

Research Article

An exploration of the challenges faced by Grade 12 English learners in creative writing

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Abstract

Background: Writing in English has always posed challenges to English First Additional Language (ENGFAL) learners. This study focused on challenges faced by Grade 12 learners in creative writing. The challenges related to the learners' inability to implement process writing strategies.

Objectives: The objectives of the study were to explore the challenges faced by Grade 12 learners in creative writing and also to design intervention strategies for the challenges experienced.

Method: The study adopted the qualitative research paradigm. A phenomenological research design underpinned the study. The participants included twelve Grade 12 learners and two Grade 12 ENGFAL teachers. Data collection methods such as classroom observation, teacher interviews and document analysis were used in the study. Data collection instruments such as a tape recorder, observation schedule and interview schedule were adopted. Collected data relevant to the study was then transcribed, coded and analysed using the inductive method.

Results: The results indicated that learners' inability to properly implement process writing strategies was due to lack of detailed knowledge of what each stage requires them to do during writing. Lack of vocabulary also resulted in learners writing sub-standard sentences.

Conclusion: The study recommended intervention strategies that would assist learners to improve in creative writing. Explicit teaching of process writing stages was recommended so that learners would familiarise themselves with the requirements of the stages. Other intervention strategies include vocabulary based teaching, learners' exposure to more English reading materials so that they can improve spelling and encouraging collaborative learning in writing.

Introduction

Many writing studies were conducted in English Second Language (ESL) writing. ESL and ENGFAL refer to the same language, and would therefore, be used interchangeably in the study. In a document called Curriculum Assessment and Policy Statement (CAPS), the Department of Basic Education (DBE) (2011) expects that by the time learners reach Grade 12, they would have developed interpersonal and cognitive writing skills which would help them produce well written texts (DBE, 2011). The CAPS document which serves as DBE's writing policy aims to guide teachers on how to teach writing in different grades so that by the time they reach Grade 12, they would be proficient in writing. However, Grade 12 learners' writing, contrary to DBE's expectation, continue to lack appropriate process writing skills as they produce writing activities that are not compliant with process writing requirements as per CAPS document. Some learners fail to plan, draft, edit, revise, proofread and write final drafts before submitting.

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Many researchers believe that ENGFAL is difficult (Abas & Aziz, 2016; Aziz & Yusoff, 2016; Mpiti, 2016; Fareed, Ashraf & Bilal, 2016). South African learners are not precluded from this perception. ESL writing challenges prompted several organisations amongst them, UNESCO (2016), to initiate Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE) programme to help global communities including learners to improve writing skills. In spite of UNESCO's efforts, many researchers' interventions strategies through different studies as well as DBE's writing policy to develop learners' writing, ESL writing remains a huge challenge (Abongdia & Mpiti, 2015). In order to understand the Grade 12 learners' writing challenges, this study sought to explore the challenges so that intervention strategies would be designed to address the challenges experienced. Therefore, the study investigated why learners fail to plan, draft, revise, edit and proofread writing texts.

Literature Review

Different researchers define the concept 'writing' in different ways. Hugo (2016) defines writing as an activity that has to be explicitly taught by teachers to learners. This means that learners' ability to write does not come naturally, but requires teachers to do a lot of scaffolding in a classroom so that they (learners) could develop writing skills. Learners should spend a lot of time practising writing in order to develop their writing skills (Anh, 2019), hence writing is about writing. De Lange, Dippenaar and Anker (2018:3) hold similar views as Hugo (2016) and Anh (2019) on explicit teaching of writing. De Lange et al. (2018) opine that "learners develop and learn writing skills through active participation within their social and cultural contexts, including their classroom". Through writing, learners are able to connect with the world around them (Moses & Mohamad, 2019). Explicit teaching requires the teachers to spend a lot of contact time in the classroom assisting learners to develop their writing skills (Aziz & Yusoff, 2016). However, time constraint is a huge factor.

More teaching time should be allocated to teaching writing hence many researchers believe that writing is difficult, especially, ENGFAL writing. According to the Department of Education's CAPS document, ENGFAL in Grades 10-12, is allocated four and half (4,5) hours per week. The allocated time is shared amongst all four language skills which are listening and speaking, reading and viewing, writing and presenting as well as language structures and conventions. This means each of the four language skills is allocated 1 hour per week. During writing lessons, teachers are expected to assist learners individually, in pairs or in groups. Faraj (2015:139) states that "practising process writing practically with teachers' scaffolding, provides learners with the practice and skills necessary to write a good piece of writing accurately, meaning fully and appropriately". Due to limited time, teachers may not be able to do sufficient scaffolding. Another factor that is related to time constraint is syllabus coverage and completion. DBE expects teachers to complete the syllabus timeously so that much focus would be on revision in the third term, before the commencement of the preparatory examination. Teachers are forced to rush through the writing lessons in the first and the second term so that they would be able to finish the syllabus before the mid- year examination.

Poor writing instruction could contribute to learners' lack of motivation because of due to their inability to develop ideas (vocabulary) and lack of grammar (tense, spelling, sentence construction, just to mention a few). Abas and Aziz (2016:22) believe that "in the process approach classroom, the purpose of instructional activities is to allow the learners to express themselves fluently, think and organize their ideas before writing and revising drafts". Poor vocabulary impedes creativity hence Ngubane, Ntombela and Govendar (2020:2) opine that "writing is a tool for the creation and expression of ideas". Learners could switch to their vernacular language when they do not know how to express ideas in ENGFAL writing (Ekanjume-Ilongo, 2015). Deane (2018:288), suggests that learners' writing can improve if writing instruction does the following:

- Builds prior knowledge by encouraging learners to read intensively (Graham, Liu, Aitken, Ng, Bartlett, Harris & Holzapfel, 2018). This would help learners to write an activity based on what they already know.
- Sets clear achievement goals. When learners know what they need to do to succeed in a writing task, they are more likely to think success is under their control and therefore give more effort and time in their writing (Gillespie & Graham, 2014).
- Provides models to emulate. If teachers model an example of a good piece of writing, learners may improve their writing based on what they have observed (Graham, Harris & Santangelo, 2015).

- Provides frequent opportunities for practice. Familiarity reduces working memory demands (Klingberg, 2010). This could improve not only learners' writing performance but also their reading comprehension, hence writing is about writing.
- Familiarizes learners with relevant vocabulary and spelling (Graham et al, 2015)). This could be done when teachers encourage learners to read more English material so that they could improve their vocabulary. Teachers could teach vocabulary to learners and give them vocabulary related activities. Teachers could also help learners to improve their writing ability by teaching spelling and giving them spelling activities.
- Increases flexibility of expression through exercises like sentence combination (Graham et al., 2015). This would help in essay writing where learners would be expected to use a variety of sentences such as simple, compound and complex sentences.
- Familiarize learners with other language structures and conventions such as the use of tense, punctuation marks, concord, just to mention a few.
- Strengthens general literacy skills by interventions that improve reading comprehension (Graham et al., 2018).

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

Ravichandran, Kretovics, Kirby and Ghosh (2017)' study explored specific writing challenges experienced by international graduate students as well as determining strategies to overcoming the challenges. The study was done through interviews of 15 international graduate students representing a variety of geographic backgrounds and disciplines. Results revealed that students writing showed elements of plagiarism, lacked cohesion and showed grammar and vocabulary challenges. Suggested interventions included feedback from teachers and peers.

Sevgi (2016) conducted a study of 10 Turkish students who were studying English language teaching at a university in Istanbul. The study investigated whether the participants used similar cognitive strategies during planning and content generation when composing a paragraph in their vernacular and English. The results showed that the participants were making use of similar cognitive strategies when they were writing a paragraph in their both languages resulting in first language transfer.

Alfagiri (2018)'s study explored the writing difficulties and challenges that Saudi Arabian English second language students experienced at different levels of proficiency. The research questions asked by the study not only focused on understanding the challenges presented to the students, but also the metacognitive strategies that the students used to solve these challenges (Alfagiri, 2018). The results showed that learners experienced grammar challenges such as tense, spelling, vocabulary, just to mention a few. Muchemwa (2015)'s study

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investigated 129 “form three” learners (equivalent of grade 10 in South Africa) from Solusi High school in Zimbabwe. The study focused on learners’ English creative writing activities as well as on teachers’ writing instruction. The results revealed that learners’ native language knowledge affected their writing output in English as they transferred their vernacular language’s linguistic knowledge into their ESL writing. The study also revealed that some teachers lacked pedagogical knowledge of writing; they could neither write nor teach composition properly. The study suggested that writing teachers should be writers in their own right in order to give proper writing instruction.

Assaf, Ralfe and Steinbach (2016) conducted a study on the learning and classroom instruction of six South African ENGFAL teachers after attending a professional development course that was focused on writing instruction. All the teachers were non-native English speakers who volunteered to be observed in their classroom teaching after the development course. The study revealed that the development courses have helped the teachers to improve their writing instruction.

The above mentioned studies are relevant to this study as both learner and teacher participants are non-native speakers of English.

Research Questions

The study asked the following research questions:

- what are the challenges faced by Grade 12 ENGFAL learners in process writing?
- which teaching strategies are employed by teachers during process writing lessons?
- which intervention strategies could improve learners’ process writing skills?

Theoretical Framework

Vygotsky (1978)’s social learning theory underpins this study. The Vygotskian theory describes the nature of learning in the classroom setting. According to the theory, learning takes place when learners engage in tasks and activities that are manageable within their “Zone of Proximal Development” (ZPD) (Pretorius, 2000). The ZPD is the space that exists between what learners can do independently and what they can do when they are assisted by a more knowledgeable person such as a teacher (Farr, 2014).

The Vygotskian theory is important in this study in the sense teachers are expected to scaffold learners on how to implement process writing during writing lessons. According to Vygotsky (1978), learners may enjoy teachers’ scaffolding until they are able to write process writing compliant activities on their own, and this is the point at which the support is removed (Farr, 2014). Learners who have reached their ZPD, are ready to advance to a stage where they can use their abstract thinking to write high order activities (Molotja &Themane, 2018). Some learners may however, continue to face challenges in process writing despite the teachers’ assistance. Learners’ continued failure to produce process writing compliant activities is said to be outside their ZPD (Farr, 2014).

Krashen (1989)’s hypothesis theory supports the Vygotskian social learning theory. Krashen (1989) argues for the Input Hypothesis (IH) which postulates that successful learning may result from comprehensible input and the Output Hypothesis (OH) which may occur through feedback. The IH is related to scaffolding in the sense that the teacher imparts knowledge by teaching and assisting learners in an ENGFAL process writing classroom. In the OH, learners produce output in the form of written texts.

Brown (2000)’s teaching and learning theory, is also relevant to Vygotsky (1978)’s social learning theory. Brown (2000:7) describes learning as “getting knowledge of a subject or a skill by study, experience or instruction.” Just like in the Vygotskian theory and in Krashen (1989)’s hypothesis theory, a teacher serves as a knowledgeable person who teaches learners through scaffolding in the ENGFAL writing classroom.

Another theory that complements Vygotsky’s social learning theory is the creativity theory. According to Kanematsu and Barry (2016), creativity theory advocates for original work where a new product is created. The

creativity theory links with the social learning theory when learners brainstorm ideas during the creative writing process. Just like in Vygotsky's social learning theory, teachers may support learners by teaching them creative writing stages such as brainstorming, drafting, revising and editing. Some learners may fall short of mastering the process writing stages as they (learners) may differ in how hard or easy they find an activity (Blanco-Herrera, Groves, Lewis, and Gentile, 2015). The learners' failure to learn creative writing stages is linked to the ZPD in the social learning theory.

Research Methodology

Research design

A qualitative research method was used since this study focused on the interaction between learners and educators (Almalki, 2016:291). The phenomenological research paradigm allowed for a deeper understanding of the participants' experience, thoughts and opinions.

Sampling

Mandal (2018:591) states that "qualitative research aims to collect and analyse the responses of a participant at a specific time, place and context". This study was conducted at two (2) secondary schools in Seshego Circuit, Limpopo Province. Learners in Seshego Circuit, study Sepedi as a home language and English as a first additional language. The schools were selected because of their close proximity. A total of number of 12, Grade 12 learners (6 per school) and 2 ENGFAL teachers (one per school) were selected for this study. The 12 learners were selected to participate in this study since Grade 12, is the exit grade of the DBE system, before they enter tertiary education where English is the common medium of communication. Moreover, Grade 12 is the grade at which the DBE expects learners to show high level of proficiency in ENGFAL writing. The 12 learners were selected according to their performance in a preliminary essay that all Grade 12 learners wrote at the two schools. Two (2) higher achieving learners, two (2) average achieving learners and two (2) below average learners per school were selected so that the study would be inclusive of learner performances at different levels of writing.

The two teachers who were also SHL speakers, were purposefully selected so that they could give their professional expertise in the study. One of the educators had six (6) years' ENGFAL teaching experience while the other had sixteen (16) years' ENGFAL teaching experience.

Data collection

Data was collected through observation schedule, interview schedule and documents written by learners. The observation schedule was used to check if learners were active participants and if they took notes which they would refer to at a later stage, when they were given creative writing activities. Learners' personal reflections, insights, ideas, confusions, hunches, initial interpretations and breakthroughs were also observed (Creswell, 2013). Teacher participants' teaching methods during writing lessons were observed in order to ascertain if various stages that are applicable in process writing were taught. An audio-recorder was used as a reminder to what transpired during the observation. The recorded data was then transcribed verbatim in order to analyse the participants' behaviour. The field notes taken at the end of each observation session were clearly rewritten so that they would be able to refer to later, as a reminder of what transpired during writing lessons (Spradley, 2016).

In-depth interviews were conducted with teacher participant in order to get their personal experiences in process writing. Follow up interviews were done with teachers for clarity and to probe more deeply into their experiences (Belleto, 2018). Notes that were taken during teacher participants' response to questions were immediately and legibly rewritten as a reminder to what transpired during the interview. A tape recorder was used as a back-up instrument to record the teacher participants' responses to questions.

Data Analysis

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Raw data collected from observation schedule, was read and reread. Recurring data patterns from the participants' ideas, experiences and expressions were then coded according to similarities and differences that emerged. Data that was not useful in the study was set aside, while relevant data was further coded into themes that were then labelled into basic themes for interpretation. Data collected through an audio recording during observation, was transcribed verbatim and typed so that it would be easy to read. The transcribed data was then compared to the recorded one to check if they are the same (Almeida & Queiros, 2017). The raw data was then read and reread looking for recurring patterns of the participants' ideas, experiences and expressions and then coded according to similarities and differences that emerged.

Data collected from field notes was read several times to check for emerging common themes.

All the above mentioned steps were repeated to ensure authenticity of the findings.

Data collected from interview schedule with teacher participants was transcribed to get a general sense of the ideas and experiences presented (Maldonado, 2017:4). The participants' direct quotations were used so that proper analyses of the participants' experiences could be made (Janesick, 2016). The data was then coded into common themes. Irrelevant data was discarded, while relevant data was coded into reduced common themes or categories that were then labelled into basic themes or categories for interpretation. The participants were asked to read their own interview transcripts for validation and were also asked to agree or disagree with the analysis.

In document analysis, data collected from learner participants' ENGFAL creative writing tasks was read and reread, and just like in observation and interviews, emerging common themes that were relevant to this study, were labelled and then analysed. All irrelevant data was discarded while relevant data was further coded to reduce emerging themes which were then labelled into basic themes for interpretation. Data collected through observation, interview and document analysis was triangulated in order to get the authenticity and reliability of the study.

Results

Data revealed that some learners struggled with development of ideas due to poor vocabulary. The essays that they were given an opportunity to write in document analysis showed that learners repeated wrongly used words in both the first draft and the final draft. Al-Mukdad (2019:305), believes that learners who have challenges in writing development would "write in their own way depending on their understanding and ability". Alfanki (2015) concurs with Mukdad (2019) that not being capable of writing, may be a result of complex nature of learners' writing skills. Some of the words that were incorrectly used were as follows:

- **This** (singular) instead of **these** (plural)
- **Been** (as in perfect tense) instead of **being** (human)
- **Cause** (as a result of) instead of **because** (giving reason)
- **No** (refusing) instead of **know** (knowledge of)
- **Were** (auxiliary verb) instead of **where**(interrogative)

Teacher interviews confirmed learners' poor vocabulary. The teachers said the following about learners' lack of vocabulary when asked about learners' writing challenges during teacher interviews:

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

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

Data also revealed that learners have challenges in spelling as indicated in the two excerpts above. Learners continue to write incorrectly misspelt words despite teachers' attempts to teach spelling as noted during classroom observation. Some of the incorrectly spelt words were "irregular", "mediate", "accomodation", "thier", "skillfull" and "greatful". Second learners who may still be developing their writing skills have to

contend with grammar issues such as spelling, syntax and vocabulary (Pfeiffer and Van der Walt, 2016). Learners may develop an anxiety due to the writing challenges they experience. Learners who have high levels of writing anxiety may write poorly while those with low levels may perform better in writing (Senko, 2016). The researcher noticed during classroom observation that the teachers failed to implement the DBE (2011) recommendations on teaching language in context. If guidelines were followed, teachers would have taught linguistic features such as vocabulary and spelling in the context of writing in order to help learners improve spelling and vocabulary.

The type of teaching instruction that the teacher uses during process writing goes a long way in helping the learners to master the skill of writing. The learners are likely to be proficient if a teacher uses effective teaching methods during writing lessons (Paolini, 2015). Results revealed that teachers mainly used communicative teaching method. The following excerpt are from writing lessons presented by the two teachers:

Teacher X presented a lesson on writing an 'agenda and minutes' of a meeting:

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

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

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

Learner E: *Opening.*

Teacher: *The second item?*

Learner A: *It is welcome and remarks.*

Teacher: *Third on the agenda?*

Learner D: *Roll call and apologies*

Teacher: *Next?*

Learner: *Minutes of the previous meeting.*

The learners seemed to respond positively during the lesson when the teacher was asking questions as she presented the lesson. The teacher also used the modelling method, as she drew an example of a mind-map on the chalkboard for the learners to see how ideas should be put on a mind-map after brainstorming the ideas. Both the communicative method and the modelling method are important in teaching writing because they offer relative ease of use and calmness in the classroom (Ünal, 2017).

Below, is part of essay writing lesson presented by Teacher Y

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The teacher also used the communicative teaching method. It was noted by the researcher that Teacher Y also taught the learners by modelling how something is done, in particular, how to draw a mind map. He demonstrated and discussed with his learners, what to write about in an introduction and a conclusion.

Apart from the communicative and modelling approach, the teachers also used the feedback strategy to help learners' writing skills. Consider the following excerpts from teacher interviews:

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

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

Both Teacher X and Teacher Y gave learners feedback handout to paste in their classwork books. The handouts were also discussed as corrective feedback. Corrective feedback helps learners to see where and how they may be making errors (Sia & Cheung, 2017). The teachers' feedback included critical aspects related to process writing stages as well as language structures and conventions which are related to vocabulary and sentence construction. All these aspects are critical in helping learners produce well written tasks.

Discussion

Learners who have poor vocabulary may not be able to construct meaningful sentences in ENGFAL writing. Such learners would lack words to express their ideas, feelings and beliefs (Moses and Mohamad, 2019). The results of the study showed that sentences and paragraphs that learners wrote, lacked cohesion, and therefore rendered their writing difficult to comprehend. Learners also experienced challenges related to grammar such as spelling, tense and punctuation. The results were the same as Ravichandran et al. (2017)' study which revealed that students' writing lacked cohesion and showed grammar and vocabulary challenges. Studies by Alfagiri (2018), Anh (2019) and Mpiti (2016) also found grammar and vocabulary challenges in English second language learners' writing.

Teacher participants used communicative teaching method by asking learners questions which they responded to. The excerpts in the results section above, show teacher-learner interaction as the lessons continue. The teachers used questions to test learners' basic knowledge of process writing. The pattern used during questioning shows that the interaction is teacher-led (Ngubane et al, 2020). The pattern is similar to the one used in Ngubane et al (2020)' study which investigated the teaching strategies used by teachers in teaching writing. Although learners in the current study seemed to have basic knowledge of process writing, teachers failed to reinforce learners' knowledge by explicitly teaching the process writing stages. The explicit teaching of process writing stages could have armed learners with the requirements of the process writing stages. Learners' basic knowledge of process writing does not mean that they are familiar with all that is required of them in the process writing stages. If learners have explicitly learned the process writing stages, they would know how to execute each step of the stages, and also know how to apply the stages when writing for different audiences and purposes (Graham, Bruch, Fitzgerald, Friedrich, Furgeson, Greene, Kim, Lyskawa, Olson & Smither-Wulsin, 2016).

Teachers also used the modelling method during writing lessons. Modelling could be effective in writing when a teacher after explicitly teaching learners features of process writing stages, starts demonstrating how each stage could be implemented when answering creative writing tasks. Through the scaffolding process, the teachers as knowledgeable persons, demonstrated on the chalkboard, how a mind-map should be drawn (Shabani, 2016). Through Modelling, learners would observe the modelling strategy, then practice it on their

own (Graham, et al, 2016). The researcher observed that teacher participants demonstrated to the learners how a mind-map should be drawn before writing commences. The teachers also gave learners tips on how to arrange ideas on the mind-map, starting with the introduction and ending with the conclusion. The teachers' use of modelling to help learners improve their writing skills is in agreement with Chandra (2015)' study which also emphasised the need for teachers to teach and model classroom behaviours. The teachers in the study, however, failed to demonstrate how the introduction and conclusion should be written.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The objective of the study was to explore the challenges faced by Grade 12 learners in creative writing. The study also sought to design intervention strategies for the challenges experienced. The results indicated that learners' challenges in ENGFAL writing was due to poor vocabulary. The findings also revealed that learners had spelling challenges as their writing displayed traces of misspelt words. Furthermore, the results revealed that although teachers attempted to use modelling during writing instruction, they did not give explicit teaching of process writing stages. Explicit teaching of process writing skills includes teaching of what is required in each of the stages as well as modelling of how the stages should be implemented could help learners to improve writing skills (Chandra, 2015). This is in line with Vygostky (1978)' ZPD where in teachers are expected to explicitly teach and demonstrate process writing stages to learners until the learners no longer need assistance as they would be able to implement the stages on their own.

During classroom observation, there was no attempt on the part of teachers to teach language in context focusing on vocabulary and spelling. In the context of the above, it is recommended that teachers should teach learners linguistic features such as vocabulary and spelling during writing lessons as per DBE (2011) guidelines. Furthermore, teachers should explicitly teach learners process writing stages in order to familiarise the learners with the requirements of each stage. The teachers should not assume that knowing the stages means learners would be able to successfully implement them during writing.

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