Exploring the potential of digital storytelling in the teaching of academic writing at a higher education institution in the Western Cape

Linda Olive Mkaza

Student number: 3515673

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Supervisor: Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam

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ABSTRACT

Writing is an important skill throughout learners' schooling trajectory because it is through writing that learners need to situate meaning and sense-making across the curriculum. Writing proficiency becomes even more important when learners access tertiary studies. Yet studies suggest that most students struggle with academic writing. Various authors suggest that writing has not been taught appropriately especially in secondary schooling contexts in South Africa and that writing becomes even more daunting for Second Language speakers of English when they reach tertiary education. There is abundant literature on students' challenges with academic writing and ways to address academic writing challenges but the use of digital storytelling in relation to academic writing development is recent and distinctively underexplored in the literature.

In this study, I seek to explore the potential that digital storytelling has in the teaching of undergraduate academic writing skills. I will focus on first year students' academic writing skills, how they are taught currently and how technology in the form of digital storytelling can help first year students improve their academic writing skills. The theoretical framework for the study is largely based on the New Literacies Studies which is championed by members of the New London Group such as Street and Street (1984) Lea and Street (2006) among others. The theoretical framework will draw on the notion of literacy as social practice rather than a set of reading and writing skills which explains why educators need to find new ways of teaching academic writing skills. I use semiotics and multimodality as a foundational concept for using digital storytelling in academic writing. That is because semiotics and multimodality further support the idea that literacy goes beyond words but that audio and visual elements are also part of learning and can help engage students in their academic work. The main aim of this proposed research is to explore both students and lecturer practices of digital literacies in the teaching and learning of academic writing at The Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT).

I propose the following research objectives: (i.) elucidate current academic writing scaffolding in academic modules; (ii.) draw on the use of digital storytelling in a first-year undergraduate course; (iii.) shed light on lecturers and students' perceptions of the ways digital storytelling impacts on first-year academic writing; (iv.) highlight the implications of infusing multimodality into academic writing in this context; and (v.) explore the ways first-year students' take on new writing practices and how these new practices are facilitated by the

lecturer. I plan to use a qualitative research method to achieve my set objectives. I have opted to conduct action research, as both participant and researcher.

The qualitative research method allows me to use the following research tools: document analysis; questionnaires and interviews. I analyse 15 student essays in order to elucidate current academic writing scaffolding in academic modules. These essays are divided into three categories: high performance; average performance; and low performance. Then questionnaires are distributed to students through a Google Forms link. Of the 40 student participants; 32 students filled in the questionnaires. The interviews were conducted with three lecturers across two departments at CPUT. These interviews, together with questionnaires that the students filled in served to address the following objectives: draw on the use of digital storytelling in a first-year undergraduate course; shed light on lecturers and students' perceptions of the ways digital storytelling impacts on first-year academic writing; highlight the implications of infusing multimodality into academic writing in this context; and explore the ways first-year students' take on new writing practices and how these new practices are facilitated by the lecturer. All the ethical considerations were adhered to for my research.

I categorized my findings according to the research questions that I posed in the study. There were three research questions which serve as the three main themes of my data analysis. However, during the process of analyzing the data, a fourth theme emerged. The first finding indicates that academic writing scaffolding in academic writing modules is adequate for students who have essays in the high-performance category. However, it is inadequate especially for students who wrote essays in the low performance categories as they could not meet the demands of academic writing. The second finding indicates that students are able to use digital storytelling to help them with various aspects of academic writing. They are able to improve language and grammar; the structure of their writing, that is, the introduction, body and conclusion. The third finding illustrates that lecturers also feel that there are academic writing benefits to when using digital storytelling. Even though that may be, the use of technology for the medium of digital storytelling proved to be somewhat difficult. That is mostly because students did not have access to various technology such as internet connection or even equipment to complete the digital stories unproblematically. Then the fourth finding emerged during lecturer interviews, that is, fees must fall protests and the impact it had on the traditional university structure across. Fees must fall protests led to disruptions in academia because one key aspect they highlight is the need for decolonisation of the curriculum. The use

of digital storytelling then not only addressed the student academic writing challenges that are highlighted by this study, but also speak to decolonisation of the curriculum because it is an innovative way for students to engage with the demands of academic writing.

The conclusion of my thesis is that as useful as digital storytelling is in academic writing; those who wish to use it as a teaching tool need to be well versed with technology as it can have challenges if not used adequately. The most pertinent of the factors revealed is that there is a need for innovative ways to teach the 21st century student.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to Jehova Jireh (my provider), who has given me strength through Jesus Christ to complete this journey. I thank You Lord for allowing me to run this race till the end. I also dedicate this to my late grandmother, Boniwe Alice Pona, who was not educated but instilled the precious value and belief that education is a key to a brighter future for her grandchildren. For that I am eternally grateful.

DECLARATION

I declare that *Exploring the potential of digital storytelling in the teaching of academic writing at The Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT)* is my own work, that it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university, and that the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references.

Name: Linda Olive Mkaza
Student number: 3515673
Date: December 2019
Signature:

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ACRONYMS

CPUT	Cape Peninsula University of Technology
IT	Information Technology
ESL	English Second Language
SSM	Study Skills Model
ASM	Academic Socialization Model
ALM	Academic Literacies Model
NLS	New Literacies Studies

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KEYWORDS

Academic Writing

Academic Literacy

Academic Literacies Model

Academic Socialization Model

Digital Storytelling

English Second Language

Higher Education

Language

Multimodality

New Literacies Studies

Semiotics

Social practices

Study Skills Model

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Globally, the ability to write in all educational contexts has come to be viewed as high symbolic capital because students' ability to successfully negotiate meaning in written texts impacts on the evaluation of their writing competence. In primary and secondary schooling contexts learners write for a variety of purposes yet their academic success is also determined by their ability to read with comprehension in combination with listening and speaking tasks. However, at tertiary institutions, students are required to consolidate their understanding of various modules, mostly through reading dense/complex academic texts, a practice which then has to be converted into written format commonly referred to as assignments or academic essays. Internationally, the consolidation of knowledge, in most cases, is demonstrated through academic writing in lengthy and elaborately drawn out assignments, academic papers or extended essays. Lillis (2001) states that tutors and lecturers' assessments of students' understanding of a particular subject are through the traditional mode of assessment in higher education, that is, student essay writing and its concomitant language proficiency. As a result, globally, students' academic writing skills can impact on their participation and success at universities.

Currently, globalization and transnational flows result in universities' opening and diversifying access and as such participation trends highlight the diversity of students entering higher education (Boughey, 2008; Ivanič, 1998; Lillis, 2001; Van Heerden, 2015). In most cases, the diverse student population comes from various social, cultural and ethnic backgrounds; multilingual repertoires and can thus be viewed as 'the other' because higher education institutions largely follow monolingual language practices (Stroud & Kerfoot, 2013). Interestingly, since this diverse student population entered higher education, a discourse of student deficiencies and underperformance have emerged(Boughey, 2008, 2013; Lillis, 2001). In response, universities globally offer academic literacy courses to socialize underprepared students into academic discourse and a culture of adherence that it demands of them (Boughey, 2008; Thesen & Van Pletzen, 2006). In South Africa, a similar situation emerged after 1994. Access has opened up but student diversity seems to impact on the success and throughput rate, especially black students who seem to be lagging behind because they do not have English as a first language (McKenna, 2010). Therefore, the poor performance of South African students

is often linked to their linguistic diversity and 'under-preparedness' for the demands and rigors of higher education.

In South Africa, the system of Apartheid racially divided education, which meant the quality of schooling was unequal and that higher education was reserved for the white minority at the time. As a result, education opportunities were unequally distributed and black students were denied equal access to higher education institutions (Thesen & Van Pletzen, 2006). Furthermore, the two official languages were exclusively English and Afrikaans and a good command of these two languages resulted in access to universities and contributed towards academic success. In fact, tertiary institutions either offered instruction through English or Afrikaans medium which thus largely excluded the majority black student population. As a result, during the apartheid era, access to higher education was limited due to principles of segregation and inequality based on race, culture and language.

After 1994, the transformation to democracy opened up opportunities and access to higher education for all races. However, socio- economic factors, diverse language and schooling contexts seem to hinder black students from performing as well as their white counterparts at tertiary level. Scott (2009) comments on the poor success rate of black learners in relation to their white peers. In the same vein Boughey (2008) argues that this poor success rate has resulted in dominant discourses drawing on the socio-economic context of such students as their inferior education has contributed to their failure in learning at higher institutions. As such, South African universities also invest in academic development programmes as a tool to facilitate academic success. As a result, academic literacy and academic writing proficiency has become a major area of concern in relation to the throughput rate and overall academic success of students.

Academic literacy involves an understanding of the various disciplinary discourses such as authorial stance, voice and other writing-specific ways of doing (van Schalkwyk, Bitzer, & van der Walt, 2010) . This means that students should demonstrate their knowledge about a given topic and demonstrate their 'way with words' in written format. Interestingly, McKenna (2010) argues that ESL students are doubly challenged because they need to be proficient in English as well as having sophisticated academic language proficiencies. Therefore, language and in most cases in South Africa, English plays a significant role in access, throughput and success

rate of specifically ESL students because it is through the English language that they have to create meaning in academic essays. It is not surprising to note that students often mention writing assignments as the most challenging especially during their first year of study (Krause, 2001). By the same token, McInnes, James and Hartley (2000) refer to the lower than expected essay results and first year students' reality shock when they encounter new academic conventions and literacy practices. While students are expected to write in an academically acceptable manner, research highlights that most students do not meet the university standards and are often labelled as either "good" or "bad" (Lea & Street, 1998, 2006; McKenna, 2010). It is understandable that conceptualization of academic literacy often centres on competency in written language; much less emphasis is placed on the ways that written language, symbols and visuals jointly elements construct meaning (Archer, 2006, 2012). Accordingly, even though there is much attention on academic development programmes, the written assignment remains the most powerful domain to label success and failure. While various academic literacy programmes offer support, alternative pedagogical approaches such as those that infuse information technology and digital academic literacies need to be explored as a means to induct ESL students into the demands of academic writing. Subsequently, I explore meaning making tools that will aid in academic writing. This is to suggest that, I need to look at the theoretical framework of semiotics and multimodality. Semiotics is concerned with anything that stands for something else such as words, images, sounds, gestures and objects (Chandler, 2007), while multimodality is the use of images, visual, audio and spatial modes (Archer, 2012; Rowsell & Walsh, 2011; Street, 2004). Modes are meaning-making resources that are socially shaped and operate well in digital environments (Archer, 2012). These two theoretical frameworks along with their fund of insights and issues kindled my interest in digital storytelling as a means to scaffold academic writing conventions as well as the pedagogic attention that it demands. Digital storytelling is a merger of traditional storytelling and technology which allows students to think creatively and critically (Ohler, 2006; Smeda, Dakich, & Sharda, 2014). Further to this, digital storytelling has features of semiotics and multimodality which I explore in Chapter 2.

The purpose of my study is thus to examine alternative teaching and learning approaches to help ESL students cope with the diverse academic discourses at tertiary level. Since academic essays are in most cases the main source of success at tertiary level, we need to look at alternative ways to scaffold this assessment process for students. One way to help students'

access to academic writing is through the use of technology. Since infusing digital storytelling into academic writing in South Africa has not been widely explored, this study contributes towards the growing body of literature that offers informed ways and practices for the infusion and inclusion of digital storytelling into the teaching and learning of academic writing.

1.2 Problem Statement

Most university courses offer academic literacy modules to socialize first-year students into academic discourses and then assess students' academic writing proficiency in various disciplines. However, literature highlights that previously disadvantaged ESL learners are underprepared for academic writing when they enter university programmes (Van Heerden, 2016; Boughey, 2010). Even though we view the world through multimodal lenses, most traditional academic development programmes focus more on decontextualized writing skills without interrogating the social function and the ways that knowledge can be produced in various modes. Since universities attempt to mould students into academic writers, the use of multimodality to teach academic writing is a national imperative given that ESL first year students are mostly at risk

1.3 Rationale for my study

My study is particularly interested in ESL students since it is mostly previously disadvantaged students that are labelled as underprepared to meet university standards (Boughey, 2008). Even though institutions have a range of academic support programmes, one can argue that implicit models of academic writing do not take into account issues of identity and language as social practice (Lea & Street, 1998, 2006). Therefore, traditional approaches to teaching academic writing need to be addressed as most models seldom allow students to find their voice and to "crack the code" of academic writing (McKenna, 2010, p. 10). Moreover, the way we view the world is largely through a combination of modes such as words, symbols and images, that is, we have a multimodal view of the world. A mode is a socially shaped and culturally given resource for meaning making which includes writing, speech, image, layout and gestures (Archer, 2012).

In almost every domain we are saturated with words and images on billboards, pamphlets, advertisements and other forms of media. Thus our schemata take such combinations of image and word as natural; for this reason, multimodality can be advantageous for students when they are taught academic writing. Hence academic writing should in essence, not be limited to

written language for first-year students but should incorporate images and symbols especially since students have not been adequately prepared for academic writing at secondary school (Boughey, 2008; Thesen & Van Pletzen, 2006). Digital storytelling then, is one way to socialize first-year students into academic writing because digital storytelling allows the student to improve their expository writing skills, develops their media literacy skills but more importantly provide them with epistemic access to dominant forms information literacies necessary for academic success. In addition, digital storytelling develops students' critical thinking and argumentation skills, a key feature of academic writing (Ohler, 2006). As a result, this study explores the advantages of digital storytelling and the ways that it can contribute towards teaching and learning practices in academia but more importantly it sheds light on immediately useful ways that ESL students can be inducted and supported to achieve academic success. Consequently, the motivation for this study is synonymous with my belief system that it could shed light on immediately useful ways to approach academic writing, both pedagogically, in terms of knowledge acquisition and cultivating positive student identities as well.

1.4 Research Aims and objectives

The major aim of this study is to explore students and lecturer practices of digital literacies in the teaching and learning of academic writing at an institution of higher education in the Western Cape. More specifically, the intention is to explore the advantages of digital storytelling when teaching academic writing to first-year students. Thus my objectives are to:

1. Elucidate current academic writing scaffolding in academic modules
2. Draw on the use of digital storytelling in a first-year undergraduate course.
3. Shed light on lecturers and students' perceptions of the ways digital storytelling impacts on first-year academic writing.
4. Highlight the implications of infusing multimodality into academic writing in this context.
5. Explore the ways first-year students' take on new writing practices and how these new practices are facilitated by the lecturer.

1.5 Research Questions

Further to the issues that I have discussed so far along with my research objectives, I propose to state my research questions. The following is the Main Research Question (MRQ) intended

for this study: To what extent can digital storytelling strengthen or impede the academic writing skills of ESL first year students?

The following sub-research questions (SRQs) are meant to reinforce the central concerns that underline the MRQ by pointing out the subsequent component parts:

1. How is academic writing scaffolding conducted in an academic module?
2. What are students' perceptions of digital storytelling in relation to academic writing skills?
3. What are lecturers' perceptions of digital storytelling in relation to the development of academic writing skills of first-year students?

By setting the MRQ and SRQs above, I hope to address the objectives set in the previous section (see section 1.4). In later Chapters of my study I elaborate further on the objectives set and the SRQs that help address each objective.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

In order to understand the nature of the writing challenges students experience, I need to understand academic writing, how it is taught and the theoretical underpinnings which create a basis for the use of digital storytelling as a tool to assist students in their academic writing. These I deal with in greater depth in Chapter two of my thesis. Therefore, I look at different teaching models and approaches to writing which include the following: The Study Skills Model (SSM); Academic Socialization Model (ASM) and Academic Literacies Model (ALM). By looking at these models to teaching academic writing, I am well placed to illustrate the tertiary academic writing context. By illustrating this writing context, I illuminate the theoretical frame that underpins my study, that is, New Literacy Studies, which views writing as social practice (Lea & Street, 1998, 2006; Street & Street, 1984). This is an important feature because I also explore multimodality as a social practice that can enhance ESL academic writing and use the theory of semiotics as a foundational concept in my use of multimdality. Finally, I have drawn on empirical studies that deal with digital storytelling and academic writing.

1.7 Research Design and Methodological Framework

In my study I use a qualitative methodological framework in keeping with (Creswell & Creswell, 2017), who states that qualitative research takes place in a natural setting, which is the place where participants mostly experience the issue or problem that is being researched. Most importantly, in the qualitative approach, the researcher is a key instrument in the research

as they have to interpret what they see, hear and understand from their settings. Qualitative research includes various methodologies such as case studies, ethnographies and action research (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). For this research, I then use some components/aspects of action research where I am also able to function as participant. Brydon-Miller, Kral, Maguire, Noffke, & Sabhlok (2011) state that action research (AR) requires participation and action. It also requires the researcher to collaborate and engage with community members in order to reach political and social justice (Brydon-Miller et al., 2011). Action research has transformative potential which integrates researchers and various stakeholders (Levin & Greenwood, 2011). This is to suggest that researchers, educators, should take action in their research in order to create such change and transformation. I team teach on the academic writing programme, which makes it necessary for me to participate because as a researcher I cannot remain outside of my own practices. This implies that the researcher should participate in the research they undertake with the aim of creating change in their respective communities in order to create social and political justice (Brydon-Miller et al., 2011; Levin & Greenwood, 2011). This is to further suggest that helping previously disadvantaged students, particularly black students who are underprepared for the demands of academic writing at tertiary level becomes an important undertaking. AR assisted me in this regard because there are five steps to take which helped make changes and plan for the future. The first step involves identifying the problem and why I want to change it. Secondly, I planned to make action towards my enquiry and have approaches that allowed me to address my broader research question. Thirdly, I collected data which I then analysed. Lastly, I planned for the future and make changes to my classroom practice. By doing so, I evaluate the impact of my strategy in order to ensure validity, by participating in and sharing the results of my work with others, as well as reflect on the value of my investigation for student academic writing (Brydon-Miller et al., 2011; Levin & Greenwood, 2011). As a result, my study draws on an AR methodology that includes in-depth interviews, qualitative questionnaires and document analysis in order to gain a more nuanced understanding of the advantages of digital storytelling at an academic institution in the Western Cape. Data collection is the process of systematically gathering and measuring relevant information in order to answer a certain research question or test hypotheses and then evaluate the outcome thereafter (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). By using various instruments, I triangulated my results to ensure validity/confirmatory support in my research as I worked from multiple perspectives and resources of research. From this stage, I wish to discuss the instruments of choice for my study.

I begin my discussion by first looking at document analysis.

1.7.1 Document Analysis (textual and discourse analysis)

Document analysis is a type of qualitative research tool where printed or electronic documents are systematically analysed and interpreted by a researcher. This analysis is conducted in order to gain understanding, meaning and elicit knowledge (Bowen, 2009). For this study then, document analysis is one of the three reliable methods which will allow me to understand the concept of digital storytelling. In order to understand this concept, I analysed fifteen student essays. These documents allowed me to gain an understanding of the ways that the course is aligned to student writing skills and the impact of traditional teaching methods on essay writing.

Following document analysis, I will now discuss interviews.

1.7.2 Interviews

According to (Creswell & Creswell, 2017), interviews are face to face interactions which are useful when participants can provide historical information about the area of research. In this case, the information I gathered pertained to student writing and the ways in which digital storytelling impedes or strengthens academic writing at university. I interviewed three lecturers from two different departments in order to understand the impact of digital storytelling on academic writing.

The last instrument I discuss following interviews are questionnaires.

1.7.3 Questionnaires

Qualitative questionnaires can be defined as structured and self-administered interviews (Mouton, 2003). They allow the researcher to control the line of questioning and draw useful information from the participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). In this regard, the qualitative questionnaires allowed me to unpack student perceptions of digital storytelling in relation to academic writing.

1.8 Research Site and sample

I conducted my fieldwork at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) in the Western Cape province of South Africa. Firstly, I teach at this institution and thus I envisage

that my study will contribute towards institutional debates on digital storytelling in relation to the advantages it holds for first-year ESL students. My intention is to draw on student records to determine their different linguistic and socio-economic resource profiles. My principal aim is to understand who our students are and shed light on the possible literacy practices that they bring into the institution. The sample that I used is purposeful sampling. While there are two types of sampling: random sampling for quantitative research and purposeful sampling for qualitative research, I used the latter for my qualitative study. The reason why I chose such sampling is that these individuals are relevant to the study and they have experience in the area of study (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The sample for the research consisted of 40 first-year students who are at CPUT as well as three of their lecturers who teach academic writing.

I am inclined to believe that the sample is a convenient sample, as working closely with both the students and the lecturers gives me ready access to them. Furthermore, this is also purposeful as it challenges my own teaching of academic literacy. This is also in keeping with Action Research (AR) in that I can conduct interviews with both students and lecturers and have questionnaires for the students. Most importantly, I participated in the research and collaborated in and with both students and lecturers in discovering the advantages of digital storytelling in academic writing. My sample allowed me to understand students' experience of digital storytelling on the programme and to further get a sense of the challenges students face, how they deal with the challenges and the resources that the university or faculty will provide. Lecturers provided an understanding of students' academic writing skills which can inform changes that can be made to assist them in the genre.

1.9 Significance of the study

Since universities mostly rely on academic writing to assess students, it is important that students are able to meet the demands of academic writing. Research, however, reveals that students, especially ESL speakers, experience academic writing difficulties. This is especially the case since the kind of students entering universities are not the traditional types of students in that they have not been adequately prepared for university (Lillis, 2001).

1.10 Limitations

To begin the study, I set the following limitations:

i. The study is limited to 40 student participants in the IT department because of time constraints and the convenience of having access to those students.

ii. The lecturer interviews are limited to lecturers who have experience in both academic writing and using digital storytelling in academic writing and since the lecturers in the IT department do not have experience in digital storytelling, I had to interview lecturers outside the department.

iii. I have been limited to action research (AR) since there are no lecturers in the IT department who used digital storytelling in academic writing. I also felt that AR was relevant for me as a lecturer in the department because I also want to improve my own teaching of academic writing skills.

iv. The methods are limited to document analysis, questionnaires and interviews because of time constraints as well as the aims and objectives of this research.

1.11 Ethical Considerations

In order to conduct qualitative or experimental research, there are ethical issues that I needed to consider (Burgess, 2005). Each type of method that is used has ethical issues and dilemmas. According to the Oxford dictionary, ethics "[relate] to morals [and] rules of conduct" (Burgess, 2005, p. 1). It is clear that morals relate to the way we act which, for researchers, is important whenever we conduct research. Before I started my fieldwork, I requested permission from the University of the Western Cape authority to conduct the research. Then followed by permission from The Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) and the Head of the Information Technology (IT) Department where I conducted my research. Then I also requested consent from the first year student participants who would participate in my research. Then the lecturers who partook in my study also needed to give their signed consent for the interviews that I conducted with them. While obtaining consent from the various participants, it was imperative that I disclose the nature of the research and ensure their safety and confidentiality during and after their participation in my research. That is, the identity and dignity of each participant must be protected and therefore be kept anonymous. Furthermore, I treated all matters and information gathered with utmost respect and ensured anonymity of participants' views so that the students and lecturers do not feel uncomfortable or worried about negative consequences of the interviews, questionnaires and documentation. During this process, I also informed the participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time they wish if they are uncomfortable. Then at the end of the transcription of my research findings, the participants may request a copy of the research document once the research has been transcribed and completed. This is to ensure clarity of interviews and to ensure that I have not misquoted or distorted the information given by participants before the final submission of the research.

1.12 Outline of Chapters

Chapter 1

This chapter presents the background to writing challenges that first year students experience. In this chapter I also present the problem statement, rationale for my study, and research aims and objectives. I also introduce the research questions; introduce my theoretical framework; and research design and methodology. Herein I also introduce the research site and sample; significance of the study; set limitations for the study; consider ethics; and outline the Chapters for the study.

Chapter 2

In this Chapter I present a detailed review of literature which speaks to academic writing and the use of digital storytelling as a scaffold for struggling writers. I do this by firstly by presenting a critical overview of operational concepts such as academic writing which speaks to students' writing struggles and I critically analyse the academic writing model. I then look at the academic writing models; identity, voice and agency; and critical pedagogy. I also delve into the theoretical underpinnings for my study: The New Literacies Studies (NLS). Under my theoretical underpinnings, I also elaborate on semiotics and multimodality which give reasoning as to why I believe the use of digital storytelling can help first year students improve their academic writing.

Chapter 3

In this chapter I present a description of my research methodology and design. This includes Action Research; research site; population and sampling; data collection instruments and ethical considerations before carrying out the research. I further look at reflexivity and validity. Furthermore, I discuss the reason for the choice of my instruments, as to how and why they relate to each SRQ, and the suitability of each research instrument.

Chapter 4

In this Chapter, I present and analyse data findings using themes and sub-thematic categories. The data is taken from three data collection instruments: document analysis, student questionnaires and lecturer interviews.

Chapter 5

Chapter five is a detailed discussion of data finings that were presented and analysed in Chapter four. I proceed apace with my discussions by combining the themes developed and analysed in Chapter four with literature reviewed in Chapter two.

Chapter 6

In the last Chapter I re-examine and revisit my research aims and objectives and provide an overview of my study findings. I also provide a summary of the Chapters in the thesis; limitations for the study; and provide recommendations and recommendations for future studies.

1.13 Conclusion

In this Chapter I have presented the background to my study. I then proceeded with a problem statement and rationale for my study. I also introduced the research aims and objectives; followed by the research questions. I also offered the theoretical framework; research design and methodological framework for the study. I then illustrated the significance of the study; set limitations for the study and consider ethics for conducting the research. Lastly, I provide an outline of the Chapters.

CHAPTER 2: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

I propose to use the following literature review as an awareness building exercise, which I believe will help me focus on academic writing and the challenges students face in this genre. These include language problems that they encounter especially since they are English second language speakers. Secondly, I will look at genres such as fairytales to explain how prediction of text is important, as well as how we need to break away from tradition of prediction in order to allow students a voice within the academic writing genre. This alternative way of looking at academic writing will lead us to the university discourse and how the first year student is introduced to academic writing. In order to understand the university discourse, I will look at the three study models, which are central to it. They are the Study Skills Model (SSM), Academic Socialization Model (ASM) and the Academic Literacies Model (ALM). The former of the two models look at the traditional way that academic writing has been taught, which has been problematic for first year students because some, especially, the second language English speakers, struggle to adapt to the demands of academic writing genre. That is why the ALM is an alternative way of teaching academic writing and together with ASM, it considers the social practices of the learner who previously had to adapt to the academic language and practice without much scaffolding.

In light of the above, I will look at the theoretical underpinnings of The New Literacies Studies (NLS). This genre does not look at literacy in the traditional sense of reading and writing but looks at the multifaceted view of literacy and further incorporates student social practices to help with academic writing. In addition, as well as in keeping with the New Literacies Studies and the proposed concept of multiliteracies, I explore student identity, voice and agency.

2.2 Academic Writing

The following section focuses on academic writing, how it has been taught traditionally. In addition, this section explores the struggles that students encounter with the traditional teaching and learning methods. Following which I look at how oral the oral tradition of folktales can offer a possible solution to the academic writing challenges students face. This alternative, coupled with fairytales, leads me to look at the theoretical underpinnings of the study: The New Literacy Studies, which borrows from the theory of semiotics and multimodality. These theoretical underpinnings thus lead me to the use of digital storytelling as a pedagogic tool

which can be employed to assist struggling writers to not only be cognizant of the structure of an essay, but also be aware of their own voice and agency and ultimately gaining their confidence in their writing ability.

2.2.1 How is academic writing taught?

The ability to be grammatically correct and have syntactic cohesion has been strongly linked with academic writing ability (Clarence, 2010; McKenna, 2010) despite the argument that academic writing is multifaceted because it contains critical thinking skills, expository writing and argument (Ohler, 2006). This is to suggest that, students' writing abilities have been mainly based on their language skills – the ability to construct grammatically correct sentences and use language that is deemed suitable for academia. Opposing such a position, Clarence (2010) suggests that looking at language as the primary means to determine academic writing excellence is generic and we should challenge such conventions because students are viewed as incompetent if they cannot live up to the conventional ways in which language is used in academics. This is because academic writing is multifaceted as it contains various skills such as critical thinking skills; expository writing and argument (McKenna, 2010; Ohler, 2006). (Boughey, 2008, 2013) illustrates further, that students who are English second language (ESL) speakers are deemed unprepared for academics and ultimately are set up for failure upon entering a tertiary institution. In addition to unpreparedness, McKenna (2010) illustrates that ESL students feel like they do not have a voice that can be listened to by others and thus lack confidence in their academic writing abilities. McKenna (2010) argues further that academic writing about 'cracking the code' of a particular discipline where students are expected to use appropriate practices in order to succeed in academic writing. However, students, particularly ESL students, struggle to crack the code to academic writing. This observation suggests that we need to challenge conventional language uses and view language as more than grammar and syntax but rather view it as social practice, which presents itself as discourse (Clarence, 2010).

2.2.2 An alternative fairytale world

Before we look at academic writing and its nature, we need to understand language and the role it plays in genre interpretation. The genre that we will look at first is that of fairytales and later, I will illustrate how the language used in this genre allows people to interpret it and predict its

structure and ending. Similarly, I believe that the idea of genre interpretation and prediction will lend itself to academic writing discourse.

In today's society, people are able to recognise and predict texts because of the language that is used in them. For example, if we look at fairytales, we know that the structure of a fairytale usually entails a princess who needs to get married, she is usually in distress and should to be rescued by a prince; in the end, the two live happily ever after. Such texts and genres have been accepted as the generic form of a fairytale, subsequently, it is seen as natural, transparent and accessible to everyone (Clarence, 2010; Pinar Sanz & Moya Guijarro, 2016). Through genres such as fairytales then, we can make two crucial observations: firstly, we can look at the nature of language which can be applied to all texts, and secondly, our ability to recognize these texts and predict their development (Clarence, 2010; Pinar Sanz & Moya Guijarro, 2016).

To demonstrate the above voiced observation, Clarence (2010) and Pinar Sanz and Moya Guijarro (2016) illustrate Babette Cole's now-classical revisionist fairytale. In the tale we are introduced to a princess who has come of age and whose mother, the Queen, forces her to find a suitor. The princess, called Smartypants, gives her possible suitors tasks which they must complete in order to win her hand in marriage (Cole & Thomas, 1986). Such tasks include asking Prince Compost to stop slugs eating her garden and challenge Prince Pelvis to a roller disco marathon (Cole & Thomas, 1986). In the story, the names of the characters are attributes that each character has and this shows the power of language and how naming possessions and people gives us ideas about their character and social context. After all the princes failed at their tasks, Princess Smartypants thought that she would not have to marry, that is, until she met Prince Swashbuckle, who managed to complete all the tasks of her respective suitors (Cole & Thomas, 1986). Upon completing all the tasks, Princess Smartypants gave Prince Swashbuckle a kiss and he turned into a frog and left the palace in a hurry. When the other princes heard what happened to Prince Swashbuckle, they did not want to marry Princess Smartypants and she lived happily ever after (Cole & Thomas, 1986).

Through the use of humour in this would be classic fairytale, Clarence shows how language has been used to shape an "alternative" to the conventional fairytale (Clarence, 2010). Various authors suggest that the story of Princess Smartypants challenges the traditional stereotypes of fairytales (Pinar Sanz & Moya Guijarro, 2016; Shanks, 2008; Siddall, 1997). This non-

traditional plot not only breaks literary traditions and norms but also develops critical thinking skills and vocabulary among other features (Pinar Sanz & Moya Guijarro, 2016). By having such incongruities, this post-modern fairytale allows the reader to recognize that there is nothing "normal" about the story (Clarence, 2010). That is because the background knowledge and assumptions we have about traditional fairytales are usually predictable and stereotypical (Pinar Sanz & Moya Guijarro, 2016). More important than breaking stereotypes is the observation that language should be understood as social practice or "discourse" (Clarence, 2010; Pinar Sanz & Moya Guijarro, 2016).

Kress (1998) defines discourse as statements that are organised systematically and give expression to the meanings and values of a system or institution. Ultimately, language as discourse is integrally linked to social power, relationships, attitudes, beliefs and values which are embedded in the language used. From this observation of language as discourse, Clarence (2010) declares that there is no such thing as an innocent language. Therefore, language as discourse illustrates its ability to shape and reshape the way that we view and conceptualize the world. Ultimately, language is what shapes the way society is ordered rather than merely reflecting on this order (Clarence, 2010). In this regard then, Cole's tale gives us a different representation of the world from the more familiar, traditional genre. It represents different sets of values, in this case about gender relationships and stereotypes which in turn, position the reader in different ways in relation to the text.

2.2.3 Recognizing and predicting text

Through Cole's fairytale we can make an assumption about language, and that is, if people use language habitually, then they will be able to easily recognise certain texts, based on the kind of language used, and further make predictions about the structure of the text, such as we have found with the familiar genre, fairytales (Clarence, 2010; Pinar Sanz & Moya Guijarro, 2016). Similarly, if a particular language is used regularly, then people will eventually see the values and norms represented by that language as natural rather than a social construct (Clarence, 2010). In the same way, people are able to recognise the subversion of the genre and can see that conventions are challenged, broken or changed. This is because they are able to recognise the traditional fairytale and the language that is used, because without the knowledge of the traditional fairytale language, they would not be able to make inferences and find humour in the changed fairytale. We find humour in Cole's tale because of its incongruities with

traditional fairytales (Pinar Sanz & Moya Guijarro, 2016). From this observation, it is clear that understanding the background of fairytales goes beyond language and grammar but illustrates the values and attitudes that come with the text (Clarence, 2010). It is at this point that I explore this concept of fairytales in greater depth by probing further and looking at fairytales and academic writing.

2.2.4 Fairytales and academic writing

Having looked at fairytales and the language that is used, there is a vital question which arises from this observation: What does all this have to do with academic writing challenges faced by students? (Clarence, 2010). While the fairytale example might seem distant from academic writing, it isn't. This is because we have observed the nature of language and concluded that language plays a role of recognition and prediction in any text type, including academic writing. From this observation we can perhaps get a greater understanding of "the language problem" students face (Clarence, 2010, p. 34).

2.2.5 University discourses and the first year student

When students enter university, they are faced with a number of institutional discourses, that is, the institutional practices and activities (Archer, 2012; Boughey, 2008, 2013; Clarence, 2010; J. Gee & Gee, 2007; Lea & Street, 1998, 2006). Additionally, students are introduced to academic standards and types of knowledge, what counts as knowledge and how knowledge is transmitted and constructed. Institutional discourses include what is said and done in lectures and tutorials, university statements and documents as well as textbooks. Much of this discourse, however, is invisible to the incoming student and they need to learn the culture of the institution that they are registered (Archer, 2012; Boughey, 2008, 2013; Clarence, 2010; J. Gee & Gee, 2007; Lea & Street, 1998, 2006). Subsequently, much of the institutional discourse needs to be learnt and at the forefront of that learning process lies "the language problem". That is, students need to interpret texts with which they engage and eventually learn the patterns of texts in tertiary institutions. Just like the fairytale, students must learn expectation or prediction of such texts (Clarence, 2010). This can be done firstly, by reading and understanding text within specific disciplines. Secondly, know the linguistic features and patterns of such texts and more importantly, understand the values and attitudes surrounding these texts Thirdly, and most importantly, if students have never encountered certain texts, it will be hard for them to predict such texts, therefore it is of paramount importance that instructions are explicit for the students

so that they can understand better (Clarence, 2010) Subsequently, it is important to provide students with "epistemological access", that is, knowledge and what it means in that particular subject because students tend to get confused about the kind of knowledge they are meant to engage with and understand (Clarence, 2010).

In this regard, Gee and Gee (2007) suggests that there are two types of discourse: primary and secondary discourse. He further explores the relationship between the two. Discourse (as opposed to discourse which is language in use), is "a socially accepted association among ways of using language, other symbolic expressions and 'artifacts' of thinking, feeling, believing, valuing, and acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or social network" (J. Gee & Gee, 2007; J. P. Gee, 2015). Primary Discourse is acquired in 'face-to-face communication with intimates', within the family in the native language and is used to indicate 'our membership within a particular local community' (J. P. Gee, 2015). Then Secondary Discourses 'involve, by definition, interaction with people with whom one is not 'intimate' (with whom one cannot assume lots of shared knowledge and experience) or they involve interactions where one is being 'formal'. Secondary Discourses are used in schools, national media and in many social, financial and government agencies (J. Gee & Gee, 2007; J. P. Gee, 2015). It is the relationship between primary and secondary Discourses that help us to understand the varying experiences that incoming students have of the university (Clarence, 2010).

2.2.6 "The language problem" revisited

It is clear that students do not have a language problem, that is grammar and syntax, but language problems: disciplinary discourses and knowledge bases (Clarence, 2010). Therefore, it is important that the academic staff need to fully understand the language problem themselves so that they can be facilitated accordingly.

In order to tackle the challenge of student writing I examine these three models, namely: the study skills model, academic socialisation model and academic literacies model.

2.2.7 Struggling writers

In addition to language issues, there are different types of students who experience writing struggles. Therefore, for all intents and purposes of this research, I will highlight three types of

student writers, who can benefit from the affordances that digital storytelling offers. The first type of writer is the one that has no problem starting an essay but does not revise their writing for grammatical and language errors. The second type of writer needs assistance with prewriting activities such planning and drafting the essay and further has difficulty starting the essay task given to them. Additionally, the writer takes a long time to complete the essay or does not complete it at all, that is, unless he has a small window with which to complete the assignment. The third type of writer has sufficient and creative ideas that she shares with the class and the teacher during the prewriting activity. However, this writer struggles to include details in their writing and opts for summarising main points in a few sentences; there is no development or unfolding of events (Sylvester & Greenidge, 2009). At this juncture, I illustrate the academic writing models which will serve as an introduction to teaching methods that are useful and those which are not.

2.3 The academic writing models

In the following section, I will illustrate the two types of academic literacy models – the Autonomous Model and the New Literacy Studies (Ahearn, 2001, 2010; Lea & Street, 1998, 2006; Street, 2004). Before I illustrate the different types of models which were in place to help teach academic writing, I will briefly dwell on the academic writing context and then illustrate each model and the significance of each, which will later be relevant for the multimodal digital storytelling and how it can enhance student writing, given the current student academic writing context. As mentioned above, students have difficulty in writing in the university context. Their issues are mainly centered on academic writing and the challenges this genre poses for them. That universities have diverse students in various academic contexts, both nationally and globally (Lea & Street, 1998, 2006; Lillis, 2001; McKenna, 2010; Thesen & Van Pletzen, 2006) is beyond any refute. Lillis (2001) illustrates that the types of students that enter university are unlike the traditional students who previously entered university. The previous students had the academic knowledge and advantage to cope with university. However, In the UK, for example, the non-traditional students who gain access to higher education institutions has increased as access to higher education institutions is no longer for the privileged few. Such diverse students come from diverse social, economic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Lillis, 2001). Similarly, Lea and Street (1998; 2006) in their research in London, also found that such diverse students, especially those who come from linguistic minority communities may experience a greater difficulty in writing and being able to master academic discourse.

As for South Africa, the shift in the political sphere in the past two decades has changed the characteristics of higher education as the previously disadvantaged students now have access to higher education (Boughey, 2008, 2013; McKenna, 2010; Thesen & Van Pletzen, 2006). Thus similar to the aforementioned context of the UK, these new types of students do not possess adequate academic writing skills which is largely attributed to the type of poor schooling they have had as a result of the legacy of apartheid (Thesen & Pletzen, 2006). Such students, usually have English as a Second Language (ESL) or what is now termed English First Additional Language (FAL) in the primary and secondary school (Veriava, Thom, & Hodgson, 2017, p. 209). The ESL students are then socialised into the academic culture that they are not otherwise familiar with and English being the second or additional language (Thesen & Van Pletzen, 2006; Veriava et al., 2017), they struggle to meet academic demands. Such demands include testing of their epistemological knowledge, which is done through writing essays.

Lea and Street (1998, 2006), among others suggest that the models that cater for and teach academic writing, are inadequate. He explains the two main categories of models: the autonomous and the ideological. The autonomous model is likened to the Study Skills Model (SSM), while the ideological model has two similar but distinct categories: Academic Socialisation Model (ASM) and the Academic Literacies Model (ALM). In the following section, I will explore each model and illustrate its significance in the changing sphere of higher education and the implications thereof for student academic writing.

2.3.1 Autonomous vs ideological models

Considering the challenges that students face in institutions of higher education pertaining to academic writing, the way that it has been taught in previous years needs to be restructured in order to accommodate the diverse students. Various researchers find that traditional academic writing courses tend to focus on structure and sequence (Ahearn, 2001, 2010; Janks, 2012; Lea & Street, 1998, 2006; Street & Street, 1984). This technical academic writing model is referred to as the autonomous model as it treats reading and writing merely as a set of mechanical skills that are adequate for academic writing (Ahearn, 2001, 2010; Janks, 2012; Lea & Street, 1998, 2006; Street & Street, 1984). Ahearn postulates that autonomous model is referred from a technical perspective and such a perspective is independent of the social context within which literacy, reading or writing, exists (Ahearn, 2001, p. 127). To put it in simple terms, the

autonomous model within the academic sphere exists within academic writing courses. Janks (2012, p. 1) illustrates that such academic writing has the propensity to focus mainly on academic context or discipline. This is to suggest that they focus on mainly writing conventions and structure, as well as sequence in language. Consequently, the autonomous model assumes that language and grammar are adequate for academic writing success. In order to understand the autonomous model, I will explain how it operates through the category referred to as the study skills model (Ahearn, 2001, 2010; Janks, 2012; Lea & Street, 1998, 2006; Street & Street, 1984), which I will later explore in greater detail.

In contrast to what I have discussed in the section above, the ideological model views reading and writing as more than generic grammatical skills. Rather, this model refers to literacy as social practice. This means that students do not merely learn literacy skills at tertiary level, but that they already possess literacy skills from their culture, social setting and different genres (Lea & Street, 1998, 2006). Consequently, the academic writing literacy practices can thus be viewed as practices that are associated with different communities (Lea & Street, 1998, 2006). This approach to academic writing challenges the long standing autonomous model by shifting the focus from a skills based model, but to a more inclusive model to understand the way that students write and their literacy within the academic context (Lea & Street, 1998, 2006). According to Ahearn (2001, 2010)this ideological mode focuses on the activities, events, and ideological constructs associated with particular manifestations of literacy.

Following this shift from autonomous to ideological models of literacy, The New London Group, a group of academics concerned with the development of a new approach to literacy in both pedagogy and learning, suggest that education goes beyond the classroom (Cazden et al., 1996). Generally, education has the fundamental purpose of ensuring that all students can eventually be active participants in the public, economic and community spheres (Cazden et al., 1996). Thus, language and literacy pedagogy has a role to ensure that both teaching and learning can facilitate the students' needs, which go beyond the classroom (Ahearn, 2001, 2010; Cazden et al., 1996). Consequently, in keeping with the students' needs, the New London Group, suggest a new approach to literacy which is more ideological in nature. Such an approach is referred to as "multiliteracies" (Ahearn, 2001; Cazden et al., 1996; Lea & Street, 1998, 2006; Street, 2004).

According to the New London Group authors, multiliteracies overcome the limitations of traditional approaches by emphasizing how negotiating the multiple linguistic and cultural differences in our society is central to the pragmatics of the working, civic and private lives of students (Cazden et al., 1996). Consequently, the through multiliteracies approach to pedagogy; students can achieve the two main goals for literacy learning. That is to firstly, create access to the evolving language of work, power, and community, and secondly, to foster the critical engagement necessary for them to design their social futures and achieves success through fulfilling employment (Cazden et al., 1996). Thus literacy cannot be restricted to the traditional definition, but needs to accommodate the increasingly global societies which are diverse, multicultural as well as multilingual (Cazden et al., 1996).

In order to fully understand the shift from the autonomous to ideological model, I will look at three literacy models that have been used over the year to understand and facilitate literacy practices in the educational context. The first model falls within the autonomous category which I spoke about earlier, that is, the study skills model (SSM). The second model is the academic socialisation skills model (ASM), which is a cross over between the autonomous and ideological model of literacy. The third model is the academic literacies model (ALM). This model is a part of the ideological approach to literacies. While these models can be defined separately, they are not mutually exclusive but rather, they overlap (Lea & Street, 2006, p. 369). The following section, will thus define each literacy model separately.

2.3.2 The Study Skills Model (SSM)

As the name implies, this approach to academic writing focuses on the core skills that students need to succeed at university. For this reason, there is a dominant focus on teaching students formal features of language such as sentence structure, grammar and punctuation (Lea & Street, 1998, 2006). It also assumes that students can transfer their knowledge of writing and literacy unproblematically from one context to another. This model also views literacy and writing as primarily cognitive skills which are individually based (Lea & Street, 1998, 2006; Street, 2004; Street & Street, 1984). The concern with the use of written language is at surface level and does not really consider the context within which the language is used. Further, the model assumes that students can transfer knowledge of writing and literacy from one context to another without any problems (Lea & Street, 2006; Lillis, 2001). Therefore, student identities and their multiple literacies are viewed as problematic and thus "non-traditional" students, who

are not proficient in English, will be perceived as lacking the necessary academic writing skills solely because of their limited English language proficiency. While this model has dominated curriculum and institutional practices in schools and universities, it is a deficit model because it ignores the identities of EAL students and views writing as a skill based on students' linguistic ability (Lillis, 2001). For this reason, there was a shift towards the second approach to academic writing, that is, the Academic Socialization Model.

2.3.3 Academic Socialisation Model (ASM)

After the SSM model, the academic socialisation model (ASM) deals with students' acculturation into disciplinary and subject-based discourse and genres. Students acquire the ways of talking, writing, thinking, and using literacy that typified members of a disciplinary or subject area community (Lea & Street, 2006, p. 369). This model further assumes that disciplinary discourses and genres are relatively stable and, once students have learned and understood the ground rules of a particular academic discourse, they are able to reproduce it unproblematically (Lea & Street, 2006; Lillis, 2001). The academic socialization model recognises that subject areas and disciplines use different genres and discourses to construct knowledge in particular ways. This model is associated with the growth in constructivism and situated learning as organising frames, as well as with work in the field of sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, and genre theory (Lea & Street, 2006).

2.3.4 The Academic Literacies Model (ALM)

The Academic Literacy Model (ALM) is concerned with meaning making, identity, power and authority, and foregrounds the institutional nature of what counts as knowledge in any particular academic context. It is similar in many ways to the academic socialization model, except that it views the processes involved in acquiring appropriate and effective uses of literacy as more complex, dynamic, nuanced, situated, and involving both epistemological issues and social processes, including power relations among people, institutions and social identities (Lea & Street, 2006, p. 369).

The ALM draws on both the SSM and ASM but goes further than the academic socialization model in paying particular attention to the relationship of power, and identity that are implicit in the use of literacy practices within specific institutional settings (Lea & Street, 1998, 2006). This model of literacy does not view literacy practices as residing entirely in disciplinary and

subject-based communities, but examines how literacy practices from other institutions such as business, government and university are implicated in what students need to learn and do (Lea & Street, 2006, p. 370). Thus the concept of literacy as practice and is further concerned with what goes on beyond the classroom; fits into the New London Group's concept of multiliteracies (Cazden et al., 1996). The academic literacies model then, is influenced by social and critical linguistics and recent critiques of sociocultural theory (Cazden et al., 1996; Lea & Street, 2006)Further, the academic literacies models emphasises a theory of learning that foregrounds power, identity, and agency in the role of language in the learning process (Cazden et al., 1996; Lea & Street, 2006). According to Ahearn (2001), language, whether it is spoken or written, is extricable embedded networks of sociocultural relations thus implying that language goes beyond the classroom.

The academic literacies model is thus pivotal in academic writing because it is understandable that literacy is no longer a set of reading and writing skills but rather students' social, cultural and linguistic practices they bring with them when thee enter institutions of higher education. Thus it is important to not only teach students writing skills that cater for the institutions' needs, but also skills that cater for the student so that student identities are considered, thus empowering them. In order to empower students, their voice and agency need to be considered within the academic writing discipline.

The following section then, will look at student voice and agency within academic literacies.

2.4 Identity, Voice and Agency

Having looked at language and literacy within the academic sphere, researchers such as Street and The New London Group have established that literacy goes beyond the classroom and literacy is embedded in the social context and vice versa. Thus it is imperative to look at literacy as more than skills that need to be acquired but rather language as social action (Ahearn, 2001). Therefore, when looking at language and literacy, Street, among others, has alluded to the idea of student identity and how students come to classrooms with their own identities which have been shaped by their various societies. Additionally, it is important to allow the students to gain confidence and have voice and agency in their academic writing. The following section then, will explore agency, as foregrounded by the three literacy models: the study skills model, the academic socialisation model and the academic literacies models.

2.4.1 Identity

As foregrounded above by the new literacies studies, language is regarded as a social action, a cultural resource and a set of sociocultural practices (Ahearn, 2001). This implies that language, whether it is spoken or written, is inextricably embedded within various social and cultural relations thus implying that discourse both shapes and is shaped by society (Ahearn, 2001; McKinney & Norton, 2008). Such an assertion of literacy then takes us back to the users of language, particularly language learners. According to McKinney and Norton (2008), learner identity is not only in language and literacy education, but is also influenced by sociocultural factors rather than psychological factors. Thus identity is not static. Rather, it is dynamic, multiple and a site of struggle (McKinney & Norton, 2008). Seeing as though identity is socially and culturally embedded, the language learner is located in the social, political, cultural and historical context (Ahearn, 2001; McKinney & Norton, 2008). Subsequently, language and identity go hand in hand and thus is one is addressing identity, they also need to address the identities of those using that language. As McKinney and Norton (2008) state, educators interested in identity, language, and learning are interested in language as social practice, through which relationships are defined, negotiated, and resisted. Further drawing on French sociologists, Bourdieu, speech cannot be understood apart from the person who speaks, and that the person who speaks cannot be understood apart from the larger networks of social relationships (McKinney & Norton, 2008).

As mentioned in my discussions above, many of the students who go to institutions of higher education are from diverse backgrounds. Such students are usually English Second Language (ESL) learners or have English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Their various identities, then are different from the dominant traditional identity of university students (Lillis, 2001; McKinney & Norton, 2008; Street, 2004) and thus it is imperative that their voices are heard. According to Bourdieu, there are inequalities for different types of speakers. He defines the redress of such inequalities as "the right to speech" or "the power to impose reception" (McKinney & Norton, 2008, p. 127).

2.4.2 Voice

In addition to identity, voice is very important in language education. The current education system is detrimental to student voices and ultimately agency. Various researchers, particularly in language education, call for reform within education, However, there has been little move

or advancement towards hearing student voices. As a result, students are unable to think critically, among other things.

Globally, the lack of student voices is a big issue. For example, in Japan, students who learn English as a Foreign Language (EFL) struggle to have a voice because they are not invited to speak, produce or participate in class. In Japan, students are described as silent, passive, disengaged are taught in a teacher centered manner. Such a teaching environment seldom encourages students. As there is little expectation from students and students remain mentally, emotionally, and physically disengaged (Murphey, Falout, Elwood, & Hood, 2009, p. 5). Thus education in such a context does not empower students. According to McKinney and Norton (2008, p. 194), "language is worth what those who speak it are worth" and "the dominant usage is the usage of the dominant class". This statement implies that if students are not allowed an identity and a voice, then language is worthless. Thus the aim of education and more specifically, language education in this context is to allow student identity and voice to manifest within the educational context.

2.4.3 Agency

Agency is the ability to act. There is, however, a difference between an agent and an actor. An actor is a person whose actions are rule governed or rule orientated, whereas an agent is a person engaged in the exercise of power in the sense of the ability to bring about effects and to reconstitute the world (Ahearn, 2001). Therefore, within the same person we can find both actor and agent. To further elaborate on the definition of agency, Ahearn (2001), asserts that scholars often fail to recognize that the particular ways in which they conceive agency have implications for the understanding of personhood, causality, action and intention. Agency therefore deserves "deeper consideration and more extensive theoretical elaboration" (Ahearn, 2001, p. 112). Researchers suggest that agency arose from a social, political, and cultural dynamics of a particular place and time (Ahearn, 2001; McKinney & Norton, 2008; Murphey et al., 2009). So what of agency in the context of academic literacies? Murphey et al. (2009) suggests that language learning diminishes its power and promise for promoting voice and agency in our teachers and students alike. This suggests that students struggle to have a voice and to exercise their voice within the academic context. As foregrounded, by the New Literacies Studies, education goes beyond the classroom and where there is lack of voice and agency, there is lack of power for those whose voices are diminished.

In the following section then, I will look at critical pedagogy and how it can aid students to have voice and agency.

2.5 Critical Theory / Pedagogy

As I have mentioned earlier, the current system diminishes its power and promise for promoting voice and agency in our teachers and students alike (Murphey et al., 2009). Our current system of teaching and learning has resulted in our students' inability to read and write because it is: a system of teaching and learning which looks upon getting through exams as its primary goal; denial of space and initiative for thinking, emotional engagement, response and reaction in the language classroom; socialization into a process of reading and writing that rewards correct grammar and comprehension instead of individual response, expressive use of language and tentativeness in thinking; and a normative orientation to testing and assessment which ignores the qualitative aspects of reading and writing processes (Murphey et al., 2009). According to Sivasubramaniam (2013), second language researchers, as well as teachers, in the rationalist/positivist tradition, believe that language learning is a closure focused task aimed at producing determinate/fixed meanings/outcomes. This modernist assumption suggests that language learning is inadequate in that it views language as: a closed system; a cognitive deficit deposit; and a negation of intrinsic meaning signifying -a disavowal of subjectivity. In Japan, we have learned that there is a dominant educational paradigm that stifles communication, forcing learners into silence in EFL classrooms across Japan. In this *one-size-fits-all education*, regardless of their interests, preferences, abilities, or learning goals, students are taken through their primary and secondary education with the same classroom cohort, teaching methods, textbooks, and tests (Murphey et al., 2009). Consequently, teachers stick to textbooks, lecturing on the finer points of grammar, involving little communication amongst the students for developing communicative competence (Murphey, et al., 2009). Students are thus demotivated with this teaching method and prefer a more active class. The aim then is to increasingly incorporate student voice to develop their agency.

Freire (1985), among others, note that one function of education is to cultivate conformity, and he took umbrage with the "banking" system in education - where students receive deposits of knowledge from the teacher - the teacher is the transmitter, producer, authority, and agent, and students must deny their independence and submit in order to be successfully educated (Freire, 1985; Giroux, 2007; Murphey et al., 2009, p. 3).

While teacher has good intentions, such an approach to education is also counterproductive as it has little value beyond filling the learner with knowledge. With no room for dialogue, student voices are silent and therefore powerless. Freire (1985) and Giroux (2007) have criticized education that prevents students from participating in the daily discourses that construct educational practices. Since we have established that students are demotivated to read and write, the on-going discussion further serves to explain the likely consequences of our students' incapacity to read the world. If students read and write just to pass exams and graduate, it is unlikely that they will appreciate what they read and write (McKinney & Norton; 2008). Therefore, the focus on education needs to shift from outcomes orientated, to student centered where their voice and identity is not diminished, but rather are encouraged to practice agency.

Based on research conducted in Japan, students generally voiced a "plea for more practical, interactive, and communicative pedagogy" (Murphey et al., 2009, p. 7). EFL students wanted more communication and less grammar. Students generally want to communicate more when they are learning English rather than having grammar. Instead of being caught and held, student interest is excluded from education as antithetical learning. When student interest is dropped, negative experiences are incurred, including loss of self-confidence and motivation, that further influenced future learning experiences for the worse (Murphey et al., 2009, p. 14). Therefore, we and our students believe that greater consistency and integration in EFL education would promote the quality and continuity of learning.

In order to address student and teacher needs, Freire (1985) Freire and Giroux (2007) advocated a revolutionary pedagogy called "critical pedagogy" – a pedagogy of shared critical reflection, with suppressed knowledge liberated through dialogues whereby teacher and students assume authority and agency in a process of mutual development. Since such a dialectical educational system is based on the knowledge of both students and the teacher, it *Invites* student voice as well as that of the educator. According to Murphey et al. (2009) "teachers can encourage students to develop their own 'voice' in the new language by embedding language in meaningful activity. McKinney and Norton (2008), suggest that it is important to open up the way for pedagogies that are critical and that respond to different forms of diversity in an unprecedented way.

Therefore, in order to look at the ways that pedagogy can aid student voice and agency, especially in their academic writing, I will look at the theoretical underpinnings of the New Literacy Studies, followed by semiotics and multimodality. These theoretical underpinnings, I deeply believe, will foreground digital storytelling as a tool to help improve students' academic writing.

2.6 Theoretical underpinnings: New Literacy Studies (NLS)

The following section will focus on the theoretical underpinnings for the study. It will further rationalize the use of digital storytelling to enhance academic writing. NLS or the London Group challenges the view of literacy as a set of reading and writing skills that are neutral and easily transferrable to any context, that is, the primacy of literacy as being about structure and grammar without taking context into consideration (J. Gee & Gee, 2007; Kelder, 1996). For this reason, researchers such as Street began to view literacy as a social practice because different societies define literacy in various ways which consequently results in different literacy practices (J. Gee & Gee, 2007; Lea & Street, 2006; Street, Pahl, & Rowsell, 2009). If we consider literacy to be a social practice, it means that institutions of higher education have to consider what the student brings with them to university, that is, their social practices which are embedded in their literacy practices (Lea & Street, 2006) or as Leibowitz (2009) suggests, understanding what students carry in their suitcases when they enter university.

This New Literacy Studies (NLS) approach then, takes into consideration the socio-cultural nature of literacy and suggests that literacy cannot be separated from its social context (Street, 1984). This means that people's literacy practices are embedded in their immediate social context. Therefore, while educational institutions define literacy based on their own terms and understanding, they need to consider the different social backgrounds of students that enter higher education institutions because these students are not the "traditional" students that had previously entered university, but they still have something to offer academic literacy (J. Gee & Gee, 2007; Lea & Street, 1998, 2006; Lillis, 2001). The London Group, among other key theorists in NLS, suggest that students can engage in different modes for meaning making because this is what informs multiliteracies (Street, 1984) and went further to develop a framework for pedagogy of multiliteracies. As a result, this framework lends itself to semiotics and multimodalities referred to as semiotic features that can be a combination of linguistic, visual, auditory, gestural and spatial modes (Lea & Street, 2006).

2.6.1 Semiotics

The following section will focus on semiotics and how it can facilitate the use of multimodal devices and thus digital storytelling. We live in a society and society is inevitably what shapes and molds our identity. Meaning is invariably constructed in the social space in which we reside (Hodge & Kress, 1988). Advances in technology and globalization have changed our way of reading and meaning-making (Kress, 1998). Consequently, the way we view academic writing has also been impacted because academic writing is a social practice and not only takes student identity into consideration but also acknowledges that students engage with a range of types of texts in different ways; across various modes (Boughey, 2008, 2013). Furthermore, traditional academic writing approaches need to include the use of different modes of communication to teach literacy such as visual, linguistic and spatial modes (Rowsell & Walsh, 2011). Since semiotics include a variety of these features which students use in everyday life, Rowsell and Walsch (2011) suggest that semiotics should form a part of their social practices.

What then is semiotics? Simply articulated semiotics is the study of signs. The Swiss Linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure, coined the term semiotics as a science which studies the life of signs within a society (Danesi, 2004). A sign then, is anything that represents something else (Danesi, 2004). In today's world and cultural norms, examples of signs include "colors, pictures, vocal sounds, hand gestures, and the like to refer to things" (Danesi, 2004, p. 4). Then the thing to which the sign refers to is known as a referent. There are two types of referents: the concrete and the ideal (Danesi, 2004). The concrete referent refers to the actual physical thing that a word stands for and the ideal or abstract refers to the figurative meaning of a word. In order to fully understand the concept of semiotics I will make a demonstration using the word "red". As a sign, it is merely a colour, however, as a referent it stands for a traffic light (concrete) or danger (abstract) (Danesi, 2004). To take the concept of semiotics further, Danesi (2004) suggests that there are three dimensions to a sign: the physical, the concept and the culturally conditioned form. If we were to demonstrate these dimensions using the colour red once again we could say the physical is the sound 'r-e-d' which elicits the concept that it is a colour while culturally we have been conditioned to believe that it stands for danger or love. A sign therefore, can now be defined as "something that stands to somebody for something else in some respect or capacity" (Danesi, 2004).

Even though Ferdinand de Saussure coined the term semiotics, it was St. Augustine (AD 354-

430), before him, who defined signs as words, gestures and symbols made by humans, in other words, they can also be referred to as conventional signs (Danesi, 2004). Nowadays, we distinguish these signs as verbal and non-verbal. Verbal signs constitute of words and expressions while non-verbal signs include drawings and gestures (Danesi, 2004). Through signs, St. Augustine placed emphasis on the need for signs as he strongly suggested that they serve a psychological need which allows humans to encode (give meaning to) and ultimately remember the world (Danesi, 2004). Signs allow thinking to be fluid and routine. Then understanding signs is based on social conventions and the way individuals react to signs (Danesi,2004).

In addition to semiotics, the philosopher, Charles Peirce, believed that signs must be interpreted by people (Cobley, 2005) and thus introduced the concept of semiosis. Semiosis is the brain's capacity to produce and understand signs (Chandler, 2007; Cobley, 2005; Danesi, 2004)The activity that creates the knowledge is then referred to as representation, that is, the use of signs such as pictures and sounds in order to portray something that is perceived or imagined in some sort of physical way. Charles Peirce, referred to the physical form of representation as representamen which literally means "that which does the representing" (Danesi, 2004, p. 34). Then the thing that is represented is called the object of the representation. Subsequently, the potential meanings that can be extracted from the representation is called the interpretant. In other words, the idea that a person has about a sign is the interpretant (Chandler, 2007; Cobley, 2005; Danesi, 2004). In turn, the whole process of deciding the meaning is interpretation (Chandler, 2007; Cobley, 2005)To illustrate this point an example of representamen could be a photograph or a film based on a certain concept, for example, the colour red. The colour red then would be the object and the representamen will determine the interpretation of the object. If, for example, you see the colour red in a representamen such as a photograph, the interpretation of the colour will differ from when you say, watch a movie which represents the colour red. Further, different social contexts will also play a role in the way we view the colour red. For example: in one context, the colour could stand for love or passion. However, in another context; the colour is associated with danger.

From this concept of semiosis, we can gather that interpretation is crucial to the human condition because even children interpret the world through signs (Chandler, 2007; Cobley, 2005; Danesi, 2004). By so doing, they make psychological connections between their bodies

and minds to the world out there. Interpretation then becomes the "conceptual glue" that allows connection between the psychological and the physical as well as allows people to think, plan and negotiate meaning (Danesi, 2004, p. 340).

Having reviewed and made an attempt an understand the basics of semiotics, I have gathered that it is a crucial starting point for my study because students live in a world filled with images, signs and symbols which they interpret on a daily basis. Kress (1998) suggests that we can use semiotic resources to negotiate meaning and use them as a means to represent ourselves and others. By expressing ourselves through semiotics, it thus stands to reason that the study of semiotics is an entry point into my broader field of study, that is, using the multimodal genre of digital storytelling to harness students' academic writing skills. Digital storytelling deals with using images, sounds and words which can scaffold academic writing for students. As a result, digital storytelling is one such mode that makes use of a range of multimodal resources such as audio, visual and textual to negotiate meaning.

2.6.2. Multimodality

The following section will focus on multimodality. Semiotics is an entry point to multimodality and the use thereof in my study. As established, semiotics are verbal and non-verbal signs, that is language and images; and semiosis are the meanings and interpretations we give to those signs and images (Chandler, 2007; Cobley, 2005; Danesi, 2004). Stated in straightforward terms, semiotics is a meaning making activity which can afford students the opportunity to use oral language, writing and reading, as well as other literacy related skills which involve using communication to make and understand text (Love, 2004). Traditionally, western culture has expressed itself through monomodality – the use of language, music, gesture, image and even texture (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001). However, Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) believe that students should be afforded the opportunity to make multiple meanings from different signs so they developed the multimodal theory of communication in which the focus in on practices and the use of resources, especially in relation to meaning (Chandler, 2007; Cobley, 2005; Danesi, 2004; Love, 2004). This multimodal theory of communication moves away from traditional meaning making where meaning is only made once because there are many ways to make meaning (Kress, 1998; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001). Various researchers believe that writing is visual in nature and academic writing is no exception especially when we consider the way that communication has changed in recent years (Archer, 2012; Lea & Street, 1998, 2006;

Rowsell & Walsh, 2011; Street, 2004). Therefore, we need to consider using multimodal forms in academic writing. Multimodality is the use of images, visual, audio and spatial modes (Archer, 2012; Lea & Street, 1998, 2006; Rowsell & Walsh, 2011; Street, 2004). Modes are meaning-making resources that are socially shaped and operate well in digital environments (Archer, 2006, 2012). This is because there has been a shift in semiotics from the audio to visual and digital environments work best at providing a visual platform for different modes (Archer, 2006, 2012).

Susan Love (2004) explores the use of multimodality to make meaning when she explores an alternative style of pedagogy, that is, anchored instruction. This instruction uses multimodality to help students acquire and use knowledge – epistemological access. In her research, Love notes that we must distinguish between merely acquiring knowledge of concepts and developing useful knowledge. This is especially important since school knowledge is inert knowledge – it can be learnt and regurgitated – however, cannot help the learner with problem solving (Love, 2004). Taking into consideration, my teaching experience and lecturing undergraduate students, I have found this to be the case hence students struggle with academic writing in their formative years of tertiary education. In light of this, I believe that it is important for students not only to acquire knowledge, but also use it critically in any academic context. Therefore, it is very important to separate what is being learnt from how it is being learnt. Traditionally, students have been passive receivers of inert school knowledge. However, educational discourse needs to change to accommodate the changing social discourse which is invariably shaped by and changed by semiotics (Kress, 2013). Consequently, this means that knowledge needs to make meaning for the student and in turn, the student should also make their own meaning from their knowledge.

While my research is not predicated wholly on anchored instruction, I use it to show how multimodality works within the context of literacy and the development thereof. This is because the main aim of anchored instruction allows students to solve problems and become independent thinkers and learners by developing their skills and confidence through the use of multimodality (Love, 2004). Subsequently, this instruction challenges conventional ways of acquiring and using knowledge, similar to digital storytelling which we will look at later in this chapter. What makes multimodality an interesting way to tackle knowledge, in this case the knowledge of writing academically, is that it affords students the opportunity to use oral

language, reading, writing and other literacy related skills as they involve communication which allows students to produce and understand text (Love, 2004).

In order to understand multimodality better, it is important to understand the design of Kress and Van Leeuwen's multimodal theory of communication which mostly focuses on using resources, especially those related to meaning making (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001). As aforementioned, these researchers look at multimodal resource that are available to make multiple meaning through various signs at various levels using any mode within cultures. This multiple expression of meaning moved away from the traditional notion that meaning is made once (Love, 2004). I believe this multimodal view is crucial at tertiary level because meaning is shaped by students' cultural background and in turn, students also create their own meaning. Therefore, if they are able to express various meanings then surely they can exercise a sense of confidence in that their knowledge or argument in essay is valid and perhaps gain their voice through their sense of confidence. According to the multimodality theory of communication, the social, cultural, and historical production of communication are taken into consideration when meaning is made (Love, 2004). From such design factors it is important to look at how different semiotic forms incorporate or include multiple skills and where necessary, technologies are used for multiple purposes.

To further explore the concept of design in multimodality, a team of researchers, The New London Group, related this concept to literacy learning. During their discussions in 1996, this research team illustrated the social context of learning and the impact social change could have on literacy and its pedagogy (Love, 2004). Subsequently, they developed a multiliteracies approach to language and literacy which focuses modes of representation in a much broader sense than just language. They believed that the multiliteracies approach was relevant to language and meaning making because they are both resources that are constantly made in ways that are gradually becoming multimodal. This is because language is continually shaped by new forms of communication media (Love, 2004). Considering the multimodal nature of language, students are able to continually make and remake meaning through multimodal resources (Love, 2004). I believe that the meaning students make, is not simply due to their own understanding, but also for their educator being confident in the student's understanding and application of knowledge.

2.6.2.1 The concept of design

The following section will illustrate the importance of design. According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001), design is a way to understand discourses within a communication situation which involves a deliberate choice of modes (form) for representation and how that representation will be framed. Simply stated, design acts as a "blueprint" for using available resources of information (Love, 2004). In the pedagogy of multiliteracies, any semiotic activity that includes the use of language for producing or understanding text is considered part of design. Therefore, teachers and students can be considered designer as the teacher instructs while the students use language to express meaning.

At the tertiary level, when we look at design within the concept of multimodality, it is also important to look at discourse. According to Love (2004) discourses are ways of knowing reality and are shaped in a social context and discourses should appropriate to people within their particular context (Love, 2004). J Gee and Gee (2007) and J. P. Gee, (2015) define discourse as a socially accepted association among ways of using language, other symbolic expressions and 'artifacts' of thinking, feeling, believing, valuing, and acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or social network". In the academic context, I will look at discourse in two parts but will focus on the latter. The first discourse is teaching in a particular context. As an educator, my discourse is focused on teaching academic writing to undergraduate students. Secondly, discourse refers to the student who engages in multiple discourses such as reading and writing and the processes involved in learning how to read and write within the academic context (Love, 2004).

In order to aid meaning making in discourse, the concept of design in multimodality has six elements: linguistic, visual audio, gestural, spatial and multimodal. The linguistic element is the most common as it is linked to literacy and writing which makes sense since traditional essay writing is about using words to make meaning (Love, 2004). According to the New London Group, the linguistic element involves delivery, modality, transivity (choice of words), vocabulary and metaphor amongst others. The following elements are the visual audio, gestural, spatial and multimodals which are increasingly becoming important as forms of meaning making (Love, 2004). Visual design includes images, layouts or screen formats. Audio design involves music and sound effects while behaviour and body language are part of gestural design. Spatial design incorporates the environment or architectural spaces. Because

multimodal design includes patterns of connections between the other modes and connects all the other design forms dynamically, it is considered the most significant (Love, 2004).

Having looked at multimodality so far, I am inclined to believe that modes of representation are not going to take away from traditional essay writing. If anything, they enrich it and allow students to express themselves confidently and with understanding of concepts they have learnt. Furthermore, if multimodality is practiced within a digital environment then it can thrive. In keeping with the points I have mentioned so far, I propose the use of digital storytelling in academic writing with a view to enhancing the academic writing skills of my undergraduate students.

2.7 Digital Storytelling

Storytelling has been a part of oral tradition for most cultures (McKinney & Norton, 2008). The following section will show the impact of storytelling on student academic progress and how technology can aid in that impact. Before I look at digital storytelling, I will illustrate the importance of storytelling within the academic context.

2.7.1 Folklore in Language education

In order to understand the use of storytelling in academia, I wish to first look at folktales which later justify my use of digital storytelling. Folktales are traditional stories which have been passed on to different generations through word of mouth (Lwin, 2015; Sivasubramaniam, 2013). That is before the writing systems were developed. According to Sivasubramaniam (2013), folktales are good stories and powerful social, cultural and moral expressions. Folktales are easily accessible to students with limited language abilities - however, they are not limited to such students. That is because Folktales typically include distinctive linguistic and phonological or grammatical patterns that create interesting rhythms. As mentioned earlier, student identities, voices and agency are silenced in the classroom which impacts their confidence and ability to write academically. Therefore, folklores, if adequately used, can assist with not only student writing but also their reading. It has further been established through various authors, particularly those who have proposed the new literacy studies approach to literacy that a mechanical acquisition of reading and writing skills is not enough because literacy goes beyond grammar and sentence structure (Archer, 2012; Boughey, 2013; Clarence, 2010; J. Gee & Gee, 2007; Lea & Street, 1998, 2006; Morgan, 2014; Sivasubramaniam, 2013). In fact, Sivasubramaniam (2013) suggests that mechanical acquisition of reading and writing

skills point to a lack of capacity in order for them to understand how their world is affected by their reading and writing, and in turn, how their reading and writing affect their world. Therefore, to merely focus on grammar skills, robs students of the ability to read the world, because after all, education is about helping the student to cope in the broader society (Ahearn, 2001; McKinney & Norton, 2008; Sivasubramaniam, 2013). If students are unable to read the world, they are illiterate because they are unable to make decisions for themselves or they are unable to participate in the process of educational and social change. In short, this illiteracy strikes at the roots of democracy Sivasubramaniam (2013).

In order to encourage a democratic and liberatory change, we need to promote students' experience ad response, assume immediacy and primacy. Sivasubramaniam (2013) suggests that for promotion of student experience, we need pedagogies that will educate students to assert their rights and responsibilities. Consequently, students should view their reading and writing as acts of empowerment. This is fundamental to the fostering of their voice, agency and identity. Folktales therefore, can aid in this process. Folktales have the efficacy to nurture critical consciousness and expressive responsiveness, especially when delivered through pedagogies of response because students should not be passive (Sivasubramaniam, 2013).
Folktales have the following unique characteristics:

- They are good stories that can set off students' curiosity for sustained reading
- They are powerful cultural, social and moral expressions
- They can serve as indices of indigenous knowledge
- They are promoters of creativity and hypothetical thought (Sivasubramaniam, 2013, p. 64)

Through these characteristics, we can understand language. The socially aligned use of language featured in folktales articulate the social nature of human beings and functions as an instrument to create meanings anew and afresh. Folktales present language as an open/expansive, fluid and indeterminate construct, which is well placed to express human activity in all its variety and illogic. We therefore need to move from a transmission to a transformative model of teaching where students can collaborate and participate. As a result, students feel motivated to take risks with their learning as they propose meaning and knowledge.

According to Sivasubramaniam (2013) there are two metaphors that can be used for how students learn. The acquisition metaphor (AM) and participatory metaphor (PM). The AM views knowledge as a commodity which is accumulated by the learner to construe as a repository where the learner hoards the commodity. The PM brings social aspects to the fore and deals with incomparable wide range of possibly relevant aspects. PM necessitates a shift in 'language structure to language use in context, and to the issues of affiliation and belonging. Sivasubramaniam (2013) further elaborates that since folktales abound in semiotic resource such as expressions of appreciation, empathy, understanding, and a host of other meaning-making activities that can represent the students' creative and critical thought – they offer opportunities for meaning construction (Sivasubramaniam, 2013). A folktale, then, is not just a self-referential closed circuit but is connected in meaningful and revelatory ways with the world of experience outside of its text. Folktales uphold a constructivist account of language, which is then understood as representational and therefore, figurative; dialogical and therefore, expansive; immanent and therefore, semiotic. The use of 'expressivist-process approach' - shifts students away from the rigid mechanical structure of language, and initiates their emotional involvement with language and to exploit it for creative and imaginative use (Sivasubramaniam, 2013).

Text structure activities

Folktales have the ability to do a number of things for students

1. it helps them understand rhetoric and that stories have a beginning, middle and end (this is significant because any literary piece- whether it's an essay, oral or otherwise should ideally have a beginning, episode/development and end).
2. Students also develop an awareness for textual organisation and the variety of ways it can play out
3. Students can also develop awareness for problem and solution scenarios as well as cause and effect. By talking about problem and solution as well as cause and effect patterns, students can have a sensitivity for rhetorical maturity and thus developing their voice and agency

Subsequently, folktales allow students to develop awareness for higher thinking order skills in that it provides good practice for them in comparison-contrast application, note-taking, drawing inferences and most importantly attempting connections between literature and real life situations. Folktales can challenge students to use their imaginative/figurative language to network strong assertions as weaker assertions and weaker assertions as strong ones.

The strategies discussed so far are ideal for exploiting the scope and space that folktales provide for nurturing students' voice, agency and identity through a semiotic mediation of the texts they encounter. This is to suggest that human beings can create signs to direct/control their behaviour instead of being controlled by their environments.

Given the nature of folktales to invoke a variety of uses within pedagogy, it stands to reason that the digital story, told orally, and mediated by technology is suitable for student voice, agency and identity. Further, it can scaffold student academic writing.

2.7.2 Defining Digital Storytelling

The following section will define digital storytelling, illustrate various uses thereof and show how it can help scaffold student academic writing in light of the 21st century need for critical pedagogy. Robin (2008) illustrates that students use emerging technology on a regular basis. Thus there is a need for educators to integrate such technology so that the tech-savvy youth can benefit from the resources available to them. Further, the use of technology illustrates can bring about the best in how teachers teach and how learners learn (Robin, 2008; Smeda et al., 2014). Digital storytelling then, will illustrate the affordances technology and storytelling can have in academic writing of/for undergraduate students. Taking into consideration what digital storytelling proposes to do, that is, allowing students to construct narrative using digital media, it can be argued that digital storytelling is a new form of teaching and learning (Kocaman-Karoglu, 2016).

Knowledge is transferred between different people and different cultures through storytelling. Digital storytelling then is storytelling made possible through the affordance of modern technology (Kocaman-Karoglu, 2016; Sylvester & Greenidge, 2009). That is, digital storytelling is a narrative that combines photos, videos and audio using the capabilities of digital media (Kocaman-Karoglu, 2016). Sylvester and Greenidge (2009) define digital stories as a multimedia text consisting of still images complimented by a narrated soundtrack to tell a story or present a documentary; sometimes video clips are embedded between images. There are three types of DST: the personal narrative, historical documentaries, and stories to inform or to instruct, with the most popular being the personal narrative (Kocaman-Karoglu, 2016). Firstly, the personal narrative has a narrator who tells a personal story or event which is usually centred around significant events that are emotionally charged by the author and have personal

meaning for both the author and the viewer (Gachago et al., 2014; Kocaman-Karoglu, 2016; Ohler, 2006; Smeda et al., 2014; Sylvester & Greenidge, 2009). Secondly, historical documentaries allow students to understand content and present it in an interesting manner to the viewer. Finally, stories which inform or instruct, on the other hand, allow students to effectively enhance their science learning motivation, problem-solving competence and learning achievements. As a result, digital storytelling has similar purposes to traditional writing but it opens up the possibilities for sense making and encouraging student voice. Therefore, creating digital stories acts as a motivator for students, thus they remain engaged throughout the project. Additionally, digital stories provide an alternative channel of expression for those students who struggle with writing traditional text. Using multimedia approach in classrooms helps students identify voice, confidence and structure in their writing.

2.7.3 Multiliteracies and digital storytelling

The term literacy has evolved over the years and does not only refer to reading and writing but also refers to knowledge and the ability to use technology such as computers, the software and hardware as well as audio and visual technological devices. Hence the New London Group created the term multiliteracies. There are four main categories of literacies within the term coined by The New London Group: technological literacy; visual literacy; media literacy and information literacy. Technological literacy refers to the skills and abilities to adequately use a computer. Visual literacy is one of the oldest literacies which was first defined by The International Visual Literacy Association in 1969 as vision-competencies that a human has which are also integrated with other sensory experiences (Sylvester & Greenidge, 2009). This definition suggests that visual literacy is about interpreting and decoding drawings and images. However, due to technological advancements, the term has evolved to include decoding of icons on the computer toolbar and navigating the web which is replete with images and also encoding multimedia projects (Sylvester & Greenidge, 2009). Media literacy is then defined as the necessary skill needed to access, evaluate and create messages in written and oral language, graphics and moving images and audio and music. Furthermore, media literacy acknowledges the role of media in society especially for self-expression in this democratic world (Sylvester & Greenidge, 2009). Information literacy then is the ability to find evaluate, analyse and synthesize information. Further to this, the development of World Wide Web has changed the availability, method, depth, quantity and at times the quality of the information. Consequently,

the internet has initiated critical reading skills which are not typically found in traditional texts because now readers have to analyse information sources before they use them.

2.7.4 Digital storytelling and the digital natives

Students in contemporary classrooms are undoubtedly first generation digital natives. The term digital natives suggest that they are fluent in the language of computers, the internet and video games as they are surrounded by computers, video games and cell phones to name a few (Lambert, 2013; Morgan, 2014; Ohler, 2006; Sylvester & Greenidge, 2009). Even though these students may struggle with academic writing, there are affordances that technology and the students' digital skills that can perhaps help them write better. At this juncture, I wish to pause and look at the background and structure of digital storytelling before going on to look at the link between digital storytelling and the affordances it can offer students who struggle with academic writing or writing in general.

2.7.5 Some background on digital storytelling

Digital storytelling involves the use of images, narration, music, modern cinematography, music and first person narration (Sylvester & Greenidge, 2009). In order to facilitate this type of storytelling, most computer operating systems offer free digital storytelling software such as Windows Movie Maker and Macintosh iMovie (Sylvester & Greenidge, 2009) which makes it easier for students to access software to make digital stories. In addition to their knowledge of computers and technology, using such readily available software will allow students to make digital stories anywhere and at any time if they have access to a computer.

According to Lambert (2013) and Sylvester and Greenidge (2009), creating an effective digital story is mainly based on seven combined elements. The first element is about the point of view. Digital storytelling allows the author to come closer to the audience through first person narration where they are able to express their persona experiences (Lambert, 2013; Sylvester & Greenidge, 2009). The second element is the dramatic question – conflict is set up from the beginning and will be developed in order to hold the viewer's attention. This technique is similar to traditional storytelling, the only difference being that the story is within a digital environment through the use of music, imagery and flashy transitions (Sylvester & Greenidge, 2009). The third element that Lambert talks about is emotional content where the stories evoke an emotion from the audience whether it is love, loneliness, confidence or vulnerability (Sylvester & Greenidge, 2009). The fourth element in a digital story is economy. This element

requires the storyteller to consciously economise the language they use in relation to the narrative (Lambert, 2013; Morgan, 2014; Sylvester & Greenidge, 2009). The narrator then has to be sensitive to the attentiveness of the viewing audience. The fifth element is pacing – the narrator must determine the rhythm of the story to sustain the interest of the audience (Sylvester & Greenidge, 2009). The gift of voice is the sixth element where the narrator uses various vocal elements such as pitch, inflection and timbre to narrate the story (Sylvester & Greenidge, 2009). Lastly, the use of music or soundtrack will help enhance the story and create an emotional response.

When students create these digital stories it is important to first start writing their story, they should use pen or pencil and paper or word processing functions on a computer which will later become a digitized voice-over narration (Lambert, 2013; Morgan, 2014; Ohler, 2006; Stripling, 2010; Sylvester & Greenidge, 2009). Next, images will be sketched into a storyboard which will complement the narrative. Following the use of the storyboard, students will number sections and paragraphs which correspond with the scenes on the storyboard. Afterwards, personal photographs, clip art and any type of graphic can be downloaded into a folder on a computer (Sylvester & Greenidge, 2009). In the process of collecting audio-visual media from the internet, students are required to cite or reference where they obtained the information in order to avoid plagiarism or violate any copyright laws (Sylvester & Greenidge, 2009). They can add citations at the end of their digital stories in their credits slides. Following this collection and planning phase, students must use video editing software to compile their digital stories into a movie. Music can be added in the stories, however, it is usually better to add music at the beginning and at the end of a digital story for novices (Sylvester & Greenidge, 2009). Lastly, the student should include a title frame and rolling credits at the end and add finishing touches to the production. The final step in the process is publishing the stories for the class to see (Lambert, 2013; Morgan, 2014; Ohler, 2006; Stripling, 2010; Sylvester & Greenidge, 2009). The various stages of digital storytelling deal with various aspects of academic writing such as research, argument and critical thinking because students are expected to conduct research in order to construct digital stories (Lambert, 2013; Morgan, 2014; Ohler, 2006; Smeda et al., 2014; Stripling, 2010; Sylvester & Greenidge, 2009). Additionally, students are also expected to think critically while constructing digital storytelling and further enhance academic skills such as digital searching, or oral and writing literacy.

2.7.6 Extending the writer's audience

The process of digital storytelling is important for novice student writers because they are able to extend their audience from teacher student (the student being the writer in traditional essay writing and the teacher being the audience or observer). Now, the students will face their classmates and will be more motivated to do their best work. Apart from publishing the work in class, the teacher can upload the digital stories on online platforms such as YouTube which will multiply the viewers and perhaps provide further motivation to students to do well knowing that their stories will be published on the internet (Sylvester & Greenidge, 2009).

2.7.7 Rationale for using Digital Storytelling

By using digital technology students are able to transform a one dimensional written essay which can be published and shared with a small, intimate audience or the world (Sylvester & Greenidge, 2009). This is because digital storytelling employs technology to construct narrative through the use of mediums such as photographs, voice-over narration, short videos, documentaries and are produced by the students (Lambert, 2013; Morgan, 2014; Ohler, 2006; Robin, 2008; Smeda et al., 2014; Stripling, 2010; Sylvester & Greenidge, 2009). Through the process of digital storytelling, struggling writers can improve their writing strategy as they are seldom good at strategic writing practices. Components of digital storytelling can help struggling writers reduce weaknesses in spelling and punctuation as they narrate their stories (Lambert, 2013; Morgan, 2014; Robin, 2008; Sylvester & Greenidge, 2009).Furthermore , the process of storyboarding facilitates the introduction of logic and sequence in their writing and reduces omissions and gaps that can be found in traditional essay drafts because the writer can be alert to such gaps in their writing and make necessary amendments before recording their narration (Sylvester & Greenidge, 2009).

Digital Storytelling can be also be seen as an instructional tool which can develop the students' knowledge when they are completing an assignment. Therefore, digital storytelling can counteract higher institutions' tendencies to subscribe to the notion of ESL learners as deficit and thus in need of a prescribed method to address their writing challenges. Digital storytelling can specifically be relevant in tutorial programmes on writing, changing writing consultants' perceptions and extended curriculum programmes which follow in a 'one size fits all' approach. In one size fits all programmes students might enter universities with established literacy practices and might feel pressured to 'unlearn' deep-rooted literacy practices. This unlearning might affect the social self and students could feel inadequate, and it could result in

dropout rates escalating in first-year programmes or universities unable to retain these students. Consequently, by gaining an understanding of the ways that digital storytelling can contribute towards positive student identities has positive implications for academic development and literacy programmes, tutorials and pedagogy at higher institutions. This is because digital storytelling is seen as a reflective activity that allows ordinary people and groups to speak out as digital storytelling allows people to use personal voice image and the social setting that is familiar to the person constructing the digital stories.

Further to above discussed views, in digital stories, the world is explained according to the point of view of the learner which encourages the student to gain self-confidence in their academic potential (Morgan, 2014; Ohler, 2006; Smeda et al., 2014). Digital storytelling allows student engagement in expository writing and media literacy tasks (Ohler, 2006; Gachago et al., 2014). Most importantly, digital storytelling creates a constructivist learning environment where learners can learn through a social dimension which can foster positive student identities, agency and voice. I believe that such confidence is pivotal in the process of learning to write because it allows the learner to build on their critical thinking skills, which is crucial in academics (Stripling, 2010). This is to suggest that, students who think critically about sources are able to improve their argument in academic essays.

2.7.8 Digital storytelling and the digital natives

Students in contemporary classrooms are undoubtedly first generation tech savvy digital natives (Morgan, 2014). The term digital natives suggest that they are fluent in the language of computers, the internet and video games as they are surrounded by computers, video games and cell phones to name a few (Sylvester & Greenidge, 2009). Tech savvy suggests that students are able to use technology effectively and manipulate it in the process (Morgan, 2014). Even though these students may struggle with academic writing, there are affordances that technology and the students' digital skills that can perhaps help them write better. But let us pause and look at the background and structure of digital storytelling before looking at the link between digital storytelling and the affordances it can offer students who struggle with academic writing or writing in general.

2.7.9 The different uses/contexts of digital storytelling: The uses/benefits of digital storytelling

I wish to present some of the benefits of digital storytelling as voiced by Oher (2006) in this section. Digital storytelling has the power to strengthen critical thinking skills, report writing skills and media literacy skills, among others in students. Ohler (2006) illustrates how the combination of photographs, music and narrative can be evocative, especially when crafted with care. In his description, Ohler (2006) narrates the story of a grade six student, Kim, who creates a digital story of how her parents went to the United States of America from rural China (Ohler, 2006, p. 44). In her narrative, Kim uses photographs and music to tell different aspects of her story. During somber times, she uses music which will accompany the story and the music becomes more upbeat when the story is how hard her parents work. While this story is about Kim's family move from China to America, the question remains: What does digital storytelling offer education? (Ohler, 2006).

While digital storytelling has been used a number of times for the purpose of telling persona stories and narratives, Ohler, among others, believe that digital storytelling has a great deal to offer academic writing. Even though digital stories are multimodal, the main emphasis is on the story that is being told. Subsequently, the medium of digital storytelling enhances students' skills in expository writing, media literacy and critical thinking, among others.

One of the main features of digital storytelling is that the story comes first. The multimodal medium, gives a voice to a number of students who do not fit in the usual academic mould (Ohler, 2006, p. 45). Even though digital stories require technology, the emphasis is placed on the power of the story rather than the power of technology. The emphasis of the story is seen in the practice that takes place before the final digital story is captured. This is by way of story mapping. Similar to mind mapping or preplanning of the final story or product, story mapping uses a storyboard which allows students to place their ideas for the order that their story should follow. A story map is a one-page diagram which shows how the most important elements of the story are incorporated into the flow of the overall narrative (Ohler, 2006, p. 45). The story map allows teachers to assess the strength of the story, while it is still in the planning stages so that they can challenge students to strengthen a weak story. There are many story mapping techniques that visually illustrate the beginning, middle and end of the story. A story diagram,

for example, visually outlines how a story moves through different elements from beginning to end and helps students visualize the progression of their stories (Ohler, 2006, p. 46).

Written and oral storytelling are important before the computerized presentation with images and sound. Even though the final digital story is media-based, writing is an essential component of this process and depending on the kid of writing the teacher wishes to focus on, the final product will be written in the format that the teacher so wishes, whether in bullet points or paragraphs.

Oral storytelling is a powerful way for students to develop their voices and to discover that events and details are essential to their stories (Ohler, 2006, p. 46). Oral presentation is also an important way to prepare for the future: as video becomes cheaper and easier to use, it will become more commonplace for students to appear on film as they narrate a digital presentation.

Creating a tie-in with academic skills:
As mentioned earlier, digital storytelling fosters students' skills in critical thinking, report writing as well as media literacy (Ohler, 2006, p. 47). Kim' story, for example, shows how digital stories can both be narrative and report writing. Further, content based subjects can combine critical thinking, report writing as well as narrative (Ohler, 2006). The following examples illustrate how digital stories can be used in combination with report writing.

At a university in Alaska, pre-service teachers used digital storytelling to illustrate their understanding of drug-resistant bacteria (Gachago et al., 2014). The teachers used voice-narration and still photographs to demonstrate the impact of medication on the bacteria. How they achieved the demonstration was by using a personal story of someone who was affected by these drug-resistant bacteria, also known as superbugs, despite getting treatment. The patient's story eventually showed – through scientific illustrations, data that supports the narrative and diagrams – the dangers of antibiotics.

The second digital story is from students at an elementary school in Oregon. Digital storytelling was used to illustrate the students' understanding of geometry circles. These students demonstrated their understanding of geometry circles by attempting to make a ball roll on beach sand, however, it ends up skidding along the sand rather than rolling. In their digital

story, the students use narrative and pictures to demonstrate their report writing skills, thus showing the impact or advantages of using digital storytelling in different contexts.

I wish to present some of the benefits of digital storytelling as voiced by Gachago et al. (2014) in this section. South Africa is a democratic country. However, there are still inequalities such as the digital divide which plagues many communities, not only in South Africa, but across the globe. Thus many communities have been marginalized as a result of lack of access to technological devices and tools (Gyabak & Godina, 2011). Nowadays, digital storytelling software is freely available thus making it more accessible and thus more viable in resource-poor environments (Gachago et al, 2014, p. 961**).** The article by Gachago et al. (2014), illustrates how digital storytelling can be used across different disciplines with both a qualitative and quantitative approach. The aim of the article is to understand student' perceptions of context-specific digital storytelling practices across various disciplines as well as student backgrounds (Gachago et al., 2014, p. 961) at a university of technology in South Africa.

The article illustrates how students produce digital stories across four disciplines: Architectural Technology, Industrial Design, Nursing and Food Technology in a resources poor university of technology in South Africa (Gachago et al., 2014, p. 962). The research conducted looks at Bourdieu's ideas of field, habitus and capital and Yosso's notion of 'community cultural wealth' (Gachago et al., 2014, p.962). These theories help us understand how students perceive digital storytelling as well as how the integration of storytelling into the curriculum can benefit students who come from diverse backgrounds. According to Bourdieu's notions of economic, cultural, social and symbolic capitals, the low academic and social achievement of disadvantaged students, such as Black-American learners, is due to these learners' lack of economic, cultural and social capital required for social mobility (Gachago et al., 2014, p. 964). The economic refers to monetary terms while cultural; Cultural capital refers to the mind and body and the long disposition of the two entities. This disposition includes access to knowledge, technology, educational qualifications and the reputation which is linked to cultural capital (Gachago et al., 2014, p. 964). Then the social capital refers to the resources one has based on their association or belonging to a group, the network and connection thereof. Similarly, Yosso suggests that students of colour struggle to create their own meaning or have agency because of cultural knowledge which is deemed valuable by dominant society and

which they might not possess as they are supposedly more passive. Consequently, Yosso proposes the concept of 'community cultural wealth' (Gachago et al., 2014, p. 965). This concept emphasizes valuing capitals that are useful to people of colour, even though they may not be valuable in the broader institution of schooling. The six forms of capital include:

1. Aspirational – maintaining hopes and dreams for the future
2. Navigational – manoeuvring through social institutions
3. Social – access to networks of people and community resources
4. Linguistic – validating learners' social and intellectual skills that are acquired by conversing in more than one language
5. Familial – cultural knowledge that is nurtured by kin that carry a sense of community history, memory and cultural intuition
6. Resistant – knowledge and skills fostered through oppositional behaviour that challenges inequality (Gachago et al., 2014, p. 965).

Of specific importance of this digital storytelling study is the learner's affinity to the tradition of storytelling in communities of colour. Further to this, one needs to differentiate between possessing the aforementioned capitals and activating them (Gachago et al., 2014, p. 965). Thus the study aims to show how digital storytelling activates students' capitals.

The use of digital storytelling allows students to learn with and not from technologies (Gachago et al., 2014). Digital storytelling has been used for producing stories with a personal content, emphasizing from first person narrative. As a replacement for traditional essay assignments, content based digital stories have proved to be a particularly suitable approach for teaching students from non-traditional educational backgrounds, that is, students for whom academic literacy and plagiarism are a challenge, due to the linguistic or cultural reason. It is suitable for those who have disengaged from classroom learning and struggle with more traditional assignments (Gachago et al., 2014, p. 963).

Even though digital storytelling is based on digitally-saturated contexts; digital storytelling has not reached 'around the world' due to the persistence of the digital divide (Gachago et al., 2014, p. 963). The digital divide describes the disparities in relation to access and training for technological resources, and also connotes the lapse of upward social mobility when those resources remain disconnected from disenfranchised populations. Norris associates the theory of technological diffusion to the digital divide by suggesting that those who have the resources,

skills and knowledge to adopt these new innovations at an early stage will eventually be ahead of the curve (Gyabak & Godina, 2011, p. 2236).

The following study conducted at a university of technology in South Africa shows how digital storytelling is used across four disciplines, namely: Interior Design and Architectural Technology (ArchTech), Nursing, Food Technology (FoodTech) and Design. The results of the study indicate that the backgrounds of the students enrolled in the different disciplines vary. A typical Design student for example, consisted of a white male who is under the age of 21, while a nursing student would typically be mature and over the age of thirty (Gachago et al., 2014, p. 969). This background information impacts on various factors such as: students' preparedness for higher education; conceptual development; approaches to learning; academic language proficiency; and digital literacy skills. In this regard, the study further revealed that the Design students had better access to and ability to use digital technology (digital natives) and needed less support for the development of their stories. The Nursing students, however needed more support in the use of digital devices as well as creating their digital stories (Gachago et al., 2014, p. 969).

Even though students came from various backgrounds and were impacted by various socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds, especially in a country like South Africa, where such factors directly impact the quality of schooling and academic preparedness for the digital storytelling project, the students were able to complete their digital stories. More importantly, they enjoyed the process rather than the product, which is the creation of their own digital story. For the Nursing black students, they expressed feelings of fear and lack of confidence in their ability to undertake the project. While a Design student was confident in their skills and ability due to their digital literacy skills. However, once the projects were completed and the students viewed their stories, they had a sense of pride as they had completed the task. The Nursing students consequently had more confidence which illustrates that the process was more important than the product (Gachago et al., 2014).

2.8 Conclusion

In conclusion, the array of theoretical issues and insights that I have garnered and presented in this chapter can provide the synergy and the focus that I would need to address those matters pertaining to my methodology and my research questions in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The following chapter addresses the methodological framework that was used in my investigation. There are ten sections in the research methodology. Firstly, I looked at the research questions and research objectives which have guided my study, which have been motivated by the various theoretical issues and insights that I have signposted and elaborated on in my Literature Review Chapter. In order to answer these research questions, I have decided to use a qualitative research methodology, which can provide me with the stimulus and synergy that I need to generate a deeper understanding of the phenomenon with which I will be able to answer my research questions. The other sections include the research methodology, research design, research site, population and sampling, data collection instruments, ethical considerations and procedures, reflexivity and validity, and finally, the conclusion.

3.2 Research questions and objectives

The following research highlights the writing difficulties undergraduate students face at university. In order to tackle their various writing challenges, I have proposed the use of digital storytelling in order to enhance the writing of first year undergraduate students. In order to explore the research topic, the following objectives are set out:

1. Elucidate current academic writing scaffolding in academic modules
2. Draw on the use of digital storytelling in a first-year undergraduate course.
3. Shed light on lecturers and students' perceptions of the ways digital storytelling impacts on first-year academic writing.
4. Highlight the implications of infusing multimodality into academic writing in this context.
5. Explore the ways first-year students' take on new writing practices and how these new practices are facilitated by the lecturer.

Following the objectives, I highlight the main question (MRQ) of this research study is: *To what extent can digital storytelling strengthen or impede the academic writing skills of English Second Language (ESL) first year students?* Then the following sub- research (SRQs) questions will underpin and answer the componential parts of my MRQ, which I believe are commensurate with the objectives of my study that I have discussed elsewhere:

1. How is academic writing scaffolding conducted in an academic module?
2. What are students' perceptions of digital storytelling in relation to academic writing skills?
3. What are lecturers' perceptions of digital storytelling in relation to the development of academic writing skills of first-year students?

In order to answer these SRQs, I need to conduct a qualitative study/research. In the following section I present and explain what motivated this choice.

3.3 Research Methodology

This chapter will take an informed look at qualitative research methods that helped me conduct fieldwork that attempts to answer my MRQ and SRQs. Freebody (2003), states that methodology provides a framework for research and contributes to educational knowledge, practice and policy. According to Creswell and Creswell (2017), qualitative research is one which takes place in a natural setting and where the participants mostly experience the issue or problem that is being researched. In my study, the participants are undergraduate students who experience writing difficulties at an institution of higher education. Creswell and Creswell (2017) further elaborates that the researcher is a key instrument in the research as they have to interpret what they see, hear and understand from their particular setting. Consequently, as the researcher, my aim is to understand and interpret the student writing needs. In order to reach such understanding as the researcher, there are various qualitative research tools that I can use to elaborate and interpret the writing of these undergraduate students. The qualitative methodologies that are included in qualitative research vary from case studies, to ethnography and action research (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). For the purpose of my research I believe that action research has been the most beneficial approach to use. Levin and Greenwood (2011) suggest that action research has transformative potential which integrates researchers with various stakeholders. As the researcher, I am not only bound to that role but I am also an educator in an institution of higher education which means that I am connected to various stakeholders that may not only participate in the research, but may greatly benefit from it. These stakeholders include the undergraduate students, the lecturers that teach academic writing skills and I. Therefore, by participating in this action research, I hope to create change and transformation in student academic writing as well as in my own approach and those of my fellow colleague's approach to teaching academic writing.

The following section illustrates my research design which is predicated on the key aspects of action research.

3.4 Research design

Action research identifies a problem or issue and looks at improvements to that problem or issue (Freebody, 2003). As mentioned earlier, I am dealing with undergraduate students who experience writing difficulties at an institution of higher education. As an academic literacy lecturer, I have a variety of students who have different linguistic backgrounds as many of them are not Home Language English speakers. Consequently, their writing difficulties do not merely stem from the inability to write, but also from the language barriers that they face when they enter an institution of higher education. In this respect then, action research is not only a means to address the writing needs but also the language or social issues that these students have, which may prevent them from succeeding in academic writing. Various researchers suggest that collaborative and cooperative work patterns need to be established (Avison, 1999; Freebody, 2003). Therefore, as the researcher, I must be part of the community that I am researching, I should further learn to understand it and the diverse needs of my students as well as my colleagues who teach academic writing skills. Since we have culturally (which also means linguistically) diverse students, whose needs change constantly, teacher education also needs to constantly change in order to meet the needs of these students. Additionally, Brydon -Miller (2011) suggest that action research requires participation and action which ultimately have to benefit society both politically and socially. In addition to social and political redress, my research will follow the five steps of action research which include: identifying the problem; having a plan of action; collecting data, analyzing the data then plan for the future. Johnson, as cited in Freebody (2003, p. 14), defines action research as:

> deliberate, solution-oriented investigation that is group or personally owned and conducted. It is characterized by spiraling cycles of problem identification, systematic data collection, reflection, analysis, data-driven action taken, and, finally, problem redefinition. The linking of the terms ‘action’ and ‘research’ highlights the essential features of this method: trying out ideas in practice as a means of increasing knowledge about and/or improving curriculum, teaching and learning.

Therefore, first and foremost, the problem that I have identified is the writing challenges that students face in an institution of higher education. I then planned the action to take for this research which includes using my data collection tools. Thirdly, the data collection tools I used

are document analysis, qualitative Questionnaires, as shown in figure 3.1 student *questionnaires* and interviews which contain both open and closed ended questions as shown in figure 3.2 Lecturer interview questions. I have used document analysis as a means of answering my first SRQ: How is academic writing scaffolding conducted in an academic module? I have also used questionnaires are used to answer the SRQ: What are students' perceptions of digital storytelling in relation to academic writing skills? Lastly, I have also used interviews to answer the SRQ: What are lecturers' perceptions of digital storytelling in relation to the development of academic writing skills of first-year students?

In order to understand my choice of research tools, I illustrate the objectives and the SRQs which address those objectives in the table below. column A shows the research objectives; column B demonstrates the SRQs that help address each objective; Column C, shows the research tools related to each SRQ.

Table 3. 1 Research Objectives, Research questions and Research tools

COLUMN A	**COLUMN B**	**COLUMN C**
Research Objectives	**Research Question**	**Research Tools**
1.Elucidate current academic writing scaffolding in academic modules	How is academic writing scaffolding conducted in an academic module?	Document analysis
2.Draw on the use of digital storytelling in a first-year undergraduate course.	What are students' perceptions of digital storytelling in relation to academic writing skills?	Student questionnaires and lecturer interviews
	What are lecturers' perceptions of digital storytelling in relation to the development of academic writing skills of first-year students?	
3.Shed light on lecturers and students' perceptions of the ways digital storytelling impacts on first-year academic writing.	What are students' perceptions of digital storytelling in relation to academic writing skills?	Student questionnaires and lecturer interviews
	What are lecturers' perceptions of digital storytelling in relation to the development of academic writing skills of first-year students?	
4.Highlight the implications of infusing multimodality into academic writing in this context.	What are students' perceptions of digital storytelling in relation to academic writing skills?	Student questionnaires and lecturer interviews
	What are lecturers' perceptions of digital storytelling in relation to the development of academic writing skills of first-year students?	

5.Explore the ways by which first-year students' take on new writing practices and how these new practices are facilitated by the lecturer.	What are students' perceptions of digital storytelling in relation to academic writing skills?	Student questionnaires and lecturer interviews
	What are lecturers' perceptions of digital storytelling in relation to the development of academic writing skills of first-year students?	

Following my research design, I now look at the research site which illustrates the place the data has been collected for the study.

3.5 Research site

The research site that I have used to conduct my fieldwork is an Information Technology (IT) Department at The Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) where the undergraduate students study. The reason for the use of this site is that it is convenient for me as a lecturer at this university and I thus have access to students and lecturers who are impacted by academic writing challenges. In addition to the IT Department, I have interviewed three lecturers: two in the Education Department and one in Architectural Design, who have experience in both student academic writing as well as using Digital Storytelling. Further to this, as a lecturer in the field of academic literacy, I also wish to improve my own teaching of academic writing and further assist students who struggle to write through the use of digital storytelling.

3.6 Population and sampling

For this section I will first lay out the definition of population and sampling and then explain my choice of population and sampling for my own research.

According to researchers, sampling should consist of a minimum of thirty participants which ensures adequate data collection (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). Additionally, the sampling should be purposive. When using purposively sampling, there are various strategies that one can employ. The first kind of strategy is a convenient sample. This is where the criteria for eligibility are posted and volunteers who meet these criteria will make up the sample. The second type of sampling strategy is the snowball. This is where people that have inside knowledge of eligible participant(s) connect them with the research project. Homogenous sampling is another technique to employ and consists of people who are very similar. Lastly, viable sampling includes participants who represent the full scope of a domain (McIntosh & Morse, 2015, p. 8).

For my qualitative research, I have decided to use purposive sampling which is convenient. According to researchers, participants in the research should have relevant experience in the research area (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; McIntosh & Morse, 2015). The sample I have used comprises 32 IT students; three lecturers for my questionnaires and interviews. Then given the sheer size of the population and consequently the essay size, I have selected fifteen student essays out of a class of 40 students to analyse. Out of the fifteen essays, I am presenting five in category one, high performing students; five into category 2: medium performing students, and five essays fall into the third category: low performing students. This is according to the essay marks.

My research participants initially consisted of 40 IT students who wrote essays and also completed the digital storytelling assignment. However, for my investigation, the student population was too large for analysis in the qualitative questionnaires, out of the 40 first year students, 32 students filled in the questionnaire that was distributed to them with the use of Google forms. As mentioned before, the questionnaire was designed to answer the SRQ: What are students' perceptions of digital storytelling in relation to academic writing skills? From these students, I have also taken fifteen essays which constituted my document analysis and also helped answer the SRQ: How is academic writing scaffolding conducted in academic module? The fifteen essays comprise of five essays that have high marks, five average essays and five lower standard essays.

In order to select samples for my interviews I looked at the requirements for sampling for interviews. Thus according to McIntosh and Morse (2015) sampling for interviews is purposive and thus participants for the interview are selected according to their experiences, perspectives, or expertise and not merely because of demographics which represent a larger population. By being purposive in my sampling, semi-structured interviews, I believed that these can optimize my findings. Therefore, to answer the SRQ: What are lecturers' perceptions of digital storytelling in relation to the development of academic writing skills of first-year students? I decided to interview lecturers who have experience with both academic writing for undergraduate students, as well as the use of digital storytelling within the academia. While I have used IT students for my questionnaire selection, I could not find lecturers who were both aware of academic writing, as well as digital storytelling. Therefore, I interviewed two

lecturers from the Education Department and one lecturer from Architectural Design department, all of whom are in the same university of technology. These lecturers were both aware of academic writing, as well as digital storytelling for the purposes of undergraduate student academic use and assessment.

The following section then will illustrate the data collection tools that were employed on the population and sampling.

3.7 Data Collection Instruments

The following section will first define the types of data collection instruments I have used. It will set out the parameters around each tool as well as the criteria for my selection of each tool. Once I have defined and set out the scope for each research tool that I have used in my research, I will illustrate how the features of each tool played out in my own research and how I tailored each tool to enhance my research and subsequently validate my SRQs as and ultimately my MRQ. To start off then, Creswell and Creswell (2017) states that data collection is a process where the researcher systematically gathers and measures relevant information in order to answer a certain research question or test hypotheses and then evaluate the outcome thereafter. There are a number of data collection tools that can be used. This research has used document analysis (textual and discourse analysis), qualitative questionnaires and interviews. By using multiple perspectives (triangulation) and resources in my research, I believe that triangulation helped validate my research claims.

3.7.1 Document analysis (textual and discourse analysis)

I propose to discuss in this section what document analysis entails in procedural terms and this, I believe, can serve as a justification for my decision to use it as a research instrument in my study.

3.7.1 Defining Document analysis

In qualitative research, documents are used as data sources (Bowen, 2009, p. 27). According to Bowen (2009), documents contain words or text and images that have been recorded without the intervention of the researcher. Atkinson and Coffey (2004) define documents as social facts which are produced, shared and used in socially organised ways. Bowen (2009) states that there are two main categories of documents: organizational and institutional. These categories may include the following types: advertisements, books, diaries, journals, newspapers, application

forms and scrapbooks to name a few. These types of documents may be used for systematic evaluation as part of a study.

Document analysis then is defined as a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents. These documents include both printed and electronic (computer-based and internet transmitted) material (Bowen, 2009). Document analysis yields data; this can be in the form of excerpts, quotations, or even entire passages (Bowen, 2009). This data is then organised into major themes categories, and case examples, specifically through content analysis. Most importantly, documents of all types can help the researcher uncover the meaning, develop understanding, and discover insights relevant to the research problem (Bowen, 2009).

3.7.1.1 Rationale for using document analysis

For my investigation, I have decided to use nine student essays, as mentioned before. These essays will consist of three top performing students, 3 average performing students and three low performing students, according to their marks. These documents were used in conjunction with other research methods, interviews and questionnaires for triangulation. According to Denzin (2017), triangulation is the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon. In order to have triangulation then, the researcher is expected to draw on multiple sources of evidence. By so doing, they may seek convergence and corroboration through the use of different data sources and methods which may include interviews and observation among others (Bowen, 2009). Through triangulation the researcher's findings will reduce the impact of potential biases that can exist in a single study. Thus in the scheme of my research, I have used document analysis as one of three methods to aid /facilitate triangulation.

Apart from facilitating triangulation, I believed that documents have their own specific uses. Thus in the following section, I discuss the specific uses of documents in research, the student essays that I have analysed, I believe can serve as a basis for my document analysis in light of the justification I have provided earlier in this chapter.

3.7.1.2 Specific uses of documents

There are five specific functions of documents:

Firstly, documents can provide data, on the context within which the research participants operate. In other words, the text can provide a context such as that of bearing witness to past

events, documents can provide background information as well as historical insight (Atkinson & Coffey, 2004; Bowen, 2009; Denzin, 2017). Such information and insight can help researchers understand the historical roots of specific issues and can indicate the conditions that impinge upon the phenomena currently under investigation. The researcher can use data drawn from documents, for example, to contextualize data collected during interviews. For my research then, student essays illustrate the conventional way that academic writing has been taught and how students respond to this conventional method of writing.

Secondly, the information contained in documents can suggest some questions that need to be asked and situations that need to be observed as part of the research. For example, document analysis can help generate new interview questions (Bowen, 2009). As part of my research, I have used the traditional essay writing method as impetus for interview questions asked to lecturers about the state of academic writing and how to assist students enhance this writing which has led me to propose digital storytelling.

Thirdly, documents provide supplementary research data. Information and insights derived from documents can be valuable additions to a knowledge base. In this use of documents, researchers can browse through catalogues and archives for documents to be analysed as part of the research process. University policies and memos written by participants may be used in document analysis. These documents are best used in conjunction with data collected from semi-structured interviews for example (Bowen, 2009). As mentioned before, student essays have been used in conjunction with interviews and questionnaires for triangulation.

Fourthly, documents can provide a means of tracking change and development (Bowen, 2009). If there are various drafts of a particular document and they are accessible, the researcher may compare them in order to identify changes.

Lastly, documents can be analysed as a way to verify findings or corroborate evidence from other sources. Sociologists tend to use document analysis to verify their findings and if evidence found in documents contradicts rather than corroborates, then further investigation should be done.

3.7.1.3 Advantages and limitations of document analysis

When documents are used in relation to other qualitative research methods, there are various advantages and disadvantages. Given this, I believe that it is necessary for me to discuss them at this juncture.

The advantages are as follows Bowen (2009, p. 31):

•*Efficient method:* document analysis is less time- consuming and therefore more efficient than other research methods. It requires data *selection*, instead of data *collection.*

• *Availability:* Many documents are in the public domain, especially since the advent of the Internet, and are obtainable without the author's permission.

•*Cost-effectiveness:* document analysis is less costly than other research methods and is often the method of choice when the collection of new data is not feasible. The data (contained in documents) have already been gathered; what remains is for the content and quality of the documents to be evaluated.

•*Lack of obtrusiveness and reactivity:* Documents are "unobtrusive" and "non-reactive" - that is, they are unaffected by the research process.

•*Stability:* The investigator's presence does not alter what is being studied.

• *Exactness:* The inclusion of exact names, references, and details of events makes documents advantageous in the research process

• *Coverage:* Documents provide broad coverage; they cover a long span of time, many events, and many settings.

Even though document analysis has advantages, I am aware at this juncture that it also has disadvantages such as the following:

• *Insufficient detai*l: Documents are produced for some purpose other than research; they are created independent of research agenda. Consequently, they do not provide sufficient detail to answer a research question.

• *Low retrievability:* Sometimes documents are not retrievable or retrievability is difficult an1d some documents may be blocked deliberately.

•*Biased selectivity:* an incomplete collection of documents suggests "biased selectivity".

3.7.1.4 Analysing documents

Document analysis is the process of skimming, which is a superficial examination, reading - which involves thorough examination of, and interpretation of documents (Bowen, 2009; Given, 2008). The process of analysis involves content as well as thematic analysis. Content analysis is defined as the process of organizing information into categories which are related to the central questions of the research (Bowen, 2009; Given, 2008). However, researchers such as Silverman (2000) suggest that content analysis obscures the processes of interpretation that turn talk into text. Therefore, it is important for the researcher to identify pertinent information and separate it from that which is not pertinent and by so doing; relevant and meaningful information may be obtained through content analysis.

Thematic analysis, on the other hand, is a form of pattern recognition within the data that contains emerging themes which become categories for analysis (Bowen, 2009; Given, 2008; Silverman, 2000). This is a more careful and more focused re-reading and review of the data. This is where the researcher looks more closely at the data that has been selected and performs coding and category construction. This coding and categories are based on the data's characteristics and they uncover the themes which are pertinent to a particular phenomenon. If there are predetermined codes, such as those found in other research methods, for example, an interview script, they may be used especially if document analysis is supplementary to other research methods which are employed in the study (Bowen, 2009). Therefore, themes and codes that are generated, serve to integrate data gathered by different methods. When the researcher selects and analyses data from documents, it is therefore important for them to be objective, that is, represent the research material fairly. Additionally, the researcher should be sensitive, that is, respond to subtle clues to meaning. Consequently, for my research I have analysed the nine student essays using content analysis and also thematic analysis, which I propose to discuss in detail in chapter 4.

3.7.1.5 Evaluating the evidence

When evaluating documents, researchers should consider the original purpose of the document, the reason it was produced and the audience it was intended for (Bowen, 2009). Further, researchers should not merely "lift" words from a passage and add it to their research. Rather,

they should establish the meaning of the document and its contribution to the issue being explored (Bowen, 2009).

Taking into consideration the use of documents, my particular research focused on using nine student essays which helped me understand the writing difficulties the first year students' experience. Additionally, I decided to answer the RSQ: How is academic writing scaffolding conducted in an academic module? The use of these documents, I believe is valuable because they are easily accessible and authentic and can further contribute to my study as documents are used in conjunction with other research methods: interviews and qualitative questionnaires.

After having discussed document analysis in the following section I present my second data collection tool: qualitative questionnaires.

3.7.2 Qualitative questionnaires

I propose to discuss in this section as to why I decided to use qualitative questionnaires as a research instrument in my study and this, I believe, can serve as a justification for my utilization of it as a research instrument in my study. I start by defining questionnaires, then illustrate how they are constructed and finally how they are administered. Subsequently, I will illustrate how my own questionnaires were utilized in my research.

Trobia (2008), defines questionnaires as a standardized set of questions, which are often called items. These items usually follow a fixed scheme so that individual data about one or more specific topics may be collected. Many times, questionnaires are often confused with interviews and Trobia suggests that questionnaires involve a particular kind of interview. This is to suggest that, the conversation is determined by the order of questions as well as the word order in the instrument (Trobia, 2008).

3.7.2.1 Questionnaire construction

In my study, I used questionnaires to collect data for my investigation. However, before I could distribute the questionnaires to the participants (filled in by 32 undergraduate students), I had to take into account, the following four prerequisites:

1. Theoretical knowledge of the topic of research, achieved through the reconnaissance of the relevant literature (if such exists) and/or in-depth interviews or other qualitative methods of research (ethnographies, focus groups, brainstorming and so on) that may serve as pilot studies.

2. Valid and reliable operationalization of concepts and hypotheses of research. Most questionnaire items, in fact, originate from the operationalization phase. To check the validity (the degree to which an item or scale measures what it was designed to measure) and reliability (the consistency or replicability of measurements) of a set of items, various techniques can be used: external, construct, and face validity, among others, in the first case; and parallel forms, test-retest, split-half, intercoder techniques, in the case of reliability.
3. Experience of writing a questionnaire, or at least the availability of good repertoires in published questionnaires.
4. A knowledge of the target population. This is crucial information: The target population must be able to answer to the questions accurately.

For my own investigation, the above points provided momentum for the use of a questionnaire in my research. The structure of my questionnaire, as illustrated in Figure 3.1 below, illustrates the structure of questionnaires. According to Trobia (2008), questionnaires are usually composed of three main parts: the cover letter (or introduction), the instructions, and the main body. Usually, they finish with thanking the respondents for their valuable collaboration.

The cover letter:
This section introduces the research to the participant and attempts to motivate them to cooperate with the task of the questionnaire (Lavrakas, 2008, 2012; Trobia, 2008). The research aims are also explained in the cover letter, as well as institutions and companies that are involved. The most important aspect of a cover letter is the guarantee for anonymity, or at least respondents' confidentiality (Lavrakas, 2008, 2012; Trobia, 2008). The cover letter acts as a "contract" between researcher and participant and illustrates the benefits of such collaboration. Therefore, it is one of the key elements in improving the participant response rate. Figure 3.1 below, illustrates the introduction of my questionnaire for student participants.

Instructions:
When the questionnaire is self-administered, the instructions are extremely important as they contain all the rules the participants should follow when they answer a question. For example, rules can include how to check boxes and which parts of the questionnaire must not be answered and such. These instruction and rules should be made as simple as possible. The questions can be categorized as (a) general instructions, (b) section introductions, (c) question

instructions, and (d) "go to" instructions for contingency questions (Lavrakas, 2012). In the student questionnaire administered to students, the different sections of the questionnaire contained instructions on the questions types to be answered, the category of answers as well as how the students were to answer the questions.

The main body includes the actual questions of which there are many types. There are questions about people and what they are; these include demographic data and attributes, such as gender, age, education, occupation). Questions are also about what people do - their behaviour, such as buying records or traveling. Further, questionnaires are about what people think, their beliefs, opinions or judgments and also about what they remember (Lavrakas, 2008, 2012). A combination of these elements then should be arranged in such a way that takes into account the participants' attention, memory, sensibility, motivations and background characteristics (Lavrakas, 2012; Trobia, 2008).

The following section will thus look at the questionnaire structure and format

3.7.2.2 Questionnaire structure and format

Structurally, questionnaires need to be logical and questions must be grouped accordingly. This is to suggest that, questions which deal with the same subject should be grouped together (Lavrakas, 2012; Trobia, 2008). Then, the length of the questionnaire should be reasonable hence one should include questions that are absolutely necessary. When dealing with the questionnaire layout, there are three basic rules that should be adhered to. Firstly, each questionnaire should have an identification code, number or both. Secondly, each question should have its own progressive number, and the space and graphic style of questions and response categories must be legible. Lastly, the numerical values or codes for closed-ended questions should be embedded into the questionnaire, in order to facilitate data entry into a case-by variable matrix (Lavrakas, 2012; Trobia, 2008). Stated in simple terms, for alternative responses to closed-ended questions, there should be corresponding codes.

When ordering items in a questionnaire, there is usually a pattern that is followed. That is, you start with general and neutral questions which build rapport and thus gives the respondent confidence. Then questions that are more complex or require greater effort follow. After those, sensitive questions follow then demographic questions are at the end. This general pattern has

been found to increase data quality for most research surveys (Lavrakas, 2008; Trobia, 2008; Wolf, 2008).

Though the above-mentioned order of questions can yield the best results, there are filter questions that yield various shapes. These shapes are: the funnel format, these questions go from general to specific and the inverted funnel goes from specific to general questions, among others. It is then up to the researcher to decide which question form to use for their particular research.

3.7.2.3 Questionnaire wording and question types

According to Trobia (2008), when constructing questions, it is generally suggested that the terminology should be clear and the structure should be simple. More specifically:

- Questions should use simple vocabulary
- Their syntax should be simple
- They should not contain two questions in one
- Questions must be concrete with respect to time and events
- They should not lead the respondents to particular answers
- The number of response alternatives should be limited unless additional visual cues are employed
- An alternative response should appear acceptable, even the most extreme
- The response alternative should be exhaustive and mutually exclusive

Basically, two types of questions can be found in questionnaires: open-ended and closed-ended questions - also referred to as fixed-alternative questions (Trobia, 2008, p. 4). Open-ended questions are suitable when the researcher believes that respondents should be free to express their thoughts in their own words. However, when analyzing open-ended questions, content analysis will be used. However, this analysis type has difficulties and are costly, thus their use is limited in questionnaires (Trobia, 2008). Subsequently, closed-ended questions are more frequently found in questionnaires as they allow immediate statistical treatment (Trobia, 2008, p. 4).

There are many types of closed-ended questions. Trobia (2008, p. 5), lists them as follows:

- Selection among nominal categories
- Checklists

- Selection among ordinal categories
- A particular kind of selection among ordinal categories is the degree of agreement or disagreement with a statement
- Ranking of personal preference
- Semantic differential scaled responses
- Interval-level or ratio-level responses

When choosing alternatives for questions, it is important that categories are exhaustive and mutually exclusive. That is, all possible responses have a space in one of the options proposed and each response should correspond to only one pre-coded category (Trobia, 2008)

The below figure 3.1 contains the structure of my questionnaires which were administered to the students. These reflect the underlying rationale for my choice and decision to use them.

Figure 3. 1 Student questionnaires

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THESIS TITLE:
EXPLORING THE POTENTIAL OF DIGITAL STORYTELLING IN THE TEACHING OF ACADEMIC WRITING AT A HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION IN THE WESTERN CAPE.

Dear student, research about academic writing skills is being conducted by Linda Mkaza as part of her Master's research.

Please fill in the following questionnaire and consent form in order to participate in the research.

You do not have to fill in your name on the questionnaire.

Please note: Participation is voluntary!

1. What is your gender?
□Male □Female □other
2.How old are you? _____
3. What is your home language? _____
4. What kind of school did you attend?
□ township □ former model c □ rural school □ private □other
5. Did you have access to a computer at home?
□yes □no
6. Did you have access to the internet when you were off campus?
□yes □no
7. Where did you do most of the work for your digital story?
□ on campus, □ at home □at the public library □other

8.What was the most difficult part of the task? (You may choose more than one)
□ voice recording □writing the story □creating the storyboard
□writing the script for the story □ using the movie software □other
9. What did you enjoy the most about the digital story?

_____

10. How did you find using the storyboard to connect your pictures to words?
□ easy □difficult □other
11. Explain your answer to question 10.

_____

12. How did you decide on the focus of your story?

_____

13.Did you feel the need to edit for language errors?
□yes □no
14. Explain your response to question 13 above.

_____

15. How many times did you have to rewrite your story so that you were happy with the end result?
□none □once □twice □more than twice
16. Did you use the introduction, body, and conclusion structure for your digital story?
□yes □no
17. Were you able to be creative in your writing?
□yes □no
18. Explain your answer to the question above.

_____

19. Did you see this as an academic writing exercise?
□Yes □no □other
20. Explain your answer to question 19 above

_____

21. Did you do some research for this project?
□Yes □no
22. Explain the answer above

_____

23. Do you think you presented the information in a logical manner/argument?
□Yes □no □I am not sure
24. What were your impressions of the show day?

_____

25. State your level of agreement with the following statements:

	1	2	3	4	5
Statement	**Strongly disagree**	**Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**

a) My biggest challenge with writing is language and grammar					
b) My biggest challenge with writing is coherence and cohesion (trying to make sense in an essay)					
c) I always understand what is expected of me in an assignment					
d) I have adequate support from my lecturers in writing					
e) The skill I learn in Professional Communication are useful for my other IT subjects?					
f) I read books or newspapers for enjoyment					
g) Reading helps improve my writing					

Thank you for your participation! Your time is greatly appreciated!

3.7.2.4 Pretesting the questionnaire

Before the questionnaire is administered to the participants, it is important to pre-test it or have a pilot test in order to verify that respondents will fully understand it and to eliminate any obvious bias (Trobia, 2008). By piloting the questionnaire, the researcher can better articulate response alternatives; revise or delete questions that raise vague answers or uncertainty; delete questions that seem to have no variance; integrate missing topics; create new order for the questions; and verify the timing of the interview (Trobia, 2008). Pilots can be carried in various ways such as interviewing or debriefing respondents, asking expert advice or mixing methods. While pretesting the questionnaire is a good way to pre-test the questionnaire, time constraints prevented me from administering the questionnaires to the students for pretesting. I did believe, however, that through the drafting of questions, I was able to administer a wide variety of questions for the participants.

3.7.2.5 Administering the questionnaire

There are various ways to administer questionnaires such as face-to-face, telephone, via computer or email and various other formats (Trobia, 2008; Wolf, 2008). There are both advantages and disadvantages for each type in terms of cost, speed, intrusiveness, anonymity guarantees, general design of the questionnaire, types of questions allowed and the quality of the responses, return rates and data entry.

The internet questionnaire seems to have three main advantages such as the possibility to reach a large population at a relatively low cost. Secondly, interviewer intrusiveness is minimized and lastly, there is an opportunity to provide multi-media stimuli such as audio-visual content

as part of the questionnaire (Trobia, 2008; Wolf, 2008). For my research I decided to use the internet (Google forms) to administer questionnaires but also decided to do face to face interviews with students to elaborate on answers.

Although I am aware that there are many advantages to using questionnaires, there are also many problems that may be encountered when administering online questionnaires. These problems include quality of sample questionnaires, verification of participant eligibility and the context in which the questionnaires are completed (Trobia, 2008; Wolf, 2008). However, it seems a mix of traditional and innovative methods is necessary.

Another aspect to consider when administering questionnaires is whether they will be administered on a single occasion or multiple occasions. In my study, I used Google forms to administer the questionnaire to the students. I provided a link for them to follow. I did this to avoid intrusiveness as both researcher and lecturer and thus anonymity could be maintained. I did, however, use a computer lab during their tutorial session to go through the questionnaire and explain the questions and also allow them to ask questions for clarity if need be. Further, if the students wished to complete the questionnaire during their own time, they did so. By using Google forms, I also have had the opportunity to get summarized results of the Google forms, which is easier to analyse. Additionally, once I had over 30 responses, I could close the responses for the questionnaire.

3.7.3 Interviews

In this section, I propose to discuss why I decided to use interviews as a research instrument in my study and this, I believe, can serve as a justification for my utilization of it as a research instrument in my study. In order to justify my use of interviews, I will first define interviews as well as the different types and then illustrate the type of interview I prepared for and subsequently used in my study.

Interviews can be defined as coordinated interactions which are used where participants can provide historical information about a research area (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Freebody, 2003). There are various types of interviews such as structured or fixed-response, semi-structured and unstructured interviews or open-ended interviews (Freebody, 2003) that one can employ in order to gather information for research purposes. The following sections will define the different types of interviews and the context under which they can be employed.

3.7.3.1 Structured interviews

Structured interviews have a predetermined set of questions which are strictly adhered to according to what the interviewer deems as relevant (Freebody, 2003). Consequently, any answer given by the participant which falls outside of the research focus is disregarded and/or not taken into account when data is compiled or analysed. Therefore, structured interviews are focused and efficient and the compilation of data is thus straightforward. Gilbert and Mulkay (1982) suggest that the usual sequence of events of interviews is:

1. The interview questions are prepared, based on theories prevalent in the area under study;
2. the participants are interviewed;
3. the analysis for broad similarities among their answers to pre-prepared questions;
4. these answers are taken at face value, and the 'common' or frequent answers are located and gathered;
5. these 'common' answers are taken to be accurate, partly because of their prevalence; and
6. the analyst constructs generalized, idealised versions of these participants' accounts, and presents these versions as the conclusions yielded by the analysis.

Gilbert and Mulkay (1982)suggest that this artificial interview method results in analysis that generalises an entire group because of the answers of a few, particularly since the researcher lacks interest in:

1. where the questions come from and how they gave particular shape to the interview event;
2. how all interviews are jointly constructed by all parties;
3. the specifics of interviewees' accounts; and
4. the accounts that are marginal, that is, 'non-representative'.

3.7.3.2 Semi-structured interviews

Unlike structured interviews, semi-interviews begin with questions that have been predetermined; however, this interview type allows some latitude in the breadth of relevance. To some degree the researcher pursues what is relevant to the interviewee (Freebody, 2003). This interview method means the interviewer will follow particular lines of talk with ad hoc follow-through questions (Freebody, 2003). The conversation is then transcribed or tabulated in full and then the research can decide what they will analyse in depth, based on the patterns and themes that emerge from the interview. During interviews, the researcher may adapt, retune or even change questions based on statements made by the interviewees. The semi-structured

interview then is convenient because it establishes core issues to be covered during the interview but at the same time allows for leeway for variation where questions can move away from the core questions (Freebody, 2003).

3.7.3.3 Unstructured interviews

The open-ended interviews are more loosely organised in that there are few highly general questions or issues but the interviewee is free to answer and direct the conversation (Freebody, 2003). The aim of this interview approach is to make the interview session less artificial.

3.7.3.4 Semi-structured interviews revisited

In order to address the main research question: "*To what extent can digital storytelling strengthen or impede the academic writing skills of EAL first year students?"* I began my investigation with structured interviews, as illustrated in Figure 3.2 However, during the interviews with various lecturers I found that there was a need to probe deeper into some of their responses thus resulting my need to use semi-structured interviews which consisted of ad hoc follow through questions or unplanned/unrehearsed probes. The interview questions and/or schedule (Figure 3.2, Lecturer interview questions) structure will illustrate a structured interview type, which consists of both closed-ended and open-ended question types. I will explore the change in interview type later on in this section. The use of semi-structured interviews in my investigation, aligns with McIntosh and Morse (2015) who suggest that semi-structured interviews can be both a tool for data collection and a research method. Even though my research draws from the qualitative research paradigm, I believe that the semi-structured interview can fit into various research methods (Freebody, 2003; McIntosh & Morse, 2015). The design of the semi-structured interview is to ascertain responses that are subjective from persons regarding a particular situation or phenomenon they have experienced (Freebody, 2003; McIntosh & Morse, 2015).

3.7.3.5 Interview guide or schedule

In order to conduct an interview, I needed an interview schedule which is a detailed interview guide or schedule. This schedule may be used if there is sufficient objective knowledge about an experience or phenomenon, yet there is lack in subject knowledge (Freebody, 2003; McIntosh & Morse, 2015). In order to create the framework for the guide development and the foci for the interview questions stems development, objective knowledge needs to be analysed.

The questions employed in semi-structured interview focus on the responses of each participant and also constitute the structure of the semi-structured interview (Freebody, 2003; McIntosh & Morse, 2015). In this interview type, participants are free to respond to open-ended questions as they wish, and the researcher may probe these responses (Freebody, 2003; McIntosh & Morse, 2015). Consequently, the framework and flexibility of the responses constitute the semi-structured aspect of this tool and ultimately makes it unique among interview methods for the degree of relevancy it provides the topic while remaining responsive to the participant (Freebody, 2003; McIntosh & Morse, 2015).

When one analyses semi-structured interviews, one will find that it is characterized by comparing participants' responses by item (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). Since the participants are asked questions that are the same and in the same order, the data is comparable and may even be numerically transformed as well as quantified. The reason why semi-structured interviews are so beneficial is because data obtained through this interview type cannot be obtained through unstructured interviews because unstructured interviews have no control over the response of the participants- the semi-structured participants respond according to specific areas of enquiry (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). Additionally, the guided interview reflects the way the research domain is structured and lists all the questions that each participant will be asked.

3.7.3.6 Preparing the interview guide or schedule

Semi-structured interviews are semi-standardized, and further characterized by the way they are used as well as their design (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). Usually, they are conducted with the use of an interview questionnaire or schedule which is comprised of predetermined or scheduled primary questions also known a question stems and those stems are further followed by sub questions or "probes" (McIntosh & Morse, 2015, p. 4). When probing, it is important that these questions are open-ended and formulated to elicit unstructured responses and create discussion (McIntosh & Morse, 2015, p. 4). Even though the questions are asked in a systematic manner, they are still unstructured and allow the interviewer to diverge from the interview script, should they need to clarify interviewee questions.

According to McIntosh and Morse, (2015, p. 5) probes can be scheduled or unscheduled. When the probes are scheduled, they will appear directly after the question stems and when they are

unscheduled, they can arise from the interview dialogue and such prompts are usually improvisational. Some researchers find that the respondents express themselves more fully when the prompts are unscheduled (McIntosh & Morse, 2015, p. 5). Prompts may include phrases such as: "In what way...? Tell me..." (McIntosh & Morse, 2015, p. 5) and the likes.
Consequently, the nature and structure of semi-structured interviews has a dual quality of being both replicable and flexible which can ultimately yield important as well as rich data.
Considering the definition and nature of structured interviews as well as unstructured interviews, my own research began with a structured interview guide. However, during the interview with all three of my participants, there are various issues or new ideas that came up which prompted me to use the semi-structured interviews as I had to probe further for answers and explanations of the various topics which emerged during the interview.

The following lecturer interview questions reflect as well as reinforce the rationale for my choice to use semi-structured interviews, which I have elaborated on in the preceding paragraphs of this section. There are a range of question types varying between closed ended and open ended question types. The questions are in two parts. The first part comprises the lecturer background information, experience and teaching experience pertaining to student academic writing. The second part of the interview deals with digital storytelling as a pedagogic tool. While not visible in this interview schedule, I propose to deal with them in chapter 4 where I wish to present a detailed analysis will be conducted of the interview. The overall interview schedule attempts to answer one of the SRQs: What are lecturers' perceptions of digital storytelling in relation to the development of academic writing skills of first-year students?
Figure 3.2. presented below contains the structure of my interview with the lecturers.

Figure 3. 2 Lecturer interview questions

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THESIS TITLE:

EXPLORING THE POTENTIAL OF DIGITAL STORYTELLING IN THE TEACHING OF ACADEMIC WRITING AT A HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION IN THE WESTERN CAPE.

Teaching academic writing and student challenges

1. What qualifications do you have/ training do you have?
2. How long have you been a lecturer?

3. Which subject/s do you lecture?
4. Which levels do you lecturer? First, second, third or post grad?
5. What academic writing challenges do students encounter in your subject? All levels.
6. Are there specific academic challenges that are specifically encountered by first years as opposed to other levels? Explain
7. What do you think is the main cause of academic writing problems? Language and grammar or coherence and cohesion? Other? Please specify.
8. How do you assist the students in their writing challenges?
9. Do the students admit that they have problems?

Digital storytelling as a pedagogic tool:

1. What are the benefits of using digital storytelling as a pedagogic tool?
2. Which aspects of academic writing does digital storytelling address?
3. How effective is this tool for academic writing assistance?
4. Explain the challenges this type of pedagogical tool encounters?
5. Do you think digital storytelling can be used in other courses/subjects effectively?

Having discussed qualitative interviews, I now look at ethical considerations and procedures.

3.8 Ethical considerations and procedures

Qualitative research requires ethical considerations, especially since it deals with people. Ethics is a moral standpoint, it is the way we conduct ourselves (Burgess, 2005). Atkins and Wallace (2012) suggest that educational research requires special attention to ethics because it is not merely recognizing the need for participants' identity to remain anonymous, or get consent from them, rather, ethics should guide every aspect of my study. This is to suggest, from the beginning and planning of the research, through fieldwork and data collection, as well as the final stages of my research report, I have paid particular attention to ethical considerations. As educators, our very profession requires an ethical or moral approach and professionalism which is grounded on respect for the profession as well as the individual (Atkin and Wallace, 2012). Educational research according to Atkins and Wallace (2012) should be underpinned by the five principles. In light of this, as a researcher, I should consider the following factors: the person, knowledge, democratic values, the quality of educational research and academic freedom.

Following Atkins and Wallace's ethical standpoint on research therefore, before conducting my field work, I had to write obtain ethical clearance from the University of the Western Cape Ethics Committee who approved my research proposal. Following the approval from this committee, I further had to obtain ethical clearance from the ethics committee of the University of Technology as well as the head of department for the IT department where I conducted my fieldwork. Upon getting ethical clearance from both universities, I had to then explain to my first year students that I was going to undertake my research and that their assignments would serve as my research material. I also explained to them that their participation was voluntary and that if they did not wish to participate in the research, they were allowed to decline. Additionally, I gave them forms to sign so that I could obtain permission to use their written essays as well as their digital stories and any other artifact that I required from their planning stages of both the essay and digital stories.

When it came to the lecturers, I could not find other lecturers who had used digital stories in the IT department, where the research was undertaken, therefore I had to go outside of the department and request interview times with lecturers who were familiar with both academic writing as well as digital storytelling. Therefore, the lecturers who consented to participation came from two different departments. Two of them were Professors in the Education Department of the University of Technology. The third participant is a lecturer in Architectural Design. All of them were familiar with the research process and procedure and I gave them consent forms to sign.

After the data collection phase, I thanked all the participants, both students and lecturers. I told them that their participation was greatly appreciated. Some students still wanted to fill in the questionnaires, as they had not all done so, however, I told them that I had adequate data and thanked them once again for their participation in my research. As for the lecturers, I sent emails to thank them once again for their willingness and participation.

3.9 Reflexivity and validity

My research employed three types of research instruments: interviews, questionnaires and documentation. The use thereof allowed for triangulation which is drawing data from multiple sources of evidence in order to find convergence and corroboration. Through triangulation, the findings could thus help reduce the impact of potential biases that can exist in a single study (Bowen, 2009, p. 28).

Further as a researcher I have used reflexivity. Reflexivity is the process that challenges the researcher to explicitly examine how his or her research agenda and assumptions, subject location (s), personal beliefs, and emotions enter into their research. I strongly believe that it is imperative for qualitative enquiry because it conceptualizes the researcher as an active participant in knowledge production rather than a neutral bystander (Hsiung, 2008, p. 212). This conceptualization premises an interactive, relational research process that recognizes the presence of the informant and challenges a directive, researcher-centered epistemological proposition. The main objective of doing reflexivity in qualitative research is to acknowledge and interrogate the constitutive role of the researcher in research design, data collection, analysis, and knowledge production (Hsiung, 2008). Reflexivity calls for active self-examination - it cannot be passive (Hsiung, 2008, p. 212). At this juncture I believe that my assumptions in the study have been moored with the help and support of the various theoretical issues and insights which I garnered explored in my literature review chapter. Further to this, my experience in teaching writing coupled with the challenges I have witnessed in students' writing have helped understand the problematic nature of the phenomenon I have chosen to investigate. Subsequently, the use of digital storytelling in the undergraduate writing space seemed appropriate when I embarked on my research journey. I have since learned that while digital storytelling can aid students in their academic writing process, there are various factors to consider when employing this strategy for academic writing assistance.

Reflexivity in qualitative research is the process where the researcher considers how their own beliefs and values affect their research. Action research is one way to be reflexive - this makes my research subjective. "Conceptual baggage" term coined by Kirby and McKenna in 1987 is described as the interconnection between a researcher's intellectual assumptions; subject location(s) in relation to class, race, sexuality, gender, and so on; and beliefs on the nature and outcome of a qualitative interview. To be aware of conceptual baggage takes time (Hsiung, 2008, p. 212).

3.10 Conclusion

To carry out, the research that I planned required me to revisit the Main Research Question (MRQ) as well as Sub-Research Questions (SRQs). I found that the instruments I used were based mainly on the types of questions that I asked. In order to answer my questions, I believed that the qualitative research frame allowed me to conduct immersed fieldwork, then the use

triangulation, by way of questionnaires, interviews and documentation was a good way prevents bias in my research. While it is my belief that this research method and tools could seem effective, I also found that students were impacted by my presence in the classroom when it came to action research as they are familiar with me and thus my authority as the lecturer may have impacted their responses in the questionnaires, though they were anonymous.

Apart from some intrinsic limitations, I am inclined to believe that my research design, site and sampling have allowed me to collect data unproblematically. I also believed that the tools I used can be helpful in answering the research questions. I will deal with the data obtained from my fieldwork in chapter four. I also believed that completing my data analysis, I hope to gain a better understanding of the issues presented in the research as well as the pre-existing assumptions I had. I will further discuss the analysis and pre-existing assumptions in chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF DATA FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I described my research methodology. The purpose of this chapter is to present and analyse the data that I have gathered during my investigation. As indicated in chapter 3, I have gathered data via the research instruments that I proposed in my last chapter, namely document analysis (in the form of student essays), questionnaires and interviews. The findings are divided into three sections which have been triangulated in order to augment their trustworthiness. The three sections comprise of document analysis, questionnaires and interviews. Due to the enormous amount of information gathered from the three research tools mentioned above, I have had to make a rigorous selection of findings in order to have more qualitative findings that may help me yield results that are trustworthy (Atkins & Wallace, 2012). The rigorous selection was made based on the three SRQs, which guided the type of instrument(s) used to gather results. Based on these results, I decided to look for recurring themes, that is, similar ideas or answers which repeatedly emerge from one or more of the three research tools stated above (Atkins & Wallace, 2012). The themes that emerge from the results are also known as categories. In this chapter, I may also refer to these themes or categories as thematic categories or categories which have various themes.

In my analysis, I first look at documents to analyse. These documents are in the form of 15 student essays. In order to analyse these documents, I will first skim through then read through the documents in order for a thorough interpretation, as mentioned in chapter 3. By analyzing student essays, I wish to relate to the first SRQ: *How is academic writing scaffolding conducted in an academic module?* In my attempt to do this SRQ, I have done content analysis, as stated in chapter 3, and which Bowen (2009) and Prior (2008) describe as the process of organizing information into categories which are relate to the SRQ. Over and above content analysis, I have conducted thematic analysis, that is, recognizing patterns within the data which eventually become categories for analysis (Atkins & Wallace, 2012; Bowen, 2009; Prior, 2008). For thematic analysis, I have not presented full texts but have extracted sections and I will present fuller versions of data in the appendices I propose to furnish at the end of my thesis. Then the patterns that emerge will later be discussed in chapter 5. Moreover, I will triangulate these document analysis findings with those of the subsequent categories: questionnaires and interviews. In order to further explain the research tools used and purpose for using these tools, I will now explain my use of questionnaires.

The second selection of tools is questionnaires. The questionnaires used were distributed with the use of Google Forms and 32 out students answered the questionnaires. The use of an online platform was meant to avoid interviewer intrusiveness (Trobia, 2008), especially since I am also the lecturer of the students. Further, to avoid incomplete questionnaires and such barriers to using an online platform, I made sure that all of the sections are marked compulsory, so that the students could not move on to the next question without answering the previous question. As a result, all of the questions were answered in the questionnaire. My use of the questionnaire was engineered to relate to the second SRQ: *What are students' perceptions of digital storytelling in relation to academic writing skills?* This SRQ aims to investigate learner perceptions on digital storytelling in relation to academic writing. The questionnaire contained both open-ended and closed ended questions. The open-ended questions were asked in order to get a more in-depth response from the participants, as stated in chapter 3. Like most qualitative instruments, content analysis is used in questionnaires (Kalayci & Cimen, 2012). Additionally, common themes are extracted from the data (Atkins & Wallace, 2012). For my specific questionnaire, I have created three categories. These categories are: biographical; the digital writing process; and digital storytelling and writing. Then due to the sheer bulk of the questions and answers in the questionnaire, I have made a rigorous selection of answers to present in this study. I have furnished full document texts as appendices at the end of my research. Following questionnaires, I will analyze interviews.

The third research tool I analyse is interviews. By analyzing interviews, I wish to relate to the third SRQ: *What are lecturers' perceptions of digital storytelling in relation to the development of academic writing skills of first-year students?* In my hope to answer the above SRQ I interviewed three academic staff who deal with academic writing. One of the Lecturers, is a lecturer in the Department of Architectural Technology while two of the lecturers are professors in the Department of Education at The Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT). The reason why I interviewed the three lecturers is that they have used digital storytelling as a teaching tool and I could not find other lectures who had knowledge in both academic writing and digital storytelling in the IT department, where most of the research was conducted with students. Once again, I have used content and thematic analysis for my interviews, as a qualitative research tool with the hopes of triangulation. Also, I have also made a rigorous selection of content to present, rather than use whole interviews. Atkins and Wallace

(2012) state that it is impracticable to make meaningful synthesis of interviews as a whole, instead, I should select data which is relevant to my argument.

Before I do an in-depth analysis of these research tools, I wish to illustrate the demographic distribution of student participants.

4.2 Demographic Distribution of student participants

Table 4.1 highlights different categories about the students' background details under different categories. These categories include the students' biographical details such as gender, age, home language and schooling background. My study involves a number of 32 participants in a questionnaire. I will use the letter "n" to show the size of the sample from each population. In the case of the population for my study, the participants were first year Information Technology (IT) students at CPUT. The population size comprised 40 students. However, only 32 (n) students completed the questionnaire. Although n is usually representative of statistical, quantitative data, I wish to use it in my presentation of findings for easier analysis. In my analysis, I will present the student responses as both percentage and numbers. They will be presented as follows: percentage (number coinciding with the percentage) n=32. In order to understand these figures, I will illustrate the findings according to student responses below. The participants who filled out the questionnaire consisted of 69% (22) n=32 males and 31% (10) n=32 female students. This means that 69% of the students were male, that is out of the n=32 student sample, 22 of them were male while 31% were female which means that out of the n=32 students, 10, were female. The document samples consisted of 73% (11) n=15 essays from males and 27% (4) n=15 female student essay samples. The participants' ages for the questionnaire varied from 18-35 years where 34% (11) n=32 are between the ages of 18 and 19 years. While 32% (10) n=32 had participants between the ages of 20 and 21 years. Then 34% (11) n=32 participants are above 22 years old.

The questionnaire participants speak one of 10 different languages as a first or home language. The questionnaire reveals that 6% (2) n=32 of the participants speak Afrikaans as a home language then 19% (6) n=32 speak English. Then 41% (13) n= 32 speak isiXhosa while 9% (3) n=32 speak French; 6% (2) n=32 speak Shona; 6% (2) n=32 speak Venda; 3% (1) n=32 speaks Setswana; 3% (1) n=32 speaks Arabic; 3% (1) n=32 speaks Kinyarwanda and 3% (1) n=32 speaks Swahili.

The background information of the participants also includes the schooling background which consists of 16% (5) n= 32 students who went to former model c schools; 28% (9) n = 32 attended private school; 18% (6) n =32 went to rural area schools and 38% (12) n = 32 attended township schools.

Table 4. 1 Demographic Table for students

Item	**Questionnaire Frequency n(32)**	**Questionnaire %**	**Interview Freuency n(3)**	**Interview %**	**Document Sample Frequency n(15)**	**Document %**
Gender						
Male	22	69	0	0	11	73
Female	10	31	3	100	4	27
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	32	100	3	100	15	100
Age						
18-19	11	34	N/A	–	N/A	–
20-21	10	32	N/A	–	N/A	–
22+	11	34	N/A	–	N/A	–
Total	32	100	N/A	–	N/A	–
Home Language						
Afrikaans	2	6	N/A	–	N/A	–
English	6	19	N/A	–	N/A	–
IsiXhosa	13	41	N/A	–	N/A	–
French	3	9	N/A	–	N/A	–
Shona	2	6	N/A	–	N/A	–
Venda	2	6	N/A	–	N/A	–
Setswana	1	3	N/A	–	N/A	–
Arabic	1	3	N/A	–	N/A	–
Kinyarwanda	1	3	N/A	–	N/A	–
Swahili	1	3	N/A	–	N/A	–
Total	**32**	**100**	N/A	–	N/A	–

School background						
Former model C school	5	16	N/A	–	N/A	–
Private school	9	28	N/A	–	N/A	–
Rural area school	6	18	N/A	–	N/A	–
Township school	12	38	N/A	–	N/A	–
Total	**32**	**100**	N/A	–	N/A	–

Table 4.2 is for lecturer participants' background and experience. In the interviews, I interviewed three experienced female lecturers, two of whom are professors. For the purposes of this research, I will name them Lecturer A, Lecturer B and Lecturer C. The background information of the participants includes the department they currently work in, their highest qualifications, years of lecturing experience; the subjects they have lectured over the years as well as the levels in which they have lectured. Lecturer A is in the Architectural Design Department, her highest qualification is a BTech; she has been lecturing for fourteen years since 2005 at first, second- year and third-year level. Lastly, the subjects that she has lectured over the years include Construction and Detailing, Architectural Design and Communications Skill 1. Lecturer B's highest qualification is a PHD, she has been lecturing for fourteen years since 2005 and has taught at various levels, from undergraduate to doctoral level. Lastly, her main teaching subjects include Research Methods and Computer Literacy. Lecturer C also holds a PHD and has been lecturing for 21 years since 1998. She has lectured various subjects at various levels - from undergraduate to doctoral levels. The subjects that she has lectured over the years include Professional Studies, Methodologies, Introduction to Research and Inclusive Education Specialization.

Table 4. 2 Lecturer participants' background

Item	**Participants**		
	Lecturer A	**Lecturer B**	**Lecturer C**
Department	Architectural Design	Education	Education
Highest Qualifications	BTech	PHD	PHD

Lecturing experience	Since 2005 (14 years)	Since 2005 (14 years)	Since 1998 (21 years)
Lecturing Subjects	▪ construction and detailing ▪ Studio Work ▪ Applied Building Science Modules ▪ Communications Skills 1 and 2 ▪ Architectural Technology Practice ▪ Environmental Design	▪ Research Methods ▪ Computer Literacy	▪ Professional Studies ▪ Methodologies ▪ Introduction to Research ▪ Inclusive Education specialisation
Lecturing Levels	First, Second, Third	Undergraduate to doctoral	Undergraduate to doctoral

4.3 Academic Writing Scaffolding

The following section addresses academic writing and how it is currently taught in an academic module at the research site, CPUT and more specifically, the IT Department, where I conducted the research with student participants. This section will further address the SRQ: "*How is academic writing scaffolding conducted in an academic module?*" The way that I wish to answer this SRQ is by conducting document analysis. The main documents for assessment consist of fifteen student essays, due to the bulk of which, have been attached as appendices in this thesis. For essay analysis, I have categorized them into high performing students, average performing students and low performing students. These three categories are based on marks obtained by the students from the assessment. Additionally, I have briefly looked at the lecture slides that I used, to show how I normally teach academic writing skills. Then I have looked at the assessment brief and assessment rubric as guidance for criteria for the essays and I will thus analyse the essays based on these criteria. The following section, then, will look at the various documents following which I will analyse the student essays based on the criteria used.

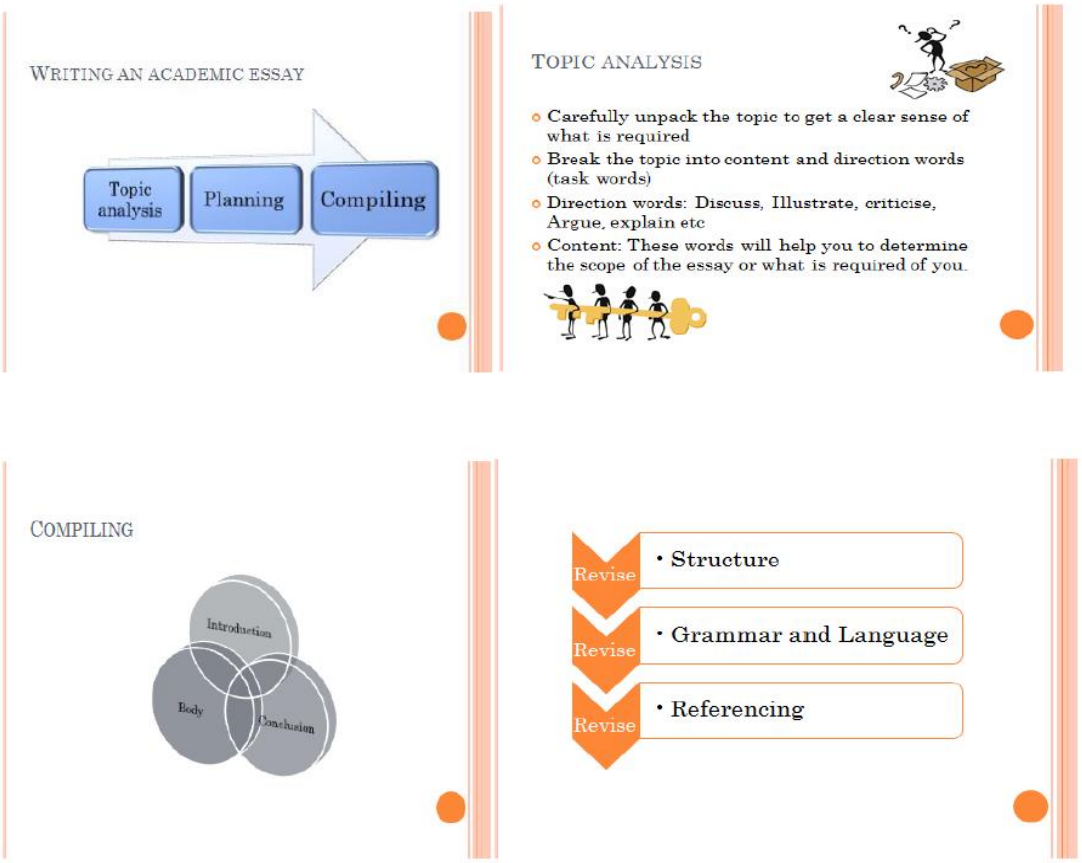
4.3.1 Document analysis for teaching of academic writing

Lecture slides on academic writing

Figure 4.1 below illustrates some components from the lecture slides that I used to teach the academic writing component of the Communications subject to the first year IT students. The reason why I chose to highlight these particular lecture slides, is because they contain the key

aspects that were covered during these classes so that the students could prepare for the academic writing task that they had to compile. The task was in the form of a personal narrative essay. As illustrated in Figure 4.1 below, the students were taught topic analysis, planning and compiling the essay. Then, they were also taught the different sections of an essay: introduction, body and conclusion. Lastly, other aspects that were covered are revisions of structure, grammar and referencing (which were not required of the students for this particular tasks). These features that were covered in class also feature later on in Figure 4.2 (the assignment brief) and Figure 4.3 (the assessment rubric).

Figure 4. 1 Lecture slides on academic writing



Assessment brief

Figure 4.2 below illustrates the assessment that the students had to undertake. In the assignment, the students were required to write an academic essay in the form of a personal narrative. In the narrative, students had to describe the stages of their literacy development, with particular focus on reading and writing and how those skills developed during the four stages of their development. These stages are childhood, primary school, high school and university. Further, the students were expected to include concepts they had learned during some of their Communications subject. Following the assessment brief, I present figure 4.3, the assessment rubric, which sets the standard of assessment for the marker.

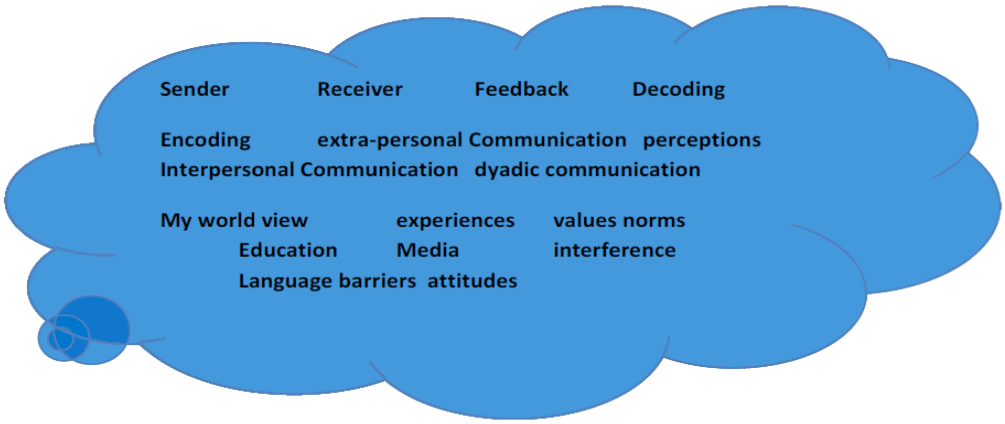
Figure 4. 2 Assessment brief

Assignment objectives

This assignment is designed to test your understanding of the communication process, social interaction and self-image as well as intercultural communication. It also seeks to test your academic writing and logical thinking skills.

Topic: Describe the different stages of your literacy development

- Write a personal narrative which describes the different stages of your literacy development (reading and writing).
- The narrative should explain your literacy experiences from childhood to primary school through high school to university.
- It should focus on the ways in which your cultural background (your community), self-image, parents and teachers have shaped your literacy development. These experiences and influences can speak to both positive and negative impacts on your development.
- The idea is that you start critically reflecting on the forces that have until now shaped your world and your perceptions or the way you think.
- Illustrate your understanding of the concepts introduced to you thus far by using at **least 3 of the terms** in the bubble below. These terms must be applied to the context of your topic i.e. it should be relevant to the stages of your literacy development.



*** The diagram above was designed by a senior colleague of mine in the Department of Information Technology*

Specific instructions

- The narrative should be typed in Arial font size 12 and 1.5 line spacing, with all the pages justified.
- It should be written in the form of an academic essay with a clear introduction, body and a conclusion.
- The body of the narrative should be divided into four logical and comprehensive paragraphs. The first main paragraph should describe your cultural/family background and the influence on your childhood literacy development. The second and third main paragraphs should focus on your literacy experiences in primary and high school. The last main paragraph should concentrate on your literacy development at university and how the entire experience influenced your decision to study Information Technology.
- It should not be shorter than 2 pages and not longer than three pages in length, excluding the cover page (approximately 1200 words).
- It should have a cover page with the course code and title, your name/surname, student number and current registration (full time or part time).
- You may use sub-headings to enhance coherence and cohesion.
- No citations and/or reference list required unless you have used another person's idea or quoted from book/article.
- The narrative should be carefully edited for language and stylistic mistakes.

Assessment rubric

Figure 4.3, below, illustrates the assessment rubric that I used to assess the personal narrative essays. The categories that were looked at are: Content which makes up m30 (m=marks) out of the m=60; Language (grammar, punctuation, spelling and vocabulary) counts for m=15; and Structure and Logical Organisation which is m=15. The criteria for each of the three sections will be looked at in more depth later for the purposes of analyzing the 15 student essays.

To conclude, figure 4.1, figure 4.2 and figure 4.3 illustrate the preparatory processes for the narrative essays that will be assessed in-depth. Figure 4.2 and figure, especially will guide the process of analysis because the criteria used to assess the essays is contained in these figures.

Figure 4. 3 Assessment rubric

CONTENT: 30	
Mark awarded	**Criteria**
28 -30	Excellent, original (depending on nature of assignment); well researched, insight shown.
24 - 27½	Very good, interesting, clear research evidence, subject well-covered, omissions only minor.
18½ - 23½	Above average; material/subject well-covered.
15 – 18	Average, superficial; only the obvious present.
8 - 14½	Below average, thin, insufficient material/information; unconvincing, plagiarised
0 - 7½	Unacceptable; little or no relevant content, plagiarised.
LANGUAGE (GRAMMAR, PUNCTUATION, SPELLING, VOCABULARY): 15	
Mark awarded	**Criteria**
14 – 15	Excellent use of grammatical structures and vocabulary. Very few spelling and punctuation errors.
12½- 13½	Very good use of grammatical structures and vocabulary. Few spelling and punctuation errors.
10 – 12	Good use of grammatical structures and vocabulary. Spelling and punctuation could be improved.
7½ - 9½	Adequate use of grammatical structures and vocabulary. Average mastery of spelling and punctuation.
4 – 7	Restricted use of grammatical structures and vocabulary. Weak spelling and punctuation.
0 – 3½	Poor grammar and vocabulary. Very weak spelling and punctuation.
STRUCTURE AND LOGICAL ORGANISATION: 15	
Mark awarded	**Criteria**
14 – 15	Excellent. Logically, systematically organised. Links clear, coherent. Key ideas supported, developed. Well-integrated introduction and conclusion.
12½- 13½	Very good. Logically, systematically organised with minor faults; links mostly clear, almost totally coherent. With only a few exceptions, all key ideas supported and developed. Introduction and conclusion functional.
10 – 12	Fairly good. Organisation logical, systematic with a few problem areas, but meaning not seriously affected. Majority of key ideas supported and developed, although not always fully. Some incoherence. Introduction and conclusion acceptable but need to be fully integrated.
7½ - 9½	Acceptable. Organisation and system need some attention, but one can still follow. Some links appear but not everywhere they should. Some worrying incoherence. Key ideas somewhat supported, developed and arranged. Introduction and conclusion still acceptable but not quite well integrated.
4 – 7	Not acceptable. Organisation and system needs much attention; difficult to follow. Links infrequent and not always meaningful. Frequent incoherence. Key ideas usually not supported, developed and well arranged. Introduction and conclusion unacceptable and/or missing.
0 – 3½	Totally unacceptable. Weak. Virtually no organisation, no apparent system. Impossible to follow at times. Almost no links. Meaning severely affected. Mostly incoherent. Key ideas not developed, supported or logically arranged. Introduction and conclusion unacceptable and/or missing.

Student essays

Table 4.3 below looks at the individual essays and breaks down the marks into their different componential categories. I have looked at the content of each, the language and structure and logical organisation. The reason for looking at the marks of the essays is meant to ascertain if each of these essays have been ranked or categorized according to high performance, average performance and low performance. These marks, then, allow that categorization of performance to happen. In each of the performance categories I have placed 5 essays for analysis.

Table 4. 3 Essay mark scores

Item	Essays	Mark obtained m(60)	Percent % (100)	Content m (30)	Language m (15)	Structure and logical organisation m(15)
Category 1: High performance	Essay 1	48	80	24	12	12
	Essay 2	47.5	79	23.5	12	12
	Essay 3	45.5	76	23.5	10	12
	Essay 4	43	72	23.5	9.5	10
	Essay 5	42	70	20	10	12
Category 2: Average performance	Essay 6	33	55	18	7.5	7.5
	Essay 7	32	53	15	9.5	7.5
	Essay 8	32	53	18	7	7
	Essay 9	30	50	15	7.5	7.5
	Essay 10	30	50	15	7.5	7.5
Category 3: Low performance	Essay 11	29	48	14	7.5	7.5
	Essay 12	29	48	14.5	7.5	7
	Essay 13	26	43	15	4	7
	Essay 14	24	40	13	4	7
	Essay 15	21	35	10	4	7

4.3.2 Student personal narrative essays

The following section analyses the essays. I look at content, language and structure and logical organisation. Here, I analyse Table 4.3 above in further depth with the hope that this could/can help me answer the SRQ: "*How is academic writing scaffolding conducted in an academic module?"* I have done this by doing an overall analysis of the categories and then analyzing each essay individually. Further to this, I have used the mark descriptors from the assessment, as shown in figure 4.3 above, in conjunction with my comments and observations, as the lecturer of this subject. Below, I look at the content, language and structure and logical organisation of each essay in all the three categories: high performance, average and low performance essays.

I hasten to reiterate that, the students were required to write a personal narrative about their literacy development (reading and writing), as stipulated in figure 4.1 above. In addition, the assignment assessed theory that they covered in the term and they were expected to speak on at least three concepts in the blue bubble (found in figure 4.1 above) so that they could show

their understanding of the concepts learned and application of these concepts. The students were expected to pay attention to language and style, among other features. Lastly, the format and structure also needed to be taken into consideration.

4.3.2.1 Category 1 – high performance

Essays in this category performed between 70% and 80%, as displayed in Table 4.3 above. The marks are further divided into different categories. I will start by discussing content.

Content

I found that four out of the five essays, received between 23½ out of 30 for content while one essay got 20 out of 30 for content covered. The content descriptors are found in figure 4.3 above and I have also extracted those particular descriptors and placed them below.

Mark	**Criteria**
24 - 27½	Very good, interesting, clear research evidence, subject well-covered, omissions only minor.
18½ - 23½	Above average; material/subject well-covered.

The first mark descriptor (24-27½) above stipulates the following: "*Very good, interesting, clear research evidence, subject well-covered, omissions only minor*." This is to suggest that the student has covered the content well, they have made the essay interesting, they have conducted clear research covering the subject very well and there are minor omissions. While the second mark descriptor, (18½ - 23½), states the following: "*Above average; material/subject well-covered*" it suggests that students were able to complete the task very well and they conducted good research. In addition to the rubric descriptors, I will also comment on the content that I analysed for each student essay as well as my comments as the lecturer.

Essays	**Content m(30)**	**Lecturer remarks**
Essay 1	24	-The content, literacy development in different stages was covered. -One concept (IT) was only abbreviated but not written out fully
Essay 2	23.5	-Content well narrated but concepts like FET were not written out in full or explained
Essay 3	23.5	-Explain the concept, vague explanation. Elaborate
Essay 4	23.5	-Vague description of concept
Essay 5	20	-Explain elaborate

Having examined the essays, I found that all of the students covered the content very well. However, there were issues of being vague. This is to suggest that in one or two places, students did not fully explain or describe concepts like IT, which stand for Information Technology or FET, which stand for Further Education and Training. However, these mistakes were minor and as mentioned in conjunction with the rubric descriptors before, these students covered the content very well and did not have issues with the content.

Following the content, I looked at Language of these high performing essays.

Language

In Table 4.3 above, the students in this category one student got 9 ½; two students got 10 marks and two students got 12 marks out of a 15mark score. According to figure 4.3, the assessment rubric, and the table below, these students' language use was adequate or good.

Mark	**Criteria**
10 – 12	Good use of grammatical structures and vocabulary. Spelling and punctuation could be improved.
7½ - 9½	Adequate use of grammatical structures and vocabulary. Average mastery of spelling and punctuation.

According to the mark descriptors for the sections, the students who got between 7½ and 9½ had an "*Adequate use of grammatical structures and vocabulary [and] average mastery of spelling and punctuation*." This description suggests that the students were able to handle grammar adequately and did not have major language issues. Then, the students who scored between 10 and 12 out of 15 are described as students who have "*good use of grammatical structures and vocabulary. Spelling and punctuation could be improved*." This means that these students have good grammar but they need to improve on their spelling and punctuation. Table 4.3 above and the table below shows the Language mark of each student. In the table below, I will further elaborate on the language use and errors that students displayed in the task.

Essays	**Language m (15)**	**Lecturer remarks**
Essay 1	12	-Rephrase "I love to believe" -Punctuation- title of a book has capital letters at the beginning of each word.

		-few punctuation errors
Essay 2	12	-Use small letters for high school. -Few punctuation errors
Essay 3	10	-Colloquialism/informal language. -Punctuation errors
Essay 4	9.5	-Run on sentences. -Colloquial language. -Punctuation – G in grade is a small letter unless it is at the beginning of a sentence. Syntax
Essay 5	10	-Syntax needs work. -Use simple past tence verbs rather than past continuous tense to narrate past events

In the table above, I have noted that my remarks regarding language are similar in all the essays. There are common punctuation errors, especially the use of capital letters. In essay 1, I noted that the student did not punctuate the title of the book. Then essay 2 used capital letters for the "h" and "s" in high school while essay 4 used a capital "g" for grade throughout the essay. Another common issue that I found in the essays is that students had good syntax, however, there were one or two sentences that were run on sentences but overall, the students did not make major syntax errors. The last language issue I looked at was an essay which used continuous tense rather than simple past tense to narrate past events. Overall, this category of students presented their work well and it seems like there was editing done in the essays, with minor issues pointed out above. Following Language, I now look at structure and logical organisation of essays in category 1.

Structure and Logical organisation

This section looks at structure and logical organisation of student essays in category 1. Table 4.3 above illustrates that students in this category got between 10 and 12 out of 15 for structure and organisation. Out of the five students, one student got 10 marks and the rest got 12 marks. The table below illustrates the description of each of these mark categories. The descriptor for this mark range states that the essays were "*Fairly good. Organisation logical, systematic with a few problem areas, but meaning not seriously affected. Majority of key ideas supported and developed, although not always fully. Some incoherence. Introduction and conclusion acceptable but need to be fully integrated.*" This suggests that the organisation and structure of

the essay was fairly good in overall terms. There was logical development in the narrative essay. Though there were minor errors, they did not impact the overall meaning. Furthermore, key ideas were supported and developed and introduction and conclusion are acceptable, though not necessarily fully integrated.

Marks	**Criteria**
10 – 12	Fairly good. Organisation logical, systematic with a few problem areas, but meaning not seriously affected. Majority of key ideas supported and developed, although not always fully. Some incoherence. Introduction and conclusion acceptable but need to be fully integrated.

In addition to looking at mark descriptors for structure and logical organisation, I analysed the essays and also looked at my lecturer remarks. The essays in this category were generally well written, the format and structure were adhered to and the introduction and conclusion introduced and concluded the topics well. There were, however, presentational issues with one of the essays as they had too much spacing between the paragraphs, but that did not impact the meaning. In another essay, I noticed that one or two run on sentences which impacted meaning in that regard. Also, the punctuation errors noted in the previous section also contributed to these structures. Then another structure and logic issue were that one paragraph had too many ideas rather than focusing one central idea per paragraph.

Essays	**Structure and logical organisation m(15)**	**Lecturer remarks**
Essay 1	12	-Well written. -Good length introduction and conclusion
Essay 2	12	-Well narrated
Essay 3	12	-Too much spacing between paragraphs. -Headings bigger than other fonts
Essay 4	10	-Avoid long paragraphs and run on sentences.
Essay 5	12	-Line spacing should be 1.5 not 1. Don't have too many ideas in one paragraph

Following analysis of category 1 essays, I will now go through the analysis for category 2 essays – average performance essays.

4.3.2.2 Category 2 – average performance

The five essays analysed in this category scored between 50% and 55%, as illustrated in table 4.3 above. The marks are divided into different categories: content, language and structure and logical organisation. I will now start by analyzing the content section.

Content

The content marks for this section range between 15 and 18 marks out of 30, as illustrated in Table 4.3 above. The descriptor for this section is found in figure 4.3, assessment rubric, which is also displayed above. I have also placed the description for this category in the table below. According to the criteria description, student essays which receive between 15 and 18 marks show that their essays are average and only the obvious is present.

Marks	**Criteria**
15 – 18	Average, superficial; only the obvious present.

After looking at the criteria, I have examined the essays and the table below illustrates the remarks as the lecturer and analysis of content in the essays. Some of the common features between the essays' content is that students tend to be vague when talking about aspects of the topic. Ideas are not well developed because there are usually too many ideas in one paragraph and these ideas are not explored. Further, they do not relate to the topic. The introduction does not introduce the topic, even though it is labelled as an introduction. Then the conclusion does not help conclude the essay, despite being labelled as such or being placed at the end of the essay.

Essays	**Content m(30)**	**Lecturer remarks**
Essay 6	18	- Vague description of events. - Too many ideas that have not been thoroughly explored nor do they relate directly to the topic
Essay 7	15	- Some ideas are not relevant to the topic
Essay 8	18	-narrative is clear but ideas are vague in a lot of places
Essay 9	15	-Introduction needs to define concepts like literacy -needs to elaborate on concept of literacy skills
Essay 10	15	-needs to elaborate on topic, especially literacy and events -content not well organised

Following the content, I now look at language.

Language

Students received between 7 and 9 ½ marks out of a 15-mark score. The table below and table 4.3 aforementioned illustrate the different descriptors for the marks allocated for this section. Students whose marks are between 4 and 7 are described as having "*Restricted use of grammatical structures and vocabulary. Weak spelling and punctuation."* Then students who receive between 7½ - 9½ have "*Adequate use of grammatical structures and vocabulary. Average mastery of spelling and punctuation."* Out of the five student essays, one got a 7, one got 9 ½ and three got 7 ½ out of a 15-mark score, as illustrated inn table 4.3 above.

Marks	**Criteria**
7½ - 9½	Adequate use of grammatical structures and vocabulary. Average mastery of spelling and punctuation.
4 – 7	Restricted use of grammatical structures and vocabulary. Weak spelling and punctuation.

In conjunction with the above descriptors, I now examine the table below, which contains my remarks as the lecturer concerning language. Based on the remarks below, most students need to work on syntax ad punctuation. Some tend to use colloquialism in their writing. Further, vocabulary needs to be built because there is overuse of the word "thing" or "things".

Essays	**Language m (15)**	**Lecturer remarks**
Essay 6	7.5	-Needs to work on syntax and grammar. -Use first person narrative for the personal narrative. -Avoid using words like "thing/s".
Essay 7	9.5	Syntax needs work. Punctuation errors, especially capital letter usage. Using exclamation marks
Essay 8	7	-syntax needs work -Punctuation needs work because it affects sentence structure and overall meaning
Essay 9	7.5	- informal language used

		- "i" should be capitalised (it is written in small letters throughout the essays)
Essay 10	7.5	-syntax and tenses need work - Vocabulary needs to be developed because there is use and overuse of the word "thing"

Following Language, I will now look at structure and logical organisation.

Structure and logical organisation

Out of the five essays, four of them scored a 7 ½ marks out of a 15mark scores for this category. While and one essay got 7 marks out of a 15mark score, as illustrated in table 4.3. The table below illustrates that essays that have scored between 4 and 7 for structure and logical organisation need to pay more attention to detail as the work is unacceptable and difficult to follow. In addition to this, the criteria state the following: "*Links infrequent and not always meaningful. Frequent incoherence. Key ideas usually not supported, developed and well arranged. Introduction and conclusion unacceptable and/or missing.*" Then those who have obtained marks between 7 ½ and 9 ½ have structure and logic that is acceptable, however, their organisation and system need some attention. Furthermore, there is incoherence which is worrying as key ideas are not supported, developed or arranged. Although the introduction and conclusion are acceptable, they are not well integrated.

Marks	**Criteria**
7½ - 9½	Acceptable. Organisation and system need some attention, but one can still follow. Some links appear but not everywhere they should. Some worrying incoherence. Key ideas somewhat supported, developed and arranged. Introduction and conclusion still acceptable but not quite well integrated.
4 – 7	Not acceptable. Organisation and system needs much attention; difficult to follow. Links infrequent and not always meaningful. Frequent incoherence. Key ideas usually not supported, developed and well arranged. Introduction and conclusion unacceptable and/or missing.

In addition to the above criteria, I look at the remarks made, as the subject lecturer. The table below, illustrates some of the issues I have noted in the essays in addition to those stipulated in the assessment rubric. Some of the common issues in the essays for structure and logical

organisation are coherence and cohesion because ideas and sentences do not link and develop logically in places. Additionally, introduction and conclusion tend to not introduce and conclude the topic, they seem to be the body of the essay. Lastly, the paragraphs are either too short or too long. In the former, the ideas are not developed, while the former paragraph tend to have too many ideas that have not been well addressed.

Essays	**Structure and logical organisation m(15)**	**Lecturer remarks**
Essay 6	7.5	- Cohesion- link one sentence to another. -Stages of literacy development are in order.
Essay 7	7.5	-Long parapraghs lead to too many ideas that are not properly explored - paragraph entitled conclusion is not structured as a conclusion - narrative not linked to topic
Essay 8	7	-Format and structure need work -Introduction and conclusion are not written in the form of an introduction and conclusion
Essay 9	7.5	-introduction and conclusion needs work -one paragraph is short and ideas not developed
Essay 10	7.5	-paragraphs are too short and ideas are not developed

After having looked at the second category of essays, I now look at the third category or essays: low performing essays.

4.3.2.3 Category 3 – low performance

Essays analysed in this category received scores between 35% and 48%. These results have been presented in table 4.3 above. I have analysed them according to content, language and structure and logical organisation. I will start presenting content analysis of the essays.

Content

The content marks for essays in this category ranges between 10 and 15 out of a 30-mark score. The students scored 10 marks, 13 marks, 14 marks, 14 ½ marks and 15 marks respectively, as seen in figure 4.3 above. The criteria descriptors for students who scored between 8 and 14½ marks are as follows: "*Below average, thin, insufficient material/information; unconvincing,*

plagiarized." This means that the students have not covered enough content or the information given is not sufficient enough for them to pass the section. Then one essay in this section got 15 marks out of 30 and that content descriptor states that the content is superficial and only the obvious is present.

Marks	**Criteria**
15 – 18	Average, superficial; only the obvious present.
8 - 14½	Below average, thin, insufficient material/information; unconvincing, plagiarized

In addition to the content descriptors presented above, I have further analysed the essays and tabulated the remarks, as they were marked by me, as the lecturer of the students for that subject. The table below illustrates those remarks. In the analysis of the essays I have found that the students have not dealt with the content and the ideas are not well developed or supported. In one essay particularly I found that the student has short paragraphs which even consist of one or two sentences. Additionally, I also found that there are contradictions in the content covered in the essay, which also does not address the topic.

Essays	**Content m(30)**	**Lecturer remarks**
Essay 11	14	-The content is not dealth with – concepts do not relate to the topic
Essay 12	14.5	-content not well developed.
Essay 13	15	- ideas not well developed because paragraphs are too short
Essay 14	13	-events in essays are not described in detail -topic is not addressed
Essay 15	10	- Essay has many contradictions -Topic is not addressed

After content, I now look at language.

Language

According to table 4.3 above, student got between 4 and 7 ½ marks out of a 15-mark score. The table below and figure 4.3, above stipulate the criteria for marks in this range.

Marks	**Criteria**
7½ - 9½	Adequate use of grammatical structures and vocabulary. Average mastery of spelling and punctuation.

4 – 7	Restricted use of grammatical structures and vocabulary. Weak spelling and punctuation.

In addition to looking at the criteria above, I have also included remarks, as seen in the table below, to show the student language performance in their essays. From what I noted in the student essays is that when it comes to language, there are a lot of syntax errors of which some are a result of grammatical errors. Moreover, grammar and syntax errors result in lack of coherence for students in this category. In addition to this, essays in this category were riddled with punctuation errors, which affected flow. Although I have noted and noticed spelling and punctuation errors for student essays that fall in the first two categories, I have found that their essays still make sense. However, student essays within this category do not make sense as a result of language errors which impede meaning as well as their inability to articulate their thoughts in the essays. In light of this, there are a lot of fragments in the way that the content is presented due to grammar and punctuation. Then the last language error that I have noted is the use of slang and colloquialism in academic essays. Essay 15, in particular, even uses abbreviated phrases or acronyms such as "LOL" and "angry emoji" which have not been explained nor are they relevant to the topic. For the ease of my readers' reference and understanding, I wish to expand on what is meant by "LOL" and "angry emoji". The acronym "LOL" can have one of two meanings. The first, as indicated in Anjaneyulu's Glossary of abbreviations used in mobile phone sms (short messaging services), is slang and means lots of love and the second meaning is laugh out loud (Anjaneyulu, 2013). While emojis, are another form of short sms language. Emojis consist of various faces that show emotion and can replace words or supplement them in sms language (Anjaneyulu, 2013). For example, if a person is happy or smiling, they will have a smiley tag ☺ to show that emotion, while someone who is angry will show an angry tag 😐 or face to show that they are angry or displeased (Anjaneyulu, 2013).

Essays	**Language m (15)**	**Lecturer remarks**
Essay 11	7.5	-Syntax needs work -coherence needs work. Thoughts and ideas to not flow/make sense -vocabulary needs work
Essay 12	7.5	-sentence structure needs work -punctuation errors
Essay 13	4	-spelling errors

		-punctuation errors -spacing is too much between words
Essay 14	4	-Editing is needed for language errors - "I" should be capitalized -use of colloquialism
Essay 15	4	-Punctuation -Tone is too informal/slang is used

Following language, I now look at structure and logical organisation.

Structure and logical organisation

Table 4.3 illustrates that students received between 7 and 7 ½ marks out of a 15-mark score in this category. The criteria for these marks are illustrated in figure 4.3, above and in the table below and has been previously explained in the previous two categories.

Marks	**Criteria**
7½ - 9½	Acceptable. Organisation and system need some attention, but one can still follow. Some links appear but not everywhere they should. Some worrying incoherence. Key ideas somewhat supported, developed and arranged. Introduction and conclusion still acceptable but not quite well integrated.
4 – 7	Not acceptable. Organisation and system needs much attention; difficult to follow. Links infrequent and not always meaningful. Frequent incoherence. Key ideas usually not supported, developed and well arranged. Introduction and conclusion unacceptable and/or missing.

In addition to this criteria, I list some other issues pertaining to structure and logical organisation that were present in the essays in the table below. As stated in the table below, most essays in this category did not have an introduction and/or conclusion or these introductions and conclusions needed work. Reason being, that they did not introduce nor conclude the essay, which affected the essay structure and logical development of argument because the students did not guide the reader and tell them what they were going to cover.

Essays	Structure and logical organisation m(15)	Lecturer remarks
Essay 11	7.5	-Structure needs work – no logical development of events - No clear introduction or conclusion
Essay 12	7	- Introduction is too long
Essay 13	7	-No introduction or conclusion
Essay 14	7	-Conclusion needs work
Essay 15	7	- No conclusion

Following this analysis of student essays, I will now analyse the questionnaires that were distributed to first year students who completed a digital storytelling task.

4.4 Student perceptions of digital storytelling in relation to academic writing

The following section looks at the student perceptions of digital storytelling. Before I elaborate on the findings of the questionnaire, I wish to briefly describe the digital storytelling assessment task that the students had to undertake, as part of their continuous assessment marks. After completing the writing assignment, I required students to produce a digital storytelling assignment on theory they had covered during the term. The theory revolved around culture and communication. Students were expected to integrate theory they had learned on intercultural communication and use their own culture or other cultures to illustrate how the theoretical aspects play out in their chosen culture. Figure 4.4 below illustrates the instructions for the assignment.

Figure 4. 4 Digital Storytelling assignment brief

Assignment objectives:

Although you are a unique person, you were also born into a culture. Your culture has been influenced by your family, society/community, and your family history etcetera. Your language and communication methods have been influenced by your culture.

In this assignment, you will explore your own personal culture, or any other culture, in relation to another culture. The assessment will be in the form of a digital story and you are required to use Microsoft Movie Maker, WeVideo or any video editing application that will help you complete the assignment.

Assignment brief:

In groups of two, explore two different cultures (for example yours and your partners, or any other two cultures). Compare and contrast these cultures in the following aspects:

- Communication methods (Ways of greeting, verbal and non-verbal codes, language, examples of shared rules of conduct).
- Hofstede's dimensions – choose only ONE of the following dimensions:
    1. Individualism – Collectivism
       OR
    2. High Uncertainty Avoidance – Low Uncertainty-Avoidance
       OR
    3. High Power-Distance – Low Power-Distance
       OR
    4. Masculine-Feminine

Note: Show practical examples where possible.

Following the assignment, I expected students to follow specific instructions in order to complete the assignment successfully. Part of the instructions I gave them was to conduct research and use a storyboard, as a point of departure. I display the instructions for the digital story below in figure 4.5. Then in figure 4.6, I illustrate the storyboard they had to use as part of the planning process.

Figure 4. 5 Digital storytelling assessment task instructions

Instructions:

- Your group's entire presentation should be **NO longer than 4 minutes (2 minutes per person)**. You will be penalised for exceeding the time limit.
- In your digital story each member must record a 2 minutes audio clip of their part of the presentation to include in the digital story.
- Use graphics such as images and your audio recording for your presentation.
- Make sure that you use graphical or visual data and audio appropriately and effectively, and that it is not simply used as an excuse to fill your presentation. **NOTE:** Do not have too many graphics (pictures) and use visual effects appropriately.
- Make sure that you include a title and credits page (which includes references for your story. Use the knowledge you have gathered from the Information Literacy Course as guide in your referencing) for your digital story. You are also allowed to have text in-between slides/ your story.
- Make sure that your slides/story that includes text has enough white space. Also, avoid using long sentences or cluttering your slides with words.
- Please **edit** your story for spelling and grammatical errors. You will be penalised for such errors as they are **unacceptable** in professional documentation/presentation.
- This is a group presentation, and no student will be allowed to present by themselves. Please note that while your group will receive the same mark for the digital story and group presentation, each member will be individually assessed on their own presentation delivery skills (nonverbal) and subject knowledge. Each member's final marks will therefore be different.
- Ensure that each member gets roughly an equal amount of 'air time'.
- Please refer to the rubrics below for the assessment guidelines.
- Note that there are different stages to your digital story and you will be assessed in each stage of the story. The stages are:
    - **Stage 1:** Analyse your topic and plan– create your storyboard (see attached template)
    - **Stage 2:** Create and record your narrative (Use a phone and be in a quiet space)
    - **Stage 3:** Collect your images and music/audio clips (create a digital story folder on your USB)
    - **Stage 4:** Presentation and reflection (Publish and view digital story)

Below I illustrate figure 4.6, the storyboard which is a tool to help them plan and analyse the different parts of the students' digital stories. In the storyboard, there is space for drawings, or images. Then there is space for the words they can use to narrate the story. Then another part of the storyboard includes space for music and credits in order for the students to write down where they accessed the sources of information for the assessment task. This is done to avoid plagiarism.

Figure 4. 6 Storyboard

STORY BOARD

Production name:_____
Writer 1: _____
Writer 2: _____

Image Description/ Drawing:	Image Description/ Drawing:	Image Description/ Drawing:
Image credit:	Image credit:	Image credit:
Spoken Text:	Spoken Text:	Spoken Text:
Written Text:	Written Text:	Written Text:
Music/Sounds:	Music/Sounds:	Music/Sounds:

In order to answer the SRQ: *What are students' perceptions of digital storytelling in relation to academic writing skills?* I distributed Google Form questionnaires to a class of 40 students and I received 32 student respondents. The questionnaire was then divided into different questions and from those questions I saw thematic categories emerging from them and I decided to present them in categories that constitute themes These categories and themes that have emerged will hopefully help me answer the SRQ: *What are students' perceptions of digital storytelling in relation to academic writing skills?* The following sections explore the different questions and themes which emerged from my analysis of the questionnaire. The categories that have emerged from the questionnaire are the following: the digital storytelling process, digital storytelling challenges, digital storytelling enjoyment and students' impressions about the storyboard

4.4.1 Digital Storytelling process

The following section deals with the digital storytelling process which I believe will have a vital bearing on the SRQ: *What are students' perceptions of digital storytelling in relation to academic writing skills?* as well as on the students' ability to successfully complete the digital storytelling task. In the questionnaire administered to students, the n=32 respondents were

asked various questions about the way they were able to complete their digital stories. Table 4.4 illustrates these findings. Each response had one option which means that I calculated the percentage of each response out of 100% and divided it accordingly. The first question posed in this category was whether the students had access to a computer at home or not. The 75% (24) n=32 majority stated that they had computers at home while 25% (8) n=32 stated that they did not have access to a computer at home.

The second question is about whether the students had access to internet when they were off campus. 44% (18) n=32 respondents stated that they had access to internet while they were off campus while 56% (14) n=32 stated that they did not have access to internet off campus. Lastly, students were given options on where they did the majority of their work. In this question they were given more than one option for each option which means that the percentage for the collective section is not based on 100% according to the n=32 respondents but rather 100% based on each individual question. Therefore, the 69% (22) n=32 stated that they did most of their work on campus while 31% (10) n= 32 stated that they did most of their work at home, only 9% (3) n = 32 stated that they also did most of their work at a public library and 3% (1) n =32 stated that they did most of their work at a student residence.

Table 4. 4 Digital Storytelling Process

Item	**Questionnaire Frequency n(32)**	**Questionnaire %**	**Interview Freuency n(3)**	**Interview %**	**Document Sample Frequency n(15)**	**Document %**
Did you have acces to a computer at home?						
Yes	24	75	–	–	–	–
No	8	25	–	–	–	–
TOTAL	**32**	**100**	–	–	–	–
			–	–	–	–
Did you have access to the internet when			–	–	–	–

you were off campus?						
Yes	18	44	–	–	–	–
No	14	56	–	–	–	–
Total	**32**	**100**	–	–	–	–
Where did yo do most of the work for your digital story?						
On campus	22	69	–	–	–	–
At home	10	31	–	–	–	–
At the public library	3	9	–	–	–	–
School residence	1	3	–	–	–	–
Total	32	100	–	–	–	–

4.4.2 Digital storytelling challenges

The findings in table 4.4 illustrate the challenges students faced while compiling their digital stories. For this question, the students had more than one option therefore 100% will not be the total but each percentage response will be measured against 100% for each item. The first item and question asked the students about the most difficult part of the task that they were given and they had various options to choose from.

Table 4.5 below illustrates that 78% (25) n=32 respondents suggested that voice recording was difficult, 19% (6) n=32 also suggested that writing the story was difficult. Then 16% (5) n=32 students found difficulty in writing the script for the story, 31% (10) n= 32 students had difficulty in using the movie making software; 3% (1) n=32 had an ‘other’ issue which was mixing the music with the background visuals and 3% (1) n=32 student did not experience any difficulties in creating their digital story.

Table 4. 5 Digital Storytelling level of difficulty

Item	Questionnaire Frequency n(32)	Questionnaire %	Interview Freuency n(3)	Interview %	Document Sample Frequency n(15)	Document %
What was the most difficult part of the task?						
Voice recording	25	78	–	–	–	–
Writing the story	6	19	–	–	–	–
Creating the storyboard	5	16	–	–	–	–
Writing the script for the story	6	19	–	–	–	–
Using the movie making software	10	31	–	–	–	–
Other: mixing the music with the backgrounnd visuals	1	3	–	–	–	–
No difficulties	1	3	–	–	–	–
			–	–	–	–

4.4.3 Digital storytelling enjoyment: What did you enjoy the most about the digital story?

The section below and table 4.6 below illustrates the level of enjoyment the students had while compiling their digital story. For this section I wanted to get the students' thoughts and thus I posed an open-ended question for them to answer and write down their thoughts. From the n=32 respondents I saw similarities and congruencies emerging in responses, though worded differently and therefore, I have grouped the responses according to the themes that emerged. The percentages drawn are from the individual responses according to the n=32 respondents and each response was made to a percentage out of 100.

In table 4.6 below the question: "what did you enjoy most about the digital story", majority of students 47% (15) n=32 enjoyed editing, collecting pictures and putting them into the digital

story while 19% (6) n= 32 students stated that they had a sense of pride in the final product. Then in two categories, 16% (5) n= 32 enjoyed voice recording and another 16% (5) n= 32 enjoyed using the movie making software and 9% (3) n=32 students enjoyed exploring Hofstede's dimensions, the theory they were expected to conduct research on. The 6% (2) n= 32 liked the video presentation rather than having to do an oral while another 6% (2) n= 32 enjoyed making the storyboard and another 6% (2) n= 32 stated that they enjoyed the new experience. Then the following categories each had a 3% (1) n=32 response from the students. The responses pointed to a variety of learning responses such as: the positive learning experience, the ability to score marks easily; the advanced nature of digital storytelling; the exhilaration that the student experienced while creating the digital story; layout of scenes in the video were interesting; conducting the research; playing around with the various aspects of digital storytelling; the challenge that it presented; being able to tell a story about another African country; listening to other people's stories; and collecting pictures.

Table 4. 6 Digital Storytelling enjoyment

Item	**Questionnaire Frequency n(32)**	**Questionnaire %**	**Interview Freuency n(3)**	**Interview %**	**Document Sample Frequency n(15)**	**Document %**
What did you enjoy most about the digital story?			–	–	–	–
editing - collecting pictures and putting them in a digital story	15	47	–	–	–	–
final product sense of pride	6	19	–	–	–	–
voice recording	5	16	–	–	–	–
movie making software	5	16	–	–	–	–
Hofstede’s dimensions	3	9	–	–	–	–
video presentation rather than oral	2	6	–	–	–	–

The storyboard	2	6	–	–	–	–
New experience	2	6	–	–	–	–
learning experience	1	3	–	–	–	–
easy marks	1	3	–	–	–	–
Advanced	1	3	–	–	–	–
exhilarating	1	3	–	–	–	–
layout of scenes in the video	1	3	–	–	–	–
research	1	3	–	–	–	–
Playing around	1	3	–	–	–	–
challenge	1	3	–	–	–	–
Telling a story about another African country	1	3	–	–	–	–
Listening to other people's stories	1	3	–	–	–	–
collecting pictures	1	3	–	–	–	–

4.4.4 How did you find using the storyboard to connect the words to the pictures?

Table 4.7 below illustrates the level of ease or difficulty the students had when using the storyboard to connect the pictures to the words. The students had three options to choose from: easy, difficult, it was okay. From the responses I found that 56% (18) n=32 students found the task easy; 41% (13) n= 32 found it difficult while 3% (1) n=32 stated that it was okay.

Table 4. 7 Storyboard, connecting pictures to words

Item	**Questionnaire Frequency n(32)**	**Questionnaire %**	**Interview Freuency n(3)**	**Interview %**	**Document Sample Frequency n(15)**	**Document %**
How did you find using the storyboard to connect your pictures to words						
Easy	18	56	–	–	–	–

Difficult	13	41	–	–	–	–
It was okay	1	3	–	–	–	–
Total	**32**	**100**	–	–	–	–

In each response presented in the above table 4.7, I asked the students to explain their choice and table 4.8 below shows their responses under each of the three categories: easy, difficult and it was okay. Due to the open-ended nature of the question asking for elaboration, I grouped the students' responses into categories and themes which emerged from each individual response.

In the "easy" response, 13% (4) n=32 students stated that the digital storytelling assignment was easy because they could tell a story through pictures; 3% (1) n=32 stated that the picture invoked emotions; 9% (3) n=32 said that correlating with the storyboard became easy once the subject matter was clear; 7% (2) n=32 stated that words written in the storyboard matched with the pictures; 7% (2) n=32 stated that the spaces provided to fill in the information on the storyboard was easy and another 7% (2) n=32 stated that good teamwork made the task easy. Then 3% (1) n=32 stated that the software interface is user friendly and 3% (1) n=32 illustrated that cutting and pasting made the task easy. Then for those who thought the task was difficult, 25%(8) n=32 stated that their story did not connect their words with the video; 3%(1) n=32 stated that the task was not as easy as they had anticipated; 16% (5) n=32 stated that it was difficult because they couldn't use the software properly. Then 3% (1) n=32 stated that there was a limit of time, which affected them because they could not speak fast. Then 3% (1) n=32 said that the colours sometimes do not suite each other and another 3% (1) n=32 said that the language made it difficult to give vivid explanations or to find the right words for explanations. Lastly, 3% (1) n=32 stated that the task was okay for them although they found it a bit hard.

Table 4. 8 Connecting pictures and words justification

Item	Questionnaire Frequency n(32)	Questionnaire %	Interview Freuency n(3)	Interview %	Document Sample Frequency n(15)	Document %
Easy						
Tell story through pictures	4	13	–	–	–	–
Pictures invoke emotions	1	3	–	–	–	–
correlating with the storyboard became easy once the subject matter was clear	3	9	–	–	–	–
word written in the storyboard were match with the pictures	2	7	–	–	–	–
The spaces were provided to fill our information was easy.	2	7	–	–	–	–
Good teamwork	2	7	–	–	–	–
The software user interface is user friendly	1	3	–	–	–	–
because cutting and pasting on word	1	3	–	–	–	–
Difficult			–	–	–	–
my story board didn’t connect with my words and video	8	25	–	–	–	–
it was not as simple as I have anticipated	1	3	–	–	–	–
It was hard because I couldn't use the software properly	5	16	–	–	–	–

Because there was a limit of time, that affected me because i am not so fast on speaking.	1	3	–	–	–	–
sometimes the colors don' t sweet to each other.	1	3	–	–	–	–
Because of the language it was difficult for to give vivid explanations, finding the right words	1	3	–	–	–	–
It was okay		3	–	–	–	–
It was ok for me although I found it a bit hard	1	3	–	–	–	–

Digital Storytelling and Writing

The section that follows looks at using digital storytelling and the impact it had on student writing. I posed various questions to the students which I analyse in the section below.

4.4.5 Deciding on the focus of the digital story

The first question asked in this section was about the focus of the story and how the students decided on the focus of the story. This was an open-ended question and from the student responses, I saw that there were similar responses that were given by the students which I then placed into categories. Table 4.9 below reveals the different categories. The first category revealed that 16%(5) n=32 students decided on the focus of their story as a group. Then 13%(4) n=32 students stated that they chose the focus of their story based on the subject that they were familiar with and could identify with in order to tell the best story. Then 6%(2) n=32 students stated that it was making a video or recording and listening to their voice; Then 9%(3) n=32 chose what they could do best. Then in the categories presented below, individuals stated the following: they first wanted to talk about their country and then found that they had to change because of the contrast of the topic. Then another student stated that they chose their focus based on easy information; then another responded that they focused on the digital story by going to a quiet place. Another student wanted their digital story to be more advanced; another

responded by stating that they wanted to make their video nicely; then another responded that they wanted to stick to facts. Another responded that they had difficulty in getting a focus for the digital story because the group did not put in any effort in the project. Then another student stated that they worked alone in a quiet place; then another response stated that they demonstrated their pictures and the other response stated that they chose their focus by brainstorming. Each of the above individual responses had a 3% (1) n=32 response.

Table 4. 9 Focus of the digital story

Item	**Questionnaire Frequency n(32)**	**Questionnaire %**	**Interview Freuency n(3)**	**Interview %**	**Document Sample Frequency n(15)**	**Document %**
This was group decision.	5	16	–	–	–	–
We chose a subject that we were familliar with and could identify with in order to tell the best story.	4	13	–	–	–	–
The type of cultures	5	16	–	–	–	–
We chose a topic that was familiar to us	2	6	–	–	–	–
It was making a video or recording and listen to your voice.	2	6	–	–	–	–
By choosing what I could do best	3	9	–	–	–	–
We first chose to talk about our countries than we change because of	1	3	–	–	–	–

the contrast of the topic						
easy information	1	3	–	–	–	–
i just to focus on the digital story by going to a quiet place.	1	3	–	–	–	–
i decided to make sure that my digital story to be more advanced that the one i did later	1	3	–	–	–	–
We decided on focus on how to make our video very nicely	1	3	–	–	–	–
I decided to stick to facts	1	3	–	–	–	–
i wanted to learn and pass so that i need to focus	1	3	–	–	–	–
it was very difficult as a group didn't put the effort in the projects	1	3	–	–	–	–
Work alone in a quiet place	1	3	–	–	–	–
I was creative	1	3	–	–	–	–
I demonstrated my pictures	1	3	–	–	–	–
working on it every even after taking supper	1	3	–	–	–	–
Brainstorming	1	3	–	–	–	–

4.4.6 Did you feel the need to edit for language errors

In the following section I asked the students if they felt the need to edit for language errors as a closed ended question. Table 4.10 illustrates their responses and 31% (10) n=32 said that they did feel the need to edit for language errors and 69% (22) n =32 respondents said that they did not feel that they needed to edit for language errors.

Table 4. 10 Language error editing

Item	**Questionnaire Frequency n(32)**	**Questionnaire %**	**Interview Freuency n(3)**	**Interview %**	**Document Sample Frequency n(15)**	**Document %**
Did you feel the need to edit for language errors?						
Yes	10	31	–	–	–	–
No	22	69	–	–	–	–
Total	**32**	**100**	–	–	–	–

Following the question: 'Did you feel the need to edit for language errors?' Students were asked to explain their response. Table 4.11 below illustrates some of the student explanations as not all the students explained their answers to the aforementioned question. From the responses, I found that of the 31% (10) n=32 students who responded with a 'no' to the previous question, only 25% (8) n= 32 explained their answer. Then of the 69% (22) n=32 students who had a 'yes' response, only 56% (18) n=32 students explained their response.

From the students who stated that they needed to edit their digital stories before final submission, there were some themes which emerged, but not that many that were similar. One student stated that when speaking to a friend, is different from speaking in a film, annunciation and articulation is important. Thus, it was important to edit the digital story so that they could deliver the best presentation. Other students suggest that editing is important for language and grammar. One suggests that using the right tenses is important, another student states: *"It's important to edit language to make sure that everything is grammatically correct."*

Other responses spoke about proof reading and the importance thereof so that avoids errors. One student said that "[their] *script because did not add up at some point,"* thus there was a need to edit their work.

For the students who felt that they did not need to edit for errors, one student stated that they have good English skills and thus it was not a problem for them. Another student stated that they try and keep appropriate and formal practices, which made their task easier. Another student stated that pronunciation was an issue for them but they decided to keep their natural accent:

> *At first, I tried to change the language errors which one of them was how I pronounce words, but I found out the more I tried the more I kept pronouncing wrong. I decided to stick to my black accent, but there's always space for improvement.*

Another student stated that there was group work, then another responded by saying that there were no language errors because they practiced before doing the actual story. Other responses included looking carefully at grammar and others felt that the reader understood what was happening because the digital story was good enough.

Table 4. 11 Justification for language editing

Justification for the need to edit for language errors	
YES	**NO**
Speaking to a friend is different from speaking for film. Annunciation and articulation become important in order to deliver the best presentation.	I have good English skills so it was really a problem to me
because of right tenses	I try my best to keep appropriate and formal so practice made it easier.
want my things to be in order	wasn't needed
It's always good to improve on something if you can. In the beginning stages not many people go full force, and as a result the good or excellent results come from editing. No one is perfect with a language even if it is your home language.	At first, I tried to change the language errors which one of them was how I pronounce words, but I found out the more I tried the more I kept pronouncing wrong. I decided to stick to my black accent, but there's always space for improvement.
It is very easy to make silly mistakes, no matter how good you are with language.	no because luck of group work

It's important to edit language to make sure that everything is grammatically correct and that there are no mistakes.	I had no language errors because I practiced before doing the actual story
we did not want any errors with the end project	We were told to look carefully at grammar
I did a lot of editing because my script because did not add up at some point.	I feel like as long as the reader can understand what is meant to be said its good enough.
as i listened to the digital story later i noticed that there are some errors in my words as i was reading it, because i quote my words from the internet and some of the words were in Xhosa	
because us young people we usually cut words to write so we need to do that	
Just to proofread and make sure that we did not make mistakes.	
to make it beautiful editing is needed.	
Some of the words we used were not used correctly and were spelt.	
There are part where I made some mistakes and realized them after I have submitted the movie.	
the story must be clear to all listeners	
yes because i had to read what i wrote and it was for marks hence i had to make sure that everything was perfect	
yes, for checking grammar mistakes	
language is complex many aspect i dont know yet	

4.4.7 How many times did you have to rewrite your story so that you were happy with the end result?

The following section will address the amount of times the students rewrote their story before they were happy with the final products. Table 4.12 below illustrates that 66% (21) n=32 students stated that they had to rewrite their story more than two times; 16% (5) n=32 stated that they had to rewrite their story at least two times; 16% (5) n=32 had to rewrite it once and 3% (1) n=32 did not need to rewrite their story before they were happy with the final product.

Table 4. 12 Rewriting storyline

Item	Questionnaire Frequency n(32)	Questionnaire %	Interview Freuency n(3)	Interview %	Document Sample Frequency n(15)	Document %
How many times did you have to rewrite your story so that you were happy with the end result?						
More than two times	21	66	–	–	–	–
Twice	5	16	–	–	–	–
Once	5	16	–	–	–	–
None	1	3	–	–	–	–
Total	**32**	**100**	–	–	–	–

4.4.8 Did you use the introduction, body and conclusion structure for your digital story?

The following section addresses the question concerned with structure of the digital story. The students were asked if they used an introduction, body and conclusion structure when constructing their digital story. Table 4.13 below shows that 97% (31) n=32 stated that they used that structure while 3% (1) n=32 stated that they did not use an introduction, body and conclusion structure.

Table 4. 13 digital story structure

Item	Questionnaire Frequency n(32)	Questionnaire %	Interview Freuency n(3)	Interview %	Document Sample Frequency n(15)	Document %
Did you use the introduction, body and conclusion structure for your digital story?						
Yes	31	97	–	–	–	–
No	1	3	–	–	–	–
TOTAL	**32**	**100**	–	–	–	–

4.4.9 Were you able to be creative in your writing?

The following section addresses the creativity of students in their writing. The students were asked if they were able to be creative in their writing. Table 4.14 shows that 72% (23) n=32 suggested that they were able to be creative in their writing while 28% (9) n=32 stated that they were not able to be creative in their writing.

Table 4. 14 Creativity in writing

Item	**Questionnaire Frequency n(32)**	**Questionnaire %**	**Interview Freuency n(3)**	**Interview %**	**Document Sample Frequency n(15)**	**Document %**
Were you able to be creative in your writing?						
Yes	23	72	–	–	–	–
No	9	28	–	–	–	–
TOTAL	**32**	**100**	–	–	–	–

In addition to asking the students the above question, they needed to elaborate on why they were able to be creative in their digital storytelling task or not. In the answered questionnaire, I select some of the responses from students because not all of them elaborated on their response to their yes or no answer on the creativity aspect of digital storytelling. Therefore, one of the students who felt that they could be creative had the following to say:

> *"I felt that we were more creative with the video because it used effects and audio etc. But we were also creative when it came to our writing. We had our own original ways of creating the storyboard. Although I don't think anyone was in awe of creativity as it was a more subtle kind, since that was required for the assignment."*

This response suggests that students were able to use various mediums such as audio and storyboard to relay their research. Another student suggested that there were not many restrictions to how they could convey their research in the following extract:

> *"We were allowed to choose any topic and display it in any way possible. There weren't many restrictions so we could be creative as possible."*

Another student who felt that they could be creative stated that they could manipulate the audio in the following statement:

> "*We consider the history and what might have possibly influenced the culture. We were also able to manipulate the audio in a way that added quality to the final product.*

Then there were those who felt that they could not be creative in their task. Their reason for that response is mainly because they felt that they were not creative people. One particular student articulated that in the following statement:

> "*I'm still suffering in order to be creative I don't know where to put the logicals and how to be creative."*

While another student claimed that

"*after proper planning it was simple to write the story."*

The last selected student response suggested that due to the research aspect of the assignment, they did not see the task as a creative task. They illustrate their sentiments by stating the following:

"*The answer to the problem mostly involved factual research."*

4.4.10 Did you see this as an academic writing experience?

Students were then asked if they saw the digital storytelling task as an academic writing task. Then table 4.15 shows that 91% (29) n=32 students saw the digital storytelling task as an academic task while 9% (3) n=32 stated that they did not see it as an academic writing task.

Table 4. 15 Academic writing experience

Item	**Questionnaire Frequency n(32)**	**Questionnaire %**	**Interview Freuency n(3)**	**Interview %**	**Document Sample Frequency n(15)**	**Document %**
Did you see this as an academic writing experience?						
Yes	29	91	–	–	–	–
No	3	9	–	–	–	–
TOTAL	**32**	**100**	–	–	–	–

After I asked the students whether they saw the digital storytelling as an academic task, I asked them to elaborate on their responses. I therefore highlight some of the responses from the students. The following responses are from students who stated that they felt the task was academic. The first student stated the following:

> "*We use language to communicate every day, but seldom take time to structure our thoughts. The assignment challenged me to think about the finished product, the steps necessary to achieve it, and then the experience or journey in actually bringing the final product to fruition."*

The above statement illustrates that the student was able to structure their thoughts and think about the process of writing. Another student had the following response:

> *"I learned something new therefore I felt it was an academic pursuit."*

This student states that learning something new is academic. Another response shares similar sentiments to the previous student and their response is as follows:

"*It taught me a lot, so it does qualify as an academic writing experience."*

Finally, another student stated the following:

> *"I saw it as an academic writing experience because I had to write what I researched using my own words and use my understanding."*

This student then states that they had to conduct research and write it in their own words. Then the following responses are from the three students who did not see the digital storytelling process as academic. The first student's states:
"*my skills aren't good as academic writing."*
The second student stated that the task was fun while the third student stated the following:
"*I experienced a lot and learnt and improved my skills."*

4.4.11 Did you need to do some research for this project?

Table 4.16 below illustrates student responses when asked if they needed to do some research for the digital storytelling assignment. The findings show that 94%(30) n=32 needed to do research for the assignment while 6%(2) n=32 felt that they did not need to conduct research for the task.

Table 4. 16 Research for the digital story task

Item	**Questionnaire Frequency n(32)**	**Questionnaire %**	**Interview Freuency n(3)**	**Interview %**	**Document Sample Frequency n(15)**	**Document %**
Did you need to do some research for this project?						
Yes	30	94	–	–	–	–
No	2	6	–	–	–	–
TOTAL	32	100	–	–	–	–

4.4.12 Do you think you presented information in a logical manner/argument

Table 4.17 below illustrates the response students gave when asked if they think they presented their information in a logical manner or argument. The student responses show that 66% (21) n=32 saw the task as an academic writing task while 31% (10) n= 32 illustrated that they did not and 3%(1) n=32 were not sure whether they saw the task as an academic one or not.

Table 4. 17 Logical presentation of story

Item	**Questionnaire Frequency n(32)**	**Questionnaire %**	**Interview Frequency n(3)**	**Interview %**	**Document Sample Frequency n(15)**	**Document %**
Did you see this as an academic writing experience?						
Yes	21	66	–	–	–	–
No	10	31	–	–	–	–
I am not sure	1	3	–	–	–	–
TOTAL	**32**	**100**	–	–	–	–

4.4.13 State your level of agreement with the following statements

Table 4.18 below illustrates the level of agreement that students had with various statements. The levels of agreement varied from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The first statement asked was whether the students' problem with writing is with language and grammar and 22% (7) n=32 strongly disagreed, another 22% (7) n=32 disagreed; 41% (13) n=32 were neutral and 6% (2) n=32 agreed and 9% (3) n=32 strongly agreed. In the second statement: "*My problem with writing is coherence and cohesion*", 19% (6) n=32 student strongly disagreed with the statement; 31% (10) n=32 disagreed; 31%(10) n=32 were neutral; 16%(5) n=32 agreed and 3%(1) n=32 strongly agreed. Then the statement: "*I always understand what is expected of me in assignments*", the research revealed that no one strongly disagreed; 16% (5) n=32 disagreed; 25% (8) n=32 weree neutral; 41% (13) n=32 agreed and 19% (6) n=32 strongly agreed. Then in the statement: *"I have adequate support from my lecturers in writing",* 3% (1) n=32 students strongly disagreed, while 13% (4) n=32 students disagreed, 31% (10) n=32 were neutral; 16% (5) n=32 agreed and 38% (12) n=32 strongly agreed. In the statement: "*I read books and newspapers for enjoyment",* 9% (3) n=32 students strongly disagreed; 16% (5) n=32 disagreed; 41% (13) n=32 were neutral; 13% (4) n=32 agreed and 22% (7) n=32 strongly agreed. Then the last statement: "*Reading helps improve my writing"* showed that 3% (1) n=32 strongly disagreed with the statement; another 3% (1) n=32 disagreed; while 9% (3) n=32 were neutral; 28% (9) n=32 agreed and 56% (18) n=32 strongly agreed.

Table 4. 18 Level of agreement

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total participants
My problem with writing is language and grammar	22% (7)	22% (7)	41% (13)	6%(2)	9%(3)	100% (32)
My problem with writing is coherence and cohesion	19%(6)	31%(10)	31%(10)	16%(5)	3%(1)	100% (32)
I always understand what is expected of me in assignments	0% (0)	16% (5)	25% (8)	41% (13)	19% (6)	100% (32)

I have adequate support from my lecturers in writing	3% (1)	13% (4)	31% (10)	16% (5)	38% (12)	100% (32)
I read books and newspapers for enjoyment	9% (3)	16% (5)	41% (13)	13% (4)	22% (7)	100% (32)
Reading helps improve my writing	3% (1)	3% (1)	9% (3)	28% (9)	56% (18)	100% (32)

4.5 Lecturer perceptions of digital storytelling in relation to academic writing

The following section deals with the third SRQ: *What are lecturers' perceptions of digital storytelling in relation to the development of academic writing skills of first-year students?* In order to examine this SRQ, I believe that interviews with Lecturer and Professors who have experience teaching academic writing skills, as well as having used digital storytelling as a pedagogic tool. Thus, taking into account the aforementioned, I have selected three participants, one of whom is a lecturer (Lecturer A) in the Department of Architectural Design and two of the other interviewees are Professors (Lecturer B and Lecturer C) in the Education Department. All participants are based at CPUT where the research was conducted. The reason why I chose these participants is that I could not find participants in the IT Department, where the questionnaires were distributed to the students, who were both familiar with teaching academic writing skills and using digital storytelling as a pedagogic tool. Consequently, on further probing, I found the participants in different departments of the same institution, which was still convenient for me as I had easier access to these participants. Taking the aforementioned into consideration, I will then analyse the interviews that were conducted with the lecturers. The interview questions were divided into two parts: the first being teaching academic writing and the challenges students face and the second set of questions deal with digital storytelling as a pedagogic tool. When asking each question to the three participants, I divided them into themes which I hope will help answer the SRQ.

4.5.1 Teaching academic writing and student challenges

The section below deals with academic writing and the challenges students face when they are expected to produce work related to academic writing. I will then unpack the various responses from the participants regarding academic writing and digital storytelling.

4.5.1.1 Academic writing challenges students encounter

The first academic writing question asked in the interviews with the three lecturers, is about the general challenges that students encounter when they write academically. From this question, there were many similarities between the lecturer answers and I then wanted to categorize them as best as I could for what I deem would be the best analysis for this question. The various themes or categories that emerged from the lecturers' responses to challenges students face when writing are as follows:

- Language
- Fear of writing / no understanding of how to write
- No writing and/or reading practice
- lack of research skills

Taking the above-mentioned challenges, I will now deal with each one individually.

Language

During the interviews, I asked the participants about the general writing challenges that students have had, according to their lecturing experience. One of the common writing challenges that student seems to encounter are around language. This is to state that, the research has revealed two areas of language that students struggle with and those areas are expression in English as a second and even third language in some instances as well as grammar. According to Lecturer A, who has lectured undergraduate students from first to third year in the Department of Architectural Design, students struggle to express themselves in their writing because English is not their home language. She states that when students were asked to discuss matters in their mother tongue, or home language and did not have to use English as a medium of expression, they were more confident and comfortable to express themselves. However, when they had to express themselves in English, they "*were a bit more hesitant because they did not want to sound silly, they do not want to appear not to be knowledgeable.*" The reason for this hesitation is that she notes that English is their second or even third language, which accounts for lack of confidence in expressing themselves. In this regard, Lecturer C, who is a Professor in the Department of Education and has lectured from undergraduate to doctoral level, echoes similar sentiments about language, as those of Lecturer A. Lecturer C asserts that she thinks language is a big challenge because she thinks "*language for many students is a second or third language so grammatical errors are notable*." Other language related issues that Lecturer C notes are that students struggle to construct sentences

and paragraphs and further struggle with coherence or making links between sentences. Then lecturers, as mentioned above, observed that students have a fear of writing or they do not understand how to write.

Fear of writing / no understanding of how to write

Following language errors, lecturers also noted that students have a fear of writing or they display little or no understanding of how to write. Lecturer A states that wen students are in a space of comfort, they feel comfortable talking, they can tell you exactly what they understand about a topic but as soon as they have to put it down in words, they falter. She assumes that they have a fear of writing as she further asserts that

"*it's almost as if as soon as they have to put it down, black on white, they have this perception in their minds that [they] can't write So even before they start writing, they say to themselves that [they] can't write*."

She further supports this statement with the following words:

> "*I think that was the biggest stumbling block for many of them because when you have a conversation, they can answer you. They are coherent, they know where to start, they know how to explain it to you, they can conclude it in the conversation*."

In the interview with Lecturer B, a Professor in the Department of Education, at CPUT, who has experience teaching both undergraduate and post graduate students also states that students struggle to write. She asserts that students' writing was "*not academic at all"* and that the issue needed to be addressed with an academic writing course where students could be taught these academic writing skills. Additionally, Lecturer B noted that writing challenges were not only prevalent in undergraduate students' academic work, but they could be found with post graduate students as well because students struggled to understand how to write research papers. She did note however, that the writing improved with Masters and Doctoral students as they were better equipped with research writing skills and also had more practice with academic writing. As regards writing challenges were concerned Lecturer C also noted that students do not know how to introduce subjects or introduce the topic, they do not know how to conclude and how to summarize or even offer recommendations in their academic writing texts.

Following fear of writing, another category or theme which emerged was that students lacked writing and/or reading practice.

Inadequate reading and writing practice

In this challenge, both Lecturer B and Lecturer C asserted that students do not read enough which is why their writing is poor. Lecturer B even suggests that there is a correlation between reading and writing as she used the egg and yolk metaphor to explain the relationship between reading and writing. She stated, "*So it's like an egg yolk…your writing informs your reading. Your reading informs your writing… So reading and writing go together, you cannot separate them*." She even suggests that when assessing academic writing, you can tell whether a student has read or not. In addition, she states that good writing also needs practice, that is, "*you need to keep on writing, you need to keep on reading for you to better your writing*." The last academic writing challenge that affects students generally is lack of research skills.

Lack of research skills

In this section, Lecturer B and Lecturer C emphasize that students do not conduct enough research. Such research requires the aforementioned reading skills that students seem to lack. Lecturer B suggests that "*The honours' students come to the research course without the academic writing skills. And without that, it's not easy for them to come up with a research project.*" Another research skill that students seem to lack is the skill of referencing. Both Lecturer B and Lecturer C suggest that students cannot reference properly. Lecturer B suggests that the reason that students struggle to reference is because they have not yet internalized the skill of referencing in her statement:

> "*Most of the students coming from school do not have the knowledge about referencing. They don't know why they should reference; they don't know how they should reference. So, now at the honours, maybe the lowest part which I teach, at the honours, most of the students are coming into honours without that knowledge of referencing. Well some might have done it, you know, during their bachelor's courses but still you find that it's not yet internalized*"

While students lack these academic writing skills, Lecturer B and Lecturer C suggest that students could get or should have gotten these skills from Academic Writing courses in their undergraduate degree.

Following Academic Writing challenges that students face, I will now look at the results related to the question:
"*Are there specific challenges that are specifically encountered by first years as opposed to other levels? Explain."*

4.5.1.2 First year student specific academic challenges

When Lecturers were asked if there were any challenges specific to first year students as opposed to other years, Lecturer A suggests that it depends on the support structure. She states the following:

"*I think it all depends on their support structure in first year. When the department puts in place a good support structure, then the first years do almost as well as the second or third years would."*

Then Lecturer C, who currently lecturers fourth year, honours, masters and doctoral students, put forward a view that there is an academic literacy subject in the undergraduate but she does not see the effect of it because fourth year students do not even know about the CPUT's referencing system that is available. Additionally, students struggle to transfer knowledge into their academic writing in lower levels. Lecturer C suggests that students experience similar writing challenges to any other year but that academic writing skills improve once the students get to masters and doctoral level as they are more familiar with the processes of writing academically.
The following section will deal with the interview question:

"*What do you think the main cause of academic writing problems? Language and grammar or coherence and cohesion? Other? Please specify."*

4.5.1.3 The main cause of academic writing problems

Following the specific challenges that students face, I enquired about the possible main cause of academic writing problems that students encounter. Lecturer A stated that all the options given: language and grammar as well as coherence and cohesion were an issue. She further stated that the reason for these writing challenges that students encounters are based on lack of reading as she assumes that students don't like reading as it's "not cool" or not fashionable. Further, students think in fragments and struggle to construct meaningful sentences. She then goes on to state that students need to be encouraged to read and further understand what they read and be able to tell the story with understanding. In this instance, she gives the example of her students that she urges to read with comprehension so that they can tell their grandmother whatever they have read and that the grandmother understands their narrative. Lecturer B, on the other hand, states that students have not been exposed to the appropriate courses for academic writing. Although the academic writing course is taught, it is not taught effectively. As a result, the academic writing course is seen as an exercise in ticking boxes. Lecturer C, states that from her observations and experience over the years, she has noted that language is one of the main causes of writing problems. Also, she stated that students show a lack of commitment towards their work; they do not read enough; they do not attend classes regularly. Additionally, she suggests that technology has made students prone to instant gratification and academic writing is a process which requires persistence and work.

After enquiring about the main causes of academic writing problems, I asked the lecturers about the assistance they offer students who struggle to write academically.

4.5.1.4 Assisting students who experience writing challenges

When asked the question: "*How do you assist students overcome their academic writing challenges?", Lecturer A* stated that she sees the students face to face and they have a one on one session. In these sessions she does the following:

> "*I then ask them…to read out loud what they have written. So you can't come to me if you don't have something that you have put pen down. So you read for me and then we try to first look at cohesion before we look…spelling and grammar is something that we leave for the very last and half the time I do not even need to go there because once I have the cohesion and the follow through of the story there. And then it goes back to*

the basics: do you have an introduction; do you have a closing that speaks to your introduction? Is your paragraph one idea at a time?"

Lecturer B then states that she assists students by giving them feedback on their writing. She alerts the students to their mistakes but does not make the corrections for the students as she believes that they will merely copy and paste the changes she has made but they will not learn anything from the task that way. Thus, she can only make suggestions and alert the students to their mistakes and let them find the correct ways to write. Lecturer C, on the other hand, states that at fourth year, the number of students is too many to tend to individually, thus they are encouraged to develop communities of practice. This means that the students get into groups that they work with, that they like. She also tells them the following:

"*They [must] read each other's work and they give feedback. And that they have said has helped a lot. So I create spaces for them to do it in class, I say to them: out of class, you can go to the library over the weekend, sit with your group, your community of practice and try to inculcate the skill that I am teaching*."

Additionally, they must read journal articles because:

"*they will teach [the students] how to construct sentences, how to construct arguments, how to construct a paragraph, how to construct an introduction, the body and the conclusion, the recommendations. So they must learn from those. I teach them the structures, but then they must take on the responsibility themselves with their communities of practice.*"

Consequently, all the lecturers want the students to take responsibility and accountability for the work so that they can improve on errors made and overcome challenges that they face when they write academically.

After finding out about the writing support that students have, I then asked the three lecturers the last question related to teaching academic writing. The question asked was: "*Do [the students] admit when they have problems?"*

4.5.1.5 Students admitting to having writing difficulties

When asked if the students admit when they encounter challenges or problems in their academic work, all lecturers stated that students do not always admit to that. When I probed the lecturers further as to why that is, Lecturer A responded by stating that there needs to be a point of trust between the academic and the student. She further states:

"*If the student trusts the academic or they feel that there is a sounding board they will say it. But very often, they don't. Often, there is too much pride for them to admit it. Sometimes it's not a cool thing to do. It depends on the personalities involved*."

Lecturer B suggests that

"when the student gets to university they think, I'm intelligent, I can do it. But I guess they do also get to a certain point to say yeah, I think things are done differently here. I need to know how things are done within the context."

She goes to further suggest that there are students who work on their assignments earlier on and they can correct errors ahead of time. However, there are those who are less confident and do their work last minute and are unable to get assistance because they did not have time to submit a draft. Lecturer C then states that students do not admit to having issues and tend to submit poor quality work and expect to pass but they get shocked when they are marked strictly. Sometimes, she will ask them to bring their essays to class and ask them to evaluate each other's work before she sees the final draft.

Having looked at teaching academic writing and challenges students face when writing academically, I will now look at digital storytelling as a pedagogic tool and the results yielded from the lecturer interviews.

4.5.2 Digital storytelling as a pedagogic tool

The following section will look at digital storytelling as a pedagogic tool. I will illustrate the benefits of using digital storytelling as a pedagogic tool, then proceed to look at aspects of academic writing that digital storytelling addresses. I will further look at the effectiveness of the tool for academic writing assistance. I will then review the challenges that digital

storytelling encounters as a pedagogic tool. Lastly, I will look at the diversity of digital storytelling and whether it can be used in various disciplines.

4.5.2.1 The benefits of using digital storytelling as a pedagogic tool

When asked about the benefits of digital storytelling, the lecturers' responses were similar in some places. Below, I have given each lecturer's response. I will then elaborate on some of the points, according to the lecturer's responses.

Lecturer A

It teaches them the following:

- To have a voice
- The opportunity for different media to be used
- Constantly improve your digital story
- A different way of looking at their work
- A sense of achievement

Lecturer B

It teaches them the following:

- Technology skills
- research skills
- organisational skills
- exploring the topic in-depth
- Respect for others
- How to relate to one another
- Structure - how to rearrange things
- ethics to avoid plagiarism

Lecturer C

It teaches them the following:

- A different technology
- Owning technology
- to have focus in their writing

Lecturer A suggests that digital storytelling allows that student, who will never stand up in class and speak up, it allows their voice to be heard. Then according to all the respondents'

digital storytelling allows students to use technology. Lecturer A states that since they come from a graphics background so in the digital story, they can use graphics in multiple ways, they can use it with personal hand writing, they can use it with photographs to tell the story, and they can use a range of things. Lecturer B stated that since we are in the 21st century, students are able to learn pertinent technology skills. Lecturer C further suggests that students are already good with technology and thus digital storytelling allows them to use technology differently, especially since it's free to download. In addition to this, students can use technology in interesting ways. They can combine music, voice and pictures if they wish and by so doing, they can make the digital stories their own. Another point highlighted by Lecturer A is that you can pre-record the digital story which "*means that you can improve on it all the time. Then you can listen back to it, you can review it yourself, you can ask a friend, you can ask someone that you are really comfortable with to give you feedback on it before you bring it into the classroom*." She then goes on to emphasize that students are expected to do that with any written piece anyway, improve on their writing anyway. Then Lecturer C also stated that digital storytelling allows students to have focus in their writing, which is a big skill because students struggle to get to the point. Subsequently, digital storytelling teaches them that skill of focusing on the most important point of the lesson.

Following benefits of using digital storytelling, the three lecturer participants were asked about the aspects of academic writing that digital storytelling addressed.

4.5.2.2 Aspects of academic writing digital storytelling addresses

The lecturers responded to the question: "*Which aspects of academic writing does digital storytelling address?"* Their responses were as follows:

Lecturer A:

Aspects of academic writing addressed by digital storytelling:

- Having a clear storyline
- Having an introduction, body and conclusion
- Be clear, not vague
- Message must carry to the audience
- Responding to the topic
- Creativity in responses

- Responding to a question or statement
- Convey story effectively and meaningfully

Lecturer B:

Aspects of academic writing addressed by digital storytelling:

- organisational skills
- how to structure their writing
- research skills
- ethics

Lecturer C:

Aspects of academic writing addressed by digital storytelling:

- Clarity
- Explicitness
- sequences
- building an argument or genre
- looking at different structures of writing
- sentence construction
- Grammar

After looking at aspects of academic writing that digital storytelling addresses, I asked the lecturers: "*How effective is this tool for academic writing assistance?"*

4.5.2.3 Effectiveness of digital storytelling for academic writing assistance

When asked about the effectiveness of digital storytelling for academic writing assistance, Lecturer A states the following:

> "*This is my personal encounter with students. When they have a sense of having achieved something successfully, it puts a smile on their face and it builds their self-esteem. And once self-esteem grows, more things are possible in their minds. They actually believe that they can achieve, they can do it, they can try something new.*"

Lecturer B stated that it can help students in their organizational skills; teach them how to structure their writing work on their research skills, and learn ethics. Then lecturer C stated that she saw no evidence that digital storytelling is an effective tool for academic writing assistance.

However, she can assume that it is because when she gave her students a literature review assignment, which was a build up from a digital storytelling project, she was quite impressed with the students' literature reviews. She further states that the literature review was improved due to a combination of modules, of which digital storytelling was a component.

After finding out the effectiveness of digital storytelling, I asked the lecturers about challenges that digital storytelling encounters as a pedagogical tool.

4.5.2.4 Challenges digital storytelling encounters as a pedagogical tool

The following section deals with challenges using digital storytelling as a pedagogical tool encounters. From the all three lecturer responses, I found that technology was a big challenge. All three lecturers suggest that students struggle to have access to technology. That is, both Lecturer A and Lecturer C, state that while smart phones are able to do voice recording and have movie making software, not all the students have access to such phones as they cannot afford them. Also, Lecturer C emphasizes that access to internet is not always a possibility for students. Also, for both Lecturer A and Lecturer C, students need headphones and other resources such as computers to create their digital stories in the classroom. But budget constraints prevent that from happening. Additionally, lecturer A states that even though there are those with access to smartphones and technology, we cannot assume that they can use it effectively. In this regard, Lecturer B also states that since students work with technology, facilitators who work with these students also need to be aware of and be able to use technology effectively. Other challenge raised by Lecturer A is lack of student attendance. This is an issue because it impacts on student getting feedback before their final submissions. Lecturer C further adds that plagiarism and copy right infringement are an issue because students copy and paste work, especially if they have done the work last minute. Then when students plagiarize, they are also unable to filter out what is important and what isn't and thus they are unable to be explicit in their work. Another issue that has transpired for Lecturer C is that students struggle to get a focus for their story and this is usually a result of work done at the last minute. The last issue Lecture C raises is that students are not aware of confidentiality. She gives the example of student show day for the digital stories and some students "*have talked about their private life and then in social media they say, well this person said this. [Then], you know, it comes out on social media*." As privacy was not a concern for students, Lecturer

C has made sure that students are aware of rules of engagement and confidentiality when it comes to class and social media.

After finding out the challenges of using digital storytelling as a pedagogic tool, I ended the interviews by asking the lecturers if digital storytelling could be used in other courses effectively.

4.5.2.5 The use of digital storytelling in different courses effectively

When the lecturers were asked about the diverse use of digital storytelling, they all agreed that it could be used in a variety of courses. According to Lecturer A, it has been used in many theory and practical subjects. Lecturer B states that it has been used in science and even chemistry. While Lecturer C states that they developed a book where digital storytelling was used in nursing, in Education, in Business, Tax Laws, and Design, among other subjects. Subsequently all lecturers stated that digital storytelling can be used as a pedagogy in any and every subject or course. Having looked at the above questions and the responses, I will now address another theme which emerged from the lecturers' responses, Fees Must Fall.

4.5.2.6 Other emerging themes: Fees Must Fall Students Protests

During the interview, two lecturers, Lecturer A and Lecturer C, mentioned the negative impact of the fees-must-fall student protests. At this juncture, I find it necessary to discuss briefly the fees-must-fall-protests. The fees-must-fall-protests took place between 2015 and 2016 across different South African universities. During these protests, students demanded a fee-free decolonized tertiary education (Buttelli & Le Bruyns, 2017; Glen, 2016; Mutekwe, 2017). When students called for decolonisation of the curriculum, they felt that even though the South African education system had made progress since South African democracy, there was still a lot to be done. This is to suggest that, although the country had made significant progress since being freed from apartheid, more could be achieved to rid South African education of colonial type education (Buttelli & Le Bruyns, 2017; Le Grange, 2016; Mutekwe, 2017). Subsequently, the fees-must-fall social movement "typically entails academics and students ridding higher education institutions of the procedures, values, norms, practices, thinking, beliefs and choices that mark anything non-European and not white as inferior" (Mutekwe, 2017, p. 143). To achieve their goal, the student protestors felt that higher education institutions needed to decrease their fees and ultimately have a fee-free higher education, especially for the poor

(Buttelli & Le Bruyns, 2017; Glen, 2016; Le Grange, 2016; Mutekwe, 2017) hence they adopted the slogan: fees must fall.

In order to achieve their overall goal of free education, students took to protesting and rioting as well as burning vehicle and parts of higher education institutions in South Africa. There was even a slogan going around social media which was to the effect of "Burn to be heard" (Mutekwe, 2017, p. 142). Therefore, the violent means that the students used during the protests resulted in regular disruptions, lack of student attendance and even the shutting down of universities across South Africa, CPUT was not an exception. In light of the student protests, both lecturers stated that they were expected to push students through because there was not enough time to assess the students. Likewise, the students have been more relaxed since the movement started because they were constantly pushed through. I feel that perhaps one of the issues is that there was no time for formal assessment during those times and perhaps alternative assessments like digital storytelling might not just speak to academic writing, but also address assessment issues in higher education. I will further address this matter in Chapter 5.

4.6 Conclusion

The findings in this chapter have so far revealed the impact of digital storytelling on academic writing. I have thus far made a rigorous selection of and analysed the three research instruments: documents, questionnaires and interviews. In my analysis, I have attempted to relate to the three SRQs posed in my research. In my attempt to that, I have developed three main themes: Academic writing scaffolding in academic courses; student perceptions of digital storytelling; and lecturer perceptions of digital storytelling in relation to the development of academic writing. I will further dwell on the unexpected theme which emerged during my analysis: fees-must-fall and the impact it had on academia. In the next chapter, I propose to discuss these findings which have been presented and analysed in this one.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF DATA THROUGH EMERGING THEMES

5.1 Introduction

The present Chapter proposes to present a discussion of the data findings that were presented in Chapter 4. The data was presented in chronological order, according to the instruments used: documents, questionnaires and interviews. In this Chapter, however, I wish to explicate the findings according to themes that have emerged. Such themes were largely guided by the sub-research questions (SRQs), which underpin my main research question (MRQ): "*To what extent can digital storytelling strengthen or impede the academic writing skills of ESL first year students?"* I believe that the three SRQs should be seen as componential parts of the MRQ because the MRQ can only be answered through the SRQs. The discussion of findings in this Chapter is meant to address that. Subsequently, I observed three themes: how scaffolding occurs in traditional academic writing courses; student perceptions of digital storytelling; and lecturer perceptions of digital storytelling in relation to academic writing. Then from the interviews that I conducted with the three lecturers in Chapter 4, I presented a fourth theme emerged, that is, the impact of fees-must-fall protests. In my discussion I also refer to some theoretical issues that I have used in my literature review in Chapter 2. In order to sharpen my argument, I also envisaged the need to bring in additional theoretical points wherever I deem it necessary in this Chapter. At this juncture, I discuss the first theme: academic scaffolding in academic courses.

5.2 Theme 1: Academic Writing Scaffolding in Academic Courses

In order to review and discuss how writing scaffolding unfolds in academic modules, I first look at the issue of language and the threat it poses to students' academic success.

5.2.1 Student writing struggles: a language problem?

In my discussion, I begin by looking at language and the impact it may have on learning. In my findings (see section 4.2 in Chapter 4), I have mentioned that most students are not native speakers of English. Most student participants spoke one or more of the eleven official languages spoken in South Africa, as I have indicated in Chapter 4 (see table 4.1 in section 4.2). Even two of the three lecturers interviewed agreed that for some students, English is sometimes a second or even third language (see section 4.5.1 in Chapter 4). In my findings, I observed that some student participants even spoke French and Arabic, among other languages, which are not native to South Africa. These findings have serious implications for students'

university careers because students who are not native speakers of English, especially those who come from countries that do not even speak English, are being set up for failure. In my literature review Chapter, I have referred to Boughey (2008) and Clarence (2010), who state that ESL speakers are deemed unprepared for academics and are ultimately set up for failure when entering university. By the same token, Lillis (2001) states that the types of students entering institutions of higher education differ from those who had entered university before. She specified that the previous students could cope with university and the demands of academic writing. In order to accommodate students, whose home language is not English, CPUT has a language policy which states that they support and protect the development of previously disadvantaged indigenous languages. Additionally, these languages should be used for educational purposes, among other uses (Cape Peninsula University of Technology, 2016). Furthermore, the policy implies that there should be a shift towards multilingualism. In the academic context that means using more than one language to teach or communicate (Van Lier, 2004). Taking into consideration the above points: the students' languages and the call for multilingualism, I have found it extremely difficult to engage with students who speak different languages. For one, as the students' academic writing course lecturer, I speak only two of the eleven official languages in South Africa, one of which is English. Secondly, the students in my classes are not all from South Africa and some have never even been exposed to English before coming to South Africa. As a result, the policy for multilingualism in the classroom is almost impossible to implement, given the multicultural and multilingual set up of the now traditional university. Even though multilingualism is a democratic right for students (Van Lier, 2004), as an educator, it is hard to transfer knowledge to students using a variety of languages. Apart from the difficulty in transferring knowledge in a variety of languages, as a lecturer, I am presented with language errors of a grammatical nature in student academic writing. Students who are ESL speakers tend to have more language errors and experience greater difficulties in their academic writing (Lea & Street, 1998, 2006; Lillis, 2001). Taking the points I have discussed above into consideration, I believe that it is imperative to penetrate/eliminate barriers to learning and academic writing, of which language is one of the leading causes of such failure. Therefore, to discuss my findings further, I now discuss the scaffolding that takes place in current academic writing modules.

5.2.2 The effects of language on academic writing success

In this section, I discuss the three categories of student essays that I have analysed. I also look at academic writing pedagogy and make suggestions that may help students who struggle the most with academic writing.

5.2.2.1 Language problem revisited

As I have indicated before, language creates barriers to academic writing success. In my literature review, I have alluded to Sylvester and Greenidge (2009), who put forward three types of students who experience writing problems. To reiterate, the first type of student has no issues with their writing but needs to revise grammar and language for errors. The second type of student needs assistance with prewriting activities such planning and drafting the essay and further has difficulty starting the essay task given to them. This writer takes a long time to complete the essay or does not complete it at all. The third type of student writer has sufficient ideas that they may share with the class. However, they struggle to develop their narrative. These types of writers bring me to my discussion of the student essays that I have analyzed in the previous Chapter.

In the essays that I have analysed in Chapter 4 (see section 4.3.2), I divided them into three categories: high, average and low performance essays (see section 4.3.2.1-4.3.2.3). In these three categories, I noticed that there are characteristics that were stipulated by Sylvester & Greenidge (2009) in the three types of writers. I will elaborate on the aforementioned characteristics in relation to the three categories of performance essays documented above and in the previous Chapter. To start, I will look at the sub-categories that were used to mark the essays. That is: content, language and structure and logical organisation. I will make a comparison between the three categories: high performance, average performance and low performance essays. On the basis of my comparison, I wish to make assertions about these findings and the impact of pedagogic strategy has on student writing skills.

5.2.2.2 Essay performance discussion: content, language and structure and logical organisation

I begin my discussion of essays by looking at high performance essays (see section 4.3.2.1 in Chapter 4). In this category I begin my discussion by looking at content. I first reiterate the analysis made in Chapter 4 and then discuss these findings. I start by conducting a superficial

discussion of each performance category. At a later stage, I wish to do a more detailed discussion of these performance categories by making a comparison between them. Then taking into consideration the different performances in academic writing, I illustrate the impact of pedagogy on student writing.

5.2.2.2.1 High performance essays

Content

In the high-performance category for content, most students were able to relay information well. The criteria for marks in that category states that the essays are very good, interesting and the subject is well covered, as I articulated in the previous Chapter. Further, my remarks as the lecturer, as well as analysis of the essays show that these students have dealt with the topic and content very well. However, while most students in this category covered the subject matter very well, there were minor errors such as not explaining concepts fully or having one or two vague descriptions in the essay. Though that was the case, I could still understand fully what they were trying to convey to the reader. Therefore, this suggests that student essays in this category could cope fully with the content with very minor issues which did not affect the coherence or cohesion. The next category I discuss is the language section of high-performance essays.

Language

To reiterate the assessment rubric found in the previous Chapter, the students in the high-performance category received overall good marks for the language use. The criteria for such marks suggest that the students made use of very good grammatical structures and vocabulary. Although in some instances, spelling and punctuation could be improved. In my analysis of these essays, I noticed that students had very minor punctuation errors which were mostly based on capitalization of common noun words. In some instances, capitalization of proper nouns such as titles of books were missing. I also noticed other language errors such as run on sentences and the use of colloquial language. In my analysis of language in essays found in this category, I discovered that while there are language errors, they do not affect the meaning in the essays. The next category I discuss is structure and logical organisation.

Logic and Structural Organisation

The structure and logical organisation of essays in this category were fairly good. The criteria show that these essays had a clear introduction and the conclusion was also acceptable. Furthermore, the major key ideas were well supported and developed. Overall, the essays were well-written. The introduction and conclusion were of a good length. Furthermore, the concepts were dealt with thoroughly and in logical development of events. While there were minor errors in format, such as spacing and long paragraphs, they did not negatively affect the overall meaning of the essay.

Following high performance essays, I now discuss average performance essays.

5.2.2.2.2 Average performance essays

Content

When I analysed average performance essays (see section 4.3.2.2 in Chapter 4), my findings and criteria in that category illustrated that content was usually average. This is to suggest that the students showed very superficial details and only the obvious was present, unlike the high-performance essays. In the essays that I marked, I noticed that the students had vague descriptions of events. This means that, the students in this category did not elaborate on details nor define relevant concepts that were part of the topic. Additionally, I found that there were too many ideas in paragraphs rather than a central theme or idea that is thoroughly explored. I recognized that in one instance, the content was not well organised, there was not logical development of ideas or events. Taking the preceding issues into consideration, it is understandable that students in this category are able to write about content and they have a basic grasp of how to relay content to the reader. However, these students need help to properly grasp content and thus may need more assistance than high performance students, especially with elaboration and creativity.

Following content, I now look at language.

Language

Based on the criteria for language in essays found in this category, I found that there was adequate use of grammar and vocabulary. Spelling was average, as there were some spelling errors, as well as punctuation. Other essays in this category displayed restricted use of the prior

language structures and had weak spelling and punctuation in places. My lecturer remarks further illustrate that student essays in this category need to improve their grammar and punctuation as it affected syntax. There was also repeated use of colloquial language, especially words like "thing" or "things". My findings regarding language for average performance essays show that students need help with their language skills as it has some impact on the overall coherence and cohesion of the essay. I now look at structure and logical organisation.

Structure and Logical Organisation

To briefly summarize the findings in the previous Chapter, I found that the organisation was mostly acceptable and in some instances, it was not. This is to suggest that, the organization needed work, key ideas were developed but links between ideas were not established in places. Furthermore, the introduction and conclusion required work and sometimes they were missing. My remarks as the lecturer revealed that the factors illustrated before were apparent in essays that formed part of this category. In my analysis, I also evidenced the long paragraphs which contributed to the poor development of ideas. In some instances, paragraphs were too short and thus not enough detail was developed. From these findings then, I assert that student essays in this category require work. Even though they pass the academic essay assignment, they need to improve their structure and logical organisation.

Following average performance essays, I now discuss low performance essays.

5.2.2.2.3 Low Performance essays

Content

I start my discussion of low performance essays by looking at content. I briefly summarize the findings in Chapter 4 (see section 4.3.2.3) and make assertions based on my findings. Students in this category seem to have only the obvious content present. In most cases, however, the content covered was below average, it was thin and in some instances insufficient to the point of being unconvincing. That means that students in this category struggled to deal with the content that they needed to, as per the topic. In addition to these issues, my remarks as the lecturer illustrates that the students address other content which is not related to the topic. Moreover, the essays also show contradictions and there are insufficient details covered, as I indicated before in the criteria for essays in this category. These findings suggest that students who produce these essays need assistance in understanding the topic and covering the relevant

content. Since content makes up 50% of the overall mark, means that helping students in this section of their essay is of utmost importance.

After content, I now discuss language.

Language

The language criteria for essays in this category suggest that students have adequate use of grammar and vocabulary as well as spelling and punctuation. However, some students have a restricted or display a weak use of these language conventions. My lecturer comments coincide with those in the rubric. Additionally, syntax needs work because it affects the coherence and cohesion of the essays. Likewise, most of the essays in this category are riddled with grammatical, spelling and punctuation errors, unlike the previous two performance categories. From this analysis then I see that while language has been tested separately, it impedes meaning and also affects content. Therefore, students need help with language, in order to convey the content adequately and most importantly, for them to have coherence in their essays.

The last section I look at is structure and logical organisation of essays in this performance category.

Structure and Logical Organisation

To reiterate the criteria for structure and logical organisation, I believed that the students' work is acceptable or unacceptable in some instances. This suggests that most of them have no organisation and system in place. Furthermore, there is no development of key ideas and pertinent paragraphs like the introduction and conclusion are not well integrated or they are missing. The lecturer remarks are similar to those found in the criteria. Therefore, from this observation I demonstrate that students in this performance category need a lot of work when it comes to structure and logical organisation.

Now that I have discussed the performance categories separately, I wish to compare and contrast them. By so doing, I hope to show the effectiveness or lack thereof of pedagogy on developing student essay writing skills.

5.2.2.2.4 Comparison between high performance, average performance and low performance essays

In the preceding section and in the previous Chapter (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.2.1), I established that high performance student essays did well in all three sections of their essays: the content, language and structure and logical organisation. In content, they were able to perform extremely well and covered all the relevant concepts. Their language use was very good and even in places where there were some language issues, it did not affect meaning making nor did it affect their content. Their structure and logical organisation was done. Consequently, these students understood what was required of them and they were able to make the essays interesting and some even mastered the art of academic writing for this particular assignment.

In the second performance category of essays (see 4.3.2.2 in Chapter 4), I pointed out that unlike the first category of essays, the students mostly covered the obvious and they were able to answer the topic. Further to this, there were more language and structural errors. However, these did not hinder the meaning from coming across to the reader.

While the first two categories show that students were able to achieve the task, at various levels, the lower performance students failed to achieve the task on more than one instance. They struggled to answer the topic, the content was not adequately dealt with, if it was dealt with at all. Moreover, while the other two categories had some language errors, the meaning was still clear and there was no impact on coherence and cohesion. In this low performance category (see section 4.3.2.3 in Chapter 4), however, that was not the case. I found that language had a huge impact on meaning as well as content. Students struggled to express themselves. Furthermore, structure and logical organisation was also affected by students' inability to express themselves through language.

After examining these three categories, I revisit my initial assumptions about academic undergraduate writing skills, particularly first year students. These assumptions are that students cannot write, they are underprepared for academic writing (Boughey, 2008). This change in perspective is based on my findings which suggest that there is a category of students who are able to write and have been adequately prepared for academic writing at university. I hasten to remark that these are high performing students. Therefore, my renewed perspective

on students' ability to write brings me to questions of the teaching of academic writing skills and the impact they have on students. In Chapter 4, I illustrated my teaching strategy by demonstrating the PowerPoint presentation slides that I use in my class and the brief that I used for the academic essay assignment. Therefore, keeping in mind my teaching strategy through PowerPoint, I wish to critically examine this teaching style and find out why it worked for some students, the high performing and to some extent, the average performing students. Most importantly, I wish to dwell on why it did not work for some, the low performing students. From my analysis, I hope to look at other strategies of teaching that I used, that is, digital storytelling.

In order to address these performance categories and the needs that students have, I wish to revisit the three academic models that I dealt with in Chapter 2 (see section 2.2.8 in Chapter 2): the study skills model; academic socialization model; and academic literacies model.

5.2.3 The effects of pedagogy on student writing performance

It is noticeable that while students are all taught academic writing, the teaching method is ineffective for some. In the lecturer-based findings analyzed in the previous Chapter (see section 4.5.1.3 in Chapter 4), Lecturer B stated that students had not been exposed to the appropriate courses for academic writing. Although the academic writing course is taught, it is not taught effectively. As a result, the academic writing course is seen as an exercise in ticking boxes. In retrospect, her sentiments further support my claim about the ineffectiveness of academic writing programmes. In this case, I focus on my own teaching of this course as both researcher and participant. While I had initially assumed that my teaching methods were effective in communicating academic writing skills, the student essays appear to confirm otherwise. As a lecturer, my PowerPoint presentation method speaks to one of the three academic models I previously contended with: the academic socialization skills. Before I elaborate on this model and its impact on student academic writing, I rule out the study skills model, as I strongly believe that it is not relevant to my teaching style. I rule it out because this model looks at language and teaches formal structures such as grammar and punctuation and assumes these are enough for academic writing success. From the lecture slides and rubric, it is evident that academic writing requires more than a mastery of language to ensure success. In light of this, Clarence (2010) suggests that language as a measure of academic writing ability is problematic because if students cannot master language, they are deemed incompetent.

Further to this, Du Preez and Fossey (2012) suggest that while language skills are desirable, a lot of South Africans are not native speakers of English, which exacerbates their poor writing skills. These researchers go on to state that it is imperative then, that students are taught other academic writing skills such as communicating information accurately and reliably, among others. Therefore, taking the above illustration of academic language into consideration, I wish to refer back to the academic socialization skills model. To summarize this model, as dealt with in Chapter 2, it requires students to acquire ways of talking, writing and thinking that require using literacy. Most importantly, students are acculturated into the academic world, that is, they learn ground rules of the particular academic discipline (Lea & Street, 2006). While this model seems adequate in the teaching of academic writing skills, it is also problematic, as we have seen with the lower performing student essays. Furthermore, it does not consider the skills that students bring with them when they enter university. In this regard, Leibowitz (2009) suggests, that higher education institutions need to understand what students carry in their suitcases when they enter university, as I have indicated in Chapter 2. With a view to understanding this concept of students' suitcases, or what they carry with them, I have illustrated in Chapter 2 the concept of the third model: the academic literacies model. This model not only looks at students' social practices, or what Leibowitz considers 'suitcases', it is also concerned with meaning making. Meaning making, together with social practices, especially for students who are non-mother tongue speakers, should empower students. Consequently, in the third model, I look at aspects of my teaching so that I can give students a voice; allow them to use their identity as non-native speakers of English to their advantage. Lastly, challenge the academic standards where authority is in the hands of the established authors and researchers and allow students to have use their voice and have authority and confidence in their writing. This writing model then, leads me to use digital storytelling as an attempt to address student needs. Later, I discuss the effect of digital storytelling on students, as well as lecturer perceptions of this genre.

Before I discuss student perceptions about digital storytelling, I wish to mention that there are other findings revealed in Chapter 4 (see section 4.5.1.1 in Chapter 4), which suggest that student challenges are not the result of poor pedagogy, which does not cater to all student performances, but also a result of students own doing. In the next section, I deal with other student writing challenges, which appear to support that the results of students are largely due to their own doing. I have based this discussion of my findings from the lecturer interviews (see section 4.5.1.1 in Chapter 4).

5.2.4 Other Student academic writing challenges

My interviews with the three academic lecturers corroborated the assumption that language, spoken and written, is a major contributor to students' poor academic writing performance. From the interviews (see section 4.5.1.1 in Chapter 4), I also found there were other patterns which emerged and ad sentiments were echoed by all three lecturers when asked about student writing challenges. Apart from language, which I have discussed earlier, I look at the following categories that lecturers deemed were causes for poor academic writing. They are:

- Fear of writing / no understanding of how to write
- No writing and/or reading practice
- lack of research skills

5.2.4.1 Fear of writing / no understanding of how to write

In the lecturer interviews (see section 4.5.1.1 in Chapter 4), all three lecturers enunciated in some way or other that students have a fear of writing or they do not understand the nuances of academic writing. Holmes, Waterbury, Baltrinic and Davis (2018) suggest that students have fear and anxiety which results in negative writing experiences. Holmes, Waterbury, Baltrinic and Davis (2018) further explore some of the causes of writing anxiety. The University of Texas Writing Centre suggest that students fear writing because they are using a new and unfamiliar academic writing style (Holmes et al., 2018). Also, students are scared of criticism that they have received in the past. Furthermore, the idea of writing for a tough audience is among the fears that students experience with writing. Lecturer A, elaborates on this idea of fear of writing in Chapter 4 (see section 4.5.1.1) where she states that students are able to articulate their ideas well, however, when they are expected to write down their thoughts, they falter. She stated that even before writing, they have a perception in their minds that they can't write. Although the assumption is that undergraduate students experience writing difficulties, Lecturer C specified that poor writing for students were not only prevalent in first year writing, but that it was also evident in post graduate students' writing (see sections 4.5.1.1 - 4.5.1.2 in Chapter 4). Furthermore, she clarified that students' writing only really improved at masters and doctoral level. Student writing fears, therefore suggest that they need help to not only overcome their language barriers, but also such fear of writing. Later I discuss how digital storytelling gives students the confidence to write. The next category I discuss is students' lack of writing and reading practice.

5.2.4.2 No writing and/or reading practice

In the previous Chapter (see section 4.5.1.1), Lecturer B and Lecturer C suggest that student do not have sufficient writing practice nor do they read enough. I have focused on the notion of lack of writing skills as voiced by Graham et al. (2018) in my literature review. They suggest that students spend little time writing or being taught how to write. This lack of writing is problematic because students need to write in order to be successful at school, university and even in their work one day (Graham et al., 2018). In addition to writing, Lecturer C also illustrated that there is a correlation between reading writing in that your reading informs your writing and vice versa (see section 4.5.1.1 in Chapter 4). This is to suggest that, if you want to be a better writer, you need to write more. In the same vein, Graham et al. (2018) suggest that when reading is taught, then writing becomes better. However, lecturers have evinced that students do not read nor do they write enough. Even in a level of agreement question students were mostly neutral when asked to state whether they read books and newspapers and magazines. Further, in the same level of agreement question, just over 50% of students stated that they strongly agree with the statement that says "reading improves writing". From these student responses, I assume that students are aware of the impact that reading has on writing, however, they do not read enough. Therefore, while the focus of my research is writing, I cannot assume that reading does not impact writing as Lecturer B suggests that there is a correlation between reading and writing where reading informs writing and vice versa (see section 4.5.1.1in Chapter 4). Taking the relationship between reading and writing into consideration, I wish to illustrate how digital storytelling will help students not only improve their writing, but also improve their reading. Morgan (2014)suggests that digital storytelling can help students with reading aspects such as developing vocabulary and fluency. Further to this, the process of creating digital stories requires students to read and reread their narrative before they present the final version of their digital stories, thus not only is reading improved but writing as well (Morgan, 2014; Sylvester & Greenidge, 2009). Following lack of reading and writing practice, I also wish to illustrate how students lack research skills, according to lecturer interviews.

5.2.4.3 Lack of research skills

In Chapter 4 (see section 4.5.1.1) Lecturer B and Lecturer C suggested that students do not possess basic skills and other academic writing skills such as referencing. Both the lecturers suggested that these research skills should have been taught in academic writing programmes,

however, they do not filter through to students' academic writing. In my literature review Chapter, I have explored various authors ideas of academic writing skills that students need to possess. Ohler (2006) suggests that students should work on academic writing skills. He also adds that digital storytelling can also assist students with their academic writing skills, research skills being one of them.

From the above academic writing challenges experienced by students, it is evident that students need a multifaceted solution to their academic writing challenges. While I propose digital storytelling as a solution to academic writing, I wish to explore this genre in more detail. Thus, the following sections will focus on student perception of digital storytelling and lecturer perceptions of digital storytelling. I now discuss the second theme: student perceptions of digital storytelling.

5.3 Theme 2: Student Perceptions of Digital Storytelling in relation to Academic writing

In this section I discuss student perceptions of digital storytelling in relation to academic writing. I discuss the questionnaire findings draw in the previous Chapter by looking at how students created their digital stories and the editing process involved.

5.3.1 Language and editing

I have specified before the various issues that are present in student writing. Even lecturer interviews and literature suggested that students struggle with language in their writing. However, when students were asked to state their level of agreement with the statement: "my problem with writing is language and grammar"; majority of students were neutral with their responses. They neither agreed nor disagreed (see section 4.4.13 in Chapter 4). Only 9% strongly agreed that they have language and grammar issues. Additionally, when asked if the students needed to edit for language errors, as many as 69% stated that they did not need to edit their digital stories for such errors. From these findings and the essays analysed (see section 4.3.2 in the previous Chapter), which show that most students, even the high performing students experience language and grammar issues, there is a contradiction. This contradiction suggests that students have language and grammar; however, they may not be aware of these language and grammar issues. Perhaps lecturer comments about students not admitting that they have problems can give us insight into the contradictory findings of documents analysed and student responses the questions asked (see section 4.5.1.5 in Chapter 4). Although when students were asked to elaborate on why they felt they needed to edit for language errors or

not, they had different responses (see section 4.4.6 in Chapter 4). Some of the responses for those who felt like they did not need to edit for language errors because they have good English skills and one stated that they had no language errors in their digital stories because they practiced their writing before compiling the digital story. The latter response, though suggests that while this student felt that they did not need to edit for language in their final digital story, they had to practice beforehand to eliminate language errors nonetheless. Then students who stated that they needed to edit for language had various responses. Some of the responses suggest that they needed to edit in order to use the correct tenses. Another student stated that it is easy to make silly mistakes, no matter how good you are with language. This response reiterates my earlier sentiments and remarks, that is, even high-performance essays had some language errors. Additionally, this student remark supports the notion of how digital storytelling aids students with their vocabulary and language as Morgan (2014) suggests that some of the affordances of digital storytelling are that students can improve their spelling and vocabulary.

In addition to language, editing the digital stories more than twice seemed to apply to majority of students in the findings (see section 4.4.7 in Chapter 4). Then as few as 5 students stated that they only needed to edit their digital story twice and another 5 students stated that they edited their stories one and one student claimed to have not edited their digital stories. The above, in relation to editing for language suggest that digital storytelling is similar to academic writing in that the students are afforded the opportunity to properly edit their work before final submission. While students were not asked to elaborate on why they needed to edit their work, I can assume from the language editing responses that students needed to edit for language errors. Also, their use of the storyboard allows them to edit their initial story even before they digitise the story. Even when asked about how they found the storyboard, most students stated that it was easy (see section 4.4.4 in Chapter 4). However, those who experienced difficulty in their storyboard stated that they needed to use the correct language; also, their storyboard did not connect with the words. From the latter statement, I can assume that editing is needed and also crucial in digital storytelling. This appears to be in keeping with the views of Sylvester and Greenidge (2009) and Morgan (2014), who state that the storyboard allows the students to combine graphics and words which need to be carefully edited for comprehension. Subsequently, reading and rereading of storyboard and digital stories is crucial so that the combination of pictures, text and audio makes sense. Furthermore, the literature I have

explored in Chapter 2 suggests that the process of storyboarding facilitates the introduction of logic and sequence in their writing and reduces omissions and gaps that can be found in traditional essay drafts because the writer can be alert to such gaps in their writing and make necessary amendments before recording their narration (Morgan, 2014; Sylvester & Greenidge, 2009).

Following language and editing, I discuss structure.

5.3.2 Structure: introduction, body and conclusion

In the findings (see section 4.4.12 in Chapter 4), most students stated that they presented information in a logical manner. Another question aimed at structure (see section 4.4.8 in Chapter 4), 31 out of the 32 students stated that their digital story had an introduction, body and conclusion. When I compare these findings with those of the essay writing, where some students did not have an introduction and conclusion or both. I find that most students are aware that they have to have an introduction, body and conclusion. I believe that this was the case because digital storytelling goes through the academic writing process in more depth than traditional academic writing process. In that there is planning, through the use of the storyboards. These storyboards allow students to plan their story from beginning, middle and end. Also, since the storyboard is usually paper based, students need to edit the board before they can compile pictures and audio. Then even after they have moved from paper to the technological aspect of digital storytelling, they still need to edit their videos and narrative for errors. Thus the thorough editing process in creating the digital story, allow students to have a better narrative I believe. As I have mentioned in my literature review, Morgan (2014) and Sylvester and Greenidge (2009) believe that students need to be more aware of editing in the digital storytelling creation process because they what they have written needs to make sense before it can be recorded. Therefore, the process of creating the storyboard shows students that the process is important than the product as observed by Gachago et al. (2014).

Following language, I discuss the academic aspects of digital storytelling.

5.3.3 Academic writing and research

In the findings section (see section 4.4.10 in Chapter 4), 29 out of the 32 students stated that they saw the digital storytelling as an academic experience. Then 3 students stated that they

did not see it as an academic writing experience. Those who saw the task as academic had various responses regarding their response. To reiterate one of their responses in the previous Chapter (see section 4.4.10 in Chapter 4), the student stated the following:

> "*We use language to communicate every day, but seldom take time to structure our thoughts. The assignment challenged me to think about the finished product, the steps necessary to achieve it, and then the experience or journey in actually bringing the final product to fruition."*

This statement suggests that the digital storytelling task allowed the student to structure their thoughts in order to communicate effectively. By so doing, I believe that the student displays the skill of critical thinking, which is part of the academic writing discourse as pointed out by Ohler (2006). Moreover, the steps that they take to achieve the task illustrates that they saw the task as academic, especially the planning stage and development stages of academic writing. Other students stated that they learned something new which they felt was an academic pursuit. It stands to reason that learning something new is an academic endeavour because as I have pointed out in my review of literature, Lillis (2001) and Clarence (2010), among others stated that literacy allows students epistemological access. This is to suggest that, acquiring and using knowledge are based on an academic pursuit (Love, 2004). In addition to knowledge learned, Love (2004) indicated that multimodality should help students use knowledge and also solve problems with that knowledge. Morgan (2014) also suggests technological tools are multimodal in that they have various formats such as graphic images, music and audio, among others. This means of conveying information facilitates learning of content because students have multiple means of receiving and conveying information. I believe that since students are aware of having acquired knowledge during the process of using multimodal digital storytelling, is a step in the right direction of their academic writing improvement. Then one student believed that the digital story required them to conduct research and write it in their own words. To me, the latter statement points to the effectiveness of digital storytelling because students need to write down researched work in their own words because in digital stories, they need to narrate their work. Although majority of students stated that they saw the assignment as an academic task, there are those who felt that it was not an academic assignment. To reiterate their reasons, one felt that their academic writing skills were not good, another student stated that it was fun and another student claimed that they experienced and learned a lot and

improved their skills. From these responses I ascertain that the students not seeing the digital storytelling project as academic are actually positive because by not seeing the task as academic, students are less intimidated by it. Although one student did not elaborate on skills, I can perhaps assume they are talking about their writing skills since they had not been exposed to digital storytelling beforehand. Furthermore, one student stipulated that their academic writing skills are not good therefore if they saw the assignment as non-academic then they may feel more comfortable building their academic writing skills through digital storytelling until they are confident in their writing. Thus, I believe that there are positive outcomes from that aspect of using digital storytelling, even for students who do not see it as an academic task.

In addition to views on digital storytelling as an academic task, findings presented in the previous Chapter (see section 4.4.9) show that majority of students stated that they were able to be creative in their digital stories. Majority of students stated that they were able to be creative while a few indicated that they were not able to be creative. To reiterate the findings stated in Chapter 4 (see section 4.4.9), those who stated that they were able to be creative gave reasons for their positive response to the question posed. One of the students stated that the video was more creative because they were able to use audio and other effects. Additionally, the students were able to be creative with the storyboard. Another student stated that they were able to be as creative as possible because there were no restrictions. Then another stated that they were able to manipulate the data. The ability to be creative with this multimodal approach is said to help students find their voice, gain confidence and have structure in their writing (Sylvester & Greenidge, 2009). And since these students are tech savvy, they are able to manipulate technology, which is a good skill to have in the 2st century (Morgan, 2014). As I have communicated in my review of literature, literacy skills that are taught should go beyond the classroom and prepare students for the world of work. Furthermore, the use of creativity speaks to students' identities, which McKinney and Norton (2008) suggest are socially, historically and politically embedded. In South Africa, specifically, Thesen and Pletzen (2006) have indicated in the literature review Chapter that there we should look at different ways of addressing students' academic needs. They suggest that the traditional models (study skills and academic socialization) that have previously been used to teach academic writing, are not adequate. That is especially relevant for the diverse South African classroom. Even students are aware of the need for "decolonisation" of education, as mentioned in the previous Chapter.

I wish to dwell on the concept of decolonisation in more depth when I later address the topic of the fees-must-fall-protests.

Although I view creativity as a positive shift in assisting students write better, we cannot assume that all students are creative or that they will embrace the technology based teaching approach to writing. That is because in the findings (see 4.4.9 in Chapter 4), there are also students who could not be creative in their digital stories. Most of these students stated that they were by no means creative individuals; therefore, when asked to be creative, they struggled with the task at hand. One statement made by a student stood out for me and it is as follows: "*I'm still suffering in order to be creative I don't know where to put the logicals and how to be creative."* From the words suffering, I assume that the student struggled with the process of creating the digital story. Then they also state that they did not know where to put the logicals, which I assume would be logical order of pictures and music, for example. From the poorly worded sentence, I also assume that this student struggles with academic writing, particularly language and grammar. Then for this student, they also have an issue with creativity, which is another stumbling block towards them achieving their academic task which was meant to aid them but has not been as successful as I would assume. Therefore, the technical or even creative side of digital storytelling for some students is the down side of using technology because it may cause more issues for students. In keeping with the view of Gachago et al. (2014) I have stated in Chapter 2, that research conducted with different departments showed that nursing students in particular needed more support with using digital devices an also creating their digital stories. This struggle can be attributed to various backgrounds which are impacted by socio-economic factors. Other factors include different schooling backgrounds of learners. For example, design students were naturally more creative and were therefore able to achieve the task confidently. On the other hand, nursing students were by profession, less creative and thus they had feelings of fear and lack of confidence (Gachago et al., 2014). Though this was the case, Gachago et al (2014) found that while the nursing students struggled with the process, they took pride and had more confidence in using digital storytelling after they had completed and viewed the task. Similarly, in my findings (see 4.4.3 in Chapter 4) I noticed that when the students were asked what they enjoyed the most about creating digital stories, some revealed that they enjoyed the final product and the sense of pride they felt when they had completed their digital stories and they were displayed in front of the class. In addition, some students enjoyed listening to other students' digital stories. Therefore, I assume that while

some students struggle with aspects of the digital stories and experience feelings of fear and anticipation, they are able to take pride in their final product. To further analyze this aspect of fear in creating a digital story, I compare it to the fear of academic which I have elaborated on in Chapter 2 where various authors illustrate struggling writers' fear of writing. However, unlike digital storytelling, where students are able to gain confidence in the end, poor academic writing skills continue to be a problem for students until they are in post graduate. This is to suggest that most students struggle with writing until they are graduate students. The only students who seem to cope with the demands of academic writing are high-performance students.

At this juncture I wish to discuss more challenges students face when they create their digital stories.

5.3.4 Challenges faced by students when creating digital stories

Although some challenges with digital storytelling process have been addressed, I expand on more challenges that I previously addressed, based on student questionnaires. A challenge I wish to address is students' lack of access to technology. Findings presented in the previous Chapter (see section 4.4.1) suggest that while a great majority of students have access to a computer when they are home, some do not. Another finding stated in Chapter 4 (see section 4.4.1) is that almost half of the students who completed the questionnaire do not have access to internet when they are home. Then findings in Chapter 4 (see section 4.4.1) also revealed that majority of students did most of their digital storytelling project on campus and very few did their work at home. From the above mentioned issues, it is evident that lack of access to technology is an issue, especially since digital storytelling needs technology to operate effectively. In addition to the questionnaires, all three lecturers also indicated that students struggle to have access to technology because some cannot afford smart phones which allow them to record audio and take pictures for their digital stories (see section 4.5.2.4 in Chapter 4). Then even if students have such phones, they struggle to access internet. Lecturer A also raised another interesting point and that is we cannot assume that since students have technology, they can use it effectively (see section 4.5.2.4 in Chapter 4). This stands to reason because I discovered in findings and in Chapter 2 that some students fear using technology even though they are exposed to it and are mostly considered to be digital natives. To add to the challenges that have already been highlighted, students were asked about the most difficult

part of the digital storytelling task (see section 4.4.2 in Chapter 4). Most of the students stated that recording the audio. However, students did not elaborate on what they meant. This appears to confirm Wang and Zhan's (2010) view, which suggests that some students do not like the sound of their voice and use music instead of their voice. Nevertheless, I do not believe that was the case, or at least it was not stated anywhere in the responses that I reviewed from the students. Though that may be, in another section of the findings (see table 4.7 in section 4.4.4 of Chapter 4) I noticed that some students expressed that they had trouble connecting what they were saying to the pictures. Then another student also conveyed that it was difficult keeping to the time limit because they could not speak fast enough. Then another student found difficulty with explaining what was happening in the story vividly. Another technology related challenge I detected in the previous Chapter (see table 4.5 in section 4.4.2 of Chapter 4) is that students had was mixing the music with other elements such as pictures and audio in the digital storytelling. Using the movie making software was also another challenge that the students experienced. These technology challenges, especially those that are software related, illustrate that as a lecture teaching these students, I may not have been able to help the students use the technology. While I am fairly confident in my ability to use technology, it is at this point in time where I wish to articulate that I did not go through the software in much depth because I had the misconception that the students, being in an Information Technology department, would be able to maneuvers around the software without much trouble. Thus I made a very surface level demonstration of the software in class. Even though my lack of attentiveness may have contributed to the student difficulties in using software, I would like to indicate that some students did not attend class regularly. As Lecturer A specified in Chapter 4 (see section 4.5.2.4), there was also lack of attendance in her class which resulted in students submitting work that was not checked and I can also assume that these students did not have adequate training or introduction to the digital storytelling software. Lack of attendance also resulted in students' inability to use movie making software and plagiarism which lecturer C disclosed in Chapter 4 (see section 4.5.2.4). The issue of plagiarism then is counterproductive to the intentions of using digital storytelling because students copy and paste information straight from the source without attempting to put it into their own words.

Having looked at challenges that digital storytelling poses, I now discuss lecturer perceptions of digital storytelling in relation to academic writing.

5.4 Theme 3: Lecturer Perceptions of Digital Storytelling in Relation to Academic Writing

To address the lecturer perceptions of digital storytelling, I continue to address challenges that they disclosed about using digital storytelling.

5.4.1Challenges of using digital storytelling as a pedagogic tool

As mentioned before, I advocate for the use digital storytelling to assist students with various aspects of academic. These aspects include language and vocabulary and overcoming fear of writing and gaining confidence in their writing abilities, to name a few. Digital storytelling, is not without its challenges specified earlier, some of the challenges include student fears about using technology and one of what I believe is a challenge when using digital storytelling is lack of access to technology or as I previously discussed, the inability to use it effectively. As for the technology challenge, I have earlier stated that in lecturer remarks. On the issue of technology, I believe that it is worth noting Morgan (2014), who suggests that technology is an issue for some educators because they fear technology and will thus resist implementing it in the class. From this assertion then I am inclined to believe that in instances teachers may need to get over their own fears of technology in order to create a conducive learning environment where technology empowers both teacher and student. Then another challenge that one particular lecturer picked up on is that some students do not consider the ethical implications of sharing other students' personal information that was shared in class on social media (see section 4.5.2.4 in Chapter 4). In that regard, she does point out that there are privacy concerns thus rules of engagement need to be explained to students and also adhered to when it comes to presenting digital stories. I believe this issue of privacy also speaks to students' understanding of ethics because academic writing requires one to be ethical. Therefore, this specific challenge gave the lecturer space to deal with issues of ethics and from those issues, one can also address issues like plagiarism and so forth.

Having discussed the challenges of using digital storytelling as a pedagogic tool, I now look at the benefits of using digital storytelling.

5.4.2 Benefits of using digital storytelling

While I mentioned some benefits of using digital storytelling, at this juncture, I elaborate on benefits of using this media. I do so by focusing on lecturer remarks on the matter. In the previous Chapter (see section 4.5.2.1), all three lecturers put forth that one of the benefits of

using digital storytelling is that it teaches students technology skills. Lecturer A made it clear that students can use a different media. While I have noted that the use of technology is beneficial in aiding students with a variety of skills, especially those related to academic writing, I concur with Holmes et al. (2018) who believe that the ability to use technology is a desired graduate attribute, especially since we live in the 21st century where such skills are essential. Another benefit of digital storytelling is that students are able to have a voice and not using, but owning the technology they use. As I have mentioned in my literature review, students struggle to voice their opinion in academic writing as they are not the traditional students who were once adequately prepared for the demands of academic writing. I believe that a student having a voice speaks to the idea of literacy as social practice. This is consistent with the position of Street and other members of the New London Group who believe that students' social practices should be taken into consideration when they are expected to deal with academic writing matters (Lea & Street, 2006). Other benefits of using digital storytelling are that it teaches academic skills such as research, ethics to avoid plagiarism and organizational skills to name a few. Further to this, Yang and Wu (2012) suggest that digital storytelling enhances such skills, including critical thinking skills and referencing skills to avoid plagiarism (Sylvester & Greenidge, 2009).

At this juncture, I wish to illustrate academic writing skills that are addressed by digital storytelling.

5.4.3 Academic writing skills addressed by digital storytelling

The lecturer interview findings presented in the previous Chapter (see section 4.5.2.2) suggest that one of the benefits of using digital storytelling is that it aids students with their organizational skills and teaches them how to structure their writing. That is, students' essays having sequence or as another lecturer states, digital stories help students to have a clear introduction, body and conclusion. My review of literature in Chapter 2 revealed that the storyboard aspect of digital storytelling is a mapping of the story. It uses techniques that visually illustrate the beginning, middle and end of the story. Furthermore, it shows how the most important elements of the story are incorporated into the flow of the overall narrative as supported by Ohler (2006). By mapping their stories, the students are able to place their ideas into the order that their stories should follow. Additionally, Ohler (2006) suggested that the story map allows teachers to assess the strength of the story, while it is still in the planning stages so that they can challenge students to strengthen a weak story. To conclude, by following

the process of digital storytelling, the students are able to have structure in their stories and thus convey the story effectively and meaningfully, as I revealed in the previous Chapter.

Another benefit of using digital storytelling is improving research skills, as shown by lecture comments in the previous Chapter (see section 4.5.2.1). In Chapter 2, I have alluded to Gachago et al. (2014) in Chapter 2, who postulates that students are able to acquire research skills because they had to conduct such research before creating their digital stories. In this instance then, digital stories are technological tools that learners allow students to learn with and from. In this regard, Ohler (2006) is of the view that the multimodal medium of digital storytelling enhances students' critical thinking skills among others. This suggests that research alone is not enough, students need to carefully select information to present and as mentioned earlier, the storyboard for instance, allows students to map out their story before they present it as a digital story. By doing so, students are able to carefully select research elements they should include and those that they should not. Yang and Wu (2012) suggest that critical thinking requires reflection in what one does or believes. Therefore, since we are in an era of information overload, Yang and Wu (2012) propose that it is important to help students develop their critical thinking skills so that they may be able to choose what information is necessary or authentic and what information is not. Since the process of creating digital stories requires students to reflect and critically analyse information, Yang and Wu (2012) suggest that it may be a good tool to use, despite there being little research conducted on the impact of digital storytelling on critical thinking skills.

In addition to the above-mentioned benefits of using digital storytelling, findings stated in the previous Chapter (see section 4.5.2.2) reveal that improving on language and grammar is another advantage. As I specified earlier, students struggle with language and thus digital stories are beneficial in aiding students in this aspect. Morgan (2014) indicates that digital stories help students improve their vocabulary. Yang and Wu (2012) also believe that digital storytelling is beneficial to language acquisition and student academic achievement. This is because the oral aspect of storytelling contains a variety of elements. These elements include repetitions, singing and even chanting. Subsequently, such elements influence the way we learn.

At this juncture, I speak about the effectiveness of using digital storytelling in academic writing.

5.4.4 Effectiveness of using digital storytelling in academic writing

I have explained in both my literature review and in my findings that digital storytelling has many benefits. Nevertheless, I have also highlighted the challenges we face when using this multimodal medium. From this point of departure, I wish to discuss the lecturers' views on the effectiveness of digital storytelling in academic writing (see section 4.5.2.3 in Chapter 4). In this discussion, I also include literature that I believe will help sharpen my argumentation. Before I look at the positive effects of using digital storytelling, I discuss one lecturer's view where she stated that there is no proof that digital storytelling is effective for academic writing assistance (see section 4.5.2.3 in Chapter 4). However, she can assume that because when she gave her students a literature task, she was impressed because they wrote well. The assignment was a combination of modules which also included a digital storytelling component. While lecturer C stated that she has no proof of the effectiveness of digital storytelling in academic writing, research has thus far illustrated there are aspects of academic writing that the digital story can aid effectively. These aspects include research and language and grammar among others. Lecturer B, articulates that digital storytelling is effective in aiding students' in their organizational skills, as it teaches them structure. From her response regarding the effectiveness of digital storytelling, I have observed that the skills that digital storytelling is effective in helping students with the skills that it addresses, which are laid out above. While Lecturer C stated that there is no evidence of the effectiveness of digital storytelling on academic writing, Lecturer C indicated that through digital storytelling, students are able to have a sense of having achieved something. This sense of achievement builds their self-esteem then she mentions that once self-esteem grows, a lot more is possible for them. They have a sense of achievement and they can try something new. Although digital storytelling has mostly focused on academic writing skills, Lecturer B's sentiments echo in the literature I have reviewed, as well as some of findings I have discussed earlier. These points confirm that, students need to be motivated to write and a technology-rich classroom can aid students in this regard (Yang & Wu, 2012). In my review of literature, Ohler (2006), exemplified that while digital stories are multimodal, the emphasis is on the story being told, the academic aspect of the story. This academic aspect speaks to the writing skills, media literacy and other skills. More importantly, by enhancing these skills, students who do not fit the usual academic mould are given a voice (Ohler, 2006). By giving these students a voice, I believe that they can overcome their fear of writing. As postulated by Holmes et al. (2018), students have a fear of writing. They lack confidence in their writing skills and some often delay the process of writing

because they simply do not know how to write (McKenna, 2010). Therefore, while Lecturer B's point on boosting students' confidence may not be seem directly related to academic writing, it is related in many other respects. This appears to support the views of Gachago et al. (2014) who believe that oral storytelling is a powerful way for students to develop their voices and to further discover that events and details are essential to their stories. I now discuss the theme of the implications of the fees must fall movement on academia.

5.5 Theme 4: The Impact of Fees Must Fall on the traditional university structure

Findings from lecturer interviews (see section 4.5.2.6 in Chapter 4) indicate that fees must fall had an impact on teaching and learning. Before I reiterate the findings from lecturer interviews, I briefly look at the issues surrounding the movement. Fees must fall brought to light a number of issues. First and foremost, it raised the issue of a colonized education system that was still in place. This system of education, despite apartheid have ended, still benefits a select few while poor are marginalized and cannot take part in education due to the exorbitant fees that the universities charge ((Buttelli & Le Bruyns, 2017; Glen, 2016; Le Grange, 2016). Mutekwe, 2017). While the title suggests, the fees for higher education must decrease and be done away with, there are more political and social issues underlying the fees must fall movement (Buttelli & Le Bruyns, 2017; Glen, 2016; Mutekwe, 2017). Overall, the fee fees must fall movement led to disrupted student learning and the shutting down of universities ((Buttelli & Le Bruyns, 2017; Glen, 2016; Le Grange, 2016; Mutekwe, 2017)). Despite this disruption, universities refused to extend student study durations. Students then problematized this issue and called for universities to make up for lost tuition time. This could not happen because fees must fall protests took place at the end of the year and even filtered through to the subsequent academic year. The protest thus led to limited tuition time. Although the fees must fall was a shock to the educational system at the time, riots in higher education were nothing new. Mutekwe (2017) demonstrates that shutting down universities goes as far back as the apartheid era. The shutting down of universities was done in order to get their attention of the government for students' various demands. Mutekwe (2017) goes further to illustrate this process of closing universities by showing the stages it takes. First the students would make demands, then there is a march which ends in confrontation with the police and often has tragic consequences. From Mutekwe's findings, I ascertain that despite history repeating itself in the form of protests, universities continued to use the tried and tested methods of involving police and even private security, which resulted in students not attending class with no teaching taking place.

Findings from Lecturer interviews in presented the previous Chapter (see section 4.5.2.6) reveal that lecturers were frustrated by the protests as management gave directive for students to get pushed through despite not having been taught the whole syllabus. This decision by university management supports Fataar's (2018) view which states that universities have an inability to engage students educationally. I say this because while fees must fall was a cause against fees in higher education, there are other political and social tensions around the movement (Mutekwe, 2017). One of the notions is that of access. As I have argued before, university students nowadays do not fit the traditional academic mould, however, universities maintain their standards of academic assessment. Yet students are not coping with these standards. Since academic writing is the way to test student knowledge, it needs to be accessible. That is why I strongly advocate for a technology-based approach to teaching academic writing, because most students are aware of technology and are able to use it. As an academic, I should be able to allow students to use their social and cultural capital in the academic sphere.

In addition to the already mentioned aspects of fees must fall protests address, there is the issue of decolonisation of the curriculum. As cited before, the fees must fall protests called for colonial education to be done away with (Buttelli & Le Bruyns, 2017; Glen, 2016; Le Grange, 2016; Mutekwe, 2017). In his research, Mutekwe (2017) found that participants assumed that transforming and decolonizing the curriculum are the same. One participant revealed that decolonizing the curriculum means replacing the old colonial works, often seen as outdated or irrelevant to the African context, with African authors and a new curriculum. In order to decolonize therefore, some participants in Mutekwe's findings showed that decolonizing a curriculum needs academics to work together and look at knowledge systems, cultures, languages and people. I believe that research conducted on digital storytelling and its benefits could be considered as a tool to help in the endeavor to decolonize education. Even though lecturers expressed their frustrations with the results of the fees must fall protests, I believe that the digital storytelling tool could also aid in assessments where students and staff are off campus, students can create digital stories for assessment purposes. Staff can also use it as a teaching tool and upload their lessons on platforms like YouTube, Google Drive and so forth.

5.6 Conclusion

In this Chapter, I have so far discussed the findings presented Chapter 4 with the help of some the key issues and insights that I presented in Chapter 2 along with some additional theoretical

points that I have used in this Chapter. In light of this, I believe that I have addressed the three SRQs, which look at traditional academic writing scaffolding methods; students' perceptions of digital storytelling and lecturer perceptions of digital storytelling. By addressing the SRQs, I believe that I have illustrated the positive impact that digital storytelling has on academic writing and more importantly, addressed the MRQ which gave impetus for this study. Though that may be, I have also illustrated its shortcomings, which I believe are outweighed by the benefits of using this genre in academic writing. In addition, I have also discussed a theme that emerged from the findings in Chapter 4, that is the fees must fall movement and the impact it had on academia. More specifically, I envisage the need for decolonisation of the curriculum, in which I believe digital storytelling can aid.

Following this discussion Chapter, I propose to state my conclusions and limitations. Further to this, I will spell out in detail recommendations for my study in the next Chapter.

CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

In Chapter 5 I discussed findings from Chapter 4 and related them to the literature I have reviewed in Chapter 2. In this Chapter I propose to sate the conclusions of my study. I firstly re-examine the aims and objectives that were set out in Chapter 1 that guided my study. This is done to show how my research has achieved its aims and objectives. Secondly, this leads me to provide an overview of the study findings where I detail the four themes which emerged from these findings. Thirdly, I offer a summary of the thesis Chapters. Following which, I reflect on the limitations of my study and the cause of such limitations. Then I look at recommendations for the study and recommendations for future study before I draw conclusions from this research.

6.2 Research Aims and Objectives Re-examined

I have earlier stated in Chapter 1 that the main aim of my study is to explore students' and lecturers' practices of digital literacies in the teaching of academic writing at an institution of higher education in the Western Cape. More specifically, my intention was to explore the advantages of digital storytelling when teaching academic writing to first-year students. The following objectives were also set out:

1. Elucidate current academic writing scaffolding in academic modules
2.Draw on the use of digital storytelling in a first-year undergraduate course.
3. Shed light on lecturers and students' perceptions of the ways digital storytelling impacts on first-year academic writing.
4. Highlight the implications of infusing multimodality into academic writing in this context.
5. Explore the ways by which first-year students' take on new writing practices and how these new practices are facilitated by the lecturer.

By realizing the objectives set above, I hoped to address the MRQ intended for the study:

To what extent can digital storytelling strengthen or impede the academic writing skills of ESL first year students?

The following sub-research questions (SRQs) were meant to reinforce the central concerns that underline the MRQ by pointing out the subsequent component parts:

4. How is academic writing scaffolding conducted in an academic module?

5. What are students' perceptions of digital storytelling in relation to academic writing skills?
6. What are lecturers' perceptions of digital storytelling in relation to the development of academic writing skills of first-year students?

Each objective was realized through answering each SRQ and each SRQ was further answered by using a data collection instrument. The Table 6.1 below illustrates the objective set, the SRQ asked to realize that objective, and the data collection instrument used to source the information, that is, either document analysis, questionnaires or interviews.

Table 6. 1 Research Objectives, Research Questions and Research Tools

Research Objectives	Research Question	Research Tools
1.Elucidate current academic writing scaffolding in academic modules	How is academic writing scaffolding conducted in an academic module?	Document analysis
2.Draw on the use of digital storytelling in a first-year undergraduate course.	What are students' perceptions of digital storytelling in relation to academic writing skills?	Student questionnaires and lecturer interviews
	What are lecturers' perceptions of digital storytelling in relation to the development of academic writing skills of first-year students?	
3.Shed light on lecturers and students' perceptions of the ways digital storytelling impacts on first-year academic writing.	What are students' perceptions of digital storytelling in relation to academic writing skills?	Student questionnaires and lecturer interviews
	What are lecturers' perceptions of digital storytelling in relation to the development of academic writing skills of first-year students?	
4.Highlight the implications of infusing multimodality into academic writing in this context.	What are students' perceptions of digital storytelling in relation to academic writing skills?	Student questionnaires and lecturer interviews
	What are lecturers' perceptions of digital storytelling in relation to the development of academic writing skills of first-year students?	
5.Explore the ways by which first-year students' take on new writing	What are students' perceptions of digital storytelling in relation to academic writing skills?	Student questionnaires and lecturer interviews

practices and how these new practices are facilitated by the lecturer.	What are lecturers' perceptions of digital storytelling in relation to the development of academic writing skills of first-year students?	

The following overview of findings will thus illustrate the above Table 6.1 and how the research objectives were realised in the study to achieve the main purpose of the study, which is to illustrate how digital storytelling can strengthen or impede students' academic writing.

6.3 Overview of Study Findings

The following section is an overview of the study findings. Here I discuss how the aforementioned objectives were achieved in the research. These objectives were achieved by answering the SRQs which ultimately address the MRQ. I do the above by first looking at academic writing scaffolding in academic writing modules; students' perceptions of digital storytelling and lecturer perceptions of digital storytelling. In addition, I look at the impact fees must fall protests had on academia.

6.3.1. Academic Writing Scaffolding in academic modules

As regards academic writing scaffolding that currently takes place in academic modules, my findings of the study reported in Chapter 5 indicated that students experience issues with academic writing mainly because the language of learning, English is usually not their mother tongue. Although I touched on using multilingualism, it is almost impractical since there are at least 10 different languages spoken by the various students. This finding indicates that alternative teaching methods are needed for such a diverse class. In findings, I also established that language errors impede academic success. To expand on the language issue, I expanded on three types of performances in essays that I analysed. The first category comprised high performance essays. In this category I mentioned that students were able to convey the content of the essay unproblematically. They were also able to write without many language errors. Also, their structure and logical organisation of the essay was done well. In this category of essay then, I revealed that language errors were very few and they had no impact on the overall understanding of the essay. The second category of essays was average performance. The content in this category was dealt with on a superficial level with a few exceptional essays. Language did not impede on the flow of the essay and most of the essays had an introduction, body and conclusion. The last category, which displayed a number of issues was the low performance category. In this performance category I indicated that students' language errors impeded on the way the content was delivered as well as the logical organisation of the essay.

Therefore, while various literature specified that language is not a measure of a good essay, the low performance category's language errors largely impacted the way the content was delivered. Therefore, the discussions for this category would later lead me to using digital storytelling as a scaffold to help this particular category of students with their academic writing. In the discussion of findings, I also described the three academic writing models: study skills, academic socialisation and academic literacies. I found that the study skills model did not apply to the teaching technique I used because I did not merely teach language and writing skills. The academic socialization model that I used in my teaching seemed to be effective to students who had high performance essays and to some extent, the average performance essays. However, students who had low performance essays did not benefit from the teaching style I used. Even lecture comments indicated that although there are academic writing courses, they ineffective. Therefore, this probe into academic writing pedagogy led me to explore the third academic writing model: academic literacies model. This model considers the social practices that students have and assumes that they have something they bring with them when entering university. From this model, I discussed multimodality and semiotics which would later lead to the use of digital storytelling in academic writing.

Although I established that language errors affected some students' writing, especially those with low performance essays, I also concluded that there are other challenges students faced that led to poor writing. These challenges are as follows:

i. Fear of academic writing or no understanding of how to write;
ii. No writing and/or reading practice
iii. Lack of research skills

The above categories illustrate that students' poor academic writing should not be attributed to language issues and pedagogy alone. I also recognised that students' attitudes also impact their own writing. These are fear of writing, having no writing or reading practice. Further to this, they do not spend sufficient time to in order to be able to adequately research their academic topics. In this instance where students impact their academic writing, I also briefly propose the use of digital storytelling as a pedagogic tool to overcome these barriers to academic writing. This is to suggest that adequate scaffolding in academic writing courses can help students the issues highlighted above. For this reason, I am inclined to believe that the first objective: to elucidate current academic writing scaffolding in academic modules, has been achieved.

Further to this, the SRQ: How is academic writing scaffolding conducted in an academic module? has been answered and this confirms a key component of the MRQ.

6.3.2 Student Perceptions of Digital Storytelling in Relation to Academic Writing

As for student perceptions of digital storytelling, my findings reported in Chapter 5 illuminated that there are various perceptions students have on digital storytelling in relation to academic writing. Findings discussed in Chapter 5 uncovered three main categories of academic writing that digital storytelling addressed. The students illuminated these three categories: language and editing; structure; and academic writing and research. Additionally, a fourth category was also presented in the discussions and that is the challenges students faced when creating digital stories.

Discussions in Chapter 5 illustrate that students experience language errors in their academic writing, even students in the high performance category. Though language contributes to writing problems, very few students admitted to having language problems or felt there was need to edit their work before final submission. Lecturers further contributed to this topic by stating that students do not admit to having language problems. In my findings I saw that although students did not admit to having language problems or needing to edit their work before submission, there were students who stated that they edited their work before digitizing it. Literature further illustrated that in the digital storytelling process, the students were able to read and re-read their work, even before digitizing it. Therefore, digital storytelling allows students, even if they are not aware of it, to edit their work, especially for language errors

During the digital storytelling process, students noted that they presented information in a logical manner. The storyboard allowed students to do so before they even record their audio. Consequently, students were aware of introduction, body and conclusion. As for academic writing and research, students felt that creating their digital stories was an academic writing experience which allowed them to structure their thoughts. Subsequently, they were able to develop their critical thinking skills. Digital storytelling also allows students to gain epistemological access and improve academic writing skills. Digital storytelling allowed students to be creative, even though some stated they were not creative by nature. In addition, students were able to find their voice and gain confidence in their writing. They were also able to use technology effectively. Although findings revealed there were positive aspects to using digital storytelling for academic benefits, there were some challenges students faced when they

created their digital storytelling. I discovered that most of the challenges students faced were related to technology. For one, students had lack of access to technology such as computers, internet and smart phones for audio recordings. Some also stated that they could not connect their words to the pictures and the recorded audio. Then some students illustrated that they could not use the digital storytelling making software. Other issues that arose were lack of attendance and plagiarism, according to lecturer interviews. Taking the above findings into consideration, which were extensively discussed in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, I believe that the last four set objectives highlighted in Table 6.1 have been achieved. By achieving these objectives, I believe that two SRQs have been answered. These SRQs are: What are students' perceptions of digital storytelling in relation to academic writing skills? and What are lecturers' perceptions of digital storytelling in relation to the development of academic writing skills of first-year students? In addition to answering the SRQs, the MRQ has thus been addressed. These same objectives also appear to have been achieved in the next set of findings which deal with lecturer perceptions of digital storytelling in relation to academic writing.

6.3.3 Lecturer Perceptions of Digital Storytelling in relation to Academic Writing

As regards, lecture perceptions of digital storytelling in relation to academic writing, I have discussed the various findings in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. In light of this, TI focused on four categories that were discussed in the previous Chapter. They are: challenges of using digital storytelling as a pedagogic tool; benefits of using digital storytelling; academic writing skills addressed by digital storytelling; and the effectiveness of using digital storytelling.

As for challenges, lecturers revealed that lack of access or students' inability to use it effectively. While it was not necessarily true to my context, literature also revealed lecturers' own fear of technology which create barriers to teaching and learning in technology induced environments. Another challenge encountered by one lecturer in particular was ethics around the presentations of digital storytelling. She noted that social media perpetuated the threat to individual's privacy. This is to suggest that, students would expose other students' personal stories onto social media platforms. Thus these findings led to ethical issues such as honesty in academia. Another issue raised is that of plagiarism which could be tackled when teaching students digital storytelling.

Then lecturer perceptions of the benefits digital storytelling include students' exposure to a different media or technology. While this issue was previously noted as a challenge, it can also

be beneficial if students are properly exposed to it. There are also other benefits which are related to academic writing such as students' having a voice; gaining research; ethics to avoid plagiarism; organisational skills; critical thinking skills; and referencing skills among others. Findings revealed that digital storytelling is not only beneficial in the above mentioned aspects, but I also discovered that the benefits are also related to academic writing. This leads me to summarise the academic writing skills addressed by digital storytelling. The following skills addressed which are similar to the benefits of using digital storytelling include organisational skills; improving of research skills; critical thinking skills; and improving language and grammar. In addition, the storyboard allows students to map out their story which eventually leads to structuring their writing and by so doing, students can also strengthen their weak story stories by selecting relevant information. This selection of information speaks to critical thinking skills which require students to reflect and analyse information before making their final selection. In this regard, findings also revealed that digital storytelling is effective in addressing certain aspects of academic writing such organisational skills, building self-esteem and many others which have been mentioned as benefits of using digital storytelling. Although there are established benefits and it seems that digital storytelling is advantageous for academic writing, one lecturer noted that there is no proof of its benefits. However, literature and findings suggest that using digital storytelling in an academic context is effective. Having looked at lecturer perceptions of digital storytelling in relation to academic writing, I go back to the aims and last four objectives of this research (set out in Table 6.1) and confirm that they have been realized. Further to this, the SRQs that help address these objectives have been answered and thus can confirm the key components of my MRQ.

6.3.4 Impact of Fees Must Fall Protests on academia

Regarding the theme that emerged: fees must fall protests, findings indicated that the current education system needs to be carefully scrutinized in that, the system does not serve the needs of the poorer communities and is thus anti-democratic. In the wake of the fees must fall protests then, there was a call for a decolonisation of the education system. Decolonisation means removing outdated colonial types of knowledge systems and include different cultures, languages and people. Then we should create a system for them in the context within which we find these languages, people and cultures. Due to the diverse nature of digital storytelling, we can thus use it as a tool for decolonisation in academia. The emergence of this theme then can also confirm that the first objective of this study has been achieved. By confirming the first objective I address the first SRQ and ultimately confirm a key component of the MRQ.

6.4 Summary of Thesis Chapters

In order to present a holistic analysis of digital storytelling and the extent to which it can strengthen or impede academic writing skills of ESL first year students, the previous Chapters have dealt with the following discussions:

In the first Chapter I introduced my readership to the global debate on writing issues which have indicated that students' diverse linguistic backgrounds have contributed to poor academic writing. Then I delved into the background for the study, introducing both local and global issues on language, writing and multimodality which provided impetus for me to pursue the study. The aforementioned issues provided the rationale for my study which resulted in the use of the multimodal digital storytelling. I further laid out aims and objectives for the study and provided the research problem. Then I illustrated the significance of the study and provided a theoretical and conceptual framework for the study. Lastly, I related my assumptions and defined key terms to be used in the thesis. I concluded my Chapter by outlining other Chapters.

In the second Chapter I reviewed literature relevant to my study. I outlined operational concepts to be used which related to academic writing and the issues surrounding this concept. I also expanded on the three writing models: study skills model; academic socialisation model; and the academic literacies model. Of the three models, I championed the academic socialisation model which would lead to me exploring semiotics and the use of multimodality in teaching. These theoretical concepts paved the way for the use of digital storytelling as a tool to enhance academic writing.

Chapter three presented the methodology I used in my research. My research design comprised of action research which used various qualitative data collection instruments. These instruments comprise of document analysis, questionnaires and interviews which would allow me to later answer the three SRQs and ultimately the MRQ. In this Chapter I also related my research site, population and sampling. I considered ethics and procedure required to embark on my research journey. Then looked at reflexivity and validity of the study.

In the fourth Chapter I discussed my findings in detail. However, I rigorously selected samples for analysis due to the qualitative nature of the research. Then I grouped the data according to thematic categories and sub-categories. Each category was presented according to the

instrument that was used to gather the data. Before the data according to the instruments used and the themes which emerged in each instrument, I provided biographical information of the participants.

In Chapter five I discussed the findings that were analysed and presented in Chapter 4. I expand on themes which emerged and triangulate findings to strengthen my argument. In order to do support my case, I incorporated literature that was reviewed in Chapter two and by so doing, I motivate my use of digital storytelling in academic writing.

The sixth and final Chapter is the current one. Here, I have revisited the research aims and objectives. In addition, I have given an overview of the study findings; summarised the Chapters; and proposed to state the limitations of the study, offer recommendations including suggestions for future studies and finally conclude the study.

6.5 Limitations of the Study

During the process of gathering data, presentation and analysis I have to point out that there were some challenges and problems that I encountered. Those challenges and problems are as follows:

As a result of time restrictions and the scope of my study, my study was restricted to three classes and forty students. Of the 40 students only 32 filled in the questionnaire because they had to fill in a Google form and the participation was voluntary. Therefore, I could not get all forty participants to fill in the Google form. Then I also interviewed six students in order to consolidate some of the information filled in on the questionnaire. However, my presence during the interviews seemed to intimidate the students as I am also their lecturer and I felt that some told me what I wanted to hear, the positive aspects of using digital storytelling, rather than how they truly felt about it. For these reasons, I did not use the student interviews as I felt that they might not be authentic enough.

Due to lack of time, I was also restricted to assessing the digital storytelling task as an oral presentation with academic writing aspects. I would have liked to have transferred that into a writing activity and compared how the assessment goes from an oral presentation to a full academic writing task. I would have liked to have compared the first student academic essays with the academic essays subsequent to the digital storytelling task, especially those of students whose essays are in the lower performance category.

Then due to the teaching allocations and experience with digital storytelling, there were very few lecturers who knew about and had used digital storytelling in their own teaching. As a result, I could not interview lecturers in my own department and had to use lecturers in other departments who had used digital storytelling in an academic context. To go back to allocations, I was also restricted to using my own students in the department as I am the only one who teaches the academic literacy course at first year level. Taking the above-mentioned restrictions into consideration, I believe there is a need to investigate the validity of the same findings in a major study and with a wider research scope.

In my study, I did not see the need to do classroom observations to collect data. As a result, my study was limited to questionnaires filled in by students and my own observations as participant in the research. Lack of recordings for classrooms limit my observation to a generalised view of the process of creating the digital stories. If I had recordings of classroom observations, I believe I could have had a more authentic analysis of students' response to both the traditional teaching approach and the technologically enhanced teaching style. This is to suggest that, their enjoyment and eagerness could have been observed better. For these reasons, I cannot generalise and state that most of the students thoroughly enjoyed the digital storytelling task. That is because the number of student research participants who filled in the questionnaire is incomparable to the total number of students in first year.

Student numbers and level of education brings me to limiting my study to first year participants. Lecturer interviews revealed that students' poor academic writing skills were not limited to first year. This suggests that in another study, research such as the one presented in this study should include other undergraduate students.

I also found it difficult to choose the type of data to analyse for the SRQ on students' perceptions of digital storytelling in relation to academic writing. Although the questionnaire provided adequate data to analyse, perhaps a study with a wider scope could include a fourth SRQ regarding the performance of students in the digital storytelling task, and compare those findings to those of the academic writing essay.
Having looked at limitations for the study, I now move on to recommendations of my study.

6.6 Recommendations

This part of the study is based on literature that was reviewed in Chapter two and major findings of the study. I thus propose the following recommendations:

1. The first recommendation is to give more support to lower performing students. Literature and findings have revealed that some students are able to cope with the demands of academic writing. Therefore, those students might not necessarily need to use digital storytelling for their academic writing weakness, but rather to sharpen their argument while more focus is placed on lower performing students. This suggests that digital storytelling is used as a scaffolding tool to teach different aspects of academic writing.

2. As for students' performance levels, we could further divide the tutorial groups between lower performing, average performing students and higher performing students. We can teach the students separately, as to focus on each students' weaknesses or allow higher performing and average performing students to aid the lower performing students in their academic writing and also in transferring the digital story into an academic task.

3. Lecturer interviews (see section 4.5.1.1 in Chapter 4) revealed that students do not read enough and that reading and writing work together. In addition, Literature reviewed and Table 4.18 in Chapter 4 shows that students understand and agree that reading helps improve writing. Taking these two points of view into consideration, I believe that digital storytelling should aid in cultivating reading skills as well which will help students in their writing.

4. As revealed in lecturer interviews (see section 4.5.2 in Chapter 4), students have exposure to technology but they may not necessarily know how to use it effectively. Therefore, I suggest that students are encouraged to use technology to benefit them academically, especially at an Information Technology department where they deal with technology.

5. In light of the above-stated points on technology usage, I also noted that educators are scared to use technology to teach. Various literature suggest that educators have a fear of using technology to teach. While it was not the case for me, I struggled to find participants to use digital storytelling in my immediate context hence the choice to do participatory action research and improve my own teaching. Therefore, I believe that educators who teach academic literacy skills, in this case get more adequate support in terms of using technology in their pedagogy, as to improve students' literacy skills.

6. To further dwell on pedagogy, The New London Group authors' literature suggests that educators need to consider students' literacy skills, especially literacy as a social skill. Educators need to be more aware and take into consideration the literacy skills that students bring with them and mold these skills in preparation for the academic world. By being aware

of students' skills, teachers should adapt their teaching style (as per the academic literacies model discussed in detail in Chapter 2).

7. A theme that emerged in findings is fees must fall protests which led to my discussion of decolonizing the curriculum (see section 5.5 in Chapter 5). I believe that digital storytelling can go beyond teaching academic writing but also other ways of decolonizing the curriculum by allowing students to contribute their own stories about their own cultures that are specific in South Africa. In other words, digital storytelling could be used to deliver curriculum. Then with channels such as online platforms, there could be collaboration between lecturers and students alike

8. In Chapter 5 discussions (see 5.2.1) I suggested that multilingualism could was not a practical way to teach students. This is because as an educator I am limited in my own language usage and the university classroom is diverse as students use multiple language (see Table 4.4 in Chapter 4). However, I believe digital storytelling could offer a practical solution to that issue. In that students are able to use text, images and audio, among other elements to create their digital stories. Thus they can narrate their digital stories in their mother tongue and write the English translation or use images to convey meaning in the digital stories and vice versa.

9. As findings and discussions in Chapter 4 (see section 4.5.1.1) and Chapter 5 (see sections 5.2.2.2 and 5.2.4.1) suggest, writing problems are not only a first year problem but they filter up to even post graduate level. Therefore, I suggest that writing strategies and support be employed throughout students' undergraduate studies and even post graduate.

10. In the above recommendation, I suggest the use of a multimodal approach to teaching students at different levels. Moreover, literature suggests that education should prepare students for the broader society. Subsequently, students should be made fully aware that literacy does not start and end at first. This point converges with the idea that students bring social practices to the class. Thus educators and students alike should be aware of the social and political repercussions of literacy learning.

Having discussed recommendations, it is at this juncture that I suggest recommendations for future study.

6.7 Recommendations for future study

Innovative teaching strategies are needed to help tackle student writing issues. This study then proposes that further research should look at a variety of student participants who come from different disciplines. The study further suggests that multimodal technologies such as digital

storytelling are ways to be innovative and they can also allow collaboration between lecturers and students in different departments. Such collaboration allows for multiple ways to engage with student writing issues.

In addition, further research is needed for students' perception and uses of digital storytelling, as well as the impact it has on improving, especially low performance students' writing. More focus needs to be focused on the lower performing students. Perhaps a focus group study would be appropriate to really narrow down the students' issues. Additionally, such a focus group should be done with a participant who is not known to the students or who does not teach the students, that is, an outside researcher so that the students are more comfortable to voice their issues with academic writing and even with the use of digital storytelling and its effectiveness in their learning of writing skills.

6.8 conclusions

The focus of my study was on first year students' poor academic writing skills and how to address them. However, findings and discussions revealed that not all students in first year had issued with academic writing. It is apparent though, that academic writing needs to be taught at all levels of undergraduate and even at post-graduate level. I also conclude that teaching and learning strategies need to be more innovative to accommodate the 21st century classroom which comprises of students who are born having been exposed to technology. Although this generation of students is technologically advanced, they need to be taught how to use technology to their academic advantage. This is not only beneficial in academia but also speaks to the call for a decolonisation of the curriculum where knowledge is not stagnant but should move with the times. Digital stories then, if used correctly and effectively, offers a solution to student academic writing issues and educators' pedagogic needs in the 21st century.

In this final Chapter of my thesis, I am inclined to believe that my findings have been uncovered explicitly and I have drawn conclusions based on these findings. By the same token, I believe that the research aims and objectives have been addressed. They were to: elucidate current academic writing scaffolding in academic modules; draw on the use of digital storytelling in a first-year undergraduate course; shed light on lecturers and students' perceptions of the ways digital storytelling impacts on first-year academic writing; highlight the implications of infusing multimodality into academic writing in this context; and to explore the ways first-year students' take on new writing practices and how these new practices are facilitated by the

lecturer. Having realized these aims and objectives, I now believe that I have now answered all three SRQs which needed to be answered in this manner so that the MRQ could be answered, thus lending some degree of validity to the purpose of my research inquiry. Having said that I believe that this research inquiry has helped explore the advantages of digital storytelling when teaching academic writing to first-year students and has helped me develop an informed understanding of the benefits of digital story telling in the educational practice of academic writing.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: INFORMATION SHEET

Researcher: Miss Linda O Mkaza
Contact number: 071 7333 214
Email: 3515673@myuwc.ac.za/ l.mkaza@gmail.com
Institution: The University of the Western Cape

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Linda O Mkaza. I am a Masters student in the Language Education Department, Faculty of Education at the University of the Western Cape. I am conducting research on the potential that digital storytelling has on the teaching of writing in the higher education.

Research Title: Exploring the potential of digital storytelling in the teaching of academic writing at a higher education institution in the Western Cape. The specific objectives are:

1. Draw on the use of digital storytelling in a first-year undergraduate course.
2. Shed light on lecturers and students' perceptions of the ways digital storytelling impacts on first-year academic writing.
3. Highlight the implications of infusing multimodality into academic writing in this context.
4. Explore the ways first-year students' take on new writing practices and how these new practices are facilitated by the lecturer.

The main purpose of this study is to attempt to help students improve their academic writing through the use of digital technologies. The aim of this study is to explore students and lecturer practices of digital literacies in the teaching of academic writing at an institution of higher education in the Western Cape.

Notably, research participation is not mandatory. The researcher's participants, which are 40 undergraduate students and three lecturers, have the right to withdraw at any stage of the research process. All information collected from the research will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous. A system of coding will be used to protect the participants' identity. In case there is need for further explanation on the study, kindly contact me on the above details.

THE RESEARCHER: …… SIGNATURE: ……

DATE: ……

APPENDIX 2: PERMISSION LETTER FROM UWC TO CONDUCT FIELDWORK

UNIVERSITY of the WESTERN CAPE

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR: RESEARCH
RESEARCH AND INNOVATION DIVISION

Private Bag X17, Bellville 7535
South Africa
T: +27 21 959 2988/2948
F: +27 21 959 3170
E: research-ethics@uwc.ac.za
www.uwc.ac.za

16 November 2017

Mrs LO Mkaza
Faculty of Education

Ethics Reference Number: HS17/5/31

Project Title: Exploring the potential of digital storytelling in the teaching of academic writing at a higher education institution in the Western Cape.

Approval Period: 15 November 2017 – 15 November 2018

I hereby certify that the Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Western Cape approved the methodology and ethics of the above mentioned research project.

Any amendments, extension or other modifications to the protocol must be submitted to the Ethics Committee for approval. Please remember to submit a progress report in good time for annual renewal.

The Committee must be informed of any serious adverse event and/or termination of the study.

Ms Patricia Josias
Research Ethics Committee Officer
University of the Western Cape

PROVISIONAL REC NUMBER - 130416-049

APPENDIX 3: PERMISSION LETTER FROM CPUT TO CONDUCT FIELDWORK

Cape Peninsula
University of Technology

P.O. Box 652 • Cape Town 8000 South Africa •Tel: +27 21 469 1012 • Fax +27 21 469 1002
80 Roeland Street, Vredehoek, Cape Town 8001

Office of the Research Ethics Committee	Faculty of Informatics and Design

Ethical clearance was granted to Ms Linda Mkaza for research activities related to her Masters in Education at the University of the Western Cape. Ms Mkaza intends to conduct research on the teaching of academic writing at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) and a formal letter of consent must be obtained from CPUT management for this purpose.

Title thesis:	Exploring the potential of digital storytelling in the teaching of academic writing at a higher education institution in the Western Cape

Comments

Research activities are restricted to those detailed in the research proposal.

Signed: Faculty Research Ethics Committee	Date
[signature]	27/2/2018

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
INFORMATICS AND DESIGN
ETHICS APPROVAL GRANTED
27 FEB 2018
Cape Peninsula
University of Technology

APPENDIX 4: PERMISSION LETTER FROM CPUT IT DEPARTMENT TO CONDUCT FIELDWORK

Cape Peninsula University of Technology

Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor:
Research, Technology Innovation & Partnerships
Bellville Campus
P O Box 1906
Bellville 7535
Tel: 021-9596242
Email: NhlapoC@cput.ac.za

27 February 2018

Ms Linda Mkaza
Department of Information Technology
Faculty of Informatics & Design
Cape Peninsula University of Technology
Cape Town
8000

Email: MkazaL@cput.ac.za

Dear Ms Mkaza

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT CPUT

The Institutional Ethics Committee received your application entitled: "Exploring the potential of digital storytelling in the teaching of academic writing at a higher education institution in the Western Cape" together with the dossier of supporting documents.

Permission is herewith granted for you to do research at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

Wishing you the best in your study.

Sincerely

APPROVED
Chair Senate Ethics Committee
27 FEB 2018
Cape Peninsula University of Technology
Sign: .....

PO Box 1906 Bellville 7535 South Africa
086 123 2788

APPENDIX 5: CONSENT LETTER FOR LECTURERS' INTERVIEWS

Faculty of Education
Researcher: Linda Mkaza
Email: l.mkaza@gmail.com
Tel: 021 464 7201/071 7333 214
Supervisor: Prof Sivasubramaniam
Email: Sivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za
Tel: 021 946 1931

Dear lecturer

Research about the use of digital storytelling and academic writing is being conducted. Please fill in the following consent form as an agreement to your voluntary participation in the research.

Research Topic: Exploring the potential of digital storytelling in the teaching of academic writing at a higher education institution in the Western Cape

I…… (name and surname) agree to be interviewed by Linda Mkaza as part of her Masters' research. I understand that:

- My participation is voluntary
- I can withdraw my participation at any time. If I choose to withdraw, all data gathered until the time of withdrawal will destroyed.
- All potential risks have been explained to me
- What I say will be confidential and my name will not be used anywhere in the research
- Should information I have given be used, a pseudonym will be used
- The interview will be tape recorded
- I will be shown the transcript of the interview
- The data collected is for research purposes only and will be destroyed after 2 years
- Only the supervisor of the research will have access to it.

Signed:……..

Date:……

APPENDIX 6: CONSENT LETTER FOR IT FIRST YEAR STUDENTS

Education Faculty

Researcher: Linda Mkaza
Email: l.mkaza@gmail.com
Tel: 021 464 7201
Supervisor: Prof Sivasubramaniam
Email: Sivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za
Tel: 021 946 1931

Dear student

Research about the use of digital storytelling and academic writing is being conducted. Please fill in the following consent form as an agreement to your voluntary participation in the research.

I…… (name and surname) agree to be interviewed by/ fill in a questionnaire from researcher/ the use of my digital story/ use of my narrative essay. I understand that:

- My participation is voluntary
- I can withdraw my participation at any time
- All potential risks have been explained to me
- What I say will be confidential and my name will not be used anywhere in the research
- Should information I have given be used, a pseudonym will be used
- The interview will be tape recorded
- I will be shown the transcript of the interview
- The data collected is for research purposes only and will be destroyed after 2 years
- Only the supervisor of the research will have access to it.

Signed:……..

Date:……

APPENDIX 7: DIGITAL STORYTELLING ASSIGNMENT BRIEF

Course: **Professional Communication 1**
Total: **70 marks**
Assessment: **Digital Storytelling: Culture and Communication**

Assignment objectives:

Although you are a unique person, you were also born into a culture. Your culture has been influenced by your family, society/community, and your family history etcetera. Your language and communication methods have been influenced by your culture.
In this assignment, you will explore your own personal culture, or any other culture, in relation to another culture. The assessment will be in the form of a digital story and you are required to use Microsoft Movie Maker, WeVideo or any video editing application that will help you complete the assignment.

Assignment brief:

In groups of two, explore two different cultures (for example yours and your partners, or any other two cultures). Compare and contrast these cultures in the following aspects:

- Communication methods (Ways of greeting, verbal and non-verbal codes, language, examples of shared rules of conduct).
- Hofstede's dimensions – choose only ONE of the following dimensions:
    1. Individualism – Collectivism
       OR
    2. High Uncertainty Avoidance – Low Uncertainty-Avoidance
       OR
    3. High Power-Distance – Low Power-Distance
       OR
    4. Masculine-Feminine

Note: Show practical examples where possible.

Instructions:

- Your group's entire presentation should be **NO longer than 4 minutes (2 minutes per person)**. You will be penalised for exceeding the time limit.
- In your digital story each member must record a 2 minute audio clip of their part of the presentation to include in the digital story.
- Use graphics such as images and your audio recording for your presentation.
- Make sure that you use graphical or visual data and audio appropriately and effectively, and that it is not simply used as an excuse to fill your presentation. **NOTE:** Do not have too many graphics (pictures) and use visual effects appropriately.
- Make sure that you include a title and credits page (which includes references for your story. Use the knowledge you have gathered from the Information Literacy Course as guide in your referencing) for your digital story. You are also allowed to have text in-between slides/ your story.
- Make sure that your slides/story that includes text has enough white space. Also, avoid using long sentences or cluttering your slides with words.
- Please **edit** your story for spelling and grammatical errors. You will be penalised for such errors as they are **unacceptable** in professional documentation/presentation.
- This is a group presentation, and no student will be allowed to present by themselves. Please note that while your group will receive the same mark for the digital story and group presentation, each member will be individually assessed on their own presentation delivery skills (nonverbal) and subject knowledge. Each member's final marks will therefore be different.
- Ensure that each member gets roughly an equal amount of 'air time'.
- Please refer to the rubrics below for the assessment guidelines.
- Note that there are different stages to your digital story and you will be assessed in each stage of the story. The stages are:
    - **Stage 1:** Analyse your topic and plan– create your storyboard (see attached template)
    - **Stage 2:** Create and record your narrative (Use a phone and be in a quiet space)
    - **Stage 3:** Collect your images and music/audio clips (create a digital story folder on your USB)
    - **Stage 4:** Presentation and reflection (Publish and view digital story)

APPENDIX 8: STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRES

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THESIS TITLE:
EXPLORING THE POTENTIAL OF DIGITAL STORYTELLING IN THE TEACHING OF ACADEMIC WRITING AT A HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION IN THE WESTERN CAPE.

Dear student, research about academic writing skills is being conducted by Linda Mkaza as part of her Master's research.

Please fill in the following questionnaire and consent form in order to participate in the research. You do not have to fill in your name on the questionnaire.

Please note: Participation is voluntary!

1. What is your gender?
□Male □Female □other
2.How old are you? _____
3. What is your home language? _____
4. What kind of school did you attend?
□ township □ former model c □ rural school □ private □other
5. Did you have access to a computer at home?
□yes □no
6. Did you have access to the internet when you were off campus?
□yes □no
7. Where did you do most of the work for your digital story?
□ on campus, □ at home □at the public library □other
8.What was the most difficult part of the task? (You may choose more than one)
□ voice recording □writing the story □creating the storyboard
□writing the script for the story □ using the movie software □other
9. What did you enjoy the most about the digital story?
_____
10. How did you find using the storyboard to connect your pictures to words?
□ easy □difficult □other
11. Explain your answer to question 10.
_____
12. How did you decide on the focus of your story?
_____
13.Did you feel the need to edit for language errors?
□yes □no
14. Explain your response to question 13 above.
_____
15. How many times did you have to rewrite your story so that you were happy with the end result?
□none □once □twice □more than twice
16. Did you use the introduction, body, and conclusion structure for your digital story?

□yes □no

17. Were you able to be creative in your writing?

□yes □no

18. Explain your answer to the question above.

_____

19. Did you see this as an academic writing exercise?

□Yes □no □other

20. Explain your answer to question 19 above

_____

21. Did you do some research for this project?

□Yes □no

22. Explain the answer above

_____

23. Do you think you presented the information in a logical manner/argument?

□Yes □no □I am not sure

24. What were your impressions of the show day?

_____

25. State your level of agreement with the following statements:

	1	2	3	4	5
Statement	**Strongly disagree**	**Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**
a) My biggest challenge with writing is language and grammar					
b) My biggest challenge with writing is coherence and cohesion (trying to make sense in an essay)					
c) I always understand what is expected of me in an assignment					
d) I have adequate support from my lecturers in writing					
e) The skill I learn in Professional Communication are useful for my other IT subjects?					
f) I read books or newspapers for enjoyment					
g) Reading helps improve my writing					

Thank you for your participation! Your time is greatly appreciated!

APPENDIX 9: LECTURER INTERVIEW GUIDE

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THESIS TITLE

EXPLORING THE POTENTIAL OF DIGITAL STORYTELLING IN THE TEACHING OF ACADEMIC WRITING AT A HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION IN THE WESTERN CAPE.

Teaching academic writing and student challenges

10. What qualifications do you have/ training do you have?
11. How long have you been a lecturer?
12. Which subject/s do you lecture?
13. Which levels do you lecturer? First, second, third or post grad?
14. What academic writing challenges do students encounter in your subject? All levels.
15. Are there specific academic challenges that are specifically encountered by first years as opposed to other levels? Explain
16. What do you think is the main cause of academic writing problems? Language and grammar or coherence and cohesion? Other? Please specify.
17. How do you assist the students in their writing challenges?
18. Do the students admit that they have problems?

Digital storytelling as a pedagogic tool:

6. What are the benefits of using digital storytelling as a pedagogic tool?
7. Which aspects of academic writing does digital storytelling address?
8. How effective is this tool for academic writing assistance?
9. Explain the challenges this type of pedagogical tool encounters?

Do you think digital storytelling can be used in other courses/subjects effectively?

APPENDIX 10: FIFTEEN STUDENT ESSAYS

CATEGORY 1: HIGH PERFORMANCE ESSAYS

ESSAY 1

The following essay will describe the different stages of my literacy development, namely my reading and writing. I will talk about my childhoold, primary school, high school and university.

Remove track changes!

Being raised by my grandparents who were both teachers and principals at their respective schools, I learnt how to read and write at a very young age. My grandmother was a Grade one and two teacher and was the one who taught me how to write my name, draw shapes and also coloring. Every evening she would have a really thin stick or shoe next to her which she would use on me every time I refused to read or do my homework. She also had chocolates as a reward for every question I got right or word I spelt correctly, even though I would end up getting one sweet. She never used to read bed time stories for me, instead, she would tell me tales every night before bed time and my mind would run wild, creating images of what she told me. She would ask me question about the stories she told to make sure I listened and understood what the tale was about. Her stories helped improve my listening skills.

During my primary school years, my mother moved me to a school in East London where I had to learn everything in English. Having started school in the rural areas and knowing only how to speak isiXhosa, I struggled with speaking and understanding English. My Grade four teacher played a very important role in my learning as she was a very patient teacher and would send me home with extra work and books to read so that I could improve both my reading and writing. My aunt, who was also a primary school teacher, played a role in my literacy development. She used to help me with my homework and would write long paragraphs for me to punctuate and fix the incorrectly spelt words. She also used to give me English books to read and then I would have to tell her about the book. That also really helped with my communication skills because I could speak to and understand people and by the time I left primary school, both my reading and writing skills had improved tremendously in the English language.

I developed a love for writing in high school when I moved to Mthatha to stay with my mother, stepfather and my sisters. It was a lot to handle as I had never stayed with all of them before, a part of me hated every being there. Writing helped me to deal with a lot that was happening around me, coping and adjusting to the new changes. I kept a diary,

where I would write poems, my dreams and write share my feelings. Writing became my escape and my therapy. It helped me accept the things that I knew I could not change, it also helped me to be able to express myself better. I could write everything and anything I wanted to write. I spent my whole high school years expressing my feelings through writing and did less socializing. I also used to love writing letters to my grandmother, letters that she never got to read. Although writing helped me with a lot, I love to believe that it also had a negative contribution in my life. For the longest time I could not express myself verbally because I was so used to writing everything on a piece of paper. As a result I used to cry when I was angry and I hated that. It also made me a very anti-social person more especially at home. I spent more time with the pen and paper than my family. I was an introvert and I felt safest at that space. My love for writing did not only contribute to my personal life only, but also at school. It helped me with my spelling, grammar and punctuation. My love for music also contributed in my writing as we had music books, and you had to make sure that you have the correct lyrics of the songs and spelt correctly.

I was then developed my love for reading when I started with College, which was mostly influenced by my mother and my younger sisters. We all would sit in our favorite spots around the house and read. The first book I ever read was a book by Angus Buchan entitled "Faith like potatoes" which was recommended by my half brother. From then I started having an interest in reading Christians books, which helped strengthened my faith, changed my perceptions on negative experiences, instilled Christian values and norms and helped me a lot with my personal and spiritual growth. Reading also helped build a really strong bond between my youngest sister and I as she would tell me about every book she read. Spending most of my high school years being an introvert both at school and at home, had an influence in me choosing to further my studies in Information Technology because I always thought it is a career for introverts and socially awkward people who spent most of their everyday lives sitting in front of the computer and doing just work. Little did I know that there is more to IT than just sitting in front a computer. There were presentations, a lot of team work meaning sharing ideas and views and also doing research which would sometimes mean talking to strangers to be able to gather information required. I never stopped writing even during college and

reading Christian books has helped me over the years and changed and improved the way I think and write. Reading has also helped me making a decision of going back to school to study Information Technology at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, and although it had always been my dream to study further at a university, a book I recently bought titled Soar by TD Jakes also had an impact in me making a decision to quit my job and go after my dream.

My love for reading and writing still continues, for it calms me and helps me cope when everything seems overwhelming. I am no longer the same introvert person that I was growing up. I have grown to love and appreciate people around me, express myself more verbally, take things as they come without being too emotional and I learnt all of that trough reading, writing and implementing in my personal life everything I have read and still read.

In conclusion, this essay has described the different stages of my literacy development, namely my reading and writing. I have spoken about my childhood, primary school, high school and university.

Very well written. Work on a few punctuation errors

MARKS
Content — 24
Language — 12
Structure — 12

48/60 = 80%

ESSAY 2

Literacy is the ability to read and write. In this essay I will explain my literacy experiences from childhood to primary school through High School to University. This essay will focus on the ways in which my cultural background, self-image, family and teachers have shaped my literacy development.

In my early childhood years, I remember when my family and I watched Generations, a popular South African soap opera, I would listen to the characters when they spoke English and tried to mimic their words. However, since my Home Language is isiXhosa, and I could understand a bit of English at the time, I struggled to understand the characters on Generations when they spoke a language other than English. Luckily for me, however, there were English subtitles at the bottom of the screen. So, in order for me to understand the storyline, I had to learn how to read. To make matters easier for myself, I had a pen and paper ready to write whenever there were English subtitles for a language that I did not understand. Of cause, even though I was writing the words, my spelling of the words was something else. In order to help make better sense of the words, my mother helped me spell and pronounce the words correctly. This was the true foundation and beginning of my reading and writing journey. Well narrated!

By the time I started primary school I had a solid foundation in reading and writing, thanks to my mother and Generations. I remember how my reading skills helped in my reading out loud period at school. The teacher would ask each learner to read a passage of text she given us to the rest of the class. This skill was meant to improve our reading confidence and it also tested our reading skills. One significant memory I have of reading class is how proud my teacher was of me whenever I stood up and read to the rest of the class. She used to tell me that I read like a child who went to an English medium school because I could pronounce words clearly and accurately and most importantly, I read with understanding of the text. My teacher could see that I understood what I was reading because I could accurately translate words and text into my home language, isiXhosa. This praise from my teacher impressed my classmates and from that experience, my confidence was uplifted and made it me want to learn as many words as I possibly could. So, every afternoon I would go home and ask my mother to give me words to spell so that my vocabulary could increase. This benefitted me greatly because not only was my reading improving but so was my sense of confidence to the point that I joined the debating team so that I could exercise my literacy knowledge and skill through spoken means.

When I reached high school my literacy level for both reading and writing developed further. We had spelling and reading lessons, we were also required to write essays and do orals (reading or presenting), write short and long transactional texts (Letters, Articles, Obituaries and more). I loved literacy during my first high school grades. I was even exchanging Novels and short stories with my English teacher. When I reached the FET phase I started losing interest. I stopped attending debate sessions and reading novels on my free time. Even prescribed poems and novels for my language subjects gave me no interest. My grades for languages started to drop, however in other subjects they were great.

My world view started to change, I realised that I do no really like a literacy related field. My options for university changed from law to Accountancy or Information Technology(IT) because I got the highest grades in Accounting and Computer Applications Technology and because they fascinated me. I decided to do a bit of research on both fields and I found IT very interesting. I liked how IT helps people deal with their everyday challenges. I liked how it brings about solutions, for example emails have simplified the life of communicating. It's now easy to communicate with someone who is in a far distance than you. Rather than traveling long distance, you can just send an email or an Instant message, there are also video conferencing, internet calling and more which helps people save on travelling costs. I decided that I also want to part of those people who bring solutions and changes. I decided that I also want to be part of the world's ever-changing field, IT. That's why I finally decided to choose IT.

In conclusion this essay I have explained my literacy experiences from childhood to primary school, through high school to University. This essay focused on the ways in which my cultural background, self-image, family and teachers have shaped my literacy development.

Well written. Work on a few punctuation errors

MARKS:

CONTENT - 28 ½
LANG - 12
STRUCTURE - 12

= 47½/60 = 79%

ESSAY 3

Introduction

- Arial size 12.

This essay will describe my personal literacy journey throughout the different stages of my life. It will examine my literacy skills, particularly reading and writing, by looking at my childhood, primary school, high school and university experiences. It will also examine how these experiences and the people involved in my literacy journey affected my development as a person and my world view.

Body

Spacing is too much.

Childhood

One of my earliest memories is of my father reading "Bad Luck Boswell" to me, which was a book about the misadventures and misfortunes of a black cat. I remember it being some of the best times of my life because every night I'd crawl into bed and my father would lie down next to me and spend an hour or two reading to me. I would feel so safe and happy. These nights were what got me so excited to start reading for myself, because I realized that there were more books that "Bad Luck Boswell", and by learning to read for myself, I could read as many stories as I wanted. I also remember my mother reading the "TinTin" comic books to me every night when I was five years old, and because these books contained quite advanced words for a five-year-old, I learned a lot of vocabulary from these nights with my mother.

Primary school

Too informal — started

When I got to primary school, I had an amazing first grade teacher who taught me how to read and write effectively. Reading quickly became my favourite hobby. I learned how to read very quickly in grade one. By the time I got to grade three and four, I was reading at a grade seven level. Reading was something I was, and still am, good at. My primary school used to grade the difficulty of the books we read

how did you learn? explain

Don't end with preposition

based on a colour system. Books with a red or purple dot on the spine were the easiest to read and books with a black dot on the spine were the hardest. I was already reading black dotted books in grade two and I continued to read them until grade six, when the school decided to discontinue the system. I used to read three books a week, and when I came across a word I didn't understand, I'd run to the nearest adult I could find, which was usually my mom, and ask them what it meant. I attribute the fact that I would do this to why I now have such a large vocabulary and why I consider myself a good writer.

Writing in primary school was a different story for me. I remember learning to write by tracing over dotted out versions of various letters. For example, I would draw the latter "A" over a dotted and faded "A". I never got it right because I'd always draw outside the dots. We used to learn how to space the words by placing two fingers in between each word, and I always got that wrong too because I never did it. With time, however, I learned that as my skill in reading progressed, so did my skill in writing. Eventually, my literacy journey in primary school got to the point where I would write my own stories in grade five and I would have my teachers mark them for me, and they would give me feedback on what I had written, because I just enjoyed writing. I didn't know that I was setting myself up for my future writing endeavours. When I wrote my stories, I would also go to my mom read them to her. My stories were never long but she always seemed to enjoy them, and she'd give me constructive criticism on each story. I think those moments with her shaped my self-image greatly, because even today I still enjoy writing.

telling me!

High school

In high school, my writing really began to flourish. English was my favourite subject because I was so good at writing. My grade eight teacher would always praised my writing, to the point where one day she asked me if she could publish one of the poems I'd written for a class task in the school's magazine. She was one of the people in my life who encouraged me to keep writing, and I owe her a lot for that. When I entered the senior phase of high school, my writing had really taken off. I

informal

attribute this to my grade ten, eleven and twelve English teacher, who helped me every step of the way by explaining where I went wrong with my stories and how I could improve them. I would always get high marks for my creative writing tasks, and I thoroughly enjoyed writing each one. During high school, writing was one of the methods I used to help cope with stress because when I needed to calm down or take a break, I'd find a quiet place to sit and I would just write.

In high school, my reading had somewhat declined. While I was still very good at reading, I did not spend much time reading for myself. I went from reading three books a week to reading one book a month. I don't know exactly why I stopped reading, but I do remember feeling like I had read all the books worth reading on planet Earth, which of course wasn't true. My pastime of reading any book I could get my hands on had taken a back seat to my pastime of playing computer games. The fact that I stopped reading books in high school is the reason why I never managed to be the top in my English class. I was in the top ten, but I wasn't first place.

University

While one might argue with me, I firmly believe that the reason I entered the IT field is because I love writing so much. In intend on being a software developer, where I will spend my time writing software code, which is only a slightly different type of writing to the writing I've been doing my whole life. I also attribute my choice to join IT to my dad. My dad has been in the IT field since he was 20 years old and he encouraged me from a young age to pursue my interest in computers and try to incorporate my skill in writing with my interest in computers, which is exactly what I've done.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this essay has described my personal literacy journey through the different stages of my literacy development. It has examined my literacy skills, particularly reading and writing, by looking at my childhood, primary school, high school and university experiences. It has also examined how these experiences and the people involved in my literacy journey affected my development as a person and my world view.

Comments:

- Work on spacing.
- Avoid colloquialism
- Do not have too many ideas in a paragraph

MARKS:

Content - $23\frac{1}{2}$
Language - 10
Structure - 12

$= \frac{45\frac{1}{2}}{60} = 76\%$

ESSAY 4

In this essay I will be describing my literacy experiences throughout my life, from childhood until now (University) and the ways in which my cultural/religious background, parents and teachers have shaped my literacy development, both positively and negatively.

Too long for a sentence!

During the course of my childhood the major influences on my literacy development were (was) my family and religion. My mother and father started reading very simple books to me when I was six months old which sparked my interest in reading, this was the beginning of my reading skills development, because the books were interactive (my parents would read "duck" and I would touch the duck's feathers and thus I began to associate words with pictures) and the way in which my parents would read (that is their tone of voice) kept me interested. My reading skills were also developed in pre-primary school at Villa Maria, where the teachers would read to us and encourage us to read. Besides my reading experiences, my writing experiences were drawing, colouring in and painting. This helped me learn to grip small things like crayons and paintbrushes which would become essential in order to grip pencils and pens in the future. As a child I would attend Sunday school where we read the children's Bible and learned about Christianity. By being constantly read to throughout my childhood it made reading a routine for me and made it natural to want to read a lot. This love for reading continued throughout my life but it was thanks to my family, school and religion for instilling it in me. My writing development only really began to pick up during school when it became an integrated part of my life.

Too long! Sentence needs work

This should be a separate paragraph.

Too informal

Primary school was when my literacy development started to increase as we were required to learn to read and write properly. In Grade R we learned the alphabet and simple counting. The teacher would read stories to us (for example: Gruffalo) and I learned how to write simple things (for example my name, my mom's name and my dad's name). Grades One, Two and Three were spent developing my reading and writing at different levels. Grade Four was a special year because it was the year I got my pen license. Before Grade Four we wrote in pencil and practiced perfecting our handwriting in pencil and then in Grade Four we got our pen license which allowed us to write in pen for the first time. This was very exciting because I could finally develop my writing skills in pen which seemed very grown up at the time. This made me even more enthusiastic to develop my writing skills. From Grade Five to Grade Seven we started reading to the class or to the teacher for assessments in

What is this?

Avoid this word.

Interesting phrase

order to make sure we could read and pronounce properly. We also began writing tests, for example English Paper Two and Three which tested our literacy expertise. During primary school we had spelling tests as well, this is where we either had to go home and learn the spelling of new more advanced words and then spell them or had a spot spelling test where we would be asked to spell a word we were not familiar with. I still remember in Grade Five we had one of these tests and we were asked to spell friend and we all spelt it as 'frend', but it was mistakes like these that I learned from and it motivated me to perfect my writing skills. We also had set work books we had to read with understanding (for the tests like English Paper Three) that became more complex as the years went on.

How? What are paper 2 and 3?

What?

Don't end a sentence with a preposition.

During high school our reading material became lengthier and more advanced and the essays that we wrote had to be longer and more in depth than before. These more extensive tests and exams helped to develop my literacy to the level it is at now, because the teachers began to expect more of us and marked more harshly. Exams like English Paper Two tested us on our reading and decoding abilities. In this way my spelling and grammar improved and I went from sixty percent to seventy percent and sometimes I achieved an eighty percent. The feedback I received from the teachers on how to improve my reading rate and writing techniques - in order to make my essays more substantial - really helped develop my literacy to the required standard. Throughout my childhood and schooling career I never had any experiences that negatively impacted my literacy development, every experience developed my literacy in a positive way. These positive experiences encouraged me to keep pushing to improve my literacy abilities.

longer

what kind?

how so?

too informal

My literacy development over the course of my life influenced my decision to study Information Technology (IT) because by having developed the ability to read I could research about IT and understand, by decoding what that information was telling me, what IT was all about and how versatile it was, that is what fields of work I could be a part of. This influenced me to choose IT over Chartered Accounting. Then once I had made my decision I had to fill in the application form using my ability to write. Furthermore in order to be accepted for this course I needed to have performed very well in high school, obviously using my literacy skills, in order to be on par with everyone else so that I did more than just pass.

Conclusion, has
In this essay I have described my literacy experiences from my childhood up until University and the ways in which my cultural/religious background, parents and teachers have shaped my literacy development, both positively and negatively. I also discussed how my development influenced my decision to study Information Technology (IT).

[980 words]

Comments:

- Work on syntax and grammar.
- Make sure you avoid long sentences and long paragraphs.
- Punctuate accordingly

MARKS

Content – 28 ½

Language – ~~10~~ 9 ½

Structure – 10

$= \frac{43}{60} = 72\%$

ESSAY 5

Introduction:

The following essay will explore my literacy experiences and focus on the forces that have shaped my reading and writing development. I will do so by focusing on key stages of my life including my childhood, primary school and high school. Lastly, I will discuss how these literacy experiences have shaped me over my formative years and affected my decision to study Information Technology.

Childhood:

While I have Afrikaans and Italian family, I was raised English and my parents were insistent that I speak clearly and with proper pronunciation. If I recall correctly, the decision to raise me as English was one with good intentions; as my parents wanted me to be more prepared for the context of the modern world. I was encouraged to speak my mind, debate and critically think to the fullest extent that I was able to. I very clearly recall and can examine conversations I had as a child with my parents. I remember discussing with my mother why exactly curse words were bad, after I said one in the middle of a casual conversation, not knowing what it really meant. In retrospect, I understand now that these were important lessons in shaping my self-image; the way I express myself and the way I communicate with others. My mother, in that case, had taught me why my intended message was misunderstood, and her feedback indicated to me that in what context I was incorrect. There were multiple situations within my childhood years in which this send-receive loop occurred, allowing me to learn within a safe environment how to handle myself respectfully in social situations.

Early Schooling:

My education began at a pre-school named Challenger, within the Northern Suburbs of Cape Town. My first attempt at writing occurred during these years; however, it was mostly my parents teaching me how to write out the alphabet and count. The school made an effort in teaching the children how to interact socially, form friendships and work in small groups on enjoyable art projects and social activities. My first friendships were formed there, as well as my first experiences (albeit minor) with social conflict. Indeed, even the struggle over whoever gets to use the red paint for finger painting proved to be a catalyst for teaching myself and the other children how to deal with conflict of social interest in everyday life. Unbeknownst to us, these were valuable lessons in communication that would undoubtedly affect how we were to deal with more serious matters in the future, as our literary experiences continued to grow.

Primary School:

During primary school, the growth of my communication skills was large but at the same time very stunted. I played a lot of video games during this time in my life, and they were very successful in teaching me new aspects of the English language that put me ahead of some of my school peers at the time. I did well in English; however I was never very good at Afrikaans. The social area of my communicational development suffered as a result of bullying and trials in my family life, which caused me to isolate myself from others. While I had friends, I was never accustomed to being very comfortable around many people my own age, subsequently causing me to avoid socializing at all costs. This, however, became less and less of a problem over the years. By the time I was in grade five, I had a solid circle of friends despite the bullying I was so used to experiencing. I always associated myself with the other boys who were ostracized, we were all "nerds" to the other children; being associated with video games, comic books and reading. During these times I never struggled with my English assessments; my upbringing and regular involvement with reading and practice of good speech during situations involving dyadic communication ensured I had a solid communicational backbone (at least academically).

High School:

My high school years were undoubtedly the best of my life for literacy and communicational development. My communicational skills developed rapidly as a result of the faster pace within the high school environment. This allowed me to further develop my social niche, granting me the incredible group of friends I surround myself with now. While high school was laden with its own set of difficulties both social and academic, I still maintained good development of my linguistic skills; particularly a large improvement within Afrikaans. I still struggle with the language to this day, however I can now understand it very well (had I been brought up with my Afrikaans background in mind, this might not have been the case). High school was a time where I experimented with creative writing, as I became a musician and began writing poetry and lyrics for my own music. This was instrumental in developing my literacy and social skills, as I became more and more comfortable with my self-awareness and interpersonal communication.

Post-matric and Tertiary Education:

After high school, I took a gap year. I received very good results for my matric certificate, taking away 3 distinctions and only missing a distinction for English by one percent. During this time, I dated a girl from a traditional Afrikaans family, allowing me to experience a very different world from what I was used to, especially since she lived all the way in the Eastern Cape. I learned a lot more about Afrikaans; such as how to understand it more coherently and better communicate using the language myself. While I still struggle with it, this year taught me more about speaking it than my last two years of high school combined. I worked at a pizza delivery company for a fair part of the year, as this was how I funded my trips to the Eastern Cape. This exposed me to a microcosm of culture within the Cape Town city bowl. I learned very quickly that being able to adapt yourself to new cultural situations is a very important skill. During this time, I decided with absolute certainty

that I wanted to study Information Technology. I have always had a passion for computers as well as music, and one of my dreams is to develop software for musicians and other creators. My experiences with communication and literacy have given me the perspective I need in order to understand that Information Technology is an important industry in terms of communication, and that grasping the intricacies of professional, clear communication is important even in the software world.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, I have explored and discussed the specific examples referenced above; and how these experiences have shaped my world view and linguistic skills. Within these examples, I have examined the influence my personal choices and personal association has had on my literacy, social adaptability and self-image, as well as my understanding of the communication process.

[1145 words]

Comments:

- Use simple past tense verbs rather than continuous tense (past) verbs (ending in -ing) as this makes your entrance structure easier to follow.
- Avoid colloquialism / informal language!
- Your language journey ~~was~~ interesting to read!
- Avoid having too many ideas in a ~~sentence~~ paragraph.

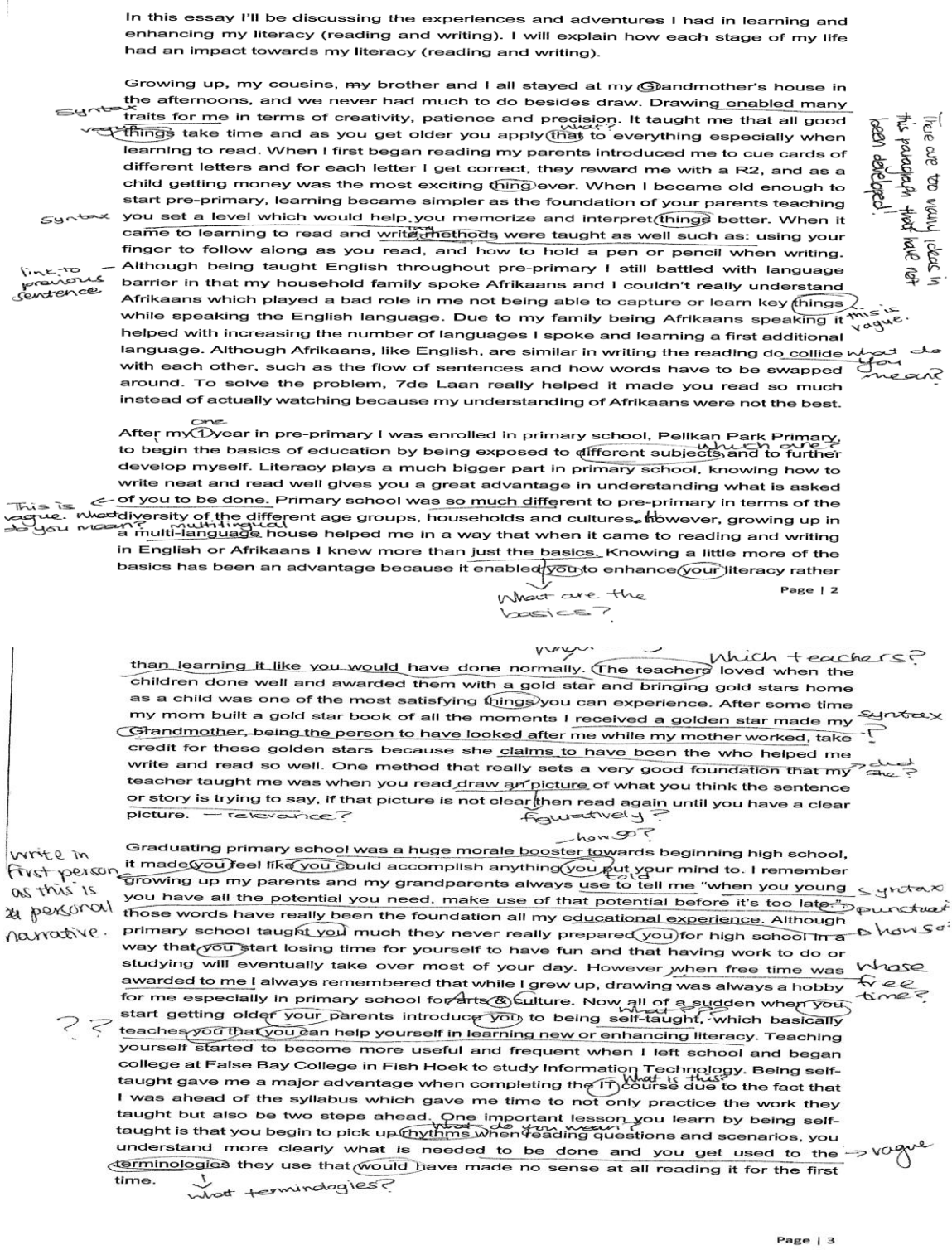
MARKS

Content – 20
Language – 10
Structure – 12

= $\frac{42}{60}$ = 70%

CATEGORY 2: AVERAGE PERFORMANCE ESSAYS

ESSAY 6



In this essay I'll be discussing the experiences and adventures I had in learning and enhancing my literacy (reading and writing). I will explain how each stage of my life had an impact towards my literacy (reading and writing).

Growing up, my cousins, ~~my~~ brother and I all stayed at my Grandmother's house in the afternoons, and we never had much to do besides draw. Drawing enabled many traits for me in terms of creativity, patience and precision. It taught me that all good things take time and as you get older you apply that to everything especially when learning to read. When I first began reading my parents introduced me to cue cards of different letters and for each letter I get correct, they reward me with a R2, and as a child getting money was the most exciting thing ever. When I became old enough to start pre-primary, learning became simpler as the foundation of your parents teaching you set a level which would help you memorize and interpret things better. When it came to learning to read and write methods were taught as well such as: using your finger to follow along as you read, and how to hold a pen or pencil when writing. Although being taught English throughout pre-primary I still battled with language barrier in that my household family spoke Afrikaans and I couldn't really understand Afrikaans which played a bad role in me not being able to capture or learn key things while speaking the English language. Due to my family being Afrikaans speaking it helped with increasing the number of languages I spoke and learning a first additional language. Although Afrikaans, like English, are similar in writing the reading do collide with each other, such as the flow of sentences and how words have to be swapped around. To solve the problem, 7de Laan really helped it made you read so much instead of actually watching because my understanding of Afrikaans were not the best.

After my 1 year in pre-primary I was enrolled in primary school, Pelikan Park Primary, to begin the basics of education by being exposed to different subjects and to further develop myself. Literacy plays a much bigger part in primary school, knowing how to write neat and read well gives you a great advantage in understanding what is asked of you to be done. Primary school was so much different to pre-primary in terms of the diversity of the different age groups, households and cultures. However, growing up in a multi-language house helped me in a way that when it came to reading and writing in English or Afrikaans I knew more than just the basics. Knowing a little more of the basics has been an advantage because it enabled you to enhance your literacy rather

than learning it like you would have done normally. The teachers loved when the children done well and awarded them with a gold star and bringing gold stars home as a child was one of the most satisfying things you can experience. After some time my mom built a gold star book of all the moments I received a golden star made my Grandmother, being the person to have looked after me while my mother worked, take credit for these golden stars because she claims to have been the who helped me write and read so well. One method that really sets a very good foundation that my teacher taught me was when you read draw an picture of what you think the sentence or story is trying to say, if that picture is not clear then read again until you have a clear picture.

Graduating primary school was a huge morale booster towards beginning high school, it made you feel like you could accomplish anything you put your mind to. I remember growing up my parents and my grandparents always use to tell me "when you young you have all the potential you need, make use of that potential before it's too late." those words have really been the foundation all my educational experience. Although primary school taught you much they never really prepared you for high school in a way that you start losing time for yourself to have fun and that having work to do or studying will eventually take over most of your day. However when free time was awarded to me I always remembered that while I grew up, drawing was always a hobby for me especially in primary school for Arts & Culture. Now all of a sudden when you start getting older your parents introduce you to being self-taught, which basically teaches you that you can help yourself in learning new or enhancing literacy. Teaching yourself started to become more useful and frequent when I left school and began college at False Bay College in Fish Hoek to study Information Technology. Being self-taught gave me a major advantage when completing the IT course due to the fact that I was ahead of the syllabus which gave me time to not only practice the work they taught but also be two steps ahead. One important lesson you learn by being self-taught is that you begin to pick up rhythms when reading questions and scenarios, you understand more clearly what is needed to be done and you get used to the terminologies they use that would have made no sense at all reading it for the first time.

After completing college, you don't have much of a different perspective of university because you more or less have been trained for the occasion. However, this did not help because in IT you 50% of the time writing using pen and paper but the other 50% you on a computer which helps with reading but not so much with writing. The further you go in your studies you realize that hand writing fades because lecturers don't have to wait for you, you have to keep up and you end up writing extremely fast but lose so much quality in your hand writing. Nowadays I notice that university is way more lenient when it comes to hand writing except in exams, I remember clearly in college every single written exam test I did there was an instruction to "write neatly and legibly". Although they say "write neatly and legibly" it occurred to that the lecturers never really had a problem if the words or sentences were clear enough to be read. To be honest I can't really talk so much about literacy in University because I've only been in University for a few months but what I can say is that, through out the years of learning and enhancing your literacy by reading in your free time or drawing as a hobby it all leads to your own writing styles and reading patterns. However, it's important to correct mistakes you make quite often in literacy because it will start becoming a habit which would last for a very long time. If you are looking for the second most effective way of improving your literacy, it's to surround yourself around people who have very good knowledge of English which improves the way you write and makes you want to read more.

In conclusion, when you start your education you don't realize how important your literacy is because you just a child wanting to have fun and your only really realize the importance once you enter your final years of high school or beginning years of university.

General comments:

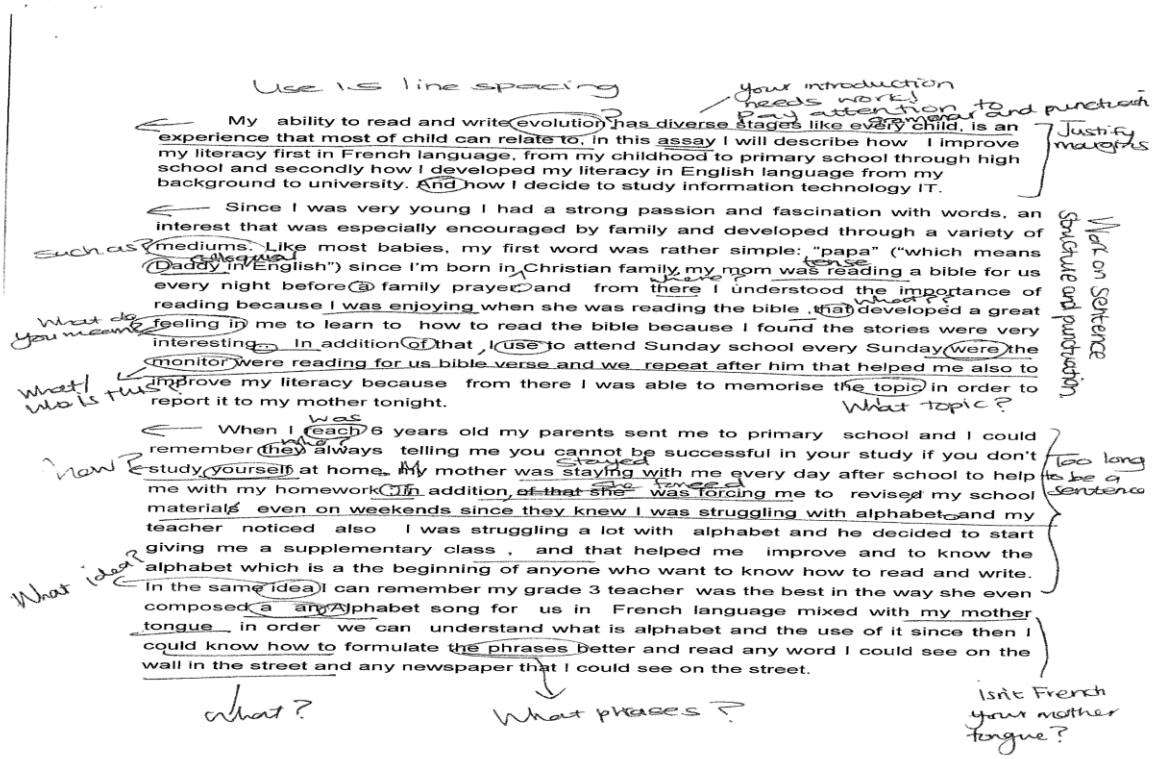
- your paragraphs are too long and have too many ideas that are not explored thoroughly nor directly relate to the topic.
- Work on syntax and grammar.
- use first person narrative - NOT second or third person

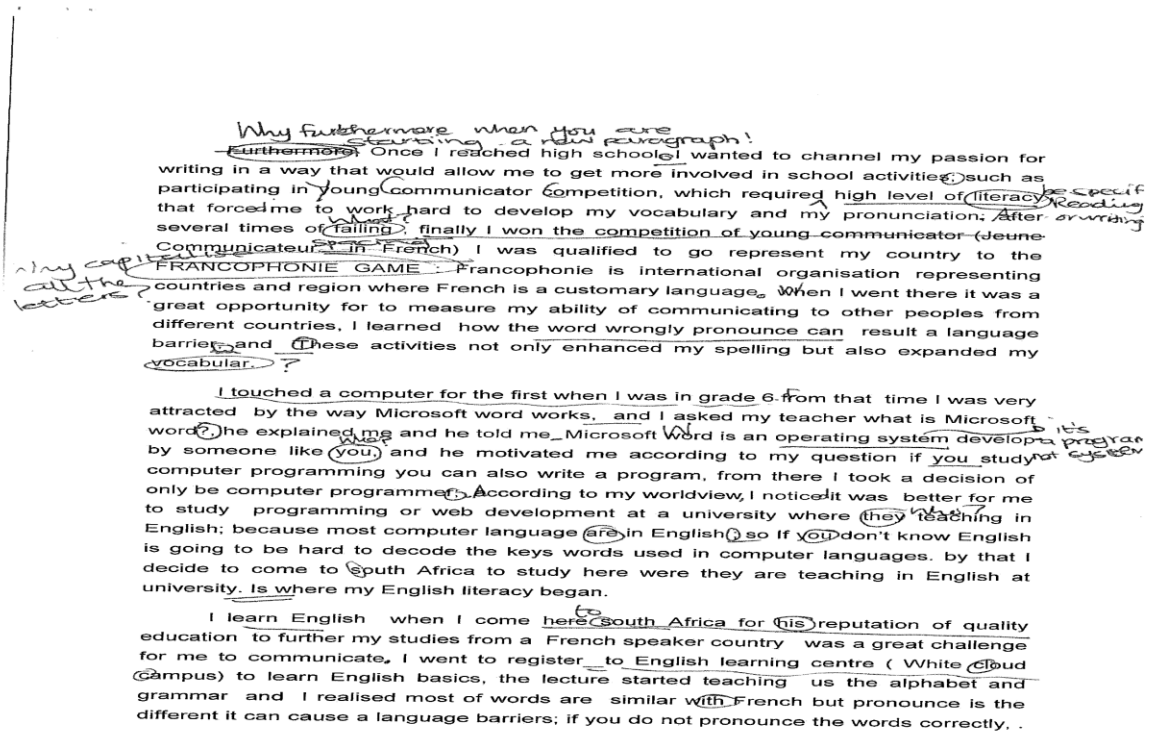
MARKS

C - 15
L - 7 ½

S - 7 ½ = 33/60 = 55%

ESSAY 7


Use 1.5 line spacing
your introduction needs work! Pay attention to grammar and punctuation
My ability to read and write evolution has diverse stages like every child, is an experience that most of child can relate to, in this assay I will describe how I improve my literacy first in French language, from my childhood to primary school through high school and secondly how I developed my literacy in English language from my background to university. And how I decide to study information technology IT.
Justify main ideas
Since I was very young I had a strong passion and fascination with words, an interest that was especially encouraged by family and developed through a variety of mediums. Like most babies, my first word was rather simple: "papa" ("which means Daddy in English") since I'm born in Christian family my mom was reading a bible for us every night before a family prayer and from there I understood the importance of reading because I was enjoying when she was reading the bible , that developed a great feeling in me to learn to how to read the bible because I found the stories were very interesting. In addition of that, I use to attend Sunday school every Sunday were the monitor were reading for us bible verse and we repeat after him that helped me also to improve my literacy because from there I was able to memorise the topic in order to report it to my mother tonight.
Such as?
What do you mean?
What/ Who is this?
What topic?
Work on Sentence Structure and punctuation
When I reach 6 years old my parents sent me to primary school and I could remember they always telling me you cannot be successful in your study if you don't study yourself at home. My mother was staying with me every day after school to help me with my homework. In addition of that she was forcing me to revised my school materials even on weekends since they knew I was struggling with alphabet and my teacher noticed also I was struggling a lot with alphabet and he decided to start giving me a supplementary class , and that helped me improve and to know the alphabet which is a the beginning of anyone who want to know how to read and write. In the same idea I can remember my grade 3 teacher was the best in the way she even composed a an Alphabet song for us in French language mixed with my mother tongue in order we can understand what is alphabet and the use of it since then I could know how to formulate the phrases better and read any word I could see on the wall in the street and any newspaper that I could see on the street.
How?
What idea?
Too long to be a sentence
What?
What phrases?
Isn't French your mother tongue?


Why furthermore when you are starting a new paragraph!
Furthermore, Once I reached high school I wanted to channel my passion for writing in a way that would allow me to get more involved in school activities such as participating in young communicator competition, which required high level of literacy that forced me to work hard to develop my vocabulary and my pronunciation. After several times of failing, finally I won the competition of young communicator (Jeune Communicateur in French) I was qualified to go represent my country to the FRANCOPHONIE GAME : Francophonie is international organisation representing countries and region where French is a customary language. When I went there it was a great opportunity for to measure my ability of communicating to other peoples from different countries, I learned how the word wrongly pronounce can result a language barrier. These activities not only enhanced my spelling but also expanded my vocabular. ?
Be specif Reading or writing
Why capitalize all the letters?
I touched a computer for the first when I was in grade 6. from that time I was very attracted by the way Microsoft word works, and I asked my teacher what is Microsoft word? he explained me and he told me Microsoft Word is an operating system develop by someone like you, and he motivated me according to my question if you study computer programming you can also write a program, from there I took a decision of only be computer programmer. According to my worldview, I noticed it was better for me to study programming or web development at a university where they teaching in English; because most computer language are in English so If you don't know English is going to be hard to decode the keys words used in computer languages. by that I decide to come to South Africa to study here were they are teaching in English at university. Is where my English literacy began.
It's a program that system
I learn English when I come here South Africa for his reputation of quality education to further my studies from a French speaker country was a great challenge for me to communicate, I went to register to English learning centre (White Cloud campus) to learn English basics, the lecture started teaching us the alphabet and grammar and I realised most of words are similar with French but pronounce is the different it can cause a language barriers; if you do not pronounce the words correctly, .

and with the advancement of technology it made it more easier for me to learn English quickly because I could google any questions I could have concerning English and get an answer, and I downloaded many dictionaries English language to French language to translate any words that I couldn't understand the meaning additional to that the responsibilities that I'm given to church to interpreter in French to those on who doesn't understand English that push me to work hard so I can translate the correct words to them.

At university wasn't easy at the beginning because there is some academic words that you will learn with time like my first test I failed wasn't because I didn't knew the correct answer ; but because I didn't understood the question properly I didn't know the meaning of some words, in the same time my mistakes is helping me to improve my literacy as result of being at university, all my friends French speakers ~~they~~ have high consideration of me in terms of reading and writing since I'm studying at university and that is motivating and push me to improve my grammar and pronunciation and research a lot to keep up my high consideration from them, and I'm learning every day from all the lectures and specially from Miss Linda MBAZA my lecture of professional communication because she is giving me many basics that I didn't knew before in English.

All things considered, reading and writing is a key to any field you wish to studies, because you will be required to write and talk everywhere like it or not , in my case I learnt French, by help of my parents and all lectures from grade R to grade 12 pushing me every day to read, and my religion through the Sunday school, in the same idea I'm learning English. through technology which is advance now by having many dictionaries applications on my phone, and English learning centre. and at university where I'm studying now despite the challenge I'm facing, is helping to improve every day with lectures and chatting with friend.

[1209 words]

Comments: Work on punctuation because it affects your sentence structure and overall meaning.

Content – 18
Language – 7
Structure – 7

$= \frac{32}{60} = 53\%$

ESSAY 8

Use Arial font size 12!

Introduction

This paragraph is too long!

Success is not to reach a destination, it is to start a journey and my educational success started with literacy. It has been a long journey so far, from childhood, my primary school, my high school and university. Where I have been finally enrolled to study Information Technology (IT) that I have undertaken. Relating my different experiences during my literacy development will be a task I pleasure doing and I will elaborate more on it in the following paragraphs below.

My Childhood

relevance to topic?

I was born in Rwanda, Western province, Rubavu District, city of Gisenyi. I'm the third child of seven children. I spent my great early childhood in that city, where life was really nice and easier for me at time. We were staying with our big family like: Uncles, grandparent and Aunts. Therefore, it was pleasant childhood where I would travel from home to my grandparent to get care from my Grandmother as she used to give me or other time I would go to my Aunt. My mother tongue was Kinyarwanda as we have one language in Rwanda every Rwandan could speak Kinyarwanda.

relevance to topic?

I grew up with my siblings where we used to entertain ourselves by playing football, volleyball and swimming, since we stayed near Lake Kivu. My parents were not interested in swimming due to fear that we could drown and die. They always used to warn me not got there but I couldn't stayed home while my siblings were going swim. Fortunately nothing happened until I became big boy.

→ relate to reading and writing

too much spacing

My Primary School

syntax

Years later, I went to school named Bukinanyana Primary School, this school was not far from home, I came across barrier language because Kinyarwanda was only the language I knew as I had not gone to crèche while the school was using French. I spent six years there learning all the fundamentals lessons of literacy such as reading and writing.

One of the memories I have kept was to lead National Hymn on the Assembly on the first day of school. Standing in front of more than thousand (1000) Pupils was not really easy for me because normally I used to feel shy that time. The teachers used to lead it or point on any pupil to do so by nominated him/her that moment or said that you would lead the whole week and this could be done by starting with greetings in French. Another, memory I kept was calculation where teacher surprised us to do multiplication without calculating on paper or without calculator but just using mental (brain) with formed good sentence and gave us limited time. And once you failed they would hit us seriously. Those moments I will never forget in my life

what does this mean?

helped

because they were really tough however, teacher's were helping us to improve our skills each day coming and because we worked under pressure made us sacrifice and hard worker. It was worth it once I completed my primary school with very good aggregates, which allowed me to join government high school where they only took those who performed well and you got a chance to paid less fees however, my parents didn't allow me to join that school instead they took me elsewhere.

why was?

Spacing

My High School

This paragraph is too long

Thereafter, I started my journey into high school. My parent enrolled me in Christian school named College Adventist de Rwankeri (CAR) which had a high level of discipline and competitiveness'; all students were striving to be the best and would do everything that it takes to get to the top. By that moment things were little bit easy for me as I could write and read French even though it was still somehow challenging to speak with a proper ascent. However, boarding school was new environment to manage it was not easy like to wake up too earlier and like twenty students slept in same room was not fair. I remember some they were speaking French with good ascent at all. Others including me we were not good enough. But we learnt from them especially guy called Peter was the best. He used to correct and teach me when needed. And some subjects were not easy like chemistry was the first time I saw it and teacher was not good. After few days I started to manage that new environment. Luckily, one of my classmate was supportive and after class he would help me and the teacher's would guide me and correct me when needed. That support helped me to pass well and became more encouraged. After three years I have taken next level where you choose your options of specialization in next three years left considered as advanced level (called in French cycle superieur). Therefore, my subjects of choice were: Physics, Mathematics and Computer. After, I have chosen my subjects I started to focus on them and to find ways of gaining deep knowledge in them. However, computer became challenging to me because it was the first time to see it. Fortunately, my teachers were very supportive, guided and corrected me when needed and also I got more advices from my classmates and I had to practice more especially in programming; where C++ was the first language to be used. I kept memory the way I run my first program without errors; I felt wow! as I was doing more theory and less practical with teacher named James who supported me more. My studies kept progressing where in my last year, I did a project where I was managing employees salary for some Construction company, where we used Visual Basic (VB) as graphic design and Database using Microsoft Access and my project was successful. As for Math and Physics I did well too, I finalized my metric with good aggregates (called distinction).

What? Relate everything to literacy development

New journey to CPUT

After I completed high school, I heard that South African education is of high quality; I decided to come and upgrade from here; however, I did not know even any university from South Africa. I decided to search information from internet and I first got University of Cape Town (UCT) and University of Western Cape (UWC) then I applied Computer Science at the University of Western Cape (UWC) via online for the first time. Because I did not know English I could not fill forms as supposed to be however, I was assisted with a guy who knew little bit English. Thereafter, my application has been not accepted, due to incomplete information during application process. Therefore I decided to come in South Africa to apply in person and looked for more Universities where I could further my education, because I saw that first application was rejected. I prepared myself for coming, I fixed all my travel documents (passport and ticket) and then I came; I arrived Johannesburg during night, it was really tough to communicate with people! By chance I mate one man who was speaking Swahili as I understood very well, he helped me to find safe hotel and cheap as well. Therefore I came to Cape Town the next day, I got someone to assist me in finding accommodation and then he connected me to Student from UWC. Thereafter, he told me that I would wait next application which would take place in August while we were in February. OH!! I felt can't manage but I had no option but to wait until then. Therefore I started to think how to improve English in that period. However, I never went to any school for learning English but I used to read the books and to ask my friends I made around where I stayed that time and correct me where needed is how I learnt English. After six months I went to apply to University of Western Cape and then I saw Cape Peninsular University of Technology (CPUT); I asked also information about it, I heard that offered course Information Technology (IT) and got collaboration with big companies like (Amazon's, Apple and Microsoft etc...) then I went to collect information From Campus (Bellville campus) and I got it. Thereafter three days I went to apply to the main Campus (Cape Town Campus) as it was only campus that had Information Technology (IT). Fortunately my application accepted and the one for UWC replied I have had to bring HESA (Higher Education South Africa) while I had SAQA (South Africa Qualification Authority). Therefore waited for two weeks after being accepted then I came for registration and I started, where I believe that I will improve my skills and knowledge in Information Technology (IT) where I shall be one of those who solve problems and creating a job via technology as our Lecturers and university are there to assist and guiding us; I will achieve my goals.

Too long

There are too many ideas! This paragraph is too long

?

Conclusion

Language barrier can hinder a person's progress in life but if one has the determination and commitment, it cannot stop you. I'm currently still facing language barrier as my English skills are not on the level of a university student because I learnt English as a fourth language but my determination and will to further myself as far as education is concerned keeps me going. This essay has talked about my long journey, where I started from my childhood, my primary school, my high school and university (Cape Peninsular University of Technology). It has stated out important factors that contributed to my studies progressions. My introduction of computer, Math and Physics during high school and my journey to Cape Peninsular University of technology (CPUT).

This is Not a conclusion

Too much/long

Comments:

- Do not have long paragraphs
- Link narrative to literacy development

MARKS:

Content – 15
Language – 9½
Structure – 7½ = 32/60 = 53%

ESSAY 9

[Personal Narrative on Literacy Development]
[Chumani Madlavu]
[Professional Communication]

what is this?

Introduction

Literacy is an essential skill which one needs to keep up with the human everyday communication process, not just for casual purposes but for professional as well, and it is therefore a need for everyone to be literate.

what?

Body

Elaborate on literacy skills you learnt and how you learnt these skills

I come from an ethnic African group called amaXhosa, where reading and writing was not really prioritised and perhaps even now it's not up to the level it should be. The large number of illiterate adults in my race proves this to be true. As a child growing up I would not say my community did much to help me or the children there at large, to improve our literacy skills. In my entire family, my mother is the only person I can point out and say she played a much bigger role in my literacy development at that stage, of which back then I did not realise for me it seemed like some sort of punishment, but now looking back at it I can see how young and clueless I was, asking questions as to what would reading help me with as in my mind thought when I would finally get old to get a job I would work with my hands not my mouth or a book.

what do you mean?

reading or writing

see literal meanings

Too casual.

When I was six years old I started primary school at Qumbu Village Junior Secondary School and the literacy development would climb another level higher, perhaps multiple levels higher than before. I was now thought a whole bunch of stuff I didn't even know existed, it was my teachers this side and my mother on the other and a glimpse of light started to glow in my eyes but I was not yet convinced. I always asked myself though,

I is always capital.

why is it so important for people to be able to read and write, and I was told it was necessary for human communication, that didn't make much sense to me at all.

For the grades I did there, Grade 1 and 2, for the first grade we focused more on reading and doing orals and so I learnt how to read and speak a bit more better especially the English language. My teacher used to give us books every now and then and encouraged us to communicate verbally in English as well, but I always lacked the confidence to stand in front of a big crowd and read out loud.

As life went on, I then became a high schooler and I now I had a better understanding of why I needed to be literate. Now we did more oral presentations, wrote more essays, books were thrown at us, so basically it was reading and writing all the way, year in and year out. I turned out to be a good reader, I know so because I regularly got complements from my language teachers for good reading. Even my peers recommended me when it was time for a student to read a novel for the class. In writing I wasn't as good as I was with reading, so I'll say, that department has been developing slower than the other. → why weren't you good?

learner

really?!

This is old age!

how?

Now I'm in university, needless to say, I need to be as literate as I can be. I'm now out into the world where being literate would come in really handy especially now that I'm doing IT. → what is this

This is too short for a paragraph

Conclusion

Whether in reading, writing or speaking, literacy will always play a part in us humans connecting with one another. The literacy journey is never ending and so I will for any other ways to improve mine.

?

Comments:

- Work on grammar and punctuation — The letter (I) is always a Capital letter!
- Your introduction and conclusion need work
- You must elaborate on literacy skills and first and foremost you need to define literacy as reading and writing

ESSAY 10

Your paragraphs are too short.

→ Too much information — why? — justify margins

[Reading and writing is one of the most important things one should know how to do them. It does not matter how old you are, at some point you will realise how important it is to know how to read and write. There are so many moments that have helped me develop my literacy since primary school up until now here in University.

You must merely introduce the topic.

I grew up in a background where most people were uneducated as a result it was hard to learn how to read and write words. The only option that was going to help me in knowing how to read and write was to go to school. My teachers played a huge role in making sure that I know how to write and read. They patiently moulded me so that I can be able to proudly say I can read and I can write. I still remember the homeworks they used to give us so that we can improve our writing and reading skills. That is where it all began. → elaborate on literacy activities.

My childhood was fun because I was learning a lot of interesting things. When we were bored at home we used to play puzzle games on the magazine and that also contributed to my reading and writing skills. Puzzle games makes brain think fast and be creative. In puzzle games I learnt when you mix this letter and that one which word comes out and how to pronounce it. → You need to elaborate the different points.

When I reached 4th Grade at school I started to learn how to use grammar in English. Teachers were also available to help me where I am lacking and also my Aunt would help me with English homeworks. I was so happy that I will finally know how to read and write in English. I was so curious I wanted to know every word written in English as a result I was reading every English name I came across with. Appliances were my targets when it comes to reading English names, I remember not knowing how to pronounce *Sansui and Hisense*. → elaborate!

I loved to watch TV while I was growing up and that also helped me to be able to read fast. In sopies like Generations it was hard to hear what they were saying since they talked many languages of which some of them I didn't understand so in order for me to understand I would read subtitles at the bottom of the screen and that is how I learnt to read fast.

You can't have a paragraph that only has two sentences.

I read two novels in primary school called *Whitney's Kiss* and the other one called *Mpho's Search*, they are one of the nicest novels I've read so far in my life. I found many new words I've never heard of them before after reading these novels. elaborate!

When I reached high school I was already know how to write and read but still I had to learn further more because we will never stop learning because we will never know everything. In high school things got a little bit complicated because now I had to use my writing skills I more deep things such as letter writing, essay writing and other assessments. It was a difficult yet helping experience.

Work on your syntax especially when it comes to tense (use past simple tense to narrate the past)

You what?? What things? This word is vague. What was difficult?

Use parallelism, have one tense in a sentence.

In high school I joined a book club called Bleed to Lead Book Club (BLBC). Activities that were done was reading the book, then review it and then after that we discuss the book as the club members as a whole. The book club really helped me a lot in terms of reading, how to hold a book, the pace of reading and a posture. It also thought me how to stand in front of a crowd with confidence and do what I'm required to do.

Reading and writing have influenced me a lot in my choice of choosing to do CT Academy (Applications Development) course because in this course I still write and I still read but the difference is that I'm also learning other languages. I'm taking my writing skills to the next level because now I'm writing programs. I like to learn new things like the languages I keep on learning in this course that is Java, c++, html and others. What is this? What are these?

It is not true that we have only one life to live; if we can read, we can live as many more lives and as many kinds of lives as we wish.

[753]

→ This is not a conclusion.

Comments:

- You essay is not well organised. Your paragraphs are too short and thought process has not been well-developed. You need to elaborate on ideas that you speak about in each phase of your life.
- Avoid using the word "thing"
- Work on sentence structure and tenses.

Marks

Content – 15
Language – 7½
Structure – 7½

30/60 = 50%

CATEGORY 3: LOW PERFORMANCE ESSAYS

ESSAY 11

The unison formation of reading and writing in the World

Amongst the developments we encounter in the process of growing up, is learning the curve of life to where it takes us. However we are all born of a perfect unknown dialectical mind that transcends to a greater power of a mind to try and quench all the information in this universe. This essay will outline a clear and concise road to how, when and why did I have a literature development broadly influenced by the environment I was living in the olden days and in this modern day age.

Reading and writing is considered as a leeway to which communication can be achieved and can ~~be able to~~ flourish in the whole world. Different languages consist of different linguistics characteristics that are recognized by those who speak these languages. The broad based introspection in each and every language practiced can be translated by reading and writing, it is in this prospectus that we can be able to distinguish one language to the other, in relation to that we are at a very interesting contemporary discourse of reading and writing where the world has evolved to a more proactive and accelerated ways of how can one read and write in a very meaningful way.

Literacy development in preschool learning

Development of literature in writing and reading started when I was immediately faced with preschool learning by the year 2005, where the connotations of small letters and capital letters first were introduced as medium and foundation of reading and writing. There was a very unique way of learning to which I still remember, where there would be a rough sketch of a drawing and under the drawing would be its name, these diagrams ranged from as simple as an environmental and artificial diagrams such as a tree, house, bus. Including shapes such as a circle, square, rectangle.

This development of reading and writing would be what I would call the amateur stage. Probably by this time as a small baby, one would be having difficulties by even properly echoing out specific words because this is the stage just after an adolescence baby has started speaking verbally. The learning of the alphabets from A to Z has helped me be mindful of the writing of vowels and all the intermediate symbols needed to both utter a word and be able to pronounce it well. As a baby you start to be cognisant of your surroundings, this helps in asking the elderly people by enquiring something that you would not know, in collaboration to that I had developed an initial vocabulary from both seeing things and attaching them with names that they are called by, this also helped with spelling issues that were very at a core foundation.

The intermediate development of literacy in primary school at a young tender age

By intermediate school learning from Grade 3 to Grade 5 by the years 2007 to 2009 in both reading and writing, there was an immense change to how I viewed reading and writing because on the onset it was challenging and really tiring to do. By this time I had known how to read particular magazines, newspapers and anything that can be visibly written. Even though my spelling would not be sufficient enough to be able to write comprehensively without obstacles of writing, I enjoyed reading more than writing because I saw it as a very irritating journey to write. I felt reading did not take much energy and thought and even if you did not know a word well, you would be able to predict the pronounciations and in most cases than not I would be able to get them right.

Mid strata development of literacy in reading and writing

The strata to be intellectually literate, to be able to read and write would have reached an average and mid professional reader and writer by that time. From Grade 8 to Grade 12, by the years 2010 to 2014. Immediately on the uprisal of the need and intensifying urgency to read and write in high school, senior school reading and writing had major

demands in all aspects because one needed to adjust to the heightened propability of having to do different subjects which had different systematic alterations. This caused a well advanced vocabulary and was a major contributor to my writing and reading skills. There was minimal difficulty to read and write especially in the final years of high school, this brought a confidence because I could now read novels, journals, political readings amongst other things.

The universal outlook of reading and writing has been wavered all around the world and has reached even the university elites, at university I could say that the processes of elevating my belief systems in reading and writing were at a very high level, because university brought such a challenge to be able to read and write comprehensively as an academia, this gives you a chance to express what you often ought to think about certain agendas of life. The consistency of the workload of university makes you realise that you need to be at the forefront of reading and writing in a world genome, because if not you cannot succumb to reading and writing at university, then you would be at a very difficult arena of illiteracy, which would make you convey university as a bad omen for you.

The full formation of a fully fleshed ideological phenomenon of reading and writing

From a personal prognosis, by now at this stage I have learnt to love reading, as the world is governed by such. Life as a whole would not be much celebrated and sweeter without giving life to reading and writing. Interaction between humans is solely depended on such. Even if you have never met someone, that does not mean you have evaded from seeing and comprehending their thoughts both in reading and scripture text. My home language of IsiXhosa, I have had intense difficulties of reading and writing it, all years from primary school to high school, it was after a moment I realised after high school that my mother tongue language of IsiXhosa, is recognised in South Africa as one of the languages that can be able to define life's greatest wonder and magical idioms. This later brought a new version of self into introspection of my reading and writing status to highly esteemed professional reader and writer.

English as a first additional language had brought immense problems, because extra work needed to be done to extend the mind prospectus of the language arena. The experience I encountered with English far outweigh that of my home language of isiXhosa. I have tried to read dictionaries, encyclopedias, information websites in order to reach par excellence in my reading and writing skills.

The world has moved very fast in a world of literature, as a way of best communication medium that can be passed through the whole world as a best perception it has always been believed that reading and writing help humans solve problems more than being illiterate beings.

Education solely depends on reading and writing, it is through this lens we can see the acceleration of intellect amongst learners and students. No method has been brought forward that can be able to accelerate the development of the mindful thought ability and comprehension of reading and writing. Sometime ago I decided to study information technology as a prerequisite to less reading and writing because I felt it will subside mu urge to read and write more. However not to say I hate reading and writing but its just that sometimes it gets too much.

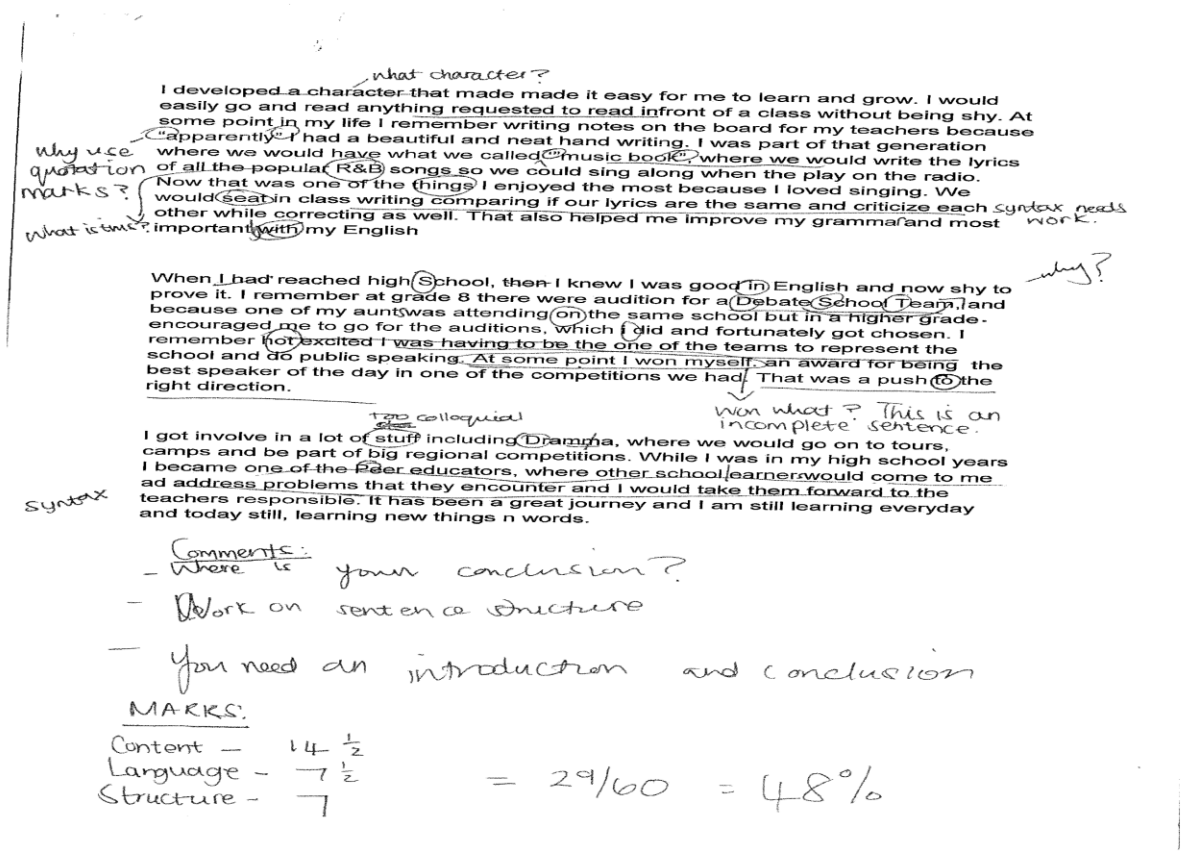
This essay has drawn out different stages of my life as the development of literature in both reading and writing. It has also tried and answered the global scale thought of what does the world think of reading and writing. As a medium of instruction some of us have home languages that are different to other people this would not be viewed as an obstacle but an alternative means to communicate in order to reach a higher scale of audience.

Comments:
- Your essay is too long!
- Use words ~~that~~ and phrases that make sense within the context of the topic
- Your thought process does not flow – there are no links between ideas, sentences and paragraphs.
- Your sentence structure needs work.
- It is LITERACY NOT literature.

MARKS:
C – 14
L – 7½
S – 7½

$= \frac{28\frac{1}{2}}{60} = 48\%$

ESSAY 12



what character?

I developed a character that made made it easy for me to learn and grow. I would easily go and read anything requested to read infront of a class without being shy. At some point in my life I remember writing notes on the board for my teachers because "apparently" I had a beautiful and neat hand writing. I was part of that generation where we would have what we called "music book" where we would write the lyrics of all the popular R&B songs so we could sing along when the play on the radio. Now that was one of the things I enjoyed the most because I loved singing. We would seat in class writing comparing if our lyrics are the same and criticize each other while correcting as well. That also helped me improve my grammar and most important with my English

Why use quotation marks?

What is smc?

syntax needs work.

When I had reached high School, then I knew I was good in English and now shy to prove it. I remember at grade 8 there were audition for a Debate School Team, and because one of my aunts was attending on the same school but in a higher grade. encouraged me to go for the auditions, which I did and fortunately got chosen. I remember not excited I was having to be the one of the teams to represent the school and do public speaking. At some point I won myself an award for being the best speaker of the day in one of the competitions we had. That was a push to the right direction.

why?

won what? This is an incomplete sentence.

too colloquial

I got involve in a lot of stuff including Dramma, where we would go on to tours, camps and be part of big regional competitions. While I was in my high school years I became one of the Peer educators, where other school learners would come to me ad address problems that they encounter and I would take them forward to the teachers responsible. It has been a great journey and I am still learning everyday and today still, learning new things n words.

syntax

Comments:

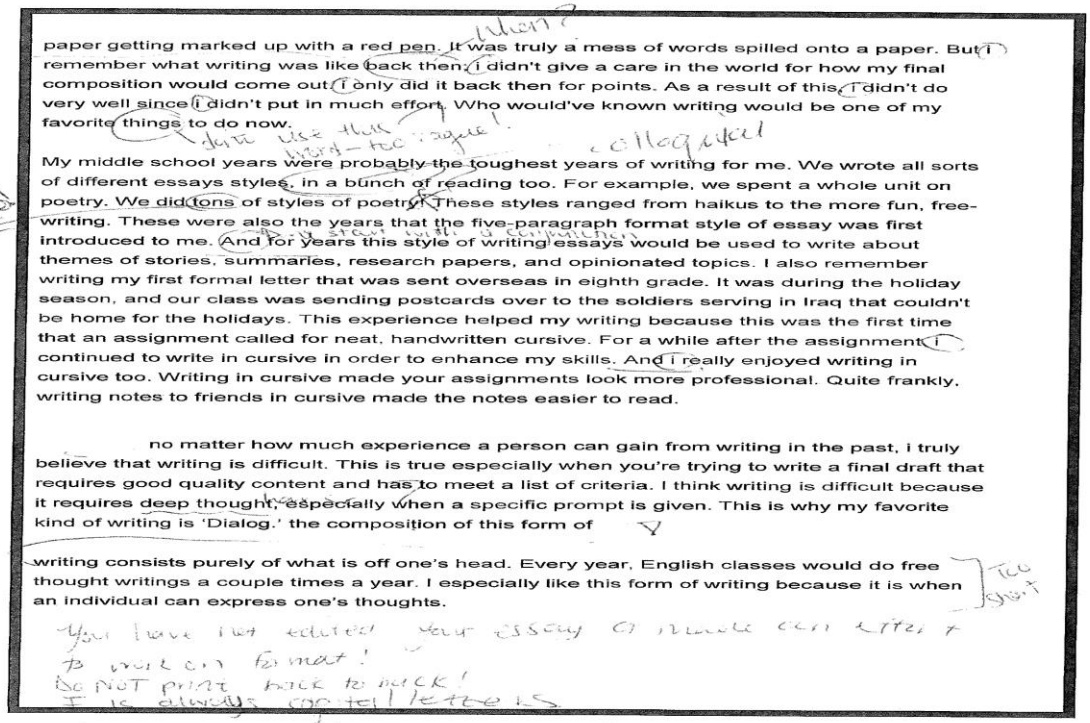
- Where is your conclusion?
- Work on sentence structure
- You need an introduction and conclusion

MARKS:

Content – 14 ½
Language – 7 ½
Structure – 7

= 29/60 = 48%

ESSAY 13



paper getting marked up with a red pen. It was truly a mess of words spilled onto a paper. But I remember what writing was like back then; I didn't give a care in the world for how my final composition would come out. I only did it back then for points. As a result of this, I didn't do very well since I didn't put in much effort. Who would've known writing would be one of my favorite things to do now.

My middle school years were probably the toughest years of writing for me. We wrote all sorts of different essays styles, in a bunch of reading too. For example, we spent a whole unit on poetry. We did tons of styles of poetry. These styles ranged from haikus to the more fun, free-writing. These were also the years that the five-paragraph format style of essay was first introduced to me. And for years this style of writing essays would be used to write about themes of stories, summaries, research papers, and opinionated topics. I also remember writing my first formal letter that was sent overseas in eighth grade. It was during the holiday season, and our class was sending postcards over to the soldiers serving in Iraq that couldn't be home for the holidays. This experience helped my writing because this was the first time that an assignment called for neat, handwritten cursive. For a while after the assignment I continued to write in cursive in order to enhance my skills. And I really enjoyed writing in cursive too. Writing in cursive made your assignments look more professional. Quite frankly, writing notes to friends in cursive made the notes easier to read.

no matter how much experience a person can gain from writing in the past, i truly believe that writing is difficult. This is true especially when you're trying to write a final draft that requires good quality content and has to meet a list of criteria. I think writing is difficult because it requires deep thought, especially when a specific prompt is given. This is why my favorite kind of writing is 'Dialog.' the composition of this form of

writing consists purely of what is off one's head. Every year, English classes would do free thought writings a couple times a year. I especially like this form of writing because it is when an individual can express one's thoughts.

ESSAY 14

It makes us different. The ability to read and write. To understand, to comprehend and to apply, practically or theoretically, of what we understood it was imprinted in us and we developed it over time through the absorption of information in school, by peers or with the use of media. Through the absorption of the information we begun to understand and able to adapt the knowledge in various forms of communication such as the pictographs which are the earliest known form of written communication. In Egypt they used hieroglyphs as a mode of transportation by using unique pictures as characters to portray instructions or information. However, before that the most common use of communication was created. The human speech

Back tracking to about 1.75 million years ago, our human ancestors, the hominids, achieved a technological breakthrough, they began to craft stone hand axes in ways that required more planning and precision than had been used in earlier processes. At the same point in time they began to evolve to beings that can talk. Which means that at the same time that they evolved technological they begun to evolve to speak. Literacy and technology have always evolved together. Fast forward to the 21 century, we have technology that can do almost everything and as technology kept evolving, literacy grew alongside it. They way technology evolved we have different jargon that is used, a different way that we speak, moving back to pictographs(emoji's) and even shorting words or phrases in the most annoying way possible. I mean "kmn" which means kill me now if you didn't get that.

My journey, like everyone else, started as a baby. I guess you can say at 3 weeks to probably 5 months old, communication was a problem for me. I kept making sound that made no sense but my parents and other adults thought that that was my way of communicating. However, what some people lack to understand that those where just sounds. I had no literacy skill whatsoever. Fast forwarding a couple months later, the increasing pressure from my parents to start talking, I thought that it would be fun to wait it out or should I just get it over with. So I did it. I said my first words. Now that I'm older now I don't remember it. Probably something simple like "*mama*" or "*papa*" or even something like "pterodactyl" but that's more unlikely however like I said I don't remember most of it. Following the time line I should have been able to form simple sentences most that doesn't make sense however a positive of getting older is that I could read, well almost read. Maybe like a sentence that is made up by like four or five simple words, nothing too difficult. Yes, I was at the peak of my youth, able to

understand, repeat and read. More like a parrot or a simian. However, unlike a parrot I have thumbs that can pick up a pen and unlike monkeys I can movie my tongue to make complex sounds.

As a grew older my way of speaking, my language that was used and my body language that was used when I was communicating all change in regards to the people I was surrounded by and the local I was in. This is technical term called adaptation. I grew up in an area where Afrikaans was the dominant language, however both my parents are English and most media both local and international was in English. So it was a given that my home language would be English. That being said, I struggle to form a basic Afrikaans sentence. I kind of understand it though.

In school, I thought that it was basically useless to teach me a language that I already know and can speak. However, when I heard all the rules or guide lines that I (we) should use. It became clear that English was the world's most despicable language. It lures you in with its innocents like a newlywed spouse but once you spend more time with it, it starts to annoy you with all its rules and way use should use it. Do not get me started on the way it gets its way with everything. It will be so defensive when you get something wrong, however, when one guy must add the word LOL or Selfie to the dictionary then its ok. Where's that wonderful language that I fell in love with. Now you're just an empty book that is getting abbreviated and being replaced by Emoji's (😠- angry emoji). – WHAT?

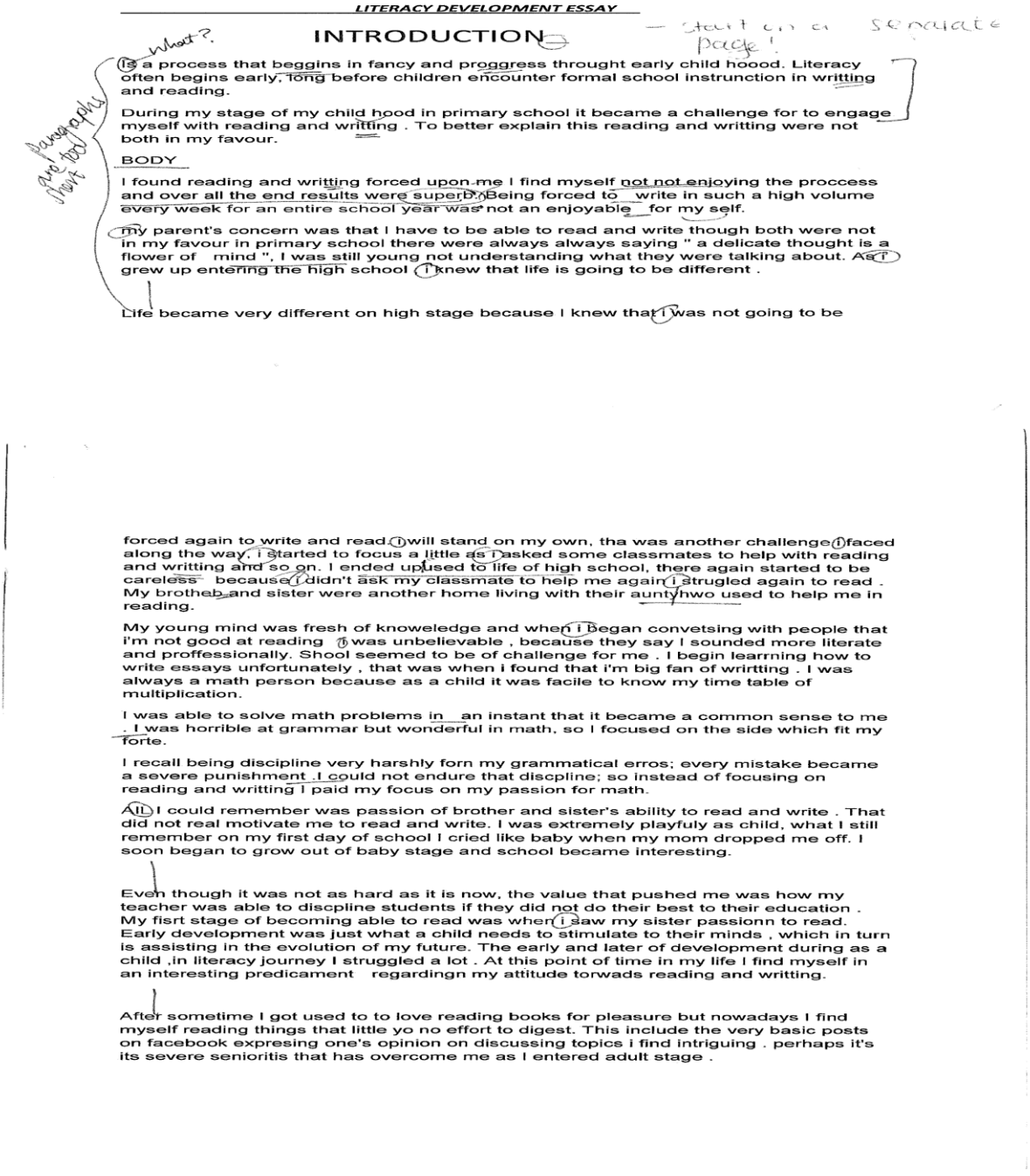
Comment:

Your essay is unacceptable! You have not engaged with the topic, your tone of writing is casual/informal and overall unacceptable for a formal essay. Work on punctuation!

MARKS:
Content – [illegible]
Language – 4
Structure – 7

= 21/60 = 35%

ESSAY 15



LITERACY DEVELOPMENT ESSAY

INTRODUCTION

Is a process that beggins in fancy and proggress throught early child hoood. Literacy often begins early, long before children encounter formal school instrunction in writting and reading.

During my stage of my child hood in primary school it became a challenge for to engage myself with reading and writting . To better explain this reading and writting were not both in my favour.

BODY

I found reading and writting forced upon me I find myself not not enjoying the proccess and over all the end results were superb. Being forced to write in such a high volume every week for an entire school year was not an enjoyable for my self.

my parent's concern was that I have to be able to read and write though both were not in my favour in primary school there were always always saying " a delicate thought is a flower of mind ". I was still young not understanding what they were talking about. As I grew up entering the high school I knew that life is going to be different .

Life became very different on high stage because I knew that I was not going to be forced again to write and read. I will stand on my own, tha was another challenge I faced along the way. I started to focus a little as I asked some classmates to help with reading and writting and so on. I ended up used to life of high school, there again started to be careless because I didn't ask my classmate to help me again I strugled again to read . My brotheb and sister were another home living with their auntyhwo used to help me in reading.

My young mind was fresh of knoweledge and when I began convetsing with people that i'm not good at reading I was unbelievable , because they say I sounded more literate and proffessionally. Shool seemed to be of challenge for me . I begin learrning how to write essays unfortunately , that was when i found that i'm big fan of wrirtting . I was always a math person because as a child it was facile to know my time table of multiplication.

I was able to solve math problems in an instant that it became a common sense to me . I was horrible at grammar but wonderful in math, so I focused on the side which fit my forte.

I recall being discipline very harshly forn my grammatical erros; every mistake became a severe punishment .I could not endure that discpline; so instead of focusing on reading and writting I paid my focus on my passion for math.

All I could remember was passion of brother and sister's ability to read and write . That did not real motivate me to read and write. I was extremely playfuly as child, what I still remember on my first day of school I cried like baby when my mom dropped me off. I soon began to grow out of baby stage and school became interesting.

Even though it was not as hard as it is now, the value that pushed me was how my teacher was able to discpline students if they did not do their best to their education . My fisrt stage of becoming able to read was when I saw my sister passionn to read. Early development was just what a child needs to stimulate to their minds , which in turn is assisting in the evolution of my future. The early and later of development during as a child ,in literacy journey I struggled a lot . At this point of time in my life I find myself in an interesting predicament regardingn my attitude torwads reading and writting.

After sometime I got used to to love reading books for pleasure but nowadays I find myself reading things that little yo no effort to digest. This include the very basic posts on facebook expresing one's opinion on discussing topics i find intriguing . perhaps it's its severe senioritis that has overcome me as I entered adult stage .

As I've gotten lazier i saw it stated to reflect in my every day life. Deep down I still love to read but I rarely find myself getting trully invested into the action unless it relates to something I am very interested.

Sadly i'm not same person that I was, I guess I could say it's part of growing up .It was never a really intentional but it's just the way how it ended up

On the other hand my attitudes towards writting are very different. first let say that deep down I trully do not like to write . I myself don't personally like to write for leisure or pleasure but rather I write because I believe it is the one of most important aspects of being able to communicate with those around me, both proffesionally and personally.

To put it differently, my attitude towads writing is that I write because I have to , not because I want to. Hopefuly this somewhat makes sense.

conclusion

I struggled during my early stages to literacy but I tried by all means to overcome problems so that everything could well according to the plan .

C – 15
L – 4
S – 7

$= \frac{20}{60} = 43\% - 10\%$

$= 33\%$

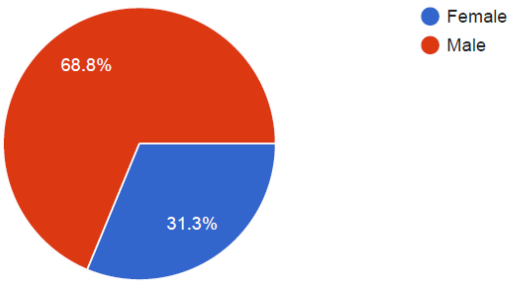
APPENDIX 11: COMPLETED STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRES

Digital Storytelling Questionnaire

32 responses

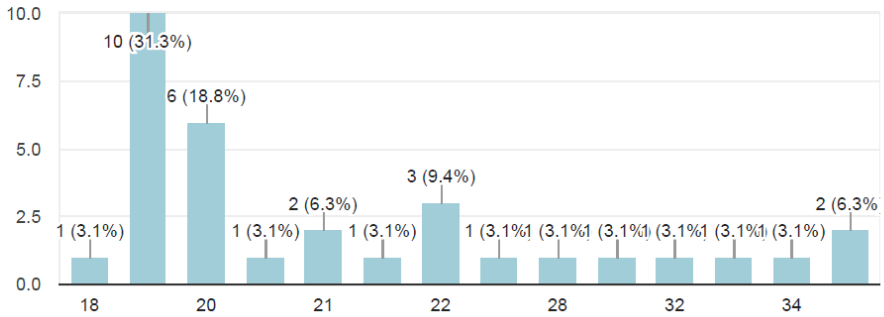
1. What is your gender?

32 responses



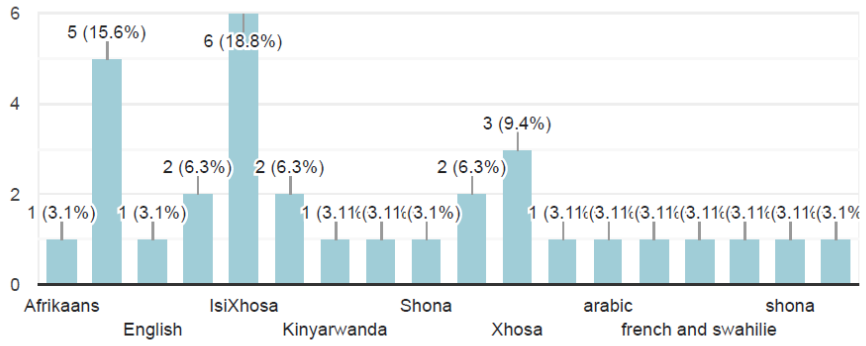
2. How old are you?

32 responses



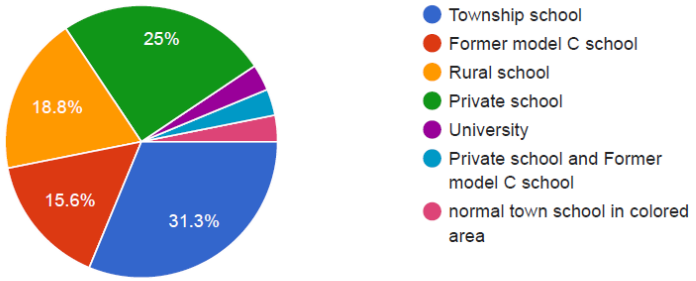
3. What is your home language?

32 responses



4. Which kind of school did you attend?

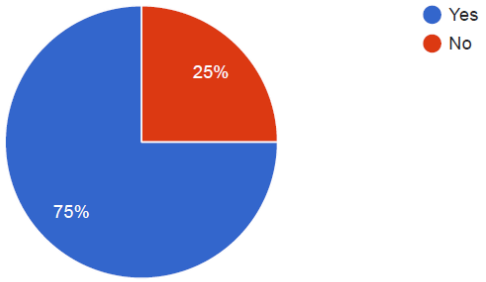
32 responses



Digital storytelling process

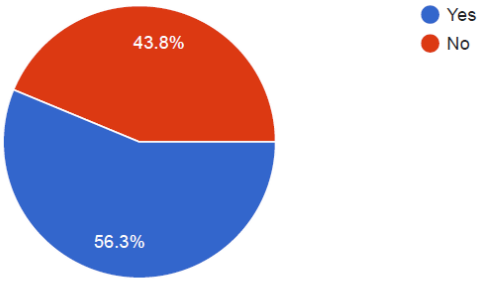
5. Did you have access to a computer at home?

32 responses



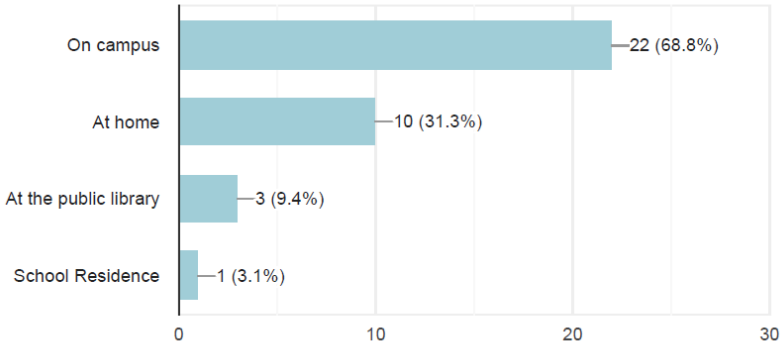
6. Did you have access to the internet when you were off campus?

32 responses



7. Where did you do most of the work for your digital story?

32 responses



8. What was the most difficult part of the task? (you may choose more than 1)

32 responses

9. What did you enjoy the most about the digital story?

32 responses

I enjoyed the challange. It is something I have never done before. The final product brought out a sense of pride after completion.

Watch the final work

I enjoyed the part when comparing the masculine and feminine in Hofstadter diamension

Recording and using the movie making software

voice recording

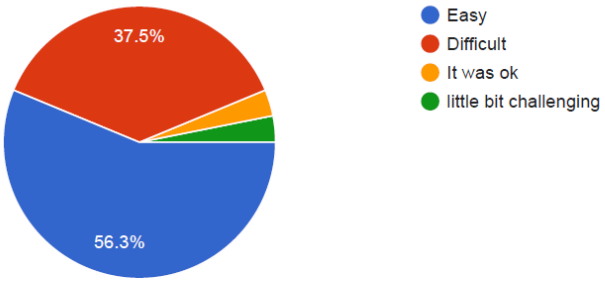
The learning experience

The fact that it was a video presentation instead of a live presentation

Learning about other cultures

10. How did you find using the storyboard to connect your pictures to words?

32 responses



11. Explain your answer in question 10 above

32 responses

The first step was understanding the topic. Once that was acheived, telling the story through pictures becomes easy. Pictures invoke emptions, and correlating that with the storyboard became easy once the subject matter was clear.

I find it easy because most of the word written in the storyboard were match with the pictures

The spaces were provide to fill our information was easy.

Easy because we used description of pictures to do our storyboard

bcz the voice record and pictures must be at the same level wen it ends

It was ok for me although i found it a bit hard

The simplistic format for the storyboard was a huge help. Also good teamwork is another factor.

Digital storytelling and writing

12. How did you decide on the focus for your digital story?

32 responses

This was group decision. We chose a subject that we were familliar with and could identify with in order to tell the best story.

We first chose to talk about our countries than we change because of the contrast of the topic

It was making a video or recording and listen to your voice.

we discussed about all topic given

voice record

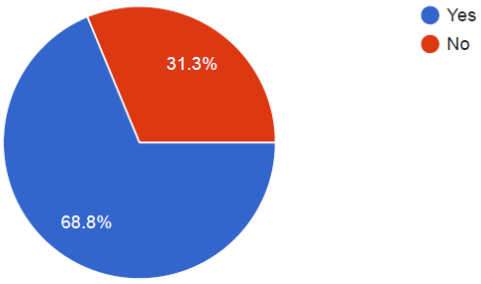
Group decision-making and research

By researching the topics and looking at the brief to see what was required of us and how we would be marked.

Some cultures are very misunderstood so I chose to explain them to people who don't

13.Did you feel the need to edit for language errors?

32 responses



14. Explain your response in the question above

26 responses

Speaking to a friend is different from speaking for film. Annunciation and articulation become important in order to deliver the best presentation.

because of right tenses

want my things to be in order

I have good English skills so it was really a problem to me

It's always good to improve on something if you can. In the beginning stages not many people go full force, and as a result the good or excellent results come from editing. No one is perfect with a language even if it is your home language.

I try my best to keep appropriate and formal so practice made it easier.

It is very easy to make silly mistakes, no matter how good you are with language.

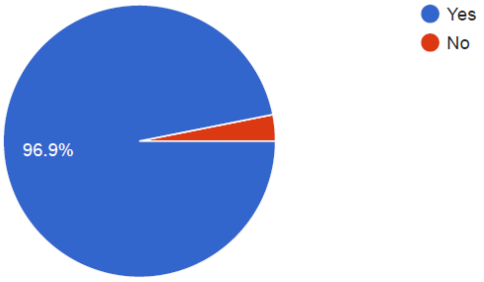
wasn't needed

15. How many times did you have to rewrite your story so that you were happy with the end result?

32 responses

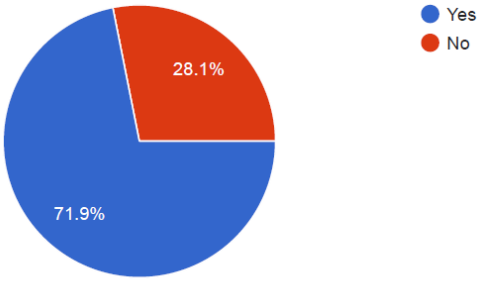
16. Did you use the introduction, body and conclusion structure for your digital story?

32 responses



17. Were you able to be creative in your writing?

32 responses



18. Explain your answer to the question above

24 responses

In order to present my story, I had to correlate the inevitable evolution of norms and customs to best present the idea of culture. This was a creative measure that focused on one idea to explain another.

bcz of the emagies

I stretched my imagination

I felt that we were more creative with the video because it used effects and audio etc. But we were also creative when it came to our writing. We had our own original ways of creating the storyboard. Although I don't think anyone was in awe of creativity as it was a more subtle kind, since that was required for the assignment.

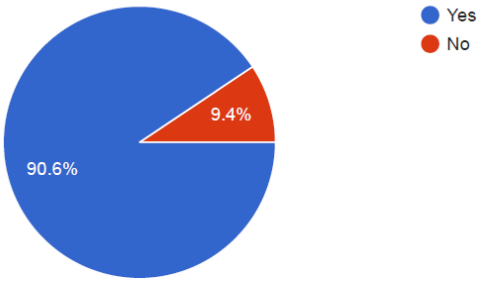
After proper planning it was simple to write the story.

The answer to the problem mostly involved factual research.

I was able

19. Did you see this as an academic writing experience?

32 responses



20. Explain your answer to question 19 above

32 responses

We use language to communicate every day, but seldom take time to structure our thoughts. The assignment challenged me to think about the finished product, the steps necessary to achieve it, and then the experience or journey in actually bringing the finished product to fruition.

Because we can post a video to provide information

It taught me how to think and make a stoty

As English is not my first language

know lot of staff

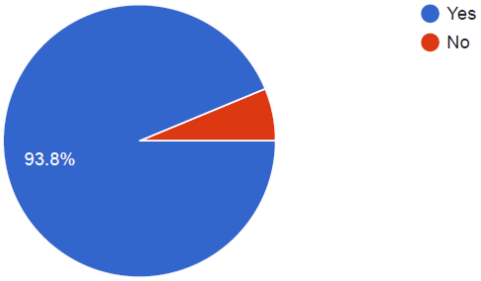
I learnt a lot from this task

Yes as this was my first time doing a digital storyboard.

Depending on the type of field you want to go into, this will help.

21. Did you need to do some research for this project?

32 responses



22. Explain your answer above

32 responses

There were different aspects involved in the project. From the story board to the final video. Each step required a well thought out plan in order to execute well. Good research was necessary in the writing process right up to the video development.

I did not have any clear information about the Ireland

Because of the opposite tradition which was the feminine type.

I didn't know much about the topic chosen

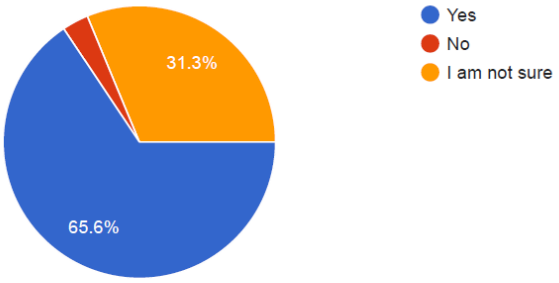
so that i can do perfect thing

I had to find some info to add on to the story and also get my facts right

I had no prior knowledge about Hofstede's cultural dimensions so I had to research that as well as what each dimension was in order to choose a topic.

I've learnt quite a lot of the years about the culture.

23. Do you think you presented information in a logical manner/argument?
32 responses



24. What were your impressions of the show day?

32 responses

I was extremely impressed on show day.

It was a good day but I was stressing

It was great

Stressful

perfect

None

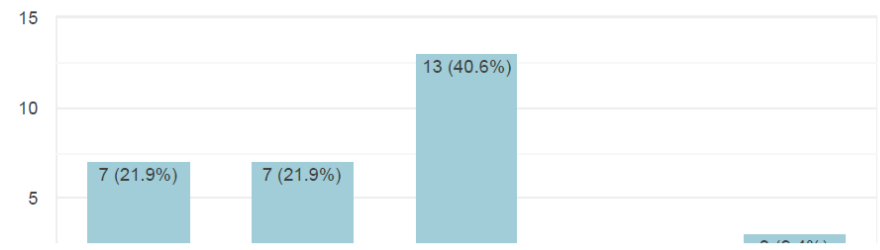
It was nice to see what everyone did, but it started late and ended late because previous groups took a while to sort out their stuff. When it comes to presenting and using technology there will always be set backs.

It seems weird because not much were paying attention on the show day.

State your level of agreement with the following statements

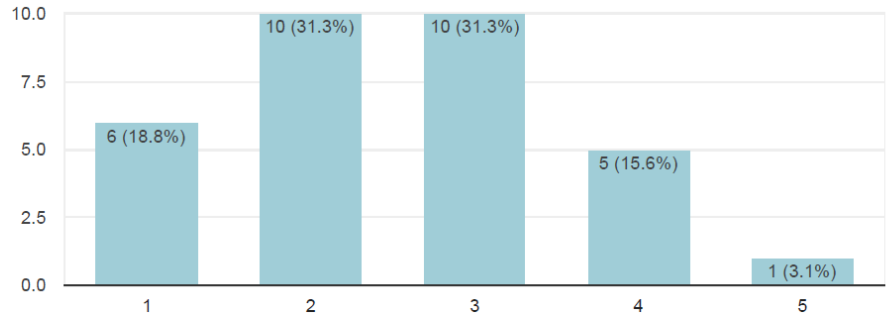
My problem with writing is language and grammar

32 responses



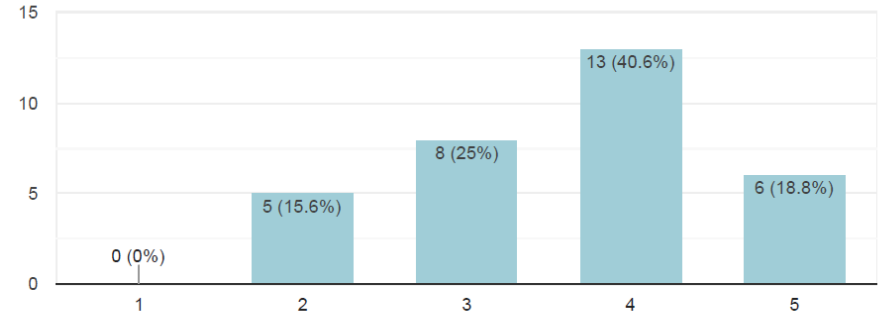
My problem with writing is coherence and cohesion(trying to make sense in essays)

32 responses



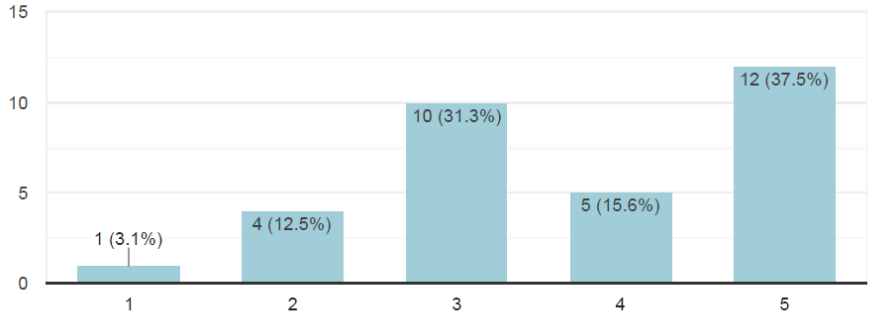
I always understand what is expected of me in assignments

32 responses



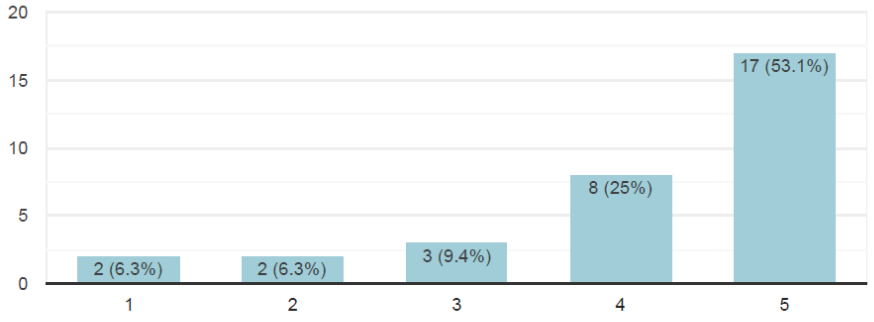
I have adequate support from my lecturers in writing

32 responses



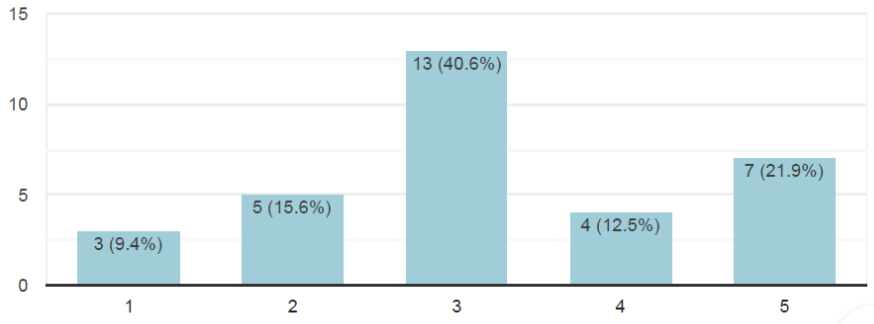
The skills I learn in Professional Communication are useful for my other IT subjects

32 responses



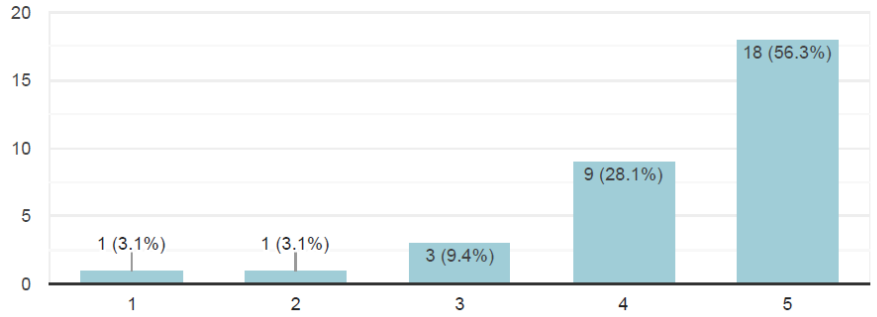
I read books or newspapers for enjoyment

32 responses



Reading helps to improve my writing

32 responses



APPENDIX 12: LECTURER FULL INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

LECTURER A INTERVIEW

Time: 49 minutes 8 seconds

Place: Architectural Design Department (CPUT)

LINDA:

Good morning, I would just like to explain that this interview is voluntary and everything has been exchanged to you regarding ethics and your participation in the research so thank you very much. Firstly, the interview is in two parts. the first part is just about academic writing in general and then the second act is a digital storytelling as a pedagogic tool

1.okay so the first question is what qualifications do you have?

LECTURER A:

So I have got to BTech in architectural technology. That's my formal qualification.

LINDA: Okay thank you very much. And then training?

LECTURER A:

Lots of short courses I am not quite sure what kind of detail you want...Just a lot of short courses mentorship programs, Service Learning, work integrated learning that is where my expertise lie

LINDA:

Okay, thank you so much. And then How long have you been a lecturer?

LECTURER A:

I have been a lecturer formally since about 2005

LINDA: and then when you say formally could you please explain that?

LECTURER A:

So I started working in the institution in 1997 no I am lying it was 1995. I formerly employed in 1998 and in 1997 I had that interview. And I started working as a student assistant and then lab assistant and departmental technician and during that time of being and assistance to the academic program I would assist in tutorials that then further developed into taking some classes And that's why I'm saying formally (**Linda:** as a lecturer) yeah because prior to that I would call it informal.

LINDA:

Thank you so much. and then which subjects do you lecture?

LECTURER A:

Right now there is one subject (Linda:mmmhm in agreement) But it's changed over the years. Maybe I will just mention to you all the subjects as I have told you over the years. so I have taught construction and detailing (Linda: mhm) I have taught studio work, I have I have taught modules in applied building science, I have taught Communications skills 1. I have taught it at the first year and 2nd year. I have taught practical studies. I have taught architectural Technology practice. Currently I am teaching environmental design, which is a new curriculated subject And I am teaching that across two disciplines and of across 3 different years so right now it is only the one subject that I am teaching to five different groups.

LINDA:

Okay and then could you further explain on the communication skills. when was the last time you taught it? and for which department?

LECTURER A:

So I taught that subject for architectural technology. I taught it over a period of three years. And I have got to think when now... This was in the...probably 2009, 2010-2011, Somewhere around that time. I could be out by a year or so but it was around that time. so it was some time ago. it was when the department felt, well so one we had a difficult time getting a Communications lecturer to come and teach on a satellite campus. So that was a difficulty. and was also a thought in the department that came from other staff members, it wasn't necessarily me because I did not choose to teach the subject. I didn't feel that I was qualified and equipped to do it because I did not have formal training as to how to teach that subject. so there was a thinking in the department that it should be far more integrated into the subject she is something I bought into because we had a Communications lecturer, previously Colleen Japhta, who was very equipped because this was her field of expertise she was brilliant at integrating the communications skills in to many of our theory subjects. so she was instrumental in that and I believe that that was something that benefited the students. So I was on the phone with her quite often in that first year.but she moved to Pretoria and worked for SAQA....Just to guide me through it because it was a difficult transition not having being formally trained in how to approach the subject. And not having someone close by that I could consult with. But yeah so it was nightmarish to say the least.

LINDA:

Interesting...but also interesting. But from that time when the subjects do you think that it was beneficial to the students?

LECTURER A:

it was beneficial to me. and at the time I did not know if it was beneficial to them. I could see benefits in it because I was teaching other subjects in first year. I taught studio work, I taught some modules in construction and detailing and I taught modules in ABS that same year. And I could see how easy it was for me to link terminology requirements in the subjects that spoke to report writing. In CTD for example they had to do a report. So in communication skill I could speak directly to that report all the time I could check up with them the difficulties that they were having, how far they were along in the process of putting the report together, in layout. So in studio work for example, teach them about how to present what and how to make it legible and even though it is from a graphic point of view, I could link it to the written. You know, so that made it, it made sense that we have that linkage. But I also felt that I, I had a lot of preparation to do, I had a lot of self-studying to do, when it came to how to prepare students to know how to put that report together. Because it is one thing doing it yourself because of experience that you have. But to give them an overall view of what is needed, how to understand what the user and the reader of that document needs from you and how to package it two suit that requirement. so I learned learnt a lot along the way myself, and that was interesting. So when I said at the beginning, it was beneficial to me to see the linkage. My first group of communication students there was an older student in that class who came from industry, and who came to get his formal qualification. And in third year, he approached me one day and said thank you for what you taught us in communication skills, because I am able to apply it in third year now, using the notes you gave us as guidelines. And that said to me okay. Because all the while I was wondering because there was no sounding board and that

was the only response I got to say okay you were doing something right because it was a benefit to them even though they did not see it immediately they came to third year.

LINDA:

Okay, that is actually quite amazing. And then this brings me to the next question.

what academic writing challenges did students encounter in your subject at all levels? so whether it was when you were doing the communication subject or just academic writing in general.

LECTURER A:

So the one failure I think that our programme had at the time and I think…We tried to address it with the new curriculum is that they have the guidance that's gets given to them in first year but then there is nothing in 2nd year and there is nothing in 3rd year. They are just expected to know how to progress from the one to the other and even though the complexity of the writing increases there is no support for that. And then also because of how large student numbers; what I found in first year was I tried something with them with their first written exercise where I gave them a topic so I gave them a reading piece. And then they had to discuss it in groups. and when they had the discussion, they could discuss in their mother tongue, they did not have to use the medium of English. This was early in the year and it was just to get students comfortable in talking because you often find that it's…it's a second or third language then you find students tend to be a bit hesitant because they don't want to sound silly, they don't want to appear not to be knowledgeable so they were allowed to do that and send feedback just had to be, there had to be a translator In the group that would translate if you chose to give feedback in your mother tongue. That was the only rule. I did find with particularly one student who was extremely quiet in studio work that that just brought out his persona in studio work because he was not so afraid to speak up any longer which was quite nice to see. But because of the large numbers, I never had sufficient time and the subject has a very small credit. I didn't have sufficient time to actually meet with every group. If they did an essay and I asked them to do an outline first, I think it's an opportunity to first see every outline to give them feedback it had to be in a general manner and that general feedback I think is appropriate a higher level I think at first year, you still need to have individual time spent with them. And I felt that We neglected in our duty art 1st year level not to have the Manpower in the class to be able to do that because I would set with numbers close to a hundred in the class and I would see them 2 hours a week and it's not sufficient. So that was definitely a challenge. so a lot of things that I thought would been more useful, I never managed to do because it was me myself and I and very little time of the timetable to actually do what needed to be done

LINDA:

That is actually very true and I…I know from you know and you do not have a lot of time.

Then just tell me about the general feedback what kind of feedback would you give them is it about, did they struggle a lot with grammar or was it sentences? Coherence cohesion all those things so what was biggest biggest challenge for them?

LECTURER A:

So the biggest challenge for them is, and I find it even today. When you have a conversation with a student when they are in the space of comfort, when they feel comfortable talking, they can tell you exactly what they understand about a topic as soon as they have to put it down in

words, they falter. And I don't know whether I'm correct I could be assuming things, but I think there is a fear for writing. It's almost as if as soon as they have to put it down, black on white, they have this perception in their minds, that I can't write. so even before they start writing, they say to themselves that I can't write. And I think that was the biggest stumbling block for many of them. because when you have a conversation they can answer you. they are coherent, they know where to start, they know how to explain it to you, they can conclude it in the conversation. But they also needs to be in a space where they feel that they can trust that you hear what they are saying. So there has to be that, both of that because if they are nervous then they are also all over the place. But yeah, there are those two things and that they need to feel that they can trust you as the assessor to give them their best result. But then there is that inherent fear or that belief that I can't write.

LINDA:

That is actually amazing. The fact that they really struggle with writing. I think that it's also to do with Confidence and I think you also mentioned earlier that the students feel comfortable in their mother tongue but not with English because it could be a second or even third language even. So that is very very interesting. Are there specific academic challenges that are especially encountered by first years as opposed to other levels of students?

LECTURER A:

For me over the years I have taught mostly at first year level. I think it all depends on their support structure in first year. When the department puts in place a good support structure, then the first years do almost as well as the second or third years would. However, during the years where that support structure was not as stable, or the manpower was not available, you kind of felt things disintegrates a bit because the first years challenges are a bit more and just yesterday I had a colleague make a comment that upset me so much, you know where she made a comment that referred to the fact that oh we can put them in first year (that's staffing now) meaning you can put the least experienced or the least qualified first year and I turned around to her and I told her how dare you say that because it should be the other way around. so the perception is that if you are teaching at first year, you are not good enough to teach at 3rd year level. now if we as colleagues think like that or perceive it to be that way, don't we realize that our students pick up on that? and what does a first-year think if he or she has this perception that you are giving me the weakest or the least experience or the least experienced or least qualified to teach me in my first year. then they are thinking that they are also miss important than any other year would be. so when we have a strong experienced team in first year, there was no difference. we would falter if that wasn't the case.

LINDA:

Wow, that is very interesting. So what do you think is the main cause of academic writing problems language and grammar or coherence and cohesion or other. Please specify.

LECTURER A: Just repeat that quickly

LINDA:

So what do you think is the main cause of academic writing problems. is it 1. language and grammar or 2. coherence and cohesion or is it something else?

LECTURER A:

I think it is all of that. You know I think language and grammar is a problem. I think that It's not cool to be a reader, it's not cool to love reading. I think I think there are many schools trying to change that. And maybe in a year or two's time it won't be a problem anymore. And then coherence and cohesion it is a problem because they think in fragments. There is a different way of thinking amongst our youth. There are like 10 thousand things going on in that brain things all at the same time and unless you focus them on one thing, they are all over the place. So I think that it is all of those and I always encourage them to read more and to talk about what they have read so that they can understand the comprehension and what I often say to them that once you have read something, you must be able to go to your granny, and tell her the story and he must be able to understand what you are telling her, you know. And that's how you need to make sure that you have the comprehension of that piece. But again, when you are working with first years, you need the bodies in the classroom to be able to say that to each one of them because each one of them interprets things differently. And if you don't catch them from the beginning then they falter because they think that they are not good enough or they don't understand or they will never understand, especially if English is not their mother tongue or they are not convinced that they can speak the language well enough. And often a kid can't speak it but then they can write it because they can read and understand it. But they don't see it like that.

LINDA:
And I like that you say that they must actually be able to tell their grandmothers because, especially for the ones who English is not their home language. And the previously disadvantaged or I say, the disadvantaged. The grandmothers are not educated in most cases or not as well educated, so they really need to learn to simply it for them. So I really like that concept.
LINDA: How do you assist students with their writing challenges?
LECTURER A:
So I have had students come to me one on one. Even now that I am not teaching the subject, I still have students that sometimes come to me. And then what I normally ask them to do is to read out loud what they have written. So you can't come to me if you don't have something that you have put pen down. So you read for me and then we try to first look at cohesion before we look...I don't...spelling and grammar is something that we leave for the very last and half the time I do not even need to go there because once I have the cohesion and the follow through of the story there. And then it goes back to the basics: do you have an introduction, do you have a closing that speaks to your introduction? Is your paragraph one idea at a time. You know, that's the simple stuff that you did at school. Sometimes they are just overwhelmed by the idea of having to write something down for them. But when you simplify it for them, it's like: "I can do this. I did this in primary school, I did this in high school." So it's just basically simplifying it. When it comes to a report then it's: Do you have a structure, you know? Did you start off by having a framework? Do you know what the conclusion is in terms of what the report is asking you to do? Then it's about, you know, just to have a simple things like a contents page. And just having that layout, a simple thing, a simple layout that you can get off word, you know. And once they realise it's that simple, it's not as daunting a task. So very

often I don't even assist with the content. Very often it' even layout and once they see that it' not rocket science, we can all do it, every single one of us can do it. And granny can do it if he has the tools. It's about having the tools. Yeah.

LINDA: Thank you so much. Then the last question for this section: Do the students admit that they have problems? If and when they do have problems?

LECTURER A:

Not always. And I think here it points to trust between the academic and the student. If the student trusts the academic or they feel that there is a sounding board, they will say it. But very often, they don't. Often there is too much pride for them to admit to it. Sometimes it's not the "cool" thing to do. Me using the word "cool" is probably not cool,you know, so. I think it depends on the personalities involved. I remember there was a year when I didn't teach first year at all. I was only involved with second year and I had a lot of first years come to me because they didn't feel like they could speak to the first year coordinator and they heard from older students that I used to be the co-ordinator. And then you have to be the third person speaking for them to your colleague, which put me in a very uncomfortable space. But that year in particular I felt that they couldn't trust the staff that was teaching them which was very unfortunate for that particular group of students. And that's also about how do we approach what we do. Often the students are struggling and yes, I have also learnt over the years that every year you get a different batch of students. Sometimes you have a class that is strong and they can run with everything that you give them. Sometimes it takes a bit more effort and time out of you. So they aren't always the same group of students, they are diverse, they come from different backgrounds. And the school curriculum has changed so much over the years and how that better supports them or gives them less support when they come to us. We don't know until they are in our classroom. But I think we are also so diverse, and that can be a good thing but sometimes it can be a bad thing if we don't open ourselves up to the nuances that are out there and you know you have colleagues that are kind of stuck in their ways and then you have those that are more lenient than others. It's difficult to find that balance, very difficult. And with the fees must fall I think things have become, I mean the biggest challenge that I have is coming to grips with how we are almost expected to baby our students and I don't appreciate that because...I don't know how to phrase this. I have a sense that the students that I teach across all backgrounds: race, creed, religion, they have a sense that they all have equal access to me. I get a sense that they trust that what I give to them I will give to anyone and everyone. And I would want them to feel that the department is like that. You know, it must not just be an individual that is like that or a few individuals that are like that. Ummm but I also think that the institution and the faculty, our faculty is expecting us to almost bend over backwards for students who fail in their responsibility and accountability. To be responsible students and accountable for their own actions. I mean I would never, four, five years ago, if there was a deadline set and you give an alternate date for late submission, then that alternative date for submission was the date. But our faculty is expecting us to extend and extend that for the student who doesn't need that second opportunity. And often it's a student who has no valid reason because if you go back you find that they haven't been attending classes, they haven't been participating in group work or anything like that. You know if there was a reason, whether it's personal or medical and often I have said to students that I don't need to know the details.

I just need someone to confirm what you are saying. That you know, you had personal problems. So if it is a call from your mom, a note from a counselor then it's fine. You know. I will trust that is the truth and I can work you with that. But if there is nothing, if you haven't been attending my classes, if you haven't spoken to me, if I can't see in my class that there is something that is not right then you can't expect me to bend over backwards yet our faculty is expecting us to do that and I think we are setting a very bad precedent because now we are creating a group of youth that think that someone else needs to come up with a solution to make sure that I succeed. Not I need to work towards that solution. And I find that problematic.

LINDA:

I think that is actually a very valid point and I think from my own experience as well fees must fall really, I don't know if the word is: set us back? But the implications...Now think of the students who started first year in 2015, 2016, 17. Three years of fees must fall. And then they haven't been taught accountability. True, proper accountability.It's quite sad.

So the next section has just 5 questions and it's about DIGITAL STORYTELLING AS A PEDAGOGIC TOOL.

So what are the benefits of using digital storytelling as a pedagogic tool?

LECTURER A:

So one of the things that I think it brings to the classroom is that it allows. So there are a couple of things that it does. So one of the things is that it allows that student, who will never stand up in class and speak up, it allows that student's voice to be heard. It gives opportunity for different media to be used. So we come from a graphics background so in the digital story, they can use graphics in multiple ways, they can use it with personal handrawings, they can use it with photographs to tell the story, they can use a range of things. The fact that you can pre-record means that you can improve on it all the time. So you can listen back to it, you can review it yourself, you can ask a friend, you can ask someone that you are really comfortable with to give you feedback on it before you bring it into the classroom. I mean we expect them to do that with any written piece anyway. But it gives them just a different way of looking at their work. It also allows the sense of achievement once it gets played in class. I always make a big thing about it. So last year when the ECPs did it, we started early in the morning, we started off with hot chocolate in the morning, we had a popcorn snack for them because it was movie day. ECP, we want to make it fun and we gave them a little burger at the end. Also ECP has a budget so you can do that. You can't do that with the first years because there is no budget. So yeah, they feel really proud of the fact that their little video is being shown to the whole class. Also it's very, it's an easy medium to integrate subjects. So when we assessed it last year, the communications, literacy lecturer was there in the space with me. So I looked at content related to the subject and the topic, she would look at structure and audio and all those things. So I think it allows for so many different things but these are the things that I could think of right now.

LINDA:

Thank you so much. These are very different things. Which aspect of academic writing does digital storytelling address?

LECTURER A:

I think that, for me, you know, it could be different things. But I think that for me it spoke to the very same things that you would use in a simple essay, you know. It's having a very clear storyline. Starting off so that you are clear about what it is you are going to talk about. So there has to be an introduction, there has to be a body of work, that body of work must be telling the story from point A to point Z, whatever it's going to be. And you have to conclude at the end, you know. And the manner in which you do it has to be clear enough so that if that is even vague, because in movies, it's a different genre - so you can play around with these things and students have done that. You know, at the end of the day, your message must still carry over to your audience, so it's about knowing exactly what you are asked to respond to and then clearly responding to that. So students have been very innovative and maybe this goes back to your first question: so they have responded in song.So there was one year, where I didn't do the digital story but he plays the guitar and he writes songs. So he wrote his story as a song. So that was his audio to his presentation. Another student took a very familiar song and she changed the words so hers was a rap telling a story in that way. So they become very creative and you get the personality of the student to also come through in that. But at the end of the day you know it's very similar to putting your thoughts in academic writing form because you are still responding to a question or statement that is posed to you. Whether it's a design problem, or theory problem, or identity, you know, which a lot of storytelling goes into. It's still about conveying that story effectively and meaningfully.

LINDA:

I think that's very true actually because I find that students get a lot of confidence from that and I think that it went to when they have a lot of pride when they watch the stories and all of that. So it's very nice.

Then: How effective is this tool for academic writing assistance? In assisting them in their actual writing?

LECTURER A:

Once I...This is my personal encounter with students. When they have a sense of having achieved something successfully, it puts a smile on their face and it builds their self-esteem. And once self-esteem grows, more things are possible in their minds. They actually believe that they can achieve, they can do it, they can try something new. My second years last year were never exposed to digital storytelling except for the ECPs in that group, none of them were exposed to digital storytelling. For one of the assignments I asked them to present their assignment in a digital story format. There was a lot of resistance in the class, it was a group of 78 students. And they originally did the project as a Studio Work project, a subject that I am no longer involved in and they did it in groups. But I had done a group project with them already so I asked them to do it individually and we were going to do a 2 day movie day on this. And umm, so like I said, there was a lot of resistance and I persevered. It wasn't formal in CPUTs, how we normally do digital storytelling because it was at 2nd year level and I told them that they could use any medium of their choice, any format that they choose. There was a limit in terms of the time, of cause, and the aspects that they needed to cover. So this was all related to environmental design and everything focused on that. And there was a lot of teething problems because it was the first time that I had such a large group present. And umm, after the presentations, almost 2 quarters of the class asked when are they doing the next digital

story. During the time that they had to put it together, there were complaints, complaints, complaints and even during day 1 there was "when are we doing the next one?" And that showed me how effective a tool it might be. Even though it's daunting because I didn't do it like I would do with ECP or first year where I showed them that these are the available free software packages or these are the ones that are advised to be used. I didn't do that with them. I gave them free reign because they knew digital media, had access. You know, so a lot of them used software that they own. All I said was, that if this gets published, you need to make sure that you can validate ownership, if you are not using a free version of a movie making package. So after all the weeks on complaining, they loved it. What was so nice was to see it. Because previously we have done a lot of, well the first time I was involved with digital storytelling it was all about identity. It was a very personal account of the student as a person. Who they are, where they come from, where they see themselves going. So this was the first time where I had the opportunity to actually use it for a theory subject and not at ECP or first year, but at second year where they have taken more ownership of the discipline.

LINDA:

So you have already mentioned that some of the students were complaining and all. So the 4th question is: What are some of the challenges that this type of pedagogical tool has? What has it encountered? Whether it's technical or otherwise.

LECTURER A:

So we have spoken about the diverse type of student we have, and it's not just they type of student but also access to technology that students have. And as much as we can assume that all of them have the technology, that all of them have a smartphone and all of that, we cannot assume that they can use it effectively. And I think that that is a general assumption, that we have. I just want to talk about one particular student that we had this year. He come from a family that's, they're not poor, there is food on the table every day. So they have meals, it's a seven days a week business. And I know what he is going through because I was there myself where I had parents who wanted me to go study and be successful. But because neither one of them went to school, they didn't understand what I needed, to be supported in my studies. So for them, when I'm home, I must do my house chores, I must go and work in the shop. I must do this, I must do that because when I'm on campus, that's when I must do my school work an when I'm at home, I must do my house work, my family work. And this student didn't speak, he was extremely quiet. He was always in class, but he never ever engaged. He unfortunately failed the year, but everyone, so even though he should be excluded, the staff feels that they want to allow him back because he was always here. He always tried, but because he doesn't engage, he didn't grow, as a person which was very sad. And this was now, this was someone whose family can afford to pay for a train ticket, that can afford for him to have lunch in his bag every day. So he's better off than the other students. Yet he failed because of, I don't even know what to call it. It's not like his father doesn't want him to study, it's just the understanding of how to support him is lacking. And through no fault of his dad. You know. I know that when my younger siblings started, when we could explain to my parents now. You know, they need this and we could kind of assist. That they got the support that was necessary. Where my sister and I, we struggled. My father was like: go work, we need to have money to put food on the table. My dad was no, you are going to go study. And ummm, so you wish well for your kids

but you don't really know what they need because you, yourself haven't been there so when you said earlier, still call it underprivileged, it is still underprivileged because our backgrounds are so different. We are starting out now where other people were 300 years ago. And to build up that. I mean, I still have to explain to my child why she has to look out for this and that because her background is very different to that child who sits right next to her in class. And it doesn't matter how clever you are. The fact that you have a backlog, is something that you have to keep working at all the time. And so many of our kids have to do that. So the technology that we have in our labs, for example. So nowadays the smartphones are good enough to do a voice recording so you can do everything on your phone. You can have the software on your phone, you can do a movie, it takes brilliant clips and all of that. But not everyone has that. In our labs we don't necessarily have microphones so that they can do their voice overs if their phones can't do it. We don't have a soundproof room where they can do it in, if they need to do that. Years ago when we started out we could borrow the equipment from Fundani and they would kindly lend it to us. 2 years ago we discovered that we couldn't do that because people haven't returned their equipment so we can't blame them for not wanting to do it because they are losing out and we are not getting the budget that we used to get. But it is a challenge. Also, with the ECP digital story I did last year, I spent, i think it was a four week or six week period where all I did was, I was in the lab with them so that they could show me progress and I could guide them so that by the time we have the presentation, this is their final product. A lot of them wouldn't attend it because they thought that they could do it on their own so a lot of them didn't get that interim feedback. And how do you get them to do that? Because it means that we have to assess everything that they do. And that creates an administrative burden on the academic. And so with ECP, I could do that but with my 78 second year, are you really going to expect me to do that? You know? And that's why I didn't do it with the first years because the first years were over a hundred students. This year it could be close to 130. So chances of me doing it with them is very slim because of the numbers and that is unfortunate because it kind of like: they bloom, like so many of them. You have those that kind of, I don't want to use the word fail, but, they don't do as well. But they are in the minority, and when you give feedback in the class, you trust that they are learning from the feedback from the others in terms of what was done well, what they could have done better. But yeah, so I think it's a brilliant tool to use. The students learn to love it as a tool. But definitely the challenges are our own assumptions of what the students can do with the medium that they have at hand. And then the other thing is: some of them are very good at capturing the image of what they are trying to convey. And then there are others that struggle with that. And that's why it was important for me, especially with the ECPs, to have that one on ones with them that month before the showing. So that I could kind of say to them, "just listen to this and look at that, does it speak to one another, does the graphics speak to your audio or not?" So I could really do that in a very simple way. So if you don't have that then you only do that at assessment. Then there is no learning to be done because now you are already assessing them. It has to happen before the submission.

LINDA: So the scaffolding process is very important.

LECTURER A: Yeah.

LINDA:

I think it goes back to academic writing where it's not about the product but about the process. It's very interesting.
Then the last question: Do you think it can be used in other courses?
LECTURER A:
Definitely! We have used it, in the department, not me specifically. We have used it in design subjects, we have used it in theory subjects, we have used it in the communication subject. So I think it can definitely be used in different courses.
LINDA: Thank you so much for your time. I really appreciate it!

LECTURER B INTERVIEW

Time: 47:31

Place: Education Department, Mowbray campus (CPUT)

LINDA:

Background. So my questions, just before we get started I just want to say that this is voluntary, you are allowed to pull out at any time that you like and I won't use any of your information if you don't want me to use it. And then, this interview is just in two parts, the first one is on teaching and learning and lecturer background and experience. And then the second part is using digital storytelling as a pedagogic tool.

LECTURER B:

Okay, should I say anything?

LINDA:

No you are allowed to, you are allowed to

LECTURER B:

Ummm yeah. I was involved in a digital storytelling project, because I don´t know, maybe because of my education technology background but I haven't used it in my own class. I teach research so I haven't used digital storytelling, myself, but within that project, the classes were doing a project on I would say, through the production of, in that project because we expected the students to produce digital storytelling projects and the aim was to, the aim was to kill two birds with one stone. One was to ummm, get the pre-service teachers to, it was a pre-service teachers' class, the pre-service teachers to acquire the, you know, the technological skills, which they can use in their teaching and learning. And second was, through the project, to get the, you know, the students within the course, within the class, to understand who each one of them was. And actually, at the end of the project it was like, because this was done to the fourth year group. At the end of the project the students were like "why didn't you give us this in the first year? It's only now that we can understand one another.

LINDA:

Wow, that is so powerful.

LECTURER B:

Yes, I really found that it was a very powerful tool, especially when you are teaching in a diverse classroom, within the multicultural setting. Digital storytelling is perfect. So it was just a 2-5 minute video, but it was very powerful.

LINDA:

And it's very interesting that you're saying that in this multicultural, diverse setting, because everywhere, and I think the different campuses, you have the microcosm of the broader society, where we have different languages-

LECTURER B: Exactly

LINDA:

So I really like this idea. So I'm teaching first years. So I find that, you know, they are still beginning. So it's interesting that now you're saying at fourth year, they actually wish they had it at first year level. So it's really really interesting, wow. okay , thank you very much. So the first question that I would like to ask: and thank you very much for all this information beforehand.

So the first question is: What qualifications do you have?

LECTURER B:

Well I have, the highest qualification I have, I have a doctoral in education.

LINDA: And then the others?

LECTURER B:

Well I have a masters, uhuh, a bachelor of education, and matric of course.

LINDA:

I would be worried if you said you didn't. Thank you very much. Then how how long have you been a lecturer?

LECTURER B:

I have been teaching. When I was doing my doctorate studies, I was teaching part time. That is from 2005 to 2008. And from 2009-2010 I was doing a postdoctoral fellowship. I was also teaching, part-time though. And then ummm from 2011, I was employed at a research field. So I have been at a research field since 2016 but one of my responsibilities in the research field is to teach research methods and I teach research methods to the honours, masters and doctoral candidates.

LINDA: And then which subjects do you teach? I think we have covered that. So apart from the research methods, Do you teach any other subjects?

LECTURER B:

No, okay, at the beginning, in 2005 and 2006, I taught computer computer literacy. I would say that is the other subject that I have taught. Firstly I qualified as a school teacher. I was teaching at high school. At high school, I was teaching Geography.

LINDA:

Tjoe and from Geography to the languages and the research, very interesting. Thank you very much. And which levels, I think you have covered that, the levels that you teach at. And then, What academic writing challenges do students encounter in your subjects?

LECTURER B:

Well in research, yes we do. I also teach introduction to research whereby we do the academic writing because, you know, actually that course, it was me and Janet who started it in 2012, was it 2012? Because we saw that the, especially the honours students, they were supposed to complete a research at the end of their course. And their writing was bad, it was not academic at all. So then we decided, okay. Before we let the students do the writing, the research project part of the course, we decided to offer them some academic writing skills. So to answer your question about the academic writing, it was about the challenges?

LINDA: Yes

LECTURER B:

The students yes, they- I will talk about the honours students, who I was teaching. The honours students come to the research course without the academic writing skills. And without that, it's not easy for them to come up with a research project. They cannot write in a way that researchers would really want to see the presentation of the project itself. Yeah the academic writing, of course, or equipping the students with these academic writing skills is very important. The students who, you know, when they are coming from high school, joining the university, they know how to write, but that is not about academic writing, that is a different

type of writing. So for one to succeed within writing, you need academic writing. And academic writing is not just about putting things on paper, it's also about how do you get the materials necessary for this particular course. What? You know, the terminology, the appropriate terminologies within this particular field. So it's a lot. You need the skills, you need to apply the skill to be able to do a proper job within a particular course.

LINDA:

And do you find that after you introduce the academic writing skills before they had to join the research, Was there a difference between those who hadn't had the writing course before, and those who had the writing course?

LECTURER B:

Yes, actually even the performance within the, when we compared the years, when we didn't have the academic writing, and when we had the academic writing. The latter years, the writing was better.

LINDA:

And then can I just ask: What exactly improved? Was it the language, the grammar, the sentence, the comprehension, the coherence or cohesion? Or is it just everything?

LECTURER B:

I would say everything because, you know, you read the piece of writing which they did before the academic writing and the piece of writing which they did after the academic writing. You would see in the piece that was done after the academic writing, it was nice to read. The flow was much better, the coherence was much better. So I don't know if I can point out that it was mainly this which improved, but what I found. What my experience is, is that after the academic writing I could enjoy reading their work than before. And even the students themselves, the proactiveness, you know, to get to understand what research is all about is much better when they get the academic writing skills

LINDA:

Okay, thank you very much. That is very interesting. And then: Are there any specific challenges that are specifically encountered maybe by undergraduate students as opposed to postgraduate students? Or maybe the lower levels of post-graduate students that you teach, maybe the honours, as opposed to the post doctoral students that you teach? Are there any major differences? For example, maybe for example: if the honours students have grammar and language as an issue and the post graduates have issues with referencing or whatever the case is. Or do they all have the same issues?

LECTURER B:

For sure, for sure. The, okay one thing I was supposed to put in when we were talking about the academic skills writing was the referencing. Most of the students coming from school do not have the knowledge about referencing. They don't know why they should reference; they don't know how they should reference. So, now at the honours, maybe the lowest part which I teach, at the honours, most of the students are coming into honours without that knowledge of referencing. Well some might have done it, you know, during their bachelor's courses but still you find that it's not yet internalised. And so when they are doing their academic writing at the honours we also do that again but I can still see that it's not that good. Now as you move on to masters and doctorates, that skills, it seems now to be internalised. So yes, I do see the

challenges at the lower level, you know, with regards to referencing. Even the understanding of what what, how to write, you know. How to write research papers. It's more, it's much more better when you get to masters and doctoral levels. At honours it's still getting there.

LINDA:

That's interesting. I don't, I wonder, Do you know maybe why that is, that the writing gets better?

LECTURER B:

I guess ummm, for you to write better, you need to practice. You need to write, to write better. So you need to keep on writing, you need to keep on reading for you to better your writing. So I guess at the honours, it's like you are just starting. You haven't read read read, you haven't written written written. So it's about, you know, with time, with practice, then you perfect this skill. You need to read research papers to see how people write within the research field. By the time you will get into masters you must have done at least some reading. So by the time you get to PHD, we expect you to have read, to know what you are doing, to understand what research is about.

LINDA:

That is actually true. So maybe it's quite interesting, I'm thinking, it's just a thought: maybe the reason undergraduate students don't write as well as the more experienced readers is because they don't read enough. I don't know. Or do you find that in your classes, when you taught undergraduate?

LECTURER B:

Yes, yes. Let me give you still the example from the honours and even the masters. When you are reading a piece of writing, you could tell whether this student has read or not. And you could tell, in the case where the student seems to not have read. You could tell, whether the student knows what to do or not. Whether the student knows that he needs or she needs to have searched for the literature or what, you could tell from the writing as well. But all that skill could be gained from the academic writing course. So those who have attended the academic writing course, you could tell from their style of writing. You could tell that somebody knows, he needs to read more and more to produce a good piece of writing and whether that person is just being lazy. That you can still tell from the writing as well.

LINDA:

So your writing informs your level of reading?

LECTURER B:

So your writing, yes. So it's like an egg yolk thing, your writing informs your reading. Your reading informs your writing.

LECTURER B:

So you can read read read read but if you don't write write write write, you may also not be getting better. So you need to write write, read read, write write. So reading and writing, they go together. You cannot just write write without reading and you cannot just read read without writing.

LINDA:

I like the metaphor of the egg and the yolk

LECTURER B :

So reading and writing go together, you cannot separate them.

LINDA:

Very interesting. Then the other question is: What do you think is the main cause of academic writing problems?

LECTURER B:

I would say in most cases it's because students have not been exposed to the appropriate courses for the academic writing. I would say that's the main challenge. Sometimes you know, people do offer the academic writing course but what is being offered is to just tick boxes.

LINDA:

That's very interesting. So for you, when do you think it's most appropriate to offer it (the academic writing course) what's the earliest you think students should-

LECTURER B:

I think the earlier, the sooner the students join the academics, in the first year, it's better to offer the academic writing courses because for them to excel in whatever subject they are taking, they need this skill. And if you, sometimes if you offer this skill when they are already in third year or fourth year, they find, you are wasting my time. "I've figured out how I can maneuver around, you're wasting my time and in third year you are offering me this? Maybe by then it should enhance what you offered me in the third year. Not an introduction to academic writing in the third year."

LINDA:

So the sooner the better?

LECTURER B:

The sooner the better because yes, they need this skill in each and every subject that they are taking.

LINDA:

I am actually thinking now, I think that the students don't really understand that this one subject needs to be put across the different subjects. I think they learn in boxes. So they think that this is just for this subject, I need to pass. That subject, this is the focus, what I learned there is not important. Whereas he is probably expected to write essays and do research for at least, if not all the subjects, then most of them, and all those things, so it's quite interesting. But how do we get that across to students? Maybe that's my question to you, how do we-

LECTURER B:

I guess it's now, now it comes to the pedagogic skills. How do you present this to students? So that the student also understands that I need this for me to be able to excel in whatever I'm doing here at the university; whether it's science, whether it's humanities, to understand how the writing is done within academics. You need to know what is it you need to do for you to produce a good piece of work in whatever assignment you have been given.

LINDA: You're actually giving me an idea now because we have orientation next week for the first years because I'm thinking to emphasise it to them this skills is not just for this subject but you carry it throughout and I think that they only see the value of it when they look back that this was very valuable. So this is aside. So the next question: How do you assist students in their writing challenges?

LECTURER B:

So I will talk about when I am supervising the masters, you know they do have their writing challenges. So it's about reading, you read the chapters they have forwarded to you. You pick up on the mistakes, so you pick up those mistakes. The worst thing you can do is to correct those things for the student, that is the worst thing. You are not helping that student by doing, you were supposed to write this this this, so that maybe the student will just, you know, just accept the changes in the document. That was you are not assisting the student. You show the student that the way you have written is not proper, try to change it and just give hints, don't provide the actual answer to them. Let the student find out, what could be the answer to the, what could be the appropriate way of doing that thing. Well, that's what I feel like. When you are supervising students, especially research, if you are not careful, you could end up doing the research for the student which will not help the student. Okay the student will graduate with the qualification, but they will not be able to do the work. Let the student do the work, let the student discover things. You will be there to help the student to discover.

LINDA:

So it's a process of discovery.

LECTURER B:

Yeah. So, what was the question again?

LINDA:

How do you assist them?

LECTURER B:

So I help them, that this cannot be this way, this you may need to do another way- giving hints but I will not give you the actual answer. It might mean you may need to read, so please go and read so and so.

LINDA:

Then can I ask: When you taught undergrad, Did you give the students essays?

LECTURER B :

Well, I was teaching computer literacy so-

LINDA:

Oh yes. Sorry. But can I ask: At honours level, Do you have time to go through the drafts of the students?

LECTURER B:

Yes I do.

LINDA:

So do you find that that process helps?

LECTURER B:

Yes, but that type, that's how I give feedback. I don't want to give the answer, I would rather you do it however many times, but I want you to discover, to make that discovery yourself because once you discover, you have got it forever. If I tell you, you will forget. If I do it for you, you will just look at it. But if you discover, you will never forget. So I teach by discovery.

LINDA:

I really like that. I think that now I'm questioning my own teaching because sometimes we are so scared-

LECTURER B:

It's tempting to just say, 'Oh no, here, you just have to do it this way'. It's tempting to do it that way but, the thing is, you are not helping the student. The student will be able to get 80% but you are not helping the student to grow.

LINDA:

That's true, that's true. Because I think we get frustrated in a way, especially when they try and try and try and then you're like there's the answer. You try and give them, and then eventually, I think especially as a new lecturer, you want them to get it but-

LECTURER B:

It requires patience. It requires patience. It's just like teaching a child.

LINDA:

Then the last question pertaining to teaching and learning: Do the students admit when they have writing challenges?

LECTURER B:

Not always. Not always. I guess because, when the student gets to university they think, I'm intelligent, I can do it. But I guess they do also get to a certain point to say yeah, I think things are done differently here. I need to know how things are done within the context.

LINDA:

And then for you: Do they approach you when they have problems?

LECTURER B:

Is that question about: Am I approachable?

LINDA:

No, no no no. I don't it's about being approachable, I think it's a matter of do they actually come to you, irrespective of whether you're approachable or not. Because like you said: students tend to think that they sometimes know it all and you know. And when I give them their first essay and what not, I tell them, that if you are used to getting 80s and 70s, here it's. They get shocked when they get 50%. And they say: 'Miss I'm not used to this' -

LECTURER B:

Yeah I must say in the honours, they need to write .... (31:12 inaudable) within research though. And you see there are some students who work on their assignments early enough and forward the essay to you just to check if they are doing the correct thing. But then, those are the, normally those are the bright students and they are the ones that can manage their time. Those who cannot manage their time well, they leave their assignment till the last minute therefore they cannot have that room to say "can you check that for me"...so you have those who are, maybe they want to get the distinctions and they plan their time.

LINDA:

Now that you are mentioning the bright students, maybe confidence.

LECTURER B:

Yes, those who are confident. That's the problem, you know, those who are already confident, they would...

LINDA:

They would get more confident… (laughs)

LECTURER B:

Those who are less confident, they leave their assignment to the last minute, they don't do a good job, you know. Sometimes when you look at what these ummm, those who submit last minute, when you compare their final draft and the draft that the other students send to you, just to check, you consider that the draft is far better than the final last minute draft. I guess it is about time management.

LINDA:

Thank you, I like this point because it actually hasn't come up in terms of the students as well. Do you think that the students are...Do you go through the process with them, for example: the writing process where they first analyse the topic and then they have the first and the final draft. Or do you perhaps give them the essay and then they go and research, come back and give you the product?

LECTURER B:

What they are working and when they send me the essay is just okay. So when we are checking, we check for everything, if there are grammar mistakes and whatever, you check for everything. But like in the honours course, it's just a one year course, and within the same year when we provide them with the academic writing skills, as a module, so we do that in the very first weeks when they just start the course. So...And maybe I should say, when we are offering the course we explain to them the whole process of writing, like for you to come up with an essay: What is it that you need? What steps do you need to follow? Actually we start with looking at the question or the topic. Because I guess for you to, in whatever course, for you to come up with an essay, as a lecturer, I have given you a topic or question...so we ask them if they have any topic from any course which they are attending, they can bring that to class and so we go together...okay, first, what you get a topic, you need to analyse the topic, understand what the question is requiring you to do. If it means you need to analyse, you must analyse. If the question is asking you to just evaluate, you need to do exactly what the question is asking you to do. So first thing you need to understand what the research topic is about because you will find yourself writing the whole essay, a beautiful one, but not answering the question, so say, I give you an example: say if I was given 3 weeks to maybe come up with a project or to write an essay, if I spend the whole week or 2 weeks just trying to understand what the question is about, then I would say I'm fine. Because the 1 third of the time remaining is about putting down what that is about! You could spend just a minute, and think you have understood the question and spend the rest of the time writing, but rubbish, which is not answering the question, that is worse. So spend enough time on the question, understand what it is about.

LINDA:

And I think maybe that's where it actually, sometimes they miss it because I also tell them that you know you can write beautiful English but what's most important, even with the mark allocation, the most marks go to content. Language and structure, yes. You can write beautiful language and beautiful structure but if you missed the content, I think that's the biggest issue. Because I think even at master's and doctoral levels, language can always get edited by someone else, but the most important thing is the content. So I love that you're saying spend, I wish that you could just talk to my students (laughs) and tell them and maybe they will hear it better from someone else, that analysing the topic is very important...and understanding it because ultimately you are answering a question, we are not looking at your language and

grammar, especially for students who are not necessarily in languages. Yes it is important, but not so much, it's about the content.

LECTURER B:

Yes and that applies to whatever you are doing. Whether you are in science...it's about understanding what you are required to do...it's about analysing what the question says, to know how to analyse questions.

LINDA:

I remember when I was a high school teacher and the students were expected to write mind maps and I spend time going through the planning, you know, where you plan. When I do a mindmap class it might take me 2 or 3 days to get through it so that they understand how important planning is, it's not just about the product, it's about the process and that's what I want to get with the digital storytelling, this is about the process, yes the product is beautiful but you must understand that in digital storytelling, it's about the process, which is similar to academic writing, which is also about the process.

Now we are going to get to the questions, there are only 5, on digital storytelling as a pedagogic tool.

1. What are the benefits of using Digital storytelling as a pedagogic tool?

LECTURER B:

There are lots of benefits from my experience...ummm we are in the 21st century, so by using the digital storytelling you are teaching the technological skills to the learners, you are teaching the learners also the research skills, you are teaching the learners organisational skills, you are teaching the learners like what we did, the topic itself, we asked them to develop their digital stories based on that topic, you are teaching them also how to relate to one another, you know, respect.... So yeah, there are lots of things you learn, just by producing a 3 minute clip...because you need to rearrange and know that I cannot do this before I do this...so structure.

LINDA:

And I like the respecting one another. Do you think that also goes to ethics?

LECTURER B:

It does, yes because when you are doing the research: what is it that you can take with and what is it that you cannot. How can you use what you are using, which is not yours? So the ethics is there as well.

LINDA:

Thank you, I like this point because I think it's also a big part of it, I think we mentioned earlier that they are not sure how to reference properly so I think ethics, plagiarism and referencing definitely plays a role and maybe the idea of respecting the human subject and all those things.

LECTURER B:

Like when using pictures, you can't use other people's pictures without getting their permission. What if you produce a video clip and there is my image there and you did not ask to use it, you will be in trouble.

LINDA:

2. Then: How effective is this tool for academic writing assistance?

LECTURER B:

Well that's what we are saying, they learn all those skills: the organisational skills, how to structure stuff, the research skills, ethics, which are very important skills within writing

LINDA: And then that gets transferred to the writing.

LECTURER B:

Yes because most of the writing, for you to answer the research question, you need to do some research. And you need to know, when you are doing research, you get all sorts of information from the author. Some important information, some not important, some may not be true. So you get all the skills to know what is true information and what is not.

LINDA:

Then the fourth question: what are the challenges that this type of pedagogical tool encounters?

LECTURER B:

Well the challenges I would say: you need the technology, and I guess now for the instructor who is using the digital storytelling approach needs to be skilled on how to use digital storytelling as a pedagogic tool.

LINDA:

Thank you very much and number 5: Do you think it can be used in other courses?

LECTURER B:

I think it can be used in many courses. I think it can be used in almost any course. You can even use it in science, in chemistry, so as a tool, it can be used in almost everything, if you want your students to learn more about a particular issue. You can just ask your students to come up with a digital story, they will learn a lot because they will have to do the research and make sure: how do I communicate this clearly to my viewers. So it can be used in anything. I think I have got a paper which talks about using digital storytelling as a teaching tool.

LINDA:

Thank you very much for your time, I really appreciate it!

LECTURER C INTERVIEW

Time: 20:16

Place: Education Department, Mowbray campus (CPUT)

LINDA:

First question. There are 2 sets of questions. The first one is about teaching and learning, lecturer background and experience. Then the 2nd set is about using digital storytelling at a pedagogic tool. Before I actually start, I want to let you know that this interview is voluntary and if you wish to pull out at any time, you are more than welcome to and the information won't be used if you don't wish for it to be used. So thank you very much for your time. So the first question: what qualifications do you have?

LECTURER C:

I have a Ph.D I graduated in 2006. I have a master's degree, I got that in 1992. I have a foundation phase teaching qualification probably in 1999. a remedial teaching qualification in 1987, and an undergraduate, a basic teaching diploma in 1979.

LINDA:

Okay. thank you so much. Then the second question is: how long have you been lecturing?

LECTURER C :

I have been teaching for 19 years and lecturing for 21 years.

LINDA:

wow that's a long time. thank you very much. and the third question is: which subjects do you lecture?

LECTURER C :

At the moment I lecture professional studies in undergraduate. I lecture in the honours I lecture research methodologies and introduction to research. and I do the inclusive education specialization

LINDA:

Can you just elaborate on the professional studies?

LECTURER C :

Yes, that's an undergraduate course and it's a compulsory module or course for the whole year. and I prepare the students for the profession of teaching. **PROBE**

LINDA:

Which level do you lecture in? Oh I think you have covered that.

what are the academic challenges that students encounter in your subject at all of the levels if you don't mind?

LECTURER C:

Academic writing skills?

LINDA:

Yes, the challenges that they encounter.

LECTURER C :

well I think language is a big one and I think language for many students is a second or third language so grammatical errors are important. I think that students know how to introduce subjects, introduce their topic. I teach them to introduce with an attention grab. and I think that they don't read enough So that's why their writing is poor. I think that they can't construct

sentences. And then they can't construct paragraphs where all the sentences link to each other. Their in-text and end of text referencing is very poor. They don't know how to conclude. They don't know how to summarize what they've said. And write a conclusion. They don't know how to offer recommendations.

LINDA:

And is this across all levels or is it undergraduate mostly or also in the post-graduate studies?

LECTURER C:

No, I find it, I have had 2 doctoral students that I have graduated this year, and I think all of those skills apply to them as well. So I think from undergraduate to doctoral level.

LINDA:

That is very interesting. And then, ummm, Are there any specific challenges that are specifically encountered by first years as opposed to the other levels?

LECTURER C:

I don't teach the first years, I only teach the fourth years and then undergraduate fourth year and then honours, masters and doctoral students. So I don't ever work with the first years.

LINDA:

Then with the fourth years, do you see a big difference between them and the PhD students? PROBE

LECTURER C :

Yes, I see. I'm not sure...We do have academic literacy as a subject in the undergraduate but I don't see the effect of it. When they come into 4th year, they don't even know about the CPUT referencing system that we have. And that shocks me because that should be taught in the academic literacy course in 1st, 2nd and 3rd year. But it's not, they don't even know that it exists. They don't know. They haven't any idea about what they are doing, they don't understand the style and the reasons behind why they are doing this.

LINDA:

Okay, that's very interesting because with the students that I have, there is something similar to that. Because what they are taught in undergrad doesn't filter through to post-graduate level.

LECTURER C:

That's another skills that they don't know, they can't transfer that knowledge to their own writing. That transferability is not there.

LINDA:

Thank you very much. And what do you think is the main cause of this problem? Is it language and grammar? Coherence and cohesion? Or any other...

LECTURER C :

I think language, I think a lack of commitment, I think a lack of reading, a lack of attendance. I think technology, they want immediate gratification whereas this is not, you have to struggle to do this. I think that there is an expectation that they can hand in work and that it can be passed, yet I am quite a strict lecturer, I don't allow that. They struggle with me on that. I insist on high standards. I think low quality has been accepted in the past. And lecturers don't even pay attention to in-text referencing and yet I do.

LINDA:

Then in terms of, the in-text referencing, I know that this is about the digital storytelling, but I also found that with the CPUT referencing guide is out of date, I don't know if you are also using the same one that is on the website. **PROBE**

LECTURER C :

There are a few things that need to be updated.

LINDA:

So maybe that could be a course on its own taught separately. **PROBE**

LECTURER C :

We do a course called Academic Literacy where that is taught. But it's not taught. I don't know what the lecturers do in that time, but there is no knowledge of that. By the time they get to 4th year, they aren't even away that there is even that article.

LINDA:

In terms of lack of commitment: Could you expand on that point please? Are they just not committed to their work? How are they not committed? **PROBE**

LECTURER C:

Last year, I had about a 30% attendance rate in my 4th year undergraduate and I'm not sure what that is. But I feel that in the past, they have also had that attendance rate and lecturers have let it go. And they have been pushed up and pushed up. So they know that they don't have to attend lectures. So by the time you get to 4th year, the attendance rate is very bad. And it was the first year that it's happened to me. Remember, their first year was 2015 when it was the riots, they lost 2 months of education and they were all pushed through, despite having 2 months of education missed, in 2016 they missed 2 months of education and they were all pushed through, 2017 they missed 2 months of education and they were all pushed through. I think they came with this attitude that they would get pushed through, so there is no commitment. "And I don't have to attend, and I'll get pushed through" So I think that we, our system, is very bad.

LINDA:

And maybe it needs to get re-looked at. Because I was also wondering why we don't have a DP system…

LECTURER C :

I am actually going to bring that in my classes.

LINDA:

How do you assist students with their writing challenges?

LECTURER C :

I think there are so many students that have writing challenges. We teach introduction to research where we teach those skills. And I suggest that the students, since we work with 60-70 students in the honours group, that they develop communities of practice. So they get into groups of people that they work with, that they like. They critique each other's work and they help each other. They read each other's work and they give feedback. And that they have said has helped a lot. So I create spaces for them to do it in class, I say to them: out of class, you can go to the library over the weekend, sit with your group, your community of practice and try to inculcate the skill that I am teaching. Plus I also say to them that the journals articles, they must read the journal articles and that the journal articles are your friend because they will

teach you how to construct sentences, how to construct arguments, how to construct a paragraph, how to construct an introduction, the body and the conclusion, the recommendations. So they must learn from those. I teach them the structures, but then they must take on the responsibility themselves with their communities of practice.

LINDA:

Thank you very much. That's very interesting. Then umm: Do students admit when they have a problem?

LECTURER C:

No, no. They just hand in very poor quality work and expect to pass and get very shocked when I mark it so strictly. And write letters of complaints about me to the Vice Chancellor. And I you know, that's it. They are very arrogant. They have their rights, I must mark their work. But they are going to be teachers and how do they bring such low quality of work to the classes? So I am very strict and they know that I am very strict. And I don't care that they write letters of complaint because they actually are at fault because they don't attend, they don't try. At 4th year they should not be writing like this.

LINDA:

And then do they go through the process? You did mention before that they do group work. So do they actually submit maybe drafts beforehand? Or is it if they have an or some research to do, or do they submit the final draft only?

LECTURER C:

Sometimes I ask them to bring their essays in class and in class they can check each other's work. But I don't have time to have first drafts and second drafts. So I see the final draft.

LINDA:

That's fair because time is actually quite limited, especially when you have to prepare and all of those things. ummm.So these are the questions for the digital storytelling.

So what are the benefits of using digital storytelling as a pedagogic tool?

LECTURER C:

Well I think that there are many benefits. I think initially, my first one is that it teaches the students a different technology. They are used to a lot of technology, they are very good now these students have a lot of technology. But it teaches them a different technology, it's free it's downloadable, it's free. They can use that technology for any teaching tool so for example, if they teaching the constitution, they can put it to music, put it to voice, bring in pictures, they can make it their own. So ummm, I think it has many benefits. Then, when they do develop their digital story, they have to focus their writing and I think that is a very big skill, it's about getting to the point. I think that's another academic skill that they lack is being focused, they tend to waffle too much and you don't want any of that periphery, you want to get to the point. So it teaches them that skill of focusing on the most important point of the lesson.

LINDA:

Thank you very much, I like that. And then which aspects of academic writing does digital storytelling address?

LECTURER C:

Well I think that I think it's clarity, explicitness ummm, sequential, they have got to look at sequences, they have got to build up and argument or genre I suppose there, they have got to look at different structures of writing. And so I teach them that and they look at that. Ummm..of course sentence construction and grammar have to be perfect for a digital story, so that's...we don't use referencing, it-text or end of text referencing. Umm..yeah.

LINDA:

Thank you very much. Then How effective is it for academic writing assistance? So do you think it's affective?

LECTURER C:

I have no evidence of that...but umm I can assume that it is. With my students I do the digital storytelling project in the first part of the year and then I do a literature review at the end. And the literature reviews I'm quite impressed but I build up a lot of, I take them through the process of how to write it, so by the time they get to that, it's quite good but they also link to this, I think they've learnt those skills from the digital storytelling.

LINDA:

Oh okay, so you don't don't do maybe a project where you have digital storytelling and then from there it get converted into maybe a writing exercise? **PROBE**

LECTURER C:

Yes, so they do digital storytelling in the first module, they do philosophy for two, and then they do a literature review at the end. So I think all of those modules lead to a better academic writing within the literature review.

LINDA:

Okay, thank you so much. Ummm then: explain the challenges this type of pedagogic tool encounters.

LECTURER C:

I think the main, there are quite a few challenges...ummm...obviously the access to internet and technology. Some students need headphones, some students can do it on their phone, some students, yes, access to internet is a big one...ummm I think ummm copyright is a big challenge, ummm, you know they have to, students tend to copy and paste, copy and paste pictures. I take them through very strict session on creative commons. So I think that's important...ummm...I think filtering out what is important, that explicitness, that, you know. And the focus, getting the focus, that's very hard for students. Yeah. So what was the question? What are the challenges of the digital storytelling project?

LINDA: That they encounter.

LECTURER C:

Another thing is confidentiality, some people, some students go into quite a lot of depth, and then that, some students talk about that on social media which we talk about, we are not allowed to do that. But some, it has come through on social media sometimes, comments.

LINDA: Can you elaborate? In what way?

LECTURER C:

Maybe some students that have talked about their private life and then in social media they say, well this person said this. So you know, it comes out on social media. We do have rules of engagement, which we start and ummm so we set the rules of engagement and one is

confidentiality within the class and within social media. But I have had to talk about the social media after that experience ummm it's very important.

LINDA:

And I am, it's very interesting that you mentioned copyright because I think it goes back to plagiarism and what you mentioned earlier about them not knowing the Harvard referencing and all of those things.

LECTURER C:

And they don't know about plagiarism, they actually don't know what plagiarism is and yet when they are, you know, when the time comes to due date, they will just copy and paste and put things in so they discard the issue of plagiarism and that becomes problematic so planning is a problem. They have lack of planning because you need a lot of time to write your story, to bring in your pictures, to bring in, you know, to to record and to bring in the music. That all takes time. You can't do that in one day. And then they start plagiarising...because they just want the job done as quickly as possible.

LINDA:

Okay, that is actually very interesting. Then the last question: Do you think that it can be used in other courses?

LECTURER C:

Oh yes, in very many courses. We had the book, they did digital storytelling in nursing, in teaching, in business teaching, tax laws, in design, in FID, so in any, it can be used as a pedagogy in all subjects. I believe.

LINDA: Thank you