Therapy	Experimental	Other	
RESEARCH CONTEXT AND PARTICIPANTS						
Level of sensitivity/ Intrusiveness (Mark with an x)	HIGH		MEDIUM		LOW	
	(Participation requires intrusive and sensitive information about participants' mental/psychological health and/or their relationship with a person/institution with power over them)		(Participation requires divulging of personal information but is not regarded as sensitive/intimate)		(Participation requires information about policies/ modules/ courses/ institutional processes with a view to analysing, assessing and evaluating them as human artefacts)	
Indicate to which category participants belong	1. Under 18 years (minors)		2. Over 18 years (adults)		3. Orphaned, separated or unaccompanied minors	

POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH POLICY

(Mark all applicable descriptions)	4. Extreme poverty or illiterate		5. HIV/AIDS		6. Mentally compromised or physical limitations		
	7. Limited proficiency in language used to conduct this research						
Primary research setting	1. Pre - school		2. School		3. Higher education		
	4. Private organisation		5. Individual		6. Family		
		7. Clinic/Mental Health/Hospital		8. Community		9. Other	

FUNDING OF RESEARCH PROJECT

Please provide details of how you have raised financial support for your project. Also clarify expectations of the funder in terms of the relationship, responsibilities and reporting requirements

CONTACT DETAILS OF CO-RESEARCHERS

Please provide a brief bio-statement of each person involved; also indicate their institutional affiliation and status

STATUS OF RESEARCH PROJECT

Do you require a blind review of your application? (Staff members only)								Yes	No
Proposal defended?	Yes	No	N/A	Fieldwork started?	Yes	No	Pilot study/ Fieldwork concluded³?	Yes	No

 Signature of applicant

 Date

 Signature of supervisor (students)

 Date

 Signature of applicant

 Date

 Signature of Departmental representative

 Date

³ <http://web.up.ac.za/default.asp?ipkCategoryID=8045&sub=1&parentid=43&subid=6258&ipklookid=6>



Reference:	
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PERSONAL DECLARATION OF RESPONSIBILITY

Title of research project:

1. I declare that I am cognisant of the goals of the Research Ethics Committee in the Faculty of Education to:
 - develop among students and researchers a high standard of ethics and ethical practice in the conceptualisation and conduct of educational research;
 - cultivate an ethical consciousness among scholars especially in research involving human respondents; and
 - promote among researchers a respect for the human rights and dignity of human respondents in the research process.

2. I subscribe to the principles of
 - voluntary participation* in research, implying that the participants might withdraw from the research at any time.
 - informed consent*, meaning that research participants must at all times be fully informed about the research process and purposes, and must give consent to their participation in the research.
 - safety in participation*; put differently, that the human respondents should not be placed at risk or harm of any kind e.g., research with young children.
 - privacy*, meaning that the *confidentiality* and *anonymity* of human respondents should be protected at all times.
 - trust*, which implies that human respondents will not be respondent to any acts of deception or betrayal in the research process or its published outcomes.

3. I understand what plagiarism entails and I am aware of the University's policy in this regard. I undertake not to make use of another person's previous work without acknowledgment or to submit it as my own. I also undertake not to allow anyone to copy my work with the intention of using it as their own work.

4. I understand that the data collected in the course of my research become the property of the University of Pretoria and I undertake to transfer all raw data and documents related to my research for safekeeping as required by the Faculty of Education.

Applicant	Signature	Date
Supervisor ⁴	Signature	Date

⁴ Delete if this is a staff application



Reference:	
------------	--

APPLICATION: APPROVAL OF RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN RESPONDENTS

Answer all questions honestly in full. The reviewers base their decisions on the information provided on this application form. Incomplete applications cannot be evaluated fairly. Please provide the Ethics committee with a typed application that addresses the following ethical considerations.

1 DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT OR ACTIVITY

Please provide a brief summary of the proposed research initiative. Include the main research question(s), rationale for this inquiry as well as its scientific importance. Mention the benefits which are likely to be derived from the project as well as its anticipated duration.

2 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Please provide a full description of the research design, methodology, and processes that will be used. Include details relating to the research sites and data collection protocols.

2.2 Should this study involve experimental methods, state whether any treatments will be withheld from some participants and justify this.

2.3 Should clinical data form part of the data source in this study, detail the relevant processes for obtaining permission and informed consent to use such data.

2.4 If this is intervention research, describe the nature of the intervention and provide details about the scientific merit of the intervention you intend to study.



Please note that you have a responsibility to ensure that you disclose fully the scientific status of the intervention to your participants when you invite them to participate in your research. Participants have the right to know to which degree the procedures and instruments you intend to use are accepted by the scientific community.

3 HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

3.1 Describe who will be participating in the study. Mention any other special criteria that may apply to your study.

Role	Vulnerability status	Institutional affiliation	Justification for participation



Please ensure that you attach to this application a draft letter of invitation to participate on a UP letterhead for each group of participants in your study. Make sure that the content of the letter reflect the content of issues outline in this application. The letter of invitation must be signed by the student and supervisor but should not be signed by the participants yet.

3.2 Describe your sampling procedure. Include how you will a) recruit b) select and c) ensure voluntary participation. Attach as addenda any draft versions of adverts/letters inviting participation in your project.

POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH POLICY

- 3.3 Please provide additional information on the criteria that will be used as the basis to include/exclude certain participants.
- 3.4 Outline what activities participants will be expected to participate in as part of this research project. Indicate the duration of each activity as well as where they will take place.
- 3.5 Should any of the participants be known to you in another context (apart from this research), provide details of this relationship and detail how you will handle the conflict of interest.
- 3.6 Should participants be deceived, please describe the nature of any deception and provide a rationale why it must be used in this inquiry. Please note: Deception includes but is not limited to the following: deliberate presentation of false information, suppression of material information, selection of information designed to mislead, selective disclosure of information.
- 3.7 Should you make use of any assistants such as interpreters, photographers, or scribes, please detail their involvement in the study. Include information regarding any orientation/training that such persons will receive prior to commencing their duties



Please note that it is your responsibility to ensure that all assistants and interpreters fully understand and adhere to all ethical requirements of the project. Please attach a personal declaration of responsibility for each assistant who works on the project.

- 3.8 Is there the likelihood of a particular sort of “heinous discovery”? (E.g. child abuse, discovery of illness or condition) If so, how will you deal with such a situation?

4 CONSIDERATION OF ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION AND TRUST

- 4.1 Describe how you will ensure voluntary participation.
- 4.2 Should any of the participants be captive, state what additional safeguards you will take to ensure voluntary participation.
- 4.3 Should any incentives be used please describe and justify these and outline what measures you will take to **still** ensure voluntary participation.
- 4.4 Will participants be asked to comment on drafts e.g., transcripts of interviews?
- 4.5 How will participants be informed that they are free to discontinue at any time? Will the nature of the project place any limitations on this freedom? (e.g. documentary film).

INFORMED CONSENT

- 4.6 Please describe how you will obtain informed consent/assent from your participants (or their care givers). Attached a draft consent form or oral consent script as an addendum.
 - Informed consent from adults
 - Informed consent from parents/guardians
 - Informed assent from minors [under the age of 18]
- 4.7 In some cultural traditions, individualised consent as implied above may not be appropriate or additional consent (e.g. group consent or consent from community leaders) may be required. If this is the case with your sample population, indicate the procedures you will follow to obtain consent.

POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH POLICY

- 4.8 Should some participants in the study be considered to be mentally compromised or otherwise not competent to consent to participation, detail what safeguards you will take to ensure voluntary participation.
- 4.9 Should the research not be conducted in the mother tongue of the participants or in a language in which they feel competent, detail the measures you will take to ensure informed consent and voluntary participation.

SAFETY IN PARTICIPATION

- 4.10 Detail the possible benefits and/or consequences that participants can expect as a result of participating in this study.
- 4.11 Detail the potential risks and harm to participants in this study.
- 4.12 Describe the safeguards you will take to minimise these risks, however minor.
- 4.13 If you indicated that you involve participants from vulnerable and/or vulnerable contexts, detail what extra safeguards you will take to protect the wellbeing of your participants.

PRIVACY, CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY

- 4.14 Detail how you will ensure confidentiality and/or anonymity in the sample selection phase of the study.
- 4.15 Should the privacy of participants not be protected in this research, have participants actively agreed to forego confidentiality requirements based on full disclosure of possible intended and unintended consequences and risks? Detail the conditions under which participants decided to forego their privacy rights
- 4.16 Detail practical steps you will take to ensure confidentiality and/or anonymity in the data collection phase of the study.
- 4.17 Detail practical steps you will take to ensure confidentiality and or anonymity in the dissemination phase of the study.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF RESULTS OR FINDINGS

- 4.18 Please mark the box which best describes the level of access you, as the researcher, will have to your participant(s) identity(ies):

	Fully anonymous	Researcher will not be able to identify who participated at all. Demographic information collected will be insufficient to identify individuals.
	Anonymous results, but can identify who participated	The participation of individuals will be tracked (e.g. to provide course credit/chance for a prize etc) but it would be impossible for collected data to be linked to individuals.
	Pseudonym	Data collected will be linked to an individual who will only be identified by a fictitious name/code. The researcher will not know the true identity of the participant.
	Confidential	Researcher will know the true identity of participant, but this identity will not be disclosed.
	Disclosed	Researcher will know and will reveal true identity of participants in results/published material.
	Participant choice	Participant will have the option of choosing which level of disclosure they wish for their true identity.
	Other (please describe)	

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

4.19 Bearing in mind the ethical guidelines of your academic and /or professional association, please comment on any other ethical concerns which may arise in this research (e.g. responsibility to subjects beyond the purposes of this study).

5 INSTITUTIONAL APPROVAL

5.1 Indicate whether you have received permission to conduct this research from the relevant provincial Department of Education.

	YES	NO	Comments
Province:			
Province:			
Province:			

5.2 If the research is conducted in a country other than South Africa, please detail the relevant legislation pertaining to the requirements for informed consent if these differ from South Africa.



Please note that you must prepare a draft letter in which you request permission to conduct research. It must be addressed to the principal or senior official head of each research site you intend to use. The letter must accompany this application and may only be sent after ethical approval has been granted.

6 DATA DISSEMINATION

Please describe how you intend to share the findings of your research with academia and the broader community (e.g. conferences, articles, seminars, dissertation, reports).

7 DATA ACCESS and STORAGE

7.1 Please describe the access participants will have to the study results and any debriefing information that will be provided to participants post-participation.

7.2 Please describe the audit trail of your data from collection to storage to its eventual archiving or disposal. Include specific details on who will have access, short and long-term storage (format and location), and final destination. For full details please consult the policy documents referred to on page 1.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We have drawn on the example obtained from the Office of Research at Concordia University, Montreal Canada while refining this form.

POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH POLICY

FOR THE APPLICANT:

	Yes	No
• Have you disclosed all relevant information which may reasonably have an impact on the decisions made the Ethics Committee?		
• Do you declare that you have not yet engaged with fieldwork in this study?		
• Are you aware that it is your responsibility to ensure that all documents relevant to this study, such as letters of permission and informed consent must be retained for safekeeping?		
• Are you informed about Faculty and UP and professional regulations of ethical behaviour?		
• Have you checked that all the appropriate role-players have signed in the appropriate places?		
• Do you undertake to inform research assistants, transcribers and translators (if applicable) of the ethical principles and institutional requirements guiding this research and ensure that they sign the personal declaration of responsibility prior to their involvement in the research?		
• Have you included a protocol letter of invitation to participate which will provide the conditions of participation and informed consent and handed to the school/organisation/institution and participant/s and signed by the applicant and the supervisor?		
• Have you included copies of the data collection protocols, such as questionnaires and/or interview schedules if and when applicable?		
• Have you ensured that the process for obtaining informed consent comply with the relevant legal and professional requirements?		
• Do you declare that all information provided in this application is true?		

APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE

DATE
FOR THE SUPERVISOR (where applicable):

	Yes	No
• Have you disclosed all relevant information which may reasonably have an impact on the decisions made by the Ethics Committee about this application?		
• Have you informed the student of the relevant Faculty and UP regulations for ethical clearance for research with human respondents?		
• Do you declare that the applicant has not yet engaged with the fieldwork in this study?		

SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE

DATE
If you have feedback about this form, please provide it here:



ANNEXURE D

RECORD OF MASTER'S AND DOCTORAL PROPOSAL DEFENCE

DATE OF DEFENCE:	MASTER'S/DOCTORAL:
STUDENT NAME:	STUDENT NUMBER:
SUPERVISOR NAME:	DEPARTMENT:
PROPOSED TITLE:	
MAJOR COMMENTS MADE ON PROPOSAL	
OUTCOME: (circle) 1=Approved 2=Approved with minor corrections (candidate to make minor revisions to the satisfaction of his/her supervisor) 3=Provisionally approved (candidate to make major revisions to the satisfaction of his/her supervisor and two panel members) 4=Not approved (need to defend again or resubmit to the supervisor, chair of proposal defence and one other academic) 5=Referred to Postgraduate Committee for consideration.	TITLE REGISTERED: Yes: Date registered: No: Date to be submitted
ETHICS APPLICATION Submitted (yes/no) Attached (yes/no) To be submitted (date):	RESEARCH SCHEDULE: Submitted (yes/no) Attached (yes/no) To be submitted (date):
SIGNED BY CHAIRPERSON OF PROPOSAL COMMITTEE	SIGNED BY INDEPENDENT OBSERVER AND COMMENTS
NOTE: Copies of this form must be submitted to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Chair of the Faculty Research Ethics Committee ○ The Programme Co-ordinator in the Department ○ The supervisor of the student 	



ANNEXURE E

**REGISTRATION OF TITLE OF DISSERTATION/mini-DISSERTATION/THESIS AND
APPROVAL OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS**

POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH POLICY

REGISTRATION OF TITLE/EXTERNAL EXAMINERS - UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

For Office use:	
Enrolled:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Date letters sent:	_____

ESS		
Dept		
%		

PURPOSE (tick appropriate block):	Registration of title	
	Change of title	
	Approval of external examiner(s)	

M-STUDENT		EXTERNAL EXAMINERS RECOMMENDED	
TITLE		1.	2.
Name & surname		Name	Name
Student no		Postal address	Postal address
Address		Tel no	Tel no
Tel no		Fax no	Fax no
Fax no		Email	Email
Email		Cellular	Cellular
Year of first registration		Highest qualification	Highest qualification
FIELD OF STUDY	Application for ethical clearance submitted? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>		
	Approved:		
SUPERVISOR	Head of Dept:		
Name	Date:		
Personnel no	Dean:		
	Date:		
CO-SUPERVISOR	Postgraduate Committee:		
Name	Date:		
Personnel no			

POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH POLICY

REGISTRATION OF TITLE/EXTERNAL EXAMINERS - UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

ESS	
Dept	
%	
For Office use:	
Enrolled:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Date letters sent: _____	

Registration of title	
Change of title	
Approval of external examiners	

FACULTY OF EDUCATION DEPARTMENT:	POSTGRADUATE COMMITTEE
	PURPOSE (tick appropriate block):

D-STUDENT		EXTERNAL EXAMINERS RECOMMENDED	
TITLE		1.	2.
Name & surname Student no Address Tel no Fax no Email Year of first registration	Name Postal address Tel no Fax no Email Cellular Highest qualification	Name Postal address Tel no Fax no Email Cellular Highest qualification	Name Postal address Tel no Fax no Email Cellular Highest qualification
FIELD OF STUDY Application for ethical clearance submitted? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	Approved: Head of Dept: Date:	3. Name Postal address Tel no Fax no Email Cellular Highest qualification	
SUPERVISOR Name Personnel no	Approved: Head of Dept: Date:		
CO-SUPERVISOR Name Personnel no	Approved: Head of Dept: Date:		



ANNEXURE F

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

PROGRESS REPORT FORM

DEPARTMENT:					
SUPERVISOR (Surname and initials):					
CO-SUPERVISOR (Surname and initials):					
STUDENT DETAILS:					
SURNAME AND INITIALS:					
STUDENT NUMBER:					
DEGREE ENROLLED FOR:					
YEAR	1	2	3	4	Other (Specify)

PROFILE OF STUDENT

1. Result for fundamental modules (MEd students)				
	1st Opportunity	Supplementary	2nd Opportunity	Supplementary
NME 810				
OOG 810				
2. Successfully defended proposal?				
Yes/No	Date:			
3. Application for ethical clearance submitted?				
Yes/No	Date:	Research Ethics Committee reference number:		
4. Title approved? Yes/No Date:				
Title:				
5. Completed chapters				
Date	Comments			
Chapter 1				
Chapter 2				
Chapter 3				
Fieldwork				
Data analysis				
Chapter 4				
Draft dissertation				
Final edited				
Ethics clearance certificate obtained				
Dissertation submitted				
Planned submission				

COMMENTS ON PROGRESS:

Satisfactory / Unsatisfactory

.....

.....

RECOMMENDATION:

.....

.....

SUPERVISOR:

DATE:

CO-SUPERVISOR:

DATE:

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT:

DATE:

POSTGRADUATE COMMITTEE:

DATE:



ANNEXURE G

GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION SHORTENED GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF THESES/DISSERTATIONS/MINI-DISSERTATIONS: 2010

1. SUBMISSION DATES GRADUATION CEREMONY

- | | | | | |
|-----|-----------|-----|----------------|-------------------------------------|
| (a) | 31 March | for | September 2010 | (Spring) (Final copies 15 July) |
| (b) | 31 August | for | April 2011 | (Autumn) (Final copies 15 February) |

2. DOCTORAL CANDIDATES: THESIS

2.1 Copies required:

Ring bound copies for examining:

One copy each for dean, supervisor and examiners – must be followed up by bound copies (hard cover) to examiners after examination.

Copies for Library (final copies after examination):

One bound paper copy (hard cover) as well as two electronic copies, one in PDF and the other in Word or WordPerfect. Electronic copies may be on CD or diskette, or students can do the submission on the UPeTD web site themselves in which case their documents will receive preferential treatment.

<http://upetd.up.ac.za/authors/publish/standards.htm#specs> for details.

Final copies must reach the Student Administration by the due date indicated in 1. Electronic copies must be accompanied by the prescribed UPeTD form which must be completed by the student as well as the supervisor. Form and UPeTD instructions obtainable from the Student Administration.

2.2 Bound:

(a) Title page in front.

(General Regulation G.58 1.1)

The title page of the thesis should contain the following:

(The full title of the thesis)

by

(Full name of the student)

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

in the Faculty of Education, University of Pretoria

(Year and date of submission)

You may add the name of your supervisor and co-supervisor (where applicable) above the year and date of submission.

(b) A summary of not more than 500 words in English (in front or at the back) with a list of 10 key words.

(c) The Ethics Clearance Certificate, valid for 2 years for MEd and 3 years for PhD.

2.3 Unbound:

(a) Title page in English

(b) An abstract in English of not more than 350 words (together with a list of 10 key words).

(c) Submission form - signed by supervisor. (Obtainable from the Student Administration).

(d) R50 administration fee (payable to the cashier before submission).

(e) A completed "Abstract" form (obtainable from Student Administration).

(f) Curriculum Vitae, in consultation with supervisor - maximum 170 words. Last paragraph 100 words. Typed in double spacing. Signature of supervisor required. (Example obtainable from Student Administration).

- (g) **Draft article for publication.** Proof of submission of an article to an accredited journal, issued by the journal, as well as the declaration form (obtainable from Student Administration) must be submitted to Student Administration by the due date indicated in 1.

3. MASTER'S DEGREE CANDIDATES

3.1 DISSERTATION

3.1.1 **Copies required:** As for doctoral thesis.

3.1.2 **Bound:** As for doctoral thesis, but title pages refers to dissertation.

3.1.3 **Unbound:**

- (a) **Submission form** signed by supervisor (obtainable from Student Administration).
- (b) **R50 administration fee.** (Payable to cashier before submission).
- (c) **Draft article for publication.** The supervisor / student submits the article for publication, but a hard copy as well as the declaration form (obtainable from Student-administration) must be submitted to Student Administration by the due date indicated in 1.

3.2 MINI-DISSERTATION

3.2.1 **Copies required:** As for doctoral thesis.

3.2.2 **Bound:**

- (a) **Title page** in front. As for doctoral thesis, but title page refers to mini-dissertation.
- (b) **A summary** of 150 - 200 words **in English** (after the table of contents), together with a list of 10 key words.
- (c) **The Ethics Clearance Certificate**, valid for 2 years.

3.2.3 **Unbound:**

- (a) **Submission form** - signed by supervisor (obtainable from the Student Administration).
- (b) **R50 administration fee** (payable to the cashier before submission).
- (c) **Draft article for publication.** Compulsory for all coursework programmes since 2005. The supervisor / student submits the article for publication, but a hard copy as well as the declaration form (obtainable from Student-administration) must be submitted to Student Administration by the due date indicated in 1.

4. TECHNICAL DETAILS

4.1 Final copies must be bound in a hard cover with:

- (a) the title of the thesis/dissertation/mini-dissertation and initials and surname of the candidate on the front cover; and
- (b) Year, surname and initials on the spine.

4.2 Copies must be printed on good quality paper and in letter quality.

4.3 A4 or A5 paper size may be used and printing may be done on both sides of the page.

Students should inform the Student Administration, in writing, of their intention to submit the thesis/dissertation/mini-dissertation at least three months prior to submission and are requested to set an appointment at least a week prior to submission. A 'Notification of Submission' form is available from the Student Administration.

For further details consult the General Regulations of the University of Pretoria



ANNEXURE H

GUIDELINES FOR EXAMINERS: MINI-DISSERTATIONS

GENERAL

The MEd degree with course work comprises of a mini-dissertation plus examinations in contrast with a dissertation only.

1. DESCRIPTION OF A MINI-DISSERTATION

A mini-dissertation is more limited in scope than a dissertation and comprises of 50 to 80 typed A4 pages.

A report on an empirical project of limited scope is also acceptable.

A single phase of a problem or phenomenon in Education may be researched and an original contribution to science is not expected.

The normal requirements regarding literary style, presentation, tables, figures, references, bibliography et cetera for dissertations apply to dissertations of limited scope.

A mini-dissertation represents 50% of the final mark for the master's examination.

2. EXAMINER

The name of the external examiner will be kept confidential.

Individual examiners report independently and **are kindly requested not to discuss the mini-dissertation with the candidate or the other examiners.**

The examiner's report should deal with the following aspects:

- (a) defining of the research area and relevance of the theme;
- (b) the candidate's insight of the problem and the goals with the research;
- (c) the candidate's knowledge of relevant literature;
- (d) the candidate's handling of applicable research methods;
- (e) ability of the candidate to evaluate and interpret his findings;
- (f) scientific character of the contents, conclusions and recommendations;
- (g) the language and technical editing of the essay.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

The examiner should indicate one of the following recommendations:

- (a) that the mini-dissertation be accepted with no required changes in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree;
- (b) that the mini-dissertation be accepted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree, but that certain indicated corrections of limited extent should be made to the satisfaction of the head of the department;
- (c) that the mini-dissertation be accepted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree, as soon as the candidate has made major changes to the satisfaction of the examination panel;
- (d) that the mini-dissertation does not meet the required standard, but that the candidate be invited to review the dissertation of limited scope and to resubmit for re-examination;
- (e) that the mini-dissertation be rejected;
- (f) that the candidate should be called for oral questioning by the examination panel prior to finalisation of the result.

4. GENERAL

The examiner may retain the copy of the mini-dissertation, provided that the mini-dissertation is accepted. In case of rejection it must be returned to the University.



ANNEXURE I

GUIDELINES FOR THE EVALUATION OF RESEARCH REPORTS

DOCTORAL THESES/MASTER'S DISSERTATIONS

The Faculty of Education invites examiners of doctoral theses/master's dissertations to compose a comprehensive and detailed qualitative assessment of the student's research report. The evaluative report (qualitative) should address, *inter alia*, the following categories or questions of importance to the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria. The categories reflect the newly established vision of the Faculty of Education for enhancing the quality of student and faculty research.

It is critical, for our purposes, that your assessment of a **doctoral thesis** assigns considerable weight to *innovation* and *the building of new knowledge*.

In the case of a **master's dissertation**, your assessment should be guided by a single, broad evaluation question: *Does the master's candidate demonstrate that he/she is competent to conduct a basic research study?*

1. CLARITY OF FOCUS

Is the problem to be studied clearly articulated? In this regard, are the **research questions** explicit, focused, coherent and "do-able" in the context of the problem statement?
Does the candidate convey a clear sense of what is to be studied? (In the case of statistical or experimental research: are hypotheses and variables clearly identified?)

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Does the candidate provide critical, evaluative *syntheses of the relevant literature* in ways that inform or extend the subject under study? Is the relevant information or findings from the literature integrated and evaluated in relation to the key research questions? Is the quality of the sampled literature adequate (recent, relevant, research-based etc)?

3. THEORY AND CONCEPTS

Does the candidate use *theoretical approaches or conceptual frameworks* that are relevant, appropriate and illuminative of the problem being studied? ("Theory" in this case can be applied, tested or generated from the data in the study). Do the theories or concepts deployed in the study deepen understanding of the problem being researched?

4. RESEARCH METHODS AND STRATEGIES

Does the candidate apply *research methods or strategies* that are appropriate for the kinds of questions being investigated? Are the research procedures clearly outlined and logically connected to other components (e.g., the theoretical framework) of the research? Is the analysis and interpretation of the research findings consistent with the data?

5. INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY

Does the study at least attempt to introduce creative and novel theoretical and/or methodological approaches to the subject under study? Does the study demonstrate potential for innovation and creativity in educational inquiry?

6. NEW KNOWLEDGE AND INSIGHTS

Does the research project add further insights on the subject under study? Does the study have potential to enrich our understanding of a particular problem? Does this basic research report suggest interesting pathways for further research?

7. TECHNICAL QUALITIES

Is the argument internally coherent? Do the different elements (components) of the study "hold together"? Is the thesis well argued? Is the language usage (including grammar) of a high standard? Have the layout, printing and other technical requirements been met? Is the thesis/dissertation well written as an academic text? Has the student adequately addressed the specific research questions?

8. RECOMMENDATION

The examiner must make one of the following recommendations on the attached examiner's report which should be returned together with the evaluation report:

- that the thesis/dissertation be accepted with no required changes;
- that the thesis/dissertation be accepted, but that certain indicated corrections of limited extent should be made to the satisfaction of the head of the department;
- that the thesis/dissertation be accepted as soon as the candidate has made major changes to the satisfaction of the examination panel;
- that the thesis/dissertation does not meet the required standard, but that the candidate be invited to review the thesis/dissertation and to re-submit for re-examination;
- that the thesis/dissertation be rejected and that the candidate does not pass.
- **MEd STUDENTS:** that the candidate should be called for oral questioning by the examination panel prior to finalisation of the result.

The supervisor of the candidate is allowed to make an extract from the report of the examiner available to the candidate.

The examiner may retain the copy of the thesis/dissertation sent to him/her for examination purposes, provided that the thesis/dissertation is accepted. If the thesis/dissertation is rejected, the examination copy must be returned to the University.

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA / UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
FAKULTEIT OPVOEDKUNDE / FACULTY OF EDUCATION
EKSAMINATORSVERSLAG: VERHANDELING/MINIVERHANDELING
EXAMINER'S REPORT: DISSERTATION/MINI-DISSERTATION

Datum / Date / /

(Drukskrif / Print)

1. Student:
2. Titel van verhandeling/miniverhandeling:
Title of dissertation/mini-dissertation:
3. Leier / Supervisor:
4. Graad / Degree:
5. Eksaminator / Examiner:

AANBEVELINGS DEUR DIE EKSAMINATOR / RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE EXAMINER:

- a) dat die verhandeling/miniverhandeling **sonder enige wysigings aanvaar** word ter gedeeltelike vervulling van die vereistes vir die graad;
*that the dissertation/mini-dissertation be **accepted with no required changes** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree;*
- b) dat die verhandeling/miniverhandeling aanvaar word ter gedeeltelike vervulling van die vereistes vir die graad sodra sekere aangeduide wysigings van **beperkte omvang tot bevrediging** van die **departementshoof** aangebring is;
*that the dissertation/mini-dissertation be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree, but that certain indicated corrections of **limited extent** should be made **to the satisfaction of the head of the department**;*
- c) dat die verhandeling/miniverhandeling aanvaar word ter gedeeltelike vervulling van die vereistes vir die graad sodra **wesentliche veranderinge tot bevrediging van die eksamenkommissie** aangebring is;
*that the dissertation/mini-dissertation be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree, as soon as the candidate has made **major changes to the satisfaction of the examination panel**;*
- d) dat die verhandeling/miniverhandeling **nie aan die vereiste standaard voldoen nie, maar dat die kandidaat genooi word om dit te hersien en in te dien vir hereksaminering**;
*that the dissertation/mini-dissertation does not meet the required standard, but that the candidate be invited to **review the dissertation/mini-dissertation and to resubmit it for re-examination**;*
- e) dat die verhandeling/miniverhandeling **nie aanvaar word nie**;
*that the dissertation/mini-dissertation **be rejected**;*
- f) dat die kandidaat eers vir 'n **mondelinge ondervraging** deur die **eksamenkommissie** opgeroep word alvorens die uitslag gefinaliseer word.
*that the candidate should be called for **oral questioning** by the **examination panel** prior to finalisation of the result.*

Slaagpunt toegeken / Pass mark awarded

%	75% onderskeiding/distinction 50% slaag / pass
---	---

Handtekening / Signature:

Hoof: Studente-administrasie
 Fakulteit Opvoedkunde
 Universiteit van Pretoria
 PRETORIA
 0002

STUUR SAAM MET U VERSLAG TERUG AAN:
SEND WITH YOUR REPORT BACK TO:

Head: Student Administration
 Faculty of Education
 University of Pretoria
 PRETORIA
 0002

Wil u 'n gebinde kople van hierdie verhandeling/miniverhandeling ontvang? _____

Would you like to receive a bound copy of this dissertation/mini-dissertation? _____

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA / UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
FAKULTEIT OPVOEDKUNDE / FACULTY OF EDUCATIONEKSAMINATORSVERSLAG: PROEFSKRIF
EXAMINER'S REPORT: THESIS

Datum / Date / /

(Drukskrif / Print)

1. Student:
2. Titel van proefskrif:
Title of thesis:
3. Promotor / Supervisor:
4. Graad / Degree:
5. Eksaminator / Examiner:

Aanbevelings deur die eksaminator / Recommendations by the examiner:

- a) dat die proefskrif **sonder enige wysigings aanvaar** word ter gedeeltelike vervulling van die vereistes vir die graad;
that the thesis be accepted with no required changes in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree;
- b) dat die proefskrif aanvaar word ter gedeeltelike vervulling van die vereistes vir die graad sodra sekere aangeduide wysigings van **beperkte omvang tot bevrediging** van die **departementshoof** aangebring is;
that the thesis be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree, but that certain indicated corrections of limited extent should be made to the satisfaction of the head of the department;
- c) dat die proefskrif aanvaar word ter gedeeltelike vervulling van die vereistes vir die graad sodra **wesentliche veranderinge tot bevrediging van die eksamenkommissie** aangebring is;
that the thesis be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree, as soon as the candidate has made major changes to the satisfaction of the examination panel;
- d) dat die proefskrif **nie aan die vereiste standaard voldoen nie, maar dat die kandidaat genooi word om dit te hersien en in te dien vir hereksaminering**;
that the thesis does not meet the required standard, but that the candidate be invited to review the thesis and to resubmit for re-examination;
- e) dat die proefskrif **nie aanvaar word nie** en dat die kandidaat nie slaag nie.
that the thesis be rejected and that the candidate does not pass.

Handtekening / Signature:

Hoof: Studente-administrasie Fakulteit Opvoedkunde Universiteit van Pretoria PRETORIA 0002
--

**STUUR SAAM MET U VERSLAG TERUG AAN:
SEND WITH YOUR REPORT BACK TO:**

Head: Student Administration Faculty of Education University of Pretoria PRETORIA 0002
--

Wil u 'n gebinde kopie van hierdie proefskrif ontvang? _____

Would you like to receive a bound copy of this thesis? _____



ANNEXURE J

Protocol No. _____

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR DECLARATION FOR THE STORAGE OF RESEARCH DATA AND/OR DOCUMENTS

I, the Principal Investigator(s), _____
of the following trial/study titled _____

will be storing all the research data and/or documents referring to the above mentioned
trial/study at the following address: _____

**I understand that the storage for the abovementioned data and/or documents must be
maintained for a minimum of 15 years from the commencement of this trial/study.**

START DATE OF TRIAL/STUDY: _____

END DATE OF TRIAL/STUDY: _____

YEAR UNTIL DATA WILL BE STORED: _____

Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH POLICY



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Protocol No. _____

**SUPERVISOR DECLARATION FOR THE STORAGE OF RESEARCH DATA
AND/OR DOCUMENTS**

I, the Supervisor, _____
for the following student(s) _____
of the following trial/study titled _____

_____ will be storing all the research data and/or documents referring to the above mentioned trial/study at the following address: _____

I understand that the storage for the abovementioned data and/or documents must be maintained for a minimum of 15 years from the commencement of this study.

START DATE OF TRIAL/STUDY: _____

END DATE OF TRIAL/STUDY: _____

YEAR UNTIL DATA WILL BE STORED: _____

Name of Supervisor	Signature	Date

Name of Student(s)	Signature	Date

PROPOSAL ASSESSMENT SHEET

NAME:
TITLE:

ANALYTIC SCORING RUBRIC FOR RESEARCH PROPOSALS						
1.	TITLE					
	Appropriateness of title?	4	3	2	1	0
2.	INTRODUCTION					
	Research area and key concepts introduced?	4	3	2	1	0
3.	RESEARCH PROBLEM					
	Problem clearly defined, described and argued in detail?	4	3	2	1	0
	Contexts described?	4	3	2	1	0
4.	RATIONALE					
	Importance of research and gap identified?	4	3	2	1	0
5.	RESEARCH QUESTION AND AIMS					
	Questions clearly and explicitly stated and appropriate for this research?	4	3	2	1	0
	Aims identified, linked to research questions and achievable?	4	3	2	1	0
6.	LITERATURE REVIEW					
	Logical structure of review?	4	3	2	1	0
	Relevant literature reviewed?	4	3	2	1	0
	Analysis and synthesis of literature in developing argument?	4	3	2	1	0
7.	CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK					
	Reference to /adaptation of a particular model?	4	3	2	1	0
	Appropriate framework for this study?	4	3	2	1	0
8.	RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS					
	Paradigm identified and described?	4	3	2	1	0
	Appropriate research design identified, described and linked to research question?	4	3	2	1	0
	Sample					
	Population identified, sampling technique described and choice of population argued?	4	3	2	1	0
	Instruments					
	Specification of appropriate instruments/data collection strategies?	4	3	2	1	0
	Appropriate to purpose of research?	4	3	2	1	0
	Data Collection					
	Procedures outlined?	4	3	2	1	0
	Data Analysis					
	Techniques appropriate to purpose of research and data collected outlined and described?	4	3	2	1	0
9.	METHODOLOGICAL NORMS					
	Validity/reliability/credibility/dependability described and argued?	4	3	2	1	0
10.	ETHICS					
	Appropriate ethical considerations addressed?	4	3	2	1	0
11.	ACADEMIC WRITING STYLE					
	Academic writing style: formality	4	3	2	1	0
	Syntax (paragraphs, sentences, concord and tense)	4	3	2	1	0
	Spelling, capitalisation and punctuation	4	3	2	1	0
	Referencing technique	4	3	2	1	0
	TOTAL					


MARKER

4=excellent 3=good 2=fair 1=poor/incomplete 0=missing


UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
PROGRESS REPORT FORM

DEPARTMENT: CENTRE FOR EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT
SUPERVISOR (Surname and initials):
CO-SUPERVISOR (Surname and initials):

STUDENT DETAILS:					
NAME AND INITIALS:					
STUDENT NUMBER:					
DEGREE ENROLLED FOR: PhD AQA					
YEAR	1	2	3	4	Other (Specify)

PROFILE OF STUDENT

1. Result for fundamental modules (MEd students)				
	1st Opportunity	Supplementary	2nd Opportunity	Supplementary
NME 810				
OOG 810				
2. Successfully defended proposal?				
Yes				
3. Ethics statement submitted?				
Yes		DATE:		
4. Title approved? DATE:				
5. Completed chapters	DATE	Comments		
Chapter 1				
Chapter 2				
Chapter 3				
Fieldwork				
Data analysis				
Chapter 4				
Chapter 5				
Final edited				
Dissertation submitted				
Planned submission				

COMMENTS ON PROGRESS:

RECOMMENDATION:

SUPERVISOR:

DATE:

HEAD OF DEPT:.....

DATE:.....

POSTGRADUATE COMMITTEE:.....

DATE:.....

NAME OF STUDENT _____

TITLE OF PROPOSED RESEARCH: _____

	COMPONENT	yes	no	COMMENTS
1.	TITLE			
	Title appropriate?			
2.	INTRODUCTION			
	Information on research area?			
	Key concepts introduced?			
3.	RESEARCH PROBLEM			
	Problem clearly defined?			
	Problem described and argued in detail?			
	Contexts described?			
	Supporting references?			
4.	RATIONALE			
	Importance of research?			
	Gap identified?			
5.	RESEARCH QUESTION AND AIMS			
	Questions clearly and explicitly stated?			
	Questions appropriate for this research?			
	Aims identified, linked to research questions and achievable?			
6.	LITERATURE REVIEW			
	Logical structure of review?			
	Relevant literature reviewed?			
	Analysis and synthesis of literature?			
	Review is used to argue for research?			
7.	CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK			
	Reference to a particular model?			
	Adaptation of a particular model?			
	Appropriate framework for this study?			
8.	RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS			
	Paradigm identified and described?			
	Approach described?			
	Research design described?			
	Chain of reasoning in place?			
	SAMPLE			
	Choice of population argued?			
	Sampling technique identified, described and argued?			
	INSTRUMENTS			
	Procedures for development of instruments and link to research question?			
	DATA COLLECTION			
	Procedures outlined?			
	Appropriate to purpose of research?			

	DATA ANALYSIS			
	Techniques outlined and described?			
	Appropriate to purpose of research?			
9.	METHODOLOGICAL NORMS			
	Validity/reliability/credibility/dependability described?			
10.	ETHICS			
	Appropriate ethical considerations addressed?			
11.	TIMELINES			
	Planning appropriate?			
12.	PRESENTATION			
	Quality of slides?			
	Structure and coherence?			
	Confidence ?			
	Ability to present ideas?			
	Eye contact?			
	Use of slides?			



31 August 2012

**INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH INTO ACADEMIC RESEARCH WRITING IN THE
FACULTY OF EDUCATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA**

Title of Research: **Learning to write by writing to learn: a postgraduate intervention to develop
academic research writing**

Dear Student

I am a student registered with the Faculty of Education completing a doctoral degree in Assessment and Quality Assurance under the supervision of Prof Sarah Howie. As part of the Assessment and Quality Assurance Master's programme, you were part of an academic writing intervention scheduled for Semester 1 and 2, 2011 which had been developed to support you through the process of writing and defending your research proposal. To evaluate this intervention, certain assessment processes have been put in place during the intervention and which you have already completed:

1. Test for Academic Literacy for Postgraduates (TALPS) pre-intervention;
2. Personal writing exercises;
3. The completion of student evaluations after each departmental seminar and contact session; and
4. The completion of a questionnaire at the end of the academic year.

However, the next stage is to complete the evaluation of the intervention and I would like to invite you to participate in the following two activities:

5. An interview scheduled for August/September 2012; and
6. Test for Academic Literacy for Postgraduates (TALPS) post-intervention scheduled for 31 August, 2012

Although participation in the study is voluntary, your contribution to the research is extremely important. Data will be treated confidentially which means you will not be personally implicated in any reporting for the research nor will any details be given that could lead to your identification. You may withdraw from participation in the study at any point prior to data publication without the possibility of any negative consequences. Ethical clearance has been given by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria (SM 11/03/02).



CEA (Centre for Evaluation & Assessment)
Office 30, Library Building, Groenkloof Campus,
University of Pretoria, PRETORIA 0002
Republic of South Africa

Tel number: +27 (0) 12 420 4175
Fax number: +27 (0) 12 420 5723

www.up.ac.za/education

You are requested to complete the consent form below, giving your consent for the interview and the post-intervention TALPS.

I, _____ agree to be interviewed by the researcher and to participate in the post-intervention TALPS.

Participant signature _____ Date _____

Should you have any enquiries about this study, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor for further information.

STUDENT INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

I WOULD LIKE TO TALK ABOUT THE FOLLOWING ASPECTS:

Intro:

1. What were your reasons for study, beginning this MEd. in AQA?
2. What expectations do you have of the AQA Master's qualification?
3. What were your expectations – from Faculty, Department – what did you get? What did you not get?
4. How well equipped did you feel you were for postgraduate study?

Body:

5. Now that you are 18 months into your Master's talk me through the process of your writing.
6. Can you compare your writing experience from your Honours to the Master's? What is the biggest difference that you have experienced?
7. How did you get from there to here? What happened along the way?
8. What came as a surprise?
9. How do you view yourself now ... in terms of writing?
10. What assistance and support have you received?
11. What challenges in terms of writing have you faced?
12. What strategies have you found to be of value?
13. What do you feel has not been addressed in faculty sessions/departmental sessions/contact sessions?
14. What would you like to have been included which could have supported you?
15. What differences have you observed in your progress in comparison to students in other fields of study?

Wrap up:

16. If you had known then what you know now, what would you have done differently to ensure success?
17. What advice do you have for prospective students?
18. What advice do you have for the faculty/department?

19. Any other suggestions – aspects that you think we need to consider...

Cilla Dowse

Researcher

Tel: 012 420-3997

Email: cilla.dowse@up.ac.za

Prof. Sarah Howie

**Director: Centre for Evaluation and
Assessment**

Tel: 012 420-4175

Centre for Evaluation & Assessment

(04/09/2012) Cilla Dowse - Termination of Studies.

Page 1

From: 'Itumeleng Mathoko' <ismathoko@webmail.co.za>
To: Sarah.Howie@up.ac.za
CC: Zelda.Shyman@up.ac.za; Cilla.Nel@up.ac.za; Kim.Draper@up.ac.za
Date: 5/5/2011 11:00 AM
Subject: Termination of Studies.

Dear Sarah and the CEA team!

Kindly be informed that I have decided to terminate my MEd studies due to serious personal reasons. I really enjoyed my short time with you and wishing you a successful 2011 academic year.

Kind Regards

Itumeleng Mathoko

South Africa's premier free email service - www.webmail.co.za

Save on insurance with OUTsurance
https://www.outsurance.co.za/insurance-quote/?source=webmail_mailer&cr=eap11_468x60&cid=215

Page 1 of 2

Cilla Dowse - Re: Just to let you know

From: Mangie Chabangu <chabangu@yahoo.com>
To: Sarah.Howie@up.ac.za; Lisa.Zimmerman@up.ac.za; Cilla.Nel@up.ac.za
Date: 5/25/2011 21:04
Subject: Re: Just to let you know

Greetings ladies,

Let me take this opportunity to thank all of you for the support and the guidance you showed me these past months.

Centre for Evaluation & Assessment

**INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH INTO POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH WRITING IN THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF
PRETORIA**

Title of Research: **Learning to write by writing to learn: a postgraduate intervention to develop academic literacies**

Dear Student

I am a student registered with the Faculty of Education completing a doctoral degree in Assessment and Quality Assurance under the supervision of Prof Sarah Howie. I would like to request you to complete the attached questionnaire, regarding information about the support programme for 2011. This will assist in understanding your experience of your first year and possible contribution that it has made on your development as a postgraduate student. Based on the results of the questionnaire, a follow-up interview may be held if you are willing to be interviewed.

Participation in the study is voluntary; however, your contribution to the research is extremely important. Data will be treated confidentially which means you will not be personally implicated in any reporting for the research nor will any details be given that could lead to your identification. You may withdraw from participation in the study at any point prior to data publication without the possibility of any negative consequences. Ethical clearance has been given by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria.

You are requested to complete the consent form as well as the attached questionnaire and return these documents via email to Cilla Dowse cilla.dowse@up.ac.za as soon as possible.

I agree to participate in this study

Date

Should you have any enquiries about this study, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor for further information.

Cilla Dowse
Researcher
012 420-3997
cilla.dowse@up.ac.za

Prof Sarah Howie
Director: Centre for Evaluation and Assessment
012 420-4175

QUESTIONNAIRE: kindly complete this questionnaire electronically and return to cilla.dowse@up.ac.za as soon as possible.

SECTION A: PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

1. Name and surname.

NAME	SURNAME

2. Contact details:

CELL	EMAIL

SECTION B: LANGUAGE BACKGROUND

3. Home language and other languages you read and write.

HOME LANGUAGE	OTHER LANGUAGES

4. Did you complete any formal tertiary English language course in your undergraduate studies?

Yes	
No	

If yes, please provide details about the course and the level of study:
(add extra numbering if required; delete numbering not required)

a

b

5. Have you subsequently completed any informal English language, writing or research course/s which may have assisted you with the research writing you are now expected to do at postgraduate level?

Yes	
No	

If yes, please provide details about the course: (add extra numbering if required; delete numbering not required)

a

b

SECTION C: EVALUATION OF SUPPORT SESSIONS ORGANISED BY FACULTY

Please reflect on the following sessions which you attended during school holidays during 2011 and rate each of them under every Content construct and every Teaching construct using a 1-4 scale.

Scales for Content	Scales for Teaching
1= not at all 2=fairly 3= very 4= extremely	1= completely insufficient 2=fairly insufficient 3= sufficient 4= sufficiently well done

		CONTENT				TEACHING				
	SUPPORT SESSIONS	Relevance to topic	Addition of new information	Assisted in understanding of next steps	Increased knowledge of research topic/processes	Method of teaching	Interaction between participants	Depth of treatment of topic	Time allocated	Not applicable: did not attend session
	SEMESTER 1: SUPPORT SESSION 24-27 JANUARY									
6	Introduction to reading and writing – Ms L. Alston									

	SUPPORT SESSIONS	CONTENT				TEACHING				Not applicable: did not attend session
		Relevance to topic	Addition of new information	Assisted in understanding of next steps	Increased knowledge of research topic/processes	Method of teaching	Interaction between participants	Depth of treatment of topic	Time allocated	
7	Introduction to academic writing – Prof A. Carstens									
8	Presentation skills - Dr R. Evans									
9	Introduction to searching the databases - Library									
10	Introduction to research – Prof J. Niewenhuis									
	SEMESTER 1: SUPPORT SESSION 28-31 MARCH									
11	Hands-on workshops on sourcing articles, using databases, using refworks - Library									
12	Moving into academic writing – Ms C. Dowse									
13	Prof Brigitte Smit’s series of lectures on developing a research proposal									

	SUPPORT SESSIONS	CONTENT				TEACHING				Not applicable: did not attend session
		Relevance to topic	Addition of new information	Assisted in understanding of next steps	Increased knowledge of research topic/processes	Method of teaching	Interaction between participants	Depth of treatment of topic	Time allocated	
	SEMESTER 2: SUPPORT SESSION 11-14 JULY									
14	Interview scheduling – Dr T. Ogina									
15	Qualitative Research – Dr C. Lubbe									
16	Questionnaire development – Dr V. Scherman									
17	Prof. Max Bergman’s series of lectures on research and mixed methods									
18	Research Indaba									
	SEMESTER 2: SUPPORT SESSION 3-6 OCTOBER									
19	Quantitative analysis using SPSS – Dr S. van Staden									
20	Quantitative analysis using SPSS – Dr V. Scherman									

	SUPPORT SESSIONS	CONTENT				TEACHING				Not applicable: did not attend session
		Relevance to topic	Addition of new information	Assisted in understanding of next steps	Increased knowledge of research topic/processes	Method of teaching	Interaction between participants	Depth of treatment of topic	Time allocated	
21	Qualitative analysis – Prof J. Niewenhuis									
22	Qualitative analysis – Dr M Botha									
23	Prof Corey Keyes series of lectures: Research – lessons learnt									

SECTION D: EVALUATION OF SUPPORT SESSIONS ORGANISED BY THE CEA

Please reflect on the following sessions which you attended during school holidays this year and rate each of the constructs using a 1-4 scale.

1=not at all
2=fair
3=very
4=extremely

	CEA SUPPORT SESSIONS	Relevance to level of study	Relevance for own dissertation	Understanding of suitable approaches to research	Addition of new information	Understanding of next steps in the research process	Increase in knowledge	Not applicable: did not attend session
24	How to write a literature review – Dr K. Draper							
25	Developing a conceptual framework with presentation of three frameworks – Drs L. Zimmerman, K. Draper, S. van Staden							
26	Introduction to paradigms – Dr L. Zimmerman							
27	Ethics panel discussion on new application form							
28	Introduction to research designs: Survey research – Dr S. van Staden							

	CEA SUPPORT SESSIONS	Relevance to level of study	Relevance for own dissertation	Understanding of suitable approaches to research	Addition of new information	Understanding of next steps in the research process	Increase in knowledge	Not applicable: did not attend session
29	Introduction to research designs: Case studies – Dr L. Zimmerman							
30	Introduction to research designs: Design Research – Dr L. Archer							
31	Introduction to assessment and assessment for learning – Dr K. Draper/Ms C. Dowse							
32	Taking a look at national assessments - Mrs A. Oberholzer (guest speaker from the IEB)							
33	Taking a look at international assessments – Prof. S. Howie							
34	Prof. S. Howie’s series of workshops on school effectiveness and improvement							
35	Assessment at FET colleges – Ms Nadine Pote (guest speaker from FET Colleges Exams Dept.)							

SECTION E: EVALUATION OF CEA CONTACT SESSIONS

Please reflect on the content of the various Friday afternoon sessions which you attended and rate them (use an **X**) according to what extent they were useful in assisting with the development and writing of your proposal.

	CONTACT SESSIONS	Not at all useful	Fairly useful	Very useful	Extremely useful	Did not attend
36	Workshop on aims of research, problem statement and research questions					
37	How to read and annotate sources					
38	Discussion of the plagiarism policy					
39	Discussion of use of research diary					
40	Feedback on personal writing and how to move into academic writing					
41	Discussion of referencing techniques					
42	Presentation of research problem and proposed review of the literature and research methods to be used					
43	Peer review of early research proposal					
44	Discussion of research methods as part of the chain of reasoning					
45	Mock defence and feedback					

46 In retrospect, please explain what you think about conducting a mock defence and what you gained in doing so.

(BEGIN HERE)

47 Tell us about the positive experience as well as the negative experience of going through a mock defence.

48 Now that you have successfully written and defended your proposal, what suggestions do you have for inclusion in the programme for the next cohort of AQA students, in particular, what are the gaps that you feel should be addressed?

(BEGIN HERE)

SECTION F: WRITING THE PROPOSAL

Please reflect on aspects that you as a postgraduate student have faced during the year while writing your proposal and then rate them (use an **X**) according to how challenging you found each.

	ASPECTS FACED WHILE WRITING THE PROPOSAL	Not at all challenging	Fairly challenging	Very challenging	Extremely challenging
49	Identifying a suitable topic for research				
50	Stating the problem and supporting it with literature				
51	Outlining the rationale for conducting the study				
52	Defining the aim of the study				
53	Developing an appropriate main research question				
54	Finding the relevant literature on the topic/problem				
55	Reading and understanding the relevant literature				
56	Synthesising the literature to write a comprehensive review				
57	Designing and developing and/or adapting the conceptual framework				
58	Creating an appropriate set of sub-questions				
59	Identifying and understanding the paradigm in which your research is most suitably situated				
60	Finding and writing about the most appropriate research design and approach for the research question				

	ASPECTS FACED WHILE WRITING THE PROPOSAL	Not at all challenging	Fairly challenging	Very challenging	Extremely challenging
61	Selecting the sample and justifying its use				
62	Explaining how the data collection instruments will be developed				
63	Describing the data collection strategies				
64	Aligning these data collection strategies with your research questions				
65	Outlining appropriate data analysis strategies				
66	Discussing the methodological norms which will be followed in the study				
67	Examining the ethical issues to take into consideration				
68	Referencing in-text (including direct quotes)				
69	Compiling an accurate reference list using the appropriate referencing strategy				
70	Developing a realistic timeframe for the study				
71	Understanding and completing the ethics application				
72	Meeting regularly with your supervisor				
73	Using feedback to constantly revise your proposal				
74	Meeting deadlines set by the supervisor				
75	Using the critical feedback given by your supervisor				
76	Thinking critically about your work				
77	Developing your academic writing skills				

78 Apart from the aspects listed above, what challenges both personal and professional have you had to deal with this past year which could have had an effect on the successful completion and defence of your proposal?

(BEGIN HERE)

- a. personal challenges
- b. professional challenges

79 Hindsight is the easiest thing in the world – but knowing what you know now, what would you have done differently?

Please elaborate as fully as you can.

(BEGIN HERE)

80 In summary, describe your experience of postgraduate study thus far, and in particular, the support you have been offered by the CEA?

(BEGIN HERE)

81 Based on your answers to this questionnaire, I would like to conduct an interview with you at some arranged stage during the year.

Please indicate if you are willing to be interviewed.

Yes	
No	

81 We met regularly during your first year in an attempt at supporting you through the proposal writing process. I would like to know if you are interested in meeting regularly in 2012 as a means of supporting you through the research and research writing process of the dissertation?

Yes	
No	

If yes, how often would be suitable?

Once a month	
Twice a month	
Every week	

and most convenient?

Wednesday afternoon	
Friday afternoon	
Saturday morning	

Thank you for taking the time and trouble to complete this questionnaire. Your participation is valued.

Dear Expert Reviewer

Please could you take a look at the intervention that was planned for our postgraduate students for the period of a year, looking at each semester and its sections critically taking into account the criteria of relevance, consistency practicality and effectiveness.

These criteria are drawn from Nieveen's work in Design Research – see below:

Criteria for high quality interventions (Nieveen, 2007)

CRITERION	
Relevance (also referred to as content validity)	There is a need for the intervention and its design is based on state-of-the-art (scientific) knowledge.
Consistency (also referred to as construct validity)	The intervention is 'logically' well-designed.
Practicality	<p>Expected The intervention is expected to be usable in the settings for which it has been designed and developed.</p> <p>Actual The intervention is usable in the settings for which it has been designed and developed.</p>
Effectiveness	<p>Expected Using the intervention is expected to result in desired outcomes.</p> <p>Actual Using the intervention results in desired outcomes.</p>

Could I ask that you report on

1. The intervention to promote academic research writing - the content of each semester – a report for each semester separately - If you want to scribble on the sheets and offer changes and suggestions, please do

SEMESTER 1 SEMINAR A

Faculty Seminar 1	
Departmental seminar A	
Centre contact session 1	
Centre contact session 2	

SEMESTER 1 SEMINAR B

Faculty Seminar B	
Departmental seminar B	
Centre contact session 3	
Centre contact session 4	

SEMESTER 2 SEMINAR C

Faculty Seminar 1	
Departmental seminar C	
Centre contact session 1	
Centre contact session 2	

SEMESTER 2 SEMINAR D

Faculty Seminar 1	
Departmental seminar D	
Centre contact session 1	
Centre contact session 2	

2. Whether the content meets the four criteria – relevance, consistency, practicality and effectiveness. I will be able to report on the intervention’s actual effectiveness drawn from student evaluations and interviews, but perhaps you can give me your perspective.
3. Please offer criticisms/critique/omissions/suggestions for improvement and anything else that you can suggest which might help in re-designing this year-long intervention.

Higher Education Qualification Framework

LO	APPLIED COMPETENCE	SPECIFIC LEARNING OUTCOME	APPLICATION TO INTERVENTION		
			FACULTY SEMINAR	PROGRAMME SEMINAR	PROGRAMME CONTACT SESSION
E	Advanced information retrieval and processing skills.	Able to engage with information retrieval by sourcing relevant literature, reading and critiquing and applying learning to own research	A ✓ B ✓ C D	A B C D	1 5 2 6 3 7 4 8
B	Advanced reading and thinking skills: an ability to rigorously critique and evaluate current research and participate in scholarly debates in an area of specialization.	Able to develop reading and thinking skills and apply to own research Able to engage in discussions and debates about own and peer research	A ✓ B C D	A B ✓ C ✓ D	1 ✓ 5 2 ✓ 6 3 ✓ 7 4 ✓ 8
F	An ability to effectively present and communicate the results of research to specialist and non-specialist audiences using the resources of an academic/professional discourse	Able to present various aspects of research to a variety of audiences	A ✓ B C D	A B C D	1 5 6 ✓ 7 ✓ 8 ✓
D	An ability to identify, analyse and deal with complex and/or real world problems and issues drawing systematically and creatively on the theory, research methods and literature of a discipline/field.	Able to identify a problem for research purposes, underpin it with theory drawn from the literature and finding a methodology to solve the problem	A B C D	A ✓ B ✓ C D	1 ✓ 5 2 ✓ 6 3 ✓ 7 4 8
E	An ability to undertake a study of the literature and current research in an area of specialization under supervision.	Able to access and review the literature critically – analysing and synthesising	A B ✓ C D	A B ✓ C D	1 5 2 6 3 ✓ 7 4 8
B	An ability to rigorously critique and evaluate current research and participate in scholarly debates in an area of specialization.	Able to analyse and synthesise the literature using it to draw examples and arguments to underpin own research	A B C D	A B ✓ C D	1 5 6 3 ✓ 7 4 8
B	An ability to relate theory to practice and vice versa and to think epistemologically.	Able to use theory to underpin problem, research, practice, intervention	A B C D	A B ✓ C D	1 5 6 ✓ 3 ✓ 7 ✓ 8 ✓
C	Mastery of the application of research methods, techniques and technologies appropriate to an area of specialization.	Able to situate research in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A paradigm • A research design • Using a particular approach Able to undertake: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sampling • develop instruments 	A B C ✓ D	A B ✓ C ✓ D	1 5 2 6 3 7 4 ✓ 8

Higher Education Qualification Framework

LO	APPLIED COMPETENCE	SPECIFIC LEARNING OUTCOME	APPLICATION TO INTERVENTION			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> collect valid and reliable data – qual+quan 				
E	Identification of quantitative and/or qualitative data.	Able to process and analyse data – qual+quan using packages such as SPSS/Atlas-ti	A B C D	A B C D	1 2 3 4	5 6 7 8
E	Critical analysis, synthesis and independent evaluation of quantitative and/or qualitative data.	Able to interpret results	A B C D	A B C D	1 3 4	5 7 8
F	The production of a dissertation or research report which meets the standards of scholarly/professional writing.	Able to complete the research proposal to the standards outlined in Faculty guidelines	A B C D	A B	1 2 3 4	5 6 7 8

	AUTONOMY OF LEARNING	SPECIFIC LEARNING OUTCOME
G	A capacity to operate effectively in complex, ill-defined contexts.	Able to work in a variety of contexts and situations applying professional standards
H	A capacity to critically self-evaluate and continue to learn independently for continuing professional development.	Able to grow academically and professionally, using self-reflection and critique as a tool
I	A capacity to manage learning tasks autonomously, professionally and ethically.	Able to develop the ability to work in a group as well as independently maintaining ethical standards and adhering to timelines
J	A capacity to critically evaluate own and others' work with justification.	Able to engage in peer review and be open to feedback

FEEDBACK ON MOCK ORAL DEFENCE

NAME:

TITLE:

	COMPONENT and SUGGESTED ORDER OF PRESENTATION	COMMENTS
1	TITLE	•
2	STRUCTURE OF PRESENTATION	•
3	INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND	•
4	RESEARCH PROBLEM	•
5	RATIONALE	•
6	MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION	•
7	AIMS	•
8	LITERATURE REVIEW	•
9	CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK	•
10	SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS	•
11	RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS	•
12	METHODOLOGICAL NORMS	•
13	ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	•
14	TIMEFRAMES	•
15	PRESENTATION	•



PROPOSAL TITLE

DEGREE

STUDENT NAME

SUPERVISOR NAME

CO-SUPERVISOR NAME

Student details:

Tel:

Fax:

Email:

Draft #

Date:

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

(Alphabetical order)

CEA Centre for Evaluation and Assessment

1 **INTRODUCTION** (2 pages)

The aim of the study is to

1.1 **PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY**

Text starts here

1.2 **MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION**

Text starts here

1.3 **STRUCTURE OF THE PROPOSAL**

Text starts here

2 CONTEXT FOR THE STUDY

(Description of the context – geographic, political, social, economic, relevant education policies - +/- 1 page)

3 LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of the literature review is to (6 pages)

3.2 A DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH CONDUCTED INTERNATIONALLY AS WELL AS STUDIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

(this section can be broken down further into themes to develop a thematic review of the literature)

3.3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND SPECIFIC RESEARCH QUESTIONS

4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

4.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

Text starts here (4 pages)

4.2 RESEARCH METHODS

4.2.1 SAMPLE OR PARTICIPANTS

4.2.2 INSTRUMENTS

4.2.3 DATA COLLECTION

4.2.4 RESEARCH PROCEDURES

4.2.5 DATA ANALYSIS

4.2.6 METHODOLOGICAL NORMS (VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY ISSUES, TRUSTWORTHINESS)

4.2.7 RESEARCH ETHICS

5 TIMELINES

6 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

7 REFERENCES

(use APA referencing technique - +/- 50 references)

From: "Itumeleng Matlhoko" <ismatlhoko@webmail.co.za>
To: Sarah.Howie@up.ac.za
CC: Zeld.Snyman@up.ac.za; Cilla.Nel@up.ac.za; Kim.Draper@up.ac.za
Date: 5/5/2011 11:00 AM
Subject: Termination of Studies.

Dear Sarah and the CEA team!

Kindly be informed that I have decided to terminate my MEd studies due to serious personal reasons. I really enjoyed my short time with you and wishing you a successful 2011 academic year.

Kind Regards

Itumeleng Matlhoko

South Africas premier free email service - www.webmail.co.za

Save on insurance with OUTsurance

https://www.outsurance.co.za/insurance-quote/?source=webmailmailer&cr=eap11_468x60&cid=215

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Cilla Dowse - Re: Just to let you know

From: Mangie Chabangu <chabangum@yahoo.com>
To: Sarah.Howie@up.ac.za; Lisa.Zimmerman@up.ac.za; Cilla.Nel@up.ac.za
Date: 5/25/2011 21:04
Subject: Re: Just to let you know

Greetings ladies,

Let me take this opportunity to thank all of you for the support and the guidance you showed me these past months.

This is to inform you that I have de-registered the MEd degree with the university on Monday 23rd May 2011. I have already completed the form and will be send to the head office or it has already been send to the head office. I am going through a rough time in my life and I cannot afford to fail the exams and defending my proposal. I have never failed before and I am not going to start now. I know this is disappointing news to you all but I had to do it.

Thank you for everything.

Cilla, please tell the rest of the students that I wish them well in the future.

Elizabeth.



DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE, MATHS AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION

RESEARCH PROPOSAL DEFENCE 2011

Candidate:

Med	
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Supervisor/s:

Title/Topic:

Component	Comments
Context and background of research	
Clear description of the context for the research and sufficient background to serve as adequate context for proposal	
Problem statement	
Problem is well-defined	
Rationale for research	
Strong rationale for the research is given	
Exposition of research aims and questions objectives	
Research aims and questions are explicitly and clearly stated and are likely to lead to new knowledge	
Literature review	
Critical synthesis of up to date and appropriate literature Adequate and appropriate references	
Conceptual framework	
Strong, relevant and current conceptual framework	

Component	Comments
Research Design and methods	
Very strong chain of reasoning and strong argument for the design which is consistent with the research question	
Population and sampling	
Definition of population explicitly defined and argued. Rationale for sampling design effectively argued and scientifically correct	
Instruments or data collection strategies	
Contents of instruments and relationship to conceptual framework appropriate	
Data collection	
Knowledge of strategies which are congruent with purpose and rationale	
Data analysis	
Data analysis techniques address purpose of study and are valid and reliable	
Ethical considerations	
Appropriate considerations taken into account with regard to ethics given the context and design	
Methodological norms	
Methodological norms appropriate for study	
Suggested timeframe	
Schedule is detailed and realistic	
Reference list	
Comprehensive and correctly referenced	

NAME OF CRITICAL READER:

DATE:

EVALUATION OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH WRITING: The six Ps of academic writing

STUDENT: _____

Components	Description		COMMENT
Product	• <i>presentation</i>		
	• <i>editing – global and surface</i>		
	• <i>proof-reading</i>		
Process	• <i>conceptual development</i>		
	• <i>developmental process of writing</i>		
	• <i>evidence of iterative cycles of process</i>		
	• <i>edit of final product</i>		
Purpose	• <i>awareness of audience</i>		
	• <i>register</i>		
	• <i>tone</i>		
	• <i>style</i>		
Politics	• <i>genre</i>		
	• <i>structure</i>		
	• <i>academic discourse</i>		
	• <i>discipline-specific discourse</i>		
	• <i>development of argument</i>		
Performance	• <i>hedging</i>		
	• <i>sentence construction</i>		
	• <i>paragraphing and links between</i>		
	• <i>use of discourse markers</i>		
	• <i>use of appropriate vocabulary</i>		
Plagiarism	• <i>punctuation, spelling</i>		
	• <i>summarising</i>		
	• <i>paraphrasing</i>		
	• <i>integration of literature</i>		
	• <i>emerging voice</i>		
	• <i>emerging identity</i>		
	• <i>use in-text citing</i>		
	• <i>referencing</i>		

