

**WHAT DO GRADE 1 LEARNERS WRITE? A STUDY OF LITERACY
DEVELOPMENT AT A MULTILINGUAL PRIMARY SCHOOL IN THE
WESTERN CAPE**

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**A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the Master in
Language Education in the Faculty of Education at the University of the
Western Cape, South Africa.**



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August 2012

Keywords

Writing skills

Literacy development

Multilingualism

Multimodal approach

Multimodal texts

Semiotic resources

Writing Development Continuum Model

Early literacy

Grade 1 learners



Abstract

Research shows that there is a literacy crisis in many South African primary schools, especially in the Foundation and Intermediate Phases (Grades 1 – 6). The latest Annual National Assessments (ANA) results released in 2011 indicate that learners performed below the acceptable literacy levels as the national pass rate for Grade 3 learners was 35% and was 28% for Grade 6 learners (ANA, 2011:6). Research on literacy focuses on reading and there is little known about how young learners develop writing skills.

This qualitative ethnographic study investigated how writing skills are developed in Grade 1 learners by looking at the writing processes as well as the teaching methods used by teachers to develop learners' writing skills. The research also analyzed the texts produced by Grade 1 learners and the languages used in their written texts. The sample group in this research was the Grade 1 learners at a multicultural school in Cape Town.

Data were collected by means of classroom observations, interviews and document analysis. The thematic narrative approach was used to analyze data and the analysis was informed by the Writing Developmental Continuum model and the Multimodal Approach to literacy in order to gain a better understanding of how young learners use language and other forms of writing such as visuals and gestures to construct and convey meaning.

The findings of this research show that Grade 1 learners make use of semiotic resources including the language(s) available in their immediate context to create multimodal texts that incorporate both visual and written features. This shows that young learners represent their world experiences through interpersonal and experiential meanings in language(s) exposed to them. The teacher has a big role to play in developing learners' writing skills and has to employ a variety of pedagogical strategies that support learners to move through the different writing phases before they develop into early writers.

The study concludes that writing is not a linear process but it is a gradual process which depends on a variety of resources and factors which build on learners' prior experiences and creativity.

Declaration

I declare that, *What do Grade 1 learners write? A study of literacy development at a multilingual primary school in the Western Cape* is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university, and that all sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.



ANCYFRIDA PROSPER

28 August 2012

DATE

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, the late father Prosper Mutayoba and the loving and caring mom, Anchilla Mwesiga, for their passion and commitment to educate a girl child. Thanks for empowering me.



Acknowledgements

This study would not have been possible without the precious hands of people who supported me financially, morally and socially.

Firstly, I wish to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Vuyokazi Nomlomo for her unfailing academic support, and for reading all the chapters word by word with valuable feedback. I am deeply thankful to her for supporting my studies financially as the financial support facilitated the completion of this project in due time. Your love and inspiration are invaluable for this work. Thanks so much!

My thanks go to the school where this study was conducted, especially to the principal for granting me an official permission to access the school for the entire duration of the research. Most importantly, my appreciation goes to the Foundation Phase teachers (Grade1-3) for willingly accepting my presence in their classrooms and their cooperation for whatever was required for the study.

The academic support I have received from the Post Graduate Research Programme hosted by Education Faculty has been immensely helpful. This programme sharpened my understanding of research approaches and critical thinking as well as how to make academic arguments when presenting scholarly work. Many thanks are due to the facilitator of this programme, Dr. Neetha Ravjee for her tireless efforts to keep postgraduate students engaged with research issues.

I owe thanks to the Language Education staff, especially Dr Caroline Kerfoot for providing preliminary scrutiny and drawing my attention to some theories that were useful for this study.

My heartfelt of appreciation also goes to the administration staff in the Education Faculty. You have been supportive in many ways I cannot mention. Thanks to Aunt Estelle and the boys for their love and care during my entire study. Your moral support was the driving force throughout my research. Thanks for taking me out on Saturdays to relax. This was the best therapy!

To my family, Princes of the house, my mother in the absence of my father. Your prayers and inspiration to my academic endeavor are significant. I appreciate you, Mama! Thanks to all my siblings for their encouragement to carry on with my post graduate studies before embarking on the world market.

Thanks to my cousin, Alex Matungwa for your concerns about your aunty as you always asked, “when are you coming back home?” I had to work very hard so that I could come back home with something to show you.

My friends, Anna and Ainekisha, thanks for walking with me through my long journey. You are amazing women!

Thanks to my fiancé, Deograthius James for your understanding and courage to keep our long distance relationship working. Your loving and encouraging emails kept me pushing harder to work towards my degree. Thanks for keeping our promise!

God bless you all!



List of acronyms


ANA	Annual National Assessments
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
CELL	Children's Early Literacy Learning
ITEP	Foundation Phase Initial Teacher Education Programmes
LiEP	Language-in-Education Policy
LITNUM	Literacy and Numeracy Strategy
LoLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
LTP	Language Transformation Plan
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NLS	New Literacy Studies
PanSALB	Pan South African Language Board
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SFL	Systemic Functional Linguistics
UWC	University of the Western Cape
WCED	Western Cape Education Department

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Chapter One

Research Background and Context

1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the background to the study and the context in which the research was conducted. It discusses the research problem that was investigated and the research questions which the study sought to address. It also signposts the research aims which guided this study as well as the rationale for pursuing research in the area of literacy. The chapter also presents an outline of the chapters comprising this thesis and ethical statements that were considered in conducting this study. It concludes with an operational definition of key concepts underpinning this study.

1.2 Background to the study

The democratic South African Constitution of 1996 declares eleven languages which should be used for the state's official functions, including educational and governmental meetings. The eleven official languages include nine major indigenous African languages (e.g. Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu) of the country as well as Afrikaans and English which used to be the only official languages prior to democracy. These languages, as stipulated in the Constitution should receive equal treatment to enable people to enjoy their linguistic human right and to be empowered by using their languages in social, cultural, economical and political domains (RSA, 1996). For example, the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) was established to deal with the implementation of the language policy in the country. The PanSALB was then given a task of uplifting the status of indigenous and religious languages which are spoken in South Africa (Ferguson, 2006:10).

The establishment of the new language policy in 1996 is a significant improvement on the language policies of the former undemocratic regime (Webb, 2004:232). Although the democratic South African Constitution (RSA, 1996) acknowledges the need to centralise the major communities by empowering them through the recognition of their languages, it, however, does not give a comprehensive plan that ensures that all languages are acknowledged across the domains of language use. As a result, African languages such as isiXhosa are marginalised in the

education system while English enjoys prestige across domains. This means that the language policy is thus not clear on how it will facilitate the effective reconstruction and transformation of the society through indigenous languages. This is one of the challenges regarding the use of language in education in South Africa. Other challenges include a lack of clear guidance in the formulation of school language policies, inadequate understanding of language policy and the mismatch between the policy and implementation of stipulated policies in schools. It is thus necessary to formulate a comprehensible national language policy with a realistic implementation plan which will lead towards linguistic transformation. By doing so, the languages of the majority have to be acknowledged through the schooling system and may also need to be used across social, economic, political and cultural spheres of life.

The new South Africa Language-in-Education Policy (LiEP, 1997) supports a democratic and additive multilingual approach in education. Multilingualism and multiculturalism are regarded as assets and schools are encouraged to promote multilingualism and to stipulate how they will implement the Policy. The Language- in-Education policy (1997), for example, suggests that schools should (a) use more than one medium of instruction and/or (b) offer additional languages as fully fledged subjects and/or (c) apply special immersion or language maintenance programmes, particularly in cases where learners' home languages are not used as medium of instruction. The central goal of the Language in-Education Policy (LiEP, 1997) therefore, is the preservation of linguistic diversity through the promotion of multilingual education in schools. This basically is meant to ensure that all people across diverse cultural backgrounds are provided access to their home languages. In practice, however, there is little evidence that the additive approach to teaching and learning is being put into effect despite the linguistic and cultural diversity of many South African classrooms.

In the 1996 Constitution, the need to promote multilingualism through schools is central as it seeks to meet linguistic needs of the majority. This is to uplift those languages that were not formerly recognised and people were denied the right to use their languages as they wished. Based on the 1996 Constitution, in 2007, the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) launched the Language Transformation Plan (LTP) with the purpose of promoting six years of mother tongue education and the learning of the third language from grades 7-9 (WCED, 2007). According to the LTP, learners would be taught in their mother tongue at least for six years,

while other two languages would be learnt as subjects. This was an attempt to promote additive multilingualism, whereby children will be acquiring new languages without losing their mother tongue.

Multicultural or multilingual practices allow learners to celebrate and acknowledge their identity (Edwards, 1983:9). The major concern, however, is when learners' languages are undervalued or rejected in the classroom as learners may consequently display withdrawal or disobedience in the teaching-learning process. This is when learners may begin to disrupt the learning activities and refuse to cooperate or even to work on tasks given in class due to their lack of competence in the language used as a medium of instruction. Conversely, if learners' home language receives recognition in the classroom, learners will develop acceptance and high self-esteem. According to Hill (2006:20) this situation appears to suggest that South African learners have to be proficient in at least two languages and that their competences need to be developed over an extended period of time.

The dilemma of multilingualism in South African schools has an influence on learners' literacy levels. Many learners still obtain a low literacy achievement below the expected standard (Howie, Venter and van Staden, 2006:9). Both local and international literacy assessments give a picture that even those learners who are taught in their mother tongue face problems with literacy (Howie *et al.*, 2006; Western Cape Education Department Literacy and Numeracy Strategy, 2006; Hill, 2009). The situation becomes even worse with African languages as they do not have enough books to cater for the majority of learners who speak them as home languages. Many African language speaking children have no access to books written in their mother tongue, and some of these children grow up in homes where parents themselves have low literacy levels and are unable to support their children. There are few books written for young children in African languages. Many African language books do not have illustrations reflecting the African children's cultural context; while the stories in the available books are often eurocentric (Bloch, 1996:25). These illustrations used may not be easy for learners to interpret and comprehend. Lack of multilingual resources including books and teaching personnel become a barrier to learners' literacy development in their own languages. Given the case, the question is how a multilingual literate society can be developed if there are no adequate resources, particularly books in African languages. In light of this, my study focused on how

multilingual resources available in the Grade 1 classroom were used to facilitate or support learners' literacy skills, particularly writing skills. A detailed profile of the school, where the research was conducted is discussed in Chapter 3.

1.3 Research Problem

As discussed earlier, multilingualism is increasingly becoming a part of teaching and learning practices in many South African classrooms and it influences teaching approaches as teachers have to accommodate learners with diverse linguistic backgrounds. Baker (2006:6) defines multilingualism as a situation whereby the person has the ability to speak more than two languages. Multilingual abilities may be acquired differently depending on the linguistic resources to which the person has been exposed. In African contexts, for example, some languages may be learned simultaneously as people get exposure in more than one language in their multilingual communities. Similarly, many young learners encounter languages or varieties of languages in their surroundings which influence the acquisition of bi/multilingual skills. Therefore, this study aimed to understand how Grade 1 learners develop literacy skills in a multilingual classroom, particularly the acquisition of writing skills in different languages.

On the other hand, multilingualism in the classroom has provoked debates about which language should be used for teaching and learning and what approach is suitable to teach literacy in a context where learners have diverse linguistic repertoires (Baker, 2006). This is because some people perceive multilingualism as an impediment to learners' learning progress. However, the purpose of this study is not to address debates associated with multilingualism but to understand the role of multilingualism in literacy development i.e. how multilingualism in the classroom could be used as a resource for developing multilingual literacies in young learners so that they can acquire potential skills in different languages to which they are exposed.

Although the LiEP (1997) promotes additive multilingualism, many schools and teachers still grapple with accommodating language diversity in their teaching as some of them are not proficient in all their learners' home languages. In addition, the problem of numeracy and literacy skills in schools appears to be a global challenge since the majority of school learners are battling to grasp basic literacy skills in learning. Reports based on systemic standardised literacy tests reveal that many learners particularly in developing countries like South Africa, cannot read, write and count (Howie *et al*, 2006, 2007; Hill, 2009). Specifically, local studies that

focused on testing Grade 3 and 6 learners to determine their literacy and numeracy performance have shown poor performance by many South African learners in literacy and numeracy in comparison to learners from other countries (Howie, Venter, van Staden, Zimmerman, Long, Scherman and Archer 2007; Western Cape Education Department, 2006).

In 2002, the Western Cape Education Department, for example, conducted an assessment of reading and numeracy of a representative sample of Grade 3 learners in all schools across the province. The assessment outcomes indicated that most learners' performances in the province were lower than what was expected of them to successfully learn and develop the basic skills (Western Cape Education Department Literacy and Numeracy Strategy, 2006:3). The overall report also reveals that only 36% of learners achieved the reading and numeracy outcomes expected of Grade 3 learners and the majority of Grade 3 learners were two to three years behind the predictable performance (WCED LITNUM Strategy, 2006-2016). As a result, both the national and provincial governments had to strategise their future plans in order to address literacy and numeracy crisis facing the schooling system.

South Africa has the most developed infrastructure than other neighboring African countries, and it is reasonable to assume that teaching and learning would be of high standard, with better academic achievement in all subjects. Yet learners' literacy and numeracy levels are disappointing as revealed in the systemic evaluation results as South Africa came at the bottom in terms of learners' achievement (Howie *et al.*, 2006). The latest Annual National Assessments (ANA) results released in 2011 indicate that the quality of basic education in the country is below the acceptable level because the percentage of learners who achieved an acceptable level of literacy performance ranged from 12% to 31% (ANA, 2011:6). Although the Western Cape is one of the best performing provinces in the country, the results, however, show that the performance of Grade 3 learners in literacy is below the expected standard. These literacy results stress the critical state the National Education Department is in and the need to pay a particular attention to numeracy and literacy in the Foundation Phase. Most importantly, the focus on literacy should equally be at strengthening and developing both reading and writing skills.

There are several barriers or factors associated with learners' poor literacy development in many South African schools. These barriers include many socio-economic factors which have to do

with poverty, lack of adequate resources and the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT). For example, the analysis of the ANA report of 2011 noted that schools in quintiles 1 and 2 need more support to improve literacy and numeracy performance in their schools as learners' achievement were lower compared to that of learners from other schools (ANA, 2011: 7). Quintiles 1 and 2 schools are located in low socio-economic status areas with high poverty rates e.g. in rural area and in black townships and many of the learners in these schools do not get exposure to literacy and numeracy activities before they enter schools, e.g. engagement with print such as text books, illiterate parents, lack of parental support and many others. Therefore, children from low economic backgrounds or impoverished homes with limited linguistic and print exposure are disadvantaged with respect to literacy development when compared to children from the rich print environments and middle class or well informed parents who are able to support their children's learning progress (WCED LITNUM Strategy, 2006). The school that has been featured in this study was experiencing similar poverty problems as the majority of parents could not even afford to pay school fees.

Literacy has globally drawn attention and continues to be a problem throughout the schooling system in many countries (Howie *et al*, 2006; Western Cape Education Department Literacy and Numeracy Strategy, 2006; Hill, 2009). Although reading has been well explored, there are limited studies done on developing writing in multilingual contexts. Kenner (2000, 2004) and Kress (1994, 2000), for example, have focused on how young learners become literate, specifically learners' engagement with writing and how meanings are communicated through their written texts.

In response to the views expressed above, this study investigated how literacy is developed through writing at Grade 1 level as the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS, 2002) for Grades R – 9 and the National Curriculum Statement (NCS, 2005) for Grades R-12 emphasize the interdependence of reading and writing skills in literacy development. The latest curriculum policy, the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS, 2011) also encourages the integration of language skills i.e. reading, writing and critical thinking in all subjects in Grade 1 in order to support literacy development. Thus, this study looked at literacy teaching and learning processes and support which the learners got from teachers to successfully acquire writing skills. This research study is situated within the area of literacy, and focuses

specifically on the writing development of Grade 1 learners because I believed that writing is an aspect of literacy which is critical for cognitive and affective development. Given the complexity of literacy, this study is informed by the Multimodal Approach to Literacy and examines not only writing, but also other inclusions such as sounds, letters, graphics, and pictures that learners use to communicate and make meaning of texts. I propose to discuss the multimodal approach at length in the next chapter.

This study was conducted in a multilingual and multicultural school which caters for learners from diverse socio-economic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. However, the language of instruction in the school was mainly English. However, the Foundation Phase classes Grades (1-3) followed a multilingual approach to learning as learners were exposed to literacy in the three dominant languages of the Western Cape namely English, isiXhosa and Afrikaans. The multilingual approach in this case refers to the simultaneous use of two languages in teaching literacy in the Foundation Phase where English is used as the main language of Learning and Teaching. This research focused on Grade 1 as it is the first grade of formal schooling where the foundation is laid for subsequent learning and literacy development.

1.4 Rationale for the study

The motivation for conducting this study is threefold. Firstly, this study was influenced by my passion for school literacy as it is increasingly becoming a critical problem in children's education globally. My interest in literacy was stimulated during my teaching practice in schools when I was studying for the Bachelor of Education (B. Ed) degree which provided me an opportunity to observe what was happening in some of the Western Cape classrooms. I was anguished by learners' underdeveloped writing skills in the Intermediate and Senior Phases (Grades 4-9). I noted that most of the learners showed interest in the lessons and were cooperative during the lessons, but could not write clearly to express their understanding of what they learnt. Such an experience challenged me to question what was happening in the lower grades with regard to literacy practices. Thus, I decided to further my studies in literacy, and focus on writing development in the Grade 1 classroom in order to gain a better understanding of teacher and learner practices with regard to the development of learners' writing skills.

Secondly, a number of studies have been conducted on literacy development. Some of these studies follow a modernist point of view which defines literacy as just reading and writing skills whereas recent studies apply a postmodernist view which subscribes to multiple literacies and multilingual literacies due to the sophisticated socio-cultural activities and diverse linguistic backgrounds in the society (Gregory, 1997; Martin-Jones and Jones, 2000; Street, 2001; Stein, 2008). For instance, Prinsloo and Stein (2004), Hill (2009), Bloch (1996) are some of the South African scholars who have researched on literacy in schools. For example, Bloch (1996) looked at learners' reading and writing skills in their early years of schooling. However, there is limited research on how young learners develop writing skills in South African Grade 1 classrooms although few scholars such as Kenner, (2000, 2004) and Kress, (1994, 1997) have made a contribution to our understanding of young learners' writing literacy from a European perspective. This shows that there is a need for more research in this area, particularly in multilingual contexts in order to understand how young learners develop writing skills in their early years of schooling when they are exposed to multilingual materials.

The Foundation Phase which comprises the first 3 years of schooling (Grades 1-3) is the most critical stage of school education and the quality and delivery of the learning content impacts on subsequent learning. It is against this background that this study focused on the processes underlying the writing development of Grade 1 learners as their writing expresses not only their understanding but also their feelings and attitudes.

Finally, the provision of multilingual reading materials in English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa in the school where the research was conducted influenced my decision to conduct research at this school. The multilingual readers were provided in a series for Grades 1-3 by a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) project which aimed at promoting multilingual practices in selected schools in the Western Cape. Teachers used these books in different ways to develop literacy, i.e. both reading and writing skills in young learners. I was interested to understand the influence of multilingual reading materials in developing Grade 1 learners' writing skills as the Foundation Phase curriculum expresses the need to expose learners to authentic materials and writing (RNCS, 2002).

1.5 Aims and Objective for the study

The study investigated the process of developing writing skills in a multilingual Grade 1 classroom. The general purpose of this study was to examine and understand how Grade 1 learners develop writing skills and the role of the teacher/s in the development of learners' writing skills.

The research objectives are:

- (i) To examine and analyze the different kinds of texts which young learners produce in a multilingual setting.
- (ii) To investigate Grade 1 teacher and learner literacy practices and the extent to which they enhance writing skills.
- (iii) To observe how teachers support and assess Grade 1 learners' writing skills.

1.6 Research questions

The main research question which this study seeks to address is: What do Grade 1 learners write in multilingual contexts?

In light of this, I have proposed the following sub-questions in order to unpack the broad research question mentioned above.

- (i) What kind of genres do Grade 1 learners write?
- (ii) What are the approaches and strategies of developing learners' writing skills in a multilingual Grade 1 classroom?
- (iii) What support do learners receive from teachers to develop their writing skills?
- (iv) How do teachers assess learners' writing activities?

1.7 Research Methodology

The study followed a qualitative epistemology to study people's behavior, action and events in relation to their daily experiences (Mouton and Babbie 2001:53). The underlying approach falls within an interpretive framework which involves an understanding and interpretation of people's actions. Given the nature of the qualitative design, the study employed ethnographic single case study principles/methods to collect information to address research questions. The research was situated around a single case because it was the Grade 1 class only which was involved in this study.

The study made use of qualitative/ethnographic methods, namely observations, interviews and documentary analysis. These methods were suitable for data collection because observations afforded me an opportunity to spend time in the Grade 1 classroom to understand and interpret how learners engage with writing as they develop literacy skills. An extended period of time was spent in the Grade 1 in particular, to observe what learners wrote at different phases of the year in order to trace how learners' writing develops over time. An interview with the Grade 1 teacher was necessary for this study as I wanted to understand the teacher's practices with regard to the development of writing in young learners. In addition, an analysis of learners' literacy work was necessary for the study in order to understand the kinds of texts young learners create and meanings communicated through the texts they wrote.

The collected data were analyzed qualitatively with the purpose of getting a deeper meaning represented in the data in relation to the context where the study was carried out. The analytical framework used in this study is informed by theories on New Literacy Studies (NLS), the Multimodal Approach to literacy and the Writing Developmental Continuum model. The research design, data collection procedures and data analysis are discussed in detail in Chapters 3, 4 and 5 respectively.

1.8 Significance of the study

This research project is meant to contribute towards literacy development in the Foundation Phase. It can yield new insights related to literacy teaching approaches in multilingual classrooms. Thus the study results can be valuable to the Foundation Phase Initial Teacher Education Programmes (ITEP) as well as to curriculum developers and Foundation Phase teachers as they shed light on how learners develop writing skills in the first year of schooling.

The study does not only impact on ITEP and teacher practices as mentioned above, but also the National Department of Education which will benefit from the findings as they illustrate teacher and learner literacy practices in Grade 1. This could guide the curriculum advisors on the nature of intervention programmes that could promote effective literacy development practices in Foundation Phase.

1.9 Chapter Outline

This study comprises 6 chapters and they are shown below:

Chapter 1

In Chapter 1, I provide the introduction and background to the study. I contextualize the study by looking at different national government policies and provincial departmental policies in relation to literacy development in schools. I also focus on local and international studies that have been conducted on literacy in schools in order to understand how critical and complex the literacy problem is so that I can determine the knowledge gap that my study can attempt to fill.

Chapter 2

The second chapter is about the review of relevant literature and conceptual framework. This chapter captures issues of literacy and literacy development with specific reference to writing, and the Multimodal Approach to literacy development in a multilingual context. It outlines the Writing Developmental Continuum model as it informs the analysis of learners' texts in chapter 5.



Chapter 3

Chapter 3 discusses the methodological issues relevant to my study. This chapter states and explains the research paradigm which informs my study, research methods and procedures of data collection and unit of analysis. Ethical statement forms part of this chapter whereby ethical procedures are explained.

Chapter 4

Data presentation and analysis are the mainstays in Chapter 4 of this thesis. The collected data are presented and analyzed using informed knowledge from these theories: Literacy and literacy development, Writing Developmental Continuum Model and Multimodal Approach to literacy. This chapter presents and discusses data associated with teacher practices which include the teaching approaches used to support learners' writing development. The New Literacy Framework and complementary literatures are meant to inform the analysis.

Chapter 5

Chapter 5 presents and analyses data related to learners' literacy practices from the texts they produced. It traces and analyses learners' writing progress over a period of time utilizing the Writing Developmental Continuum Model in conjunction with the Multimodal Literacy Theory to understand learners' texts and how their writing changed over time. The Multimodal Analytical Tool was used to understand elements in learners' visual and written texts. In addition, the experiential meaning drawn from Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) was used to understand different meanings carried through young learners' written texts as they represent their experiences.

Chapter 6

In Chapter (Chapter 6) of the thesis I present: the research findings. On the basis of the findings, conclusions drawn on the basis of the findings and recommendations on how the literacy problem in relation to writing could be addressed in the classroom. I also identify gaps which could be further explored in future research.

1.10 Definition of key concepts

Writing

There are many ways of understanding writing. In this study writing refers to skills which cannot be separated from literacy as learners are taught how to use pencils and papers to produce meaningful texts. The term “writing” is used in this study to represent visual systems such as images, drawings and pictures that Grade 1 learners produce as part of visual literacy.

Literacy development

This study uses the term “literacy development” to refer to a process through which learners go in their early years of schooling as they develop skills such as reading and writing which are necessary for further learning. Reading and writing skills are interrelated and they need to be learnt concurrently. Therefore, this study acknowledges the interdependence of literacy skills in the sense that writing development cannot be understood in isolation of other language skills.

Multilingual and multicultural classroom

Multilingualism and multiculturalism are used as focal points in this study to acknowledge cultural and language diversity in the Grade 1 classroom. South Africa is a multilingual and multicultural society where people share languages or language varieties and cultural norms, values and practices. In the school where this study was conducted, learners came from different language and cultural backgrounds.

Multimodal texts

Multimodal text is an appropriate phrase used to define Grade 1 learners’ texts since they make use of many semiotic resources which involve multiple modes to create their texts. The term is used in this study to refer to texts that incorporate both visual and written features of language. Grade 1 learners produce texts that have pictures or symbols together with letters or words.

Semiotic resources

Semiotic resources in this study represent the different resources that are used to create or to communicate multimodal meaning. In this study, Grade 1 learners use papers, pencils, boards, stickers, colours and rulers to create multimodal texts. Similarly, the teacher uses various resources such as the white board or chalk board, books, computers, and overhead projector to facilitate the composition of multimodal meanings which cannot be represented through written language only.

1.11 Conclusion

This is an introductory chapter which has so far presented the background to the study by analysing language education policies and the extent to which they influence literacy development in the Grade 1 classroom. It has discussed the literacy problem in South African schools by referring to international and local studies which report on literacy challenges. The chapter served as a motivation or rationale for the research, along with the objectives and research questions which guided the study. It highlighted the research design and methods used in this study and finally presented a chapter outline of the thesis. I propose to use the next chapter to present a review of relevant literature and conceptual framework which will cover relevant theories in relation to the research questions underpinning this study.

Chapter Two

Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to review relevant literature and to discuss conceptual framework underlying this study. The conceptual framework discussed in this chapter is based on three key concepts: the Multimodal Approach to literacy, the Writing Developmental Continuum and New Literacy Studies. The Multimodal Approach to literacy and the Writing Developmental Continuum are of significance to this study as they illuminate the nature of texts that Grade 1 learners produce while the New Literacy Studies framework (NLS) is discussed to gain a deeper insight into the contested views regarding literacy and literacy development in multilingual contexts.

I propose to use the first part of this chapter to present the conceptual framework, which covers debates on the controversial notion of literacy from the New Literacy Studies perspective and use the following sections to cover the broad discussion on writing development and the teaching and learning of writing in a multilingual context drawing on Multimodal Literacy, the Writing Developmental Model and other literature relevant to this study. Although this study focuses on writing development, there is an in-depth discussion of writing as this concept cannot be understood in isolation of other language skills such as speaking, reading and critical thinking. Thus I have started by conceptualizing “literacy” in order to highlight the different views associated with this concept.

2.2 Literacy Models

Literacy is defined within two contested schools of thought, namely the autonomous or independent (or traditional) view of literacy and the ideological perspective of literacy which is presented within the New Literacy Studies framework (NLS) (Street, 1984). The traditional view regards literacy as only reading and writing and it takes into account the abilities and skills the person learns from the formal settings such as schools (Goody, 1968). Literacy as ability to read and write is restricted to human cognitive ability which does not necessarily match with the changing world of diverse socio-cultural and linguistic contexts. This means that understanding

literacy as only reading and writing in a multilingual and multicultural world of technology may be misleading. The purpose of this discussion is to highlight literacy debates and models in relation to the teaching and learning multilingual literacies in the early years of schooling, i.e. in Grade 1. The following discussion draws a distinction between the autonomous and ideological models of literacy.

2.2.1 Autonomous model

As mentioned above, the autonomous model refers to literacy as an independent entity. Literacy is presented as a neutral and universal entity limited to person's ability to read and write only. Basically, this model treats literacy as fixed and the same across cultures because it does not take into account the socio-cultural practice that informs the act of reading and writing (Street, 1984:23). The social implication of the autonomous model is the 'great divide' between the literate and illiterate society as those who have the ability to read and write are defined as literate and those who cannot read and write are defined as illiterate (Goody, 1968). Street (2001) criticizes this model as discriminatory as it does not take into consideration that people engage with texts in different situations which do not necessarily require them to read or write. Hence literacy continues to be defined through the lens of a particular dominant literacy instead of a model that recognizes the multiple forms of literacy which are relevant to a particular society.

In relation to the above, school literacy has been a key determinant of what counts as literacy or illiteracy. This implies that those who are not literate in the terms determined by the school are seen as lacking essential skills such as reading and writing and are often judged to be intellectually, culturally and even morally inferior to others (Martin-Jones and Jones, 2000:68). This judgment does not recognize the oral practices with a set of values and beliefs which people engage with daily and that form part of their literacies and literacy practices.

Literacy practices often trigger a sense of interdependence rather than dependence as people share their skills and knowledge with members of their social group. Although some people may be labelled as 'illiterate' if they cannot read and write, the knowledge and skills they possess about their social cultural practices are necessary for the child's literacy development. This aligns with the New Literacy Studies (NLS), which conceptualizes literacy as social practices;

suggesting that even illiterate people find themselves engaged in various literacy activities which result in many forms of literacy within the society (Street, 2006).

Some ethnographic research on literacy assumes that members of societies with little or no literacy can all perform the same logical functions (Goody, 1968). This implies that a definition of literate and non-literate societies varies with cultural contexts. In other words, in some contexts a person may be literate, while may be illiterate in other contexts. Thus Street (2000:25) proposes that we should rather talk of “literacies” or literacy practices instead of a single, autonomous literacy which may be confusing in different contexts. This is an indication that the boundary between “literate and non-literate” is less obvious than the individual standards of literacy (Doronilla 1996 cited in Street, 2006) which are expressed in various ways in different contexts. In the context of this study, the autonomous views of literacy may be irrelevant given the multiplicity of literacies found in multilingual and multicultural classrooms.

2.2.2 Ideological model

The ideological model is referred to as an alternative literacy model defined within New Literacy Studies Framework (NLS) (Street, 1993) and it critiques the traditional understanding of literacy as suggested in the autonomous model discussed above. The ideological model is more culturally sensitive as it takes into account the local literacy practices that differ from one context to another. This model views the act of reading and writing as a social practice which is not just technical skills, but also a means through which people reflect their knowledge and identity (Street, 2006:13). This implies that meanings and practices of literacies are always rooted in a particular socio-cultural worldview which enables people to make sense of their own practices. For example, the dominant literacy (school or formal literacy) results in the marginalization of other literacies, e.g. school literacy versus home or community literacy. In many cases, the society finds itself conforming to school literacy as the only literacy necessary for every individual to achieve, without acknowledging home or community literacy.

Some literacies, however, have received more attention than others in the past few decades. For example, the formal literacy is a dominant one for its association with reading and writing skills (Street, 2000). Formal literacy entails the skills that are learnt from formal environment such as schools where designed programmes are followed. This kind of literacy perpetuates the idea that

literacy is universally the same and it is achieved in a similar way across societies. It is against this background that a broader understanding of literacy that acknowledges people's daily practices and languages or language varieties is crucial because what counts as literacy in one community might not be applicable to another context.

As pointed out above, the New Literacy Studies perspective seeks to accommodate local literacies that are reflected in people's cultural values and practices. The New Literacy Studies framework dictates recognition of multiple literacies which vary according to time and space but are also contested in relation to power (Stein, 2008). This is to suggest that literacy and literacy practices shift considerably over time as a result of the changing world, particularly the development of science and technology whereby visual and digital literacy increasingly gain privilege in private and public domains. Street (2000:17) suggests the idea of 'pluralism' in literacy which should be referred as 'Literacies'. The use of 'Literacies' instead of 'literacy' is an attempt to overcome the autonomous view of literacy as reading and writing skills only. This view does not only recognize the diverse reading and writing practices but also the different genres, styles and types of texts associated with various activities in different domains. It refers to contexts where social practices take place, as well as social identities attached to these practices (Martin-Jones and Jones, 2000:5).

This implies that literacy does not necessarily have the same meaning or function in all societies, or in all communities within a society. Since literacy does not refer to the ability to read and write only (Delgado-Gaitan, 1990 in Martin-Jones and Jones, 2000:56), we need to understand that the development and function of an individual's literacy is shaped by the structure and organization of the social situations in which literacy is practiced. Different literacy activities in which people engage within socio-cultural contexts equip them with knowledge which makes them literate in various skills.

In the field of New Literacy Studies, researchers have explored the relationship between 'school literacy' as a particular form of cultural capital and other forms of literacy, including those outside school such as community literacy (Baker *et al.*, 2006 cited in Stein, 2008:30). This is because both children and adults engage with various forms of literacy which in one way or another may influence each other. Learners, therefore, move between different forms of literacy knowledge which they encounter in their everyday activities. Learners in the first place

come to school with knowledge from home which includes their home languages and cultural practices. As they enter the school they experience a more formalized knowledge which is more structured, and at this stage they need support to navigate productively the relationship between the different forms of knowledge, i.e. the knowledge produced in school and the knowledge sustained and refined in domains outside school such as home and community. Similarly, multilingual/bilingual Grade 1 learners involved in this study may face difficulties to assimilate the knowledge acquired from home in relation to school literacy as the language used in teaching and learning at school is different from their home languages. Therefore, such learners may require appropriate support from teachers to enable them bridge the gap between home and school knowledge.

However, the New Literacy Studies framework (NLS) has been criticized for its focus on local literacy practices. For example, Brandit & Clinton (2006:67) argue that it is impossible to think about local literacies in this contemporary world without situating them within the context of globalization. This is basically to say that NLS framework does not take into account the influence of the information technology on local literacies. Due to advancement in technology, both written and spoken texts can be represented in multiple modes to communicate the intended meaning. Thus the theories on multimodal approach to literacy become relevant in understanding how children develop literacies in this study. They complement the New Literacy Studies for they locate literacy within the context of complicated technologies including visual and digital literacies.

In this study, the multimodal texts which learners create and engage with using multiple forms such as visuals and written language, (see Chapter 5), are important because such texts communicate a variety of intended meanings. Moreover, referring to literacy as literacies is appropriate because the Grade 1 classrooms are composed of learners from diverse linguistic and cultural contexts. Learners come to school with a variety of literacies which cannot be ignored in the classroom. Therefore, in this study I am interested to see how literacies brought to the multilingual classroom are acknowledged, nurtured and used as a resource for enhancing learners' literacy, particularly in developing writing in the Grade 1 classroom.

The New Literacy Studies framework, therefore, is of particular significance to this study as it provides theoretical underpinnings of literacy situated within socio-cultural practices. In this research, teaching and learning literacy is viewed as a social practice, taking into account multiple literacies which learners bring to the multilingual classroom which include local, visual and digital literacies.

In summary, literacy has multiple definitions. I have noted that literacy is centred around talk on text, which means that the context of literacy practices may be different but the purpose and meaning communicated through a particular text is important. Although formal literacy can be encouraged for young learners to develop, there is a need to minimize the gap between formal literacy and other literacies acquired outside of the structured programmes (e.g. home literacies). Informal literacies may be used as rich resources to support learners' literacy development in formal settings such as the classroom.

2.3 Literacy as a socio-cultural practice

According to Heath (1983:35) literacy is viewed as a social practice that is deep-rooted in relations of power, history and culture. This implies that the socio-cultural landscapes determine what can be termed as literacy or literacy practice. In other words, the social construction of literacy in a particular community or society determines people's understanding and perception of literacy and literacy practices. This is why the views on literacy differ across societies due to different historical backgrounds, cultural practices and power relations in social structures e.g. the family decision maker may have an influence on other members on the choice of appropriate literacy practices in a particular context. Consequently, many scholars subscribe to the idea that literacy is defined within a particular socio-cultural context in which practices and events take place (Street, 1993, 2001); Barton, (1994), Baynham (1995), Gee (1996), Barton & Hamilton, (1998) and Barton *et al.*, (2000).

As mentioned earlier, literacy is viewed as a social practice in this study as it recognises the linguistic and cultural resources, which learners bring to the classroom as a form of home or community literacy. These resources are referred to as 'alternative' literacies, a concept used by Street (1993) to mean literacy other than school literacy which children encounter from peer groups or from home. In the classroom, it is necessary to acknowledge alternative literacies in

order to challenge the dominance of formal literacy which has created confusion of what constitutes literacy. Street (1995:111) emphasizes the significance and the role of formal literacy which learners acquire at school as well as alternative literacies which support the teaching and learning of literacy in the classroom. In other words, learners' prior knowledge and experiences from their immediate environment are important as they lay the groundwork for the acquisition of formal literacy in the classroom. Learners' experiences, therefore, need to be integrated in the teaching and learning of literacy, so that learners may assimilate and then accommodate the new knowledge taught in multilingual classrooms.

Concepts such as literacy practices and literacy events have been used interchangeably to describe the different occasions, contexts and concepts which constitute people's relations as well as people engagement with literacy (Heath, 1983). In this study, literacy practices refer to the classroom interactions between teacher and learners and among learners themselves that are normally centred on texts, whereas the event is seen with reference to how the literacy activities take place in the classroom and within the broader context of the school. On the other hand, literacy events refer to occasions in which "the talk revolves around a piece of writing (text)" Heath (1983:386). This means that any literacy activity involves a text which people engage with through discussion while trying to make meaning of it. In addition, Barton and Hamilton (1998:7) refer to literacy events as activities in social contextual spheres where literacy performs a role. The 'talk' that people engage with have a particular purpose or a role to play depending on the participants involved in the literacy event and practices. For example, the major purpose of engaging with texts in the classroom is to facilitate learning. Literacy events, therefore, are recognizable occurrences which emerge from practices and then in turn are shaped by those practices e.g. oracy, literacy or visuals. This means that when a teacher and learners engage with literacy or visuals as teaching and learning practices, a literacy event also takes place.

Similarly, Street (1995:2) stresses that literacy events are instances in which literacy plays a crucial part in a particular occasion. For instance, literacy events in the classroom would be the activities of teaching and learning, the school cultural practices and the daily routines, which the school has to follow at a given time. This shows that many events taking place in the classroom can be described as literacy practices since the nature of interaction is focusing on teaching and learning activities. In the context of this study, literacy practices and events refer to an act of

teaching and learning literacy and will be used to understand how Grade I learners engage with writing texts in the classroom and the extent to which literacy practices and events enhance their writing skills in the three languages (English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa) to which they were exposed.

2.4 Related Studies in South Africa

Many South African scholars have conducted research studies in the area of literacy where they have explored community or home literacy by looking at how people make use of literacy resources at their workplace and homes (Prinsloo and Breier, 1996; Bloch *et al.*, 2001; Prinsloo 2008; Prinsloo & Stein, 2004; Stein & Slonimsky, 2006). These scholars subscribe to the idea that literacy stretches far beyond reading and writing skills as they look at literacy practices that constitute a multilingual society and the influence of local literacy on formal literacy. Prinsloo and Stein (2004), in particular, used multimodality to look at how South African township children make use of local literacy resources such as fairy-tales, both through spoken and written modes to represent and communicate meanings.

Furthermore, Bloch, Stein and Prinsloo (2001) focused on literacy practices in the classroom by exploring children's experiences with early literacy and the teaching strategies employed in a diverse linguistic classroom to develop reading and writing in Grade 1. For example, Bloch's study was conducted at a multilingual school that employed a dual medium of instruction which means that both English and Afrikaans were used as languages of instruction to African language speakers in the school. The study was situated in Grade R and 1 in some Cape Town schools, focusing on teachers' approaches towards language issues in the multilingual classrooms. The study found that many teachers do not have multilingual literacy skills in the learners' home language particularly in African languages (Bloch 1996:4). As a result, teachers experienced difficulties in teaching how to read and write in unfamiliar languages.

Secondly, learners' home languages such as the African languages are invisible in teaching and learning literacy because some teachers have views that these languages have to be developed at home as part of socio-cultural practices (Bloch, 1996). Furthermore, there is a scarcity of resources in African languages and there are no displayed resources and reading books in isiXhosa. This means that the role of learners' home languages is ignored in learning and the

learners' home languages are not acknowledged or used to facilitate the understanding of the new language. As a result, some teachers do not allow learners to use African languages in class because they cannot speak these languages. This finding underscores the need to train teachers in order to equip them with multilingual literacy skills so that they can be able to function in the multilingual classroom.

Likewise, Prinsloo and Stein's (2004) ethnographic study on early literacy practices conducted at three centres of pre-school and one Grade 1 class in the Western Cape, Gauteng and Limpopo provinces as part of the Children's Early Literacy Learning (CELL) research project looked at children's encounter with early literacy and the implications as readers, writers and carriers after school. They made use of theories of Emergent Literacy, New Literacy Studies and Social Semiotics to analyse how reading, writing and other communicative modalities i.e. drawing, songs, dances are taught and learnt as forms of social literacy practices in and out the school settings. The study found that children can make sense of written language, speech and other communicative modes at the very early age. However, the knowledge and experiences they have are shaped by what they encounter in the informal environment.

The study also used an ethnographic technique to look at how a group of multilingual children engaged with game play creatively and productively by modeling each other and making meaning from different languages and other semiotic resources. It was conducted in a Cape Town township where parents and children in real life were studied through the lens of the social practices aimed at literacy (Prinsloo, 2008). The study noted the gap between what children are capable of doing in an informal setting versus the formal instruction at school as learners are less engaged in learning activities. This is to suggest that the teaching approaches fail to draw on learners' resources and experiences of out of school literacy because the focus is more on talk and print instead of using other resources such as drawings, songs, games and visuals (Prinsloo, 2008:22).

Prinsloo's (2008) study also shows that although learners are learning to make use of multiple-semiotic resources to communicate meaning, the school largely teaches children to use a single mode which is written language. This pin points to the concern that written language has been centralized as the only mode through which people can express themselves, while ignoring other

communicative modalities such as gesture, visuals and posture which are evident in the technological changing world (Kress 1997).

These research studies mentioned earlier, indicate that literacy development is a concern in many South African schools. It is crucial to recognize languages or language varieties that learners bring to the classroom when developing their literacy skills. These languages can be used as resources to enable children acquire literacy skills successfully, i.e. there is a need to develop multilingual literacies particularly in the early years of schooling. More attention on how young learners develop writing skills is also of great necessity because there is dearth of research in this area. This is an area which still needs to be investigated in order to determine the critical problems impinging on learners' literacy development which may affect learners' subsequent writing and achievement across learning disciplines or subjects. Thus this ethnographic study sets out to investigate how learners' writing abilities are developed in a multilingual Grade 1 classroom.

In summary, multilingual literacies in the classroom are relevant as the teaching and learning of literacy does not only take into account the reading and writing ability of learners in a language of instruction, but also considers the processes of how learners engage with texts in written and spoken languages in a diverse linguistic classroom. In this case the teacher has to develop literacy skills in some of the languages or language varieties which learners use in their community. This entails the recognition of learners' home languages while helping the learner to develop necessary skills that are required in the formal learning environment. In line with the view proposed by the New Literacy Studies, multiple forms of literacy are promoted as literacy acquired from home is integrated in the teaching and learning of new knowledge at school.

2.5 Multimodal Perspectives on Literacy Development

The above discussion is informed by the New Literacy Studies and it highlights different views on literacy in relation to literacy development in the multilingual classroom. In this section I wish to focus on the theories of Multimodal Literacy Approach and the Writing Developmental Continuum Model. According to Jewitt and Kress (2003:9) the multimodal approach to literacy, also known as multimodal literacy or multimodality is informed by the semiotic theory which was adopted from the social semiotics theory of Halliday (1978). The influence of social

semiotic theory on multimodal literacy has resulted in the creation of the multimodal analytical tool for the purpose of analysing multimodal texts (Stenglin and Iedema, 2001:194). This tool will be discussed in Chapter 4 as it has been used in this study to analyze learners' visual and written texts to understand the signs and messages they produced to communicate meaning in their writing.

The Writing Developmental Continuum was developed by the Education Department of Western Australia from the literacy research which involved children who are English mother tongue speakers in Australia. This tool was designed to help teachers track learners' phases of writing development by looking at what and how learners could do as far as writing was concerned in order to inform the teachers' planning (Raison, 1994:2). I draw on some of the indicators of the writing development in this study to understand Grade 1's developmental stages of writing, although I am aware that there could be some inconsistencies as the Australian model was meant for English home language speakers, while the learners involved in this study were English second language speakers. Furthermore, there are differences in the South African and Australian socio-political make-ups, and all these limitations have been taken consideration in analyzing the learners' written work in Chapter 5.

The above mentioned theories are interdependent because the Writing Developmental Model does not take into account the visual texts which young learners produce. Therefore, the Multimodal Framework complements the Writing Developmental Continuum as it captures writing, visuals and other modes which enable us to understand literacy development. In the next section, the focus is on understanding literacy as a semiotic resource through which learners communicate their meanings in what they write. The discussion draws mainly on the Multimodal Literacy Approach to unpack literacy, visual literacy and signs in relation to literacy development, particularly writing development in young learners. In the following section I focus on literacy as a means of meaning-making (semiotics).

2.5.1 Literacy and Semiotics

The word "semiotics" originated from the Greek word 'semeion', which means signs. According to (Kress 1997:6) semiotics refers to systems of meaning-making through signs. There are different systems of signs such as language, images and cultural clothing. These

systems are common in our society as people use them to communicate their understanding of issues and experiences. Semiotics includes both literacy and visual literacy in making meaning of texts. The concept 'semiotics' is informed by the theory of social semiotics derived from Halliday (1978), whereby communicating meaning is viewed from ideational, interpersonal and experiential metafunctions perspective (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006:40). This means that people make meaning to represent their experiences, to express their relationships with others in addition to using the language systematically to create texts. In the same way, learners produce purposeful texts which reveal their daily experiences, relationships and the intended meaning through a particular semiotic mode, depending on semiotic resources available at hand to them.

Drawing on the work of several scholars, the discussion unpacks semiotics (the system of meaning-making) as a key feature in literacy development (Kress, 1989); Kress and van Leeuwen 1996, 2006; Jewitt and Kress, 2003). It is the aim of this study to analyze learners' written texts, in particular, by using the experiential meaning in order to understand how young learners use different processes to express what is happening in the world around them. The experiential meaning is a type of function or purpose of language which refers to the use of language to talk about our experiences of the world in which we describe events, participants and circumstances. When analyzing a text for experiential meaning, the three experiential elements need to be identified i.e. processes, participants and circumstances. These elements are useful in the analysis of learners' written texts to identify how young learners use language to represent their world's experiences. Hence signs are viewed as important resources in literacy development.

2.5.2 Signs as literacy resources

Sign-makers use the forms they consider appropriate for the expression of meaning which can be in various forms such as visuals, prints or spoken or oral language (Kress and van Leewen, 2006:7). Children in their early years of schooling, for example, may express themselves in any semiotic mode depending on their interest and what they are exposed to. They make their own representational resources as part of a constant production of signs and the previously produced signs are transformed into new signs. This means that young learners use available resources or modes to produce or reproduce different meanings. Therefore, Kress (1997:76) asserts that signs

are a combination of meaning (signified) and form (signifier) in which the meaning is made in any medium at hand. Generally, the process of making signs depends on the sign maker's interests in selecting particular features of the object to be represented as a form at a given time and the context.

Signs are usually reproduced from the different resources such as sounds, speech, graphics and writing. As Kress (2010:6) claims, new signs are often unconsciously created from the available materials through interaction with the environment.

However, the meanings represented through signs might be understood within a particular context. What young learners produce in writing at a young age reflect their social and cultural contexts. For example, the scribbled letters with drawings that learners produce at their role play phase may be difficult to interpret if the child's context is not understood. Given this, it is possible for learners in multilingual classrooms to produce texts in different languages due to the influence of their diverse linguistic backgrounds. Their texts may also reflect the socio-cultural practices at their homes or in their communities and the nature of genres the child is exposed to both in school or at home. Although young learners' sign-making could be regarded as self expression, particularly in the classroom, it is usually presented through those objects or letters which children write or draw. So, children can express themselves as they wish using multiple semiotic modes to represent and communicate meaning. The child's written text, for example, is a product of their actions which result from the use of representational means. However, young learners may, at the same time, be restricted in terms of their expression due to lack of rich cultural semiotic resources. The presence of sign making resources at learners' disposal provides a range of choices in which they can express themselves in spoken, written, visual or gesture modes.

The child's actions in relation to meaning making have to be understood as productive of their own representational resources and those of the community around them. It should be understood that the signs which children make are fully meaningful although they differ from the signs produced by adults. Thus, Kress and van Leeuwen (1996:13) stress the need for teaching sign systems other than verbal signs since the learning of writing proceeds in exactly the same way as the development of other sign systems such as images. Therefore, there is a need to pay attention to visual literacy in the classroom in order to accommodate what learners have been

exposed to in their daily lives e.g. television, video, computer games, media, etc. This could promote multilingual literacies since visual literacy can be promoted in different languages as learners engage with multimodal texts in different ways. With regard to writing development, the texts young learners write in their early years of schooling need to be regarded as a process through which proper writing conventions could be developed.

2.5.3 Early Literacy and Visual Images

According Kress (1997:13) meaning-making occurs in a socio-cultural environment. This idea aligns with the Western Cape Literacy and Numeracy Strategy (LITNUM Strategy, 2006) which stresses the importance of teaching literacy in context. This means that the learning of phonics, for example, would be not to focus on a particular sound in isolation but to use a particular text to teach different sounds that need to be covered in a certain learning programme. In this case, the use of visual literacy resources such as wall displays of phonics charts, singing rhymes of sounds, etc. could be useful to make the learning activities more meaningful. Also, it should be understood that children come to school with some knowledge of signs. The wide range of media which young learners use before coming to school include toys of various kinds, cardboard boxes, chairs, pens and paper, scissors, paste, paper, colouring etc. These different kinds of media should be acknowledged at school as many of them may be used as resources for teaching and learning literacy. The same idea is encouraged in the Revised National Curriculum Statement of the Foundation Phase Grades R-3 (RNCS, 2002) where the use of games and other kinds of educational puzzles and play are encouraged to develop learners' literacy.

In developing early literacy, children are usually encouraged to produce images. However, these images are often treated as expressions of learners' feelings, desires and emotions instead of recognizing them as forms of communication (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006:15). The (RNCS, 2002) encourages teachers to give constructive feedback on learners' written work in order to improve both their literacy and visual skills. So, it is important that visual products such as drawings created by learners should be thoroughly assessed as written texts in order to increase opportunities for young learners to make meaning through the mode of their choice. That is, the assessment of what the learners write should also take into account the multimodal texts so that learners can make meaning of what they see around them. This implies that the school curriculum and pedagogy need to integrate multimodality as part of literacy development

because it has become part of learners' life due to learners' exposure to various multimodal texts and technological advancement.

What can be deduced from the above discussion is that the construction of meaning which involves the expression materials or resources seems to be influential on the choice of a particular written mode by learners. Although many young learners' texts might be characterized by multiple forms of meaning representation, one may still find that each feature represented in the text stands out for a particular purpose. This implies that there are essential differences of meaning-making by those who produce meanings and those who receive and reconstruct meanings (Kress, 2010:212). This can be due to the new sign being reproduced from the existing sign which may in one way or another lead to the distortion of the intended meaning. Therefore, it is crucial that multimodality is acknowledged when looking at young learners' writing in a multilingual classroom where meaning-making is done through multilayered forms which do not necessarily make one form a dominant feature. This leads us to multimodality of texts which influences learners' literacy development.

2.5.4 Multimodal Literacy

Multimodality refers to the texts which use multiple forms of visual and written texts within the same text to convey multiple meanings (Jewitt and Kress, 2003:6). This is basically to say that any type of text or message is usually presented in a multimodal way. In addition, Stenglin and Iedema (2001:194) state that:

a multimodal text is one in which a number of different modes (words in headings and headlines; images and the written texts themselves) are integrated to form a composite whole.

This means that any type of text including written language text reveals various modes within a single text. A written essay, for example, whether it is typed or hand written, involves various aspects such as its layout of the pages and the type of the grammar used which add meaning to the same text (Kress, 1997:10). Such features become integrally enforced on writing as young writers practise writing. Some scholars recognize the multimodal approach to literacy for its relevance when studying different texts that are produced for specific purposes (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001; Cope and Kalantzis, 2000 cited in Street, 2006:19). The multimodal approach

to literacy, therefore, takes into account the multiplicity of meanings involved in the making of a sign (the combination of form and meaning).

The children's multiple engagement with print, for example, enables them to treat print as a multimodal and complex semiotic system instead of seeing print as a single medium. As children regularly act multimodally, it becomes possible for them to make a way through to the great complexity of alphabetic writing. Kress (2000:28) claims that children's alphabetic writing is multimodal because it is viewed as blocks of prints, letter shapes, media such as newspapers, birthday cards, books, genres, etc. It is also seen as an aesthetic object which can be used in design, a medium of meaning or a drawing of sound. Learners in the classroom usually engage with different types of texts as part of literacy practices which could be described as multimodal. Many texts which may be produced by Grade 1 to Grade 3 involve a lot of visual images and written language which form a multiple mode of a particular text.

Kress (1997:96) also states that children make use of multiple ways in which they make meanings as well as the multiplicity of modes, means, forms, materials, etc. which they employ in order to convey their multiple meanings. Many of these means and materials, however, may not be recognized by the adult ways of representing meaning through visual and written texts because they might look different from what is normally seen as an appropriate convention of meaning-making. As a result, what young learners produce may rarely be given attention as something that communicates meaning, particularly by adults. The multimodal point of view on literacy, therefore, intends to shift people's ideology from a single mode to multiple modes especially for teaching and learning literacy in multilingual classrooms where it is necessary to understand ways in which children make meaning in different languages.

The multimodal approach to teaching and learning literacy can support a theoretical position that treats all modes as equally significant for meaning and communication. Given the multilingual nature of South African classrooms, a bi/multilingual learner draws on a variety of multilingual resources to represent the multimodal text because multilingualism influences the choice of an appropriate mode to use in the text so that meaning can be communicated in a manner that suits the purpose of the sign maker.

The signs which children make whether conventional or unconventional enable the child to create signs which will communicate the multiple meanings (Kress, 1997:97). For instance, paper material can be used for drawings, colours, sticking together and cut out depending on what is in the mind of the child as well as the meanings the child wants to express. Therefore, the different modes and materials (e.g. paper, pencil, colours etc.) which children utilize in their texts provide different resources for the making of meaning which result in different affective, cognitive and conceptual possibilities (Kress, 1997:97). Children thus make meaning multimodally from the materials they use, the objects they create and their engagement with their bodies.

It should also be understood that the action of writing is itself a multimodal practice that draws on visual and action modes, particularly resources of spatiality and directionality (Kress 2003). These relationships might be encountered when analyzing children's engagement with writing which is possible incorporated with other modes. Therefore, Jewitt and Kress (2003:3) maintain that there is no monomodal communication.

2.6 Learning to write

This section builds on the understanding that writing is developmental especially if learners receive adequate support from teachers, peers and parents. It focuses on different approaches and strategies for teaching writing, particularly to young learners. This approach is relevant as the study focuses on Grade 1 learners who acquire essential writing skills necessary for subsequent learning. The discussion draws on the Writing Developmental Continuum and the South African curriculum documents i.e. the National Curriculum Statement (2002) in order to understand strategic plans for literacy development in a multilingual context. The National Curriculum Statement (NCS, 2002) supports the balanced approach to teaching literacy to young learners whereby language is learnt in context to make the learning activities more meaningful to the learners.

2.6.1 The Writing Developmental Continuum

The Writing Developmental Continuum provides a framework of what learners can do and also highlights key issues that need to be recognized when teaching learners who have English as a second language. The first three phases of the writing continuum include role play writing, experimental writing and early writing (Raison, 1994:21). During the role play phase, learners

begin to experiment with marks on paper to communicate meaning or reproduce what was written by an adult whereas in the experimental phase learners are aware that speech can be written as well as directionality e.g. they understand the organization of words from left to right. In the early writing phase, learners may write a sentence and they may be able to deal with some of the linguistic elements e.g. spelling, differences between capital letters and small letters (Raison, 1994).

When children start writing, they begin to produce texts randomly but as they learn to recognize and form few letters, then they begin to write systematically (Latham, 2002:37). According to the multimodal approach to literacy, children's prints produced either randomly or systematically are regarded important as it is believed that children make use of multiple forms to convey intended meanings. Therefore, a mark which a child makes carries meaning which could probably be explained in a paragraph if the text would be in a written form.

The writing continuum recognizes the fact that learning may not occur in a linear manner because of different learning styles and the diverse backgrounds and experiences which learners bring to the classroom. The continuum can further show that teacher support plays an important role in literacy development and teachers need to monitor the progress of learners in order to discover possible strategies to help them.

The Writing Developmental Continuum (Raison, 1994:15) also states that children's writing develops when they are engaged in purposeful authentic written language tasks which are clearly explained to them. In this case, the teacher needs to take responsibility of the lesson preparation and class activities that will make it possible for learners to develop writing in an appropriate way. Learners should be actively involved in writing as the teacher attends to their needs by explaining and demonstrating how language is used in a particular text. The problem, however, in many African contexts, is the fact that there are few books written in African languages, particularly books for young learners. Many stories tend to be difficult for learners to interpret because they do not represent social and cultural settings of the learners.

As a means of promoting multilingualism in schools, learners should be encouraged to write their stories in languages of their choice, which some of them may be compiled as story books useful for other learners. This study seeks to understand the impact of the language(s) to which

learners are exposed on their literacy development in the multilingual classroom. In this case, the multilingual books had the same content and were printed in three languages; Afrikaans, isiXhosa and English.

2.6.2 Emergent writing

The children's writing practice in early years is referred to as emergent writing (Latham, 2002:40), which means that learners are still developing and trying to make sense of writing. Writing is defined as letters which may either be presented on a page or on a screen, depending on the social contexts in which communication takes place. Children normally become aware of the writing systems at an early stage. For example, in print-rich societies, children are exposed to a wide variety of environmental print, including street and shop signs, posters, labels, leaflets and cards. Children as young as five or six years old, according to Kenner (2004:65) understand the fact that different writing systems work in different ways. Chinese children, for instance, know that Chinese is not alphabetic as it uses characters to represent words whereas Arabic speaking children would know that Arabic writing runs from right to left and that forms of letters change according to their position in the word. This implies that, even multilingual children might be conscious about the distinctive ways of writing in the languages they know. Writing is, therefore, a process that occurs unconsciously depending on the extent to which the child is exposed to rich literacy environment. In multilingual situations like the South African classrooms, the curriculum encourages a more balanced approach to literacy development where the learning of language skills e.g. speaking, listening, reading and writing is situated within the context of the story. In the formal learning environment therefore, the young learner consciously makes sense of the writing systems in the languages taught at school.

Learners' pathway into writing seems to be influenced by the kind of writing materials available at their immediate environment. Kenner (2000) cited in Jewitt & Kress (2003:89) reiterates that the learners' environment may become a constraint or may offer possibilities with regard to the development of writing. This is because lack of writing resources may prohibit the learner to explore and practise writing. In this case, the provision of materials is necessary for young learners to encourage them to write. This includes providing writing tools e.g. pen, colour, pencil and the writing convention of a particular language system. Such provisions are important for learners in their early ages of experimenting with writing. They need to be guided in many

ways as they find their way into writing. Teachers of young learners need to be systematic in a way in order to avoid confusion that may be caused by different language writing systems.

Regarding directionality, for example, learners may still need to find their ways to understand that writing starts from left to the right and from the top to the bottom. In early years of learners' writing, it is possible to find learners who cannot recognise directions but as they get exposed to writing practice, their writing behaviour changes. The above features imply that writing is an organized process that has to follow a systematic order, though it is not a linear process.

From a multimodality point of view, placement in a text may take place on the screen or on the page with multiple texts e.g. writing, image or pictures, depending on the purpose of representation. Kress (2003:66) states that placement is 'the spatial positioning of the mode-elements, materials and it has meaning effects'. The placement of image and writing features on the page or screen denotes that visual entity is also organized in a particular way. This means that although multiple modes may be used in the same texts, they are placed in a way that would make sense to the readers.

Placement in a text determines whether the verbal caption is placed near to the visual unit or distantly, whether an element of writing or image is placed at the top, at the bottom, to the left or to the right, within the same frame, within the visual element or outside the frame (Kress, 2003:66). These features appear to be predominant in learners' texts, particularly in the early years of schooling in which they produce multimodal texts with a variety of semiotic resources for meaning making purposes. However, some of the learners might still be learning appropriate writing conventions at this stage. In this study I am also interested to understand whether directionality and placement of mode elements in learners' written texts change across their learning programmes in the year.

The type of text or writing which learners produce, according to (Kress, 1994:66) can be classified as print rather than as handwriting when learners first encounter a new language. Learners learning to write symbols or letters, for example, become engaged in a creative activity whereby the process is monitored progressively while the learner constantly practices writing and making shapes. In so doing, the outcome might be promising because the learner would have explored multiple forms of communicating meaning. Based on Kress' observations of his

own children, for example, the process of writing a name in young learners provides both inspiration and challenges to the learner, which all support the learning process (Kress, 1994:66).

In learning to write, learners usually display enthusiasm and energy e.g. when children learn to write their own names. This is because the children are eager to experiment with the writing systems of languages that are in their immediate environment. Children can learn writing their names quickly if there is proper support and resources such as the paper to write on and pencil, pen and someone to check their progress. It is important to understand that writing is a developmental process which may require a teacher to monitor the learners closely and improvise on teaching strategies that would enhance the learners' writing skills.

Scholars believe that learners learn to write: when they are surrounded with examples which they can learn from, when they are given an opportunity to make mistakes, when they are provided with positive feedback and given time to practice in realistic ways (Gambrell, Morrow and Pressley 2007:245; Beard, 2000). This implies that learners need to be encouraged to engage with texts from real life situations to facilitate their learning. It is important that teachers provide feedback and offer learners an opportunity to make decisions as they engage with writing, but the texts which learners produce should make sense to them. Similarly, Bloch (1996:6) argues that written language learning, like learning spoken language, should have at its heart the construction of meaning and the expression of creativity of communication. In this case, whatever approach teachers take to develop literacy needs to ensure that learners make meanings out of the learning activities. Besides, as a result of the support that learners get from their teachers and adults, their written texts grow gradually where some words are correctly spelt, while others are attempted in a reasonable way.

During the early years of schooling, learners' writing may be uneven because they largely produce texts with different format or layout regardless of the teachers' preference for a particular format (Latham, 2002:27). This means that, we do not expect Grade 1 learners, for example, to produce similar texts although they may be taught by the same teacher. Learners' written products would vary due to different exposure to writing practices. Also, the language structure is likely to be at first single words or short phrases or headings, and as learners progress with writing, they begin to produce simple short sentences which may lack punctuation marks

such as full stops and capital letters. As the learners continue to learn writing skills within the language contexts, they begin to realize the importance of other elements in a written texts e.g. tenses and punctuation.

The teaching of writing skills such as handwriting and spelling vary considerably from one language to another. The fact that writing systems differ across languages, indicates that even the teaching approaches will considerably be different. Each language has its own distinctive characteristics which seem to be significant for learners to acquire. Handwriting is improved through practice that is not boring to the learners (Edwards, 1983:113). Although the child has to write at a size and speed that is reasonable at that level, the teacher needs to gradually monitor learners' writing to ensure that learners are working towards a reduction of letter size and an increase in speed.

Although vocabulary is not considered a writing convention, it is an important aspect contributing to good writing. It is believed that learners who receive vocabulary instruction that engages them in playful activities using a range of words in rhythms and songs often have more words when it comes to writing (Gambrell *et al.*, 2007:245). This is to suggest that vocabulary development is not only an index of intelligence but also an index of literacy. Such learners usually produce different texts of higher quality than learners who do not receive such instruction. During the vocabulary building lessons in multilingual classrooms, learners need to have access to bi/multilingual dictionaries where they can be encouraged to select words and look for appropriate words to use in their writing. The words of their choice may also be used in creating their own definitions as well as sentences for each word. In doing so, the teacher encourages the development of multilingual literacies whereby learners acquire skills from different languages.

2.7 Literacy Teaching Approaches and Strategies

Although there are various approaches that can be employed in teaching literacy, this study focuses on the whole language approach and phonic approach. The following discussion will unpack these approaches in relation to a balanced approach to literacy development which is supported in the National Revised Curriculum Statement of the Foundation Phase (Grades R-3) (NCS, 2002).

2.7.1 The Balanced Approach

Firstly, “whole-to-parts” also known as whole language approach suggests that sound letter correspondences are best taught in context (Edwards, 2009:14). The focus for this language teaching approach is not on the mechanical decoding of the written word (e.g. understanding letters and spelling in isolation) but the focus is more on equipping children with the strategies they need to make meaning of texts. In this view, understanding does not necessarily depend on the individual’s ability to interpret language components, rather the individual’s knowledge of how language works in the real world is important in learning literacy.

Moreover, the whole language approaches believe that children learn to write by re-inventing the writing system for themselves. This is achieved by observing, generating hypothesis about how to do things, trying things out and evaluating their efforts against examples of conventional writing given by their teacher or an adult (Edwards, 2009:14). In the process, learners come to understand the difference between drawing and writing, and that letters represent words. They also discover spelling and punctuation as they engage with a range of texts.

Whole language approaches are influenced by constructivist notions which are informed by Vygotsky’s (1978) theory. They view the learner as an active contributor to the learning process. In this case the teaching methods preferably place the learner at the centre of learning in order for him/her to become actively involved in the process (Vygotsky 1978 cited in LITNUM Strategy, 2006:7). It is, therefore, necessary for a teacher to offer opportunities for learners to explore and create knowledge as they make sense of what they have been exposed to inside and outside the classroom. This helps learners to become knowledge constructors instead of just receivers of knowledge. In the same way, the whole language approach focuses on equipping children with skills and strategies to make meaning of a text since the learner is regarded as an active contributor to learning.

2.7.2 The Phonic Approach

Contrary to the whole language approaches, the phonics approaches stress the importance of the explicit language teaching of a set of skills independently i.e. from part-to-whole (Edwards, 2009:14). This is to say that the learning of phonics involves an understanding of the relationship between sounds and symbols, and the look and say or the rapid recognition of whole words in isolation. In this approach, the teacher focuses on learners and how they understand the relationship between sounds, letters and how to say sounds and words. For example, when learners learn to write in this approach, they start with letters (or graphemes) which they build into a word, phrases, then sentences and longer texts. When letters are joined together they form a word whereas for reading, the task is to break down a word into its letters, pronounce a phoneme for each letter in the given word and then blend the phonemes to form a word.

It is my point of view that both whole-to-part and part-to-whole teaching language approaches would to some extent need to be incorporated for effective teaching and learning of literacy. In this way these approaches can complement each other because they are both significant, particularly in the development of literacy skills in young learners. On the other hand, the RNCS (2002) puts forward a balanced approach to teaching and learning literacy in the Foundation Phase. Within the balanced approach, the three approaches such as the phonic approach, the look-and-say approach, and the whole language approach are not used in isolation but they are integrated to make sure that young learners develop reading and writing skills successfully. As the balanced approach believes that learners need to be involved in reading real books and writing for genuine purposes, attention should be directed to phonetics to encourage literacy development at the early years of schooling (NCS, 2002:22). The Western Cape Literacy and Numeracy strategy also suggests that explicit teaching of phonics would effectively take place within a whole language approach whereby meaning making is based on the context of the story (LITNUM Strategy, 2006:5). This shows that it is necessary for learners to acquire both reading and writing skills simultaneously since these skills are interdependent and they are fundamental aspects of literacy development.

2.7.3 Reading and Writing in Literacy Development

Kinmount (1990) in (Latham, 2002:45) stresses the importance of the interdependence between reading and writing skills which need to be clearly demonstrated as the learners' literacy experiences develop so that learners become aware of the links between the two languages modes. Therefore, listening to stories and reading them independently or as a group, are vital activities for literacy development among the learners. Importantly, reading a variety of story books does not only make learners enjoy the pleasure of that particular type of text but it also helps them learn about different kinds of texts. Reading stories may lead to knowledge of the narrative type of stories which is dominant in young learners' stories and it can also provide the basis for other kinds of learning. Such activity helps children to understand that the written word is an important medium by which experiences can be extended as they engage with writing.

Through reading practices which may be guided by the teacher or an adult, learners may become familiar with a range of text-types which they can follow in their own writing. For instance, when learners decide to write something based on the topic of their choice, the different genres to which they are exposed would be evident in their written texts. Therefore, exposing learners to reading a variety of texts does not only help with understanding kinds of genres but also the writing convention is learned. Edwards (1983:114) insists that language aspects such as punctuation may be learned through reading and in use. For example, when learners write texts, the influence of punctuation from other texts would be obvious although they may not be consistent in the entire text. Learners will need to be encouraged to write as much as possible in order to get used to the writing rules. It is important that young learners get a close look at each step they take regarding writing in order to guide them to become good writers.

Another strategy which can be used to develop literacy is shared writing, when the teacher writes something for the group based on children's contribution (Latham, 2002:70). In using this strategy, the teacher writes words on the board which have been taken from the story or developed from phonics depending on the focus of the lesson. The teacher gives an example of a sentence based on the words or sounds and thereafter learners give their own sentences. When this strategy is carefully used in the literacy classroom, it enables children to construct their own sentences. However, there is a need for the teacher to pay much attention on what learners say so that they can be helped to rephrase their sentences if they are incorrect. In multilingual

contexts whereby learners might be using their second language as a medium of instruction, the teacher could help learners to construct sentences based on their ideas. The teacher can read back the given sentences while learners follow the teacher. This is a way of scaffolding learners' literacy skills.

2.7.4 Scaffolding Literacy Development

In a multilingual classroom, support or assistance may be rendered through the process of scaffolding to support learners to reach their high achievable levels. Scaffolding, according to Gibbons (2002:40) refers to the continuous support given to the learners to acquire knowledge, skills and values at their potential levels. In this process, learning occurs when the present level of understanding of a learner is understood and then is moved to another level that is within the learner's potential. In many cases the instruction may be learner- centered where learners learn through cooperation while the teacher builds on what learners know by supporting them in a familiar language for learning to take place. Language is regarded as a tool for facilitating the learning process during the scaffolding process. In cases where language becomes a barrier, teachers need to improvise. For example, in multilingual classrooms, teachers can make use of learners who speak the same language to help each other so that they can understand the work.

In multilingual contexts, learners need support with language because the language used mainly as a medium of instruction is often not the learners' home language, especially in many African countries. In this study, for example, the learners' home languages are Afrikaans and isiXhosa while the language used for teaching and learning is mainly English. Learning in a language which is not the home language may be difficult because the second language is often not adequate enough to comprehend literacy and even numeracy. Therefore, whatever teaching and learning methods are adopted in such a scenario, the learner may still be linguistically inadequate to assimilate the knowledge and engage successfully in the learning process. In order to facilitate literacy development, learners need to be given language support which may be provided by the teacher assistant in cases where the teacher is not a speaker of learners' home language (Gibbons, 2002:36).

In addition, Baker (2006:300) states that teacher assistants often work with small groups, helping slow learners and they may sometimes translate, interpret, and create classroom materials. This

creates bilingual or multilingual resources that enable the learners to learn literacy in their home languages while they are acquiring other languages. In addition, the assistant teacher may also be the link between the teacher and home, enabling parents to work together in their children's education by providing necessary support and feedback on the child's literacy progress (Baker, 2006:300).

Scaffolding literacy aims at supporting learners to be able to read and write at an appropriate level associated with the right age group. It is claimed that scaffolding encourages interaction between learner and teacher whereby learners are given some clues of what is expected of them to do in a particular task (Culican, Milburn and Oakley, 2006:8). Scaffolding in literacy development for young learners may help to fill the gap between the home literacy and school literacy, particularly for learners whose first exposure to texts is encountered at school. In such instances, the teacher would need to come between the learners and the new knowledge in order to mediate the learning process for learners to move towards their potential level.

The Western Cape Education Department (WCED) in South Africa, through a pilot project has also employed assistant teachers to help learners to reach their potential, particularly for the Grade 1 classes (LITNUM Strategy, 2006-2011). This approach to literacy as stated in the LITNUM Strategy of 2006-2016 is aimed at addressing low literacy levels which reveal that language can be a barrier to learning. Assistant teachers are given an ongoing training to equip them to become effective in the classroom. Based on the leadership of the teacher, the assistant teacher is able to work with learners in group activities or even individually to support the learning processes. The teacher may also ask the assistant teacher to clarify something in case learners could not understand it in a language in which the teacher presented it. In this instance, language is seen as a resource for learning rather than a problem. The learners' home language is recognized by learning through it while acquiring other languages as well.

2.8 Conclusion

In this chapter I have used a sequence of theoretical discussion to articulate my position on literacy. This meant that the act of learners engaging with literacy in the classroom should be viewed as a social practice due to alternative literacies which learners come with from their home and communities. These literacies include culture, different languages that learners know

before coming to school and visual literacy which they encounter daily at home. Learners are also involved in literacy practices daily, particularly writing, reading and listening to stories. These activities form part of their lives, both in and outside the classroom as their writing develops. This is to suggest that we need to move away from the use of the term 'literacy' to the use of multilingual literacies to refer to diverse linguistic repertoires in our communities and the multiple ways of engaging with text. In addition, teachers' pedagogical strategies and approaches play a role in learners' writing development.

I have further stressed that the learners' exposure to multi semiotic resources influences learners to produce multimodal texts that are visual and written. The multi semiotic resources which learners encounter daily include both visual and literacy resources, starting from their homes or community and at school. This means that the drawings and letters which learners create at their early age of schooling communicate significant meanings which cannot be undermined or ignored at school. In light of this, I concur with Kress (1997:2010) that visual literacy needs to be valued in teaching and learning in the multilingual classroom.

Lastly, multilingualism or bilingualism in the classroom has been viewed as a situation where learners come into the classroom with diverse linguistic backgrounds. I have stated that languages that exist in the classroom where one language is used mainly as medium of instruction can be used as resources rather than to be seen as a problem for teaching and learning. The teacher in this case may use the advantage of having diverse linguistic repertoires to facilitate the learning process. The teacher may either use learners to tutor each other through the collaborative approach or parents, community workers and teacher assistants may come in class to assist learners understand another language through their language. In so doing, learners' home literacy is being recognized while learning is taking place.

In the next chapter I will explain in depth the methodological paradigm and the research design and procedures used in data collection in this study.

Chapter Three

Research Methodology

3.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present and discuss the methodological framework, research design and data collection techniques and how they have been applied in this study. Firstly, the chapter provides a description of the research framework or the paradigm which informs this study. Thereafter, data collection procedures are explicated in order to give a clear account of how the data collection process occurred. The chapter also explains the sampling processes and the selection criteria for the research participants. The chapter concludes with a discussion of research ethical procedures, reflexivity and limitations of the study.

3.2. Research Paradigm and Design

This study adopted a qualitative research approach underpinned by an interpretive paradigm in studying literacy development, particularly how Grade 1 learners' writing develops over time. The qualitative approach is the most common research approach in social sciences which entails studying human behaviour from the 'emic' or the insider's perspective (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:53). In this study, I have considered the insider's perspective as my own interpretation of data, which was informed by the respondents' experiences as I tried to make sense of what I observed in the teachers' and learners' natural setting (i.e. the classroom) with regard to literacy teaching and learning.

The interpretive paradigm believes that the different viewpoints of how the world is constructed can be better understood from the natural settings where events and actions take place (Henning, van Rensburg and Smit, 2004:20). In other words, the world is interpreted and understood through different processes of observations and multiple perspectives which account for the research context. In this study the natural setting refers to the classroom context in which literacy actions and events of the participants of my study and it portrays the participants' daily experiences. The interpretive theoretical paradigm is relevant to this study as it enabled me to understand and interpret Grade 1 learners' writing and the different teaching approaches used by teachers to develop learners' writing skills in a multilingual classroom. Its strength lies in the

role and importance of context when interpreting and understanding actions of the participants (Henning *et al.*, 2004:20). The description of Grade 1 learners' writing progress as well as teachers' behaviour and construction of meanings in relation to the multilingual context was thus inevitable in this study. My presence in the classroom did not interfere with the teacher's practices as I wanted to study both the teacher and learners' actions and processes as they arose naturally during the teaching and learning process.

Qualitative research is characterized by a number of social aspects which include the social organization and interactional relationships of a particular social group under study (Strauss and Corbin, 1990:17). This implies that the researcher needs to understand how a particular social institution is organized and the kind of interactions within the group in relation to other social structures. Qualitative research, therefore, is about studying people's lived experiences whereby actions and events involved in daily practices are noted when gathering information for research purposes.

The qualitative research approach is well known for its interests on 'quality' rather than 'quantity'. This implies that studying people's behavior and attitudes is better reflected in their 'natural setting', hence it is referred to as a "naturalistic inquiry" (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:270). The qualitative researcher, therefore, needs to study the actions and events as they occur in a particular social context, focusing on what, how and why things happened in that particular way in a given context rather than the outcome of people's doings (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:270). Such an understanding informs the researcher about the reality of people's lived experiences which may not be well captured by means of controlled experiments or for that matter by a raft of statistics/numbers. In this study, the participants' experiences and actions were captured as they happened in the classroom by means of observations and field notes, particularly during the literacy lessons. I have then been able to provide an in-depth description of learners' and teachers' literacy behavior during literacy lessons.

Qualitative research is associated with many research designs such as ethnographic studies, case studies and life histories. In this study I adopted an ethnographic case study design as I wanted to trace literacy development processes over an extended period of time in order to determine how Grade 1 learners' writing developed and changed over a period of six months. It was also

important for me to observe and understand classroom practices pertaining to literacy teaching and learning in Grade 1. Thus, I spent six months in the Grade 1 classroom so that I could immerse into the daily literacy practices and events in this class.

3.2.1. Qualitative Ethnographic Case Study Design

As mentioned earlier, I followed a qualitative ethnographic case study design in order to gain a comprehensive and a more definitive picture of what was happening in the classroom where I conducted my research. Stake (1995:8) points out that a case study design relies on a variety sources of data collected through various techniques that respond to research questions.

This study is a single case investigation which involved the Grade 1 class only. Observations, interviews and documents analysis were used for data collection in order to get deeper meanings of literacy practices. This design was an appropriate choice as I believed that it could provide me with an understanding of literacy in the multilingual classroom from a socio-cultural perspective. It offered a wide range of data which illuminated how literacy is developed, particularly tracking the progress of learners' writing at their first year of formal schooling. In this study any actions and events that took place in literacy lessons were regarded important because they formed part of both teachers' and learners' behavior in daily classroom practices. This is consistent with Fetterman's (1989:11) idea that ethnography is an inquiry which focuses on the more predictable patterns of human thought and behaviour.

An ethnographer needs to seek for a 'deeper immersion' for the sake of understanding research participants' daily practices (Emerson *et al.*, 1995). It is, therefore, necessary for the researcher to immerse himself/herself in the research field in order to study people's social reality and to gather personal experiences. This is in line with this statement:

With immersion, the field researcher sees from the inside how people lead their lives, how they carry out their daily rounds of activities, what they find meaningful, and how they do so (Emerson *et al.*, 1995:2).

Further to this, we could refer to Spradley (1979:187) who mentions the three types of immersion which define ethnographic design namely, total immersion, partial immersion and spot immersion. In this study, I have followed partial immersion because I did not live in the area where learners came from to get acquainted with their cultural practices at their homes and

in the entire community. Although I learnt both the school and the classroom culture in terms of literacy practices, I could not learn all the diverse languages spoken by learners which might possibly qualify this study to a total immersion. Though I followed partial immersion, I spent sufficient time in the field to observe and monitor the development of writing in young learners. My partial immersion in the school afforded me an opportunity to understand and interpret the experienced events and actions in context (see Chapter 4).

Yin (2009:20) mentions different applications of a case study design in research enquiry, some of which tie in with ethnographic requirements e.g. to explain the phenomenon and to describe things or situations as they happen in a certain context. An understanding of context in ethnographic studies helps to provide 'thick' rather than 'thin' description. Henning et al., (2004:7) assert that behind descriptive studies is not to generalize the events the researcher encountered in the classroom, but what is important is to understand the events occurring in a particular context. Hence understanding the context and meaning is the central feature of ethnographic studies (Geertz, 1973). This implies that whatever is seen in the immediate context of the subject studied might not provide an in-depth meaning unless the researcher looks beyond the events that occur in the research context. I had to take this into consideration when doing my research as I had to familiarize myself with the socio-cultural backgrounds of the learners and the school context before understanding and interpreting meaning from the daily literacy practices. Therefore, it was important for me to understand the learners' background by accessing their portfolios and holding informal conversations and an interview with the teacher in order to gain information beyond what I observed in the classroom. In other words, the description of events had to go deeper than what I saw in the classroom through observations as ethnography suggests that "each scene exists within a multilayered and interrelated context" (Fetterman, 1989:29).

Furthermore, an ethnographic design requires a variety of data collection methods and analysis methods in order to strive for credibility (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:20; Fetterman (1989:29). As I followed an ethnographic case study design, I used multiple data collection methods namely observations, interviews and I analyzed learners' written work using the Writing Developmental Continuum and the Multimodal Analytical Tool with experiential metafunction for triangulation purposes. This corresponds with Yin's (2009:101) statement that a good case study ought to rely

on multiple sources of evidence in data collection in order to make the collected information more reliable. This study had to strive for reliability through the use of different ethnographic methods to collect data from the classroom i.e. observations, interviews and document analysis. These methods complemented each other in that what could not be captured by observations was followed up through interviews and document analysis to triangulate observation filed notes.

3.2.2 Research site

The study was conducted in a multiracial primary school (Grades 1-7) established in 1933 in one of the Southern suburbs of Cape Town. Before 1994, the school was characterized by a homogeneous culture, i.e. only “white” racial group could register at this school at that time. The teaching staff and learners at that time were from the same cultural and racial group. The cultural shift in this school occurred after 1994 when South Africa attained freedom and became a democracy. Therefore, all learners could be admitted at any school regardless of their cultural and racial backgrounds since that point of time. The school is currently composed of multicultural learners and teachers who share diverse cultural and language backgrounds. Thus the school qualifies as a multilingual and multicultural school.

The school has a total number of 364 learners and 10 teachers. The Grade 1 class is made up of 40 learners and 2 teachers: 1 qualified teacher who is the class teacher and an assistant teacher who does not have a teaching qualification but works under the supervision of the class teacher. The assistant teacher helps learners with their group tasks and makes sure that the learners complete their work.

The majority of learners in this school come from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. As a result, some of them enter Grade 1 without having gone through Grade R and this implies that the Grade 1 teacher has to start from scratch in terms of teaching literacy skills, e.g. teaching them how to write their names. A large number of learners in this school are isiXhosa home language speakers, followed by Afrikaans and a few learners who speak English as a home language. Teachers however, are predominantly Afrikaans mother tongue speakers followed by isiXhosa home language speakers and a few English home language speakers as reflected in the following tables (Tables 1 and 2).

3.2.3 Table 1: Grade 1 Teachers' Language Profile

Foundation Phase	Grade I
No of Teachers	2
Home Language(s)	Teacher (T): Afrikaans ¹ Assistant Teacher(AT) : IsiXhosa
Other Language(s)	English
Gender	Females
LoLT	English

3.2.4 Table 2: Grade 1 Learners' Language Profile

Gender	Home Languages	IsiXhosa	Afrikaans	English	²Others	No of Learners
18 Boys		22	1	7	10	40
22 Girls						

¹ Assistant teacher (AT) is an unqualified person who is given some training to work with learners under the supervision of the teacher.

² Others refer to home language(s) for some Foundation Phase learners which include SeTswana, French, Lingala, Shona, and Kirundi.

The language of teaching and learning in this school is mainly English. However, in the Foundation Phase, teachers used a multilingual approach to teaching literacy. This is an approach which allowed teachers to use the learners' home languages, namely isiXhosa, Afrikaans and English languages simultaneously in order to assist learners to learn English concepts in their home languages.

One of the criteria used to choose this particular school was the use of multilingual approach to literacy teaching and learning in the Foundation Phase while English is the main language of instruction. The multilingual approach entails the use of learners' home language (s) in order to help them understand the subject content offered in English. In cases where the teacher cannot speak the learners' home language (isiXhosa in this case), the assistant teacher is asked to explain the content or repeat the instructions given by the teacher. This is more than code switching because when the person code switches, different languages are used simultaneously. But in this case, the boundary between the use of different languages in teaching and learning is very clear. This is because the teacher completely moves from one language to another language explaining the same thing taught in the one language. This process is referred as translanguaging (Garcia, 2009).

Secondly, the selection of the school was based on the availability of multilingual resources in the form of story books produced in different languages which reflect the South African context. I specifically refer to Kagiso readers which are a series of story books developed for Grade R to Grade 3 learners in the three dominant languages of the Western Cape, namely, isiXhosa, Afrikaans and English. The content of the stories in these books is the same and it develops gradually in order to facilitate learners' understanding of the stories. Each story begins with simple words and few characters and develops as the learners get exposed to more stories of the same series. The illustrations used in these story books portray real life situations in the townships which most learners are exposed to daily. Although the study focused on developing writing skills, it was crucial to understand how the multilingual reading materials were used to develop learners' literacy skills as I believe that language skills are interdependent. In other words, the acquisition of reading skills is geared to support the development of writing skills.

Thirdly, the school which participated in this study is amongst the schools involved in the Western Cape pilot project for promoting literacy in Foundation Phase. The project deployed assistant teachers as supportive personnel, particularly for Grade 1 classes where most learners struggle to adapt with formal schooling. The focus of this study was to explore the development of writing skills which is considered as an aspect of literacy in the Foundation Phase.

3.3 Sampling

Amongst other types of sampling associated with qualitative interpretive framework research, the commonly used types are purposive and theoretical sampling. Purposive sampling is a criteria-based sampling whereby the researcher develops criteria for setting research unit before entering the area of research whereas theoretical sampling does not depend on set criteria but the sample is based on emerging theories (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:287). It is important to understand that when the study involves a smaller sample, the purposeful selection criteria become necessary, as Babbie and Mouton (2001:288) maintain that: “sampling in the interpretive paradigm is often purposeful and directed at a certain inclusive criteria rather than random”. So, purposeful sampling with clear criteria was adopted in this study as the intention of the study was to understand Grade 1 teachers’ and learners’ actions and events with regard to writing development.

The learners’ sample comprised 6 learners who were chosen on the basis of their performance in the literacy lessons and activities. I chose two learners with the highest or above average performance, two learners with average performance and two learners who were in the intervention programme i.e. learners who were struggling with their work. All of the selected learners made up a diverse linguistic group that enabled this study to make justification of whether the home language had an influence on learners’ writing development. I monitored the performance of these learners for a six month period of my field work in order to track their writing development over this period. The following table illustrates the 6 Grade 1 learners’ profile who formed part of this study.

3.3.1 Table 3: Grade 1 sample of six learners' profile³

Learner	Language (s)	Performance	Gender	Age
A	English/Afrikaans	Above Average	Boy	6
B	English/Afrikaans	Above Average	Girl	6
C	English/ French/Lingala	Average	Girl	6
D	Xhosa	Average	Girl	7
E	English/French	Intervention	Girl	6
X	Xhosa	Intervention	Boy	6

I specifically situated the study in the Grade 1 class because I believe that Grade 1 is a fundamental stage, whereby learners need to be equipped with basic reading and writing skills for successful learning across the grades. I had to go deeper in terms of observations because learners' writing development had to be tracked across their learning curriculum in the year. I investigated if teacher support and methods used in teaching literacy enabled learners to improve their writing in any of the three languages they were exposed to in the classroom.

Regarding teacher support, I focused on the processes of developing literacy and how learners were exposed to literacy resources. My aim was to establish whether teacher practices and literacy resources had an impact on the learners' writing progress and to investigate the type of texts learners produced in the Grade 1 class. Concerning the teachers' sample, I worked with the Grade 1 teacher and her assistant to collect data for this study. Both the teacher and assistant teacher were females. However, in terms of age, the class teacher ranged between 35-40 years of age while the assistant teacher's age ranged between 25-30 years. In addition, the class teacher had 19 years of teaching experience, specializing in teaching English language. On the other

³ The information of Grade 1 sample of six learners were provided by the class teacher based on their language profile, performance, gender and age.

hand, the assistant teacher did not have a teaching qualification but she had been assisting in the Grade 1 class for 2 years during the data collection period of this study.

3.4 Research Methods

As mentioned earlier, I have made use of various strategies to collect data namely observations, interviews, and document analysis in this study. The following discussion presents each research technique in terms of how they were employed in the study.

3.4.1 Classroom observations

Observations were used as one of the research techniques for data collection from the classroom for six months (in the second and third terms of the year). I took field notes of literacy events and actions as they happened in the Grade 1 classroom. I observed 17 literacy lessons during my visits to the school and all the lessons took approximately 30 to 45 minutes. I recorded the observed lessons in my field notes. Out of the 17 observed lessons I selected 5 lessons for data analysis as they were relevant to the research questions of this study. The 5 lessons focused on writing skills which responded to one of my research questions. For example, lesson A focused on reading a story in isiXhosa, while lesson B was about introducing vocabulary. Lesson C dealt with sentence construction. The rest of the lessons were also useful in terms of understanding the teaching and learning of literacy in Grade 1.

During my observations, I noted that the teacher would first engage learners with story reading. After a systematic development of the lesson then learners would be involved in group or individual activities, working on a given exercise related to the presented lesson. The systematic development of the lesson refers to the step by step process of presenting the lesson. Doing observation in this study was meant to create opportunities to understand the reality of multilingual literacy practices in the classroom. Given the multilingual nature of the classroom, observations were beyond how writing skills developed since it was also important to understand how the multilingualism was used as a resource for literacy development.

However, observations can pose challenges in qualitative designs because it might be difficult to categorize people's actions in terms of their significance, as it is believed that:

You cannot real be sure of what's important and what's unimportant until you have had a chance to review and analyse a great volume of information (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:295).

Thus, I had to record all the information that had to do with literacy and multilingualism practices in the classroom. Moreover, it was important for an ethnographic study to consider issues that were reflected in people's behavior because they become useful when providing description of meanings communicated through those actions. I made notes of all the literacy actions and events in the classroom and in the school at large as I believed that observation of people's actions is more valuable than their 'verbal account' because observation allows the researcher to get an in-depth information about people's daily practices (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:295). Given the ethnographic design of this study, I did not have an observation schedule because I took notes of literacy behaviour and events that accrued during observations. In the classroom, observations focused on teaching and learning literacy e.g. teaching processes and strategies and learners' written products whereas outside the classroom I observed all events that contributed to literacy practices e.g. the assembly speech, daily prayers, greetings, etc. All these were documented in the form of field notes (see Appendix A).

Outside the classroom, I also observed how learners and teachers interacted, focusing on what language (s) they used given the multilingual status of the school. I took note of the language(s) in which learners interacted amongst themselves when they played or when they were outside the classroom (e.g. during excursions). I also observed the school routines e.g. the school assembly and what learners learnt from those gatherings and how learners were taught morals by their teachers through daily prayers and the language(s) they used to pray in. Basically, I had to observe everything that occurred in and outside of the classroom since all the activities took place in the school formed part of literacy practices and events. It was significant for this study to understand how people, especially in the context of the school engaged with literacy activities. It was important to take note of how they integrated the literacy activities occurring outside the classroom in the writing lesson. Within the literacy lesson, I was then able to observe different processes in which teachers developed writing skills and how learners were supported to develop writing skills on a daily basis.

I wish to bring additional support to my use of participant observation. Fetterman (1989:45) explains that participant observation is when an observer immerses himself or herself in the field

thereby participating in the people's lives while maintaining the professional distance that will make observations possible and sufficient. In this study both participant and non-participant observation were applicable when gathering relevant information that could help in understanding the problem under study. I became a participant observer by getting engaged in the school activities as well as in the classroom at times when the teacher asked for my assistance. For example, I used to help learners when they were working on certain activities.

Spradley (1979:193) cautions that participant observations during field work may create an intimate relationship between the researcher and the participants who become free to disclose their real life to the researcher. In order to overcome the influence of my relationship with the participants of this study, non-participatory observation was necessary. In some instances I became a non-participant observer when I needed to understand how the literacy lessons were developed, i.e. the strategies involved in teaching and learning literacy in the multilingual classroom. I sometimes observed things as they happened without my involvement in order to minimize subjectivity that would possibly influence the data and my interpretation thereof. I had to distance myself from the classroom routine so that I could play the role of a researcher in order to fulfill the research aims and objectives of this study by recording relevant information that was subsequently used for analysis.

However, I realized that teachers preferred someone who could participate in the classroom activities instead of being a 'watch guard' to teachers. Given this, I had to make time to interact with learners in their groups, particularly, when they were given tasks to work on. Sometimes, I helped the teacher with marking of learners' exercises that were done in the previous day. I also participated in the learners' extra mural activities. In the case of this study, I established a good relationship with teachers, particularly the Grade 1 teacher who provided valuable information during conversation after her class. By so doing, the teacher could gain trust in my presence since I did not seem to be an invader of her privacy. I also tried to avoid many questions during or immediately after the lesson but I had conversations with the teacher during break times where I could direct my questions on interesting and puzzling issues that arose from literacy lessons.

I had to observe the processes involved in learners' literacy development and the support which learners got from their teachers in order to write different kinds of texts. In this case, the jotting

down of notes for various literacy lessons was important so that I could make sense of the literacy lessons, as well as the activities involved in these lessons that enhanced learners' writing skills and the learners' developmental stages. Classroom observations, therefore, informed my interview questions because I was interested to probe deeper into why things happened in a certain way through the informal conversations with the teacher. This shows that my participation in the naturally occurring activities was derived from being interested in particular literacy events which could not only be reflected in the field notes but also stimulated some questions which were addressed through an interview with the Grade 1 teacher.

Although the observation technique is perceived to be time-consuming in terms of documenting the data, its positive aspect is that it can be done anywhere with the interest of understanding real life experiences. This means that the researcher has the ability to engage in social practices and processes in the particular setting while collecting information which could be overlooked when collecting data through interviews or video recordings only. I also made use of field notes and audio recordings to capture the classroom events.

3.4.1.1. Field notes and Audio Recordings

Field notes are often gathered through different methods such as participatory and non-participatory observations, depending on the interest of an ethnographer (Emerson *et al.*, 1995: 18). Some ethnographers, for example, prefer to socialize and form part of the particular researched social cultural group while learning their practices in order to experience being 'native like' the population group being studied. In this case, field notes become a reflective report of what an ethnographer experienced during the whole period spent with a particular cultural group.

In this study I had to use a writing pad for jotting down some notes as the lessons were in progress in order to capture the developmental stages of literacy lessons and interaction between teacher and learners in the multilingual classroom. It was crucial for me to pay attention during literacy lessons since some notes had to be jotted down for analytical purposes. In order to gain trust of the participants, I asked the teachers' permission to write down the notes while she was teaching. With regard to the use of audio-recordings, consent was granted by the teacher and

parents (see Appendix D). But I had to inform the teacher each time I had to use the audio-recording machine during her lessons.

Since I had to write down the whole procedure for each lesson observed, I had to have the preliminary analysis section, where I wrote my personal interpretations of each lesson or situation. As indicated earlier, the literacy practices which occurred outside the classroom could not be ignored during my observations. Therefore, I made notes of the school daily practices like school assembly, languages used for communication in the school, learners' and teachers' notices on the wall and the staff room notice board. All these events were written in my reflective journal after observations to avoid teachers' discomfort and distraction during their teaching. The reflective field notes are attached in Appendix A.

In summary, observations in this study involved the Grade 1 class because my interest was to understand the writing development of Grade 1 learners. Observations in Grade 1 were meant to understand the pedagogical strategies used by teachers to develop learners' literacy skills and whether teacher support had any impact on learners' writing development. In my field notes, I could identify and understand methodologies and strategies used in the teaching and learning literacy in Grade 1. The prolonged period in the field afforded me opportunities to observe the different kinds of texts which learners produced at different stages of their learning as I tracked learners' writing development in the second and third terms of 2011.

The audio-recording machine was used in Grade 1 classroom to record 5 literacy lessons in order to capture the stages used in developing literacy lessons. The recordings of the lessons were not used as data collection methods but were meant to complement the field notes, and to capture teacher-learner interaction in its authentic state. The recorded lessons were transcribed so that I could be able to make a link with what I had gathered by means of the observation field notes. In other words, recordings also enabled me to capture key aspects that might have been left out if I had to rely on the field notes only, especially how literacy lessons were developed from the beginning to the end.

3.4.2 Interviews

There are several types of interviews which include structured, semi-structured, informal and retrospective approaches/formats (Fetterman, 1989). Following the guidelines of other ethnographers (Emerson *et al.*, 1995; Fetterman 1989), this study adopted informal interviews because I could gather data in a casual way through informal conversations with the teacher. Although there was an interview guide with topics of discussion that was given to the teacher before the session, the interview was largely informal and aimed at probing more detailed information about multilingual literacy practices from the teachers' perspective. The role of the researcher in this case was not to control the conversation but to facilitate a gentle flow of information, while the teacher expressed her experiences of teaching literacy in a multilingual classroom. This is contrary to the structured interviews where the discussion is more controlled and an interviewer has "an explicit agenda whereas informal interviews have a specific and implicit research agenda" (Fetterman, 1989:50).

After I had observed some lessons, I decided to have a follow-up interview with the Grade 1 teacher in order to confirm some issues which emerged from the field notes and recorded lessons. The interview was specifically designed for the Grade 1 teacher because the study was located in Grade 1 class to investigate how young learners develop their writing skills.

Moreover, I wanted to find out more about the roles of assistant teacher apart from interpreting and translating for multilingual learners. The interview therefore helped me in gathering more information about the key functions of the assistant teacher in a multilingual classroom. The recorded interview was done through the medium of English for approximately 35 minutes. The topics that were discussed and some responses from the teacher are duly presented (see Appendix B).

Before the interview conversation began, the participant was reminded of her voluntary participation in the study in order to ensure that she understood her rights as a research participant. As an interviewer, I had to establish a non-threatening and relaxed atmosphere for the respondents to be in position to provide information necessary to address my research questions. Posing non-threatening questions, particularly at the start of the interview seem to be critical in interviews for it is believed that:

a multitude of significant nonthreatening questions can elicit the information the fieldworker seeks and create many golden moments in which to ask questions naturally as part of the general flow of conversation (Fetterman, 1989:50).

When conducting informal interviews it is the researcher's responsibility to pose questions based on what the respondent provides in order to gather in-depth information (Babbie and Mouton, 2001). The interview questions do not depend on a set of questions written chronologically but an interviewer constructs questions based on what comes out from the naturally occurring conversation. This is to suggest that questions for the interviews in ethnographic studies naturally emerge from the interview talk (Fetterman, 1989:49). This enables the researcher to cover questions which were not asked. The same was done for this study though I designed some guiding questions based on what I discovered in the field notes (i.e. the use of multilingual resources) which I used as an icebreaker to open up the discussion. Thereafter, I began to construct questions depending on the responses I got from the interviewee.

In light of this, the researcher needs to provide specific questions that will make it possible to explore the topic in depth. As mentioned earlier, the interview was a follow-up of what I had observed in Grade 1 literacy lessons in the multilingual classroom. Many questions were derived from the conversation to focus on issues relevant to the study. Thus, the nature of questions I posed to the teacher were both closed and open ended because I wanted to discover more answers and also to confirm teachers' experiences as well as their perceptions regarding developing writing literacy skills in young learners. This is an indication that the nature of questions and how they are constructed matters in an ethnographic study because "specific and detailed questions determine similarities and differences in ways people perceive the world" (Fetterman, 1989:50).

Although informal interviews have some benefits for the researcher in terms of covering a whole range of data, they might not be aptly and effective because the researcher might become the controller of the interview instead of facilitating the interaction to occur naturally without manipulating the possible respondents' view on the topic (Fetterman, 1989:49). I could overcome this barrier during the interviews by giving the respondent a platform to explain things and I could only interrupt when I wanted clarity and depth on a certain issue. I was interested to know more about multilingual literacy practices with a clear focus on literacy teaching strategies in the classroom instead of being critical and challenging the interviewee.

3.4.3 Document Analysis

Document analysis was used as a data collection tool in this study in order to track the writing development behavior of Grade 1 learners and also to triangulate information gathered from field notes, observed and recorded lessons and interviews. Documentary material characterizes data in its own unique manner that captures the real life of people under study (Silverman, 2003). Therefore, in this study learners' work and literacy materials in the classroom were collected and analyzed to study literacy development among Grade 1 learners. The learners' work, particularly the different texts they produced at the beginning of the year and in the second and third terms of year were copied and some taken in the form of pictures or photos to assess their literacy development. As stated earlier, permission was granted by the teacher and parents to access learners' work books whenever I wanted to trace their writing progress.

The extended period that I spent in the classroom doing observations, enabled me to track what learners wrote. For example, visual and written texts in either creative writing or literacy exercise books were collected, focusing mainly on the representative samples selected from Grade 1 (see Appendix C). These documents of written words, pictures, drawings and images were studied closely as the preliminary analysis of observations guided me on relevant writings that I needed to analyze. The learners' texts provided me with evidence of how writing develops differently in learners who receive instruction from the same teacher. The preliminary analysis of observation data and the analysis of learners' work were useful because I had topics on which I needed further clarity during the interview in order to get a deeper meaning of certain literacy practices in the classroom.

Copies of literacy materials were meant to inform this study about the nature of the literacy environment that the young learners are exposed to as literature indicates that multilingual literacy resources have an influence on learners' literacy development (Cummins, 1994; Baker, 2006). Given the case, during observations I recorded how learners used literacy materials such as calendar, alphabet charts, phonics charts, and multilingual books in their daily literacy practices in the classroom e.g. during reading or literacy lessons. The use of literacy materials is stipulated in the NCS (2002) curriculum as teachers are encouraged to teach young learners the days of the week, months, etc. as part of literacy.

3.5 Research limitations

Despite enormous attributes discussed in relation to ethnographic study, time consumption is a well known shortcoming in ethnographic design (Fetterman, 1989). This means that sufficient time is required for data collection e.g. doing observations, interviews and writing up of the report needs to be carefully attended to because none of the research participants should be seen as less important. In other words, a detailed report of the research events and activities has to be compiled. Therefore, I had to plan my time well, visit the school regularly and I worked passionately despite study challenges and time constraints. In addition, the large amount of data accumulated became a challenge in terms of transcription and analysis. A period of data collection longer than 6 months could have benefited my study but I had to meet the university deadlines with regard to time spent on the whole research project. However, I believe that all the data I collected in six months can help to address the research questions and objectives of this study.



3.6 Ethical considerations

In this study, ethical procedures were taken into consideration given the fact that the study was investigating the teachers' and learners' everyday practices. Immediately after the research proposal was approved by the University of the Western Cape's Higher Degrees Committee, a written letter was submitted to the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) to request permission to conduct research in the school where this research study was conducted. When consent to pursue research at this school was granted, the Principal had to be contacted to give his consent to access the school. I held the meeting with the Principal where I explained the aims of the study and other questions related to my study and thereafter I was introduced to the teachers and the Foundation Phase learners.

I had to write a letter with research information to both the Principal and parents as I had to deal with young learners who were still under the guardianship of parents. In the letter, a brief background was provided about the researcher, the title and objectives of the study were stated as well as the ethical statement with regard to voluntary participation, the participants' right to withdraw at any stage of the study and assurance of confidentiality of any information collected

from the school (see Appendix D). The teacher's and parents' consent forms were presented to the Principal on the first day I visited the school.

Although I was granted access to the research site, each day I visited the school I had to politely ask the teacher if I could sit in her classroom for observations. The teacher's permission was important even when I wanted to access learners' work books so that I could check what they wrote and their writing progress. In addition, the teacher provided consent to use audio-recording machine to record some literacy lessons and interviews. In this case, I had to explain to the teacher how the information would be treated to protect the identity and dignity of the participants involved in this study.

In summary, the study adhered to ethical procedures since the data collection process did not cause any harm to the participants. The final report of this study took into account the participants' confidentiality by using pseudonyms to ensure that the participants' names and the school's remain anonymous.

3.7. Reflexivity

Reflexivity in social research refers to “ways in which the products of research are affected by the personnel and processes of doing research” (Davies, 2008:4). This means that reflexivity is about self-examination of how the researcher's involvement in the entire processes of research, as well as the techniques employed in understanding the problem influenced the results of the study. This is to suggest that the researcher has to reflect on how the concepts used to study the problem were relevant to the particular context since concepts and terminologies might be applied differently in various contexts. In addition, the researcher also needs to reflect on methodological issues which entail the implications of methods used in collecting data that would answer the intended research questions and, importantly, reflect on the role of the researcher in data production. In other words, the power relation between the researcher and the research participants is of crucial importance. Finally, reflexivity looks at how sensitive the researcher was to ethical procedures to ensure that the research could not cause any harm to the research subject. This means that reflexivity can be epistemological, methodological and ethical (Holland, 1999).

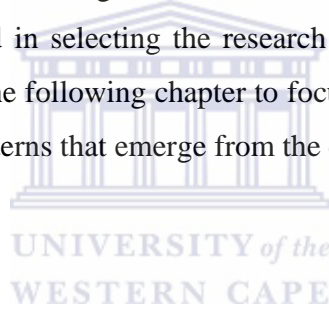
In the context of this study, epistemological reflexivity is captured in the concepts and theories adopted to understand the research problem, namely multilingual literacies as used in the New Literacy Studies (NLS) and the Multimodal Approach to Literacy as discussed in Chapter 2. The concept of multilingual literacies for example, depicts the multilingual nature of the classrooms and communities where learners come from. The term “literacies” also captures the multiplicity of ways in which people engage with different texts in various contexts. Any kind of talk around text which can take place through multiple modes such as spoken, written or visual form may communicate the intended meaning. This is a similar situation in the classroom whereby any kind of talk revolves around visual, spoken or written texts. Likewise, the Multimodal Approach to Literacy in this research was used to understand how the semiotic resources including visual literacy are incorporated in developing literacy in Grade 1 learners where the use of images, pictures and drawing to represent and communicate meanings are inevitable. Therefore, I’m inclined to believe that the theory on multimodality used in this study can be appropriate since the kinds of texts which learners produce in their early years of schooling are multimodal, i.e. they have both written and visual aspects (see Appendix C).

With regard to methodology, the study employed intensive observations which involved spending a prolonged time in the field while studying the problem from the research participants’ experiences. In order to control the researcher’s personal views and to ensure a high degree of objectivity on the research process, non-participatory observation was adhered to. This appears to conform to Powermaker’s (1999) position cited in Davies (2008:4) which states that: “participant observation requires both involvement and detachment achieved by developing the ethnographer’s role of stepping in and out of it”. This implies that, the researcher’s role changes from full participation to the stance where interaction with participants is controlled in order to avoid changing the researcher’s identity in the field. Nevertheless, the experiences I have gained from participatory observations of daily activities as they happened in the field enriched my understanding and interpretation of data of this study. Also, the use of multiple methods to complement observation field notes minimized the level of the researcher’s subjectivity which could have influenced the results of this study. Teachers’ interviews and an analysis of learners’ work were used to understand the research problem from different perspectives.

Finally, the study was conducted ethically as discussed in section 3.6. Participants were informed about the objectives of the study and consent letters were signed by all the participants to indicate their willingness to take part in this study. Both teachers and parents gave me permission to use the audio-recording machine in literacy lessons and the teacher granted the permission to be recorded during her teaching and in the interviews.

3.8. Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with methodological matters, stipulating clearly how the research was conducted. The research employed qualitative research methods which are informed by the interpretive paradigm and qualitative ethnographic design. Observations, interviews and document analysis were used to gather information that provided a rich description of multilingual literacy practices and writing in the Grade 1 classroom. The chapter has also discussed the procedures followed in selecting the research participants, ethical considerations and reflexivity. I propose to use the following chapter to focus on data presentation and analysis in order to identify themes and patterns that emerge from the collected data.



Chapter Four

Data presentation and Analysis: Teacher Practices

4.1 Introduction

Data presentation and analysis are discussed in Chapters 4 and 5 in order to illuminate teacher and learner practices with regard to the literacy or writing development. In this Chapter I present and analyze data on teachers' practices and literacy development, whereas in Chapter 5 I will focus on learners' writing practices. In both chapters the data are presented qualitatively in a thematic narrative style to describe how young learners write and how they develop their writing skills over a period of time. Data presentation and analysis discussed in this chapter draw on data collected by means of classroom observations, field notes and interview which was conducted with the Grade 1 teacher. In Chapter 5 data collected through an analysis of the learners' workbooks are presented.

This chapter is divided into two major themes: (i) the school and the classroom environment and (ii) teacher practices in order to gain an understanding of how learners' writing is encouraged and developed in the Grade 1 classroom. The presentation and analysis of data is preceded by a description of the Qualitative Analytical Approach as it applies to this study.

4.1.2 Thematic Narrative Approach

According to Dainte and Lightfoot (2004:225) the thematic narrative approach involves identifying recurring themes as well as associating and contrasting theme patterns from different sources of data in order to understand the represented meanings. The thematic approach is used in this study to present themes that emerged from the analysis of classroom observations, field notes, interviews and an analysis of learners' work. This approach was adopted to systematically present the analyzed data from participants' experiences in relation to my observations of literacy development in the Grade 1 classroom. This aligns with Emerson's *et al.* (1995:171) explanation that a thematic narrative form of writing starts by establishing the main idea or the thesis, and the narration of the story develops while referring to the given idea. Given this analytical style, I will identify key patterns which emerged from the data in order to describe and narrate how young learners develop writing skills in the multilingual literacy classroom.

The Thematic Analytical framework captures the concept of multilingual literacy and the contested notions of literacy as discussed in Chapter 2. Through the lens of the NLS framework, the study analyses practices relating to multilingual literacy in the Grade 1 classroom. In addition, the Multimodal Approach to Literacy which argues for an equal treatment of literacy and visual literacy in the classroom has been used to analyze the multimodal texts created by young learners in the classroom in order to understand how young learners communicate meanings through visual or written texts. This analytical tool is useful as it highlights features that need to be considered when interpreting learners' visual and written texts as we try to understand what learners write in their early years of schooling.

The Writing Developmental Continuum model is used with the Multimodal Analytical tool to analyze learners' different kinds of texts at various developmental stages as learners create texts which incorporate multiple semiotic resources. Thus, the theoretical grounds gained from the mentioned frameworks facilitated the interpretation and discussion of texts produced by Grade 1 learners. The themes to be discussed in the following sections emerged from a concurrence of theme patterns during the process of data categorization in relation to the research questions. These include the school environment and teacher practices in terms of how they facilitated Grade 1 learners' development in writing. The first part highlights the classroom and school environment and its influence on multilingualism and literacy development. The second section focuses mainly on teacher practices and the various approaches and strategies that were used to enhance learners' writing skills in the Grade 1 classroom.

4.2 The School and Classroom Environment

4.2.1 Language Use

As indicated earlier, this ethnographic study was conducted in a multilingual and multicultural primary school where both learners and teachers share diverse linguistic backgrounds and cultures. Though they have English as the main language of learning in the school, both teachers and learners speak more than one language i.e. isiXhosa, Afrikaans and have diverse cultural practices. The school is located in the middle class area in the northern suburb of Cape Town. Many learners in this school come from low social economic backgrounds where access to necessary services such as food, shelter etc. is a problem. Learners travel long distances from

various townships namely Grassy Park, Strandfontein, Khayelitsha, Langa and Philippi to get to this school. Some parents cannot afford education expenses for their children and some of the learners come to school hungry. Consequently, the school established the feeding scheme which provides fruit and sandwiches to young learners who do not bring something to eat at school.

The Foundation Phase (Grades 1-3) adopted a multilingual approach to teaching literacy where the learners' home languages are used in the literacy classrooms where English is the main language of instruction. In this context, the multilingual approach to teaching occurs when the subject content is presented in English and then translated to isiXhosa or Afrikaans, depending on the needs of learners. This approach requires linguistic support so that when there is a need to translate from one language to another, the translation can be properly done without distorting the meaning of the knowledge to be imparted.

As shown by Table 1, the Grade 1 teacher spoke Afrikaans and English and had an assistant teacher who spoke English and isiXhosa. For that reason the Grade 1 learners were in a good position in terms of developing their multilingual literacy skills as they could get support through the languages that are familiar to them while learning a new language. The assistant teacher worked closely with the teacher to assist and support learners who needed individual attention. The majority of Grade 1 learners were isiXhosa home language, therefore, the assistant teacher largely used isiXhosa when engaging with learners, especially those who faced difficulties to understand English as she was competent in isiXhosa and English. The aim of her involvement was to repeat the instructions given in English or translate the content so that the learners could be able to write their work in English. The class teacher had this to say about the role of the assistant teacher:

I think the most important role for me at the moment is for her (Assistant teacher) to translate like I said many of my learners... come from isiXhosa background so it's important for them to first understand the content or the context in their mother tongue before they can even understand or begin to grasp the concept in English

(Interview with Grade I teacher: 31 July, 2011)

The interview excerpt above highlights the role of language in teaching and learning. Learners need to develop skills in the language which is used as a medium of instruction in order to be

able to process information given to them as Baker (2006:53) claims that when the level of understanding of the language is not well developed, the learner is unlikely to engage in the learning process. In this case, the language may become an obstacle for learners to develop their writing skills since the language of teaching is not familiar to them.

As the multilingual approach to literacy takes place, translanguaging also occurs as people engage with multiple forms of literacies while translating in other languages so that people can understand and make sense of the world around them (Garcia, 2009:46). The translanguaging process in this study was facilitated by the Grade 1 assistant teacher as she translated the English instructions or tasks into isiXhosa or Afrikaans which were the languages of the majority of the Grade 1 learners. Therefore, translanguaging in the multilingual classroom facilitated learning as learners were supported to understand their work in more than one language.

Learners made use of their home language to communicate with each other, particularly the isiXhosa children, unless they were speaking to someone who spoke a different language from theirs. Learners who spoke other languages such as Afrikaans, Shona, Lingala and French communicated in English. Teachers spoke English to the learners even during break times. It was interesting to note that the prefects who were isiXhosa home language speakers spoke isiXhosa to isiXhosa learners when they monitored young learner to get back to their classrooms. They used to switch to English when interacting with learners who did not speak isiXhosa. They even used isiXhosa with the teachers who spoke isiXhosa and the teachers would respond in isiXhosa or English. From this observation, I realised that isiXhosa speaking learners were more comfortable to use their home language but also used English when they interacted with people who did not speak their home language. This means that multilingual/bilingual speakers make use of their linguistic resources in diverse language situations. In the case of this study, the school strongly promoted English but learners still found space to make use of their home language (s) during extramural activities. However, I did not encounter any situation when learners interacted in other languages i.e. Afrikaans, Lingala, etc. This could be attributed to the low number of learners who spoke these languages in the whole school. But in the Grade 1 class, the teacher sometimes used Afrikaans when reading a story to learners. However, she indicated that Afrikaans is dealt with in an informal way because the focus is to help learners to develop their reading and writing in English.

Afrikaans is dealt in a very informal way = = through songs, through rhymes, through games so... the focus is not as intense as in English

The above discussion underscores that the language of teaching and learning is crucial for learners' writing progress. If the learner has underdeveloped skills in this language, the learner may face difficulties to interpret and understand the lesson content. Given this, the learner may also struggle with developing writing skills because literacy skills are interdependent and they develop concurrently.

The dominance of English language was also seen in the learners' work where all written activities were in English. Whilst this observation was not surprising as the main language of learning and teaching (LoLT) was English, the school's participation in the Western Cape project suggests that it seeks to strengthen multilingualism in the 3 dominant languages of the Western Cape i.e. Afrikaans, isiXhosa and English, but learners are not given opportunities to explore writing in the languages they are exposed to in the classroom. The implication of such practice is that learners might be able to function in one language while losing some linguistic skills in their home language (s). This means that they become subtractive bilinguals. In addition, confusion in learners' learning is likely to arise as result of low literacy skills in the language of learning and teaching, and a lack of adequate support in their home languages.

The Language-in-Education Policy subscribes to additive multilingualism which encourages learners to acquire more than one language without losing their home language(s), unlike the subtractive multilingualism where the person learns another language at the cost of his or her home language. To promote additive multilingualism, schools are required to use more than one language as medium of instruction or they should establish special immersion or language maintenance programmes, particularly for learners who are learning through the language which is not the home language (LiEP, 1997).

4.2.2 Visual Literacy Resources

The Grade 1 classroom had colourful visual literacy resources displayed on the walls including colourful posters, phonics charts, children's artwork, educational charts, calendars, birthday and alphabet charts. Although these materials were written in English, they were useful, particularly in the Grade 1 class where learners referred to charts when they said certain sounds. They also referred to the phonics chart when they wanted to write letters as the teacher encouraged them to firstly say the sound of a particular letter before they could proceed to write it. The resource display aligned with the requirements of the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS, 2002) which encourages the balanced approach to literacy teaching through the "look and say" approach. In this approach the teacher needs to encourage learners to look at the sound or alphabet as they say them so that they can understand or assimilate the sounds.

Bilingual displays were seen around the school and in other Foundation Phase classrooms (Grades 2 and 3). For example, in the reception area of the school there were objects displayed in two languages, Afrikaans and English, words such as *safety gate* in English and *veiligheidshek* in Afrikaans. Multilingual displays were found on the cupboards in the Grade 1 class, for example, the word "cupboard" appeared in three languages as: *Cupboard* in English, *kas* in Afrikaans and *ikhabhathi* in isiXhosa. Most of the posters or notes written by both teachers and learners were mainly English. For example, I saw a written text by a learner "*do not litter, keep our school clean*". This corresponds with the point mentioned earlier that the learning of isiXhosa and Afrikaans was dealt with in an informal manner with no emphasis on developing learners' writing skills.

4.3 Teacher Practices and Learners' Writing Development

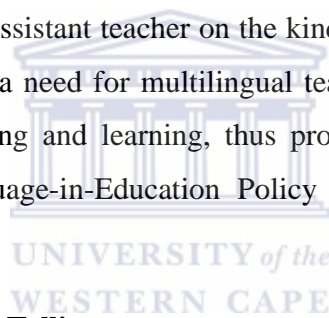
4.3.1 Exposure to Multilingual Resources

The study observed that some efforts were made to encourage multilingualism through teaching vocabulary in different languages. The Grade 1 teacher, for example, taught learners to identify the new words by labeling the objects in the classroom using the flashcards. Lots of objects in the Grade 1 class as stated in previous section were labeled in isiXhosa, Afrikaans and English. Also, the story reading process in the case of Grade 1 occurred in three languages as the assistant

teacher read the story in isiXhosa and explained it in English and the teacher would also explain it in Afrikaans. By so doing, learners were able to understand the same story in three languages. Afterwards, the teacher would base the lesson on an English story where she would write the new words on the flashcards or on the board so that learners could use the new words to construct sentences.

Grade 1 learners often dealt with words drawn from the English story i.e. the activities reflected that the English stories read regularly in the classroom whereas isiXhosa and Afrikaans stories were just read to them while they listened but there were no activities drawn on these two languages. This suggests that the teacher tried to develop isiXhosa and Afrikaans through listening and reading while writing skills were developed in English only.

Moreover, the Grade 1 teacher would identify the area where the learners struggled so that she could give clear indication to the assistant teacher on the kind of assistance that learners needed. This is an indication that there is a need for multilingual teachers who can use learners' home languages as resources for teaching and learning, thus promoting multilingualism in schools which is promoted in the Language-in-Education Policy (1997) and in the South African Constitution (1994).



4.3.2 Playful Activities and Story Telling

I observed that young learners made use of literacy charts on the wall to remind themselves when the teacher asked them to say sounds of a particular word. They would refer to the phonics charts on the walls. They also use alphabetical charts to pronounce alphabet letters. The teacher asked learners to identify different letters on the board as the teacher called out letters from certain words. Learners did phonic singing which helped them to remember the sounds. In the interview the teacher expressed the significance of teaching literacy in an entertaining way while learners acquired potential literacy skills. The Grade 1 teacher stated thus:

Learning languages, I think it's quite interesting for them learning through stories through songs through rhymes through games many of them are interested in learning literacy

(Interview with Grade I teacher: 31July, 2011)

Before the learners began to write anything for the day the teacher would first ask them the date for the day. She would then write the date on the board and ask learners to write dates on top in their work book. The teacher also used charts by referring learners to the calendar and month charts to learn months of the year. The teacher asked learners to mention the type of letters to begin with when writing months. In so doing, she was teaching learners to always start with capital letters when writing the month or days of the week. This shows that the teacher made use of different strategies to integrate and develop literacy skills in an interesting and meaningful way. This appears to concur with the view that learners need to be exposed to authentic written materials so that they can understand the role of prints available at their exposure (Raison, 1994:15).

Educational puzzles were also used in the Grade 1 class for entertainment purposes and to stimulate problem solving skills and critical thinking. I observed that Grade 1 learners had the opportunity to play with puzzles once in a week. I noted that learners liked to play with puzzles and they liked to show their teacher and assistant teacher what they had achieved as they worked in groups. The teacher would make sure that everybody was engaged in the puzzle games, and would give clear instructions on how to use the puzzles. The use of educational puzzles in the classroom is emphasized in the National Curriculum Statement (2002) as a means of developing literacy in young learners.

Teachers used songs whereby learners would be saying the sound of the word in rhythm tone or by clapping their hands. They also used games such as puzzles to put together sounds of a particular word. By using funny activities in learning sounds and letters of words, learners found themselves learning new words and developing speaking, listening and reading skills which are necessary for developing writing skills. The Grade 1 teacher also expressed the significance of teaching literacy using funny activities that capture the interest of learners as they acquired literacy skills, as she stated:

I find that by teaching them to learn alphabet in a funny way where they first learn through songs, through games through story telling = = in that way they are engaged and they want to learn and they excited about learning.

(Interview with Grade I teacher: 31July, 2011).

The above strategy is supported in Gambrell *et al.*, (2007:245) that learners who receive instruction through playful activities such as songs, rhymes games, etc. are likely to develop more vocabulary which may have a positive influence on their writing skills.

Those learners who did not want to play with the puzzles were allowed to choose books of their interest from the reading corner so that they could engage with reading activity while others played with educational puzzles. Learners at any time could ask permission from the teacher to access a book for reading in cases where the teacher would be working with specific groups. There were various story books in the reading corner of the Grade 1 class. Apart from the multilingual books, teachers had a range of books to choose from depending on what the teacher intended to cover in a particular lesson. The Grade 1 teacher encouraged learners to bring reading books from home which could be used during the reading hour and the teacher would read the book to them. This helped the teacher to understand the nature of the texts which learners were exposed to at home and got to know the interest of learners. These books included the Kagiso readers which were available in the three languages, English, isiXhosa and Afrikaans. These were multilingual books as the same content was printed in the three languages. These activities captured learners' attention and they became interested in learning. Stories in these books were developed from pictures without words and then words were developed to form a story with text.

When teaching the stories, the assistant teacher would read again in Afrikaans, and finally in English. The teacher stressed the importance of encouraging learners to read the story in isiXhosa first before reading it in English as follows:

I find that it is important for the learner to first understand the story in his or her mother tongue so that helps, so the translator or the teacher assistant she will then read the story to them in isiXhosa and then what I will do is I will follow up and reading the story in English and once there in their reading ability groups they will then come to the mat and read the book in English

(Interview with Grade I teacher: 31July, 2011)

The preceding excerpt shows that understanding the story in the mother tongue before learners are introduced to the English story is important. The teacher tried to help learners understand the story in their home language so that it could be easier for learners to work with the same story in English. The English story was used to draw up writing activities such as using new words from the story e.g. asking learners to draw the picture or to match pictures with those words.

The balanced approach suggested in the Foundation Phase National Curriculum Statement emphasizes explicit teaching of phonics and that learners must be able to look at the word and say it in order to learn (NCS, 2002). Observations in this study revealed that the Grade 1 teacher put strong emphasis on phonics which were taught within the context of the story. The new words were written on the board and the teacher asked learners to say the sounds which made those words. Sometimes, learners could make rhythms while they were repeating the phonetic sound of the word which the teacher pointed at. In this way, learners were encouraged to read the story while they had to recognize and say the words used in the story. Therefore, the study shows that the Grade 1 teacher focused on teaching phonics at the beginning of year, trying to help learners to master phonics before they could move to alphabets. However, the observation noted that there was no attempt to teach phonics in isiXhosa or Afrikaans as they were only taught in English.

In the interview, the Grade 1 teacher stressed that teaching phonics to young multilingual learners was a challenge because learners came to school with knowledge of alphabetical letters and rhymes (e.g. a,b,c...) before they learn the letters as sounds. In order to overcome confusion, the teacher would start by teaching letters in phonics. They learnt three letter words, how to blend the words and then finally the teacher would proceed to spelling. I observed that the learning of spelling involved use of alphabet letters in rhythms as learners said letters from words. It should be noted that the teaching of letters and writing systems may differ considerably from one language to another since each language has different rules which need to be explicitly taught to language learners (Edwards, 1983). So, it is important for multilingual learners to learn and understand different rules of the languages they speak in order to overcome confusion that may be created between these languages, although there was no provision made for isiXhosa and Afrikaans in this study.

4.3.3 Visual Literacy and Meaning Construction

Observation data show that the Grade 1 classroom was print rich, with many pictures and drawings displayed on the wall. These visual materials were used in different ways for literacy lessons. In Grade 1, for example, the teacher used the pictures to stimulate learners' imagination, reading and oral skills to understand the story. The teacher would ask learners to tell the story in their own words on the basis of what they saw on the cover of the book. The learners would express their views as they tried to make meaning of the story.

The teacher also gave learners an opportunity to express their thoughts about the picture while she helped them rephrase their sentences when they were not grammatically correct. This shows that pictures are useful tools that stimulate learners' imagination as they generate ideas when retelling the story in their own words or through drawings. The use of drawings or scribbled letters by young literacy learners shows that they have their own way to engage with print for communication purposes. This is evident in the texts Grade 1 learners produced during their learning programme which are reflected on Appendix C. This observation appears to tally with Kenner's (2004) claim that young learners do not necessarily reproduce what the teacher exposes them to, but they use their own experiences to actively engage with texts by re-interpreting it for their own purposes. This is to suggest that learners become active constructors of knowledge through the active engagement with the text, as the Grade 1 teacher reiterates:

We could just discuss the picture = = what are the interesting points based on the picture, what do you think the story is all about, we do lots of questions and answers, we do a lots of prediction where they predict what happened at the beginning of the story or what could happen at the end of the story and also we leave a lot up to their imagination if they can retell the story on their own words and build their own story and interpretation of the story

(Grade 1 teacher interviews: 31July, 2011)

This is to suggest that when young learners are still developing literacy skills, they do not rely on a written form of language to make meaning but they have a choice to use visual modes to express the same thing that could be described in words. However, they need to be exposed to visual literacy resources in the classroom so that they can learn how to make meaning from those resources. In that way, they begin to understand that meaning can be represented through both

written and visual modes. This attests to the multimodal approach to literacy framework that meaning making-making of semiotic resources takes place in the learners' immediate environment (Kress, 1997:13). When developing writing skills, teachers need to encourage young learners to construct meaning through both literacy and visual resources so that learners who struggle to write words or sentences can have an opportunity to present their meaning through pictures, drawings or colouring.

To develop learners' vocabulary, the teacher used flash cards with sight words. Before reading the story the teacher used flash cards with certain words to remind learners about the words dealt with previously or the new words they would find in the story. The flash cards were pasted on the board to make them visible to all learners. The teacher interview revealed that the flash cards had to be pasted on the board so that learners could use some of the words to create their own sentences. Sometimes the teacher asked learners to draw a picture against the words so that learners could assimilate the word with its actual diagrammatic representation. This suggests that visual literacy in the classroom can play an important role in exposing learners to semiotic resources which are familiar to some of them (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006:15). It is also important to encourage learners' writing creativity through sight words and new words encountered in reading activities so that learners can understand those words in a context of the sentence or story text.

More visual texts, which learners encounter in newspapers, advertisements, television programmes, games and visual designs in their books can be used in literacy teaching. In this study, I observed that young learners make sense of visual texts while constructing meaning of the stories they read. The teacher acts as a facilitator by questioning and providing constructive feedback that leads to better understanding of the stories. This observation can be supported by the concept of scaffolding whereby a teacher becomes a mediator between the knowledge and the learners in order to help learners achieve their learning potentials (Gibbons, 2002:40). The continuous support given through visual literacy and reading stories helped the Grade 1 learners to become active participants and knowledge constructors in the learning process as stipulated in the National Curriculum Statement of Grades 1-3 (2002). Through such practices, young learners develop not only their reading skills, but also writing skills as reading skills influence the development of writing skills (Latham, 2007).

In summary, this discussion appears to confirm the need to expose young learners to multiple semiotic resources i.e. literacy and visual literacy in order to support literacy development. This is because learners, in their early years of schooling do not depend on a single mode such as writing, but they also make meaning through images, pictures and drawings. The teacher needs to use teaching resources that will enable learners to construct meaning. In addition, the multilingual nature of the classroom cannot be ignored with regard to literacy development since language is critical in learning and teaching. In other words, if the language of learning and teaching is not understood by both the teacher and learners, learning may not take place effectively. Therefore, proper language support needs to be in place for young learners who are taught in a second language so that they can successfully navigate between home literacy and school literacy (Baker, 2006). The Grade 1 teacher further expressed her support for multilingualism in the classroom as she stated:

I think to get them to read in three languages, that's possible, it might be compulsory as from next year for them to be able read and write in Afrikaans.

(Interview with Grade I teacher: 31 July, 2011)

Lesson observations show that the teacher regularly asked the assistant teacher to explain certain concepts in isiXhosa because many learners in Grade 1 class were predominantly isiXhosa-speaking learners. In addition, in one of the lessons observed, the teacher had planned to read a story in isiXhosa after she had finished an English version of the same story in the previous week. Below is one of the reading lessons observed in the Grade 1 classroom. Since the assistant teacher was not available on that day, the class teacher assumed that learners could read in isiXhosa because they speak the language at home. The lesson proceeded as follows:

LESSON: A

Reading a story in IsiXhosa

1. T: Today we are going to read a story in another language, who can read in IsiXhosa?

2.L: **Ikhaya lam** (*my home*)

3. T: What does the title mean?

4.L: my home

5.T: Lets page through the book

6.L: Learners page through the book

7. T: If you can remember, what book did we read before this one?

8.L: The house burn

9. T: What was the name of the story? It starts with 'h'

10. L: Help!

11. T: What happened on the house?

12.L: The fire burn the house

13.T: give me another sentence like this

14.L: the house was burn

15. T: Who was the owner of the house in the story?

16.L: grandmother

17. T: What happened after the fire?

18.L: there was smoke

19. T: very good, yes there was a smoke. What are people on top of the house doing?

20.L: they are busy fixing the house

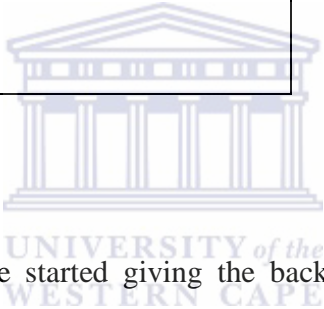
21. T: good, who is fixing the house?

22.L: Vuyo, Marie, Ben, Friends, People, neighbors



23. T: Can someone read the story for me?
- 24.L: **jonga ikhaya lam** (*look at my house*)
25. T: What does that mean?
- 26.L: Look at my house
27. T: What happened with the house?
- 28.L: the house was burnt
29. Yes, now let's page through the book, who can read in isiXhosa?
30. Silence
- 31.OK, put these books down, let's use the English books

Grade I reading lesson: 13/9/2011



The teacher was prepared and she started giving the background of the story based on the previous English story. Thereafter, the teacher asked learners to read the story in isiXhosa, and none of the learners in the class could read the story in isiXhosa as reflected by a silence in line 30 where the teacher asked learners to volunteer (but they were all quiet). This implies that learners could not read in isiXhosa though the teacher assumed that isiXhosa-speaking learners could be able to read the story in their home language. As a result, the teacher had to change to an English version where the lesson was well developed and each learner in the group could get an opportunity to read the story whereas the isiXhosa story could not be read since there was no person to assist the teacher. This shows that despite the teacher's good intention to encourage learners to use their home language, the teacher's and learners' lack of reading proficiency in isiXhosa is a barrier to effective implementation of multilingualism. When learners' home language skills are developed, learners are likely to learn and understand the new languages while maintaining their own home languages.

Surprisingly, when the learners changed to English story, they became more active and all learners in the group got an opportunity to read the story as shown in the field notes presented in Appendix A. Based on these observations, it can be deduced that although the teacher expressed support for multilingualism in the classroom as indicated in the interview extract, the fact that she could not speak the language of the majority in the class (isiXhosa) was a barrier to develop learners' home languages skills successfully as she depended on the help of the assistant teacher. Also, although learners displayed good oral skills in their home language (isiXhosa), their lack of reading and writing proficiency in this language appears to be a sign of subtractive bilingualism.

Throughout the data collection stage, none of the learners' written work was either in isiXhosa or Afrikaans. This means that although the Foundation Phase adopted the multilingual approach to literacy teaching and learning, English still superseded the other languages since there is a strong emphasis on developing English language skills as opposed to Afrikaans and isiXhosa. The school and classroom environments clearly favoured the English language to flourish while isiXhosa and Afrikaans languages are left as subsidiary languages in the classroom despite their official status. This raises the question as to how home literacy can be integrated in the classroom if the learners' home languages are not equally integrated in the structured system of teaching and learning.

Street (1995) and Baker (2006) suggest that learners' home language knowledge which is characterized by multiliteracies and multicultural experiences needs to be acknowledged and used as a resource for teaching and learning. Moreover, the New Literacy Studies refers to literacy as a socio-cultural practice which recognizes people's linguistic and cultural capital (Street, 1993). In the context of this study, languages and cultures that are part of the learner's life should not be ignored in the process of teaching and learning literacy. This is to suggest that literacies learnt outside the classroom setting need to be used as a resource for acquisition of school literacy. This will promote literacy socio-cultural practices as learners' previous knowledge is recognized and accepted as part of learning in the formal setting.

4.3.4 Story based approach

During my observations, I noted that the development of literacy lessons drew on a particular story while developing different skills simultaneously. Learning activities, especially during the second term of the year were based on stories whereby the teacher encouraged learners to listen to stories which she read while learners listened. I noted that developing learners' listening skills was necessary to support the development of their reading and writing skills. In the interview the Grade 1 teacher stated that when learners gained interest in stories through listening, they would also develop interest in reading stories and that facilitated their writing progress. This is an indication that one cannot teach literacy skills in isolation because literacy skills namely speaking, reading and writing are interdependent. This is to suggest that learners need to comprehend what they read so that they can learn how to generate their own ideas and put them in writing. In other words, learners need to be able to read in order to express themselves in writing. This appears to confirm Latham's (2002:45) view that the interdependence between language skills such as reading and writing needs to be demonstrated through reasonable exposure to stories as learners develop literacy skills. Similarly, Edwards (1983:114) stresses the significance of exposing young learners to a range of stories which offer them an opportunity to create texts from the genres exposed to them while strengthening their writing skills.

Concerning literacy genres, the teacher made use of fairy tales, narratives comic books in English and short story books which were available in Afrikaans, isiXhosa and English. The different genres exposed the learners to various language uses and aspects such as punctuation and spelling through various activities. Most of these texts appear to have enabled the learners to relate to their immediate environment as they focused on familiar social activities.

Interestingly, the analysis of learners' texts show that the texts produced by Grade 1 learners are predominantly comics and recounts where they wrote about events and their daily experiences as reflected in document analysis discussed in Chapter 5. This implies that teaching literacy is text-based and learners get introduced to more genres as they move from one grade to another. The genres noted in the data correspond with some genres prescribed in the National Curriculum Statement of Grade 1-3 (RNCS, 2002). For oral activities the curriculum suggests short stories, recounts, simple description, action rhymes and games while for writing activities simple stories, shopping lists and instructions are suggested (RNCS, 2002:25). These genres can be used to

design any type of activity depending on what the teacher wants to achieve in the literacy lessons.

4.3.5 Scaffolding Learners' writing

Raison (1994:2) states that writing skills may not develop in the same way and pace in all learners as they have diverse linguistic exposure and they learn differently. The teachers' role as mediator of learning, therefore, is crucial in providing support to learners with practical examples that will make their learning experiences meaningful as they acquire new skills. Observation data show that the Grade 1 teacher made use of learners' prior experiences to develop their writing skills. For example, the teacher would use the themes that were discussed during the school assembly in a writing lesson e.g. love or sharing. The teacher wrote those words derived from the themes so that learners could identify the words and then they would learn how to say or pronounce the words. Learners use the words to write sentences with the help of their teacher and the assistant teacher in the classroom.

The teacher sometimes asked learners to draw pictures on what they learnt from the message. In this case, the teacher would provide a title based on the theme and then encourage learners to represent their ideas by means of drawings. As the Multimodal theoretical framework believes that meaning making can be done through multilayered forms, not necessarily the written form (Kress, 1997:212), the learners' drawings or pictures were a valid means of communicating meaning and representing the world around them.

The teacher based her teaching on learners' experiences gained from excursion. She developed writing activities using shared writing strategy, also known as joint construction from what the learners' experienced in an excursion trip (Gibbons, 2002). In this situation the teacher encouraged learners to retell the story about their experiences and what they learnt from the excursion and she wrote the words on the board. Thereafter, the sentence constructed by learners would be written on the board as an example so that learners could learn as they were also required to write their own sentences. This strategy supports Dixon-Krauss (1996) view that writing can be learnt through innovative means where the learner imitates some writing aspect from another writer, but also the shared writing experiences can focus on construction of new sentences or texts.

Shared writing activities are useful as they offer an opportunity to learners, particularly young learners to learn how to present their ideas in writing. In light of this study, the Grade 1 teachers, both the assistant teacher and the class teacher would go around, helping learners to rephrase their sentences for those who could not construct sentences on their own. In some instances, the class teacher asked learners to express their ideas so that the teacher could help them to construct sentences. The assistance was given in English, isiXhosa or Afrikaans depending on the needs of the learners. Some theorists claim that shared writing in literacy lessons is likely to improve sentence construction skills (Latham 2002:70), so the use of this strategy was useful in supporting learners in their attempts to construct own sentences and to put these in writing.

4.3.6 Pedagogical Support

Language plays a key role in teaching and learning literacy since both teachers and learners cannot understand each other without a common language. Learners may not understand their work presented to them if they are less competent in the language of instruction. As far as writing is concerned, learners need to have an idea of what is expected of them but at the same time they must be able to present their ideas on the page through writing. I observed that the multilingual approach was used to support learners to be able to carry out their written activities by translating the English content to isiXhosa or Afrikaans so that learners could understand their work. The teachers also made use of repetition to emphasize the key concepts of her lesson.

Observations revealed that the teacher was aware of her learners' language difficulties and engaged learners in lots of practical activities in which she provided adequate support in various ways. The teacher support is evident in Lesson B where the teacher introduced vocabulary. In this lesson the teacher used lots of illustrations and explanations so that learners could understand.

LESSON: B

INTRODUCING VOCABULARY

- 1.T: The teacher introduces learners into new words, writes them on the board e.g. spoon, rice
2. T: these new words will be found in the story that she is going to read for them.
- 3.T: The teacher writes those words on stickers e.g. bowl, rice, spoon
- 4.T: The teacher demonstrates each word with concrete examples of pictures
- 5.T: Lets all try to say the words
- 6.L: Learners try to say the words on stickers with the assistance from the teacher
7. T: very good, teacher pastes stickers on the board.
8. T: The teacher pastes pictures on the board, and then asks learners to put the words on stickers against the relevant pictures.
9. L: Some learners attempt to put the words against the picture with the help of the teacher
10. T: The teacher then reads the story in front of learners while they look at illustrations.
11. T: The teacher reminds the learners about the words extracted from the story earlier as they encounter them while reading the story.
- 12.T: The teacher requires learners to be able to relate words with illustrations in the book. Gives learners sentences written on the sticker to match them with relevant pictures in the story
13. L: Learners are given same sentences as in the story book and then they are asked to paste the same sentences next to the other one in the book. In this case learners do not really understand the meaning of the sentences or even the words but they try to relate and identify them.
- 14.L: Learners should find the words in the book by looking at the given sentence
15. L: Learners were given a task to draw a picture against the following words e.g. rice, tomatoes, beans and chill.

Grade I lesson observed on: 9 May, 2011

The lesson observations presented above reflect that phonics was taught explicitly within the context of the story where the teacher used the words extracted from the story for learners to sound them. This shows the interdependence of language skills in developing literacy skills as learners need to recognize the words, and then learn how to say the sounds so that they could be able to write them. Lesson B indicates that the teacher adhered to curriculum guidelines since she employed the balanced approach to literacy as stipulated in the LITNUM (2006) and NCS

(2002) documents. What can be deduced from this observation is that the phonic approach was used to strengthen and support learners' writing skills, while also developing other literacy skills.

The above lesson does not focus on a single mode e.g. writing as the only mode for literacy development. The lesson also demonstrates the importance of visual resources because visual texts develop in the same way as writing (Kress, 1997). In this lesson the teacher used words for learners to match with the relevant pictures. This proves that when developing writing skills, learners learn to associate the words with the actual objects as they learn the meaning of the words. Moreover, the teacher gave the learners a task to draw their own pictures opposite the given words. In this way, the child learns that words represent meaning which can also be represented through the visual texts.

Bloch (1992) suggests that the learning of written language should be oriented to meaning construction and creative expressions. In light this study, the Grade 1 teacher extracted words from the story and she continuously reminded learners about the particular story so that learners could make meaning out of the learning process. From the variety of genres to which learners were exposed, they were able to create and write their own texts independently. By so doing, learners began to write sentences using words learnt from various genres.

Table 4: Summary of lesson B to illustrate teacher support

Activity by learners	Teacher Activity/Strategy	Example from the lesson
New words	Writes words on the board	Line 1
Look at words	Writes words on stickers	Line 2
Look and listening	Demonstration of words	Line 4
Pronounce words with teacher	pronounce words with learners	Lines 5
Pronounce words on their own	Teacher help	Line 6
Match pictures with words	Paste stickers on board	Line 7,8,9
Looking at illustrations	Reading the story	Line 10
See new words in the story	Remind learners about words	Line 11
Match words with illustrations in the book	Give sentences written on stickers	Lines 12

Match sentences with pictures in the story	Assist learners as they paste sentences with relevant pictures	Lines 12,13
Find words in the story	Gives learners sentences	Line14
Draw pictures against the given words	Gives words i.e. rice, tomatoes, beans and chill	Line15

Extra language support was provided by the assistant teacher who facilitated some of the learning activities by monitoring learners in their small groups, while explaining and repeating instructions in the learners' home language (isiXhosa) so that learners could understand their task. This appears to support Baker's (2006:300) suggestion that an assistant teacher cannot only be involved in creating multilingual resources in the classroom, but can also translate and interpret for learners to understand their work. By doing this, the assistant teacher helped learners to make a connection between home (or community literacy) and school literacy and that allowed them to associate and relate home and school knowledge. The same view is expressed in the teacher interviews where the teacher expressed the importance of assistant teacher as a translator in the multilingual classroom since it is necessary for learners to first understand the content in their home languages before they can make meaning in an additional language.

The teacher explained thus:

It's important for teacher assistant to translate because most of my learners come from isiXhosa background, so it's important for them to understand the content or context in their mother tongue before they can even understand or begin to grasp the concept in English

(Interview with Grade I teacher: 31 July, 2011)

The above utterance can illustrate the belief /claim that language support to learners who are instructed in an unfamiliar language is necessary for effective teaching and learning. When the assistant teacher is not available, parents and siblings can also play the same role of developing multilingual literacies in young learners (Baker, 2006:313).

This discussion can serve to illustrate the significance proper language support to enable young learners gain literacy skills for further learning. As discussed in the earlier section, language

support was given through using learners' home language to facilitate learning activities. Also, there was a strong emphasis to teach phonics in English language so that learners could learn the sounds of the language as they learnt to write it. This means that before learners can write, they should be taught how to say and recognize sounds through reading activities.

In the following lesson extract (Lesson C) is an illustration of how learners were engaged in learning activities as the teacher encouraged them to participate in the learning process. It also shows that writing skills are developed simultaneously with other skills i.e. different strategies are employed to help learners acquire literacy skills.

LESSON C: Sentence construction

- 1.T: The teacher writes sight words from the story
2. T: Teacher asks learners to draw a picture against each words that are written on the board e.g. doll, ducks, door. Teacher gives learners a drawing task first in order to help learners to associate picture with words so that they can remember. Teacher gives learners some time to focus on that while both teacher and assistant teacher work around the groups to help learners.
3. L: Busy working on individual task in their groups
4. T: Teacher gives an example of a sentence to the learners e.g. That is a door
5. L: As learners construct their own sentences teacher goes around groups to help learners with sentence construction process.
6. T: What can we say about the door?
7. L: I can open the door.
8. T: Who can construct a sentence with the word ducks?
9. L: Ducks can swim.
10. T: Very good, write the sound 'd' in capital letter and in colour.
11. T: You should make sure that you write full stops at the end of your sentences.
12. L: Yes teacher
13. T: Why do you think we should write a sound d in capital letter?
14. L: Because it is at the beginning of the sentence.
15. T: Good

16. L: Avuzwa come on the board and show us where do we put full stop in the sentence?
17. T: Do we write it at the beginning, in the middle at the end of the sentence?
18. L: At the end teacher
19. T: Then put a full stop at the end of your sentence
20. T: Don't forget to use your finger to create space between the words in the sentences. Ms (teacher assistant) please make sure they leave space in between their words.
21. T: OK, Who can construct a sentence with the word **dog**?
22. L: I played with the **dog**.
23. T: Good Lisa, let's all say the sound **d**
24. L: 'd'
25. L: Good, write the sound 'd' in red colour
26. T: Ongezwa, where does the sentence start? E.g. do we write from left to write or we write from right to left? Show us here in these sentences
27. L: Learners struggled to identify the direction but teacher assists the learner
28. T: OK. Let's all read these sentences
29. L: They all read with teacher
30. T: I played with my dog, why do you think the word play is written as **played**? Who can help?
31. L: Then one learner answered, because it was done yesterday.
32. T: Very good, the word play is written as played in that sentence to indicate past tense, to show that the action was done in the past or yesterday like Amvuyela said

TASK

Draw a picture for each sentence after you have written sentences down.

Grade I lesson observed: 18/04/2011

Lesson C shows that both teacher and learners were actively involved in the lesson and learners were treated as active constructors of knowledge, and not just recipients of knowledge. The teacher used the question and answer strategy throughout the lesson to encourage learners'

critical thinking The teacher provided support by giving examples or clues when learners seemed to be lost, but most importantly the teacher encouraged learners to generate their own ideas based on what they saw from the picture or from what they read in the story.

The observed lesson shows how writing is supported within the context of literacy. The lesson was developed from the previous story from which the words they used to construct sentences were derived. The teacher consistently helped learners to construct their own sentences but also introduced writing conventions that needed to be incorporated in writing. For example, in Lesson C, lines (16-19) the teacher encouraged learners to use full stops, capital and small letters so that they could learn their significance in writing, although punctuation was not the focus of the lesson. The teacher used lots of questioning but learners were given some hints and examples they could draw on as they constructed their own sentences. This teaching strategy corresponds with the view that learners can learn how to write when they are exposed to appropriate examples from which they can learn (Gambrell *et al.*, 2007:245).

Lesson C appears to confirm that writing cannot be developed in isolation of reading skills as discussed earlier, i.e. there is an interdependence of literacy skills. This means that learners need to become good readers so that they can be able to write. In Lesson C, for example, the teacher read with learners before they could write a word or sentence. In lines 28-29 of Lesson C, the teacher encouraged learners to read the sentence they constructed on their own with her. Also, learners were taught how to sound letters and words in the same lesson. The lesson shows that the teacher focused on the letter /d/ but learners were given an opportunity to say the sounds of other letters in the word. The teacher would choose a learner to say the sound and then the entire class would say it again. As mentioned earlier, young learners are taught through repetition in order to help them to remember the words and letters when it comes to writing. In this lesson learners used the same sounds to compose different words which started with /d/ and they made use of the words to construct meaningful sentences e.g. Ducks can swim. This implies that the teacher taught the sound system to support the development of writing since the learners needed to recognize the letters before learning how to write them.

Lesson C shows that the teacher introduced the use of tenses at Grade 1 as learners were taught past tense though it was not the focus of the lesson. In lines 30-32, for example, the teacher tried to find out if learners had any idea about tenses. The learner provided response to the teacher's

questions, and thereafter the teacher explained the type of tense used in the sentence (i.e. past tense). This is to suggest that literacy teaching in Grade 1 does not only focus on a particular language aspect but the teacher integrates different language skills to support literacy development in young learners. By so doing, the learning process becomes more meaningful as learners use different language aspects to construct meaning of the lesson.

The preceding discussion can support the belief that the teaching of literacy requires teachers to be innovative to make sure that the purpose or objectives of the lesson are met. I also believe that it can be useful to give an opportunity to learners to be more interactive in their learning activities because it helps the teacher to identify areas in which learners need more attention. Teaching writing should be an integral part of the learning process to enable learners to apply their writing skills in meaningful situations.

4.3.7 Peer and Individual Support

It is important for the child to engage in joint activities since interaction with others promotes problem solving skills and social participation (Vygotsky, 1978) cited in (Gibbons 2002:8). Interaction among learners encourages learners to assist and learn from each other on a particular task. In this study I observed that when learners worked together (peer interaction), they became excited and showed interest in their learning. When Grade 1 learners, for example, engaged with educational puzzles without the help of the teacher as discussed in 4.3.2, I could see that they were helping each other to reach a common decision on how to complete the puzzle. In that way learning took place in a less threatening and warm atmosphere.

To inculcate the culture of peer support in the first term of the year, the Grade 1 teacher established a heterogeneous group where stronger learners sat with weaker learners so that they could help each other. However, the teacher expressed the concern that weaker learners were copying from the strong or the average learners. Consequently, in the second term the teacher decided to create homogeneous groups where learners worked together without copying from each other. This shows that peer teaching is not always effective; it needs thorough planning. The teacher needs to monitor the progress of learners in their groups.

Some studies claim that learners' written texts gradually develop when they receive support from adults (Latham, 2002:27). In this study young learners started by scribbling marks on the paper

as they got exposure to print products in terms of reading and writing practices. They began to produce words or phrases and then they wrote simple sentences. The analysis of what learners wrote in the next chapter indicates that writing is developmental since learners' writing changes from writing marks to writing letters that make meaning and at the end of my field work many learners could write sentences. This is confirmed by the teacher interview that developing writing skills requires continuous support from the teacher which involves individual consultation or attention.

The teacher did a lot of repetition where learners did activities on word patterns and spelling of words through writing. Learners in the intervention programme got support from the remedial teacher who specifically focused on learners who experienced difficulties in reading and writing. The assistant teacher also worked with learners individually to assist them with their work, focusing on the problems identified by the remedial teacher. As a result, many learners gradually improved their literacy skills as reflected on Appendix C.

4.4 Conclusion

This Chapter has dealt with the first part of data presentation and analysis which focuses mainly on data collected by means of observations and interviews. The discussion is based on two themes, namely the school and classroom environment and teacher practices. The latter part covers issues pertaining to pedagogical strategies, learning support and literacy for meaning construction. The analysis is informed by the Multimodal Approach to Literacy as discussed in Chapter 2. The discussion seems to suggest that learning literacy in a multilingual situation requires proper support for second language learners to successfully acquire literacy skills. The support needs to be given in a language that is familiar to the learners in order to strengthen their language skills. In this way the learners' home language becomes a resource for teaching and learning in a multilingual classroom. In the next Chapter I propose to present and analyze learners' written work using the Writing Development Continuum.

Chapter Five

Data presentation and Analysis: Learners' Writing Practices

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents data drawn from learners' writing practices to describe how learners develop writing skills. The analysis focuses on learners' texts that were produced at different stages of the data collection period. The data were taken from learners' literacy work books which they used to do all their activities given by their teacher. It was necessary to look at the texts which learners produced in order to determine how their writing practices had changed over a period of time when they entered Grade 1 up to the end of my field work in the third term of the year. The analysis of learners' work was supplemented by observation field notes and teacher interviews which are discussed in the previous chapter. This chapter situates the discussion on three themes namely writing development, making meaning of visual and written texts and the assessment of learners' writing skills. Fuller versions of all the learners' work are presented in Appendix C.

The Writing Developmental Continuum provides writing phases which show what learners can write at certain learning stages when they learn to write and it also informs this study on how the young learners' texts can be evaluated to determine their progress. It is complemented by the Multimodal Framework to understand how learners make meaning of the world around them through visual and written texts. The Multimodal Analytical Tool is influenced by the Systemic Functional Linguistic Framework (SFL) which enables us to understand how learners make use of visual and written (multimodal texts) to represent their experiences of the world.

5.2 Developing Learners' Writing Skills

This analysis took into consideration the first three phases of writing which are: the role play, experimental writing and early writing phase together with their indicators because Grade 1 learners are likely to operate within these phases as some of them begin to learn how to write when they come to school. The writing indicators refer to observable things that learners can do at a given learning phase. It is important to reiterate that learners' writing progress rarely occurs

in a sequential order but learners may remain in one phase for an extended period of time and eventually move to other phases (Raison, 1994:21).

Data show that many learners in the Grade 1 class operated within the role play phase at the beginning of the year. They copied whatever the teacher wrote on the board as they could not write sentences on their own. The teacher encouraged those learners who could not write sentences to draw pictures related to the topic. For example, learner A (Picture 2) copied the date although it was not well written, and underneath he drew a picture relating to the theme i.e. sharing.

In learner E's (Picture 2) work, letters are placed randomly on the page and the date numbers are reversed, with pictures as her main focus. The major difference in these texts is that learner A was aware of the use of capital letters and small letters in writing whereas learners E could not differentiate between the use of capital and small letters when writing a sentence. This analysis shows that although these learners were at the same writing development phase, their experiences with letters were different because learner E mixed capital letters and small letters whereas learner A was consistent with capital letters at the beginning of the words and small letters within the words. Also, it appears to suggest that learner A (Picture 2) was moving to the experimental phase while learner E (Picture 2) was still in the role play phase. This is not surprising given that developing writing skills is not expected to be the same to all learners because some learners may take longer in one phase before the transition to another phase (Raison, 1994:22). This appears to confirm that learners have different experiences and unique ways of learning e.g. visual learners learn differently from kinesthetic learners. The teacher's planning, therefore needs to accommodate diverse linguistic and learning styles in the classroom.

The analysis of learners' work also shows that many learners could not write their names when they joined Grade 1. According to the Writing Developmental Continuum framework, these learners were on the role play phase. In the role play phase, learners attempt to write their names and they begin to recognize that one moves from the top to the bottom and from the left to right of the page (directionality) when writing. As shown in Appendix C, learners A (Picture 1), B (Picture 1) and D (Picture 1) could copy their own names correctly whereas learners C (Picture 1), E (Picture 1) and X (Picture 1) could only write some letters of their names and sometimes certain letters were omitted or reversed. Learner E substituted letters C with S in her name and

as she continued to rewrite her name the consonant cluster was deleted. This can be associated with a common practice among young learners who tend to write some letters as we say them and assign meaning to their own letters (Raison, 1994).

A similar case is apparent in the text of learner X (Picture 1) where new letters are invented at the beginning of the name where the letter is duplicated /O/ and is later substituted with /WO/. Learner X (Picture 1) however, seems to have an idea of how to write his name but he maintains letters that are dominant in the name. This analysis indicates that some learners join Grade 1 with knowledge of how to write their names. It is possible that such learners attended Grade R or they had support or assistance while others were dependent on the Grade 1 teacher to build their writing foundation before they could move on. However, the tracking of learners' writing progress showed that learners' writing improved as they got support from their teacher through exposure to reading stories and phonics. For example, Learner C (Picture 5) started writing scribble letters when she began Grade I (see Picture 1) but by the end of the third term, this learner could write a meaningful sentence which reflected her understanding of punctuations and spacing.

The writing development of learners E and X can be classified within role play and experimental writing phases. For example, learner X (Pictures 1-3) could only copy what the teacher wrote on the board, that is, the date and the title for the news of the day. The analysis of learner X's work reveals that she could write letters with no space between the words and some letters were reversed. In the second term, learner X managed to write the date and a sentence with full stop at the end and this indicates that the learner X was moving towards the early writing phase. In the third term the same learner produced a sentence with scribbled letters and mixed small and capital letters with no space between them (Picture 6). In Picture 2, learner X wrote the isiXhosa word (this could be the name of the crèche he attended or his friend's or sibling's name) and then stated his age group. This supports my belief that the learner was exposed to isiXhosa at home or while he was Grade R.

Similarly, learner E could not write a sentence when they started in Grade 1 but by the end of the second term, she managed to write a sentence without space in between the words but one could make sense out of the sentence she wrote (Picture 4). At the end of the third term learner E could produce correct sentence with space in between though less attention was paid to

punctuation marks (Picture 5). Both learners X and E were in the intervention programme where they got extra support in reading, writing and counting. However, the presented data indicate that learner E was making positive progress whereas more effort was needed for learner X to enable him to move to the early writing phase. According to the Writing Developmental Continuum a range of scaffolds may be needed to support learning, especially for English second language learners, and the nature of support may vary over time depending on the complexity of the content (Raison, 1994:4).

The analysis of learners' work from the first term to the end of third term appears to confirm that learners improved exponentially towards the end of the year while others took time to develop writing skills. For example, learners A (Picture 5) and B (Picture 5) moved into early writing phase where they could produce grammatically correct sentences by the end of the third term as reflected on Appendix C. Learner B spelt the words correctly with appropriate capital letters but there were no full stops at the end of the sentences. As stated in the Writing Developmental Continuum framework, learners in their early writing phase deal with certain elements of writing at a time. This means that they may spell the words correctly but may not be able to use punctuation marks and other writing conventions. Likewise, learner C (Picture 1) early in the year started in the role play phase where he scribbled letters and learned how to write his names but by the end of the third term, this learner had developed to the early writing phase because he could construct sentences.

Learner C's writing progress was different from learners A and B because the latter were two phases ahead of learner C. However, learner C moved gradually between three phases i.e. from role play writing, experimental writing and early writing phase by the end of the third term. According to my observation, learner A and learner B could have been moved to the conventional writing phase by the end of the third term as they were familiar with letters from the beginning of the year and were able to write meaningful sentences unlike learners C, E and X who could not write their names at the beginning of the year. Learners A and B were ready to write more than one sentence by the end of the third term but the teacher did not introduce new things to them as the majority of learners had not acquired writing competence. As a result, the stronger learners were put on hold while the teacher did some catch up lesson with the rest of learners. Although the teacher intervention was good in terms of bringing her learners on par

with regard to writing development, the practice was unfair to fast learners as it prevented them to reach their fullest potential in writing.

The data point to various ways in which learners express themselves in writing and in communicating meaning. Drawings were commonly used by the learners to show their own understanding of different situations. According to my observations, learner A was one of the strongest learners in the Grade 1 class. His texts showed his own understanding of the learning environment and the kind of genre that would be meaningful in his writing. In this case, the learner used a short narrative with correct tense i.e. past tense and a drawing to express his views and understanding. For example, learner A's drawing shows him and his friend playing soccer. The drawing was not sufficient to communicate this learner's intended meaning, as he decided to write a sentence in the middle of the picture to represent the same message in words. The date and the topic appear in different colours and this could imply that the learner understood that these were important aspects of the story as the teacher used to start with the date and the title of the story before the whole class read it.

All the above are in line with the Revised National Curriculum Statement as teachers are encouraged to use a range of genres such as comics, games, fairy-tales and narratives in teaching literacy (RNCS, 2002). Also, the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS, 2011) stipulates the variety of genres in the learning activities necessary to facilitate the development of different linguistics skills in learners. For CAPS, however, literacy is not regarded as a learning area only but it is an integral aspect in all the subjects taught in the Foundation Phase. This entails that teachers should engage learners with meaningful activities in languages and life skills to facilitate learners' literacy development.

Further analysis of learners' texts shows that learner A's story (Picture 4) is different from learner E's story although they visited the same place and were instructed by the same teacher in Grade 1. Learner E's story (Picture 4) depicts the physical appearance of the actual place visited as they entered the patch with friends to play with stones. She expressed this by drawing the door, herself and another learner (friend) to show how they entered into the door of the patch. She further showed the weather of the particular day by drawing the sign representing the sun right on top of the text below the title (see also Appendix C). Learner E could not write her own

sentence to describe the event in words. Also, the placement of the title and the date on top of the page on the left hand side corner indicates that the learner was struggling with directionality and the recognition of words and their meanings appear to be a problem to this learner. The analysis of learner A's and E's texts show that the development of writing skills in young learners is not a linear process (Raison, 1994); learners do not acquire literacy skills in the same manner and at the same time, even though they receive support from the same teacher.

In addition, learner A's and learner B's development show that they were functioning at different levels as they produced texts that communicated meaning though they had used visual and language features differently. While learner A could be placed under the early writing phase since he could write a sentence and he was aware of some writing conventions such as spelling, punctuation marks, learner E was functioning within the role play phase of the writing continuum where learners experiment with marks on paper to communicate meaning. Learners who are at this stage of writing usually reproduce what was written by an adult person (Raison, 1994:2). So, learner E still needs more support with writing in order to recognize letters and use them to make words or meaningful sentences.

The underlying theoretical assumptions of the Writing Developmental Continuum appear to concur with the Foundation Phase Education Policy (RNCS, 2002) which subscribes to the balanced approach to the teaching and learning of literacy. According to the continuum language learning occurs when learners deal with meaningful events instead of exposing learners to isolated language activities (Raison, 1994:3). In the same way, this study observed that the Grade 1 teacher tried to make link of classroom learning activities from meaningful events in which learners were involved. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the teacher made use of themes which were mentioned in the assembly for writing activities.

The Grade 1 teacher also encouraged learners to write reflective journals at least two times a week. She asked learners to write about the weather experienced the previous day and what they enjoyed in their learning activities. Practically learners were engaged with writing activities while they were learning how to generate their own ideas. The analysis of learners' written journals showed that the way learners presented their ideas on the page changed from time to time with regard to use of punctuations marks as shown in Appendix C. As they progressed

with writing activities, they became more aware of full stops and capital letters and were able to use them appropriately. This can confirm the view that learners' writing develops through practice and support from the teacher (Raison, 1994). However, the majority of Grade 1 learners preferred to draw pictures to represent an idea that was written in a sentence. They also liked to draw themselves and their families as many of their drawings reflected their homes.

Interestingly, the teacher sometimes did not tell them to draw since the focus would be on writing sentences but many of the learners presented the texts with a drawing underneath. This shows that communication through images and drawings amongst young learners is important and exciting because they used such texts to express themselves better. This appears to correspond with the view expressed in the Multimodal Approach to Literacy that young learners' communication does not depend on a single mode e.g. written but also visual modes e.g. drawings, pictures and images can be used to communicate their intended messages (Kress, 1997).

5.3 Making Meaning of Visual and Written texts

The Multimodal Analytical tool considers three areas of representation as pointed out in Stenglin and Iedema (2001:194): (i) the structure of the visual image, (ii) the events and happenings in the world including the people involved in the events and (iii) circumstances associated with the event and the relation "set up" between the image and viewer in order to understand how the young learner positions himself or herself to the world around him. The structure of the visual image focuses on the placement of visual elements on the page while the events and happenings in the text are linked with grammatical meanings, particularly the experiential meaning.

The analysis looks at how the visual texts are used to express interpersonal meaning through the use of modality ingredients such as colours, images and boldness and how some elements stand out more than others in the text. This study is interested to understand how young learners make reflections on their internal world and on things that are important to them through images. Therefore, the analysis of learners' texts is informed by the three components of multimodal framework highlighted above in order to understand how learners use visual and written texts to make sense of the world and to represent things around them.

For the structure of visual image, Kress and van Leeuwen (1996: 195) point out four main tools which can be used to analyze visual texts namely, directionality or placement which means positioning of an element either horizontally (from left to right) or vertically (from top to bottom) in the text. The framing of images has to do with thickness or boldness of the frame of the text (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996).

5.3.1 Placement of texts

Learners' multimodal texts examined in this study show various ways of placement of elements. For example, learner C (Picture 2) placed her words more to the left, and the date is also on the same side while a large space is left blank on the right hand side. The same learner (Picture 3) has placed visual elements from left to right but the text appears to be more on the left hand side.

In learner B's work (Picture 3) the written text is placed at the left hand side while the visuals are placed at the right bottom of the text. In picture 1, for example, the learners' name is written on the left and her picture is drawn to the right, unlike learner C (Picture 1) whose visuals appear to the left where she drew her picture and the scribbled letters of her name on the right hand side. This is an illustration of how learners place elements in the multimodal texts which concurs with the view that the placement of elements in any direction of the text implies meaningful choices which might not necessarily be the same to all individuals (Stenglin and Iedema, 2001:195). This is to state that for an individual to choose to place a particular element either to the left or to the right is influenced by the meaning that needs to be represented through those elements. For example, in learner C's work (picture 1), it appears that the focus was not on writing her name which is more to the left but it was important for this learner to show the writer of the text by drawing herself on the right hand side.

In visual communication, many people seem to subscribe to the Western writing convention where an element placed on the left is regarded as "known" or "assumed" while an element placed to the right is referred to as new information (Stenglin and Iedema, 2001). In this study the texts produced by learners B and C portray this kind of convention. In learner B's work (picture 1), the name is written on the left, an indication that it is known and her picture to the right is the new information. For, learner C (Picture 1) the known would be her picture and the new information would be the scribbled letters of her name.

The placement of elements either on top or at the bottom of a text communicates different meanings. Information reflected on top of the text is usually viewed as an ‘ideal’ and is referred to as generalized meaning while the element positioned at the bottom of the text is regarded as ‘given’ or specific information. For example, for learner D (Picture 5) the ideal is the date, title and the sentences which are positioned on top while the given is an image of what happened in the excursion. For this particular learner, the sentences give us generalized information about the excursion and the image is more focused on specific meaning. Through the drawing, different meanings could be deduced e.g. learners jumping from one stone to another while other learners are picking up gemstones. Therefore, the image at the bottom draws the viewer to specific events whilst the top text gives indication that she went for an excursion, but more information of what happened there is captured well in the visual text. This can illustrate that young learners make use of semiotic resources including visuals to represent and communicate meaning (Kress, 1994; Kress, 1997); Jewitt and Kress, 2003). Any kind of text, either visual or written which learners produce has meaning that cannot be ignored when trying to understand what young learners write.

The above explanation shows that young learners are sign makers as they make use of multiple semiotic resources in their immediate context to represent their experiences and communicate meanings (Kress, 1997). In other words, learners’ messages can be rendered through multiple modes such as written images, drawings or pictures, depending on the intention of the sign-maker. Although they may not be aware of the established conventions of writing such as proper spelling, directionality and punctuation, they make use of any resources that are appropriate for meaning making. For example, the materials printed or visuals provided in the immediate environment can enable learners to express their thoughts or to make meaning of the world (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006:7). They are likely to make signs that reflect the media or objects they encounter at their homes and at school such as toys, games, cartoons, etc. Hence Kenner (2000) states that the immediate environments in which learners are exposed to may offer possibility or constraints for young learners to create texts.

5.3.2 Framing of texts

With regard to salient and framing of texts, the analysis shows that learner E (Picture 3) and learner X (Picture 4) place their visual elements at the centre of the text to show the significance of those particular elements in the entire text. Salient objects and features are often regarded to be the most important and they are usually placed at the centre of the text. Learner E (Picture 4), for example, drew the entrance door to the patch at the centre of the text to denote how learners entered to the scratch patch. This might be due to the learner being interested in that particular point and not in the actual event of picking up stones. It could be that he/she wanted to focus on himself/herself as the picture looks bigger and bolder than the other learner's picture he/she drew. This appears to suggest that learners represent their relationship with the world through their personal experiences.

A similar case is presented in learner X's work where he drew himself bigger and bold with colour at the centre of the text while the fellow soccer player's image is smaller and is placed at the bottom end corner of the text. In this case, the action of playing soccer seems to be the most significant event in the text. This observation shows that to choose a particular visual element as central for the entire text would depend on the intended meaning which the creator of the text wants to emphasize.

Modality-makers, according to Kress and van Leeuwen (1996:203) are often used to indicate the amount of details in the text. Young learners make use of different colours in their texts to represent the intended meaning. The analysis of learners' texts shows that learners make use of colours of their choice depending on the meaning and amount of details they want to express or to emphasize in certain features. For example, learner B (Picture 4) uses lots of colours and boldness to represent meaning in the text.

Framing is a less dominant feature in the learners' texts that were analyzed. Many texts do not have frames except the texts about the excursion or visit to the scratch patch. All the learners have framed this particular text with stones of different colours. Learner D (Picture 5), for example, has framed the larger text with bold stones in different colours and the smaller text is also bolded with the same colour. The use of framing in this text seems to portray the

importance of information presented in the text which was to express the different kinds of stones in the scratch patch.

The actual activity of picking up stones is presented in the text. The learner has more sentences in the text and the visual text at the bottom of the sentences provides us with more details of what she encountered during the excursion.

5.3.3 Semiotic Resources

In this study learners were provided with literacy and visual literacy resources which gave them an opportunity to explore writing in the form of sign-making. The teacher asked learners to draw pictures to express what happened at the scratch patch they visited. In the text produced by learner A (Picture 4) we see how the learner captured the view of the place, especially where they went to play with stones. The learner drew himself jumping between stones which were placed next to the small stones to allow the flow of water from the rock. The stones were drawn in different colours which represented the actual stones they saw at the Scratch patch which were in different colours. The use of colourful pencils, pens and paper and the visit to the scratch patch were necessary before the learner could write about their experiences from the excursion. For example, the Grade I learners would not be able to produce these particular texts as reflected in Appendix C without the necessary materials like pencils, colours and papers to create signs through either drawing, pictures or words.

In the same way the translanguaging process can facilitate the use of multiple modes to produce a text that has both visual and written features that represent meaning (Garcia, 2009). In other words, the choice of how to use the semiotic resources in the text has to be made before integrating multiple modes to make a multimodal text. Similarly, in this study I observed that young learners translanguage between the visual and written text as they transmitted the message from one semiotic mode to another. Translanguaging takes place when people make use of multiple forms of literacy to express their intention. For example, learner A (Appendices C) produced a multimodal text where the written text is right in the middle of the visual text. This means that the sentence carries the central idea of the text whereas the visuals illustrate the same idea by capturing the learners' experiences at the scratch patch by means of a drawing. In that

way the learner was able to demonstrate the interdependence between the visual and written texts but this also shows his ability to represent his understanding of the world around him.

The analysis of learners' text in this section draws on experiential meaning to understand how young learners use language to represent the world around them. The learners' work shows evidence of using action verbs that express their emotions and that indicate their relations with the world. For example, most of the texts produced at the beginning of the year are predominantly action verbs (e.g. Learner A, Picture 3) because the teacher encouraged them to construct sentences based on their experiences and what they did. They basically wrote recounts of the events over weekends as the teacher asked them to retell these events orally and also to put them in writing. Towards the end of the third term, the teacher introduced learners to writing about their feelings daily.

The analysis shows that young learners appear to use language to express events, feelings and their relationship with the world around them. However, exposure from home and school influences how they construct the world through language. In Table 5 the learner engages with the material process where the physical actions are stated. Table 6 is a relational process while Tables 7 and 8 present the mental processes.

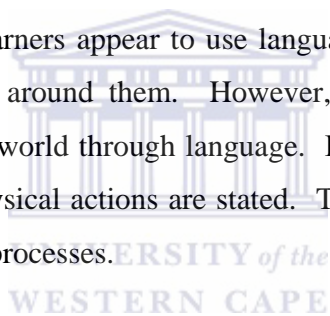


Table 5: Material process

I played soccer with my friends (Learner A: Picture 3)

I	Played	Soccer	With my friends
Actor	Material process	Goal	Actor

The material process describes the concrete events of the external world. The verbs used in this process are noticeable and involve movements. The actor is the main participant involved in the material process.

Table 6: Relational process

I am six years (Learner X: Picture 2)

I	Am	Six years
Carrier	Attributive (relational process)	Attribute

The relational process expresses the relationship of participants to a particular identity or attribute. The participant as reflected in the above table is a carrier but there are other participants that can defined under relational processes.

Table 7: Mental process

I enjoy reading (Learner D: Picture 4)

I	Enjoy	Reading
Sensor	Mental process	Phenomenon



The mental process describes the inner world of sensing for example, feeling, thinking and perceiving something. In the above sentence, the learner expresses the feelings she had with writing.

Table 8: Mental and relational processes

Today I feel happy because my daddy is at home (Learner C: Picture 5)

Today	I	Feel	Happy	Because	My daddy	Is	At home
Phenomenon	Sensor	Mental process	Phenomenon		Carrier	Attributive relational process	Attribute

The above analysis can support the theoretical underpinnings of the Writing Developmental Continuum that young learners construct and make sense of the world through the language which reflects an understanding of their socio-cultural environment. This is to say that learners use language to represent their experiences of the world surrounding them. An analysis of some learners' texts reveals what they encounter in the community, media and at school as well. For example, Learner X's (Picture 4) text shows that he was playing soccer next to passing by cars. This is a reflection of a context or a residential area that does not have sports field and where children play in the streets.

Learner B's (Picture 3) text is about a birthday party with people surrounding a cake and singing a birthday song. This is an indication that learners communicate things that they are exposed to in their real lives. The same learner in (Picture 6) writes a sentence about President Nelson Mandela's birthday "**today is Tata uMandelas birthday**". Interestingly this learner speaks Afrikaans and English at home but the text reflects the use of the isiXhosa word such "*tata/father*" and "*uMandela/Mandela*" with a prefix (to Mandela) which is characteristic of isiXhosa nouns. It is a reflection that the learner might be having some exposure to isiXhosa speaking people or the media such as television or radio where people use different terms such *tata* to address the first president of the democratic South Africa. The above sentence shows how the influence of multilingualism is increasingly becoming inevitable in the classroom context due to exposure to diverse linguistic resources in communities, media and school.

In summary, young learners can make meaning through visual or written texts. Learners' texts reveal the use of visual elements such as modality markers, placement and framing to signify certain meaning. Also, the written texts represent learners' world experiences through material, relational and mental processes. In the following section I will focus on how the Grade 1 learners' written work was assessed.

5.4 Assessment of Learners' Writing

Having analyzed how Grade 1 learners develop writing, it is important to understand how their writing development is assessed in the teaching and learning of literacy. The Writing Developmental Continuum states that evaluation of learners' writing development needs to be done progressively during the entire duration of teaching and learning (Raison, 1994:120) rather than focusing on what may be produced at the end of studies in the form of summative assessment. Given that, teachers are encouraged to have whole class writing profile sheets which can be used to record learners' writing progress as the teacher observes the writing behavior in relation to indicators given on each phase. The systematic tracking of learners' writing behavior may help the teacher to write an informative report about the progress of the learners at the end of the year (Raison, 1994:15).

This study observed that the Grade 1 teacher used rubrics with criteria to evaluate what learners had written and awarded marks based on those criteria. Although the use of rubrics is preferred for its objectivity, the provided checklist in the activity done by Learner B (Picture 6) does not seem to accommodate learners who might be at the role play phase where learners scribble letters and symbols to which they assign their own meanings. In other words, the rubric does not cater for learners' diverse learning abilities as learners' progress is measured against achievement of the written tasks, not necessarily on their ability to produce a text which could be in scribbled form.

Moreover, assessing writing development takes place within a particular context in order to be more meaningful to the learners and also to help the teacher to plan follow-up activities to facilitate learning (Raison, 1994:15). This study observed that learners were regularly assessed based on the texts they produced. For example, the teacher looked at learners' texts including pictures to determine whether they made sense and if not, the teacher would repeat the same

thing so that learners could redraw their pictures or written texts. The teacher looked if learners could match pictures with words or sentences and if they could draw pictures in relation to given sentences. For example, to support learner B (Picture 2), the teacher wrote a small letter in the middle of the sentence where the learner had written in capital letters.

In marking what the learners wrote, the teacher made use of question marks and underlined words and letters which were incorrectly written or which did not make sense. However, the use of question marks and the underlining of incorrect words may not be understood by Grade 1 learners in terms of what they mean or what the learners are expected to do. In my observations I noted that the teacher explained to the learners after marking their work so that they could correct their mistakes and the assistant teacher helped struggling learners so that they could do their unfinished work before the teacher introduced them to new lesson content. So, this opportunity enabled the learners to practise their writing skills as they corrected their tasks.

The Writing Developmental Continuum suggests that learners should be assessed in relation to phases. This means that the learner needs to be assessed in relation to what he or she can do at a particular writing development stage instead of focusing on what the curriculum expects the learner to achieve in writing. In this study learners were not assessed on what they knew about writing but the writing assessment was more of fulfilling the expectations set in the curriculum as the curriculum requires Grade 1 learners to write meaningful sentences. This curriculum objective does not acknowledge learners' diverse learning styles and the different experiences learners have about writing. For example, for learner E (Picture 3) the teacher wrote feedback in the picture as; "*the learner is not able to write her own sentence*". But if the level of understanding of the learners was recognized, the teacher could have seen that the learner attempted to copy the heading though punctuations marks were less obvious in the title and the visual texts reflected the experiences of the learner in the excursion. Therefore, this text shows that the learners could generate ideas through the drawing which link well with the title of the text.

The teacher needs to inculcate a positive learning environment where individual achievement is important rather than 'competition and comparison' against fellow learners (Raison, 1994:15). Teachers need to be aware of the learners' level of understanding and should acknowledge other texts such as drawings and pictures as a means of communication.

For instance, the use of pictures could have been taken into consideration in learner E's work. Also, rewriting the words or sentences could be helpful in the teaching and learning of writing as learners get to learn how to do it better next time. Similarly, for punctuation and spacing the teacher needs to consistently model correct punctuation and proper spacing until the learners write the sentences or words properly. Some scholars maintain that learners learn better writing skills when they are surrounded by examples (Lantham, 2002:70), so teachers must provide learners with relevant examples to improve their writing skills.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed how young learners develop writing skills by analyzing learners' written work on the basis of the Writing Developmental Continuum. The analysis of learners' visual and written texts shows that writing is a developmental process although it does not occur simultaneously and sequentially in all learners. The discussion also illustrated that young learners construct meaningful texts which represent experiences of the world around them through visual or written texts. With regard to assessment, young learners' writing skills are assessed gradually within the teaching and learning of literacy. This means that writing is assessed concurrently with other literacy skills such as reading or thinking and reasoning skills. In the next chapter I will discuss the findings, conclusions and recommendations drawn on this study.

Chapter Six

Discussion of Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

The study investigated early literacy development in terms of how Grade 1 learners' writing develops in a multilingual classroom environment. It attempted to address the main research question: What do Grade 1 learners write in multilingual contexts?

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the summary of findings of this study. On the basis of the findings, I draw conclusions and propose recommendations. The presentation of the findings is guided by the subsidiary research questions proposed in Chapter 1 and are as follows:

- (i) What kind of genres do Grade 1 learners write?
- (ii) What are the approaches and strategies of developing learners' writing skills in a multilingual Grade 1 classroom?
- (iii) What support do learners receive from teachers to develop their writing skills?
- (iv) How do teachers assess learners' writing activities?

6.2 What kind of genres do Grade 1 write?

6.2.1 Production of Multimodal texts

Data analysis shows that Grade 1 learners are able to produce multimodal texts that incorporate visual and written language features (Jewitt and Kress, 2003). The multimodal texts are characterized by scribbles and written words or letters to communicate meaning. The study found that learners communicate experiential and interpersonal meaning through these texts. The experiential meaning could be seen through the use of action verbs that are dominant in learner's written texts. The sentences constructed at the beginning of the year reflect the material verbs where learners showed how they became involved in certain activities. Towards the end of the third term, they began to produce mental verbs in which they expressed how they felt about the world around them. However, the social exposure, particularly the classroom environment

appears to have influenced the way young learners decide to present their experiences of the world around them.

Learners made use of semiotic resources to represent their world's experiences in different forms depending on the exposure and intention of the particular text. The Grade 1 learners' texts communicated interpersonal meaning through visual images in which they represented personal and important information by making use of modality markers. For example, learners made use of colours to express their interpersonal meanings of the world around them. Different meanings were communicated in visual texts through the colour choices and placement of elements on the text in relation to their world views. This finding seems to be in agreement with the Multimodal Analytical tool which explains that the placement of elements in the texts can be associated with certain meanings (Stenglin and Iedema, 2001).

It emerged from this study that the use of pictures in teaching literacy can be useful because visual images stimulate learners' imagination. The study found that the teacher made use of pictures for discussion i.e. before reading the story the learners would discuss the picture on the cover of the book as the teacher gave learners an opportunity to predict what would happen in the story before even reading it.

The study also discovered that writing activities were drawn from the story and the visuals were used as foundation for learners to develop their own stories. As discussed in Chapter 4, the teacher would ask learners to write their stories with pictures or the teacher wrote a sentence and instructed learners to draw a picture under the given sentences. This appears to have enabled learners to make the story through visuals and words thus developing their literacy skills. Therefore, this study can confirm that pictures and other visual resources formed part of learners' learning experiences. The use of visual images is also supported in Latham (2002:27) that pictures for young learners act as a stimulus to remember the words or sentences written on a particular picture. It was important for the teacher to make use of visual resources to support writing skills by stimulating learners' imagination, thinking and reasoning skills.

Moreover, the study found that learners' multimodal texts were structured differently depending on the individual's choice to communicate meaning. Learners who were operating in the role play phase, for example, could not show evidence of organizing elements according to the four quadrants i.e. right-left and top-bottom because some learners at the beginning of the year were struggling with directionality and many elements in their texts were placed on top.

6.2.2 Recounts dominant in Grade 1 learners' writing

The texts produced by Grade 1 learners showed dominance of recount genres in which they wrote about a series of past events. This is because the teacher asked questions that were reflective of events which learners encountered in the past. The reflective journals guided them in sentence construction. They were guided by the teacher on how to write sentences on their daily experiences encountered in the previous day. As presented in the previous chapter, learners were exposed to reading stories and they also wrote short stories that were sometimes based on pictures or topic suggested by the teacher. The use of a variety of genres to develop learners' literacy is stipulated in the National Curriculum Statement (NCS, 2002). It encourages teachers to expose young learners to recounts, narratives, television, CD ROM, comics and games. However, the learners' texts were written in English since it is the language that was primarily used as LoLT while isiXhosa and Afrikaans were used to support the learning of English skills. In other words, learners were not encouraged to write in other languages as the teacher aimed at developing English language skills. Edwards (1983:114) advocates the need to introduce learners into variety of genres which give learners an opportunity to explore with writing to create texts of their choice.

6.3 What are the approaches and strategies of developing writing skills in a multilingual Grade 1 classroom?

The study found that the Grade 1 teacher used various teaching approaches and strategies to enable learners promote literacy in the classroom. Some of the teaching approaches and strategies that were noted during observations include text-based approach, repetition, cooperative learning, one to one consultation and question-answer strategy.

6.3.1 Text-based approach enhances learners' writing skills

The study found that the Grade 1 teacher followed the balanced approach to literacy as stipulated in the National Curriculum Statement for literacy in the Foundation Phase. This approach encourages that literacy needs to be taught in context for learners to make meaning of the learning process (RNCS, 2002). The teacher made use of stories to develop a variety of learning activities so that learners could acquire different language skills simultaneously instead of learning these skills in a fragmented way. In this way literacy skills were taught in an integrated way as teacher incorporated many language aspects to support literacy development.

The teacher took learners through the story where they identified key aspects such as the author of the story, the title and illustrations on the cover of the book before reading the actual story. The teacher introduced learners to some elements that were necessary for young learners to learn about the story before they could begin to write their own story. The teacher also encouraged learners to generate their own ideas on the story through visual images or written texts where they wrote sentences or some words about the story.

Literacy skills are interdependent i.e. the acquisition of one skill supports the development of other skills. The study appears to support the belief that before learners could learn to write, they had to do a lot of reading activities, phonics and speaking so that they could learn how to write the words as they said them. Learners were given many reading activities to enhance their writing skills. The teacher had to practise with learners through reading and saying sounds of some words (phonics) so that they could recognize the sounds and words before they could write them. This means that the development of writing skills depends on exposure to reading activities because it is through reading that learners can recognize sounds and letters of the words they want to write (Latham, 2002).

6.3.2 Phonics Approach common in the Grade 1 classroom

The study also noted that phonics was taught to support the development of writing skills in Grade 1 learners. Lesson C presented in the previous chapter demonstrates how the teacher taught learners vocabulary through phonics. It shows how the teacher encouraged learners to say the sound as they wrote the words. As the lesson proceeded, learners made use of the same words in their sentence construction.

This is to suggest that teaching learners to say the words as they write can enable them to remember the words especially when they need to create their own texts i.e. shared and guided writing as suggested in the Foundation Phase Literacy Curriculum (NCS, 2002). At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher provided an example constructed from the given sight words. Based on the example, learners were required to construct their own sentences under the guidance of their teacher while the assistant teacher walked around to support struggling learners. As they proceeded with writing sentences, the teacher reminded learners about putting full stops at the end of their sentences and the need to start new sentence with capital letters. Such a development of literacy lesson shows that the teacher subscribed to what is suggested in the National Curriculum Statement (NCS, 2002) as she tried to help learners to explore with the process of writing. Importantly, the lesson C presented in chapter four reveals that developing writing skills requires teacher's inputs and close monitoring to identify areas that still need more attention for a particular learner to improve.

6.3.3 Guided Writing and Vocabulary Development enhance learners' writing skills

The study noted that teachers inculcated the culture of reading so that learners could develop vocabulary in support of their writing skills. As stated in Chapter 4, writing activities were drawn from stories whereby the teacher let learners read the story and some words were extracted from that particular story. These words were used by learners to construct sentences. For example, the teacher provided examples of sentences and learners composed their own sentences based on teacher's example.

Sometimes the teacher would let learners do guided writing where they said the sentence or word and then the teacher helped with the writing of that word or sentence while learners attempted to copy the sentence. Guided writing was useful at the beginning of the year when many learners could not write words but could say them. In this case, the assistant teacher would work with learners in groups, assisting those who could write while the teacher proceeded with the lesson.

The teacher also used sight words which were written in a word bank for the class on a separate board. These were common words which learners knew or had encountered since the beginning of the year. It was noted that the teacher would regularly read those words with the learners before reading a story or before attempting a particular task. The teacher asked learners if they

remembered the words and the entire class would repeatedly read those words. As they engaged with reading activities, the teacher sometimes asked learners about the common words they saw in the story. The teacher also attempted to find out if learners knew the meaning of certain words so that she could explain to them.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the teacher introduced learners to new words by writing them on stickers or on the board before reading the story. Firstly, the teacher read the words and learners read after the teacher. Secondly, the teacher would ask a learner to match the picture with a particular word on a sticker and thereafter the teacher would explain the picture in relation to the word. As learners read, the teacher asked them to identify new words which were introduced to them before reading the story. At the end of the story, the teacher asked learners to make use of words in sentence construction or sometimes the teacher required learners to draw the picture against the words and also formulate their own sentences. The study found that learners' writing development depended on the writing phase in which they were as some of the learners (e.g. those who were on experimental writing phase) could only create visual images with scribbled letters but the teacher supported them by writing the sentences for them and they would copy those sentences. Advanced learners did independent writing but the teacher reminded them about punctuations and spacing between words as they wrote sentences.

6.3.4 Translanguaging supports multilingual literacy

In the multilingual contexts people usually make use of linguistic resources available in their immediate environment for communication purposes. In the multilingual classroom both teachers and learners deploy their linguistic abilities in different situations. The language used as a medium of instruction in the school was mainly English whereas isiXhosa and Afrikaans languages were used for interaction among learners and between the teacher and learners. However, the assistant teacher assistant made use of isiXhosa or Afrikaans to provide language support to learners whose home language(s) were not English. As mentioned in the previous chapters, translanguaging is one of the means of a multilingual approach to literacy development whereby learners' home languages are acknowledged and used in the classroom to support learning.

Multilingual skills enable people to alternate across languages for different purposes (Baker, 2006). This is to say that the language choice is informed by participants and context in which the communication takes place. Multilingual/bilingual teachers and learners have the ability to translanguage in different languages as they engage with a variety of learning activities (Garcia, 2009). For instance, although the lessons were taught through the medium of English, the same information was repeated in isiXhosa or Afrikaans to support learners. Furthermore, the assistant teacher worked with learners in their small groups, repeating instructions and giving explanation in learners' home language(s) to help learners carry out their tasks in English. However, at the school assembly, English was the language used for addressing staff and learners but when learners played outside the classroom, they made use of their home language(s) and English. This appears to support the belief that learners have the ability to translanguage between different languages without mixing them. In other words, they know the audience and the language choice suitable particular participant in a conversation. Therefore, it was noted that the use of a particular language amongst multilingual speakers is for certain purposes and support literacy development in the classroom.

6.3.5 Co-operative learning essential for literacy development

According to Gibbons (2002:40), literacy can be developed through a learner-centred approach where learners become active participants in knowledge construction. This can be done by encouraging interaction amongst learners based on a learning activity while the teacher facilitates the learning process. In this study the teacher made use of the co-operative learning approach to create opportunity for learners to interact as they learnt from each other.

It was observed that during the first phase of the study, the teacher created mixed ability groups in which learners at different levels of learning were put as indicated in Chapter 4. This strategy was meant for learners to help each other so that even the weaker groups could be supported by the stronger learners. However, it was noted that this kind of group mix was not effective because the weaker learners were copying from the stronger learners. Given the case, the teacher created homogeneous groups which worked better because the teacher was able to identify learners who needed extra attention and support. This is to state that the co-operative teaching approach needs to be properly managed to yield effective results.

6.3.6 Repetition used frequently in the Grade 1 literacy lessons

The study found that the Grade 1 teacher did a lot of repetition especially when trying to emphasize certain lesson aspects for learners to remember. The teacher also used the repetition strategy to help those learners who were performing below average and who needed extra support. This was done purposely by the teacher to accommodate learners especially those weaker learners to learn something. Through repeating several times, learners could be able to learn something and could be in position to use the words in writing sentences.

6.3.7 Question and Answer Teaching Strategy facilitates literacy development

The question and answer strategy was used by the teacher to encourage learners to participate actively in the lesson by asking questions that required learners to respond. The study learnt that this strategy can inculcate the culture of interaction or communication in the classroom and it can motivate learners towards learning. By so doing, learners became active participants and co-creators of learning rather than being just recipients of knowledge. Knowledge construction is emphasized in the Revised National Curriculum Statement as it encourages teachers to have a learner-centred approach whereby learners become actively involved in learning activities (RNCS, 2002).

Importantly, the question-answer strategy can also encourage critical thinking because questions stimulate learners' thinking and it is also a means of classroom management as it demands the learners' attention to the lesson. In addition, the question and answer strategy forms part of formative assessment because the learners' responses give an indication of learners' understanding of a particular topic and it provides the opportunity to the teacher to improve the lesson (Raison, 1994). This can confirm that the question and answer strategy is necessary in teaching and learning literacy skills because learners get opportunity to be involved in the learning process as they try to interpret and understand their work.

6.4 What type of support do learners receive to enhance their writing skills?

6.4.1 Socio-Cultural Environment supports learners' writing

Young learners engage with writing practices in multiple ways as they represent their message through the use of visual images or written languages (Kress, 1997). The visual and written texts the learners produced reflected their experiences of the world surround them. It is also believed that learners' writing skills develop when they are engaged with purposeful authentic written texts which are clearly explained to them as they explore writing activities (Raison, 1994:15).

This study learnt that if teachers expose learners to texts that they are familiar with, learners can make better meaning of such texts as they can relate to their own experiences. For example, the Kagiso multilingual readers are useful books for reading in the Foundation Phase. They provided learners with what they encounter at their homes or in the surrounding communities. These materials stimulate learners' thinking and learners are stimulated to read or write about their daily or familiar experiences.

The study noted that the Grade 1 learners were also encouraged to write about the events that happened in the school, e.g. the themes from the school assembly were integrated in the writing lessons. The teacher would write the title on the board and then learners were required to draw a picture and construct sentences based on the title. By so doing, learners were encouraged to bring social experiences in the writing process and even those who could not write words were able to communicate their meaning through visual images.

The teacher also asked learners to report on the excursion in writing. This appears to have helped learners to generate ideas based on their experiences at the excursion. For example, the learners wrote about what they learned and what they enjoyed from the excursion. The study found out that learners represented their experiences in written sentences and in visual images to communicate what they learnt from their study trip. In light of this, learners could make meaning out of the excursion as they reported on the events and actions that we encountered out of the classroom. This indicates that the learners' socio-cultural environment can serve as a rich resource in terms of strengthening learners' literacy skills.

6.4.2 Learners' Home Language supports literacy development

The exposure to a variety of multilingual reading materials can play a significance role for literacy development. The Kagiso Grade 1 readers were printed in the three languages dominant of the Western Cape (i.e. Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa). Although the study did not find many multilingual teaching aids, the school had access to the Kagiso multilingual books. The aim of having multilingual books in the Foundation Phase was to encourage learners to read in their home language so that they could have a better understanding of the story in their home languages.

As the Grade 1 learners were read to in isiXhosa by the assistant teachers before they were required to read Afrikaans and English stories, this exercise appears to have helped them as second language learners to associate the meanings of the words from the story read in their home language(s). This implies that reading in home language(s) can scaffold or facilitate reading in an additional or second language. It can then be easier for the teacher to use the English story to draw on writing activities because learners can make sense of the story in their home languages.

Similarly, the New Literacy Studies framework emphasizes the recognition of learners' prior knowledge e.g. home literacy in teaching and learning (Street, 2001) because it enables the learner to navigate between home and school knowledge. In a multilingual classroom, literacy resources such as learners' home language are to form part of teaching and learning experiences. This study found that learners' home language(s) were used as literacy resources to facilitate literacy teaching and learning activities. As mentioned above, the Grade 1 teacher made use of a multilingual approach to help learners understand English concepts in their home languages. This approach benefits both teachers and learners as it becomes easier for bi/multilingual teachers to assist learners in the language they understand and this facilitates teaching and learning. Although the Grade 1 teacher could not speak isiXhosa, the assistant teacher was of great use as she supported learners by explaining the task in learners' home language(s). Therefore, the assistant teacher acted as a mediator between the learners' home language(s) and the new language used in the classroom i.e. English. This responds with Baker's (2006) suggestion that the learners' multilingual and multicultural experiences should be seen as a resource for teaching and learning rather than as a barrier to learning. Thus, using learners'

home language(s) in the classroom appears to have enabled learners to learn better and to develop literacy competence in English through the support of the learners' home language.

6.4.3 Individual Attention essential for writing development

The teacher provided support by creating extra time to assist learners individually. This was a significant contribution towards learners' literacy development (Latham, 2002). This study noted that developing writing skills requires a consistent support from the teacher by paying attention to individual learners' problem. As stated earlier, writing skills do not develop simultaneously in all learners. Therefore, the teacher needs to understand different learning experiences and styles in order to come up with suitable measures to support learners. The assistant teacher also consulted with individual learners as she tried to provide more support with language, particularly for those learners who did not understand their work in the second language. This position appears to tally with Baker (2006) that second language learners need language support for learning to take place.

6.4.4 Remedial Support essential for struggling learners

This study found that the school had a learning support from the remedial teacher and volunteers whose job was to support Foundation Phase learners to improve on their literacy skills. The volunteers, assistant teacher and remedial teachers worked in collaboration with the Grade 1 teacher, focusing on problems identified by the teacher in order to help children develop reading, writing and counting skills. They worked with learners by giving extra reading and writing activities during the course of the week. The teacher did a follow-up by asking learners to repeat what they learnt from assistant teacher and remedial teacher in order to monitor the progress of the learners. Therefore, one to one consultation and remedial support must have helped the weaker learners to improve gradually while being integrated into the mainstream teaching and learning process.

6.5 How do teachers assess learners' writing activities?

6.5.1 Formative and Continuous Assessment

The study found that learners' work was regularly checked to ensure that learners performed the given tasks but the teacher also provided some feedback that aimed at learner's improvement. The teacher provided oral and written feedback on learners' work by rephrasing the sentence or re-writing letters and sometimes the teacher decided to revisit certain aspects that seemed to be difficult to the majority of learners in the class. This was part of formative assessment. The Grade 1 teacher for example, used to give oral feedback where she explained something to the entire class and thereafter the assistant teacher worked with individual learners so that the mistakes could be rectified. This is in line with the Writing Development Continuum which states that assessing writing should be based on individual learner achievement instead of comparing learners and expecting them to have achieved at the same level or to progress in the same way (Raison, 1994). Therefore, providing feedback is crucial but the nature of feedback needs also to be considered since learners need to learn from what the teacher says about their written work.

Continuous assessment enables the teacher to establish learners' level of understanding which informs the planning for teaching and learning (Gibbons, 2002:45). Assessment does not only help the teacher to identify the gap of knowledge but it also helps the teacher to improvise supportive strategy to learners. This was practised in this study as the teacher used various strategies to find out the learners' existing knowledge and the problem areas that needed attention. Therefore, the teacher used the question and answer strategy during the lessons and rubrics with set criteria were provided to determine learners' level of understanding and capabilities. The teachers' assessment strategy is in line with the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS, 2002) which stresses the importance of assessing learners' task using certain criteria which learners need to be aware of. In this study, learners' writing development was assessed continuously. Therefore, I was able to determine whether learners had progressed through the role playing stage to the early writing stage.

6.6 Conclusions

Based on this study, it can be said that writing skills develop by encouraging learners to present their own ideas and engaging learners with meaningful and stimulating writing activities. This is to suggest that learners' writing behaviour can improve through practice as well as from proper support from the teacher. Teacher support plays a significant role on learners' literacy development since the teacher has to teach and monitor the learners' writing progress. Learners' writing skills develop in a supportive learning environment where interactive teaching strategies are used and where opportunities to integrate literacy skills in the learning process are provided.

Secondly, Grade 1 learners create meaningful multimodal texts which incorporate features from written language and visual literacy. This shows that young learners have the ability to represent their world experiences using visual and written texts. They make use of multiple semiotic resources in a single text to represent interpersonal and experiential meanings. However, what learners produce under the guidance and support of their teacher reflect their socio-cultural environment and experiences and learners' writing develops over time with proper support. In other words, although learners may be taught by the same teacher but they produce different texts which are influenced by their prior experiences. They display different understandings and interpretations of literacy situations. This also shows that literacy or writing development is both a socio-cultural and cognitive phenomenon.

This study was administered at a multilingual and multicultural school where both teachers and learners came from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Language diversity in this study is regarded as a resource for literacy teaching and learning. Although teachers and learners need a common language to understand each other, teaching in a multilingual classroom should not only rely on teaching through the medium of one language but the use of other language(s) to promote additive bi/multilingualism. In this study the learners' home language(s) were not seen as barriers to learning but they were recognized through their use in learning activities. However, only Kagiso readers were available in the classroom and this means that a lot still needs to be done to ensure that literacy skills are sufficiently developed in learners' home language(s) and in the additional language(s). By doing this, learners can acquire multilingual literacy skills which would enable them to express themselves orally and in writing through different languages. This would be a cognitive and affective benefit to all learners.

The study concludes that the teacher's input and teaching strategies play a big role in developing learners' writing skills as Grade 1 learners move through writing phases before they develop into early writers. This shows that writing is not a linear process but it is a gradual process which depends on a variety of resources and factors which build on learners' prior experiences and creativity. Thus Grade 1 learners appear to be capable of producing different written texts with different meanings which depict their levels of writing development and their understanding of the world around them.

6.7 Recommendations

In view of the above findings and conclusions, this study proposes the following recommendations:

(i) Promoting Multilingual Literacy Practices in the Classroom

- ❖ Classrooms should serve as spaces to develop other languages other than English that exist in the classroom. This means that the focus should not only be to develop skills in English language but isiXhosa and Afrikaans in the case of Western Cape Province. Teaching and learning of these languages should be developed in order to encourage learners to acquire multilingual literacies.
- ❖ Translanguaging should be extended to help all the learners across the Grades since many learners could learn better through this process.
- ❖ Multilingual resources such as Kagiso readers (story books that are printed in three languages e.g. isiXhosa, Afrikaans and English) should be used to develop multilingual literacy skills across the learning phases.

(ii) Integration of home and school literacies

- ❖ Home and school literacies should be integrated through multilingual literacy practices in the classroom.
- ❖ Visual literacy should be an integral part of teaching and learning e.g. make use of advertisements, television programmes, games, news papers, white boards, etc. since they have an influence on learners' literacy development.

(iii) Promote Multimodal Literacy among Grade 1 learners

- ❖ Multimodal practices should be encouraged as many Grade 1 learners can produce multimodal texts. In this case, there is a need for teachers to know how to teach multimodal texts, especially when learners are in their early years of schooling.
- ❖ Multimodal literacy needs to be used in the Writing Developmental Continuum in order to trace learners' writing behavior in relation to appropriate writing phases.

(iv) Innovative Literacy Teaching and Assessment Strategies

- ❖ Writing should be assessed based on individual learner achievement rather than comparing learners' achievements. This is to suggest that the teacher should monitor learners' progress regularly rather than focusing on summative assessment.
- ❖ Learners need to speak about their own texts. In other words, learners should be given opportunity to reflect and discuss the meaning or messages communicated through their texts.

(v) Invest on Foundation Phase Teacher Training Programmes

- ❖ Teacher training programmes should equip pre-service and in-service teachers with multilingual linguistics skills. In other words, the three languages predominantly used in the Western Cape Province should be compulsory for the teachers in training in order to prepare them to become effective teachers in a multilingual context and to enable them develop their learners' literacy skills.
- ❖ Teachers should be trained on how to use the text-based approach where teacher would know that teaching literacy based on the story is good but there is a need to focus more on the features of a particular genre in order to expose learners to different kinds of genres.

6.8 Implications for Further Research

Further research is needed to understand the role of home literacy in the learners' writing behavior by looking at parental involvement in support of multilingual literacy development. There is also a need to investigate the effects of the medium of instruction on children's writing, particularly in the Foundation Phase. Another prospective study may look at the text-based approach to language teaching in the Foundation Phase with a particular focus on identifying and understanding linguistic features in relation to different genres produced by young learners.



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Appendix A: Field Notes

DAILY LITERACY PRACTICES IN THE SCHOOL/CLASSROOM

DATE

Learners are always reminded by their teachers about the importance of writing dates. Before they begin to write anything for the day the teacher will ask learners what is the date today? Sometimes the grade three teachers will mention the wrong date to see if learners can follow dates, then learners would respond by saying the right date. All the grades have calendar to help learners see dates and practice them daily.

MONTH

The foundation phase classrooms have charts that shows month in the year. Learners get opportunity to look at those charts especially grade one to be able to recognize the month. The grade two teacher for example help learner to say sounds in a particular month. The teacher uses the months chart for learners to say those sound for each month. So, the focus is on phonics but also learners are learning to pronoun months correctly.

YEAR

All teachers in the foundation phase emphasize to learners writing and saying it and reading it so that they can differentiate between the years, day and month. Sometimes the teacher would say the wrong year just to test if learners know exact years which entails that they noted the differences as well.

WEEKLY ASSEMBLY

The school holds formal assembly every Monday for 30minutes. The principle addresses the school and sometimes the guest speaker is invited to address learners on specific issues. E.g. hygiene, safety and security, discipline. For example a speaker about discipline motivated learners to behave better learners tomorrow than yesterday hence they will become better future citizens. Based on this theme each teacher in the foundation phase could make it the NEWS of the day or week. The grade three teacher, they developed the theme into their own story and the grade one teacher they wrote in their news books. The traffic officer also presented issues on safety and security to help learners keep safe against strangers and cars. The foundation phase learners were the only one involved in this discussion because they are still young. After the session, teachers would every time and then remind them what was said for their security and safety.

ASSEMBLY SPEECH

The school has the routine of having speech every Monday morning. Sometimes people are invited to come to school to present something that would build on the moral of learners. For foundation phase teachers, these speeches will be used in the classroom to build on a literacy lesson. The grade three teacher for example asked

learners to draw a picture in their creative writing exercise book based on the theme taken from the speech that was given in the morning.

DAILY PRAYER

It is a school rule that learners should do a prayer in conjunction with teaching and learning activities. Learners do a prayer with their teacher in the morning before they start lesson, during intervals and before they go home. This becomes practices for learners for their all life at the school. In this way learners are taught values that will enable learners to respect themselves and become obedient to teachers and amongst themselves.

COUNTING NUMBERS EVERY MORNING

Foundation phase learners given few minutes before lesson begin to count numbers. This depends on what the teacher has on the table to cover for the day but generally I observed that as teachers try to prepare their learners with the first lesson, they encourage them to learn numbers. In the long run, learners memorise these numbers and then they can remember them when they begin to work with numbers.

READING HOUR

All learners in the foundation phase are being asked to bring story book of their favorite from homes so that they can read during story time. To make it easier the teacher picks up few learners ask them to bring story book and then they choose from what will be available in the following day. The teacher spends 30minutes before departure time reading the story to the children while they sit on mat.

EDUCATIONAL GAMES

Grade one learners have the opportunity in a week to play with puzzles. Teacher gives learners' opportunity to engage with these puzzles trying to solve problems and stimulating their thinking. Lots of learners like to play with puzzles and they like to show their teacher or someone in class of what they have achieved. Learners concentrate so much when organizing puzzles you would hear the soft talk around how can they built right thing as people in the group. Teacher make sure that everybody is engaged and they working on a puzzle. Those learners who do not want to play with the puzzle would also choose their favorite books from their reading corner and then begin to read. These activities capture learners' attention as they become interested

ADRESSING PEOPLE

Teacher usually reminds learners on how to address people formally which is part of their daily practices in the classroom. The teacher will consistently correct learners when they come requesting for permission try to teach learners to use polite language when requesting something not only permission to go outside the classroom but also borrowing colours or pen from each other e.g. excuse me teacher

CLASSROOM RULES

Teacher makes use of colour as a tool to manage discipline of learners in the classroom. Learners know that when teacher say a particular colour it an indication that they should do something or something need to be changed urgently. Teacher for example would say red to indicate that their noise behavior is becoming unruly and therefore learners will immediately put their one hand on their head and a finger on their lips to show that they urgently need to keep quiet because its danger.

Both grade one to three classrooms have PHONIC CHARTS and ALPHABETICAL CHARTS, these literacy resources are useful particularly in grade one and two where learners still refer to these charts when they say sound. I noted they use charts on the wall to remind themselves when the teacher ask them to say sound of a particular word because they know the use of these materials on their walls. They also use alphabetic charts to say alphabets. The grade two teacher was regularly referring to these charts because many learners in the first term of the year could not recognise the letters in the word. So the teacher has to every time ask learners to go on the board to show different letters the will pick from the word.

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE OF CLASSROOMS IN RELATION TO LITERACY.

Wall displays appears to be mainly in English. I found multilingual displays on the cupboard in grade one class as well as Grade II class in grade III class key indicators are in English. The key indicators give learners the meaning of the same word for example cupboard in English, Afrikaans and Xhosa. It is important in literacy environment because learners will be acquiring multilingual skills. The reception of the school also has key indicators which appear in two languages that is Afrikaans and English.

The following educational charts were displayed in the foundation classroom colourful posters, phonics charts children artwork, calendar, birthday charts, alphabetical charts. Teachers make use of these resources as teaching aids to demonstrate the lessons for learners to understand.

LITERACY MATERIAL

Learners have a separate book to do their painting, but also few on the wall

They have story book in English and multilingual comic books

Book layout: visual images on cover, colorful, some of them bigger in size A3

LESSON C

GRADE I: Reading a story in IsiXhosa

T: Today we are going to read a story in another language, who can read in IsiXhosa?

L: Ikhaya lam

T: What does the title mean?

L: my home

T: Lets page through the book

L: Learners page through the book

T: If you can remember, what book did we read before this one?

L: The house burn

T: What was the name of the story? It starts with 'h'

L: Help!

T: What happened on the house?

L: The fire burn the house

T: give me another sentence like this

L: the house was burn

T: Who was the owner of the house in the story?

L: grandmother

T: What happened after the fire?

L: there was smoke

T: very good, yes there was a smoke. What are people on top of the house doing?

L: they are busy fixing the house

T: good, who is fixing the house?

L: Vuyo, Marie, Ben, Friends, People, neighbors

T: Can someone read the story for me?

L: jonga ikhaya lam

T: What does that mean?

L: Look at my house

T: What happened with the house?

L: the house was burnt



T: Yes, now let's page through the book, who can read in isiXhosa?

L: Silence

T: OK, put these books down, let's use the English books

Analysis

After the development of the lesson the teacher could not get a learner to read the story in IsiXhosa for them. Teacher assistant who usually help seem to be working on something that she could not come to read for learners. As a result the teacher had to make use of an English story.

Personal interpretation

Teacher could have encouraged them to try and read and the teacher assistance could be useful to help the learners to read the words correctly. I could see that learners were anxious to read the story especially those who speak IsiXhosa.

LESSON D

GRADE I: READING IN ENGLISH VERSION

T: Teacher reads the story with learners

L: Learners follow from as the teacher reads

T: Put your books on the mat, will ask each person to read, Zubenati?

L: reads loud where the teacher is pointing

T: Lisa?

L: Reads the phrase which teacher points

T: why is he saying i am up here? Where is he? What do you think is going to do?

T: Tristan?

L: He is may be going to fix the roof

T: YES,what is the little boy here doing?

L: It's Vuyo

T: What Vuyo is doing?

L: He is helping to pass on material

T: Junior, continue reading

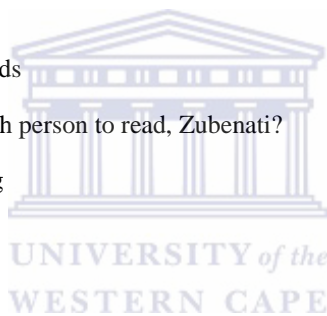
L: reads the phrase pointed by the teacher

T: **What is missing in the (I'm)? Teacher gives them a clue by demonstrating on the board**

L: I AM

T; **What is the mark on top of the word (I'AM), teacher gives them a clue an apostrophe**

L: **learners repeat from the teacher apostrophe**



T: What the house like now?

L: it looks nice

T: Yes, it looks nice, give another word for 'nice'

L: beautiful

T: **What is another word, it starts with 'CL'**

L: It looks clean

T: Very good, it looks clean

T: Now, I want you to look for a partner, **you are going to read in pairs**

L: Two learners read at the time while others follow

T: Stop, another pair?

L: They also read

T: **If you look at the pictures here, are all of them helping?**

L: NO

T: What's happening?

L: playing

T: **Show me in the picture?**

L: Learners pointing to the children playing

T: Lets all do the last page

L: They all read the last page with Teacher

T: ok, put the book down, Zandile, what was the title of the story?

L; My home

T: How did the house look like?

L: It was burnt

T: Zubenath, what happened at the end of the story?

L: people came to help the granny

T: Yes, they can to help to make another house.

ANALYSIS

Teacher has story books in IsiXhosa but learners do not have much exposure to the language. The teacher assumed that since learners can speak the language then they will be able to read the books. Therefore the initial plan was to get learners read in their mother tongue but only to find out that learners cannot read in IsiXhosa. The fact that



teacher also do not know the language and the teacher assistant was not in position to help then teacher decided to use the same book in the English version. The reading went very in English language because the group had strong learners so they understand English and they can read. This could be seen on how they respond to question shows that they follow the story and they can even link it well with the previous story they have been reading.

PERSONAL INTERPRETATION

I think if teacher had made an arrangement with the teacher assistant to help with the reading of the story, learners were eager and ready to read in IsiXhosa but unfortunately they had to swap to reading English story. It needs time to help learner learn to read in their mother tongue and learners need to understand what is it important for them to learn how to read in their mother tongue. It is important the teacher uses the multilingual resources specifically other languages apart from English and make use of the teacher assistant to help learners acquires skills from different languages.

APPENDIX B: Teacher Interviews

Transcription Convention

Symbol	Meaning
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.	Full stops: mark completion whether (complete or not) or certainty
---	--

,	commas: signal speaker's parcellings of non-final talk
---	--

?	Question mark: indicate questions or uncertainty
---	--

!	Exclamation: expression of counter-expectation
---	--

()	non transcribable segments of talk
-----	------------------------------------

...	Intervals within and between utterances
-----	---

[]	interval between turns (exceeding 3seconds)
-----	---

Overlap phenomena

Simultaneous concurrent: when two entire turns occur simultaneously, the symbol is placed before each simultaneous turns/ utterances = =

Overlapping utterances: The point at which the second speaker begins talking is shown by = = preceding the point in the first speaker's turn.

Contiguous utterances: when there is no interval between adjacent utterances produced by different speakers. The symbol is placed at the end of one speaker's line and at the beginning of another speaker's turn = =

Fillers are represented orthographically as follows

Umm: doubt

Mmm, mhm : agreement

Eh: query

Oh: reaction

Ohh: suggesting surprise, shock or disappointment

Eggins, S and Slade, D. 1997. Analysing casual conversation. Cassell

Interview with the grade one teacher about teaching and learning literacy particularly writing: 31July, 2011.

Purpose: To understand how writing is being developed at the early years of schooling

Interviewer: Thanks for...your consent to participate in this conversation... it's as I already explained to you that it's about literacy practices in the classroom you as a teacher your own experiences around teaching literacy and particularly writing development in young learners OK What... what gives you pleasure to teach this class?

Interviewee: OK for me like I said in the past I ... prefer to teach grade two learners but at the moment I am in the grade one class and what I find fascinating is that how they come to school some of them have never been to a formal schooling at all so... for them it's everything is new so for me it's like () taking a child from knowing basically nothing not being able to read they don't know their alphabet so it's taking them from real grassroots level and getting them firstly to... learn in an informal way but yet they learning so many skills at the same time they learning not only to listen but they also they learn to read they learn to write and what fascinating is that by the end of the year most of them are able to read= = you know once you have put all these practices into place and I find that by teaching them to learn alphabet in a funny way where they first learn through songs through games through story telling = = in that way they are engaged and they want to learn and they excited about learning= = that's what makes interesting for me that when they come to not knowing those little basic things and at the end of the year they are able to read

that's fascinating for me

Interviewer: = = Yah and for example I saw some of what learners write you know at the beginning of the year the learners texts and I noted that some learners come to school when they don't know to write even the alphabet like you said= = but you know as the year progresses you can see there is such a huge shift How does that make you feel as the teacher?

Interviewee: = =yah that for me I think is a big reward (laughter) and light at the end of the tunnel because you know teaching is very demanding and if I look at a lot of my learner this year particularly more than three quarters of them couldn't even write their name and ...you know by the second third week of the first term most of them had mastered even writing their name I think once you have good start and you real lay the foundation for them then you can just go on and build on that foundation

Interviewer: Mmm what are the most important... things that you need to consider when developing writing in young learners?

Interviewee: I think when developing writing you first need to...before writing can even take place they first have to listen to stories so get them to listen is firstly { } quite a big challenge and developing their listening skills that is important because once you have that listening skills then you have once they are able to sit down quietly and listen to stories then that sets their imagination ticking and I find that... some of the learners are quite attentive when we have storytelling and some of them are not but that follows later but once you get to...I remember when I started as a child before I could read or write my mother told me stories and that's how I gained an interest in reading and once they interested first listening to stories and then once they pick up books they try and read the book on their own because obviously now they emulating the teacher... so once they can read then that will spark the writing and that makes writing process so much easier and makes it more flowing and also what I like to do is once I told then a story I will then transcribe()put a sentence on the board and then they will try transcribe it and draw a picture and from that picture they can also try and write their own sentences and we do lots of cite words so learn to first of all they need to learn lots of sight words and the way I do it as I

use flash cards and I will then flash the sight words and then also give them a list of sight words to take home to study for home work as well = = and then like I said to you firstly start off by just drawing pictures and then after they drawn pictures and they can tell the story based on then picture and then they will copy sentences that I perhaps put on the board and then later they... because of the like I said the story telling process after that then only they will learn how to spell some words and then they will learn how to formulate their ideas and the idea is not to focus on spelling= = is getting the child just to write what comes from him naturally and from the there from what they know or what they familiar with many times the learners write things down sometimes it makes no sense at all but they know what they want to say but once they start writing like I said to you we don't focus on spelling too much we focus on the ideas and once those ideas start to generate and flow that's how the writing process grow just grow from strength to strength

Interviewer: = = mmhh OK so what are some of biggest challenges you face in your daily practices= =

Interviewee: = =with literacy?

Interviewer: Yes literacy development

Interviewee: I think firstly getting them to learn the alphabet that is been quite a challenging for Many learners because I have multilingual class lost of them speak isiXhosa and there are other learners who speak other languages like French Lingala so may be even Afrikaans so that's been difficult so first getting them first to learn all the letters of the alphabet and to learn not only a b c d but to learn to learn it phonetically that's been a challenge because many of our parents don't know how to teach phonetics so in my parents meetings when I do have parents meetings I stress this with parents and I... will reiterate that they first need to teach the child the phonetic alphabet and not a b c d e f g because anybody can sing that rhyme but learners need to know the phonetics of the alphabet that's first to get the learners to know the alphabet phonetically so once they know the letters of alphabet phonetically then we will start them off with three letter words and they learn how to blend words and then from that bases then= = you know they learn to spell

Interviewer: = =Yah OK and I noted that every Monday you have assembly school assembly and there is kind of themes that arise from the assembly meeting and you usually use them

Interviewee: = =Yah

Interviewer: as... the news of the day or the news of the week why do you do this?

Interviewee: OK many of those assemblies usually will have a topic or a theme like you said and those theme are also life skills that the child learn for example...how to share how to be a good leader or how to be a team player so those are little life skills that we teach our learners and it's important for those life skills to be integrated within our literacy project or literacy studies because we want our learners not only to be good students but we want them to be moral citizens at the end of the day= = so what I normally do is for example if my theme was say love or sharing I will then use the message at the assembly point and when we get to class then we will use it as a point of discussion and then we will take the salient point from the assembly and we will use it as a lesson in class where we can teach one another how to care for one another and how also to be responsible learners in the class= = and then sometimes we will then use it as a little project where they have to write or they have to draw a picture based on what they learnt and then throughout the week it will be as a reminder = = and I would also write the words on the board so that they can also identify those words so that when they hear that word love or sharing then they will be able to use it not only in spoken language but also in a written work because it is up on the board

Interviewer: = = mmhh OK so what do such practices have on developing literacy in young learners?

Interviewee: OK may be just rephrase your question

Interviewer: the effects of such practices on literacy development

Interviewee: Are you talking about the practices in the assembly point? = =

Interviewer: = = yes using the themes that arise from the assembly = =

Interviewee: OK like I said we can use it as points of discussion so we can use it in our oral lessons we can also then use those oral activities can then become written activities

we can also then choose stories from that so that can be used as a listening activities where they listen to stories with morals topic or moral theme attached to it or moral lesson= = and from those moral stories they can then also write their own little stories from what they have heard or similar story= =

Interviewer: = = Mmm OK you have a teacher assistant in your class who helps children to work in their groups with their work and translate the content that you give in English into isiXhosa= = what other roles does teacher assistant have in your class?

Interviewee: = = Mmm OK... firstly I think the most important role for me at the moment is for her to translate like I said many of my learners... come from isiXhosa background so it's important for them to first understand the content or the context in their mother tongue before they can even understand or begin to grasp the concept in English = = so I think as a translator it's that is the purpose but as far as teaching that is up to me because I have to do the actual teaching but she facilitates so for example when I am busy with one group on the mat she is walking around monitoring and facilitating the other groups and then helping learners for example if they are unable to spell a word= = or to understand the instruction so many at times she should be repeating instruction to them she will give guidance in form of either helping them to understand the instructions or otherwise explaining the task to them= = and helping them with written work...so she is more like a facilitator I would say

Interviewer: = = mmhh OK in what ways do you encourage the use of mother tongue in the context where English is the main language because = =

Interviewee: = = (chuckle) my duty is not to encourage mother tongue my duty is actually to encourage English because they are in English speaking school= = so firstly and fore most I am not there to encourage their mother tongue = = their mother tongue I think... it plays an important role as well but to me mother tongue education should be done at home= =and should be encouraged at home where as... I think also for me to understand their language I think the mother tongue is important to me where they can teach their mother tongue to me= = so there certain words or vocabulary

that I can familiarize myself because I am sure you have seen in the classroom that some of the objects it's labeled in their mother tongue at the same time I am learning the language so they teaching me the language (chuckle) and I am teaching them English at the same time so it's a win wing situation = = but... I would say my focus and fore most is to teach them English and to get them to master English= =but I can't ignore their mother tongue either because time comes it will be important for me to also learn IsiXhosa

Interviewer: = =Mmm Yes I see you use a particular series of books Kagiso= =which are printed in IsiXhosa, English and Afrikaans= =how helpful are these books in developing reading and writing skills in young learners

Interviewer: = = OK that's right I find that it is important for the learners to first understand the Story in his or her mother tongue so that helps so the translator or the teacher assistant she will then read the story to them in IsiXhosa and then what I will do is I will follow up and reading the story in English and once there in their reading ability groups they will then come to the mat and read the book in English = = and once we have dealt with the book in English we have the discussion and we have question and answer discussion then they will then go back to their sits and then they will draw a picture based on the story just that they can also have some kind of written assessment of the story = =and also vocabulary and the particular cite words that they haven't dealt with so they will familiarize themselves with the cite words and then from there we can then formulate sentences based on the pictures that they have drawn and we move into the next book

Interviewer: So you do the same processes even in IsiXhosa

Interviewee: but in isiXhosa is done less formally= = it's done in more informal way where they will listen to the story but they do get a chance to look at the book so page through the book and read through the book but the focus is not as intense as in English= = in English we expect them to read the book= = ok where as in isiXhosa the assistant teacher she will read the story to them they will listen and they will follow in their book ok...but whereas in English they are expected to be able to read the book independently= = and then also once they have dealt with the book in English they

can also read the same book in Afrikaans so by that time they will have read the book for the third time so they will have a better understanding of the book in all three languages

Interviewer: = =mmhh could you tell me a little bit about Afrikaans who does help them in reading Afrikaans?

Interviewee: that will be my job as well because at the moment in grade one Afrikaans is not compulsory = = Afrikaans is dealt in a very informal way = = through songs through rhymes through games so... the focus is not as intense as in English but where as in Afrikaans we just try to teach them basic vocabulary that they need= = and also in Afrikaans I will then read the story to them they will listen but those who do understand Afrikaans will be able to follow the story quite well because there are some learners in the class who are coming from Afrikaans speaking background so for them it will be much easier = = and I find that they actually enjoy learning Afrikaans as well because it's a new language for them so it's quite interesting

Interviewer: = = and could you tell me a bit about the thirty minutes story time = =

Interviewee: = = oh the drop all and read period? We call it the dark period= = drop all and read that period is...teachers can use it very effectively to...get the learners to sit down with the book and those periods can vary from day to day where it compulsory to have them every day but how you design your lesson depend solely on the teacher but the idea is that the learner should see the teacher with the book and everybody else in the school should be actively reading so that the children can then realize how important reading is = = so...and on any given day we will do the reading in a different way everyday so for example day one I will read the story to them = = and they will they will listen day two I will give them a book to read and they will just read a book that they particularly want to read so it's not the book that I gave them it's the book that they have chosen and they are at liberty to use the reading the book from the reading corner from our little library corner= = and we have small books that they can read so it's the book that they choose so they can read at their own leisure and then what I also do is I will send them home with the book so then

they can take the book home mummy and daddy can read to them or they can read it on their own= = and then on another day we can have them read in pairs where they read to a friend or a friend will read to them in that way they will also learn from one another= = so the reading period varies from day to day sometimes (Mr name of the principal) the principal also ask them to come to the office and read aloud to him because children also need to learn to read aloud that reading period can be a silent reading period but it is also important for them to read aloud

Interviewer: = =Mmm OK now in that case how do you deal with children who are still struggling with reading?

Interviewee: OK with some of them that are struggling with reading I will then...in fact what I will do is while they busy reading I will circulate and go around to each group to see how are they reading how they coping for those still struggling they are still at the stage where they just page through the book and look at the pictures= = but that's their way of reading= =that's also part of the reading process it doesn't mean that they have to be able to read the book but they can understand the context of the book based on looking at the pictures and sometimes I will just get them just look at the pictures and retell the story to me in their own words = = and many of them are at that stage where they can do that and then later they learn to point to the words and I will read to them and they will read back to me

Interviewer: = = Yah I see you use visual images in teaching how useful visual resources are in developing literacy skills?

Interviewee: all right what we could do is for example I am introducing a book I could start with just cover of the book and we will have whole discussion just based on the cover on the cover of the book before we could get into the actual reading of the story of the book that could be one way or I could take a picture from the book make a photocopy of the picture taken from the book and then we could just discuss the picture = = what are the interesting points based on the picture what do you think the story is all about we do lots of questions and answers we do a lots of prediction

where they predict what happened at the beginning of the story or what could happen at the end of the story and also we leave a lot up to their imagination if they can retell the story on their own words and build their own story and interpretation of the story = = so pictures are very useful tools we also use flash card where I will flash the important words or vocabulary or otherwise cite words that they need to know so we will flash the words to them and we will also use a notice board in the classroom we will then stick those words up to the notice board so that they are visible to them all the time so when they need them when they have to write their own sentences they can refer to those words again because they are available in the classroom

Interviewer: = = Yah OK now you identified some learners who have alcohol syndrome and dyslexia what strategies do you use as the teacher to help such learners to reach their potential

Interviewee: ...those learners not only receive help from the remedial teacher at school they also get one to one assistance from me and from the teacher assistant so...we do lots of individual work with them where we re-teach lots of alphabet lots of cite words we do lots of storytelling home work extra home work send home for learners and parents to assist them with their work= - but it's ongoing on process where you need lots of hand and hand as far as writing is concern we need to teach them how to write we need to lots of pattern lots of ...writing spelling of words = = so its lots of one and one work

Interviewer: = =Yes and how do you deal with multi-graded learners particularly when you trying to integrate them within the general learning programme?

Interviewee: OK in the first term I had multi-graded groups where I had strong learners sitting with weak learners sitting with average learners= =and the idea was for the strong learners to assist the weaker learners and the average learners but sometimes that does not always work because you find that the weaker learners will just end up copying things from the stronger learners but I try to encourage is for stronger learners to assist the weaker learners so we have lots of peer to peer teaching where they can assist one another and just ...almost re-teach what I have just taught= =and

that helped quite a bit = = then in the second term I decided to change things and I decided to have different level groups where I had learners who are real struggling the weaker in one group where I had my top learners the ones who are working quite well in one group and I had the average learners in one group= = and I found that that also worked because now they were...they were still at different levels but more...they were working at more less the same pace= =so that encourage them within the group to work together to a common goal in order just to finish their work for example the stronger learners would urge each other to work even better and the weaker ones will encourage the other weaker ones to complete their work= = to also within those groups they can assist one another but then I could identify the real weaker learners much faster = = so I felt that that was the way to go now in the second term

Interviewer: = =Yah and I realized that when you teach a particular aspect of a language you teach it within a context of a story why do you have to do that?

Interviewee: OK children learn things through stories very quickly especially if it's the story perhaps they are familiar with for example fairy-tales or otherwise the context which they relate to because children love listening to stories and they are caught by the story= = so its interesting for them so that's how you gain their interest and you get them more to listen more attentively if its told in the story

Interviewer: = =Mmm could you explain a little bit more on how the use of story in the context where you have more than three language (Multilingual context) like your classroom where you have learners coming from diverse linguistic background = =

Interviewee: = =OK for example if I think to one particular story the Gold Rocks and the Three Bares they were very interested in that story because some of them new it...may be form grade R they had it in grade R = =so it was familiar to them and those who did not know the story were just captured because it was interesting because they heard it for the first time and what I could also do is to let them read and act the story = =so they could dramatise it the story and if we dramatise the story for them it became more practical and another way...another school I remember teaching the same lesson at another school where we had the

visuals via the internet and that could work quite well because they could not only read the story but they could also see the actual images so for the child that's visual that child could learn more from the visual text than the actual words in the story

Interviewer: = =Mmm based on that aspect of using visuals I remember one time you used the book that doesn't have words but they just looked at= =the pictures and you told them to develop the story based on those pictures from the book what is the significance of using visuals in developing literacy skills what effects do such practices have on developing literacy?

Interviewee: = =oh yes I think I understand what you mean now what children do is looking at the picture first because the picture tell the story in itself so once they look at the pictures they formulate their idea of the story is and once I have told them the story now by listening to the story and also looking at the visual images of the story they can now put it together it meaning for them= = it creates meaning for them does this answer your questions?

Interviewer: = = yes it does now based on that meaning making idea = =

Interviewee: = = eh

Interviewer: Children went for an excursion at Scratch patch which I also went with you and they learnt lots of things how do you link what they learnt with= = the writing process= =

Interviewee: = =OK good what we did is we went to scratch patch at Gemstone in Simon's Town we went and we collected the germ stones first of all the learners were excited about the excursion to Simon's Town because for many of them it was the first time that they have ever been to Simon's Town by bus and the actual route was very scenic= = and all along the sea all along the coast= =so it was beautiful and like I said once they got there they could collect the Gemstones and put them in their packet and they were all excited about the collecting the actual the stones because they had so many choose so they did not know (chuckle) it was like locking them up in little a shop and giving them free rain when we came back to school I made a writing lesson I used my...our excursion as a writing lesson where they first came and told

us what they did at the place where we collected our stones = = and then they had to first to retell the excursion to me in their own words what they enjoyed about the excursion... how exciting it was to collect the stones = = and what are we going to use the stones for etc and then I got them to draw a picture like I said to you pictures are very important to them so picture get their imagination ticking and that's part of the writing process where they first draw the pictures = = so they first drew their pictures and I also we put some key words up on the board for example the word stone word gemstone etc and from... based on the key words that we write on the board I then say to them now you have write a little sentence anything that you found interesting about the excursion what you enjoyed about the excursion and then many of the learners were able to write a little sentence based on the excursion many of them did quite well they could tell me what we did there what they did there what they learnt and whether they enjoyed the excursion or not

Interviewer: now some of the things that were emphasized at the beginning of the year was to write their names and how to say the words what other important things that they need to know as far as writing skills is concerned at the end of the year

Interviewee: by the end of the year?

Interviewer: yes

Interviewee: OK As far as writing skills they should be able to write their name they should be able to write their numbers you know from one to hundred even beyond some of them know away beyond that they should be able to write three letter words they should be able to blend words they should be able to write and identify all the letters and alphabet they should be able to identify cite words they should be able to their own and formulate their own sentences at least five sentences independently = = and they should be able read

Interviewer: = =Now would you develop these skills in all the three languages?

Interviewee: that is the tuff one (chuckle) first and fore most like I said to you I am not able to speak isiXhosa = = I understand a little bit so I won't be able to develop the skills in isiXhosa however my main focus like I said my primary is to develop those skills in English but like I said to you Afrikaans is dealt with in a very an informal way but I

think as from next year it's going to be compulsory to be able to write and read in Afrikaans = =but ...I think just getting them read in all the three languages that's possible we could get them to identify the words in for example labeling objects in the classroom = = so we could get them identify objects in the three different languages so there we could use flash cards labeling then also story telling...very often the interpreter tells them the story in isiXhosa and then she explain it in English and then I explain it in Afrikaans as well so at the same time they learning three different languages= = and also when it comes to reading like I said to you our reading series they can read the same book in isiXhosa English and Afrikaans in that way we can encourage multilingualism in the classroom= = and also then another thing I forgot to mention is we do lots of song and rhymes and games and sometimes just actions for example I would say ... talk I would say when we say talk in English is talk in Afrikaans the word talk we say plaat when we say talk in isiXhosa is theta = = so learning little vocabulary and words like that it encourages multilingualism in the classroom

Interviewer: = =Mmm and how do you find the response of learners towards you know approaching learning languages= =

Interviewee: = = in three languages?

Interviewer: yes

Interviewee: I think they are very interested= = you see in grade one children are very excited about learning so= = for them especially... learning languages I think it's quite interesting for them through stories through songs through rhymes through games many of them are interested in learning literacy than they are numeracy (chuckle) = = because for them literacy is a little bit easier to learn than numeracy

Interviewer: = = Yah thank you very much

Interviewee: pleasure

Appendix C: Learners' Visual and Written Texts



Appendix D: Consent Letters

I. Consent Letter for the Principal

Researcher: Ms Ancyfrida Prosper

Cellular number: 0769913740

Email: ancypro@gmail.com

Institution: University of the Western Cape, Faculty of Education, Bellville, South Africa

Research Title: What do Foundation Phase learners write? A study of literacy development at a multilingual Primary School in Cape Town.

I understand that the school's participation in this study is voluntary and at any circumstances the school has the right to withdraw from the study. I am also aware that the information collected from the school will be treated confidentially to protect the identity of the school. I am guaranteed that the findings will be used for research purposes not to damage the name of the school.

The project has been explained to me clearly in a language I understand. I hereby agree to participate in this research project under the conditions stipulated above.

I..... (Name and Surname) hereby give consent to the researcher to conduct research at my school in grades 1-3classroom.

Principal's signature:.....

Date:.....

II. CONSENT LETTER FOR PARENTS/GURDIAN

Researcher: Ms Ancyfrida Prsosper

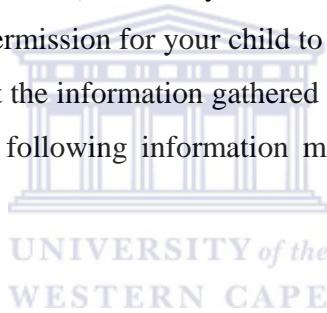
Cellular number: 0769913740

Email: ancypro@gmail.com

Institution: University of the Western Cape, Faculty of Education, Bellville, South Africa

Research Title: What do Foundation Phase learners write? A study of literacy development at a multilingual Primary School in Cape Town.

My name is Ancyfrida Prosper. I am a registered Masters student at the University of the Western Cape. I wish to conduct research at your child's school where I would like to do intensive observations, collect some copies of learners' work and recordings of some literacy lessons for foundation phase (grade 1-3). Since your child will be in one of these classes I respectfully request your written permission for your child to voluntarily participate in this study. It is important for you to know that the information gathered as a result of this study will be used for research purposes only. The following information may help you to make an informed decision regarding my request.



Aim of Study

The purpose of the study is to determine how young learners develop writing skills by examining kinds of texts which they produce. The study seeks to investigate the processes of developing writing skills in a multilingual foundation phase classroom. It will trace the languages which young learners prefer to write in, as well as investigate kinds of support which learners receive to enhance their writing skills.

My involvement in your child's class

In order to conduct this research I will have to be present in some of your child's literacy lessons only over a period of 6-10 months in order to observe literacy development specifically writing skills. I need to emphasise that my presence in the classroom will not disrupt, interrupt or interfere with any classroom activities. I may wish to record some of the lessons when and where appropriate only when the teacher gives me permission to do so. These recordings will not focus on any particular child, but will be on the classroom activities and interactions. I

would also need to make some copies of learners' written text from grade 1-3 with the permission provided by respective class teacher.

Child's Participation

No information will be directly linked to your child and his/her privacy will at all times be respected. No child will be referred to by name in the writing up and presentation of any data as a result of this research. Your child will at all times be treated with respect and sensitivity.

I trust that the above information has helped you to make a decision with regard to my request. If at any stage you have questions about the study please contact me directly at the above contact details. Alternatively, you can contact my supervisor, Dr Vuyokazi Nomlomo on Tel. (021) 959 2442 / 2650

CONSENT FORM

Please sign the form below and return it to your child's class teacher. Thank you for your kind assistance.



I, (name of parent/legal guardian).....parent of (child's name).....have read the information provided above and **do/do not** (please circle your choice) give permission for my child to participate in this study.

Parent/ Guardian's signature:.....

Date:.....

III. TRANSLATED VERSION OF PARENTS' INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM

Ifomu yesivumelwano nabazali

Isihloko sophando

Babhala ntoni abantwana abathetha iilwimi ezininzi? Uphando oluqhutywa kiSigaba esiseZantsi kwesinye sezisikolo zamabanga asezantsi eKapa

Research Title: What do Foundation Phase learners write? A study of literacy development at a multilingual Primary School in Cape Town.

Mzali obekekileyo,

Ndingu-Ancyfrida Prosper. Ndifundela isidanga seMasters kwiYunivesithi yaseNtshona-Koloni. Ndingwenela ukwenza uphando kwisikolo somntwana wakho apho ndiza kubukela eklasini yakhe ithutyana elithile. Ndiza kujonga umsebenzi owenziwa ngabantwana, ndishicilele nezifundo zokufundisa ukubhala ukusukela kwibanga 1 ukuya kwelesi-3. Njengoko umntwana wakho ekwenye yezi klasi, ndicela ngokuzithoba imvume yakho ebhaliweyo ukubandakanya umntwana wakho kolu phando. Ndikwafuna nokucacisa ukuba ukuthabatha inxaxheba kolu phando ayisosinyanzelo, kwaye lonke ulwazi oluqokelelwe kolu phando luza kusetyenziselwa iinjongo zolu phando kuphela. Le nkcazelo ingezantsi ingakunceda ekuthabatheni isigqibo malunga nesi sicelo sam.

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Injongo yophando

Injongo yolu phando kukuqwalasela ukuba abafundi abakumabanga asezantsi bafunda njani ukubhala ngokulolonga umsebenzi abawubhalileyo. Le yindlela yokubona ukuba siphuhliswa njani isakhono sokubhala kubantwana abakwiiklasi apho kuthethwa iilwimi ezininzi. Olu phando luza kuqwalasela nolwimi abathanda ukubhala ngalo abafundi, kwakunye nenkxaso abayifumanayo ukuphuhlisa isakhono sabo sokubhala.

Ukubandakanyeka kwam kwiklasi yomntwana wakho

Ukuze ndikwazi ukuqhuba olu phando, kubalulekile ukuba ndibekhona kwezinye izifundo zokufundisa ukubhala kwiklasi yomntwana wakho kangangethuba eliziinyanga ezingama-6 ukuya kwezili-10. Ndifuna ukugxininisa ukuba ubukho bam eklasini yomntwana wakho ayizukuba sisiphazamiso ekufundeni nangayiphi indlela. Ngamanye amaxesha kuza kufuneka ndirekhodishe okanye ndishicilele ezinye izifundo. Olu shicilelo aluzukujolisa emntwaneni wakho, koko luza kugxila kwizinto eziqhubekayo eklasini kwaneendlela zonxibelelwano. Kusenokufuneka ndenze iikopi zomsebenzi obhaliweyo wabantwana abakumabanga 1 – 3, ngemvume yeetitshala zabo.

Inxaxheba yomntwana

Akukho nanye into eza kunxulunyaniswa nomntwana wakho ngqo, kwaye nelungelo lakhe lokungapahazwa kwegama lakhe liza kuthathewa ingqalelo. Akuzukusetyenziswa amagama okwenyani xa kubhalwa iingxelo zolu phando. Ngoko ke igama lomntwana wakho alisayi kuvela konke. Umntwana wakho uza kuphathwa ngesidima nangentlonipho ngalo lonke ixesha.

Ndinethemba lokuba le nkcazelo ingentla izakukunceda ukwenza isigqibo malunga nesicelo sam. Ukuba unombuzo malunga nolu phando, nceda uqhagamshelane nam kule nombolo: 076 991 3740. Kungenjalo unganxibelelana nomhlohli olikhankatha lam kolu phando, uGqirha Vuyokazi Nomlomo kule nombolo: (021) 959 2442 /2650

Ndibamba ngazibini.

Ozithobileyo

Ancyfrida Prosper

IFOMU YESIVUMELWANO

Nceda ugcalise le fom u ingezantsi uze uyithumele kutitshala womntwana wakho. Ndiyabulela kakhulu ngoncedo lwakho.



Mna, (igama lomzali/umgcini womntwana osemthethweni) ongumzali ka.....(igama lomntwana) ndiyifundile le nkcazelo ingentla kwaye **NDIYAVUMA/ANDIVUMI** (rhangqela impendulo yakho) ukuba umntwana wam athabathe inxaxheba kolu phando.

Intsayino yomzali:.....

Umhla:

Researcher: Ms Ancyfrida Prsospers

Cellular number: 0769913740

Email: ancypro@gmail.com

Institution: University of the Western Cape, Faculty of Education, Bellville, South Africa

IV. CONSENT LETTER FOR THE TEACHER

Researcher: Ms Ancyfrida Prsosper

Cellular number: 0769913740

Email: ancypro@gmail.com

Institution: University of the Western Cape, Faculty of Education, Bellville, South Africa

Research Title: What do Foundation Phase learners write? A study of literacy development at a multilingual Primary School in Cape Town.

I..... (Name and Surname) hereby give consent to the researcher to do observations and recording in my classroom.

The study was explained to me clearly and I understand that the presence of the researcher will not disrupt, interrupt or interfere with daily classroom practices. Participation of my class in this study is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw at any time during the course of research. I understand that the researcher will inform me when planning to use the tape recording machine in my class. All information will be treated confidentially when writing the thesis in order to protect my classroom identity.

I am promised that my classroom participation in this study will not risk my job and my personal image will not be damaged.

Teacher's Signature:.....

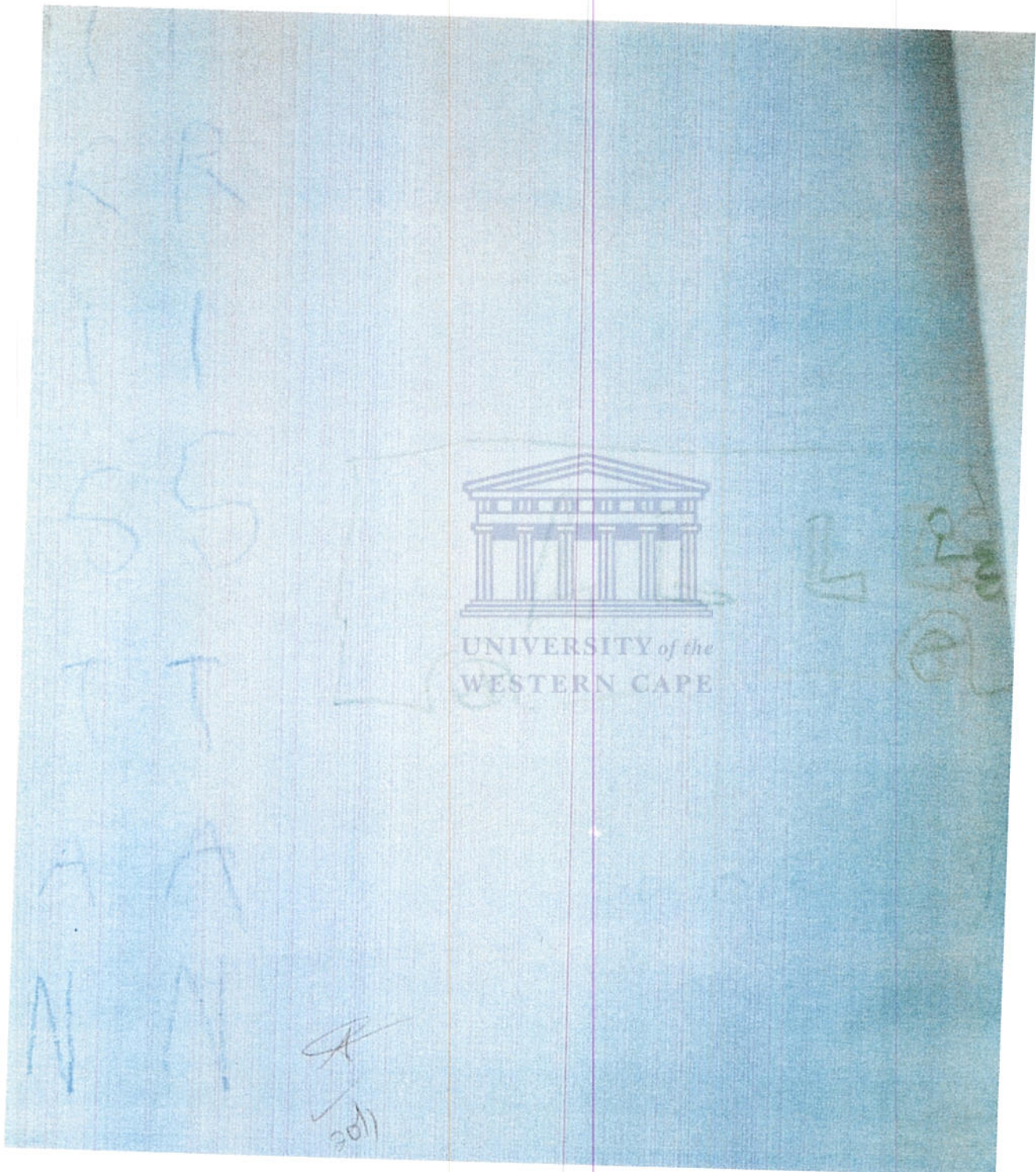
Date.....

APPENDIX C: LEARNERS' VISUAL AND WRITTEN TEXTS

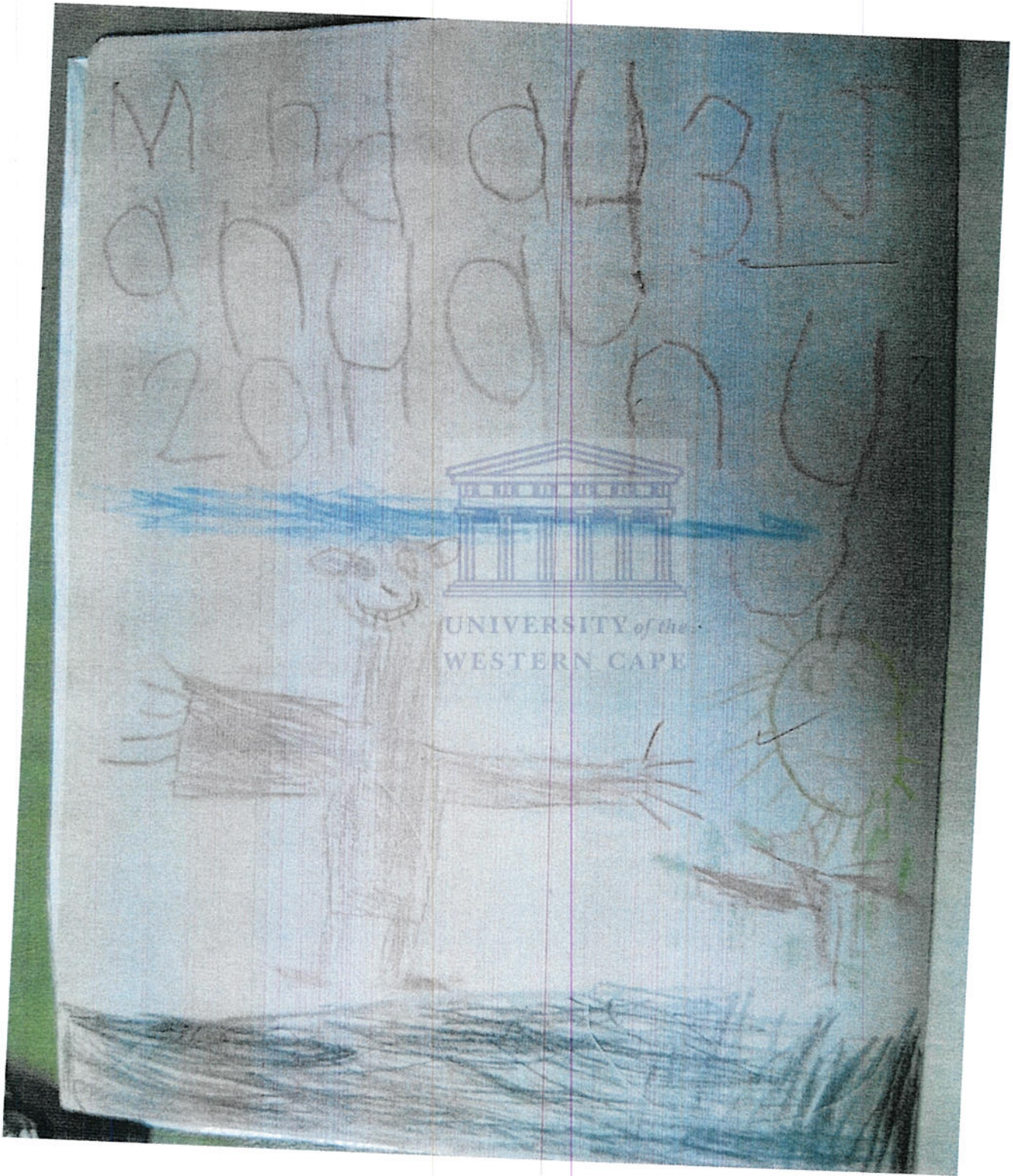


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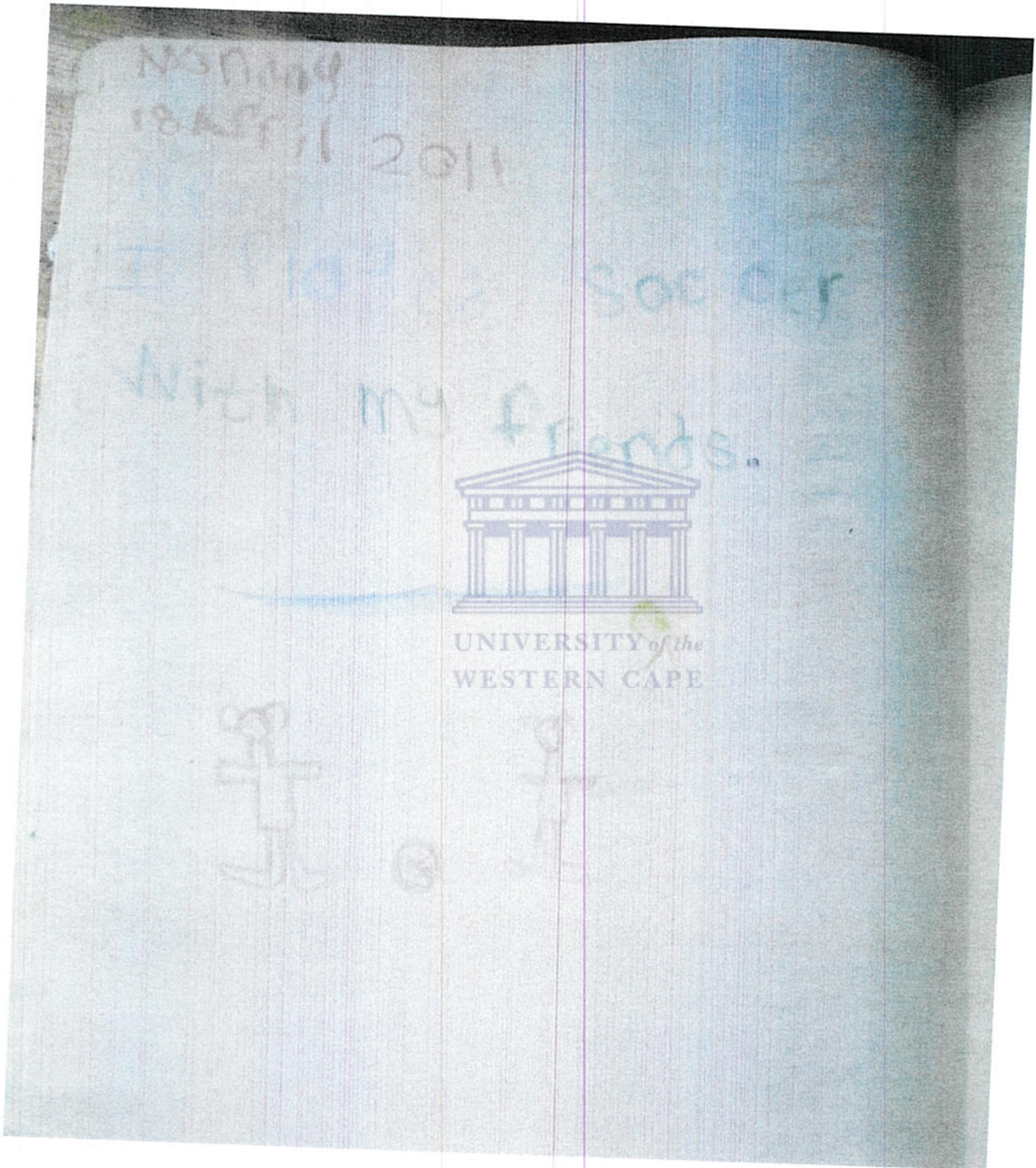
Learner A: Picture1



Learner A: Picture 2



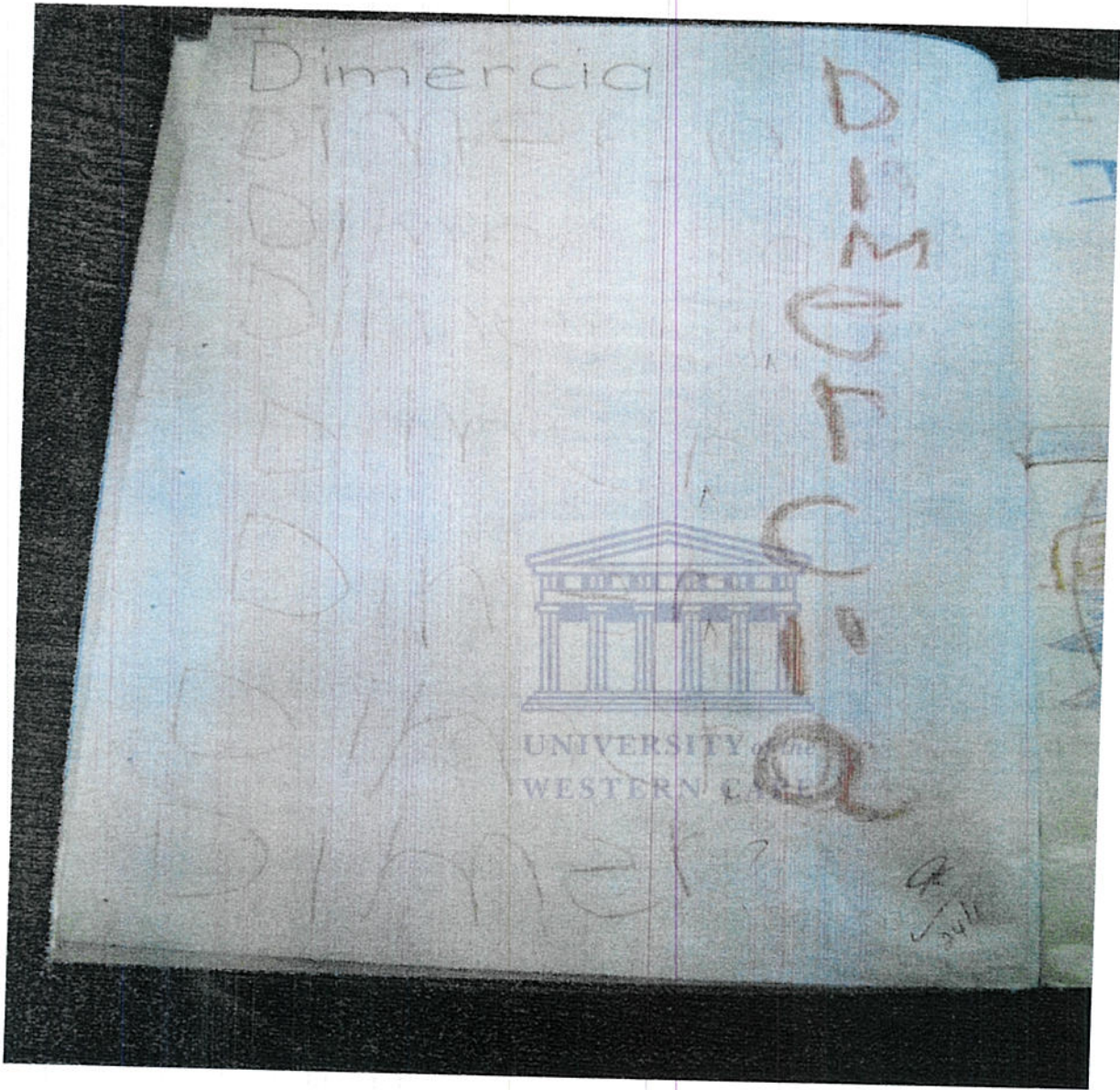
Learner A: Picture 3



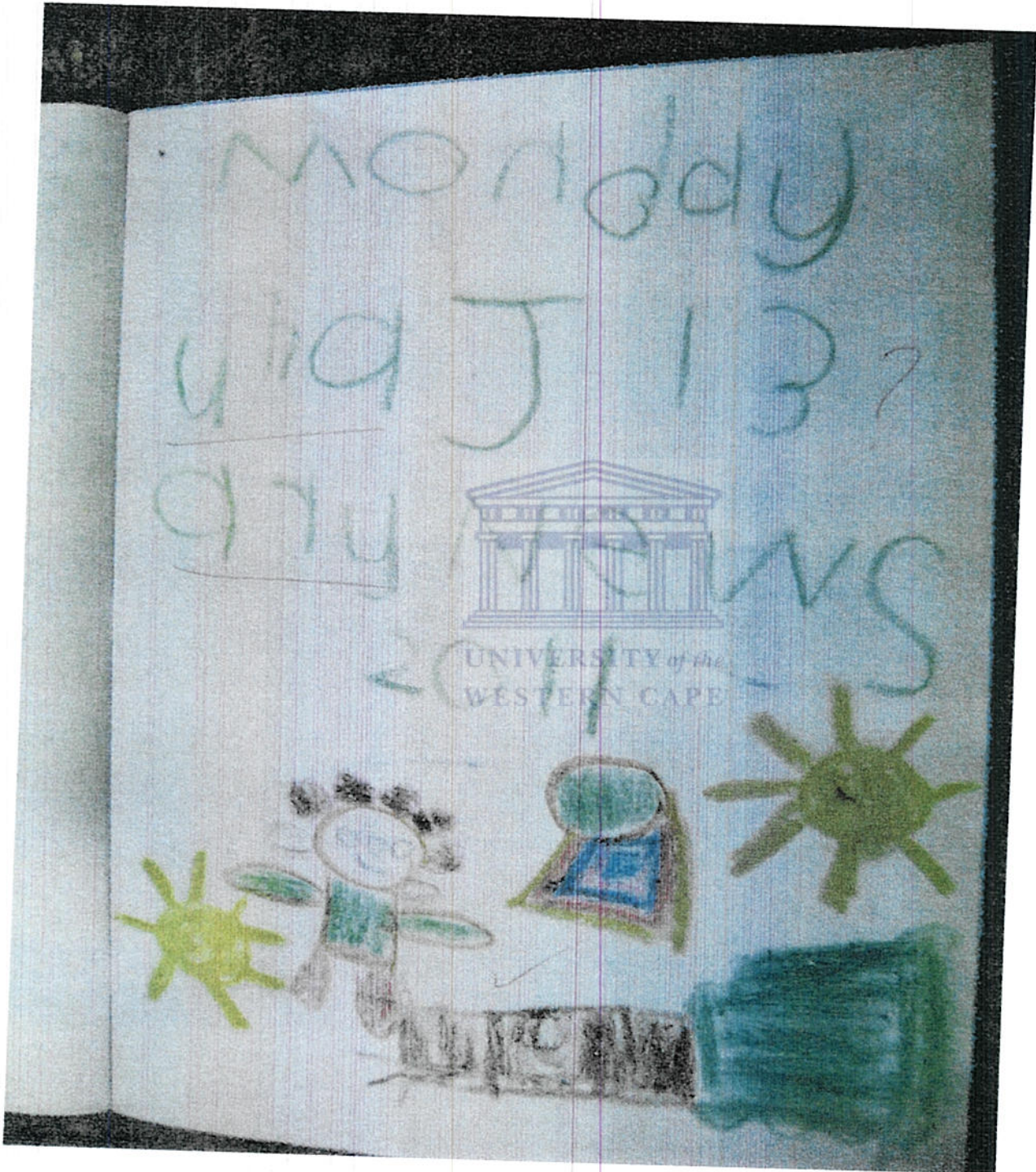
LEARNER A : PICTURE 4



Learner E: Picture 1



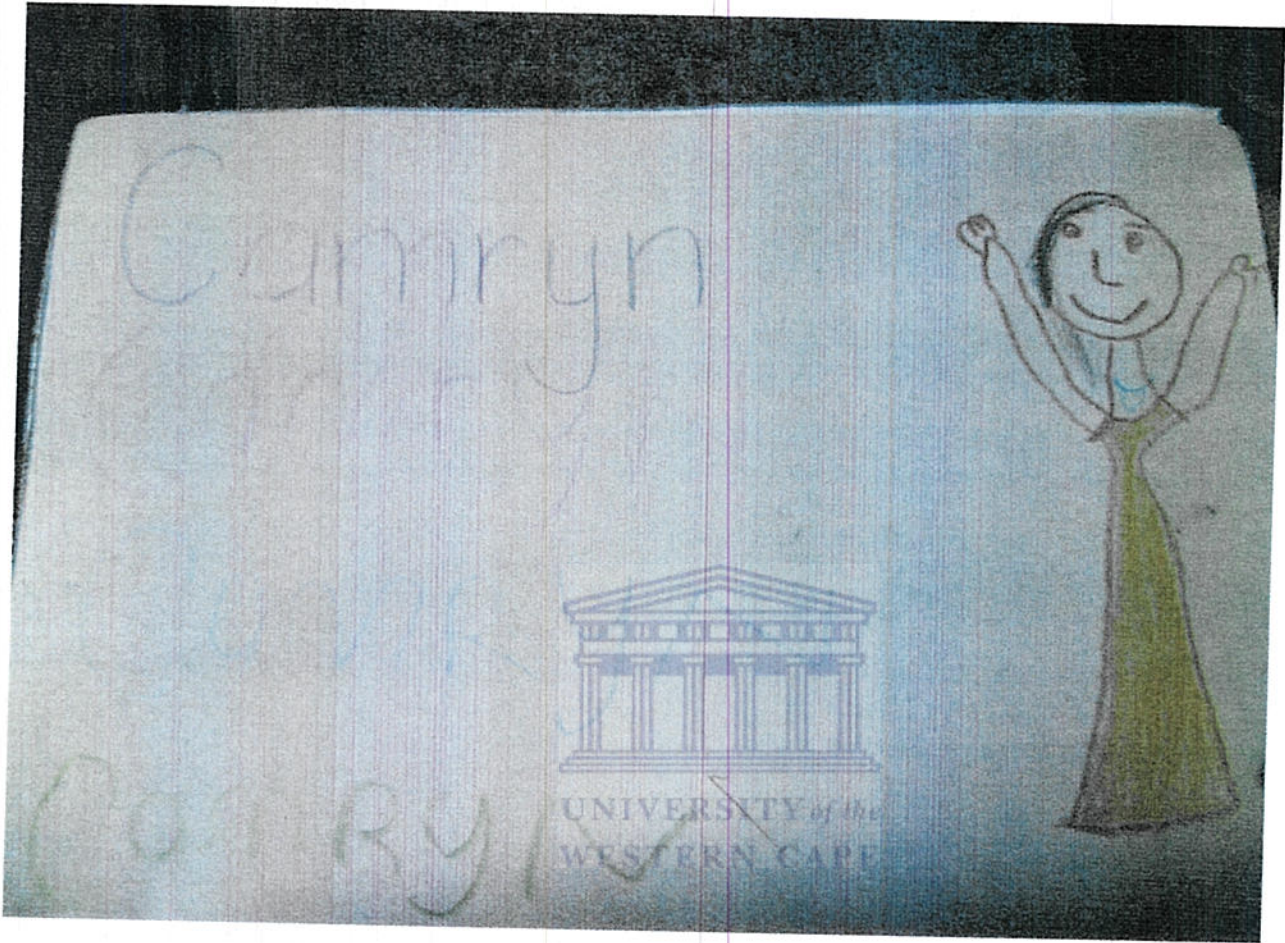
Learner E: Picture 2



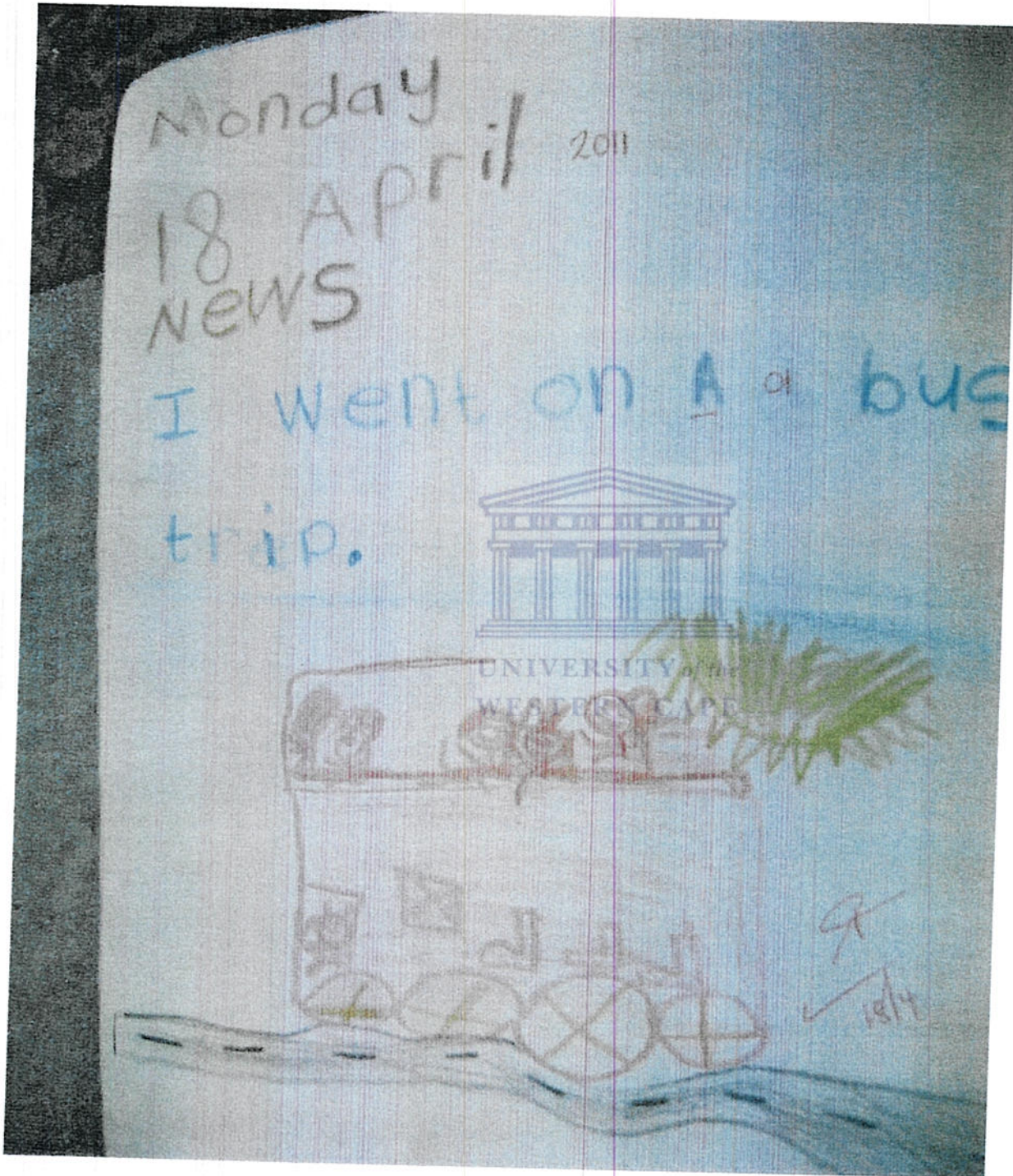
Learner E: Picture



Learner B: Picture 1



Learner B: Picture 2



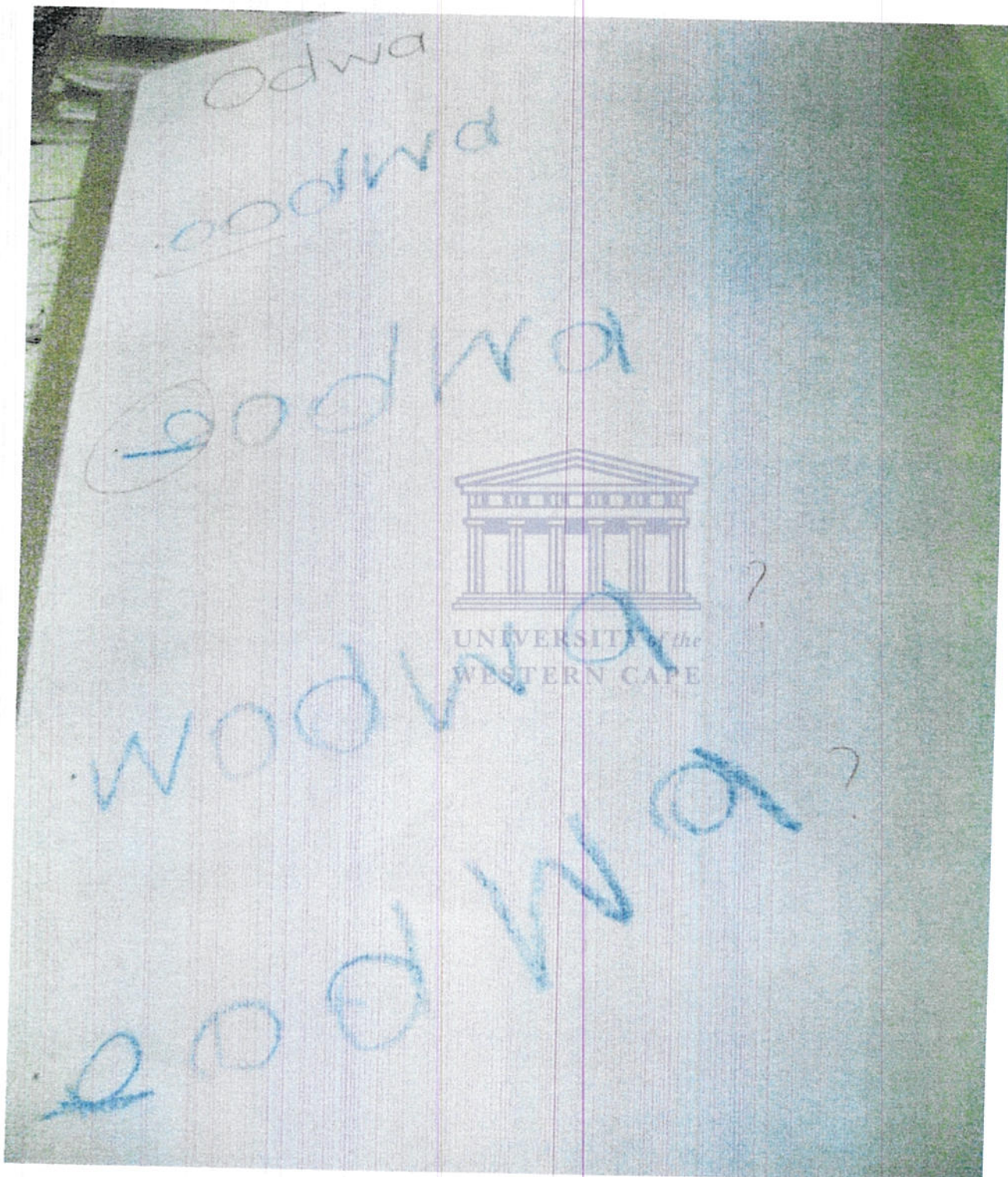
Learner B: Picture 3



Learner B: Picture 4



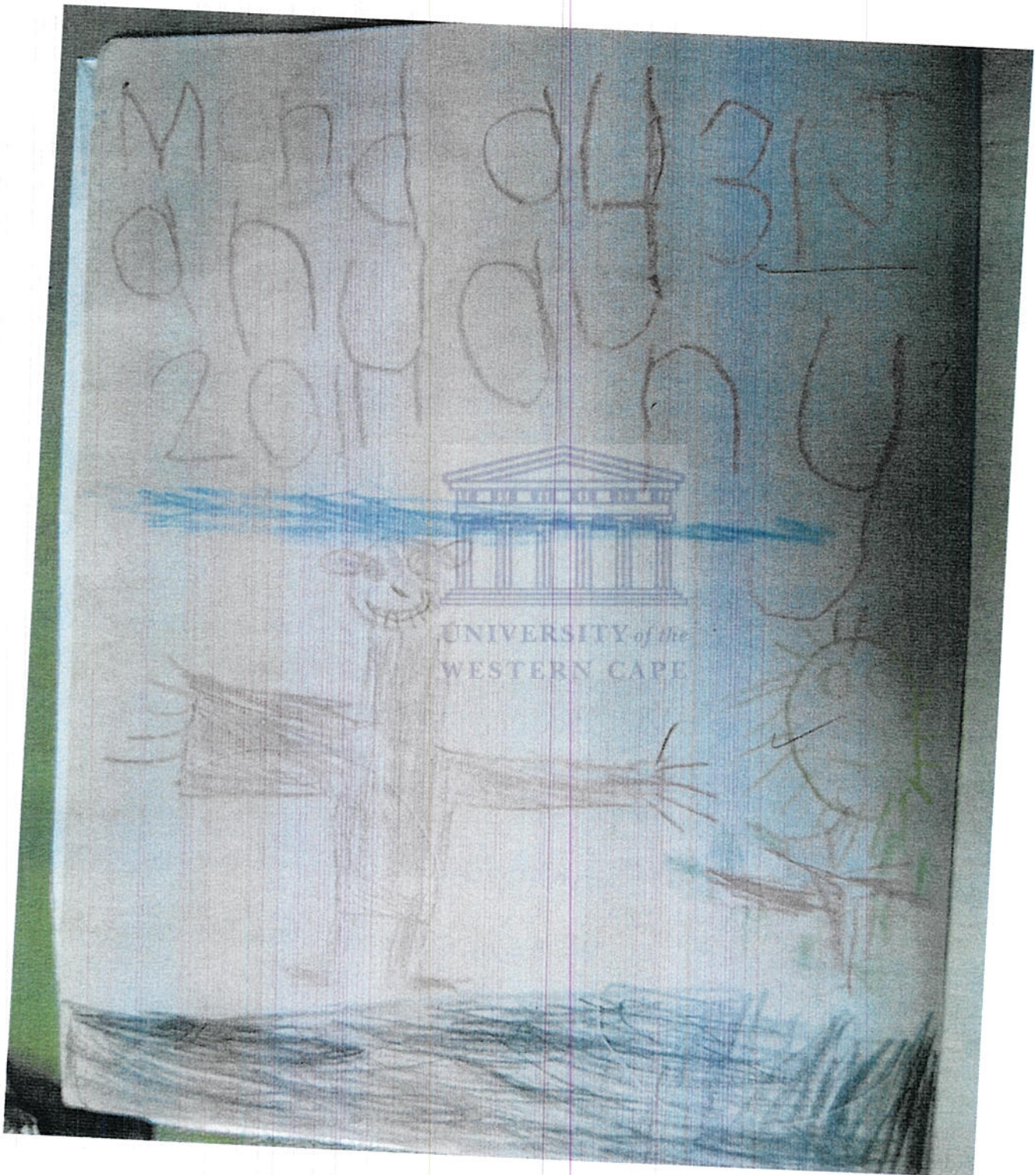
Learner X: Picture 1



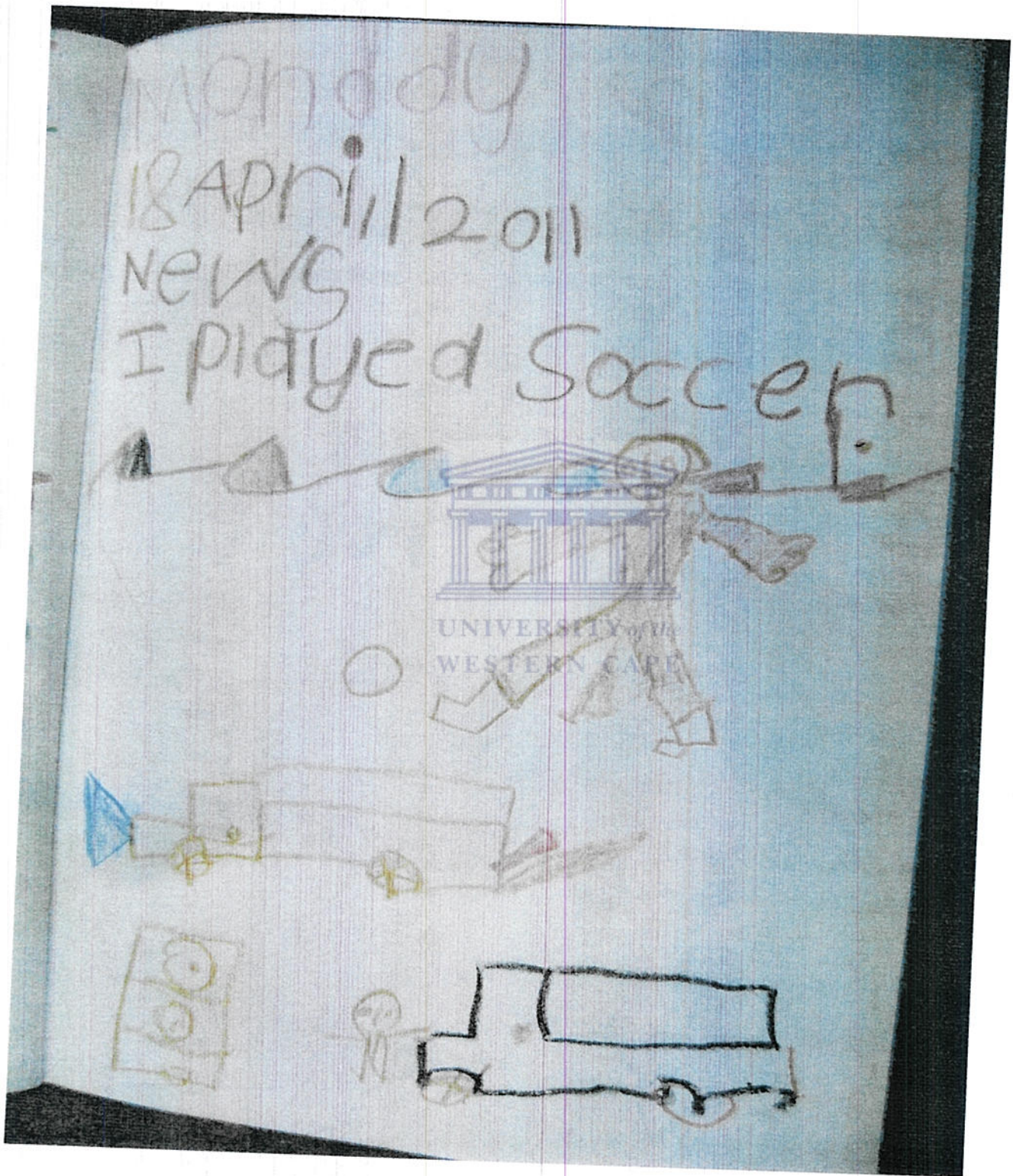
Learner X: Picture 2



Learner X: Picture 3



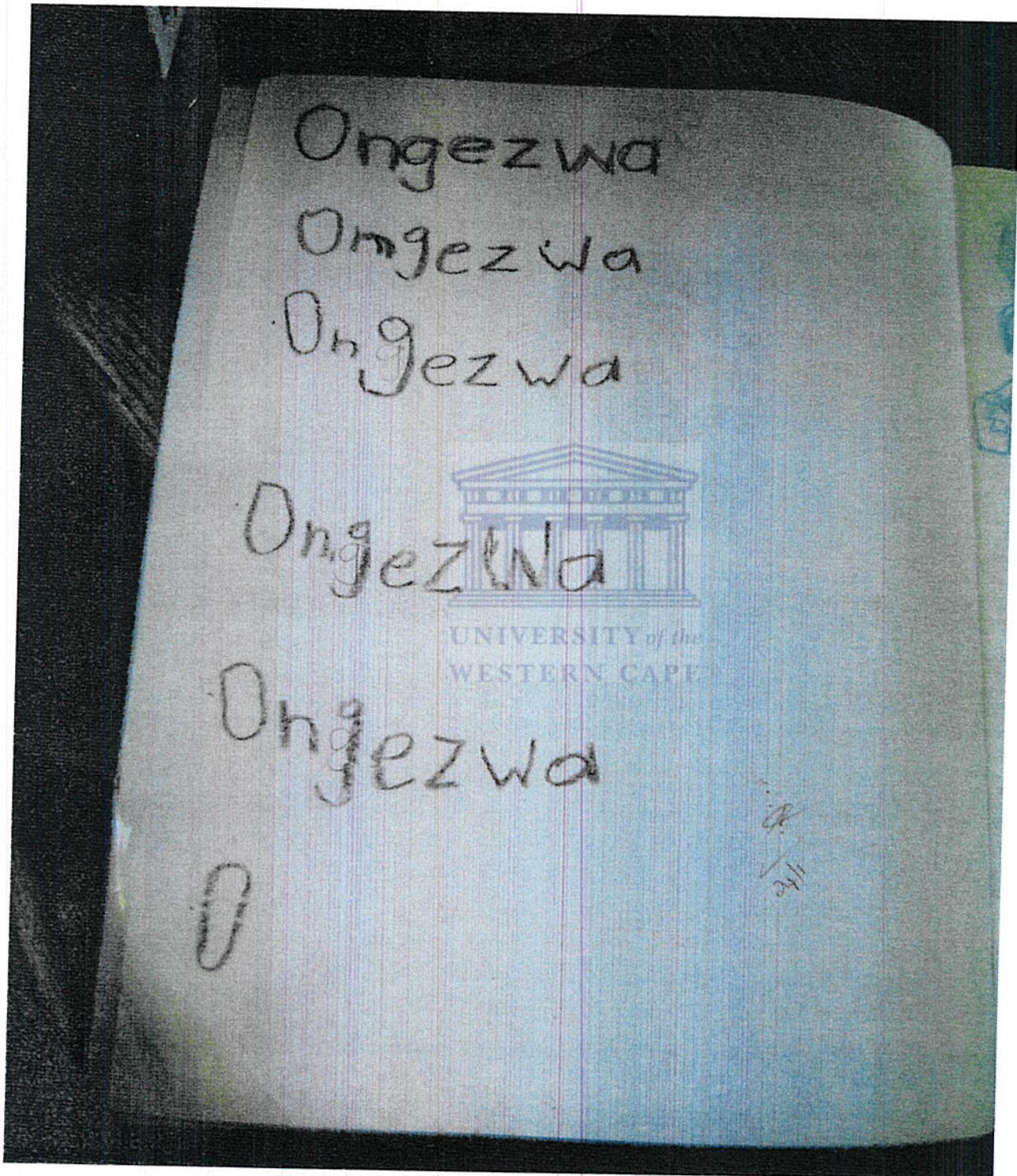
Learner X: Picture 4



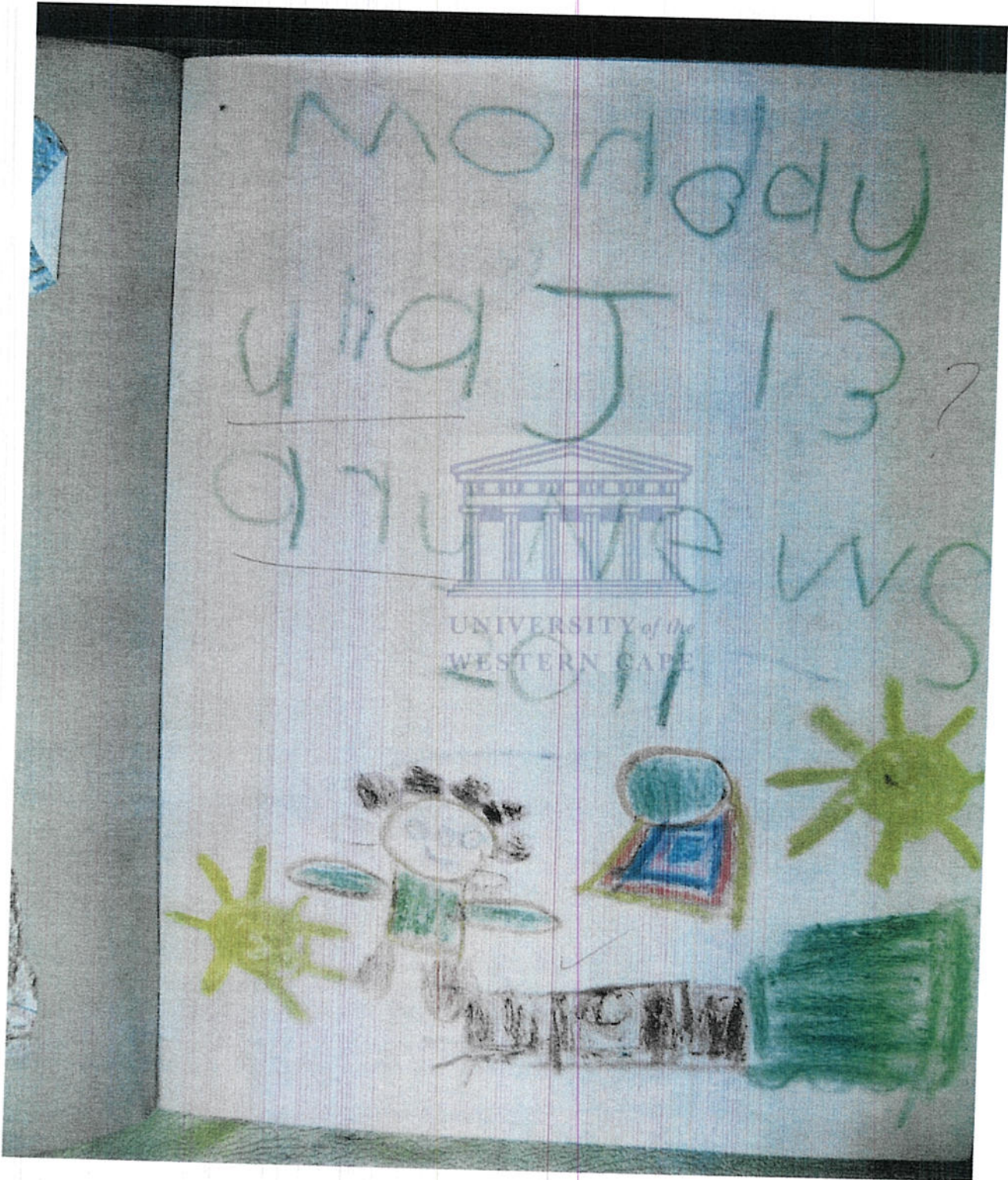
Learner X: Picture 5



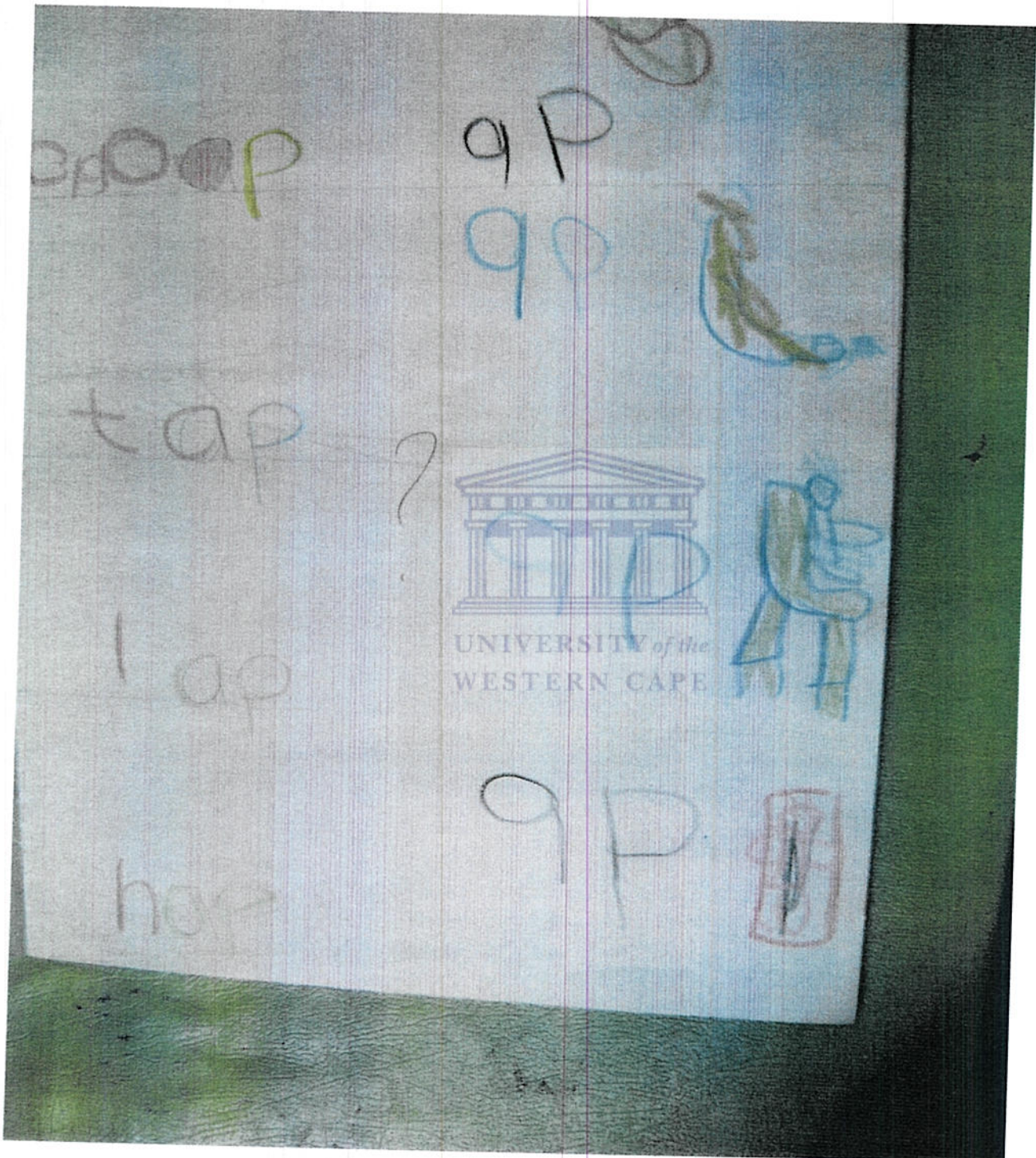
Learner D: Picture1



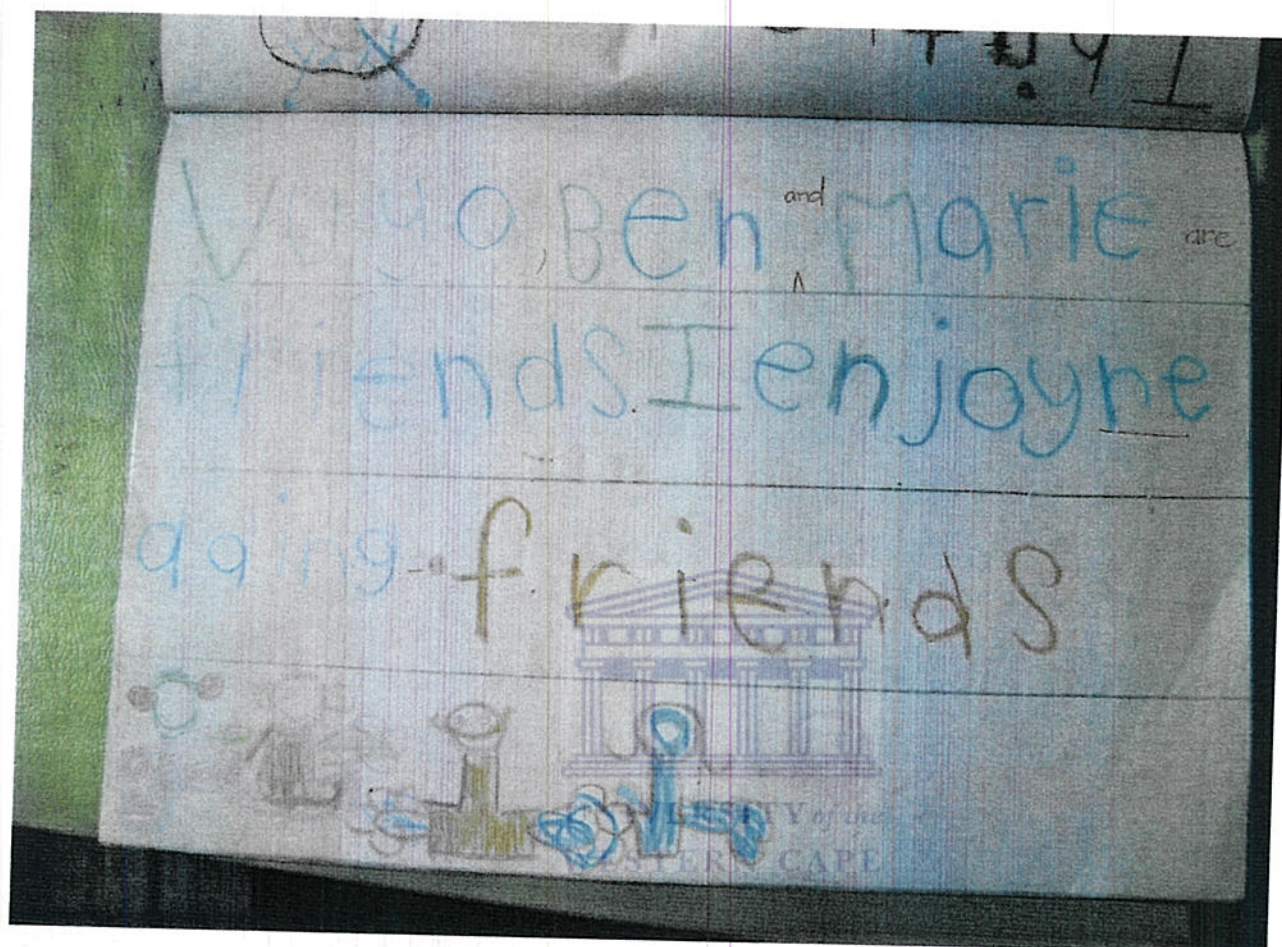
Learner D: Picture 2



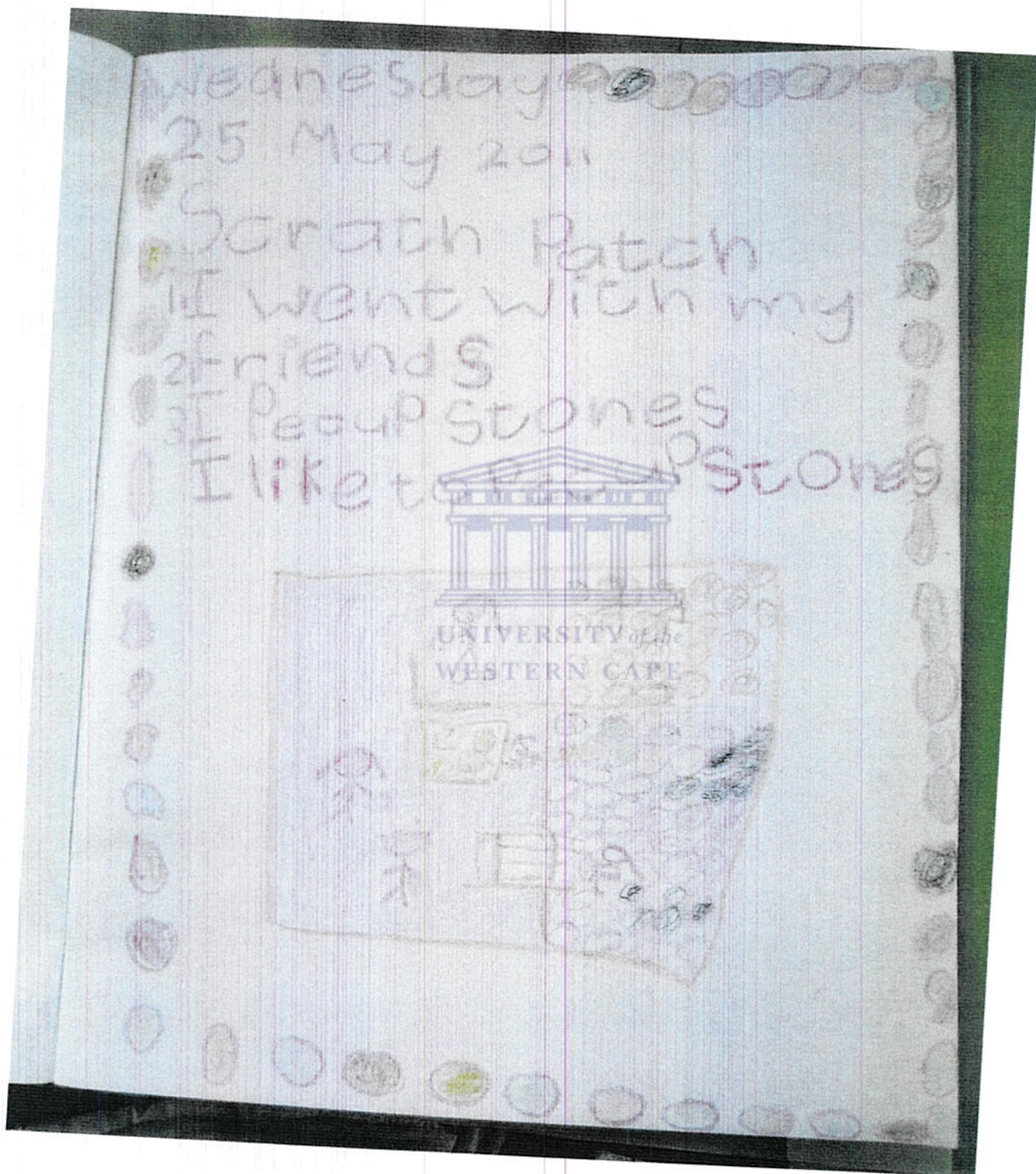
Learner D: Picture 3



Learner D: Picture 4



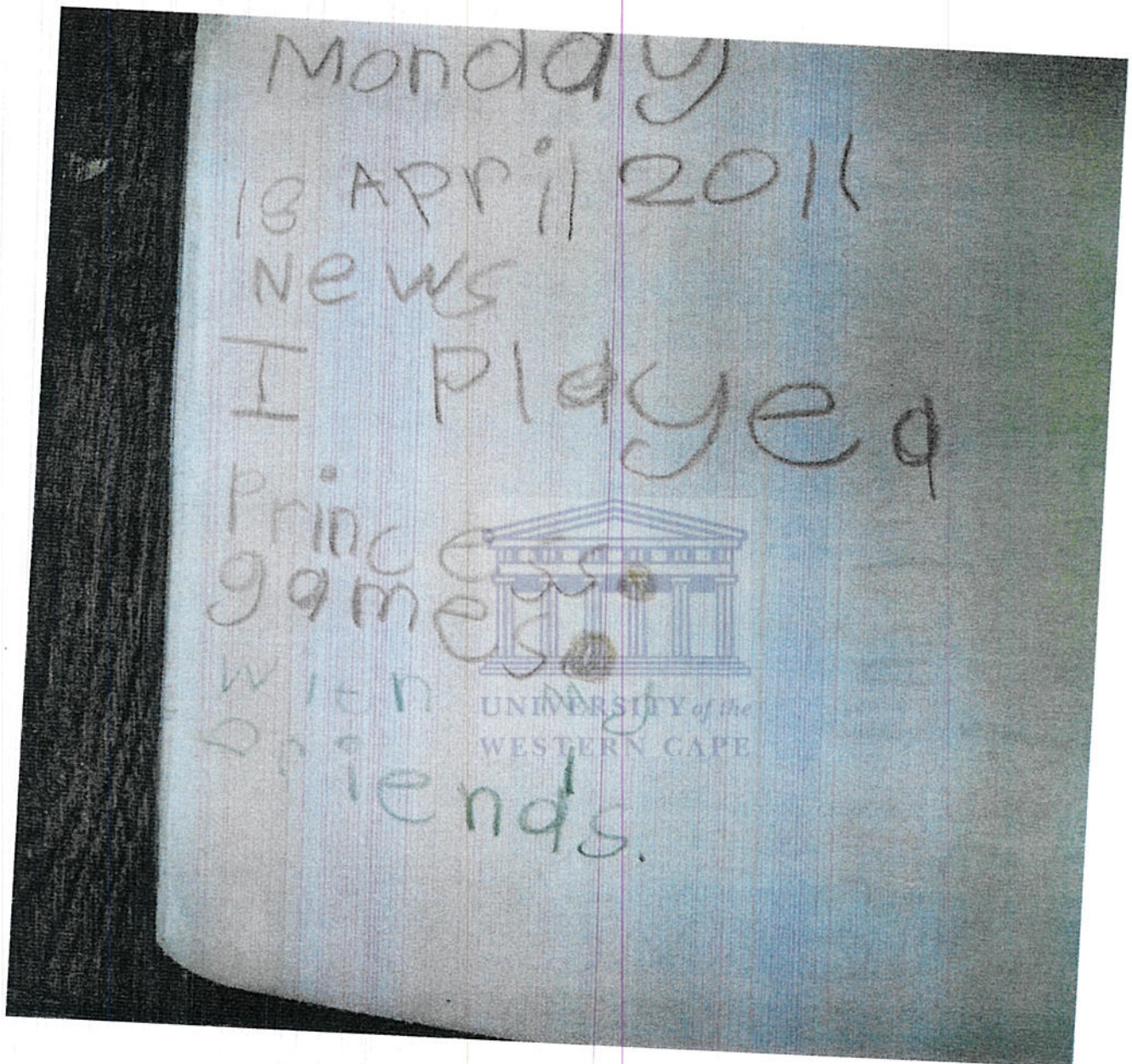
Learner D: Picture 5



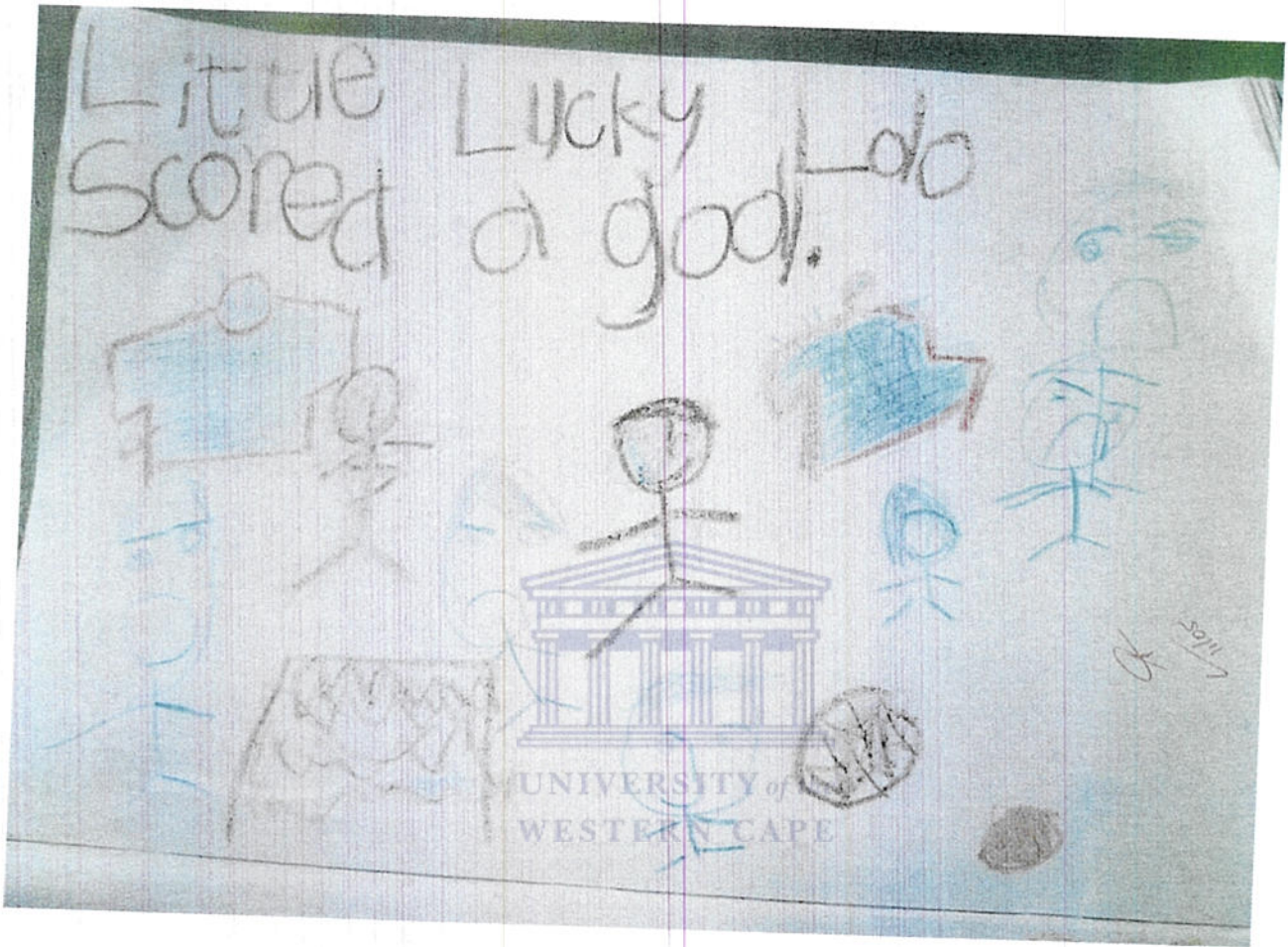
Learner C: Picture 1



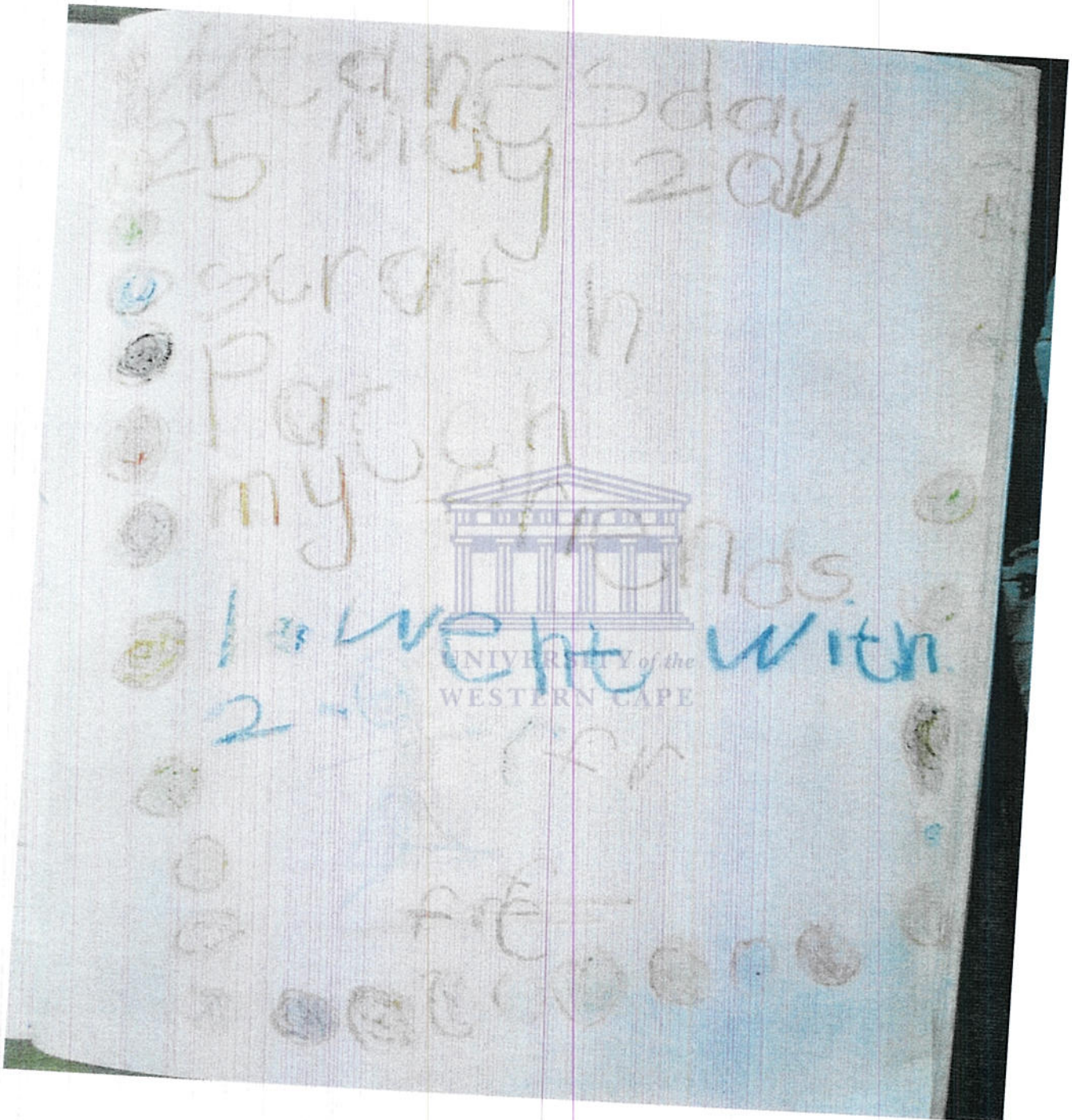
Learner C: picture 2



Learner C: Picture 3



Learner C: Picture 4



This is an example checklist for guided writing, which can be adapted for Grades R-3.

Key: ✓ = Competent ✗ = not yet competent

Writes key words and draws picture.	Writes a simple sentence and draws pictures.	Writes a few short sentences.	Uses a capital letter at the start of a sentence.	Uses a full stop at the end of a sentence.	Spells some words right.	Writes stories, messages, lists and letters.	COMMENTS
		✓					
			✓	✓			
					✓		3

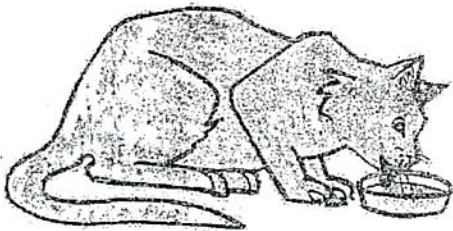
Task 4: Activity 3

1 | 2 | 3 | 4



Write sentences next to each picture.

cat



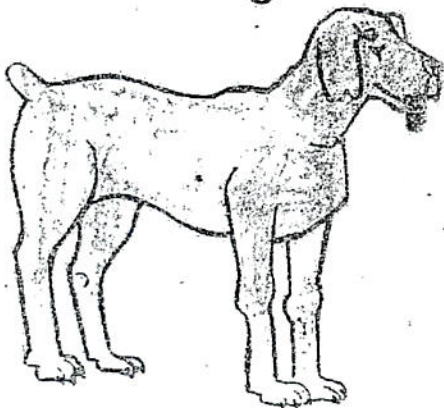
• This is my cat.

• The cat is brown.

• The cat is eating.

• My cat is fat.

dog



• This is my dog.

• She is brown.

• My dog is kind.

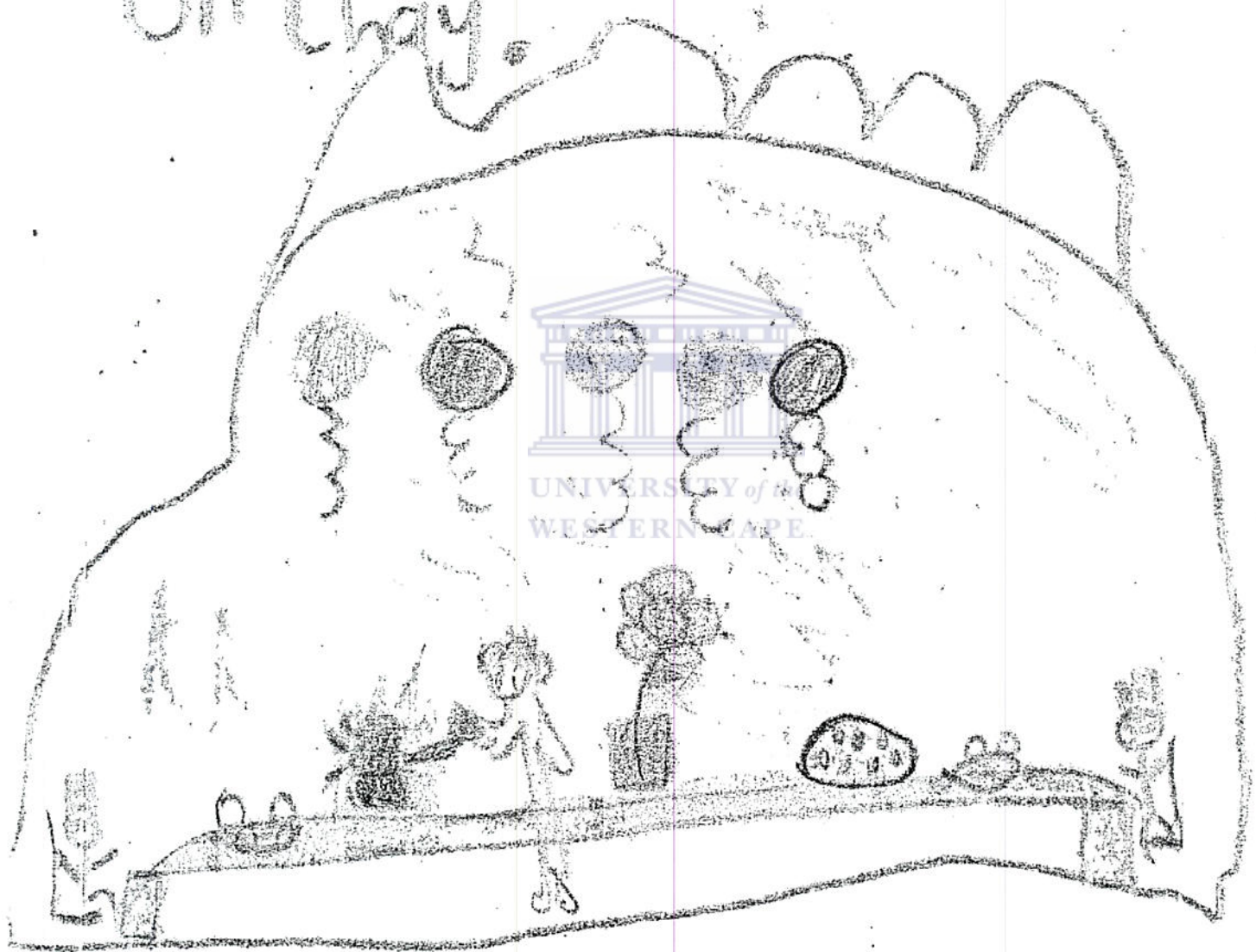
• The dog is standing.

18 July 2011

Learner & (Pictures)

Monday News

Today is Tata Mandelas
birthday.



Monday

Leamer C (Pictures)

29 August 2011

Today I feel happy

because My
daddy is at

home

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JAMES K



29/8

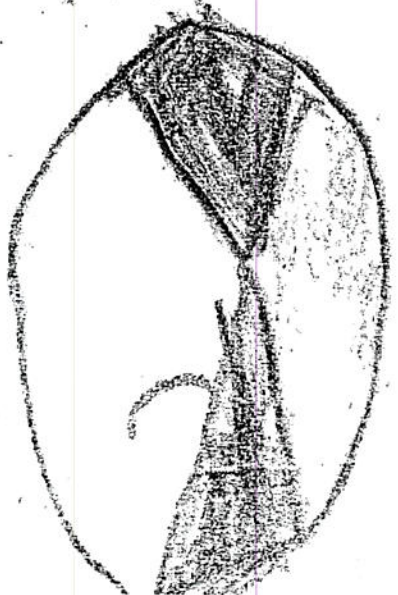
Mohdy
5 September 2022 Oc

Learner X (Picture)

MAWONGS
Sinhua hinhim hinh



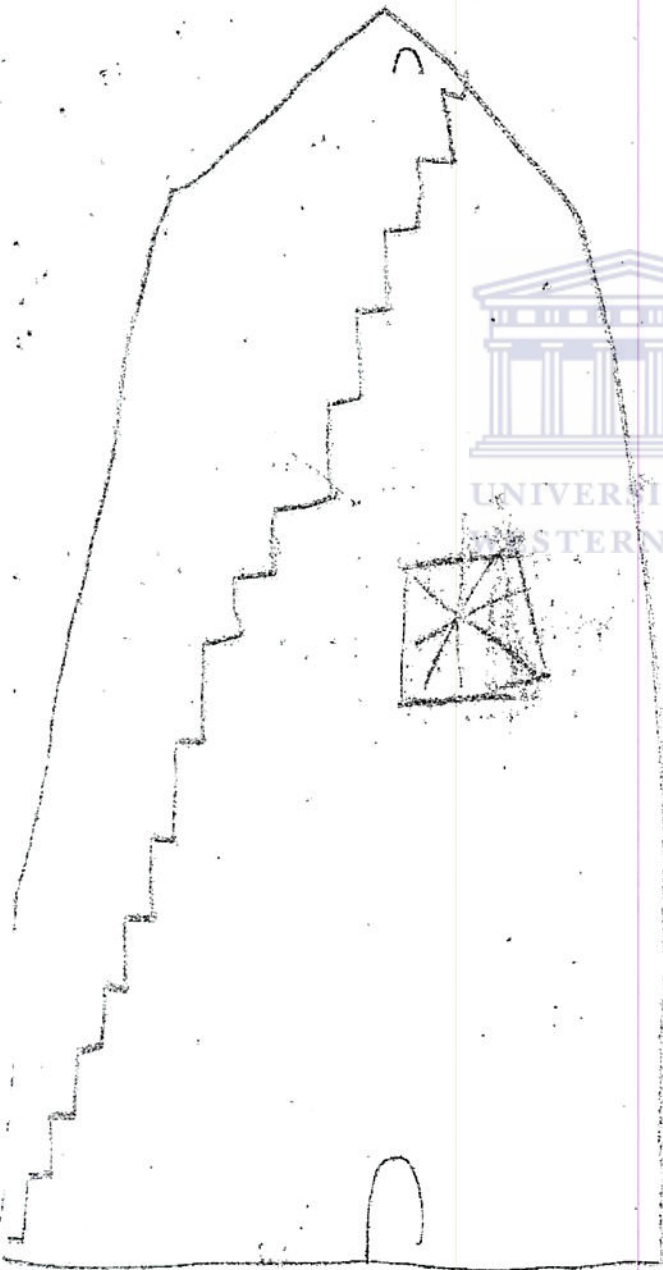
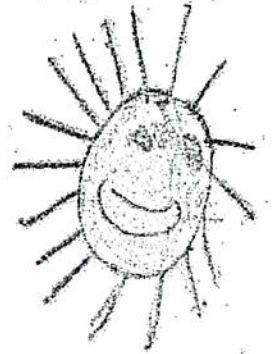
R
✓ 3/9



7 September 2011

Learner A (Picture 5)

Today I feel good
because I have fun in the sun



R
7/9



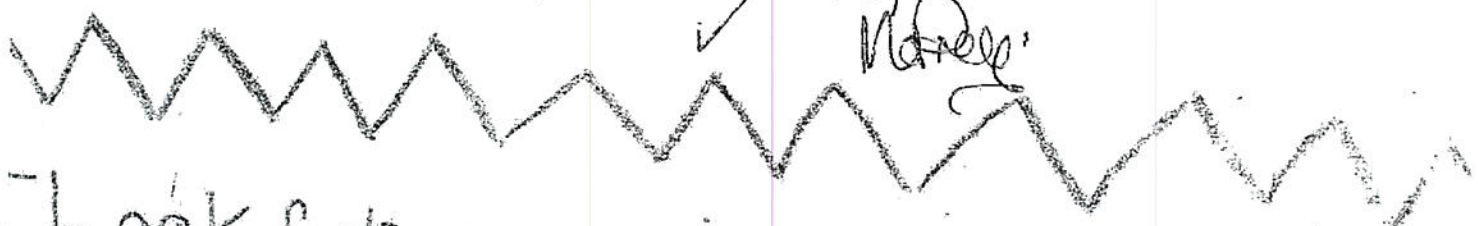
20 July 2011



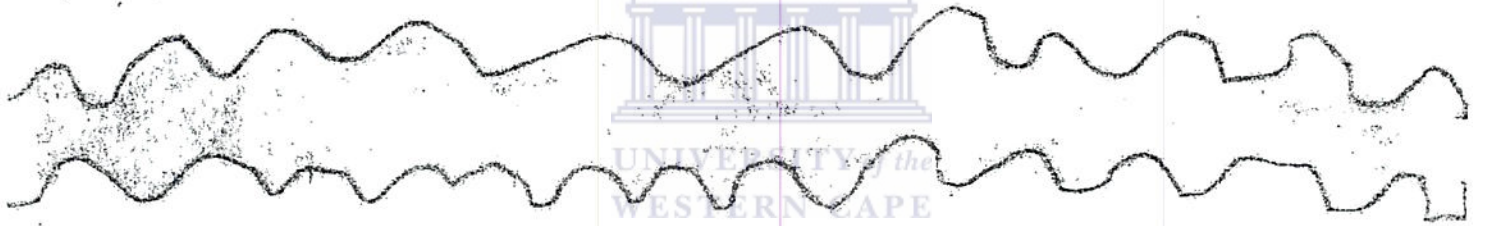
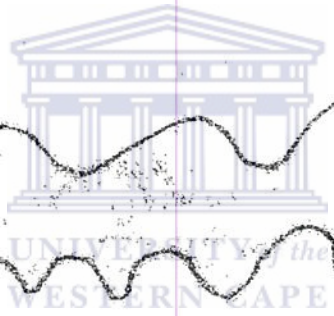
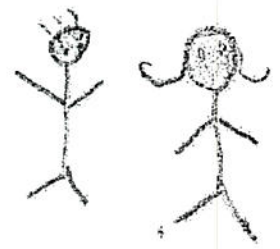
News.

Learner E (Picture 6)

26/07
Natalie



I look for my M. D. D. d.

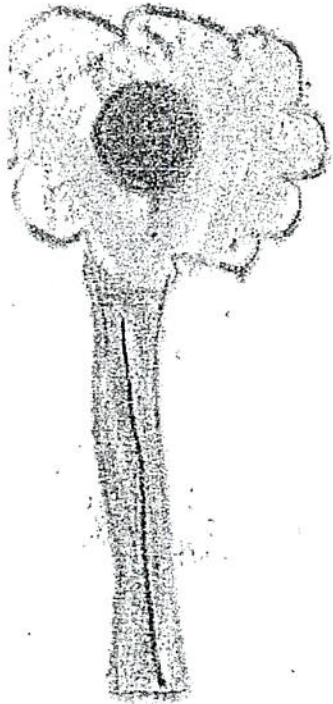


Friday

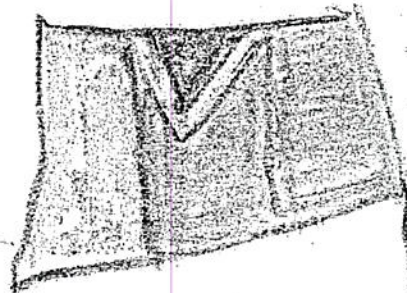
Learner E (Picture 7)

September 2011

Today I feel awesome
because sun it is



sunny



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APPENDIX D: CONSENT LETTERS

I. CONSENT LETTER FOR THE PRINCIPAL

Researcher: Ms Ancyfrida Prosper

Cellular number: 0769913740

Email: ancypro@gmail.com

Institution: University of the Western Cape, Faculty of Education, Bellville, South Africa

Research Title: What do Foundation Phase learners write? A study of literacy development at a multilingual Primary School in Cape Town.

I understand that the school's participation in this study is voluntary and at any circumstances the school has the right to withdraw from the study. I am also aware that the information collected from the school will be treated confidentially to protect the identity of the school. I am guaranteed that the findings will be used for research purposes not to damage the name of the school.

The project has been explained to me clearly in a language I understand. I hereby agree to participate in this research project under the conditions stipulated above.

I..... (Name and Surname) hereby give consent to the researcher to conduct research at my school in grades 1-3classroom.

Principal's signature:.....

Date:.....

II. CONSENT LETTER FOR PARENTS/GURDIAN

Researcher: Ms Ancyfrida Prsospers

Cellular number: 0769913740

Email: ancypro@gmail.com

Institution: University of the Western Cape, Faculty of Education, Bellville, South Africa

Research Title: What do Foundation Phase learners write? A study of literacy development at a multilingual Primary School in Cape Town.

My name is Ancyfrida Prosper. I am a registered Masters student at the University of the Western Cape. I wish to conduct research at your child's school where I would like to do intensive observations, collect some copies of learners' work and recordings of some literacy lessons for foundation phase (grade 1-3). Since your child will be in one of these classes I respectfully request your written permission for your child to voluntarily participate in this study. It is important for you to know that the information gathered as a result of this study will be used for research purposes only. The following information may help you to make an informed decision regarding my request.



Aim of Study

The purpose of the study is to determine how young learners develop writing skills by examining kinds of texts which they produce. The study seeks to investigate the processes of developing writing skills in a multilingual foundation phase classroom. It will trace the languages which young learners prefer to write in, as well as investigate kinds of support which learners receive to enhance their writing skills.

My involvement in your child's class

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would also need to make some copies of learners' written text from grade 1-3 with the permission provided by respective class teacher.

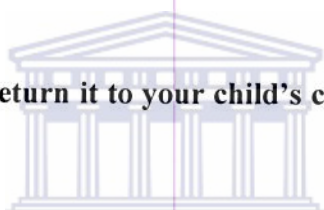
Child's Participation

No information will be directly linked to your child and his/her privacy will at all times be respected. No child will be referred to by name in the writing up and presentation of any data as a result of this research. Your child will at all times be treated with respect and sensitivity.

I trust that the above information has helped you to make a decision with regard to my request. If at any stage you have questions about the study please contact me directly at the above contact details. Alternatively, you can contact my supervisor, Dr Vuyokazi Nomlomo on Tel. (021) 959 2442 / 2650

CONSENT FORM

Please sign the form below and return it to your child's class teacher. Thank you for your kind assistance.



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I, (name of parent/legal guardian).....parent of
(child's name).....have read the information
provided above and **do/do not** (please circle your choice) give permission for my child to
participate in this study.

Parent/ Guardian's signature:.....

Date:.....