School of Education

An investigation of the use of visual and multimodal skills on descriptive language and imagery in the narrative writing of Year Five students

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Declaration

To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgment has been made. This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university. The research presented and reported in this thesis was conducted in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007) – updated March 2014. The research study received human research ethics approval from the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (EC00262), Approval Number HRE2018-0251.

Date……………12/10/2024…………………………………………………..

Signature………………………………………………………………

Abstract

Australia and other Anglophone countries have utilised high-stakes standardised assessments in an attempt to reduce educational inequality and improve educational outcomes. As a result, emphasis has been placed on preparing students for success. Consequently, writing instruction within the English curriculum has tended to be increasingly delivered via a pedagogical approach that has focused on narrow assessment criteria, and a formulaic pedagogic approach that emphasises transcriptional skills and grammar over creativity and reader response. Despite this emphasis there is little evidence that students' writing has actually improved. Instead, many students produce writing that lacks descriptive language and visual imagery. Furthermore, although communication is increasingly completed via the visual semiotic, writing pedagogy that focuses on criteria measured in standardised assessment further accentuates the increasing disjunct between the home and school.

This research investigated the impact of an intervention program that focused on Year 5 students' ability to compose narrative texts, and their capacity to evoke strong visual images for the reader. Embedded within a sociocultural perspective, students were provided with opportunities to activate implicit visual semiotic knowledge and engage their senses. The intervention involved peer to peer collaborative talk and shared writing. Other key elements of the pedagogic approach included analysis of picturebook illustrations and subsequently photographs taken by the students themselves, which were then used as illustrations for narrative writing. A quasi-experimental design was applied to the study, involving pre- and post-intervention assessments, using 'Brightpath', an evidence-based writing assessment tool, devised in Western Australia. However, the study took an essentially qualitative approach within an interpretivist paradigm. A vocabulary rubric, designed to analyse the use of descriptive language and imagery, was also used to assess the quality of students' writing. The researcher was positioned in the role of participant observer as students worked collaboratively. These observations, along with notes taken during out-of-class activities, were recorded in a journal. In addition, individual interviews were conducted with students and the students' teacher.

Findings suggest that scaffolding students' analysis and production of rich visual images during the writing process may activate implicit funds of knowledge about how the visual semiotic functions. Once this implicit knowledge is activated it

is suggested it then provides inspiration, leading to the generation of ideas. The results also revealed that by creating a social and sensory environment for writing, the students were able to develop authentic voices as writers, which further increased their motivation and engagement to write.

The research suggests that for writing to improve, writing instruction in the English curriculum should move from the current teacher-dominated pedagogy, premised on highly prescriptive skills-based instruction, to a carefully scaffolded student-centred approach. It is suggested that the implementation of a student-centred pedagogy provides students with authentic opportunities to write like 'real writers' with opportunities to access their funds of knowledge (Gonzalez & Moll, 2002; Moll, 2019). The use of visual representations of sensory experience stimulates memory recall and idea generation. In addition, in order to visualise and transform thoughts into linguistic form, students need time to brainstorm and generate ideas. The findings of this research suggest the need for a paradigm shift toward the implementation of pedagogy that utilises and values multimodal and visual resources, along with the creative agency of the student in order to access students' prior and implicit knowledge, which can he be used as an explicit resource to improve writing.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 is divided into six sections. The first delivers a rationale that establishes the impetus of the research study based on identified concerns around the level of students' writing achievement, and limited research in the teaching and assessment of writing (Cremin & Locke, 2017). Consequently, our understanding of being a writer and the teaching of writing lags behind our understanding of the teaching of reading (Myhill & Chen, 2020, p. 1). The second section provides details about the context under which the study occurs. Included in the third section, which provides the background on the research, is an overview of the influence of globalisation on international education policy, standardised assessment and accountability, and teaching pedagogy, followed by a segment on the call for pedagogical change. The next section provides an overview of the National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), with a particular focus on writing, inclusive of assessment criteria and analysis of reports on writing. The final segment provides an overview of the Brightpath assessment tool, which produced the provocation for the research and is also used as a measurement tool in this research. The fifth section of this chapter introduces the research objectives that guided the research and the three questions on which the intervention is formed. The chapter concludes with a section on the significance of the study.

1.2 Rationale

Although the ability to write is increasingly essential in today's society for effective communication and knowledge acquisition (Calkins & Ehrenworth 2016; Daffern & Mackenzie, 2020; Gadd & Parr, 2017), many students 'struggle to learn how to write' (Rietdijk et al., 2018, p. 641). The question 'What is good writing and how is it measured?' arises in the context of limited research regarding writing instruction and evaluation within the English curriculum. This study is significant as it investigates the use of visual images within a program of effective teaching and assessment pedagogy, as an alternative to the current skills-based approach orientated towards 'teaching to the test' and driven by the pressure to succeed in standardised assessments.

Governments worldwide have introduced evidence-based education policies, which has subsequently driven the implementation of high-stakes standardised

assessments (Filiasov & Sweetman, 2023) aimed at reducing inequality and improving educational outcomes (Canaan & Mouganie, 2018). However, research undertaken by Skerret and Hargreaves (2008) found a focus on standardised assessments inhibited schools' ability to respond to student diversity, as what is taught and how it is taught is determined by the literacy and numeracy goals measured in the same standardised assessments. By their very nature, standardised assessments are summative, with the purpose of testing being the generation of grades (Vögelin et al., 2019). The goal of ensuring cohorts of students achieve adequate levels of proficiency (Wiliam, 2010) has led teachers to practice preparing students for success against the narrow criteria assessed (Bousfield & Ragusa, 2014; Frawley & Davies, 2015; Salhberg, 2011; Singh, 2018) 'at the expense of a richer, broader pedagogy for writing' (Myhill & Clarkson, 2020, p. 163). Consequently, writing instruction has focused on the genres privileged in standardised assessments (Frawley & Davies, 2015), which, in the case of Australia concerns narrative and persuasive texts. However, the focus of teaching tends to be on the final product, not the compositional process or students' sense of identity as authors (Myhill et al., 2023, p. 420).

While large-scale, standardised assessments continue to be implemented at national levels in countries worldwide (Jeffery & Parr, 2021), student achievement has not improved (Applebee & Langer, 2011; Au, 2022; Graham & Rijlaarsdam, 2016; Hursh, 2007; McCarthey, 2008; Wyatt-Smith & Jackson, 2016) with writing achievement lower than other subjects (Dockrell et al., 2016) and continuing to fall (Thomas, 2020; Wyatt-Smith & Jackson, 2016).

It has been suggested that the decline is a result of the influence high-stakes tests exert on writing instruction, with writing lessons focused on teaching to the test (Jeffery & Parr, 2021) and using a pedagogical approach that focuses on the technical features measured by standardised assessments (Gardner, 2018a). In standardised assessments, all students sit the same test under the same conditions, with answers scored in a pre-determined manner (Mayes & Howell, 2018). This pedagogical approach, which focuses on preparing students for standardised tests, overlooks creative aspects of writing (Carey et al., 2022; Gardner, 2018a; Perelman, 2018) and fails to prepare students for the multimodal writing required by twenty-first-century society (Graham, 2019; Jeffery & Parr, 2021). Although teaching to the test narrows instruction and leads to an impoverished curriculum, it is not only

encouraged but has become common practice (Barrs, 2019; Cairns, 2021; Gannon, 2019). Exceptions include Norway, which does not have a national writing test (Skar et al., 2021), and New Zealand, where the removal of national standardised assessments in 2018 resulted in no mandated national examinations until the last three years of school (Jeffery & Parr, 2016; Parr, 2019). In New Zealand, teachers and schools have the autonomy to decide how to adapt the broad curriculum to meet the needs of their students and context, and how develop their teachers through appropriate professional development (Jeffery & Parr, 2021; Parr, 2019). Without a measure of competency, teachers cannot determine students' level of proficiency; consequently, New Zealand introduced the Assessment Tools for Teaching and Learning: Writing (e-asTTLe: Writing) to provide teachers with a means to measure student performance (Jeffery & Parr, 2021; Parr, 2019;).

The time invested into preparing students for standardised assessments, where students must produce a text within the allocated time frame, is excessive (Applebee & Langer, 2011) and subverts the implementation of effective writing instruction (Perelman, 2018). Although the purpose of a narratives is to entertain readers (Caldwell & White, 2017), the formulaic approach, which places emphasis on set criteria including 'correct sentence structure' and inclusion of 'long words' (Graham, et al., 2014; Myhill & Newman, 2016), as well as a complication, and a resolution, fails to engage student's imagination or creativity (Caldwell & White, 2017; Carey et al., 2022; Gannon, 2019; McGaw et al., 2020; Perelman, 2018;). Consequently, students do not write freely, and writing becomes a mechanistic process resulting in narratives that are 'wooden and narrow' (Carey et al., 2022).

Writers need time to transform their ideas, experience and sensory images from long-term memory into linguistic forms, with vocabulary identified as the link between memory and students' ability to select words to produce high-quality text (Flower & Hayes, 1980). Prior to writing, students need time to brainstorm, visualise, draw, and 'free' write (D'Arcy, 1999). Yet planning is often an ignored part of the writing process (Flanagan & Bouck, 2015; Jacobson & Reid, 2010; Staal, 2000) and has subsequently become a neglected skill worldwide (Barrs, 2019). Planning involves both the retrieval of knowledge stored in the long-term memory and the generation of new ideas through visualisation (Ahmed et al., 2022; Barton et al., 2015; Cremin & Myhill, 2012; Gardner, 2018a; Troia & Graham, 2002; Wyse et al., 2018) developed by means of 'synthesis and imagination' (Myhill, 2009, p. 48).

Students may experience difficulty because they are unable to access their prior knowledge (Hillocks, 1987). Furthermore, the lack of prior knowledge negatively impacts writing achievement (Kellogg et al., 2013). However, its role during writing composition has received limited attention (Shanahan, 2016).

The teaching and assessment of writing has been under-researched (Clary & Mueller, 2021; Dockrell, 2015; Gardner, 2018a; Gardner & Kuzich, 2022; Wyatt-Smith 2020), with research typically directed towards the 'cognitive processes of writing, not the process of translating ideas into written text (Abbott, et al., 2010). Moreover, Myhill (2009) contends that writing instruction should focus on 'how children write rather than what they write' (p. 48). Yet, there is limited research on the teaching of writing in mainstream primary school classrooms (Cremin & Oliver, 2017; Dockrell, et al., 2016; Jeffery & Parr, 2021), particularly for students aged between 11 and 16 years of age (Myhill, 2020). The same point applies to the assessment of writing (Dockrell, et al., 2015); composition of text (Jeffery & Parr, 2021); and vocabulary content (Castillo & Tolchinsky, 2018; Dobbs & Kearns, 2016; Olinghouse & Leaird, 2009; Olinghouse & Wilson, 2013). Furthermore, most research on writing has been conducted and published in the United States of America, with limited research on writing undertaken in Australian schools (Clary & Mueller, 2021; Jesson & Cockle, 2016) and no longitudinal research on teachers' pedagogical practice (Wyatt-Smith, 2016). In order to improve students' writing, research is needed to identify the cause of the decline in writing achievement and identify programs and effective pedagogy which will increase student outcomes (Brindle et al., 2016; Gardner, 2018a; Graham et al., 2013; Wyatt-Smith & Jackson, 2020).

Pedagogical approaches need 'to be continuously reviewed and analysed to ensure good strategies do not become bad strategies' (Bull & Anstey, 2019, p. 269). The standardisation of writing instruction and assessment limits teachers' ability to address the learning needs of a diverse student population, and the continued application of a skill-based approach will not resolve the standard of students' writing (Skerrett & Hargreaves, 2008). While teaching to the test using 'pre-packaged, corporate-produced materials' is common (Bloom & van Slyke-Briggs, 2019, p.107), 'the onus falls on teachers to teach beyond the test, by constructing a robust and meaningful pedagogy for writing' (Gardner and Kuzich, 2022, p. 515).

Effective writing instruction pedagogy acknowledges: the culture and community of all students (Bearne, 2017; Graham et al., 2012; De Smedt & Van Kerr, 2018); students' agency as writers (Gardner, 2018a; Myhill et al., 2016); and 'creates space for playfulness, experimentation, and constructive failure; it also seeks to give students voice within a creative community of writers' (Myhill, 2020, p. 209). For example, utilising the cognitive and socio-cultural models of writing, Myhill and Chen (2020) presented a linguistic model that focused on 'the language of text composition, and children's increasing mastery of it' whilst delivering a more holistic approach (p. 4). While changing current approaches to writing instruction will require 'engagement, effort, fortitude, and professionalism from all relevant stakeholders' (Graham, 2019), writing instruction can be transformed through developing teachers' knowledge how students learn and what constitutes effective writing practices (Barrs, 2019).

Due to technological advances, the way people communicate and process information is increasingly completed through the visual semiotic (Eisenlauer & Karatza, 2020). Viewing images assists with memory (Alesandrini, 1984) and expression of ideas (Whitley, 2013); yet, little research has been conducted on the role of visual literacy pedagogy in the classroom (Friedman, 2021). Therefore, research needs to explore the relationship between students' visual literacy and their ability to compose written texts that evoke visualisations in the reader's mind (Bull & Anstey, 2007). Visualisation occurs when prior knowledge and memories of sensory experiences are recalled in the form of mental images which 'contain only the criterial features of a reality once seen' (Kalantzis & Cope, 2023, p. 41). They are then transposed into verbal or written form (Creely, 2019). Providing opportunities for students to experience their own reality through the physical senses of touch taste and smell, their imagination, can assist the development of their linguistic creativity, inclusion of figurative language (Ehrenworth & Labbo, 2003; Kalantzis et al., 2016, Protherough, 1978; Vygotsky, 2004), rich vocabulary, and lexical proficiency, which enhances writing (Graham & Perin, 2007; Vögelin et al., 2019).

The literacy development of students occurs both at school and in the community (Gardner, 2013). However, there is an identified disjuncture between the way writing is taught in the classroom and the writing students engage in outside school (Graham, 2019; Myhill, et al., 2023), with a significant difference in both environments (Gardner, 2013). For example, in the home environment, it is

suggested students develop a wider range of literacy skills as they engage in a range of multimedia semiotic resources (Gardner, 2013). Effective writing instruction needs to address all the multidimensional elements of writing development (Bazerman et al., 2017), with students' 'funds of knowledge' including the styles of writing valued and integrated into school (Gardner, 2013, 2018a; Gonzalez & Moll, 2002; Graham, 2019, Moll, 2019). For overall their growth as writers, writing lessons need to develop students' cognitive and linguistic skills within a social, sensory, and motivational environment (Graham, et al., 2015), which accesses technology (Bazerman, et al., 2017). Dowdall (2020) recommended the implementation of a hybrid pedagogy for writing instruction that incorporates scaffolded instruction and technology. Furthermore, schools require models of writing instruction that are aligned with a changing society, digital technology, visual resources, and that embrace and enhance students' visual literacy knowledge (Reynolds & Vinterek, 2016). This can be delivered through the implementation of a pedagogy of writing which provides students with authentic writing experiences within which transactional skills are integrated (Gardner, 2018a).

Students gain understanding through reading (Graham et al., 2018). They subconsciously read and interpret meaning delivered through visual codes conveyed via linguistic, visual, spatial, audio and gestural modes (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012) from a young age (Ehrenworth, 2003). Literacy is multifaceted and evolving; meaning emerges within the semiotic space that exists between the image and the text (Martin & Rose, 2007; O'Halloran, 2009), with writer's words formed from visual and spatial mental representations (Olive & Passerault, 2012). Visual images are the most dominant mode of communication (Kress, 2003; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006), and today's students live in a world saturated with images. Yet rich images and students' funds of knowledge are not utilised as a means to engage students in the writing process.

Motivated by the observed decline in the writing performance of primary school students was apparent in the annual assessments of the National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) nationally (Gardner, 2018a; Wyatt-Smith & Jackson, 2016), and among participants at the school in which the research was undertaken. This research aimed to address the identified research gap by investigating the narrative writing of one class of Year 5 students. It involved an intervention program designed to improve engage and motivate students by

activating their funds of knowledge during authentic compositional opportunities and developing their writer's voice through the use of visual imagery.

1.3 Context of the Study

Education in Australia is provided by three separate sectors, all of which are bound by Australian Government legislation in regard to financial accountability, curriculum, assessment, and reporting. Publicly-funded schools are administered by state or territory education departments; Catholic schools are administered by the Catholic Education Commission; and independent schools are administered by the state or territory Association of Independent Schools. The independent school sector covers a diverse range of faith-based educational philosophy communities and schools specialising in catering for students at educational risk either because of disability or social, emotional, or behavioural factors. Students attending independent schools represent all socioeconomic backgrounds and account for 34.4% of total school enrolments (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021). The introduction of the National Curriculum of Australia (MCEETYA, 2008) aimed to develop students' technological knowledge, creative and critical thinking skills (Acedo & Hughes, 2014), and analytical, reflective and research skills in writing (Appleby, 2013).

This research study was conducted in the city of Perth in the State of Western Australia. Formal education in Australia is the shared responsibility of the Australian Federal and State and Territory Governments. Three levels of schooling cater to the education of children between the ages of five and 17; however, it is only a legal requirement that children be enrolled in school before the age of six. While formal education does not begin until the age of five, primary schools accommodate students from Pre-Kindergarten (PK) (three years of age) to Year 6 (approximately 11 to 12 years of age). From Years 7 to 12, students attend secondary schools, although some schools provide education for students from PK to Year 12. Although term dates vary across Australian states and territories and school systems, a school year comprises a total of 200 days across four terms, beginning in late January or early February and concluding in early to mid-December.

The Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) rating is used to determine 'school advantage' using a combination of sociodemographic data, such as the occupation and education levels of parents and number of Indigenous and ethnic minority members of the school community, which is obtained through the

Australian Bureau of Statistics census (ACARA, 2017b). On the ICSEA scales a value of 500 represents schools with extremely disadvantaged students, and a value of 1,300 indicates students with extremely advantaged backgrounds. The ICSEA rating enables fair and meaningful comparisons to be made between schools, with valid comparisons between schools with students who have similar 'educational advantage' or background. This measure is particularly useful when comparing schools' NAPLAN results (ACARA, 2021). The impact of socio-economic background on students' educational achievement increases as students advance through school (Goss, 2017), and school advantage accounts for about 20 to 30 percent of the school-level variation in student progress in relation to NAPLAN results (Goss & Sonnemann, 2018, p. 12).

1.3.1 Research School

The study took place in a low-fee, independent, co-educational, Pre-Kindergarten to Year 12 school in Perth, Western Australia. The school population consists of students from a range of metropolitan, rural, and international backgrounds. The 2017 school population consisted of 1,447 students, of which 52% were boys and 15% identified as speaking a language other than English. The ICSEA rating was 1,075 (national average 1,000) (ACARA, 2017b).

The school was the preferred location for the research study because of convenience. The researcher was a full-time staff member at the school, which enabled pre- and post-intervention interviews, meetings with parents, implementation of the intervention program, and informal discussions with the classroom teacher to transpire naturally during the course of a school day. Additionally, familiarity with the school facilitated planning of the resources and locations used during the intervention program, and as an employee, the researcher had access to the student drive where students saved their work during or at the end of each lesson. Furthermore, as the researcher was commonly present in classrooms throughout the primary school, her presence in the classroom during the intervention was not considered unusual or intrusive. Therefore, the researcher's presence did not fundamentally interfere with the data collection process and the setting of the intervention maintained a realistic environment that could be reliably replicated in another setting.

1.4 Background to the Study

1.4.1 International Education Policy

Political, social and economic globalisation, resulting from increased mobility and interactions of people worldwide; electronic communication provided via the internet, combined with the realisation that education systems are not providing students with 21st century skills, led to changes in education policy worldwide (Sahlberg, 2011). Comparison of the level of student achievement between countries is obtained through student participation in the International Large-Scale Assessments in Education (ILSAs) (Maddox, 2018). For example, every three years fifteen-year-old students from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries participate in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) standardised assessments in Science, Reading, Mathematics and Problem Solving. Beyond the knowledge and skills of students, PISA measures 'the intrinsic qualities of entire school systems' (Maddox, 2018, p. 70). Students in Year 4 and Year 8 participate in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) every four years, and Grade 4 students participate in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) every five years (Unsworth et al., 2019). Data obtained from the International Large-Scale Assessments in Education (ILSAs) use standardised tests 'to measure and compare educational achievements within and across nations' (Jerrim et al., 2018), which subsequently influence national education, curriculum, and assessment policies (Maddox, 2018). For example, PISA is used as a reference point for comparison in the international educational sector (Au, 2022; Serder, 2018). However, there is no international standardised assessment for Writing.

The Education Reform Act (ERA) 1988, developed in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, was formed on the economic principle that competition drives improvement. ERA is identified as the event that led to the international reform of education policy (Levin & Fullan, 2008) and the subsequent implementation of a national curriculum and standardised testing in other jurisdictions (Gray, 2007). The reform of education systems worldwide, with an international move to standardise and quantify educational outcomes through the implementation of policies and learning which prioritised student proficiency in basic competencies, was termed 'The Global Educational Reform Movement' or 'GERM' (Sahlberg 2006, 2011,

2012). This movement delivers a top-down, test-based approach with a centralised, prescriptive curriculum focusing on 'what students should do and learn' (Sahlberg, 2006, p. 273) and incorporating marketing and privatisation (Lingard et al., 2016).

Subsequently, education policies such as the Common Core Standards (CCS) and No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act in United States of America (USA) (Hursh, 2007; Porter, et al., 2011), the Pan-Canadian Assessment Program (PCAP) in Canada (Filiasov & Sweetman, 2003) and the National Curriculum of Australia (MCEETY, 2008) in Australia were introduced. Similarly, the Australian Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) aimed to ensure 'that every child leaving primary school should be numerate and be able to read, write and spell at an appropriate level' and 'that every child commencing school from 1998 will achieve a minimum acceptable literacy and numeracy standard within four years' (DEETYA, 1998).

1.4.1.1 Standardised Assessments and Accountability

The implementation of standardised assessments and making schools accountable for results arose from the neoliberal belief that competition leads to better schools (Hursh, 2007) and that the quest for higher results would lead to better quality schooling (Wiliam, 2010). As a consequence of neoliberalism, systems of assessment and accountability, such as Pan-Canadian Assessment Program (PCAP) in Canada, the Standard Attainment Tests (SAT) in England, the National Assessment of Education progress (NAEP) in the United States, and the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) in Australia, have been employed in education settings.

Driven by the conviction that increased competition results in 'increased productivity, efficiency, and accountability' (Klenowski, 2011, p. 3), comparability between students' levels of achievement in standardised assessments introduces the application of a 'market' approach to education, with the intention to improve students' levels of attainment (Salhberg, 2006, 2011; Wolf, 2007; Wyatt-Smith & Jackson, 2016). This marketisation of education in Australia is evident in the number of schools, across all sectors, that publicise evidence of their educational standing by showcasing their students' test scores using a range of marketing strategies such as websites and billboards (Wyatt-Smith & Jackson, 2016). However, competition, accountability, and public announcements of assessment results through identification and 'league tables', under the guise of 'transparency', have been

criticised as a means of 'naming and shaming' (Sahlberg, 2011), with standardised exam results used as a measurement of teacher and school performance (Elwood et al., 2017). Furthermore, standardised tests are designed to produce a 'normal distribution' of scores, with scaling to ensure the majority of scores fit within the 'bell curve' (Au, 2022). Consequently, because of their design, 'there will never, ever be a case where all students are deemed 'proficient' or 'meeting the standard' (Au, 2022, p. 124).

Although supporters of standardised assessments argue that higher expectations drive improved writing instruction and lead students to become better writers (Graham et al., 2011), education systems worldwide report a decline in students' writing achievement (Graham, 2019; Graham & Rijlaarsdam, 2016; Wyatt-Smith & Jackson, 2016). For example, it was established that between 2011-2017, NAPLAN showed that Year 7 students' writing results had the greatest fall with a 16.1-point drop, followed by Year 9 at 14 points, Year 5 with a fall of 10.1 points, and finally Year 3, 2.3 points (Gardner, 2018a). Results from the 2019 NAPLAN writing indicate 2.0% of Year 3 students achieved grades below the National Minimum Standard (NMS), which increased to 15.8% for Year 9 students, with both Year 7 and Year 9 grades falling below 2011 averages (ACARA, 2020d; McGaw, et al., 2020; Wyatt-Smith & Jackson, 2020). The level of underachievement is greater for students living in regional or remote areas, who have English as Second Dialect (EALD), or who experience socioeconomic disadvantage (ACARA, 2019; Jesson & Cockle, 2016). Similarly, results of English primary school students' writing grades were below the expected level, with writing being the subject in which students achieved the lowest scores (Dockrell et al., 2016). Likewise, Portugal reported that 50% of Grade 4 students' writing was below the standard (Cardoso et al., 2009), while Germany reported one-third of Grade 9 students' writing was considered unacceptable (Neumann, 2012). The United States reported only 25% of Grade 8 and Grade 12 students met the proficiency writing standard in the 2011 National Assessment of Educational progress (NAEP) (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012; Graham, 2019; Wood et al., 2020). Similar results were achieved by students in New Zealand, where the results of the 2014 standardised assessment identified that 29.4% of primary school students did not meet the expected national standard in writing (Parr & Jesson, 2016). Research monitoring the achievement levels of Year 4 and Year 8 students against the English curriculum identified that

the average writing score achieved by Year 4 students, as assessed against New Zealand English curriculum expectations, fell significantly between 2012 and 2019.

The global reform of education and the accompanied assessment driven pedagogy, allied to increased teacher accountability (Cairns, 2021; Mackenzie, 2014; Simpson, 2017), negatively impacts both teaching and learning (Stobart, 2008), with content aligned to standards measured in the tests (Darling-Hammond, 2010), leading teachers to teach to the test and allocating increased time to practice for the high-stakes standardised tests (De Smedt, et al., 2016; Dockrell, et al., 2015; Gilbert & Graham, 2010, Graham, 2019; Hsiang & Graham, 2016; Hsiang et al., 2018; Wyatt-Smith & Jackson, 2016). It is suggested this focus on the final written product rather than the writing process (Myhill et al., 2023) leads to inadequate writing instruction and 'radical impoverishment of teaching and learning' (Moss, 2017, p. 62), as teachers focus instruction on a 'small proportion of the capabilities that students need to develop' to be effective writers (Simpson, 2017). Inadequate instruction includes limited timetabled allocations to writing, infrequent opportunities to compose different text types, lack of opportunity for extended writing, instructional practices that lack a sufficient evidence base, limited access to digital tools, and a lack of audiences for students' writing beyond the classroom teacher.

Consequently, teachers' autonomy is restricted as writing instruction follows a rigid formula designed to prepare students for success in standardised assessments (Sahlberg, 2012; Simpson, 2017). Consequently, teachers become deskilled (Barrs, 2019), which results in them employing a safe and low-risk teaching approach at the expense of more innovative approaches that encourage creativity and risk-taking (Bloom & Van Slyke-Briggs, 2019; Caldwell & White, 2017; Carey et al., 2022; Gannon, 2019; Perelman, 2018; McGaw et al., 2020; Sahlberg, 2011). Hence, students learn to become text producers and not writers (Myhill et al., 2023). Furthermore, concern exists about the capacity of both pre-service and early career teachers, who have been educated within a pedagogical approach which prepares students for standardised test, using pre-packaged resources, to deliver writing instruction that is both 'rich and creative' (Bloom & Van Slyke-Briggs, 2019).

1.4.2 NAPLAN

The National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) was introduced in Australia in 2008 with the intention of providing national data that

would deliver results comparable across all Australian states and territories and would 'determine the effectiveness of Australia's education systems' (Thomas, 2020). In addition, the tests make possible comparisons between testing rounds and between year levels, enabling evaluation of student growth in learning. NAPLAN is managed by representatives from public and private school sectors and the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), 'an independent statutory authority with a vision to inspire improvement in the learning of all young Australians through world-class curriculum, assessment and reporting' (ACARA, 2020a). NAPLAN measures the reading, writing, spelling, language conventions, and numeracy skills of all students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9.

NAPLAN assessment results provide a snapshot of student achievement through point-in-time assessments which are held annually in the first term of the school year. Levels of proficiency are represented on a ten-band scale, with a 'national minimum standard' determined for each year level. Results are comparable between years, enabling performance to be monitored over time (Dave, 2020). However, the minimum expected growth between assessment years differs. While the expected growth between Years 3 and 5 is two bands and the growth rate reduces to one band between Years 5 and 7, and between 7 and 9 (Marks, 2022).

In addition to detailed reports that allow further analysis by schools, individual reports of student results show how they are progressing against national standards over time (NAPLAN, 2020). The data enables analysis of trend lines with comparisons of school performance across the state and nation. In addition, individual school results are published on the Federal Government's 'My School' website, since 2010 (Parr et al., 2015). Although ACARA states that NAPLAN results will be used by teachers, 'to identify strengths and areas to improve in teaching programs and to set goals in literacy and numeracy,' (ACARA, 2020c), it is argued that NAPLAN is a standardised, not diagnostic assessment (Wu, 2016) and, therefore, does not provide direction for further teaching (Rogers et al., 2018; Johnston, 2017). Unlike standardised assessments in England and the United States, NAPLAN is not considered to be a traditional high-stakes assessment, since schools do not face direct consequences for poor results, such as school restructuring or even closure. However, results are placed on the MySchool website, which allows comparability between schools (Polesel et al., 2014; Reeves et al., 2019), therefore, Australian schools face similar competitive pressures to schools in other jurisdictions

where the results of high-stakes tests are used by parents when choosing where to send their children (Gable & Lingard, 2016).

Critics of NAPLAN assert that the test places undue stress on students and parents (Mayes & Howell, 2018). In addition, the practice of preparing students for the assessments in order to improve school results (Thompson & Cook, 2014) leads to the narrowing of the curriculum as teachers teach to the test (Caldwell & White, 2017; Singh, 2018), which frustrates teachers and undermines their professionalism (Cormack & Comber, 2013; Mayes & Howell, 2018).

1.4.2.1 NAPLAN Writing

The Writing section of the NAPLAN assessment requires students to write on a set topic based on a prompt in the allocated 40-minute period. At the beginning of the test, students are allocated five minutes for planning prior to commencing writing, and are warned five minutes before the expiry of the 40-minute test to check and edit their work. From 2018, the previously paper-based tests were also delivered online, with 95% of students accessing the online mode in 2022.

The writing prompt contains a graphic image or images, written instructions including a list of reminders such as plan your writing, choose your words carefully, write in full sentences, pay attention to your spelling and punctuation, use paragraphs to organise ideas, and check writing. Examples of NAPLAN narrative writing prompts from 2008 to 2016 are shown below in Figure 1.1

Figure 1.1

NAPLAN Narrative Writing Prompts

Although the Australian Curriculum prescribes the teaching of three main text types; imaginative, informative, and persuasive, NAPLAN tests focus only on the persuasive and narrative genres. Narrative writing was the genre assessed in 2008, 2009, and 2010, and again in 2016 and 2019; persuasive writing has been the dominant genre over the 12-year period from 2008 to 2019, as shown below in Table 1.1 (Valuate, 2019).

Table 1.1

NAPLAN Writing Prompt

Year	Genre
2008	Narrative
2009	Narrative
2010	Narrative
2011	Persuasive
2012	Persuasive
2013	Persuasive
2014	Persuasive
2015	Persuasive

Year	Genre
2016	Narrative
2017	Persuasive
2018	Persuasive
2019	Narrative

Both persuasive and narrative writing are assessed against heterogeneous scales across ten criteria. However, in the assessment of narrative text, the writer's use of persuasive devices is replaced by the evaluation of the writer's description of character and setting and orientating the reader through the development of a storyline and resolution. A summary of the criteria for NAPLAN Narrative writing is shown below in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2

NAPLAN Narrative Writing Criteria (NAPLAN, 2020)

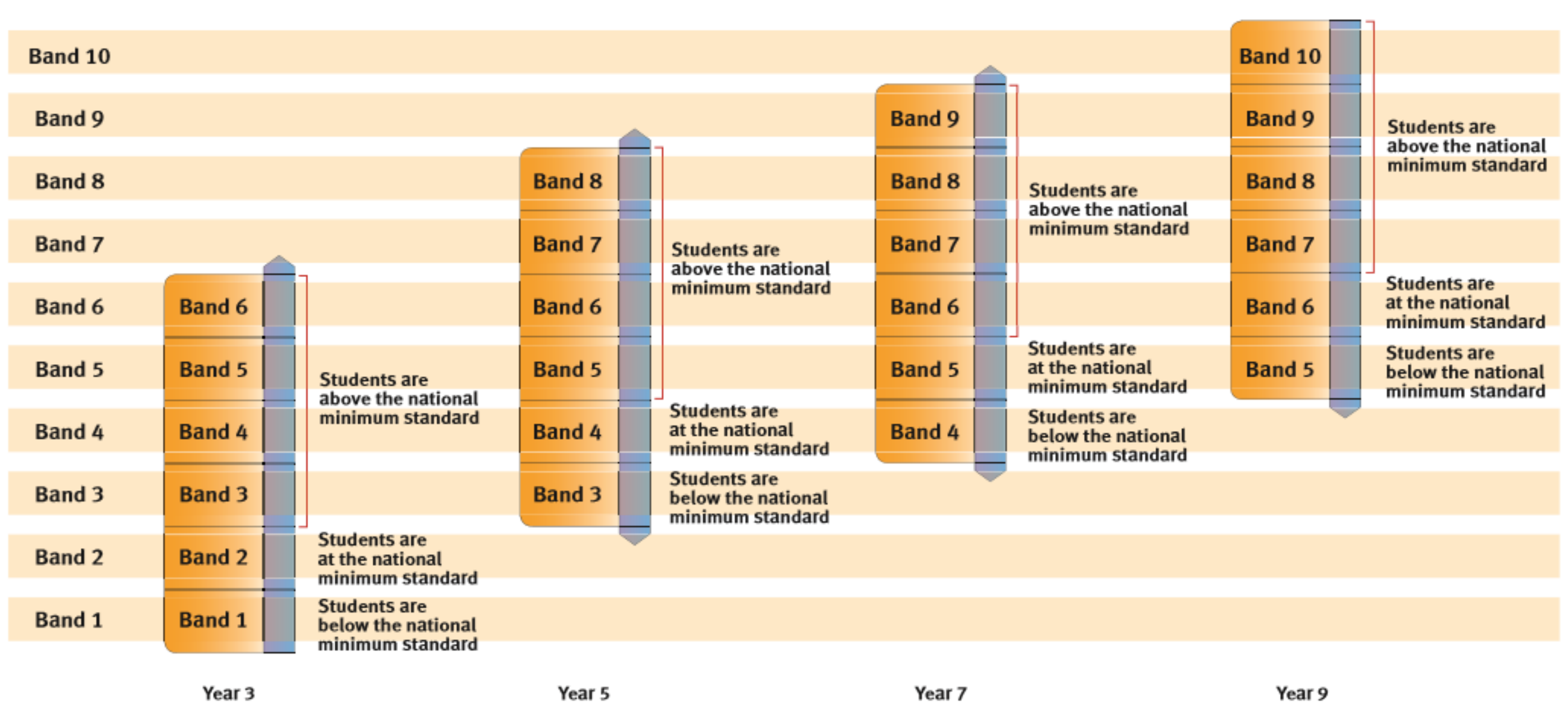
Criterion	Definition	Marks
Audience	The ability to orient, engage and affect the reader	0-6
Text structure	The organisation of narrative features including orientation, complication and resolution into an appropriate and effective text structure.	0-4
Ideas	The creation, selection and crafting of ideas for a narrative.	0-5
Character and setting	Character: The portrayal and development of character. Setting: The development of a sense of place, time and atmosphere.	0-4
Vocabulary	The range and precision of contextually appropriate language choices.	0-5
Cohesion	The control of multiple threads and relationships across the text, achieved through the use of grammatical elements (referring words, text connectives, conjunctions) and lexical elements (substitutions, repetitions, word associations).	0-4
Paragraphing	The segmenting of text into paragraphs that assists the reader to negotiate the narrative.	0-3
Sentence structure	The production of grammatically correct, structurally sound and meaningful sentences.	0-6
Punctuation	The use of correct and appropriate punctuation to aid the reading of the text.	0-5

Criterion	Definition	Marks
Spelling	The Accuracy of spelling and the difficulty of the words used.	0-6

Weighting is applied to each of the criteria, and a total score is awarded. Analytic marking, following a rubric for each of the ten categories, aims to deliver reliability and consistency (Spina, 2017). The combination of marks from each of the ten categories provides a total score and subsequent band allocation on the NAPLAN writing scale. A diagram of the of the distribution is shown below in Figure 1.2.

Figure 1.2

NAPLAN Writing Bands (NAPLAN, 2019)



Band 2 is the expected level of attainment in Writing for a Year 3 student, and Band 6 is the minimum standard for a Year 9 student, although the scale accommodates scores below and above these levels.

1.4.2.2 Decline in NAPLAN Writing Achievement

Declining levels of writing achievement have been recorded both nationally (Gardner, 2018a; Wyatt-Smith & Jackson, 2016) and internationally (ACARA 2019; Graham, 2019; Graham & Rijlaarsdam, 2016; Wyatt-Smith & Jackson, 2016). Furthermore, since the introduction of NAPLAN in 2008, there has been no improvement in students' writing achievement (ACARA, 2019; McGaw et al., 2020; Perelman, 2018; Thomas, 2020; Wyatt-Smith & Jackson, 2016). Whilst the writing achievement of Year 3 and Year 5 students has remained constant, the results of Year 7 and Year 9 students have fallen (McGaw et al., 2020). There is a downward trend with increasing numbers of students' writing scores falling below the benchmark (Daffern & McKenzie, 2020; Gardner, 2018a; Wyatt-Smith & Jackson, 2016). Whilst the 2014 decline was potentially a result of it being the first year schools were not notified in advance of the genre of the writing assessment (Thomas, 2020), the NAPLAN writing performance of Australian students continued to decline in 2018 (ACARA, 2018). NAPLAN provides a standardised benchmark against which Australian students' writing can be compared, but there is no international assessment of student writing to provide a comparable international measure of writing competence (Wyatt-Smith & Jackson, 2016).

Although it is argued that standardised assessments drive higher expectations, resulting in improved writing instruction, and students subsequently becoming better writers (Graham et al., 2011), education systems worldwide report a decline in students' writing achievement (Gardner, 2018; Graham, 2019; Graham & Rijlaarsdam, 2016; Wyatt-Smith & Jackson, 2016).

The writing test is the most problematic of the NAPLAN assessments, with criticism directed at formulaic instruction, targeting low-level mechanical skills, which are analytically graded on set criteria (McGaw et al., 2020; Perelman, 2018). For example, although a simple sentence may produce greater impact and be more effective, writers of these sentences may be penalised, whereas the writer who includes complex sentences receives higher marks (Ryan et al., 2021). Furthermore, with writing limited to persuasive or narrative genres, it is argued NAPLAN assessments fail to measure students' imagination or voice (Carey et al., 2022).

Additionally, with writing prompts based on the assumption that all students have similar experiences (Frawley & Davies, 2015) leads to inequity, as students in remote or country towns do not share the same experiences as middle-class students living in metropolitan areas (Ragusa & Bousfield, 2017).

A review of the NAPLAN program commissioned by the Department of Education of New South Wales, Queensland, and the Australian Capital Territory was undertaken by a team of academics, including: Emeritus Professor Barry McGaw AO, Emeritus Professor William Louden AM, and Professor Claire Wyatt-Smith, who expressed significant concerns about the writing assessment. The researchers found the test was not valued by teachers, citing identified problems in its design, content, prompts, criteria, writing conditions, and scoring, which did not provide validity and reliability. It was also suggested that the assessment did not support the development of excellence in writing (McGaw, et al., 2020). Substantial recommendations were made by the researchers, including that the test be withdrawn until a new model was developed. Suggested modifications to the test included the removal of genre restrictions; the provision of richer writing prompts designed to assess students' writing skills over multiple tasks, including imaginative, persuasive and informative texts. A redesign of the marking rubric with fewer attributes aligned to the writing prompt was also recommended, and assessments were to be conducted digitally against calibrated samples. Following the recommendations, panels of experts from all state jurisdictions oversaw the implementation of NAPLAN writing trials in 2021. Topic, wording, and images were considered for both persuasive and narrative genres, with 5000 student participants completing the writing assessments under test conditions. In 2022, all year levels sitting the NAPLAN writing assessment were tasked with composing a narrative. However, the 2021 trials had little impact on the 2022 assessment. The only adjustment to the marking criteria, as shown above in Figure 1.2 was in the Paragraphing category, where the maximum grade was reduced from 3 to 2 (ACARA, 2022).

1.4.2.3 Valuate

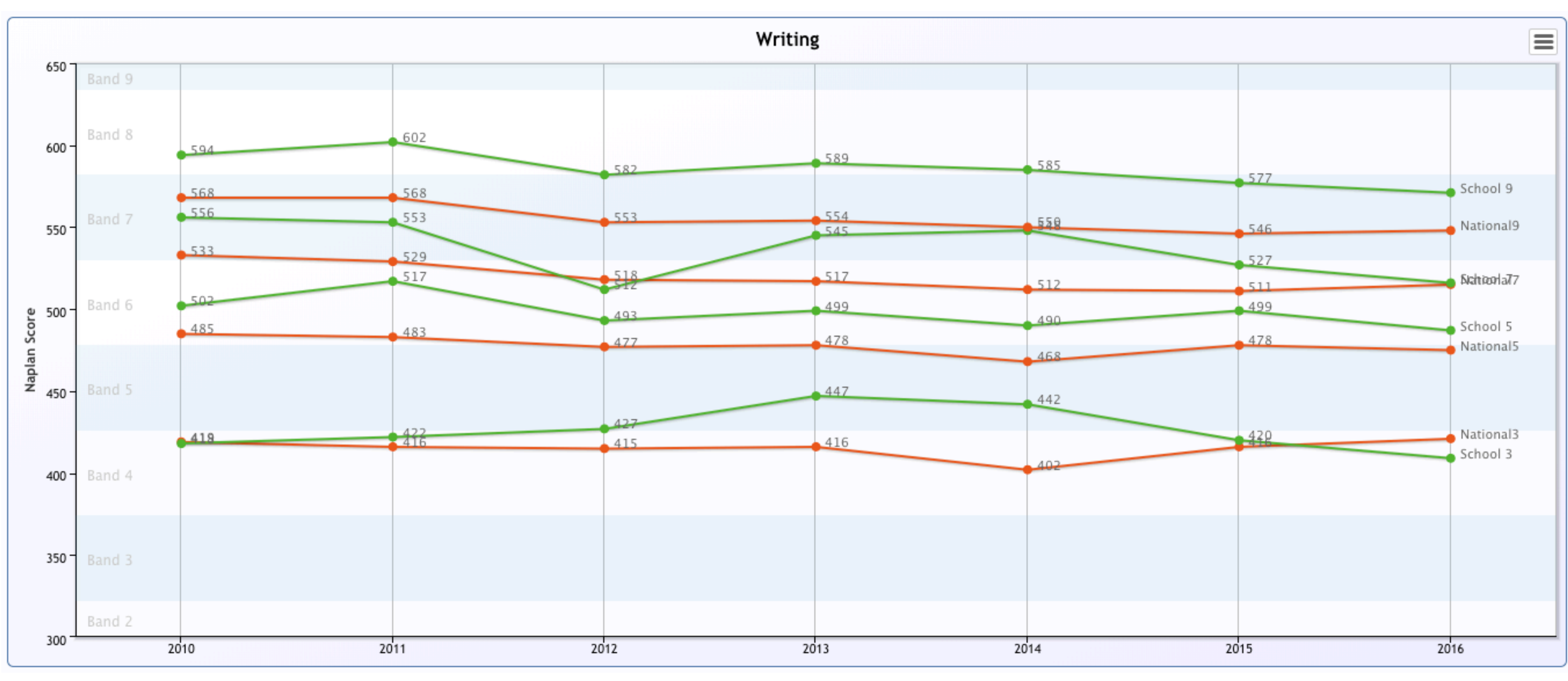
Developed in collaboration with the Australian Independent Schools Western Australia (AISWA, 2019), Valuate is an interactive online tool that provides analysis of NAPLAN results and comparison of student achievement and learning growth over time. The trajectory of achievement against a wide range of performance data, such as national distributions, results in selected years, subject areas, or spanning

several years, for individual students' or a year level, was possible. Similarly, the performance of a single school can be tracked and compared within a specific year, or across several years in relation to school, state, nationally, or similar schools' data. The data obtained through Valuate assists schools in implementing changes to enhance teaching and learning to improve individual and cohort outcomes (AISWA, 2019). However, while NAPLAN results provide a comparison of student achievement scores against standardised benchmarks (Wyatt-Smith & Jackson, 2016), they do not diagnose issues (Wu, 2016) or direct teaching (Johnston, 2017).

Examination of the NAPLAN Writing results for students in this study was undertaken by means of Valuate. The decline in the NAPLAN writing achievement of students in Years 3, 5, 7, and 9 from 2010 to 2016 for the school subject to this research is shown below in Figure 3.1.

Figure 1.3

NAPLAN Writing Grades 2010 - 2016



The graph presents a comparison of the school’s NAPLAN writing assessments from Year 3, 5, 7, and 9 students conducted between 2010 and 2016. Year 5 students have maintained writing scores that consistently exceed the national average. However, the broad gap between the school's performance and the national benchmark narrows considerably in 2016. Both Year 3 and Year 7 scores show a marked decline from their previously high averages in 2013 and 2014. By 2016, these grades had fallen to levels that are at or below the national average, indicating a cause for concern. Although Year 9 students’ writing scores remained above the national average throughout the years under review, this group experienced a decrease in their average scores during 2015 and 2016.

In response to falling NAPLAN achievement levels, a review of writing instruction and assessment was undertaken by the Primary School where this research was conducted. In an endeavour to reverse the decline and to provide internal consistency in writing instruction and assessment, the Primary School leadership introduced the Brightpath assessment tool into Years 1 to 6. Brightpath reports enable the comparison of individual students’ progress and whole school performance within a year and over time.

1.4.3 Brightpath

Brightpath was developed through research conducted by The University of Western Australia to overcome the limitations of the analytical measurement of rubrics (Heldsinger & Humphry, 2010, 2013). The calibrated exemplars and performance descriptors in the Brightpath Teacher’s ruler were devised by means of pairwise comparison and a traditional marking rubric. After the writing samples of early writers established interrater reliability, in stage 1 of the research, trained raters marked the writing of 87,000 Year 3, 5, and 7 students in the Western Australian Literacy and Numeracy assessments, followed by 72,000 in stage 2. The application of the pairwise process confirmed teachers’ ability to make a holistic judgment on students’ writing performance within the categories of subject matter, vocabulary and descriptive language, tone, style and voice; conventions of writing – spelling, punctuation, correct formation of sentences, clarity of referencing, paragraphing, and text structure, with a reliability score of .97 (Humphry & Heldsinger, 2014).

Heldsinger and Humphry were concerned the rubrics used to assess students’ narrative writing in annual state-wide standardised assessments were based on broad categories which did not account for detailed differences of writing performance

(Heldsinger, 2021). As a result of their research Heldsinger and Humphry developed a narrative writing rubric which accounts for qualitative differences in student achievement against the categories shown below in Table 1.3.

Table 1.3

Modified Narrative Writing Rubric

Aspect	Score Range
On balance judgement	0-6
Vocabulary	0-6
Sentence Structure	0-6
Spelling	0-5
Ideas	0-5
Narrative structure	0-4
Characterisation and setting	0-3
Punctuation within sentences	0-3
Punctuation of sentences	0-2
Paragraphing	0-2
TOTAL	0-42

The revised rubric resulted in a greater distribution of marks and reduced the clustering of grades which had occurred when writing was graded with the original rubric (Heldsinger & Humphry, 2019). In addition, marking using the modified rubric was less complex and reduced marking time. The rubric developed by Heldsinger, and Humphry was adopted for use in the NAPLAN assessment (Heldsinger & Humphry, 2019).

Developed by Thurstone (1994), pairwise judgements apply the principle of 'law of comparative judgement'. The Brightpath measurement scale, termed the 'Teacher's Ruler', is the product of pairwise comparison methodology research undertaken by Heldsinger and Humphry. The researchers found that the grading of narrative stories by teachers from Western Australian primary schools, using pairwise comparison, was consistent. Expert markers were employed to check the validity of the Brightpath scale with teaching judgements using the Brightpath scale and exemplars. Inter-rater reliability and concurrent validity of the 'Teacher's Ruler' were achieved by using both the calibrated ruler and a traditional marking rubric to grade the same set of students' writing samples (Heldsinger & Humphry, 2010, 2013). Further research on the reliability of teacher judgement in the assessment of students' narrative, persuasive, and informational report writing ranged from .95 - .97, with .1 representing exact grading (Heldsinger & Humphrey, 2014), with scores

1.0 representing perfect agreement and scores above .9 indicating very high achievement.

Brightpath is an online diagnostic assessment and reporting instrument designed to provide comparable assessments of students' writing capabilities and deliver diagnostic data to inform teaching. Brightpath applies a bottom-up approach to the assessment of students' writing, combining the strengths of NAPLAN with the strengths of teacher professional judgement (Brightpath, 2020). The two-stage process used in the development of Brightpath delivers a time-effective process and enables teachers to make reliable pairwise assessments with minimal training (Humphrey & Heldsinger, 2019). Assessment of student writing occurs throughout the school year, with teachers grading students' writing performance along the continuum of the 'Teacher's Ruler' (Brightpath, 2017), as shown in Appendix 1.

Positioned along the scale of the Teacher's Ruler, writing samples provide 'calibrated exemplars' to which students' writing samples are compared, through a 'best fit' approach. (Brightpath, 2017, 2019; Heldsinger & Humphry, 2013). In addition to the standard conventions of writing of spelling, punctuation, sentence formation, clarity, structure, and paragraphing, the Brightpath narrative writing assessment considers students' ability to manipulate language through the use of subject matter, vocabulary, descriptive language, tone, style, and voice (Beaglehole, 2018). As well as enabling teachers to accurately report what students can do as writers the descriptors also provide clear statements that can be used as targets for future writing. The process provides teachers with an understanding of students' current level of achievement and identifies areas where teachers can deliver measured scaffolded instruction as shown in Appendix 2.

A study completed in 2019 by the School Curriculum and Standard Authority (SCSA) in 113 Western Australia schools found schools who had implemented the that Brightpath program achieved higher results in Years 3 and 5 NAPLAN writing assessments than schools who did not access the program (Brightpath, 2020). Following the inclusion of the Brightpath assessment tool in over 980 Government, Catholic, and Independent Australian school, over one million writing assessments were completed by August 2020 (Brightpath, 2020). Successively, Brightpath exemplars and accompanied descriptors were used to develop the learning progression of the Australian Curriculum (Heldsinger, 2021a).

1.5 Research Objectives

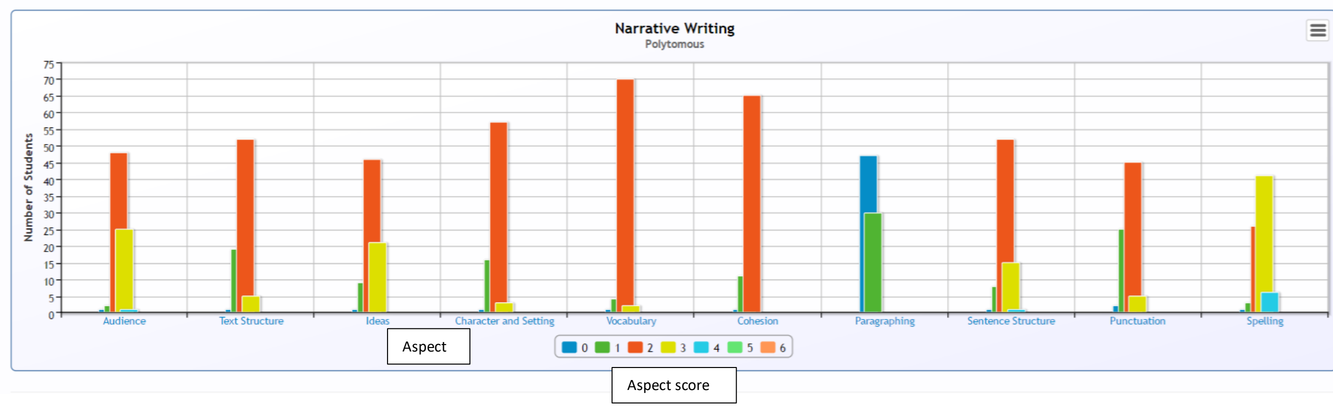
1.5.1 Identification of Problem

During the process of grading of one primary school's Year 4 and Year 5 students' narrative writing using the Brightpath assessment tool, the researcher became aware of a consistent and recurring paucity of descriptive language and visual imagery. It was noted that the students' narratives were predominantly focused on action and did not include vocabulary to engage the reader. Analysis of the subject school's Year 3 and Year 5, 2016 cohorts' NAPLAN narrative writing identified similar concerns. For example, Year 5 2016 NAPLAN data (Valuate, 2017), as shown below in Figure 1.4, identified spelling as the category in which the highest number of students achieved levels 3 and 4. In contrast, paragraphing was identified as the weakest area, with the majority of students achieving either a level 1 or 0. The majority of students achieved level 2 in the character and setting, cohesion, punctuation, and vocabulary categories. Likewise, Year 3 students' 2016 NAPLAN narrative writing, as shown below in Figure 1.4, identified spelling as the category in which students achieved the highest grade, with the majority of students achieving level 3, followed by level 2. In the vocabulary, cohesion, and character and setting categories, the majority of students achieved level 2. Paragraphing was the weakest area, with the majority of students achieving level 0 or level 1.

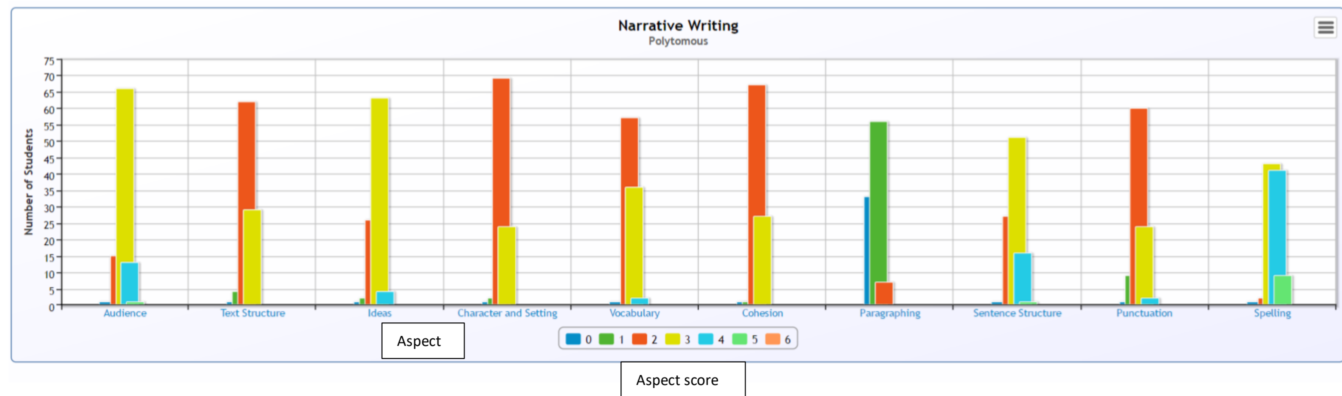
Figure 1.4

2016 NAPLAN Narrative Writing Scores (Valuate, 2017)

YEAR 3 2016 NARRATIVE WRITING



YEAR 5 2016 NARRATIVE WRITING



As previously stated, the decline in students' writing development is a worldwide concern (Gardner, 2018; Graham, 2019; Graham & Rijlaarsdam, 2016; Wyatt-Smith & Jackson, 2016), yet little research has been directed toward writing instruction (Daffern et al., 2017; Wyatt-Smith & Jackson, 2016). Pedagogy driven by assessment and accountability (Mackenzie, 2014; Moss, 2017) leads to inadequate writing instruction (De Smedt et al., 2016; Dockrell et al., 2015; Gilbert & Graham, 2010, Graham, 2019; Hsiang & Graham, 2016; Hsiang et al., 2018). Grammatically driven writing assessment pedagogy delivers a narrow concept of 'good writing' (Wilson, 2007) and does not include writing for authentic purposes (Daffern et al., 2017). Moreover, writing instruction targeted towards success in standardised assessment such as NAPLAN, fails to develop students' creativity, imagination, and voice (Caldwell & White, 2017; Carey et al., 2022; Gannon, 2019), as well as their understanding of how to compose a good story (Caldwell & White, 2017). Consequently, teachers implement deficit-based solutions (Barton & McKay, 2016).

A paradigm shift is required to move writing instruction away from the narrow focus on surface-level skills to a pedagogy that provides students with the ability to see themselves as writers while participating in authentic writing experiences, is flexible, delivers choice, embraces transactional skills (Aitken et al., 2022; Carey et al., 2022; Derewianka, 2015; Gardner, 2013; 2018a), and incorporates both the social and the individual aspects of writing (Graham et al., 2019, p. 286).

Students obtain knowledge for writing through non-writing activities (Graham et al., 2019). For example, viewing an image invites deep exploration and connection (Rowsell et al., 2012), leading to increased word choice (Cremin & Myhill, 2012). This research study sought to access students' implicit visual knowledge and 'liberate' the visual image as a means of scaffolding students' visual imagination, providing them with substance for their writing, not just as a prompt but as a cognitive companion throughout the writing process.

The questions that guided the research were:

1. What impact does a visual literacy intervention have on students' use of descriptive language and imagery in narrative writing?
2. What is the evidence that the visual literacy intervention is sustained two months after completion?
3. What are the implications of using visual literacy for a pedagogy of writing?

1.6 Significance of the Study

According to the Australian English Curriculum, literacy includes reading, writing, viewing, speaking, listening, and creating across a range of visual, oral, and digital texts (ACARA, 2020). The increase in electronic modes of communication in a world saturated with images calls for a redefinition of pedagogy (Duncum, 2010; Vincent, 2006) and acknowledgment of students' awareness of visual literacy in the social contexts. Consequently, it was suggested that the combination of multiple features from the range of discourses would enable teachers to adjust their teaching to match students' needs in relation to available resources (Graham & Perin, 2007; Knapp & Watkins, 2005; Garcia et al., 2018).

The study contributes new research with feedback obtained from both student participants and their teacher, in addition to qualitative data derived from students' written narratives. This research was not limited to students at educational risk or gifted students but took place in a standard primary school class with the full range of achievement levels. Edward- Groves (2011) described students as creative 'multimodal designers of text' and stressed the importance of 'enhancing and extending' students' knowledge by incorporating print, visual, and digital modes in multimodal combinations in classroom writing (p. 50). Findings from this research support Edward-Grove's claim by identifying teaching strategies that empower and engage students, by incorporating the use of multimodal resources. These strategies have the potential to be incorporated effectively into any classroom environment, with the only cost being that of time.

1.7 Chapter Summary

The rationale section at the beginning of this chapter included a brief reflection on the impact of globalisation and electronic communication on education policy worldwide and the subsequent introduction of standardised assessment and accountability. This segment was followed by an examination of the impact assessment and accountability have had on education pedagogy and the declining quality of students' writing when measures against standardised assessment criteria. Australia's national standardised assessment program, NAPLAN, was explained as a contextual background to the research study, with descriptions provided of the writing assessment criteria, marking and reporting. The next segment provided a detailed description of the Brightpath online diagnostic assessment and reporting

tool, which is utilised in the research study as a pre- and post-intervention test measurement instrument. The fifth section outlined the research objectives and the three research questions driving the research. The chapter concluded with a section providing evidence of the significance of the research.

1.8 Thesis Overview

This thesis is divided into seven chapters. The first chapter provided a background to the study, including identified concerns, pedagogical practices surrounding writing, and an outline of the context in which the study took place. Chapter 2 provides a review of literature related to writing development, instruction, and assessment. The third chapter delivers a conceptual overview of writing pedagogy through the lens of semiotics, visual literacy, sensory provocations, multiliteracy, and self-efficacy. Chapter 4 provides a detailed overview of the methodology implemented in this research study, and Chapter 5 delivers detailed results of the intervention program, including interviews, observations, and pre- and post- assessment results. An analysis and discussion of these results is delivered in Chapter 6, with recommendations for future action and research provided in the Chapter 7.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a review of the literature focused on studies, theories and findings related to writing instruction across four sections. The first section, Writing Development, discusses theories and studies how writing skills develop from oral language to prewriting in early childhood and the creation of complex written texts. Building from the first section, the next section, Writing Instruction, reviews methods and practices and analyses different perspectives surrounding writing instruction. These are considered through the lens of the skills, process, whole language, creative, genre, social practices and sociopolitical within the Discourses of Writing framework developed by Ivanič (2004). Aspects affecting the teaching of writing such as cultural and social influences are considered together with reviews of collaborative and dialogic approaches, and the influence of metatalk and student agency. In the third section, Writing Assessment, the methods of evaluating writing performance and assessment strategies are explored. Included within this section the impacts of standardised assessment and accountability and the practice of 'teaching to the test' are discussed together with the role of rubrics, feedback, and automated scoring.

2.2 Writing Development

Learning to write is a developmental process that requires cognitive skills combined with deliberate instruction involving a series of stages (Kellogg, 2008). Students access various domains during the writing process, including sensorimotor, language, cognitive, social-emotional, and executive function domains, which are influenced by biological, cultural, social, and linguistic levels of development (Bazerman et al., 2017). Students obtain the skills to write through non-writing activities such as reading and observation (Graham, 2018, 2019). The link between oral and written language is commonly acknowledged (Berninger et al., 2002; Kim et al., 2013; Olinghouse & Leaird, 2009). The oral language skills children develop through communication with adults provide a foundation upon which written text is developed (Graham et al., 2019). While oral language develops naturally through social interactions within a community, the creation of written text requires deliberate semantic instruction (Vygotsky, 1986).

The transition from oral language to written language involves a process of translating language representations, such as phonological, syntactic, and discourse knowledge stored in the memory, into written text (Bereiter & Scardamali, 1987; Berninger et al., 2006, 2010; Shanahan, 2016). Writing involves a process of retrieving ideas and information from memory to generate pre-verbal ideas and messages that are translated into written text (Myhill, 2009). Therefore, students' oral vocabulary impacts their writing achievement (Kent & Wanzek, 2016), as vocabulary is the means through which thoughts are expressed (Wood et al., 2019). Multimodal and collaborative activities, such as shared reading, role plays, videos, and discussions, provide students with opportunities to practice, experiment, and develop new vocabulary (Daffern & Mackenzie, 2020).

During the prewriting stage, children acquire the prerequisite skills for writing development through play, speech, and drawing (Vygotsky, 1986). Prior to the age of three, children recognise the shapes of objects and begin to make meaning and express themselves by drawing representations of their understanding as marks on a page (Wyse, 2017). Drawing is the primary means of communicating ideas during the prewriting stage, enabling children to convey their story through visual messages, akin to how professional writers compose (Clay, 1991; Dyson, 1982, 2010; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; Sundeen, et al., 2017; Watanabe & Hall-Kenyon, 2011). Children use their drawings to guide their thinking and tell their stories with increasing descriptive details, which provides support for richer written narratives (Sundeen et al., 2017).

Early writing evolves from expressive speech, with the production of written text occurring after the formulation and organisation of ideas in the mind. In this stage of writing development, children's ideas and messages are conveyed by a 'string of letters' (Watanabe & Hall-Kenyon, 2011). Upon entering school and receiving formal systematic instruction, students' knowledge of the alphabetic writing system and letter-sound relationships progressively improves as they advance through the year levels (Parodi, 2007). Early writers begin to tell their stories through written text using 'invented spelling,' with both the quantity and quality of their writing increasing as their technical writing skills develop (Cremin & Myhill, 2012; Dyson, 1986; Graves, 1983).

Handwriting serves as a foundational skill on which all writing is developed, with the ability to write 'fluently and legibly with little conscious thought' serving as

a predictor of composition length and quality (Quigley, 2022, p. 37). Handwriting necessitates the integration of orthographic knowledge and fine motor skills, and achieving automaticity in the formation of letters, words, and sentences is critical for producing creative, well-written compositions (Christensen, 2004; Feng et al., 2017). Writing accounts for 42% of the variability in writing quality (Graham et al., 1997). Once the basic skills of correct letter formation and word spelling become automated, working memory, which was previously dedicated to transcription skills, can be allocated to the higher-order cognitive skills of processing thoughts, generating ideas, and subsequently the production of texts of greater length and quality (Drijbooms et al., 2017; Kellogg, 2008; Kellogg et al., 2013). However, the generation of written text can be inhibited if the writer cannot rapidly retrieve the letters needed to transcribe and spell words correctly. As a result of transcription difficulties, ideas held in the working memory are lost, and the writer struggles to communicate ideas resulting in low compositional fluency and productivity due to frequent pausing (Christensen, 2004; Graham et al., 1997; Berninger et al., 2006; Shanahan & Lomax, 1986; Summer et al., 2014). Proficient writers have greater working memory capacity, which facilitates the retrieval of a diverse range of less familiar words (McNamara et al., 2010), while students with learning difficulties (Dockrell et al., 2015) and boys who demonstrate lower orthographic skills (Berninger et al., 2008) produce shorter texts (Williams & Larkin, 2013). Consequently, these students often receive lower grades due to their writing fluency and the difficulty markers have in deciphering the handwritten text rather than the quality of their writing (Adams et al., 2015; Graham et al., 2011; Santangelo & Graham, 2016).

Although students who write text by hand spend longer periods of time in the planning and revising process (Chan et al., 2018; Zehner et al., 2019), students who type spend more time editing and revising (Christensen, 2004). However, the demands of handwriting may be replicated if the student does not have the level of orthographic-motor integration required to type (Christensen, 2004).

2.2.1 Reading and Writing Reciprocity

A high correlation exists between reading and writing (Berninger et al., 2002; Jenkins et al., 2004; Wood et al., 2020), with parallels in meaning-making and skills (Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000; Graham et al., 2020). Both reading and writing require the use of visual, phonological, and semantic system skills developed

through oral language and literacy (Berninger et al., 2006; Shanahan, 2016; Shanahan & Lomas, 1986), and students gain understanding about writing through reading (Graham et al., 2018). The development of questioning, predicting, visualising, and prior knowledge association (Anderson & Briggs 2011; Shanahan, 2016) in either reading or writing reinforces skills required in the other (Coker et al., 2018; Graham et al., 2018; Roskos et al., 2003). Time spent reading directly influences word knowledge and understanding of literacy concepts, leading to greater idea generation and subsequently improved writing achievement (Andersen et al., 2018; Graham et al., 2018; Lee & Schallert, 2016; Roberts et al., 2008). Professional writers read as a 'writer rather than just as a reader' and 'borrow techniques… without plagiarising' from their reading (Myhill et al., 2023, p. 418). Similarly, in addition to accessing their personal experience and imagination, good writers consider their audience and reflect on their work from the perspective of the reader (Green & Sutton, 2003; Hayes & Flowers, 1986; Quigley, 2022). Bruner (1986) supported studying the work of professional and gifted writers to understand what makes stories compelling and powerful.

A low working memory negatively impacts a student's ability to hold and process information required for reading and writing composition (McCutchen, 2000; Swanson et al., 2010). Likewise, a slow reading rate negatively impacts a student's ability to extract information from text and their ability to create written text (Katusic et al., 2009). The influence of reading on writing is demonstrated by the linguistic choices internalised and available to avid readers (Jones, 2020). For example, the writing of proficient readers includes a greater diversity of words and a density of noun phrases required for the creation of visualisations in the minds of the reader (de Blume et al., 2007). In contrast, the narrative writing of poor readers is dominated by words related to action and fear (de Blume et al., 2007). Although students are often encouraged to include 'wow' or 'fancy' words, similes, and metaphors to enhance their writing; this can result in inappropriate and out-of-context descriptions that do not improve writing quality (Barrs, 2019).

Readers of both audiovisual and written narratives experience emotional responses as a result of following changes in the character and feeling present in the scene (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009; Cohen, 2006; Hoeken & Fikkers, 2014; van Krieken et al., 2017). Their response, engagement, and enjoyment of a narrative are determined by their ability to identify with the characters (Busselle & Bilandzic,

2009; Hoeken & Sinkelda, 2014). For example, when a reader identifies with a fictional character, they perceive and experience what the character is portrayed to see and hear (Hoeken & Sinkelda, 2014; Yaxley & Zwaan, 2007).

Prior knowledge must be accessible from long-term memory for reading comprehension (Narkon & Wells, 2013) and writing composition (Abbott et al., 2010; Cragg & Nation, 2006; Kim et al., 2011; 2018). A meta-analysis of research conducted between 1980 and 2016 on the impact of independent reading on reading and writing concluded that independent reading enhanced the overall quality of students' narrative and descriptive writing (Jouhar & Rupley, 2021). Similarly, systematic writing instruction programs have produced a positive impact on students' reading comprehension (Graham & Herbert, 2011). Kent and Wanzek's (2016) meta-analysis of 38 research studies on school-age students in the English language, determined that reading proficiency accounted for variance in students' writing until the fourth grade. While later research determined that reading impacted students' writing quality until the fifth grade (Ahmed et al., 2014; Wood et al., 2019), a review of 13 research studies undertaken by Jouhar and Rupley (2021) identified that stronger writing-to-reading connections are evident from fifth grade when students have had increased opportunities to write.

Programs targeting the development of reading skills have been found to have a positive impact the quality of students' writing (Lee & Schallert, 2016). Deep reading requires a greater investment of time beyond surface-level comprehension achieved by superficial skimming techniques. Sustained focus during deep reading enables readers to immerse themselves in the text, leading to greater interpretation of the content. Deep reading is an interactive process of 'discovery' that stimulates the imagination and allows stories to unfold 'through the language and voice of others' (Waxler & Hall (2011) p. 30). Waxler & Hall (2011) describe reading and writing as 'flip sides of the educational coin' and call for a unified pedagogy 'fueled by imagination' where 'we write our own stories as we read the stories of others, and we read others' stories as we write our own narratives' (p. 47).

2.3 Writing Instruction

The classroom environment plays a pivotal role in writing instruction, focusing on the cultivation of skills that can be applied and transferred across multiple modes of communication (Kalantzis et al., 2003; Leadbeater, 2008;

Serafini, 2012b; Wohlwend, 2009). Written compositions produced by students are linked to the quality of writing instruction (Kim et al., 2013) and teachers' pedagogical and subject knowledge influence how they teach writing (Myhill et al., 2023).

2.3.1 Discourses of Writing

Based on earlier theories including those developed by Fairclough (1989, 1992), research of policy documents, teaching resources, interviews with students and teachers, and analysis of media coverage, Ivanič (2004) developed the Discourses of Writing framework to describe aspects that influence the teaching of writing. Ivanič determined that written text is produced within a cognitive, event, or social context for the purpose of communication. She considered the heterogeneous properties of text, such as the intertextual features used by both producers and consumers and the impact of social context on how text is produced and interpreted (Fairclough,1989, 1992; Ivanič, 2004).

The Discourses of Writing framework provides a multi-layered view of language comprised of the six discourses: Skills, Creativity, Process, Genre, Social Practices, and Socio-political, within which the theories of writing are embedded (Ivanič, 2004; Ryan & Barton, 2014). Each discourse identifies a homogeneous group connected through common beliefs, actions, or socially accepted ways of using language and other symbolic expressions (Ivanič, 2004; Gee & Gee, 2007). While boundaries are defined and distinguishable between each of the discourses, overlap occurs with common pedagogical practices and curriculum objectives found in multiple discourses (Gardner, 2013; Gee, 2012). Ivanič (2004) acknowledged the multifaceted nature of writing and did not advocate one approach over another. Although teachers may be influenced to follow one particular discourse over others, Ivanič (2004) recommended that a comprehensive approach be applied to writing instruction by combining elements of two or more discourses. Each of these six discourses is discussed below.

2.3.1.1 Skills Discourse

The Skills Discourse focuses on the cognitive aspects of writing based on the principle that learning to write develops from learning to apply linguistic skills, initially in the form of sound-symbol relationships (Ivanič, 2004).

Teaching writing within a skills-based approach follows a bottom-up model based on the belief that students must master predetermined skills prior to creating

textual compositions (Bull & Anstey, 2019). The teacher's role is to transmit information through highly prescriptive teacher-directed instruction (Bull & Anstey, 2019; Simpson, 2017). Students learn to write by mastering technical skills of increasing difficulty, taught in isolation through a series of sequenced steps (Bull & Anstey, 2019; Lipscombe et al., 2015). The expectation is that students will absorb the information for later recall (Skidmore, 2006) and implicitly make connections during the composition process (Bull & Anstey, 2019). For example, students must master writing simple sentences before constructing paragraphs, followed by writing full composition pieces in a set timeframe, on a topic set by the teacher (Bull & Anstey, 2019; Lipscombe et al., 2015).

In line with behaviourist theory, writing instruction followed a highly prescriptive, skills-based approach from the mid-1900s to the 1960s (Cambourne & Turbill, 2007; Ivanič, 2004) with reading, writing, spelling, handwriting, and grammar taught as separate subjects using a 'teach-practice-test' approach, with mastery acquired through drills, flashcards, and worksheets, followed by numerically graded assessments (Cambourne & Turbill, 2007). Before producing a written composition, students need to develop skills in handwriting, spelling, phonics, punctuation, and grammar (Cambourne & Turbill, 2007). Accordingly, assessment of written compositions within a skills-based approach concentrates on the technical 'surface-level' skills of spelling, handwriting, punctuation, sentence structure, and the correct use of grammar (Bull & Anstey, 2019; Cremin & Myhill, 2012; Eyres, 2017; Ivanič, 2004; Kress, 1982; Lipscombe et al., 2015)

D'Arcy (1999) cautioned the narrow skills-based assessment criteria focused on the linguistic features of writing at word, sentence, and text levels, with writing valued for accuracy in text structure, spelling, and punctuation, had turned the teaching of writing into 'language study'. Further concerns identified from the narrow focus on 'surface-level' skills is that students who lack confidence in their spelling ability, limit their word choices to words they can spell correctly (Quigley, 2022; Summer et al., 2014), which inhibits linguistic creativity, leading to technical and repetitive compositions (Freire cited in Cremin, 2006), which lack sensitivity, empathy, and imagination (D'Arcy, 1999).

2.3.1.2 Process Discourse

The Process Discourse integrated the cognitive and the process theories of writing, focusing on composition rather than spelling and handwriting (Ivanič,

2004). Influenced by the works of Emig (1971), Britton (1970), Flower and Hayes (1981), and Murray (1985), writing instruction shifted from a traditional skills-based approach to the process approach in the 1980s. The process approach involved progressing through pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing stages (Simmerman et al., 2012). Although significant gains in writing achievement are achieved through revision (Hillocks, 1982), the process requires higher-order processing (Ahmed et al., 2022). Consequently, revision focuses on editing with a 'quick skim of spelling and grammar' or the addition of more detail (Myhill, 2009; Quigley, 2022).

The process approach gained popularity among teachers and policymakers, leading to its adoption in writing pedagogy in England, the United States of America, Australia, and New Zealand during the 1970s and 1980s. Despite this, teachers continued to provide explicit and scaffolded instruction to text composition (Ivanič, 2004). The social constructivist aspect of the process approach helped alleviate many students' writing anxieties (Calkins & Ehrenworth, 2016) and fostered a positive learning environment (Graham & Harris, 2013).

Graves (1983) identified time, topic choice, response, and the learning community as four key elements of the writing process and introduced the cognitive process approach to writing. This approach promoted a recursive model with stages of planning, translating, and reviewing applied throughout the writing process, with sub-processes included within each stage. For example, 'retrieving information from long-term memory' and 'organising ideas' during the planning phase. The approach enabled students to draft and edit their work, as well as participate in conferences with the teacher before publication. Writing instruction within a cognitive model recognises writing as an individual endeavour, and allows students to take ownership of topic choice (Graves, 1983; Murray, 1982, 1985) which provides a sense of autonomy (Aitken et al., 2022).

Writing workshops allowed students to work on their compositions over an extended time period, with writing not confined to one single writing lesson. Writing workshop lessons typically began with five to fifteen minutes of explicit instruction and modelling, followed by independent writing, during which the teacher worked with individual students or small groups (Calkins & Ehrenworth, 2016; McNamara & Kintsch, 1996). Modelled after adult writing groups, this approach provided time for explicit instruction, idea generation and text composition. Idea generation was

not necessarily a process that occurred before writing, but could also occur during teacher-student conferences held during the writing process, which assisted students to elaborate and develop their writing before finalising and submitting their compositions (Bull & Anstey, 2019; Calkins & Ehrenworth, 2016; Cremin & Myhill, 2012; Graham & Sandmel, 2011).

Based on the reasoning that students could only write effectively on subjects they were knowledgeable about, and influenced by the writing practices of professional writers who develop ideas, create text, edit, and publish (Wyse, 2018). Similarly, students could write regardless of their level of transactional skills if they had a reason to write and a desire to write (Aitken et al., 2022; Bull & Anstey, 2019). However, to avoid students solely writing about the world they know from television or books, Graves recommended that students be provided with opportunities to explore their immediate surroundings.

The Reading to Learn' (R2L) project, based on systemic functional linguistics (SFL) pedagogy developed by Halliday (1978) expands the genre approach to engage semiotic resources to develop English Language learners literacy, through scaffolded instruction using authentic resources and real world experiences (Martin & Rose, 2008). The aim of the program is to utilise students' everyday spoken language to access the academic code through teacher modelling, interaction and shared meta-language to make the hidden curriculum visible (Rose, 2018). Key features of the program include the use of templates and guided instruction so that students are not faced with 'blank page'. Although the program requires a high level of teacher engagement for the explicit and scaffolded instruction following the implementation of the program in seven primary and secondary schools, pre- and post-reading and writing assessments identified a reduction in the achievement gap (Acevedo et al., 2023; Rose & Martin, 2012).

Tasked with improving the teaching and learning of English, the School Curriculum Development Committee (SCDC) introduced the National Writing Project (NWP) to an unknown number of schools across England (Wyse, 2017). Prior to the introduction of the National Curriculum in 1988, there was no state control of the primary school curriculum (Wyse et al., 2008). Introduced over two phases, the NWP, which was influenced by Graves' process writing approach, involved thousands of teachers (Wyse, 2017; Wyse et al., 2018). The first phase, the 'development' phase, operated from 1985 to 1988, and the second, the

‘implementation’ phase, from 1988 to 1989 (Wyse et al., 2018). While the NWP provided opportunities for students to see themselves as writers (Bifuh-Ambe, 2013), students needed a purpose and audience for their writing beyond the teacher (Graves, 1983).

While the process approach brought positive changes (Graham et al., 2013; Calkins & Ehrenworth, 2016) and shifted writing instruction away from the narrow focus on spelling and handwriting skills, it led to a predominance of narrative writing, which was the genre preferred by most students (Kamler, 1992). Moreover, because the process approach embraced a social semiotic perspective, students’ writing often reflected their personal experiences, emphasising the values and gender stereotypes of the dominant culture, potentially disadvantaging students from diverse cultural backgrounds (Anstey & Bull, 2018; Kamler, 1992; Rivalland, 1989). Additional concerns arose about the sufficiency of instruction provided by teachers during conferences (Hammond, 1996), with conferencing during the publication phase often reduced to a mere correction of spelling and punctuation, which Kamler (1992) described as ‘talking red pens’ (p. 107).

Informed by the research of cognitive scientists, Hayes (1996) revised the process writing model developed by Flower and Hayes (1981) to incorporate the influence of social, affective, and motivational factors (Cocker, 2006). Hayes (1996) recognised the relationship between cognitive and motivational processes involved in the writing process. His updated model was based on the belief that ‘writing is learned, not taught’, and the teacher’s role was seen as that of a facilitator who provides encouragement and support to students during the writing process. Hayes (1996) recognised the writer’s need to retrieve information from long-term memory and hold ideas in short-term memory prior to constructing sentences. The updated approach, which emphasised writing for real audiences and workshops with conferences between students and the teacher during the writing process (Wyse, 2017), led to students demonstrating increased confidence, motivation, and interest in their writing (Bull & Anstey, 2019). The social constructivist aspect of the process approach, which reduced the emphasis on foundational skills such as handwriting and spelling (Graham et al., 2015), helped alleviate many students’ writing anxieties (Calkins & Ehrenworth, 2016) and fostered a positive learning environment (Graham & Harris, 2013).

2.3.1.3 Whole Language Approach

The whole language approach was grounded in the principle that knowledge is unconsciously constructed through immersion, skill development, and learning seen as a 'process of acquisition' (Ivanič, 2004; Gee, 2001). Evolving alongside the process approach and similarly shifting away from an emphasis on conformity and discrete skills, the whole language approach entailed the deliberate integration of reading, discussion, and writing (Derewianka, 2015). Embracing a child-centred approach and acknowledging students' prior knowledge, the connection between reading and writing was recognised, which encouraged students to read as writers (Cambourne & Turbill, 2007). Significant focus was placed on, relevance and interest and emphasised that students should write about topics aligned with their personal interest, authentic resources, and examples of good writing (Ivanič, 2004). Reading assumed a prominent role with big books and classroom libraries receiving a boost as teachers immersed students in language through literature, with spelling, reading, and writing becoming interwoven within the broader context of literacy (Cambourne & Turbill, 2007).

While teachers recognised the value of conferences, concerns began to surface regarding constraints arising from the competing demands on their time. The time required for conferencing and the development of conventional linguistic skills conflicted with curriculum and testing demands (Bull & Anstey, 2019; Dutro et al., 2013; Hannon, 2000). Consequently, some teachers selectively incorporated aspects of the whole language approach into their teaching (Kamler, 1992). Additional concerns raised about the whole language approach centred on the notion that writing lessons became overly student-directed, resulting in an overabundance of narrative and recount genres at the expense of other text types (Bull & Anstey, 2019; Cairney, 1992; Ivanič, 2004; Kamler, 1992). Furthermore, the endorsement of invented spelling as a substitute for explicit grammar and spelling instruction fuelled calls for increased accountability and the introduction of a national curriculum (Cambourne & Turbill, 2007).

2.3.1.4 Genre Discourse

The genre approach emerged in Australia in the late 1980s in response to concerns about writing pedagogy, particularly the lack of explicit instruction and skill development, and the influence of the whole language approach (Bull & Anstey, 2019). It also addressed students' limited exposure to the text types

necessary for upper school and workplace settings (Freedman, 1993; Ivanič, 2004; Kress, 1982). The genre theory of writing instruction centred on generic text structure and language features (Wyatt-Smith & Jackson, 2016). While the genre approach did not align with progressivism or the 'back to basics' movement (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993), it responded to the call for social justice by providing equal access to writing activities for all students, regardless of social or cultural backgrounds (Christie, 2005; Derewianka, 2015).

The genre approach directs writing towards specific text types, serving particular purposes within a social context (Halliday, 1978; Ivanič, 2004; Ryan & Barton, 2014). It relies on formulaic teaching and explicit instruction on how to write within clearly defined structures. Students learn to follow rules that are considered reproducible as needed, applying specific grammar, vocabulary, tone, detail, layout, and organisation for each text type (Cremin & Myhill, 2012; Devitt, 1993; Hyland, 2003; Ivanič, 2004; Lea & Street, 2003; Martin & Rothery, 1993; Martin et al., 2010).

Initially, the genres taught were predominantly non-fiction text types such as recounts, instructions, reports, procedures, explanations, discussions, and persuasions. Later, these were modified to include the categories of argument and story (Doecke & Breen, 2013; Wyse, 2017). While the primary focus of the genre approach is on the final product, it also encompasses the identification of specific linguistic features and how they apply to each text type, including the process, communicative purpose, audience, and context (Ivanič, 2004).

The genre approach aimed to develop students' critical literacy skills by integrating speaking, listening, reading, and writing across various text types (Cambourne & Turbill, 2007). Due to the influence of genre theory on the National Literacy Strategy (NLS) in England from 1998 to 2010, writing instruction shifted from emphasising composition, student choice, and expression to a focus on writing for specific purposes and text analysis.

Critiques of the genre approach cited the excessive use of writing frameworks and the narrow, prescriptive method of writing instruction that led all students to write in a similar manner, adhering to the structure of each genre (Doecke & Breen, 2013). A study by Ormerod and Ivanič (2002) examined changes in literacy practice and products of 37 students in an English primary school over the course of three years. The researchers found that despite offering students the choice

of a semiotic mode for their project work, due to the limitations placed on students' writing and teacher instruction, by the end of sixth grade, all students' writing looked the same in format and length. While the use of writing guides is not inherently poor pedagogy (Bull & Anstey, 2019) and writing templates provide tools for students to achieve success (Graff, 2003), the need for scaffolding diminishes as students gain experience (Hyland, 2003).

Additional concerns regarding the emphasis on the genre approach stem from the argument that while genres are grounded in the language of the society, they fail to evolve with the societal changes (Doecke & Breen, 2013; Bull & Anstey, 2019). Furthermore, due to the explicit linguistic requirements within each of the text types, integrating the genre approach with other discourses can be challenging (Ivanič, 2004).

2.3.1.5 Social Practices Discourse

The Social Practices Discourse is grounded in the understanding that language is a social process that is intricately linked to and inseparable from the society in which it exists (Bazerman, 2016; Fairclough, 1992; Halliday & Hasan, 1985; Kong & Pearson, 2003; Lillis & McKinney, 2013; Mercer & Littleton, 2007; Scardamalia & Bereiter, 1996; Vygotsky, 1986). Before children receive formal instruction on the mechanics of writing, they develop an awareness of the print environment, internalising language through their experiences as members of a social community (Bruner, 1997; Cremin & Myhill, 2012; Graham, 2018).

To understand the world, the brain processes information through action, perception, and linguistic coding, prioritising the information such as visual or aural cues depending upon the situation. Bruner (1971) developed a 3-tiered model to show how information is processed and understood. The first enactive representation is the earliest mode where students learn through interaction with the environment, and knowledge is represented through action and movement. The second, iconic representation, involves the manipulation of mental images or visualisations to recall information or solve problems. In the third mode, knowledge is represented through symbols, words, or numbers, which are essential for language, mathematics, and abstract thinking. Cognitive growth and understanding about the world transpire as students process and retrieve information through a process of translation as the three modes of representation interact with each other. Symbolic processing enables students to interpret information beyond physical sensory experiences within their

immediate surroundings. Bruner's representational model identifies how combining experiences and cognition is crucial for interpretation and communication.

In the Social Practices Discourse, writing is established on the belief that the purpose of writing is to communicate with real audiences and is learned implicitly in real-life contexts (Ivanič, 2004). Children learn, make meaning, and develop 'funds of knowledge' as they engage in activities and interactions with their family, friends, and members of their community (Calkins, 1994; Dyson, 1986; Gonzalez & Moll, 2002; Moll, 2019; Vygotsky, 2004), 'without the need for didactic teaching approaches' (Moll, 2019, p. 198). Cognitive modelling occurs when teachers demonstrate specific aspects of the writing process while providing explanations and reasoning behind the actions (Colwell, 2018). For example, when teachers share their own writing compositions, they can offer students strategies to overcome difficulties they themselves may have encountered during the working process (Cremin, 2006).

The influence of society and culture on language has expanded our understanding of literacy as a collection of skills shaped by the social and cultural environment (Graham, 2018) and applied within a range of social settings (Cope & Kalantzis, 2006; Halliday, 1973; Hasan, 2016; Henderson, 2011; Heath, 1983, 1986; Knobel & Lankshear, 2008; Lankshear & Lawler, 1987; Street, 1984). Opportunities to apply their learned skills and insights in new contexts lead to the development of new skills and increased motivation (Graham, 2019). Students bring their 'funds of knowledge' acquired through their life experiences into the classroom, which they can embed in their written compositions (Dyson, 2003; Gardner, 2018a; Rios-Aguilar et al., 2011), and their success as writers is enhanced when writing instruction recognises students' 'funds of knowledge' (Gardner, 2018a).

'The Strathclyde Three Domains Model' was originally developed by Ellis and Smith (2017) to assist student teachers' understanding of three different lenses of literacy research. The model was incorporated into research targeting the development of teacher awareness of the gap between advantaged and disadvantaged students and the impact of social class on literacy achievement (Ellis & Rowe, 2020). By combining cognitive knowledge and skills, cultural and social capital, and social and personal identity (Ellis et al., 2019), the Strathclyde Three Domains Model determines that literacy:

> learning involves acquiring a set of cognitive knowledge and skills, is a social practice and learning involves helping readers to acquire the cultural norms around literacy that are assumed by schools, is entwined with identity and literacy learning, involves a process of developing a positive identity as a learner, a reader and a writer. (Ellis & Rowe, 2020, p. 421)

In order to successfully incorporate the Strathclyde Three Domains Model, teachers must 'navigate a more complex theoretical and pedagogical landscape' that attends to the social and cultural capital students bring to school (Ellis et al., 2019, p. 67). As teachers' professional understanding of equity in opportunities and experiences, plays a pivotal role in ensuring successful outcomes, implementation of the Strathclyde model will require teachers to expand their perspectives to include new instructional possibilities (Pomerantz & Kaufman, 2019) and value 'new kinds of evidence', such as students' interests, and consider students' funds of knowledge as useful knowledge (Ellis et al., 2019, p. 74). Following professional development on The Strathclyde Three Domains Model, teachers in 48 Scottish primary schools identified a significant improvement in the average literacy achievement scores of all students, with the number of students in the low and below stanines decreasing and increasing in the average and above categories (Ellis & Rowe, 2020). Cultural values and ideology shape the writing produced by students in the school environment (Pantaleo, 2009) which is enhanced when their out-of-school experiences and cultural resources are valued and utilised to make connections in the classroom (Bifuh-Ambe, 2013; Cutler & Graham, 2008; Kress, 2000; Pantaleo, 2009).

Literacy within the Social Practices Discourse validates and embraces the interests, knowledge, and experiences that students bring to school in their 'virtual backpacks' (Ellis & Rowe, 2020). When applying a sociocultural approach to writing instruction teachers use the available semiotic resources within a supportive and constructive environment. Students assume ownership of their writing, and write for real audiences with opportunities to engage with others (Graham et al., 2013; Wilcox et al., 2016), whether writing collectively as a whole class or individually at any stage of the writing process (Fletcher & Turbill, 2015; Harris et al., 2006). This pedagogical approach promotes active learning by linking prior knowledge with discovery and inquiry, as students access their recall of past experiences to facilitate new learning (Bazerman et al., 2017; Krahenbuhl, 2016). Furthermore, the process

assists in the creation of links between students' Primary Discourse, by leveraging their 'funds of knowledge' to bridge the gap between formal school literacy and the literacy of the social environment (Gonzalez et al., 2005; Lambirth, 2011; Mercer & Littleton, 2007; Siegel, 2012; Simpson et al., 2019; Wyse et al., 2018; Yelland et al., 2008).

2.3.1.6 Sociopolitical Discourse

The Sociopolitical Discourse expands the Social Practices Discourse by incorporating the political context, recognising that increased mobility and globalisation, social transformation, and fluid boundaries give rise to hybridity, heterogeneity, and intertextuality (Ivanič, 2004).

Written language serves as a gateway to cultural knowledge and social influence, granting access to the dominant discourse (Brandt, 1999; Ivanič, 2004). Writing instruction, is an integral part of educational pedagogy, it is significantly influenced by the prevailing societal ideologies, which are often dictated by the dominant political authorities that shape the economy, social structures, and communication systems (Lambirth, 2011). Therefore, educational institutions play a role in perpetuating the class and social hierarchies of the prevailing society (Fairclough, 1989).

Information about how writing is taught has been gathered through surveys, observations, and interviews conducted in various regions, including the United States, Europe, China, South America, and New Zealand (Applebee & Langer, 2011; De Smedt et al., 2016; Gilbert & Graham, 2010; Hsiang et al., 2018; Margarida et al, 2016; Parr & Jesson, 2016; Rietdijk et al., 2018; Tse & Hui, 2016). Research conducted in multiple countries across the world has consistently identified the common issue of inadequate writing instruction, with a heightened focus on assessment and accountability (Caldwell & White, 2017; Dreher, 2017; Gardner, 2018a; Graham, 2019; Graham et al., 2011; Milner, 2013; Rooney, 2015; Reeves et al., 2019; Spina, 2017; Thompson & Cook, 2014). This has led to structured, teacher-led writing instruction, often with limited room for student choice or creativity (Carey et al., 2022; Fletcher, 2001, 2015; Gardner, 2018b; Gibbons, 2019), and limited opportunities for extended writing, collaboration with peers (Cremin & Oliver, 2017), or writing for an audience (Barrs, 2019; Graham, 2019; Graham et al., 2013; Ryan & Barton, 2014; Wilcox et al., 2016).

Standardised assessment has led to writing instruction that is shaped by generic writing skills and assessment criteria (Barrs, 2019; Caldwell & White, 2017; Mo et al., 2014; Singh, 2018), which leads to 'curriculum backwash' or instruction that focuses on preparing students for tests (Andrews et al., 2009; Carey et al., 2022), where students are prepared to achieve scores that exceed the minimum standards on standardised assessments like NAPLAN, particularly in the period leading up to the testing (Au, 2007; Caldwell & White, 2017; Dreher, 2017; Gardner, 2018a; Graham et al., 2011; Milner, 2013; Rooney, 2015; Reeves et al., 2019; Spina, 2017; Thompson & Cook, 2014; Wyatt-Smith & Jackson, 2016). In an effort to maximise student success, teachers direct writing instruction toward the specific elements assessed in these tests (Comber, 2012; D'Arcy, 1999; Ewing, 2018; Gardner, 2018b; Hillocks, 2002; Myhill et al., 2020), including teaching structures and discursive markers applicable to the text types assessed (Andrews et al., 2009). This is achieved through a combination of analysing past exam papers and utilising commercially produced practice tests and rubrics modelled on those used in the high-stakes assessments (Applebee & Langer, 2011). Consequently, instruction becomes predominantly one-dimensional, often involving excessive 'drill and practice' (Cremin & Myhill, 2012; Gardner, 2014, 2018a; Gillenwater, 2009; Graham et al., 2014; Klenowski, 2011; Shanahan, 2013; Yeo, 2007) and concentrated on mechanical skills, structural features, and conventions of writing that can be quantifiably measured, such as punctuation, spelling, and grammar (Comber & Cormack, 2011; D'Arcy, 1999; Gardner, 2018a; McCarthey, 2008; Mo et al., 1995; Troia & Olinghouse, 2013). Moreover, writing instruction frequently focuses exclusively on the narrative and persuasive genres assessed in standardised assessments to the exclusion of other genres (Andiliou & Murphy, 2010; Ewing et al., 2015; Hillocks, 2002; Radcliffe, 2012; Sowey, 2018).

Writing instruction based on the narrow criteria assessed in NAPLAN has become the norm in schools (Wyatt-Smith & Jackson, 2016). While some students attaining high scores in formal assessment because they can successfully transfer skills developed through formulaic teaching (Mo et al., 2014), these grades provide artificial measures of student learning (McNeil, 2000). Furthermore, this narrow teaching approach detracts from students' learning experiences (Polesel et al., 2014) and restricts their ability to demonstrate their full potential (Vincent, 2006). Moreover, the intense focus on preparing for standardised assessments and 'teaching

to the test', fails to empower students as creative writers, as 'the structural approach has subsumed the development of their imaginative capacity' (Carey et al., 2022, p. 33). For example, the NAPLAN Writing rubric fails to capture students' proficiency in creative writing, or their 'individual voice' (Carey et al., 2022), therefore, students who write creatively are often actually penalised (Caldwell & White, 2017).

The focus on test preparation has even permeated early years (Kindergarten-Year 2) education (Hassett, 2008), with Australian students being prepared for success in standardised assessments in writing long before the introduction of NAPLAN in Year 3 (Mackenzie, 2014). Similarly, the practice is evident in early years education with baseline assessments for all children (Dowdall, 2020). This pedagogical practice often emphasises competition and comparison of student achievement, sending the message to students that these assessments are of paramount importance (Ryan & Shim, 2012). Consequently, due to this emphasis on test preparation, students' enjoyment of writing diminishes as they progress through the year levels (Cambourne, 2015; Radcliffe, 2012) as instruction primarily focuses on test preparation and skill development results in students 'merely filling in required components rather than composing' (Hales, 2017, p. 2). As a result, teaching creatively is relegated to a secondary status (Abrams et al., 2003; Aljaghaiman & Mowrer-Reynolds, 2005; Wyse et al., 2018). Interactive and multimodal teaching approaches that incorporate multimedia, research, and role play are often limited (Rex & Nelson, 2004), with originality and creativity (Cremin, 2009; Gardner, 2013; Jeffery & Gardner-Bixler, 2016; Spina, 2017), and the development of students' voice (Albertson, 2007; Applebee, 2013; Barton et al., 2015; Beghetto, 2005; Behizadeh, 2014; Caldwell & White, 2017; Gardner, 2018a; Milner, 2013; Mo et al., 2014) reduced. Consequently, students are denied agency and opportunities to write like professional writers (Gardner, 2018a; 2018b), who prepare to write by engaging in sensory-collecting activities such as 'daydreaming, walking around noticing, gathering ideas in a notebook, and freewriting' (Myhill et al., 2023, p. 411). However, the cognitive process used to compose text is similar whether the writer is a child or an adult; therefore, when students are provided with the ability to choose their own topics and determine the direction of their writing, they develop agency as writers (Joshua, 2007; Vaughn, 2018).

Research conducted by Graham et al. (2014) found that more than half of the 285 middle school teachers surveyed reported that high-stakes assessments

negatively impacted their writing programs. Furthermore, in the face of a crowded curriculum and a limited amount of time allocated to the teaching of writing (Brindle et al., 2016; Gilbert & Graham, 2010; Graham, 2019; Graham et al., 2014), limitations do not allow the writer to fully engage with the subject matter or write for a specific audience (Ryan & Barton, 2014). Yet, high-quality writing instruction necessitates multiple writing sessions that enable students to effectively plan, draft, revise, and produce their best writing (Bearne & Wolstencroft, 2007; Graham et al., 2019).

Primary Discourse refers to learning that occurs within a cultural or social context, while learning that takes place outside the primary context is the Secondary Discourse (Gee, 2001). Students whose Primary Discourse is compatible with the Secondary Discourse can apply the literacies they have already acquired at home into their school activities. In contrast, students whose Primary Discourse does not align must undergo a learning process at school due to linguistic differences (Lambirth, 2011). Students develop as writers at different rates due to their individual neurological makeup and their prior experiences (Dyson, 2003; Gardner, 2018a) and the discord between the language of home and the language of school often leads to underachievement (Carbone & Orellane, 2010; Heath, 1983; Lambirth, 2011), necessitating explicit instruction and opportunities to practice and develop the required levels of understanding and knowledge required within the Secondary Discourse (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990).

The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy (NLS) (DfEE, 1998), in England aimed to enhance the literacy skills of primary school students by homogenising teaching methods. The NLS introduced teaching strategies that favoured a skills-based approach and prescribed specific literacy teaching methods and expectations establishing baseline levels of competency for all students. While this standardisation aimed to ensure uniform instruction for all students, it overlooked the diversity in students' backgrounds, and that not all students enter the classroom with the same knowledge and skills. Therefore, the strategy reinforced the values and cultural norms of the dominant social class (Bull & Anstey, 2019; Lambirth, 2011) and schools with student populations from more socially advantaged backgrounds tended to achieve higher levels of performance in standardised assessments (Moss, 2017).

Although the goal of education and high-stakes testing seeks to improve social mobility, many students continue to experience long-term disadvantage as students' knowledge of the signs and symbols of language developed outside the school environment may not be identical to academic literacy (Moje, 2009). However, their language is not deficient, but different from what is expected in the school environment (Brice-Heath, 1983), and high levels of accountability combined with the lack of autonomy in the era of standardised testing make it difficult for teachers to simultaneously meet the diverse needs of students (Carter Andrews et al., 2016).

2.3.1.7 Creativity Discourse

The purpose of writing in the Creativity Discourse is to entertain a reader Meaning-making and creativity are the central elements, and writing is assessed for its content and style (Ivanič, 2004). The Creative Discourse focuses on the cognitive aspects of writing and embodies terms such as 'creative writing', 'writer's voice', 'story', interesting content', and 'good vocabulary/words', all of which are criticised in education policy, on the grounds that it does not prepare students for the real world (Ivanič, 2004; Wyse et al., 2018). In contrast to the Skills Discourse, where writing is explicitly taught, the Creative Discourse is based on the belief that creative writing is not taught, but implicitly learned through exposure to examples of good writing and through writing itself, with the notion that the more students write, the more they will develop as writers (Carey, 2022; Ivanič, 2004).

Creativity involves 'the capacity to use imagination, intelligence, and self-expression' (Craft, 2003, p.148) developed through 'possibility thinking' (Dezuanni & Jetnikoff, 2011). It is not a result of individual genius but is embedded in the community through the sharing of ideas (Craft, 2003) and making connections with previously unconnected ideas (Duffy, 2006). Creative writing is encouraged and developed through collaborative journeys undertaken by the teacher and the students (Williams, 2020) with creativity emerging during the writing process as writers imagine, explore, and generate new and existing ideas (Carey, et al., 2022; Cremin, 2009). While originality and imagination are commonly identified as essential elements of creativity (Barbot et al., 2012; Nettle, 2009; Plucker et al., 2004), it is important to note that imagination does not necessarily result in something entirely original, but may represent an extension of existing ideas (Leigh, 2012; Wyse, 2015).

Carey et al. (2022) described the hallmark of creative writing as 'the writer's ability to create a unique and individual "voice," one that can impact readers, move them, inspire them, as well as inform them' (p. 36). 'Imaginative and innovative' writing instruction (Dezuanni & Jetnikoff, 2011) fostered through collaboration, exploration, reflection, and feedback (Cremin, 2006) empowers students to 'push the boundaries of their use of language' (Cremin & Myhill, 2012, p. 24). Although creative writing requires an investment of time to enable students to develop their originality and creative voice (Barton et al., 2015; Carey et al., 2022; Roth, 2000; Ryan & Barton, 2014), when the focus is not solely on writing 'correctly', students are able to engage in writing creatively (Cremin, 2006; Cremin & Myhill, 2012; Ewing et al., 2015). A learning environment that allows students to 'think creatively, to solve problems independently, and take intellectual risks' (Bloom & Van Slyke-Briggs, 2019) nurtures students as writers rather than mere producers of text (Dean & Grierson, 2005), and provides opportunities for students to engage in writing in various ways and on a multitude of topics (Joshua, 2007). Students become proficient writers when they are given opportunities to write daily, and extended time to write (Calkins et al., 2012), with sufficient planning time (Troia & Graham, 2002). However, 'time alone is not sufficient to ensure students receive strong writing instruction' (Graham 2019, p. 288).

In 2018 and 2019, Carey et al. (2022) implemented a creative writing project titled 'Approaching Literacy Through Narrative and Creative Writing' for fifty-four students from three classes of Year 9 students from three Steiner schools in Australia over a 10-week period. The project targeted students' ability to write purposefully with meaning rather than the skills measured in standardised assessments. The lessons were based on the book 'Playing with Words: An Introduction to Creative Writing Craft' (Davidow & Williams, 2016). During weekly sessions, students were encouraged to play with words and received verbal feedback from both peers and the teacher. In addition to using the NAPLAN writing assessment rubric for pre- and post-narrative compositions, a holistic scaled rubric emphasising students' voice and unique writing style was employed to evaluate their work. Students' writing was categorised as emerging, competent, or sophisticated, with up to 10 points awarded for each of the following five criteria:

1. Moving through time and space.
2. Words, sentences, and voice.

3. Those who speak: characters and context.
4. Creativity/innovation/research.
5. Structural elements and presentation.

After participating in the project, students' narratives were found to include an increased level of creative content.

Increased autonomy, as offered within a creative writing approach, has been linked to improved writing achievement (Ahmed et al., 2022; Graham et al., 2007; Limpo & Alves, 2013; Pajares, 2007).

Myhill's (2009) research identified a relationship between writing styles and writing success in that the quality of writing is impacted by students' focus on task completion rather than the quality of text and that all children do not approach writing in exactly the same way. Based on her observational study of writing behaviours of 38 Year 9 and Year 11 students, Myhill (2009) identified the following five categories of writing:

> *Brief pausers*: these students spent more time writing and took only brief pauses.
>
> *Flow writers*: these students spent more time pausing than writing, often finishing within the 10 minutes.
>
> *Sustained pausers*: these students spent more time pausing than writing, with few transitions.
>
> *Rapid switchers*: these students balanced time between pausing and writing with frequent short bursts of each.
>
> *Stop starters*: these students balanced pausing and writing with longer bursts of each.

While observation determined that 91% of high achievers fell into the rapid switchers, stop starters or brief pausers categories, and lower-achieving writers mostly in the flow writers category, interviews determined children were able to reflect on and describe their compositional processes. Responses suggest that lower-achieving writers do less thinking, planning, and reflecting during the translation stage than high-achieving writers. For example:

> *Brief pausers*: think during writing and pauses, about the next idea as well as pre-plan what is going to happen in later events.

Flow writers: delay thinking about the effectiveness of their writing until later.

Sustained pausers: experience a block and don't know what to write, in which case they may re-read what has been written to assist with idea generation or contemplate how to fix writing that isn't working.

Rapid switchers: Use pause as management of cognitive demand to translate ideas to text.

Stop starters: Use pause as management of cognitive demand to translate ideas to text.

2.3.1.7.1 Collaborative Activities

Social constructivist pedagogy identifies students as the central elements of learning, with the teacher serving as a facilitator of learning. However, pedagogy endorsing social interaction is not a new concept. Vygotsky (1978) determined that the implementation of a social constructivist approach using collaborative activities enabled learning to occur within the cultural context of the environment. Likewise, collaborative learning environments featuring scaffolded instruction and social interaction were deemed effective by Bruner (1997. In addition, the writing conference, a key element of the process approach advocated by Graves (1983) and Murray (1982), can be seen to align with a social constructivist approach to writing. It is suggested that when teachers assume the role of a facilitator, students take responsibility for their own learning (Krajewski, 2021). The outcome of scaffolded instruction is an increase in language sophistication in students' writing (McNamara et al., 2010).

Participating in collaborative activities and dialogue prior to writing increases student motivation, interest, confidence, and self-efficacy, ultimately enriching learning and writing (Arfe et al., 2016; Bruning & Kauffman, 2016; Costillo & Tolchinsky, 2018; Davies, 2009; Mercer et al., 1999; Mercer & Littleton, 2007; Wyse et al., 2018; Yarrow & Topping, 2001) and develops a sense of community, making students more willing to share their work with one another (Conway & Amberson, 2011). During collaborative activities, students engage with artifacts and tools from their social and cultural environment to access their prior knowledge and develop new ideas (Schrader, 2015). The 'communal' talk that takes place during

group discussions is a social tool for the sharing of ideas and joint construction of new ideas and understanding (Gillies, 2015). As a result of enhanced metacognitive thinking that occurs through verbal representation of ideas (Eilam, 2012) higher-order thinking is stimulated when students share ideas, check their understanding with their peers and work collaboratively on open-ended tasks (Alexander, 2008; De Smedt et al., 2016; Eilam, 2012; Jonsson & Svingby, 2007; Van Boxtel et al., 2000; Zenkov & Harmon, 2009). Students learn from their interactions with each other and the teacher (Chen et al., 2020) and become stronger writers (Higgins et al., 2007). Group talk also allows semantic connections to be made resulting in broader vocabulary, which strengthens text quality (Dockrell & Connelly, 2015; Kim et al., 2014; Slomp, 2012).

The value of students being active participants in their learning via means of social interaction and verbal communication has been well-documented (Barnes, 2010; Littleton & Mercer, 2013; Vygotsky, 1978). For example, Calkins and Ehrenworth (2016) suggested that writing lessons consist of a teacher-led explicit instruction period of ten minutes, followed by thirty minutes of writing and conferences, after which students share their writing with peers and set new goals. Yet, teachers typically view writing as an individual task, with interaction between students discouraged (Applebee & Langer, 2013; De Smedt et al., 2016). However, this is due to 'the role of listening and speaking in classroom discussions not being understood', the exchange of information, collaboration and discussion are often considered disruptive in the classroom environment (Edward-Groves & Davidson, 2020, p. 83). Consequently, collaboration is discouraged, resulting in limited opportunities for students to engage with one another (Wilkinson et al., 2015).

2.3.1.7.2 Dialogic Approach

Oral language serves as the foundation for written language, with the quality of writing is influenced by oral vocabulary (Kent & Wanzek, 2016). For example, Vass (2007) investigated the role of emotion, cataloguing students' use of dialogue as they worked collaboratively with a partner and reported that creative content was jointly produced through engagement with humour and singing and ideas were linked by the elements of tone and emotion located in images.

Although teacher-led whole-class teaching traditionally dominates writing instruction, newer approaches include a focus on dialogue (Anstey & Bull, 2019). Mercer, (2008) advocates that students' participation in dialogic talk is essential for

their language development, with dialogic talk serving as a tool through which students jointly construct new knowledge (Asterhan et al., 2015), making 'explicit what is unconsciously absorbed by a few' (Jones, 2020). A dialogic approach is based on the principle that students and teachers are active and equal participants in classroom dialogue, with text co-constructed through collaboration and communication between the teacher and students (Alexander, 2004; Mercer & Littleton, 2007). The teacher's role is to extend students' responses by probing for further explanation, elaboration, and verbalisation (Myhill, 2020). While acknowledging that moving from monologic to dialogic instruction is challenging, a teacher's proficiency in managing dialogic discussions is crucial for fostering metalinguistic thinking and decision-making to ensure student ownership and thinking is prompted (Myhill et al., 2016).

During dialogic discussions, students listen to the ideas of others (Asterhan et al., 2015) and build upon these ideas through a process of 'interthinking' (Mercer & Littleton, 2007). Cumulative talk occurs when each speaker builds positively on the contribution made by the previous speaker (Alexander, 2018; Mercer & Littleton, 2007), enabling students to develop their communication and cognitive skills and learn from one another (Boyd et al., 2019). Regardless of the level of participation, students internalise collective ideas, reasoning, and vocabulary (Kelly, 2008; Vygotsky, 1978). Through the process of dialogic talk, students are able to reflect on and verbalise reasons for their linguistic choices (Myhill, 2020). After participating in dialogic activities and conversations during the writing process, students demonstrate a more positive attitude, achieve higher outcomes, and transfer their knowledge to other curriculum areas (Asterhan et al., 2015; Graham et al., 2020).

Mercer and Littleton (2007) compared the results of 124 students in Year 2, 5, and 8 from schools in the United Kingdom that participated in the 'Thinking Together' approach with a control class. The researchers found that students who participated in the 'Thinking Together' class demonstrated more active involvement for longer periods of time, had deeper discussions, and were able to provide more evidence to support their points of view than those in the control class.

Funded by the UK Education Endowment Foundation, the 'Cambridge Primary Review Trust / University of York Dialogic Teaching Project', research program ran between 2014-2017 and was based on Alexander's book 'Towards Dialogic Teaching: Rethinking Classroom Talk'. The goal of the program was 'to

energise classroom talk, enhance students' engagement and achievement within the context of social and educational disadvantage' (Alexander, 2018). The pilot project, which ran between 2014 and 2015, reviewed the ten London primary schools that had taken part in the 'Thinking Together' project. The second phase of the review involved Year 5 classes from 72 schools in a trial project which ran between 2015 and 2016, leading to a review process and follow up during 2016 to 2017. In contrast to the 'Thinking Together' project, which allowed flexibility, the pilot required teachers to follow a specified program, with allowances made for individual circumstances. The 'Thinking Together' project identified changes in the participating teachers' pedagogy and determined the five elements of classroom culture in which dialogue flourishes as follows: collective, obtained through a joint learning experience; reciprocal, with participants listening to and giving consideration to the views of others; supportive, providing a risk-free environment with no wrong answers or risk of embarrassment; the cumulative contributions of participants link together, creating coherent ideas; and purposeful, where dialogue focuses on the achievement of set objectives (Alexander, 2018, p. 566).

A dialogic approach requires teachers and students to recognise and value dialogue as a joint, collaborative, and interactive process (Alexander, 2018) where students feel safe to share their thoughts, knowing these are valued and cannot be wrong (Boyd et al., 2019; Resnick, 2015). Reflective questions asked during discussions that seek students' point of view, imply the teacher expects to hear a range of viewpoints and ideas (Boyd et al., 2019). This process widens and deepens the dialogic space (Wegerif, 2013) and encourages students to make their own linguistic choices to shape meaning (Myhill & Newman, 2016). For example, encouraging students to elaborate and provide reasoning for their comments by asking provocative questions that require thoughtful answers (Alexander, 2004), such as 'Why do you think that? What's your evidence?' or What led you to that conclusion?' (Michaels & O'Connor, 2015, p. 348). When provided with an environment that facilitates dialogic talk, students learn more as they identify links between topics discussed and between new knowledge and prior knowledge; students develop a positive view of their intellectual capabilities (Boyd et al., 2019; Resnick, 2015). Furthermore, students who participate in classes in which a dialogic teaching approach is implemented are able to transfer skills developed to other curriculum areas (Resnick, 2015). 'Authentic interactional talk,' is achieved through

the implementation of a dialogic approach (Bull & Anstey, 2019). Moreover, fostering a culture where students share their ideas with peers during the writing process supports their development as writers and keeps them engaged in thoughtful conversations (Graham et al., 2015).

2.3.1.7.3 Metatalk

The process of discussing writing, referred to as 'metatalk,' contributes to the development of students' awareness of intentional linguistic choices made by an author, considering the impact of the words on the reader. When metatalk is integrated into writing lessons, opportunities are created for exploration, sharing, questioning, and reflection on ideas (Boyd et al., 2019; Wegerif, 2013) with students' metacognition and visualisation are further developed through questions such as 'What do you see? What do you hear? and What do you feel?' (Bowkett, 2009). Teachers play a critical role in developing the use of metatalk to support the creation of written text (Myhill & Newman, 2016), with a high level of teacher and student interaction positively impacting student achievement (Mercer & Littleton, 2007; Ryan & Barton, 2014).

Oral storytelling delivers a valuable resource that can be incorporated into writing instruction as a prompt to foster students' creativity and imagination. Through listening to stories, students become aware of words and phrases, hear intonation and pace; observe gestures and eye contact made by the reader and respond with emotion and humour, absorbing how they are employed in the text. This is evident in research by Jampole et al. (1991), which found that following exposure to 1200-1500-word texts containing a high content of expressive olfactory, visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic descriptions before writing, the 38 fourth- and fifth-grade students' post-test writing exhibited an increased volume and range of descriptive language.

Derived from the research of Martin and Rothery (1986), the 'Talk for Writing' program, introduced in 2009, aimed to enhance primary school students' writing. Key elements of the 'Talk for Writing' program include rote learning of strategies delivered through direct instruction and modelling. The program emphasises a high focus on oral language and involves daily shared writing, the use of visuals including word walls and story maps, and regular formative feedback (Dockrell et al., 2015). The implementation of the 'Talk for Writing' program requires teachers to follow a set of three phases, during which students learn to 'read

as a reader' and 'read as a writer' (Dockrell et al., 2015, p.10). The first phase involves discussing a story that, through repetition and imitation, students learn by heart. In the second phase, students write their own story by adapting the story they studied in the first phase. The final step, 'innovation', requires students to create an original story with the assistance of the teacher. Whilst 'dialogic talk,' empowers students through the opportunity to participate in genuine dialogue (Bignell, 2012), the collaborative talk in the 'Talk for Writing' program remains teacher-dominated.

2.3.1.7.4 Student Motivation and Engagement

Motivation plays a pivotal part in fostering an active learning environment. Students' motivation to write is influenced by intrinsic and extrinsic factors such as enjoyment and interest in writing, as well as the writer's level of competence and self-efficacy (Graham, 2018). Unlike school-based writing, which is often perceived as being 'just for the teacher, or to practice for a high-stakes test, or fill up an empty space on a bulletin board,' writing completed by students at home often serves an authentic purpose (Routman, 2014, p. 108). Teachers' attitudes and beliefs influence those of their students (Reeves, 2009). If students perceive the classroom and writing tasks to be dull, punitive, and unfriendly, they are unlikely to be engaged or motivated in the writing task (Hansen, 1989). Likewise in classrooms where teachers monopolise classroom talk, student participation is reduced, leading to disengagement (Bull & Anstey, 2019). However, students' motivation increases when teachers encourage discussion and guide collaboration between peers, (Alvermann, 2002), and incorporate elements that address their identity as writers (Graham, 2019).

Learning environments that encourage risk-taking and the establishment of student voice (Cremin & Myhill, 2012) by providing time to read, write, speak, and listen (Bull & Anstey, 2019; Cremin, 2009; Graham et al., 2015; Hassett, 2008) empower active learning. Although 'many students often feel they have no voice, that they have nothing to say that is worthy of being heard' (Hooks, 2010, p. 45). Teachers who show enthusiasm for teaching writing and are flexible in their approach to writing instruction (Graham et al., 2015) provide opportunities for students to develop their personal and creative voice as they engage in the writing process (Cremin, 2006; Gardner, 2018b; Graham & Harris, 2013). Engaging students in the decision-making process through topic choice facilitates their development as writers (Alexander, 2010; Bazerman, 2016; Cremin & Myhill, 2012; Fletcher, 2017;

Wright, 2015). For example, when the writing stimulus is considered to be interesting, with themes like 'adventurous, scary, strange, or magical' aligned with students' reading interests, they are more motivated to engage in the writing process (Allagui, 2021; Johnson, 2004).

In his book 'A Writer Teaches Writing,' Murray (1968) raised the question of why students were not being taught to write like professional writers (Calkins & Ehrenworth, 2016). He acknowledged that writing is not merely the production of 'single draft, single-authored composition, created at a desk with pen and paper, under restricted time and in response to imposed topics and text types' (Daffern et al., 2017, p. 75). Enabling students to choose their own topics, write about their own world and personal life experiences increases creativity, engagement, motivation (Bifuh-Ambe, 2013; Daniel, 2011; Fletcher, 2015; Gardner, 2018b; Gonzalez & Moll, 2002; Radcliffe, 2012) and includes the inclusion of advanced phrases (Jouhar & Rupley, 2021). Research by Grainger et al. (2003) discovered that nine to eleven-year-old students exhibited increased enthusiasm for writing when they were not constrained by limited time frames and were provided with more freedom and choice. Likewise, Creely (2019) found enabling students to write about their lived experiences employment delivered students agency, as writers resulting in the production of meaningful poetry as students made the connection with themselves as 'poetry-writers'. Undertaking their research in the creative writing classes of one ninth-grade and one tenth-grade class, Callahan and King (2011) found that previously disengaged students who participated in a creative writing program that employed a collaborative approach supported by multimodal resources demonstrated increased levels of motivation, as evidenced by their request to continue working in their free time.

In an effort to identify effective practices in teaching writing and the relationships between practice and progress, Gadd and Parr (2017) conducted a study of nine New Zealand upper primary and middle-school teachers. Data were gathered through observations, interviews, and analysis of students' writing using the Assessment Tools for Teaching and Learning (asTTle version 4), a norm-referenced assessment, measuring student achievement across seven criteria: audience, content, structure, language resources, grammar, spelling, and punctuation (Gadd & Parr, 2017; Ministry of Education and New Zealand Council for Educational Research, (2021). Similar to Brightpath, asTTle enables teachers to assess students' writing by

comparing their texts against pre-calibrated response exemplars. The research found that underachieving students made gains that exceeded the average, which was partly attributed to their involvement in the selection of learning tasks that drew on their interests and enabled them to connect with prior knowledge. The researchers also identified classroom interactions and challenging questions that required students to think more deeply, were contributing factors to improved writing achievement. Success was also attributed to opportunities for students to write outside of designated writing instruction sessions and to work collaboratively (Gadd & Parr, 2017).

2.4 Writing Assessment

Writing produced by young or weaker writers is shorter in length, less coordinated, and contains more subordination and finite verbs than higher achieving or older writers (Myhill, 2020). While longer texts are more likely to contain a higher number of repeated words (McCarthy & Jarvis, 2010), writing proficiency is measured by the complexity of sentences and the richness of vocabulary, determined by lexical diversity and sophistication (Koutsoftas & Petersen, 2017; McNamara, et al., 2010). Lexical diversity is a measure of the range and variety of vocabulary (Crossley et al., 2012; Vögelin et al., 2019), and lexical sophistication is measured by the percentage of less frequently used words included in a text (Vögelin et al., 2019). Whilst lexical diversity is used as a measure of writing proficiency, sentences with identical lexical diversity may differ in sophistication (Crossley et al., 2012; McCarthy & Jarvis, 2010; Vögelin et al. 2019). For example, the use of longer noun phrases, less pre-modification and more post-modification of nouns (Myhill, 2020). Sophistication and language proficiency develop as writers gain an understanding of the purpose of their writing, learn how to communicate with their audience (Christensen, 2004), and reflect on their work from the reader's perspective (Hayes & Flowers, 1986). For example, shorter or simpler sentences are deliberately chosen by the writer for effect and as an effective means to deliver messages succinctly (Myhill, 2009, 2020).

While standardisation of assessment ensures consistency and comparability in judgement (Attali, 2016), they are conducted at a single point in time, which limits students' authentic engagement in the writing process (Bearne, 2017; Botelho et al., 2014; Dockrell et al., 2015; Ewing, 2010; Ivanič, 2004). Success is typically

measured solely by achieving a score above a predetermined grade, with little consideration for the complexities underlying the score (Dutro et al., 2013). According to Ivanič (2004), writing graded against set criteria for specific text-types represents 'academic socialisation', and although students can achieve good marks due to their ability to follow the prescriptive structure, their writing may be deficient in content (Ivanič, 2004). Furthermore, by focusing on the assessment of formal language skills such as spelling, grammar, and punctuation, assessors may overlook strengths in other areas such as organisation, lexical diversity, and variation (Vögelin et al., 2019), which negatively impacts non-native speakers (Rezaei & Lovorn, 2010). This is corroborated by reviews of writing assessments from forty-one stated in the United States completed by Jeffery (2009) and in Canada by Slomp (2008), which highlighted a focus on formal and genre features, and rhetorical functions but neglected students' metacognitive and process knowledge.

Whilst it is acknowledged that 'assessment is essential for effective instruction' (Wiliam, 2018, p. 42), research completed by Graham et al. (2014) found that over half of surveyed teachers regularly assessed students' writing using a variety of tools, but the majority rarely used the assessment to guide instruction. Despite this, when students 'fail to make the grade,' they are considered to have 'failed.' While assessments typically focus on providing a mark or grade, they seldom provide informative feedback that can be used to direct teaching (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). From a synthesis of over 1600 meta-analyses covering 90,000 studies, Hattie (2009) ascertained that identifying students' current level of achievement and setting achievable goals was found to have an effect size of .51 and advised that for teaching to be effective, teachers should provide feedback at or just above the student's current level.

Mandated assessments significantly influence literacy pedagogy (Unsworth et al., 2019). The competing agendas of skills-focused standardised assessments and the multimodal literacy skills emphasised in the Australian National Curriculum English (ACARA, 2020b) have created an 'educational chasm' (Reeves et al., 2018; Unsworth, et al., 2019). Limitations arise with NAPLAN testing results not aligning with the Australian Curriculum, where students' achievement is reported using A – E grades (Goss et al., 2015; Klenowski, 2011; Wyatt-Smith & Jackson, 2016).

Due to NAPLAN writing assessments favouring the genre approach, classroom writing instruction has promoted the genre approach at the expense of

creative writing (Frawley & Davies, 2015; Gannon, 2019). Unsworth et al. (2019) argue that monomodal NAPLAN assessments need to be broadened to include the range of multimodal texts in the national curriculum and international assessments such as PISA and TIMSS.

Macken-Horarik (2009) questioned whether standardised writing assessments accurately measured students' writing ability or their ability to analyse the visual image provided as a stimulus. Visual prompts are not for visual analysis but to stimulate ideas and evoke feelings for further elaboration. The visual image ensures that students do not need to 'stare at a blank piece of paper and wonder what to write about' (Olshansky, 1997, p. 611). However, prompts that contain multiple images also create increased cognitive demand (Bates, 2018) and idea overload (Green & Sutton, 2003). While simplifying images increases appeal to a wider audience, it also increases some students' difficulty in interpreting the image, with many students disadvantaged due to cultural knowledge (Bates, 2018; Botelho et al., 2014). Information obtained from writing assessments should identify students' performance levels and provide insights into strengths and weaknesses to enable planning for further instruction or remediation (Fang & Wang, 2019), with theoretical approaches, teaching, and assessment practices aligned (Botelho et al., 2014), focusing on learning through open-book assessments, collaborative learning, digital portfolios, and multiple sources of feedback (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012).

Although challenging to measure accurately, no single form of writing assessment captures all the features adequately (Troia, 2013). Effective writing is more than syntactic and grammatical correctness (Myhill, 2020), and teachers can apply a holistic approach alongside an analytic rating scale (Vögelin et al., 2019).

Effective assessment incorporates opportunities for students to evaluate their own learning and writing development. A model focused on improvement and growth signifies a shift from summative to formative assessment (Huot & Perry, 2016), redirecting assessment towards qualitative analysis and targeted instruction (Beck et al., 2018; Callahan & Spalding, 2006; Pella, 2012). Through formative feedback, students assess their writing, establish goals, and monitor their performance while receiving guidance from the teacher (Graham et al., 2011) and peers through reflective discussions (Cremin & Myhill, 2012).

Hattie (2009) asserts that feedback should directly align with the learning intention and success criteria, reminding students of identified goals, informing them

of their current achievements, and outlining the necessary steps for progress. Moreover, personalised feedback linked to previous performances allows students to see their progress (Seery et al., 2019) and encourages continued advancement. This approach emphasises a collaborative process in which students actively engage in evaluating and enhancing their writing skills, fostering a deeper understanding of their learning objectives and facilitating continuous improvement.

2.4.1 Rubrics

The assessment of students' writing commonly involves the use of rubrics (Andrade et al., 2008) that consist of predefined criteria, each with a specific number of quality graduations (Andrade, 2005), typically arranged in a matrix design, allowing for performance measurement between markers (Moskal & Leydens, 2000). Originating from teachers' dissatisfaction with the traditional grading approaches (Rezaei & Lovorn, 2010), rubrics are considered to enhance grading validity (Jonsson & Svingby, 2007), offering an 'exact, efficient, and objective tool for evaluating student writing' (Fang & Wang, 2011, p. 148) and promoting inter-rater reliability (Wilson, 2007).

Wilcox et al. (2016) argued that rubrics, when used to assess students' writing, empower effective teachers to build on students' existing competencies and motivations. However, the subjective nature of rubric assessment introduces challenges to accuracy and reliability, as individual assessors may interpret criteria differently even after training (Attali, 2016; Rezaei & Lovorn, 2010).

Critics argue that rubrics are generic and focus on limited features (Spence, 2010; Wilson, 2007), primarily concerning grammatical elements that are easily taught and pertain to the mechanics of writing (Casey et al., 2016). Furthermore, they emphasis the limitations of rubrics in measuring proficiency levels and assessing the final written product rather than the writing process (Beck et al., 2018; Cosner, 2011). Despite being viewed as an 'exact, efficient, and objective tool', rubrics may fail to capture the nuanced aspects of writing (Rezaei & Lovorn, 2010; Wilson, 2007; Wohlwend, 2008), leading to a narrow conception of 'good writing' (Fletcher, 2001; Nauman et al., 2011) and providing limited insights into how to advance future writing (Fang & Wang, 2019). Furthermore, it is argued that rubrics do not measure students' ability to be 'creative, effective, engaging, and expressive' writers (Fang & Wang, 2011, p.148), or 'capture the unique ways in which a piece of writing calls out to its readers' (Wolf et al., 2002, p. 79), through the use of

metaphors or the development of a character's emotions (Sandiford & Macken-Horarik, 2020). However, Roth (2000) contends that grading writing using a holistic approach places equal weight on both content and form to determine the overall impact on the reader.

2.4.2 Feedback

The most effective form of assessment, known as 'assessment for learning', occurs during the writing process, involving formative feedback that offers advice for the writer's next steps, followed by time for revision and editing (Graham et al., 2013; Hattie, 2009; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Wyse et al., 2018). For formative assessment to be impactful, it must be learner-driven, providing ongoing and timely feedback throughout the learning experience to propel learning in a positive direction (Routman, 2014). Reflecting on detailed feedback empowers students to become active learners engaged in the learning process (Black & Wiliam, 2009; Bull & Anstey, 2019; Hawe et al., 2008), consequently boosting motivation (Seery et al., 2019). Furthermore, authentic feedback, grounded in reactions to the imagery created by the writer's word choice, not only contributes to improved writing but also enhances the teacher's marking experience (Spence, 2010; Wilson, 2007).

In an effort to gather more comprehensive information about students' writing ability, Wardle and Roozen (2012) proposed an 'ecological' model of assessment, emphasising the collection of students' writing from both in and outside of school environments. The longitudinal collection of student writing through portfolios and reflections provides a more equitable assessment of students' abilities and progress (Ruttle, 2004; Ryan & Barton, 2014; Wardle & Roozen, 2012).

2.4.3 Automated Scoring

The global implementation of high-stakes testing has promoted an increased reliance on automated scoring for assessing student writing (Reinertsen, 2018). However, disparities exist between how computers are programmed to process and analyse written text and how humans read and interpret the same text (Reinertsen, 2018). Despite comparable outcomes observed in studies comparing computer-generated and handwritten text, grades assigned through computer-based assessments are deemed more reliable and nearly instantaneous (Wolfe & Manolo, 2005), with reliability achieved due to automated narrative scoring, placing emphasis on aspects such as grammar, fluency, accuracy, and vocabulary (Condon, 2013). However, it is argued that automated marking violates human social communication

aspects of written text and subsequently undermines assessment validity (Deane, 2013).

The adoption of computer-based assessment practices, however, results in teachers preparing students to 'write for machines', consequently eroding the subjective element of fairness associated with human judgement, given that 'all writing is social, all writing should have human readers' (Deane, 2013, p. 8). Nevertheless, the crux of the issue lies not in whether the test is marked by a computer or a human, but in the challenge of composing a coherent text on an unfamiliar topic in a limited time frame, which inevitably impacts the quality of writing (Condon, 2013).

2.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented a comprehensive review of the literature relevant to the current research project within three major sections, with each addressing specific aspects related to the research focus.

The first section explored writing development and textual literacy. The developmental stages of learning to write, ranging from the prewriting stages of scribbling and drawing to the creation of complex written texts were examined. This section also discussed the impact of vocabulary, lexical diversity, sentence complexity, and the shared cognitive processes between reading and writing, including the importance of memory and prior knowledge.

The second section, Writing Instruction and pedagogical practices reviewed writing theory embedded within the Writing Discourse framework encompassing Skills, Process, Genre, Sociopolitical, Social Practices, and Creativity Discourses, developed by Ivanič (2004). Characterised as highly prescriptive, instruction within the Skills Discourse was identified as teacher-driven, and focused on the mastery of basic literacy skills such as spelling, grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure with proficiency in writing attained through skill development and practice. The cognitive processes of planning and memory recall, and the development of transactional skills were recognised as key elements of writing in the Process Discourse reinforced through revisions and teacher conferences during the composition phase. Likewise writing in the Whole Language Approach is considered a process of 'acquisition'. Formulaic teaching was identified as the key element of writing instruction in the approach Genre Discourse, which aimed to

deliver equal access for all students. The impact of globalisation and the influence of dominant political powers on education policy, curriculum and assessment were discussed as features driving the implementation of writing instruction within the Sociopolitical Discourse. This encompassed segments on planning to write and a discussion of the common practice of employing formulaic teaching of technical skills to ensure students are 'test ready.' The section identified the cascading effect of preparing students for standardised assessment in early years and the use of instructional templates. The shaping of communication through social and cultural elements were identified as key features of writing instruction within the Social Practices Discourse. In contrast to the emphasis on test preparation, the section also discussed the implementation of student-centred instruction. Additionally, it discussed the adoption of both collaborative approach and dialogic approaches to writing instruction. The last segment in this section learning writing through exposure to exemplary models within the Creativity Discourse was discussed, together with interactive methods used to engage students in the writing process explored. This included discussions on encouraging creativity through imaginative and innovative approaches, as well as the utilisation of metatalk. Additionally, the section reviewed practices involving access to the natural environment and sensory experiences to foster the development of students' imagery and visual memory.

The chapter concluded with a section on Writing Assessment. Research indicated a prevalence of writing assessments aligning with the categories evaluated in standardised tests. A comprehensive examination of the advantages and disadvantages of rubrics was conducted, considering the perceived limitations stemming from preparation for mandated assessment. This was followed by discussions on formative assessment, feedback practices, and the use of portfolios. The assessments section concluded with an exploration of automated scoring.

Chapter 3: Conceptual Review

3.1 Introduction

The conceptual framework addressed in this chapter is based on the theoretical frameworks and concepts that underpin the practices and studies discussed in Chapter 2. The first section considers Semiotics, discussing the theory of signs and symbols in the context of writing and literacy, with five segments defining the linguistic, visual, spatial, audio, and gestural sign systems and how they pertain to both verbal and non-verbal communication. This is followed by three segments that consider the influences of social semiotics, visual social semiotics, and intersemiosis on writing. The second section, Visual Literacy, explains the significance of visual images in society and discusses how students are exposed to obtain visual literacy knowledge through the dominant use of images for communication in today's society. Consideration of a visual-verbal approach to writing instruction and storytelling is considered, through the visual modes of photographs, television, film, picturebooks, and graphic novels. The next section, Sensory Provocations discusses the unconscious acquisition of implicit knowledge through exposure to semantic stimuli and the potential arising from utilising the natural environment as writing stimulus. The fourth section of the chapter, 'Multiliteracies and Multimodality', examines the theoretical frameworks surrounding multiliteracies and multimodal approaches to communication and considers literacy beyond the reading and writing of written text. The impact of today's students' enhanced visual communication skills developed from their experiences and familiarity with technology, and the subsequent demand for the integration of a multiliteracy approach and the creation of multimodal texts as part of writing programs, is documented. Self-Efficacy, the final section of the chapter explores the concept of self-efficacy as it relates to writing and its impact on motivation and performance. The impact of high-stakes assessments, formulaic instruction, an overcrowded curriculum on both teachers and students attitude, motivation and ultimately self-efficacy is considered.

3.2 Semiotics

Every human expression is dependent on a sign system for communication (Cowen & Albers, 2006). Semiotics denotes the study of communication as conveyed and interpreted through verbal and non-verbal sign systems (Halliday,

1978; Hodge & Kress, 1988; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; Suhor, 1984). Communication within each sign system involves an interchange of codes and signs through linguistic, visual, audio, gestural, and spatial semiotic systems (Cowan & Albers, 2006). Meaning is delivered through the sensory elements of sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste, via modes such as illustrations, photographs, words, sounds, and body language (Bull & Anstey, 2019; Halliday, 1978; Ormerod & Ivanič, 2002; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; Spencer, 2011). 'A spoken or written word is a linguistic sign' (Suhor, 1984, p. 248). Meaning is interpreted through identified behaviour, interaction, written, and spoken language (Gee, 1991), with emotion and mood developing from memory, which subsequently influences perception, behaviour, and the richness of a person's experience (Vygotsky, 2004). Semiotics comprises semantics, pragmatics, and syntactics of signs and systems of signs (Suhor, 1984). Implementing a teaching approach from a semiotic perspective, which views literacy as semiotic, multimodal, and collaborative, empowers students to develop richer and more sophisticated literacy skills (Cowan & Albers, 2006).

3.2.1 Visual Semiotic System

Vision is the most dominant of the sensory systems (Barbot et al., 2013), with the human-brain system identifying shape, colour, and motion information from memory to recognise objects. Visual text is scrutinised in a similar manner to lexical text (Trifonas, 2021). The visual semiotic system automatically searches for visual order in the environment through neural signals, processing the elements of representation, interaction, and composition: colour, line, texture, point of view, and position to create meaning (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001; Metros, 2008). Photographs and illustrations support communication, with viewers' responses determined by context, physiological and cultural understanding (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001, 2006). The way objects are represented or portrayed, whether in art or photography, w determines the perspective from which it is viewed and ultimately a viewer's response. For example, the positioning of objects, depth, and distance portrayed through overlapping images direct the focus of the reader's eyes and indicate the importance of an object's size, light and shade, colour, and detail. Intensity influences mood and emotions, and perspective delivered texture, thickness, shape, direction of vector lines and framing (Bull & Anstey, 2019; Colomer & Kummerling-Meibauer, 2010; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; Pantaleo, 2015). Texture portrayed in an image 'connects the sense of sight with the sense of

touch' (Trifonas, 2021, p. 700). However, the viewer must have sufficient prior knowledge and relevant information to make meaning (Trifonas, 2021, p. 702). Perspective creates intensity with point-of-view shots, such as close-ups focused solely on a character's eye, which 'contributes to the atmosphere or mood of scenes and the intensity of the character's emotions, and thus impacts the reader's experience' (Pantaleo, 2015, p. 120).

3.2.2 Spatial Semiotic System

Communication via the spatial semiotic system influences a viewer's experience and understanding through the placement and movement of objects delivered by means of the gestural and visual semiotic systems. The metalanguage of spatial semiotics includes foreground, background, distance, degree, angle, framing, layout, and positioning.

3.2.3 Audio Semiotic System

The audio semiotic system embodies the elements of verbal and non-verbal sounds, with meaning delivered through changes in volume, pitch, and rhythm. For example, modulation and intonation of a voice, sound effects, and music create an emotional response in the listener (Bull & Anstey, 2019; Hull & Nelson, 2005).

3.2.4 Gestural Semiotic System

The gestural semiotic system applies the elements of body language, conveyed through physical gestures and facial expressions to communicate ideas, thoughts, and feelings. Gestures make invisible thoughts and ideas visible (Bull & Anstey, 2019) with meaning delivered and received by the way a body is orientated through posture and positioning (Kalantzis et al., 2016) and the way it moves around through space (Jewitt & Kress, 2008).

3.2.5 Linguistic Semiotic System

The linguistic semiotic system combines the elements of language to create written text created for the purpose of reading (Cambourne, 2015; Walshe, 2015). Meaning is delivered through the codes and conventions of language and the purposeful use of nouns, verbs, adjectives, conjunctions, phrases, clauses, sentences, and paragraphs (Anstey & Bull, 2018; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006).

Traditionally, literacy has been defined by the conventional language skills of grammar, spelling, punctuation, and comprehension required for reading and writing; however, literacy is an evolving concept (Mackenzie, 2014). Textual literacy is a multifaceted, complex combination of linguistic, visual, spatial, audio,

and gestural modes (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012) requiring knowledge of the sound-symbol sign system and syntactic structures of written language (Knapp & Watkins, 2005; Kress, 1982).

3.2.6 Social Semiotics

Social semiotics explores how signs systems are used and how meaning is made within society (Bezemer & Kress, 2008; Siegel, 2006). It is an interdisciplinary field that immerses with other fields to unite communication theory and cultural studies (Chandler, 2007; van Leeuwen, 2005) by examining observable actions and signs established by their past use with relevance to users within a social context and culture (Lemke, 1998; van Leeuwen, 2005). Social identity is determined through visible codes such as clothing, hairstyle, or mode of transport (Chandler, 2007). Globalisation has led to a broader understanding of cultural codes and conventions within semiotic systems (Anstey & Bull, 2018; Bull & Anstey, 2019).

3.2.7 Visual Social Semiotics

Communication of meanings in images is delivered subconsciously through interactive and representative elements via an interplay of codes and conventions (Chandler, 2007; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Codes are internalised at a young age; children 'look before they speak' and 'know more than they can say' (Ehrenworth, 2003, p. 44). Representational elements within an image consider how the people, places, and objects are encoded visually (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). For example, interpreting the pictograms outside restrooms and icons on screens (Cappello & Lafferty, 2015). Decoding is an automatic rather than a conscious activity delivered through elements within an image such as facial expression, posture, gesture, clothing, physical orientation, and body proximity, and factors such as size, sharpness of focus, tonal and colour contrast (Chandler, 2007; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Placement in the visual field, perspective, and specific cultural factors, salience within images, make some objects more noticeable than others (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 202). For example, high tonal contrast, such as the borders between black and white, exhibits heightened salience, as does the contrast or juxtaposition between intensely saturated and muted colours (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 202). Perspective or point of view deliver meaning by drawing the viewer's attention through vectors delivered via camera angle, image composition, lighting, colour, and editing, influence the viewer's interpretation (Chandler, 2007; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). For example, images showing

people looking directly at the viewer build contact and the development of an imaginary relationship (van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001), and the unblinking stare of a person has the ability to unsettle a viewer (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006).

3.2.8 Intersemiosis

In communication, the convergence of text and image establishes an inter-media semantic relationship, commonly referred to as intersemiosis (Martin & Rose, 2007; O'Halloran, 2009). Meaning emerges within the semiotic space that exists between the image and the text, extending and enriching the construction of meaning on a greater scale than is achievable through a single medium alone (Martin & Rose, 2007; O'Halloran, 2009). Viewing images and linguistic text together arouses memories formed within a social context. Writing is produced in a social context (Bazerman, 2016; Graham, 2018), and during written composition, the writer's words are formed from visual and spatial mental representations (Olive & Passerault, 2012).

3.3 Visual Literacy

Visual literacy is 'informed by individual perception and developed by assimilating information gathered from observation and personal experience (Messaris, 2012) and the 'ability to see, acknowledge, understand and communicate through graphic media' (Lane, 2020, p. 3). Visual literacy is grounded in the proficiency of the components of 'visual perception, learning, thinking, and communication' (Avgerinou & Pettersson, 2011, p. 2) and the ability to comprehend, create, and communicate effectively using a variety of media. The first and most basic definition of visual literacy was provided by Debes (1972), who described visual literacy as the 'strategies and skills one needs to make sense of visual images' (p. 21). Debes (1972) considered visual images critical to children's language development, with children learning to 'read' visual signs before they could perceive and interpret verbal signs, but he recognised that until the child was able to 'touch, taste, or manipulate it,' an object had limited meaning. Debes acknowledged that the way students learn was impacted by technological advancements and stressed that the teacher-dominated classroom with passive students needed to change to accommodate increasing technology. Visual literacy requires the ability to interpret or understand and to create or communicate using visual signs and images (Kedra, 2018), and 'just as writing is essential to textual literacy, the capacity to manipulate

and make meaning with images is a core component of visual literacy' (Felton, 2008, p. 61), extending to the critical analysis of pictorial sequences beyond their surface value (Lane, 2020, p.3).

However, the ability to read written text does not guarantee visual literacy, which involves analysing an image to uncover intended messages, 'thinking differently, asking interesting questions, and seeing the nuances of things' (Emanuel & Challons-Lipton, 2013, p. 11). Capable readers rely on the printed text for meaning-making and may become frustrated if they are unable to process vital clues included in visual images (Cook, 2017; Jimenez & Meyer, 2016; Serafini, 2014a).

Visual images are a universal means of communication that provide powerful messages (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001). The process of reading an image is neither linear nor sequential (Kress, 2003), and just as encoding and decoding skills are required to read written text, students need to be able to read and interpret images and compose visual messages (Emmanuel & Challons-Lipton, 2013; Metros, 2008). Consequently, capable readers rely on the printed text for meaning-making and may become frustrated if they are unable to process vital clues included in visual images (Cook, 2017; Jimenez & Meyer, 2016; Serafini, 2014a). Visual images are read much like written text, through rich amounts of information that attract attention, provoke curiosity, and obtain emotional engagement from the viewer (Mowat, 2002). Colour and signs appropriate to the context are used to communicate and make connections beyond surface features and to engage with readers' personal experiences, knowledge, and sensory elements such as texture (Abilock, 2003).

The world is saturated with images, both moving and still, including photographs, film, and video, and in all manner of hybrid combinations with text and sound, which draw attention and provide information. Before speaking, a child sees, processing visual information, recognising and categorising what visually catches the eye's attention (Callow, 2013). Visual images have replaced written language as the most dominant mode of communication (Kress, 2003; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006), demanding the move from interpreting the world through linguistic terms to new approaches that interpret the 'world-as-a-picture' (Avgerinou, 2009, p. 28). Living in the image-rich culture of today's society, students are regular consumers of visual communication through growing visual media platforms such as film, television, video games, and internet digital social media and advertising in their daily lives (Avgerinou, 2009; Friedman, 2021; Stenliden et al., 2017). Research has

found that children's daily engagement in screen-based activities has increased over previous generations, with research data indicating that 40% of children aged 5 to 14 spend between 10 and 19 hours, and an additional 24% spend more than 20 hours each week engaged in screen-based activities (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2023). Likewise, a survey conducted in the United States found that 8 to 12-year-olds spent an average of 30 to 38.5 hours each week engaged with screens, with the time increasing significantly following the COVID pandemic (Rideout, 2021). However, visual awareness of what is seen is not developed through exposure alone (Brumberger, 2011; Felten, 2008) and the ability to create or interpret images is not guaranteed (Matusiak, 2020). Visual perception involves a number of processes (Callow, 2013), with people's ability to view images with 'slow and careful contemplation' impacted by the volume of images (Wyly, 2010, p. 501).

Reading an image requires the application of the same competencies as reading other forms of literature, with meaning gained through practice and interaction (Kárpáti & Schönau, 2022). To interpret and describe messages within an image (Eilam, 2012; Pantaleo, 2013) and be 'visually literate', requires the viewer to stop and look carefully with a critical eye to construct meaning (Berger, 1973; Gilbert, 2013; Santas & Eaker, 2009) by making connections with prior knowledge through questioning, inference and emotional engagement (Eilam, 2012; Mowat, 2002; Nodelman, 1990; van Horn, 2008). This process of 'reading' pictures requires an understanding of words, as the reader is required to conceptually turn visual information into verbal language (Nodelman, 1990). Moreover, context impacts the interpretation of what is seen in a visual image, and to be competent in reading images (Lewis, 2001), students need to be able to read and understand visual elements in the environment (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Approaches that incorporate visual literacy together with traditional texts and allow students to have increased influence in the learning process (Michelson, 2017), provide students with the capacity to engage in visual learning and thinking in the classroom (Kedra, 2018).

Visual images dominate students' everyday lives outside school and are part of students' writing from the initial use of drawing to communicate. Texts are increasingly multi-modal (Mills, 2008, p. 110), and demanding novel approaches to interpretation and understanding the content or concept conveyed visually, as well as verbally, is crucial for both creating and understanding textual content (Doloughan,

2011). Students obtain their 'funds of visual knowledge' through sensory experiences developed through exposure to visual stimuli, interactions in a social context with cultural influences, and through education and play (Serafini, 2011). The prevalence of accessible visual resources in students' day-to-day lives provides teachers with the ability to expand literacy beyond written text to include images and multimodal text (Callow, 2013; Cappello & Walker, 2016; Elkins, 2007). Teachers can capitalise on easily accessible visual resources such as art and photographs to support literacy achievement (Capello, 2017; Capello & Walker, 2016). Yet, the use of visual images in the literacy classroom remains predominantly limited to writing prompts, and students are provided with limited opportunities to develop or utilise their visual skills (Lane, 2020; Little et al., 2015). Although the integration of visual and verbal elements has the potential to increase the richness of a narrative experience (Doloughan, 2011) the selection of visual texts requires careful consideration of the students' prior knowledge, such as their lived experiences and knowledge of other texts (Capello, 2017).

Visual storytelling enables students to sequence images to develop visual communication skills (Kedra, 2018), and the development of visual literacy skills includes the teaching of visual processing (McClanahan & Nottingham, 2019). For example, using pictures from magazines or photographs taken by students themselves in their own environment as story prompts makes writing easy and fun (Williams, 2007).

To improve students' writing and assist with idea generation, teachers can model how to write by thinking aloud (Emig, 1971). Moreover, facilitating opportunities for students to engage in activities that promote the verbal expression of their thoughts, whether before or after a writing task, enhances their understanding of their cognitive processes (Silby, 2015). Prior to setting a task of describing a painting, Williams (2007) modelled thinking aloud to the students. Although initially, the students simply described what they saw: 'There is a man. He's standing on a bridge' (p. 638); after being prompted with why, where, and who questions, they moved beyond a simple description to the creation of a background story.

Visualisation is required in the creation of written text with sensory, motor, and emotional information recalled and encoded from mentally retrieved images (Barsalou, 2008; Sadoski et al., 1990; Woolley, 2014), enabling writers to develop

ideas and create descriptions (Barbot et al., 2012; Flower & Hayes, 1984). Highly imaginative writing is a result of students' creating visual images in their minds prior to commencing the writing process (Creely, 2019; Flower & Hayes, 1981). Yet, although students are exposed to images via multiple methods throughout their day, the creation of images in the mind is not automatic, with many students experiencing difficulty due to limited vocabulary or background knowledge (Hibbing & Rankin-Erickson, 2003). However, instruction in visual imagery can benefit memory recall and vocabulary development (Gambrell & Bales, 1986; Gambrell & Jawitz, 1993; Sadoski et al., 2003).

Paivio (1991) introduced the concept of dual coding, explaining that the retrieval of information from memory uses the nonverbal system to process both concrete and spatial information. Upon recognition of an observed object, the viewer applies visual perception and mentally decodes what is seen by comparing the image with known concepts stored in long-term memory, which are represented by words. Qureshi et al. (2022) describe perception as 'a library of acquired knowledge where all the vocabulary has been stored' (p. 248); therefore, what each individual understands or interprets will not be the same as another.

Research undertaken by Gambrell and Bales (1987) on the impact of targeted instruction in visual imagery found the written expression of 28 third-grade students who were instructed to 'make pictures in their heads' as they listened to a story resulted in enhanced comprehension, retention of information, and more organised and descriptive writing. Similar results were found in research on the effect of mental imagery on the creative writing conducted by Jampole et al. (1991). Researchers studied the writing of fourth- and fifth-grade gifted students over four lessons, across a two-week period. Students listened to four, 1200 to 1500-word passages that were embedded with image-evoking and sensory descriptions, in addition to being shown pictures of characters from picturebooks. Prior to writing, all students were shown a picture stimulus, with one group receiving additional instructions to apply their senses and create images in their heads while the story was read. The researchers reported that the writing of students who were explicitly instructed to create visual images while listening to the story, contained an increased number of imaginative words, dialogue, and originality.

Bos et al. (2015) studied the narrative writing of 165 students from grades four, five, and six, to determine their inclusion of situational descriptive words (who,

what, where, when, and how/why) and sensory descriptive words (sights, sounds, tastes, smells, and feelings/textures), in an open-ended writing assignment. To determine word use, the researchers categorised the words into visual, auditory, tactile, kinaesthetic, olfactory, organic, taste, emotional, or action words. The researchers identified a direct correlation between sensory richness and originality, with the development of visualisations skills established in either reading lessons or writing lessons transferable (Bos et al., 2015). The researchers determined that the ability to use words in a way that 'evokes compelling, vivid, multi-sensory, images in the reader's mind' determines creativity and not the number of sensory words (Bos et al., 2015 p. 844).

A study completed by Gambrell and Jawitz (1993) promoted the use of mental imagery to increase the comprehension ability of fourth-grade students with an average reading ability. The researchers reported that the combined use of mental imagery and relevant illustrations resulted in notable increases in students' comprehension and recall. Similar results were achieved in research conducted by Hibbing and Rankin-Erickson (2003), who discovered encouraging students with low reading ability to apply their prior knowledge to recall images and imagine 'watching a television' as stories were read aloud was effective. Similarly, the 'Visual Thinking Strategy' (VTS), an inquiry-based approach aligned with the sociocultural discourse, employs a recursive process to slow perceptual in order to develop students' visual literacy skills (Cappello & Walker, 2016; McClanahan & Nottingham, 2019). By applying a process used in traditional reading of a text while participating in interactive lessons, students are asked to identify and provide reasons for what is happening in the image, followed by further prompting questions to promote deep thinking such as 'What do you see that makes you say that?' and 'What else is there to see?' (Cappello & Lafferty, 2015, p. 289; Yenawine & Miller, 2014).

Tasked with examining visual literacy and creativity, a team of psychologists, linguists, and educators developed the Perception, Interpretation, Expression (PIE) model of visual literacy (Shivers et al., 2017). The PIE model recognises three phases of visual literacy development. The first phase involves students observing an image or artwork and developing a description of their perceptions, which they share with their peers. In the second phase, to develop their creative and perception skills, students provide reasons for the interpretations made

in the first phase by answering questions such as 'What does it remind me of?' (Shivers et al., 2017, p. 69). Finally, during the last phase, students create a written argument based on their responses made in the first two phases. After implementing the PIE approach with ninth-grade students, Shivers et al. (2017) reported that students produced fuller responses, and all students developed their creative and critical skills. The researchers summarised that, as a result of participating in the PIE program, students developed skills 'that go far beyond learning to write a narrative' (Shivers et al., 2017).

3.3.1 Visual Writing Scaffolds

Visual scaffolds such as story maps, assist with reading comprehension by guiding readers to identify characters, setting, events, problem, and resolutions (Boulineau et al., 2004; Narkon & Wells, 2013; Mathes et al., 1997). Similarly, visual representations and graphic organisers provide temporary scaffolds that assist students with idea development (Kroll & Reid, 1994) and planning their writing compositions (Englert et al., 2007; Monroe & Troia, 2006). The provision of organisation and structure scaffolds, such as well-designed writing prompts, can stimulate effective writing (Ruth & Murphy, 1984), resulting in less repetition, longer compositions, and subsequently, an improvement in writing achievement (Dexter & Hughes, 2011; Sturm & Rankin-Erickson, 2002). Beyond providing a starting point, writing prompts provide a framework on which students can 'organise their ideas, communicate clearly, and create cohesive narratives' (Bingol, 2023, p. 352).

Students' writing is further enhanced when pictures created by the students themselves guide the writing process and support the creative development of ideas (Ehrenworth & Labbo, 2003; Joshua, 2007). Drawing serves as a guide or placeholder throughout the writing process, assisting students in embellishing their writing with richer and more detailed descriptions (Roth, 2000; Sundeen, et al., 2017). Additionally, students become more engaged and empowered in the writing process, taking ownership of both their art and their writing (Joshua, 2007).

3.3.2 Visual Writing Prompts

The process of word selection accesses verbal fluency, and incorporating a visual-verbal approach to writing instruction delivers innovative methods for teaching and learning while fostering the integration and appreciation of students'

out-of-school and in-school learning experiences (Rowsell et al., 2012). Engaging in sensory experiences before writing enhances visualisation and the ability to connect mental images with words, leading to 'richer and more complex stories' (Choo, 2010, p. 32). Moreover, utilising an image as a writing stimulus, as opposed to a written title, reduces the demand on long-term memory (Williams & Larkin, 2013).

Writing after viewing moving images enriches students' writing as visual understanding is transferred to written text (Hekmati, 2018). A sequence of images creates a visual narrative that can be translated into a textual narrative (Hong et al., 2023). Hong et al. (2023) identified that high visual tellability occurs when a sequence of 5 to 10 images with sufficient diversity for the construction of a coherent plot and at least one main character is used as a visual writing prompt. In their research on image-based story generation to assist in the composition of coherent 50 to 300-word stories, Hong et al. (2023) accessed scenes from movies, filtering out fantasy, science fiction, and horror genres. Dunn and Finley (2010) examined struggling writers' participation in 'The Thirsty Thinkers Workshop,' which aimed to enhance students' ability to transpose ideas and increase their use of visual imagery through the combination of reading stories, art, and technology before writing. The program involved the 'Ask, Reflect, Text' process, where students were not compelled to edit or revise their stories but were encouraged to elaborate through daily dialogue with their teacher. After participating in the program, students demonstrated an increased interest in writing and a desire to improve their writing skills. However, constructing elaborate stories requires time for extended practice (Dunn & Finley, 2010).

3.3.3 Photographs

Photographs are a rich form of commonly available multimodal text (Choon-Lee, 2019; Cook & Kirchoff, 2017), possessing the ability to communicate 'vast amounts of information effortlessly' (Ziller, 1990, p. 37) by delivering a 'sense of reality, truth, and evidence' and providing an 'illusion of reality' (Newfield, 2011, p. 82). Photographs provide texture and tone, represent real objects, and deliver a sense of truth (Newfield, 2011) that links to the viewer's past experiences, evoking multisensory responses, eliciting feelings and memories (Brumberger, 2011; Spencer, 2011), with immediacy and pre-reflective reactions before cognitive processing occurs (Spencer, 2011). Therefore, interpretations of photographs are dependent upon each viewer's contextual understanding (Brumberger, 2011).

Unlike illustrations, photographs lack deliberate placement of messages but direct the eyes through the use of perspective, and angle (McLean & Rowsell, 2015; Nodelman, 1990). The camera creates a frame between the photographer's eye and the world, enabling choices on which objects to photograph to convey a message (Belt, 2011). Readers apply their senses, context, and experience (Duncum, 2010) to interpret nonverbal behaviour and communication portrayed through non-verbal expressions, and gestures (Marshall & Rossman, 2015). High levels of colour, perspective, and detail delivered through gestures and facial expressions, establishes greater connections and stimulate the deep thinking necessary for writing (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). The richness of texture and detail in photographs facilitates a precise reading of an image (Suchar, 1997), reproducing what is seen by the naked eye and providing the viewer with a sense of being there (Bates, 2018). The reality of visual evidence in photographs is 'intimately linked to an individual's social values and culture' (Spencer, 2011, p. 13).

Images and screens dominate the lives of students (Wiseman et al., 2016), and cameras are readily available and increasingly a part of everyday reality (Pink, 2013). Yet, although students are familiar with cameras in the home environment and participant-generated photographs contain valuable visual information, their use in the school environment is still a novelty (Cappello & Lafferty, 2015; Chapman et al., 2017). The camera provides a catalyst for visual descriptions (Spencer, 2011) in the form of photographs, which delivers an authentic resource to give students a voice and to combine messages and words to tell their own story (Cappello & Lafferty, 2015). 'Even photographs taken without much thought may represent and communicate more than what a participant might consciously choose to reveal' (Chapman et al., 2017, p. 812). In addition, photographs can be utilised as a resource for students to choose the content contained in the photographs (Chapman et al., 2017) and to develop critical thinking and build connections with students' lives (Wiseman et al., 2016).

In a research study conducted by Hughes et al. (2011), students utilised video and photographs to create graphic narratives. The researchers discovered that although students experienced difficulty with traditional story writing, they 'required little instruction with textual features and media concepts' (Hughes et al., 2011, p. 610). Similarly, research undertaken by Cook & Kirchoff et al. (2017) found students displayed greater consideration of the audience and understanding of the

composition process through the creation of photo-narratives. Incorporating photographs into writing lessons encourages students to read and write in new ways, increasing engagement and motivation (Van Horn, 2008) and supporting writing (Zenkov & Harmon, 2009). However, although students may be familiar with using a camera to take photographs, they may not have the same level of familiarity or ability to analyse photographs (Cook & Kirchoff, 2017).

Utilising images captured by students provides opportunities to enrich the educational experience, fostering metacognition and reflective thinking as integral components of learning (Cappello & Lafferty, 2015). Zenkov and Harmon (2009) integrated photography with writing in the 'Literacy Through Photography' (LTP) project. LTP is a teaching methodology that encourages children to explore their worlds through photography, using images as catalysts for verbal and written expression around universal themes such as self-portrait, community, family, and dreams (Centre for Documentary Studies, 2021). The research involved approximately 100 at-risk middle and high school students. Between 2004 and 2007, for periods ranging from four months to one year, the students met fortnightly to discuss photographs they had taken and write reflections on their experiences. Students reported finding the use of photographs powerful, and researchers noted that students were more willing to engage in writing tasks. Additionally, the researchers indicated the one-on-one attention from adults, interaction with peers, and that the length of time provided to review photographs motivated students to write and review their writing.

McLean and Rowsell (2015) studied how students in elementary and secondary school in the United States and Canada used visual images to convey a message or tell a story by creating written narratives to accompany photographs. The researchers reported that, in addition to being afforded the freedom of expression, collaboration, choice, and flexibility, the use of photography and visual senses resulted in students demonstrating a deeper understanding of their visual world. Similarly, deeper understanding and strong emotional responses were evidenced in sensory poems written by students in Choon-Lee's (2019) study, in which students were tasked with decoding visual messages in a photograph and composing a poem.

A form of multimodal literacy, photo-essays require a writer to create text to describe or enhance the photographs. The creation of a photo-essay necessitates careful selection and consideration of sequence, organisation, and diversity of the

images (Reilly & Goen, 2015). While analysing each image, the writer selects text that reflects and describes what is seen in the photograph (Cook & Kirchoff, 2017).

In research completed by Lilly and Fields (2014), students' own photographs were employed as an authentic stimulus for the writing of fourth-grade students. The students were taught research writing skills and how to use features of zoom and angles before participating in a photo walk during which they photographed objects of interest. The researchers reported that combining image and word compositions had a positive impact on students' motivation and that the use of vocabulary in the students' writing exceeded their expectations. Likewise, Bruce (2009) found that students demonstrated high levels of enthusiasm when creating videos in which they had a choice of topic and format, applied expertise gained outside of school, and worked beyond set class time, which was extremely rare when composing written text. The application of the same pedagogy also positively affected students' written compositions with print text using words and clauses, while video compositions used audio, text, graphics, and images (Bruce, 2009).

Wang (2017) reported the use of photographs taken by students on their mobile devices as writing prompts resulted in an improvement in writing achievement through greater word choice, ideas, and organisation. Although the writing produced by higher-achieving students improved, the achievement gap was reduced, with the lower-achieving students recording greater gains.

3.3.4 Video/Film

Although static visual images such as photographs and art evoke emotions free of linear forms, visual moving images displayed on television and film evoke greater emotional responses (Davydov et al., 2011; Stafford, 2010). The combination of music, dialogue, and sound effects helps with meaning-making, perception, and interpretation (Kasper, 2000; Stafford, 2010). Filmmakers consider the process of transforming words into visual elements, deciding what to showcase visually and what to convey through narration in their creations (Doloughan, 2011). The visual information delivered through film supports students' critical thinking through a deeper exploration of concepts and relationships observed within the images (Kasper, 2000). Moreover, drawn into the powerful images that provide an illusion of reality, viewers consider possibilities as they question elements and visual cues (Newfield, 2011).

Children find joy in watching the moving images of film and television, often repeatedly viewing their favourite shows. The expansion of technology and home-cinema experience, with surround sound and expansive screens, has increased children's immersion in the medium of film (Stafford, 2010). While not required to comprehend the technical intricacies of filmmaking and television, such as camera angles and lighting, children, through their extensive exposure to film and television, encounter the filmmakers' portrayal of objects and individuals. This portrayal is achieved through deliberate placements within a scene, allowing the viewer to keenly observe, react, and articulate how these elements impact their viewing experience (Stafford, 2010, p. 88). For instance, the use of a 'bird's-eye' shot to evoke a sense of power or detachment, or the use of a close-up of a character's face compelling the viewer to scrutinise the portrayed emotions (Stafford, 2010). Although elements like costume and lighting are often overlooked and taken for granted, they too convey messages to the viewer (Stafford, 2010).

3.3.5 Picturebooks

Picturebooks are multimedia sources from which readers process both sensory and semantic information (Styles & Arizpe, 2001), wherein there is an interdependence between the written text and the images. Nikolajeva and Scott (2001) classified picturebooks, which contain an average of 32 pages, into four categories and determined that, in the most common form of picturebook, illustrations support the written text. In a second category, illustrations enrich reader understanding by providing additional descriptive information. A reciprocal relationship exists within the third category, with written text and the illustrations equally supporting each other, with neither adding additional details. In the fourth category, illustrations intertwine with the written text, neither contradicting nor expanding the story.

Illustrators and authors of picturebooks collaborate, making deliberate choices, to create the semiotics of picturebooks (Nodelman, 1990). Regardless of the simplicity of an image, the relationship between the parts evokes interest (Werner, 2004) from the interplay of information (Kress, 2001; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, Unsworth, 2015), enabling readers to develop meaning (Hibbing & Rankin-Erickson, 2003; Martinez & Harmon, 2012; Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001). Context allows readers to derive meaning from their interpretation of the signs communicated within the visual images and visual imagery established from reading the written text

(Wu, 2014). Readers seek further information from the images based on their existing knowledge, with preschoolers using the illustrations to gain information (Kaefer, 2018), whereas students in Grades One to Three, enrich their comprehension of the text from the analysis of the images (Maderazo et al., 2010), and older students apply their extensive visual knowledge to analyse issues and characters' emotions with greater sensitivity (Burke & Peterson, 2007).

Whether electronic or paper, picturebooks are products where words and pictures combine to tell a story to tell a story (Martinez & Harmon, 2012; Wu, 2014). Connections are made by merging images and the sequential information of written text (Carney & Levin; Kiefer, 2008; Martinez & Harmon, 2012) to create a composite text (Wolfenbarger & Sipe, 2007). Wolf (2002) explained that authors and illustrators of picturebooks '…want to guide us in how to feel' through the use of visual elements (p. 234). Meaning is developed by stimulating readers' intellectual and emotional responses through visual techniques such as colour and shape applied by the author to draw the reader's eyes and make links and expressions (Bearne, 2004; Lopatovska et al., 2016; Nodelman & Reimer, 2003). A reader's experience is impacted by an illustrator's use of perspective, colour, detail, and object size, which influence atmosphere and emotion (Pantaleo 2015). Additionally, the way characters and objects are portrayed and placed within images determines the reader's interpretation and maximises the reader's sense of involvement, with 'close-ups' drawing the reader in and 'long shots' creating distance (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; Painter, 2007).

Reading illustrations in picturebooks is comparable to observations made in real life (O'Neil, 2011). The visual elements in picturebooks that support students' active engagement, and imagined experiences increase emotive expression and narrative competence (Cremin, 2009). Furthermore, picturebooks provide educators with a motivating resource to develop students' understanding of narrative structure, visual literacy (O'Neill, 2011; Pantaleo, 2009; 2014), and understanding of multimodal texts (Bearne & Wolstencroft, 2007; Youngs & Serafini, 2013). Although commonly considered juvenile books and suitable for young children to support early reading, beyond motivating reluctant readers, picturebooks' multifaceted nature makes them suitable for intermediate and secondary students (Massey, 2015). As reading ability and the volume of written text increase, the focus on images decreases, resulting in a decrease in students' ability to read visual images

(McClanahan & Nottingham, 2019); however, the images and written text in picturebooks offer different means of engagement and potential for learning (Jewitt & Kress, 2010).

While an image can be quickly scanned, in-depth observation and analysis require a greater length of time to develop students' critical thinking and perception skills (Pantaleo, 2014). Peeck (1993) explained the significance of illustrations:

> If we are reading a story told in words alone, we will have one main question always on our minds: 'What happened next? In other words, our attention is always pointed toward the future; we want to turn the page and keep reading. But if the page also contains a picture, then the picture stops us. The picture demands our attention; not only that, it says in the very nature of its being, don't be concerned with what happens next, think about what is happening now, at this moment … (p. 183)

Picturebooks deliver a resource to teach students artistic codes and conventions (Pantaleo, 2009). Responding to the need for the provision of meaningful and interesting lessons to engage early adolescent students and move their thinking from concrete to abstract thinking and from literal to symbolic understanding, Graham (2000) used picturebooks as a writing stimulus. She described the text of picturebooks as closer to the text students are tasked to write and reported that the use of picturebooks resulted in an improvement in students' writing. The precise language used by authors of picturebooks provides students with examples of appropriate diction and syntax to use in their writing (Heitman, 2005). When used as an anchor text during shared reading, books provide a source for vocabulary development.

When students are provided with the opportunity to role-play and act out the next scene during shared the reading of picture fiction books, their ability and confidence to play with words, ideas, and imagination increase (Cremin, 2009). A 'Book Club' was the focus of research by Griffith (2010), who studied the relationship between language and visual images through teaching Years 4, 5, and 6 students to 'read like writers'. Originally developed for passionate readers, the club was later expanded to include the full range of students (Turbill et al., 2015). During the program, books were read to students, who listened for words and phrases that the author had used to stimulate the readers' senses. Turbill et al. (2015) reported

that after participating in the club, students displayed an improved awareness of messages found in both words and illustrations and demonstrated increased confidence and willingness to read and write.

While traditional picturebooks are common with young readers, postmodern picturebooks, which range from print to multimodal texts with varied sign systems and styles of illustrations, seek to engage young adult readers (Anstey, 2002; Murphy, 2009). Authors and illustrators of postmodern picturebooks challenge readers with non-traditional ways of reading and viewing through the authors' use of plot, character, setting, design, and layout (Anstey, 2002), with words and pictures that may 'overlap, complement, amplify or contradict each other' (Bland, 2015, p. 25). Young teens are drawn to books containing strong visual images in which meaning is obtained because they are immersed in a world where visual culture is central to their experience and interactions (Short, 2018). The images can 'pique the interest of many adolescent students who, on the surface, may appear to be bored and apathetic' (Murphy, 2009, p. 20) but who have the ability to 'turn verbal imagery into mental images' (Bland, 2015, p. 25). Beyond providing deep and pleasurable reading (Bland, 2015, p. 27), post-modern picturebooks 'offer a medium for teaching visual and critical literacy' (Burke & Peterson, 2007, p. 74).

Picturebooks written for older students and early adolescent readers are not appropriate for younger readers who do not have sufficient prior knowledge. These picturebooks feature appealing storylines, interesting illustrations, relatable language, more complex themes, and multiple levels of meaning compared to picturebooks written for younger readers (Murphy, 2009) and require higher-order thinking. Picturebooks designed to engage adolescent readers are generally designed to be read in one sitting whilst challenging their thinking and understanding of their social, cultural, political, and economic world, which typically requires more than one reading (Anstey, 2002; Murphy, 2009). Massey (2015) declared that 'a skilfully chosen picturebook contains depth of material and is a model for good writing and detailed illustrations to activate visual thinking' (p. 46); however, a teacher's passion for the book should be considered when selecting a suitable picturebook (Costello & Kolodziej, 2006).

3.3.5.1 Wordless Picturebooks

Wordless picturebooks encompass original stories, adaptations, or recreations of pre-existing fictional texts delivered through a variety of genres (Bosch, 2017).

Children develop visual language skills through wordless picturebooks, requiring readers to derive narrative understanding by applying their imagination and exploring possibilities from messages within the images (Arizpe, 2013; Bosch, 2017; Serafini, 2014a). While in true wordless picturebooks the only written words are the title, author, and publisher details, picturebooks classified as wordless may include a few written words within the images (Bosch, 2017). Bosch (2017) classified wordless picturebooks with written text within the objects in images, which are intrinsic to the sign 'intra-iconic' texts. The narrative, delivered in a chronologically sequenced set of actions (Chaparro-Moreno et al., 2017), focuses on the characters and their actions (Bosch, 2017). Readers of wordless picturebooks look for relationships in images, creating inferences as they view pages in isolation and sequentially to make sense of the images by drawing on their prior knowledge and making meaning through analysis of the composition of elements within the picture, such as colour and perspective (Pantaleo, 2023; Ramos & Ramos, 2011). However, in order to make sense of the book, readers of wordless picturebooks require sufficient time to engage with the text, through re-reading and reflecting (Arizpe, 2013).

Wordless picturebooks provide a foundation for students' oral language, comprehension, visual literacy, and writing (Arzipe, 2013; Murphy, 2009). However, to successfully build students' background knowledge, the images should be engaging (Joshua, 2007). Analysing the images for details and themes during a 'picture walk' through a book activates students' prior knowledge, stimulates critical thinking, and enhances visual literacy skills (Dean & Grierson, 2005), while providing 'respite from the weight of words' (Arizpe, 2013, p. 24). A 'picture walk' is an interactive experience with students engaging in discussion as they are guided through images or illustrations designed to deliver a narrative or storyline.

The visual culture of the world has influenced the expansion of wordless picturebooks, which provide a perfect medium for all readers regardless of their reading proficiency and serve as stimuli for their own stories (Murphy, 2009; Serafini, 2014b).

3.3.5.2 Graphic Novels

Graphic novels vary in complexity, subject matter, and target audience (Jacobs, 2007; Weiner, 2004) and encompass fiction and nonfiction and almost all content covered by traditional text, including comedy, fantasy, history, mystery,

romance, and science fiction (Oner, 2017). Using a sequence of static images developed for comic books, graphic novels deliver fiction and nonfiction stories, from superhero tales to historical and autobiographical stories (Evans, 2014; Pantaleo, 2014; Schwarz, 2006). The reader interprets visual and verbal messages delivered through a combination of both words and images, with 'images juxtaposed with text in the form of speech balloons, captions, or sound effects' (Cook & Kirchoff, 2017, p. 76), presented in the form of a comic strip consisting of 3-5 panel sequence (Serafini et al., 2018). In contrast to a comic book, which consists of 20-40 pages in a magazine format, a graphic novel delivers a full narrative of a chapter book in 48 to 224 pages (Schwarz, 2006).

Readers are directed to focus on key moments via 'succinct and dramatic vocabulary, dialogue, and gestural or nonverbal communication' (Hughes et al., 2011, p. 604) and gain understanding through visual cues delivered through the sequence of events and interpretation of characters' nonverbal gestures to discern the story's plot and make inferences (Lyga, 2006). The multimodal text of graphic novels appeals to both visual and verbal thinkers and has the capacity to challenge readers of varying abilities (Connors, 2015). The reader applies the same strategies as those employed when watching television, movies, and real-world observations (Downey, 2009), and reading graphic texts is 'like reading and watching a movie at the same time' (Weiner, 2004, p. 115). The reading of comics and graphic novels is intuitive (Mouly, 2011) - 'readers understand what is meant without words' (Oner, 2017, p. 527); the reduced dominance of written text directs focus to visual literacy skills (Gillenwater, 2009; Serafini, 2012b; Thompson, 2008) and critical literacy skills (Ward & Young, 2011). Meaning is made by the interpretation of the messages in the visual cues provoked by prior knowledge and past experiences, while simultaneously applying imagination to fill in the gaps (Downey, 2009; Heath & Bhagat, 2005; Jimenez & Meyer, 2016; Pagliaro, 2014). Graphic novels empower minorities by conveying messages about culture, history, and human life in an accessible format (Schwarz, 2002).

The combination of written text and images produces a synergetic effect (Sipe, 2008), creating deeper meaning than would be obtained by either element alone (Jacobs, 2007). The sophisticated level of literacy required to comprehend the print and visual messages contained within comic format speech bubbles, text panels, and embedded sound effects (Hughes et al., 2011; Short, 2018). Reading a

comic requires a combination of ‘back and forth between text and picture, picture and picture, and text and text, on each page and spread as well as throughout a whole story’ (Nodelman, 2012, p. 438). The emotions of comic and cartoon characters are portrayed through exaggerated body language and facial expressions (Feng & O’Halloran, 2012), and visual linking devices such as a main character and key elements within the scene communicate time and place information that helps create links between the visual images (Lim, 2007).

Although originally considered ‘fun’, graphic novels are an important component of literacy education (Oner 2017), providing motivation and support for students who experience difficulty reading traditional text (Frey & Fisher, 2004), while also providing challenges for capable readers (Connors, 2013; Jacobs, 2007). Readers apply their imaginations to make connections between the images and the written text using prior knowledge (Mouly, 2011), which contributes to increased enjoyment and motivation to read and re-read the books (Christensen, 2006; Edwards, 2009; Lyga, 2006; McPherson, 2006). The evolving visual culture has increased the popularity of graphic novels (Short, 2018), with many classic novels rewritten in the form of a graphic novel (Oner, 2017).

Although relatively short, graphic novels are an excellent resource to promote complex thinking about written and visual text (Cook & Kirchoff, 2017) and inspire students’ writing (Schwarz, 2002). Picturebooks and graphic novels help bridge the gap between the literacy used by students at home and at school in the composition of texts (Pantaleo, 2014). Graphic novels can be used to teach dialogue and writing by either omitting the text and having students write their own or omitting the illustrations and having the students describe the character’s actions (Weiner, 2004). Graphic novels engage students in the composition of graphic texts such as ‘photo-essays’ (Cook & Kirchoff, 2017). Through critical analysis of ‘authors’ rhetorical and modal choices’, students are able to explore writers’ voices and develop skills they transfer into their own traditional and multimodal writing compositions (Connors, 2013; Frey & Fisher, 2004; Jacobs, 2007; Thomsen, 2014).

An over-emphasis on the plot combined with weak development of characters and setting, were areas of weakness identified in secondary students’ narrative writing by Myhill (2020). A multimodal approach was applied by Hughes et al. (2011) in their study of twelve 15 to 17-year-old, Canadian students’ composition of graphic novels using video, photographs, drawings, and the computer

program ‘ComicLife’. Hughes et al. (2011) reported that students’ stories demonstrated they had obtained a greater understanding of ‘characterization, setting, and space, and developing artistic techniques’ (p. 611). Questionnaires and pre- and post-assessments were used by Oner (2017) to research the impact that reading graphic novels had on students’ attitudes toward reading and reading comprehension ability. As a result of her study, Oner reported that graphic novels increased both student motivation and reading comprehension.

Books that combine the multimodal elements of picturebooks, comics, and graphic novels, originally classified by Evans (2011) as visual narratives, were reclassified by Reid and Serafini (2018) as multimodal novels. The researchers defined a multimodal novel as containing more than one image, which should exist within the narrative space, apart from the cover, title, or end pages. Furthermore, the images should ‘depict actors, objects, places, and events connected to the world of the story’ and not serve as a ‘decorative visual embellishment’ (p. 35). Novels which ‘cannot be classified as a comic or graphic novel because the story is not constructed from sequences of panels and gutters’, yet ‘embed various comic conventions and structural elements within their pages’ are included in the multimodal novel category (Reid & Serafini, 2018, p. 34). In contrast to traditional novels where written language is the primary source of meaning, in multimodal novels, the images carry a heavy communicative load (Serafini et al., 2018), with readers required to infer what is happening between illustrations (Watts, 2015). Following their research on multimodal novels, Reid and Serafini (2018) concluded the multimodal novel is a valuable resource; its visual material adds layers of complexity, increases meaning potential, and offers ‘students the chance to analyse written text, interrogate visual images, and construct meaning from the modal pieces and semiotic resources available to them’ (p. 40).

Popular fiction novels which integrate ‘visual, linguistic, hypertextual and design features in new and unusual ways’ (Serafini et al., 2018, p. 312), such as The Diary of a Wimpy Kid (Kinney, 2007) and Tom Gates (Pichon), fall under the multimodal novel category. These books are typically based on life stories of children of similar ages to the target audience. To identify the underlying values and popularity of The Diary of a Wimpy Kid (Kinney, 2007), Voinea and Norel (2016) questioned 100, fourth-grade students and four teachers. Their findings indicated that students found the text ‘funny and accessible’, promoting authenticity, with

students feeling that it 'is written for me' (p. 322) through the handwritten diary format. The researchers described the text as suiting a globalized market, with the character having universal 'child' problems such as 'problems with teachers, quarrels with brothers…' (p. 320) are things relatable to the reader.

Motivation and choice are key features to overcoming students' resistance to reading and graphic novels provide unmotivated students with a reason, at least, to pick up a book and attempt to read (Richardson, 2017, p. 25). Reading comic books for pleasure leads to more reading of books and supports the idea that 'it doesn't matter what students read as long as they read' (Routman, 2014, p.95). Popular diary series of books, such as The Diary of a Wimpy Kid (Kinney, 2007) or the Dork Diaries (Russell) appeal to middle-grade reluctant readers and writers because the characters fulfill the role of a similar-age person (Moss, 2012).

3.4 Sensory Provocations

Affective empathy is the ability of the perceiver to resonate with the perceived emotions delivered through visual cues produced by body language and facial expressions (Oliver et al., 2018). Implicit knowledge is accessed unintentionally and indirectly without awareness or conscious effort during the performance of a task (Schacter, 1992; Suzuki, 2017). Supported by memory, implicit knowledge and skill acquisition occur through exposure to semantic stimuli (Packard & Knowlton, 2002; Ullman et al., 2020). While both implicit and explicit knowledge can be accessed quickly, implicit knowledge is accessed unintentionally and indirectly without awareness or conscious effort during the performance of a task (Schacter, 1992; Suzuki, 2017). Explicit knowledge is something someone knows they possess and makes a conscious effort to access (Schacter, 1992), whereas implicit knowledge is silent and unspoken (Silby, 2015). Implicit knowledge involves an implicit understanding of how to perform a task, and the interplay between students' existing knowledge, their understanding of concepts, and the manner in which this knowledge is applied (Silby, 2015). Participation in activities within a social context, such as 'think-pair-share,' assists students in transferring their implicit knowledge to explicit (Silby, 2015).

3.4.1 Natural Environment

Natural environments are defined as 'environments not designed or cultivated by humans' (Fjortoft, 2004, p. 24). Although not always on a conscious level, people

learn about the world through their interaction with the environment using their senses (Mills & Dreamson, 2015), with 'the more senses involved in an experience the more likely it will be remembered' (Mowat, 2002, p. 7). Sensory experiences are essential for learning about the world (Mills & Dreamson, 2015), but today's generation of children is spending less time outdoors than previous generations (O'Brien, 2009). Contact with the natural world and authentic experiences has been replaced by popular culture, technology, and the screen-based world becoming the natural environment (Berman et al., 2008; Felten, 2008; Gardner & Kuzich, 2018; Maller et al., 2009; Soga & Gaston, 2016). Louv (2005) described the reduced contact and interaction with the natural environment as 'nature deficit disorder'.

The natural environment is an underutilised resource (Marchant et al., 2019). Barriers to accessing the outdoor environment include teachers' lack of knowledge and confidence in teaching and managing students outside the indoor setting, as well as a lack of flexibility due to the pressure of standardised assessment, together with a 'tightly packed curriculum' (van Dijk-Wesselius et al., 2020; Waite, 2010). Additionally, negative associations between the outdoor environments and play increase teachers' reluctance to engage with outdoor learning environments, particularly above the Early Years (O'Brien, 2009; Lumby, 2011; Waite, 2010). However, teachers can take advantage of children's natural curiosity and explore natural environments (Barrable & Arvanitis, 2019) where engagement in real experiences rich with stimuli, outside the conformity of the classroom enhances learning and develops students' perception and sensory awareness (Beames & Ross, 2010; Brannon, 2018; Gardner & Kuzich, 2018; Marchant et al., 2019; Thorburn & Marshall, 2014).

Flexible structures create an open and exploratory discourse, allowing the 'unpredictability of the natural world to be harnessed' and 'rekindle excitement and curiosity…' (Waite, 2010, p. 120) and outside the constraints of a traditional classroom, learning is constructed not reproduced (Murdoch, 2015). This is demonstrated by the action of Clegg (1965, as cited in Wyse et al., 2018) who, during a thunderstorm took the opportunity to develop students' power of observation and their writing skills. Clegg paused a maths lesson and took the students outside, where under the shelter of a canopy, they observed a storm and experienced the 'sudden change in light, the noise, the heightened sense of unease and danger' (p. 197). Similarly, a Scottish place-based learning program, 'Outdoor

Journeys' provided students with an authentic real-world adventure within a pedagogy of 'tacit learning and connection' (Beames & Ross, 2010, p. 104) with the surroundings of the school environment. The program which involved students participating in explorative walks around their school grounds and local neighbourhood, promoted moving teaching and learning outdoors and engaged cross-curricular learning. To tell a human or ecological story, a 'cycle of questioning, researching, and sharing' was applied as thirty-five students between the ages of 8 and 11 years, in groups of two or three, noted by hand or photographed elements of the physical landscape they observed (Beames & Ross, 2010 p. 106).

Writers use descriptive and figurative language to elaborate on ideas that produce pictures in the mind of the reader (Barbot et al., 2012; Knapp & Watkins, 2005), employing original and descriptive language arising from an analysis of sensory experiences (Engle, 1970). Palmer and Brooks (2004) found that while readers are able to comprehend figurative language when it is embedded within oral language, they struggle to interpret figurative language when embedded in written text.

Research by Gardner and Kuzich (2018) 'explored the impact on children's poetic writing of direct engagement with an unmanaged natural setting' (p. 429). The researchers compared the sensory and figurative language of poetry written by students from a school in the United Kingdom and a school in Australia. One class from each school wrote poems while they were outside in the natural setting of either a forest or bush, while a control class remained in the classroom and used photographs of a forest as the stimulus for their writing. The researchers reported that the writing of students who experienced the natural environment was more original and contained more imagery and sensory vocabulary. The United Kingdom students incorporated twice the amount of figurative language in their poetry, while the Australian students incorporated four times more than students who wrote in the classroom. Gardner and Kuzich (2018) proposed that by abandoning the habit of children writing in solitude at their desks and providing them with experiences in the natural world, children would generate new sources of linguistic expression.

3.5 Multiliteracy and Multimodality

Shaped by society, writing in Western culture has historically been monomodal (van Leeuwen, 2017). However, as society has evolved, the term

‘writing’ no longer adequately represents the multiple modes and integration of semiotic systems used to communicate today (Bazerman et al., 2017; Bull & Anstey, 2019; Cope & Kalantzis, 2006; Exley, 2008; Healy, 2008; Hull & Nelson, 2005; Kalantzis et al., 2016; Kress, 2017; van Leeuwen, 2017; Wyatt-Smith & Kimber, 2009). Whereas traditional literacy meant the ability to read and write, influenced by cultural connections with the social environment and increased technological advances, multiliteracy extends traditional writing to encompass the range of practices applied to make meaning (Bull & Anstey, 2007; Bourne & Jewitt, 2003; Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; NLG, 1996). Writing is a multimodal and interactive process (Chen et al., 2020); therefore, the creation of multimodal texts (Macken-Horarik et al., 2011) can be a valuable inclusion in the teaching of writing (Bull & Anstey, 2007; Unsworth, 2015).

Multiliteracy pedagogy increases student engagement and enhances the educational outcomes for all students (Callow, 2007), providing ‘diverse, dynamic, immediate, interactive, multimodal, rapidly evolving, and requisite for living and learning’ (Unsworth, 2008, p. 377). Integrating multiple modes of communication enables literacy education to move beyond traditional concepts to a multiliteracies pedagogy, delivering opportunities for students to incorporate creative and critical growth and develop metacognitive awareness of their writing (Kalantzis, et al., 2003; Vincent, 2006; Wyatt-Smith & Kimber, 2009).

Vygotsky (1978) described the gap between what students are able to achieve independently and what they are able to achieve with scaffolded support from a more knowledgeable person as the zone of proximal development (ZPD). Vygotsky (1986) promoted writing as a collaborative activity involving the writer, targeted audience, peers, and teachers, asserting that ‘What the child can do in cooperation today, he can do alone tomorrow’ (p. 188). Incorporating tasks that target the development of students’ multiliteracy through multimodal texts can simultaneously increase student engagement and expand the narrow focus of school literacy (Brien & Bauer, 2005; Mackenzie, 2014; Serafini, 2012b).

The process of transferring material across sign systems or modes ‘in which something that is configured or shaped in one or more modes is reconfigured, or reshaped, according to the affordances of a different mode’ was termed ‘transduction’ (Kress, 2003; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Mills (2011) termed the process generated through analysis and re-examination of concepts in the original

composition and the creation of new meaning in the second sign system (McCormick, 2011; Schmit, 2013; Siegel, 1995) as 'transmediation', deeming the process as fundamental to meaning-making (Mills, 2011, p. 56). Recently, Kalantzis and Cope (2023) coined the term 'transposition' to convey the idea that 'one form of meaning can replace another,' exemplified by 'images and written text referring to the same thing' (p. 46).

The domination of the interactive processes involved in the consumption of multimodal texts combined with increased accessibility of technology, leads Bull and Anstey (2019) to suggest that the term 'consuming' substitute reading and the term 'producing' replace writing. The creation of text through multiple modes is not new, as all paper-based texts comprise a combination of visual and linguistic codes. The definition of 'multimodal text' has expanded to include the combination of the modes of 'print, visual images, and design elements' (Hassett & Curwood, 2009, p. 270). Incorporating multimodality into the classroom provides students with opportunities to creatively construct and deconstruct meaning, but to successfully produce multimodal text, they need to be provided with sufficient time (Edward-Groves, 2011, 2012; Kirwin et al., 2013).

Since the 1990s, technological advancements and increased availability of electronic media have led to a remarkable expansion of the internet, social media, and streaming platforms, including online video games (Rideout, 2016), which has resulted in increased popularity and participation in screen-based activities among children, increasing with age and during the weekend (Hinkley et al., 2012; LeBlanc et al., 2015; Nguyen et al., 2023; Oswald et al., 2020; Yu & Baster, 2016).

Although it is recommended that children have a maximum of two hours of screen time each day (WHO, 2019), this limit is exceeded by children in multiple countries. Research undertaken in Australia identified that the average daily screen time for 3–5-year-old children was 113 minutes per day, and 12–13-year-old children spent three hours per day during the week and four hours on the weekend (Houghton et al., 2015; Yu & Baster, 2016). In recent years, there has been a surge in screen time, with current data indicating that 40 percent of children aged 5-14 spend 10-19 hours, and 24 percent spend more than 20 hours engaging in screen-based activities per week (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2023). Yan et al. (2017) identified that 40 percent of adolescents in Wuhan, China, engaged with screens for over two hours daily, exceeding the recommended time. Similarly, research

conducted in the United States also identified a significant increase in children's media use, with 8–12-year-olds spending an average of 5.5 hours per day, while 13–18-year-olds dedicated 8.5 hours to media engagement through screens (Rideout, 2021).

It is important to highlight that children's engagement with screens often involves multitasking activities, such as scrolling while watching television or checking social media, while eating or traveling (Rideout, 2021). Studies have found that children who exceed the recommended maximum of 2 hours of leisure-related screen time per day attain lower academic scores (Mundy et al., 2020). Nonetheless, when used as educational tools, screens can be positively integrated into the school environment (Houghton et al., 2015).

Due to familiarity and immersion with technology, today's students are described as 'digital natives' and 'millennials' with their enhanced visually orientated thinking skills, technology, and visual communication skills developed from their access to phones and computers throughout their childhood (Brumberger, 2011). They are frequent users of multimedia and express their thoughts using multimodal means in a range of social settings in their everyday lives, outside the school environment (Dowdall, 2009). However, the first generation of students to be identified as 'digital natives' were those born between 1980 and 1994 (Bennett et al., 2008). Young children are able to 'shift meaning across multiple modes long before they have mastered formal writing skills' (Mills, 2011, p. 56), and access to increasing levels of technology today means students are processing information visually, developing the ability to read, view, and create visual texts on-screen using multimedia devices (Walsh, 2010). In addition to reading images and pictures, these students are 'superior scanners' who can filter out 'what's important from what's not' (Tapscott, 2009, p. 113). However, not all students have access to the same level of technology, and mere exposure access does not equate to possessing effective visual communication (Brumberger, 2011).

A disparity exists between students' school writing and the writing they experienced outside school, with visual literacy, multimodal skills, and writing in the broader community often overlooked and absent in the classroom (Anning & Ring, 2004; Applebee & Langer, 2011; Coker et al., 2016; Dowdall, 2009; Freedman et al., 2016). Digital technology and multimodal devices increase access to multiple modes of communication (Barton & Unsworth, 2014; Serafini, 2010; Wyatt-Smith &

Kimber, 2009), enhancing and expanding opportunities for learning (Bailey, 2009; Dowdall, 2019, 2020; O'Brien et al., 2007; Miller, 2013) through enriched learning experiences (Unsworth, 2008). However, by the time students reach middle primary, the pressure of accountability and standardised tests limits the time available for engaging in multiliteracy and multimodality (Seigel, 2006).

Digital technology and the choice of multimedia enhance the hybridisation of reading and writing (Ayotte & Collins, 2017; Callahan & King, 2011), allowing for the creation of multimodal texts and the inclusion of pedagogical practices that promote interactive collaboration (Edwards-Groves, 2012). Digital tools such as word processing enable written composition to be completed in modes other than handwriting and provide students with the ability to produce texts of longer length with increased accuracy (Taipale, 2014) due to the ability to use a spell checker, and easily add, delete, or share text with multiple viewers (Morphy & Graham, 2012). Although research has established that students demonstrate greater improvement when producing text through word processing (Goldberg et al., 2003; Graham and Perin, 2007a; Morphy & Graham, 2012) and that the use of technology reduces the physical strain of producing text by hand (Kress, 2003), handwriting remains the prominent form of text construction in elementary schools (Graham & Harris, 2013; Mueller & Oppenheimer, 2014; Santangelo & Graham, 2016). However, due to NAPLAN moving to an online assessment it is essential for students to develop keyboard fluency to allow their focus to be on text composition (McGaw et al., 2020).

While traditional print text continues to be the dominant resource in education pedagogy, schools cannot ignore the need to acknowledge and engage with the full range of modes, multimedia, and communication literacies. Accessing digital technology in the classroom opens ups new possibilities for writing composition (Dowdall, 2019). An effective learning environment is created when teachers plan activities that support multimodal composition (Bearne & Wolstencroft, 2007). However, rather than emphasising the need for old and new practices to supersede or replace each other; print and visual texts can be blended together (Leander, 2009).

Multimodality encompasses both linguistic and visual modes of communication, combining semiotic resources and modes, such as print, video and three-dimensional objects to create meaning (O'Halloran, 2011). Kress et al. (1997)

maintained that it is no longer feasible to read text reliably by focusing solely on written language; rather, it must be interpreted in conjunction with other semiotic modes of the texts. The implementation of a multimodal pedagogy enables students to be active participants in their learning (Wyse et al., 2018), fostering increased understanding through shared knowledge (Mercer, 2000; Mercer & Littleton, 2007). Despite potential challenges in writing texts in the classroom, students possess knowledge and experience gained through the use of multimodal texts such as television, the internet, and advertising outside the classroom (Cremin & Myhill, 2012). However, certain forms of writing, like texting, emailing, and blogging, which students participate in outside school, described by Thomson (2002) as their 'virtual school bags,' often remain undervalued within the classroom.

Bearne and Wolstencroft (2007) defined an effective classroom environment as one in which teachers plan 'activities which both challenge and support multimodal composition and writing' (p. 51). Applying a visual and multimodal approach to writing lessons, blending traditional school literacy with contemporary literacies, provides students with an opportunity to demonstrate their view of the world (McLean & Rowsell, 2013; Vincent, 2006) while creating a safe environment to experiment with their writing (Cremin & Myhill, 2012).

Despite the global recognition of literacy's reconceptualization as increasingly digital and multimodal, teachers often lack the knowledge to teach the writing of multimodal text (Chandler, 2017). Written language continues to dominate classroom literacy, and although young children are capable of multimodal communication and meaning making (Bezemer & Kress, 2008), they have more learning experiences out of school that are more important for their futures than they do in school (Gee, 2004). Students' out-of-school experiences, knowledge, and competence with multimodal technology is an asset to be valued and incorporated into classroom learning (Alvermann & Hagood, 2000; Applebee & Langer, 2011; Bearne & Wolstencroft, 2007; Bearne, 2003; Brice-Heath, 2000; Coker et al., 2016; Cope & Kalantzis, 2006; Freedman et al., 2016; Jocius, 2013; Kress, 2003; Merchant, 2007; Mills, 2011; Shivers et al., 2017; Siegel, 2006, 2012). Failure to value and incorporate students' out-of-school experiences and knowledge of semiotic communication modes leads to missed opportunities for advancing students' learning (Shanahan, 2013) and reduces in-school achievement (Gardner, 2013). However, to bridge the gap between students' lives outside the school

environment and school education, students need to be encouraged to bring their experiences in the ‘real world’ into the world of school (Owens et al., 2002). While participation in multimodal composition provides students with increased understanding of the audience during the writing process (Kirchoff & Cook, 2016), the challenge for schools is to ensure that multimodal technology can be incorporated into literacy programs ‘without reducing the importance of the rich imaginative and cultural knowledge that is derived from books’ (Graham et al., 2013, p. 212).

The New London Group described the production and consumption of text as a matter of design involving transformation, interpretation, or production of texts (Serafini, 2012a), occurring in print and digital environments by means of cultural and semiotic resources (Serafini, 2014b). The Learning by Design project, built on the Multiliteracies project introduced by the New London Group (1996), aimed to ‘encourage learners to be actively and purposefully engaged in their learning’ (Kalantzis & Cope, 2010, p. 204). Students have agency in and responsibility for their learning, and are encouraged to make meaningful choices in practical challenges to which they apply their past knowledge and understanding. The teacher’s role within the Learning by Design project is that of a ‘learning designer,’ providing students with opportunities to ‘take greater responsibility for their learning’ through a variety of platforms, including multimodal methods, as opposed to ‘curriculum implementer’; and as such, this is achieved. The teacher encourages supportive and sharing multifaceted environments, utilising best practice pedagogy with assessment ‘for learning’ not ‘of learning’ (Kalantzis & Cope, 2010).

Student learning must meet the needs of today’s image-dominant society and ‘assessment expanded to capture twenty-first-century skills and sensibilities’ (Kalantzis & Cope, 2010, p. 203). Integrating ‘visual, verbal and other representational modes’ into the curriculum (Brice Heath, 2000, p. 121) aligns and connects learning in the community with learning in the school environment. Moreover, the implementation of multiliteracy and multimodality instructional approaches affords alternative methods of assessment beyond traditional skills-based assessment tools (McLay & Mackey, 2009; Wyatt-Smith & Kimber, 2009).

3.6 Self-Efficacy

Driven by motivation, effort, persistence, and resilience (Bandura, 1977), self-efficacy refers to an individual's perception of their ability to perform a task (Bandura, 1997; Klassen, 2002) which can become more powerful than a person's actual ability to perform a task (Bandura, 1997). A writer's self-efficacy is influenced by social elements, including observations of the writing of others, the verbal judgments of others, as well as their own physiological and emotional state (Locke, 2017; Pajares et al., 2007).

3.6.1 Teacher Self-Efficacy

While little is known about teachers' self-efficacy and sense of themselves as writers (Cremin & Oliver, 2017), results of studies completed in the United States found that teachers were 'moderately confident' in teaching writing (Cutler & Graham, 2008). However, many teachers believe they do not have the necessary skills to teach writing due to their own inexperience and lack of confidence as writers (Biofuh-Ambe, 2013; Brindle et al., 2016; Cope et al., 2018; Mackenzie, 2014), which can potentially have a detrimental impact on their writing pedagogy, students' self-efficacy, motivation (Myers et al., 2016), and subsequently writing achievement (Cremin & Oliver, 2017). Teachers with high self-efficacy are more positive towards teaching writing and allocate more time to writing lessons each week, diversifying their pedagogy (Tschannen-Moran & Johnson, 2011). Teachers report insufficient training in the teaching and assessment of writing (Calkins et al., 2012; Cutler & Graham, 2008; Jeffery & Parr, 2021) as the reason for their lack of confidence and consequently combine elements of different writing instruction approaches (Gilbert & Graham, 2010; Martin & Dismuke, 2018).

Teachers and researchers have expressed their concerns about the negative impact of high-stakes assessments on their teaching of writing (Applebee & Langer, 2011; Brass & Holloway, 2021; Garver, 2020; Graham et al., 2011b; Perryman, 2009), which subsequently overshadow their agency and decision-making (Pomerantz & Kaufman, 2019). Teaching to a curriculum of standardised assessments '…is so generic that it does not involve the mind of the learner; it rarely involves the mind of the teacher…' (McNeill, 2000, p. 248). Additionally, an overcrowded curriculum combined with restrictive, formulaic teaching deskills teachers (Barrs, 2019) and limits their creativity (Cremin & Myhill, 2012; Ewing et

al., 2015; Knapp & Watkins, 2005; Ryan & Kettle, 2012; Walshe, 2015). Furthermore, the practice of teaching to the test constrains teachers by limiting opportunities for them to apply their professional judgement (Barton et al., 2013; Bifuh-Ambe, 2013; Brass & Holloway, 2021; Anstey & Bull, 2018; Cremin & Myhill, 2012; Gardner, 2018b; Garver, 2019; Mo et al., 2014), resulting in their status as professionals being lowered (Barrs, 2019; Bousfield & Ragusa, 2014; Milner, 2013), leading to reduced job satisfaction, increased work pressure (Warren & Ward, 2018), and concern that they are not teaching in a way that ensures students learn (Barrs, 2019).

Additionally, commercially developed programs published with the purpose of teaching transcriptional skills 'constrain teachers' agency as teachers of writing' (Gardner, 2018b, p. 22). Bifuh-Ambe (2013) reported that after participating in ten weeks of writing workshops, teachers acknowledged an improvement in their confidence and ability to teach writing; however, time to implement writing workshops in their classrooms was limited due to the need to focus on standardised tests. The need to follow a prescribed practice of teaching to the test replaces teachers' professional autonomy (Sahlberg, 2011), which causes a dilemma for teachers who aspire to provide dynamic learning environments and teach students to write creatively (Bearne, 2017; Beghetto, 2007; Dreher, 2012). Furthermore, misalignment between the English curriculum and NAPLAN criteria delivers conflicting agendas, increasing pressure on teachers (Gannon, 2019). The contradictory positions of the need to implement a narrowed curriculum and the inability to deliver their vision of good teaching, in teachers becoming dissatisfied and developing 'Cartesian anxiety' as they are torn between the two approaches (Rooney, 2015).

Early career teachers receive limited models of high-quality literacy teaching (Comber et al., 2017; Cremin & Oliver, 2017; Graham, 2014) as teachers focus on skills-based models driven by test accountability (Bloom & Van Slyke-Briggs, 2019; Macken-Horarik, 2009). Furthermore, professional learning in writing predominantly focuses on providing teachers with skills and strategies to support the improvement of student achievement in high-stakes tests (Mackenzie, 2014). Yet, teachers are more likely to be motivated to teach and improve writing instruction when equipped with knowledge; however, this is an area which can also be

addressed by educational priority of policymakers and principals (Graham et al., 2019).

3.6.2 Student Self-Efficacy

Students' views of themselves as writers develop from the writing activities they participate in, both inside and outside of the school environment (Cremin, 2020). Aware of the focus on technical accuracy, at the expense of writing to an audience, students write to meet the assessment criteria (Barrs, 2019). Although students may achieve well when assessed on what is taught, the narrow emphasis and prescriptive teaching techniques deprive students of their originality and voice (Mo et al., 2014). Students' attitudes and motivation towards writing impact self-efficacy, self-esteem, and success (Grainger et al., 2003), determined by their belief in their ability to generate ideas, regulate their writing, and employ writing conventions (Bruning et al., 2013; Wright et al., 2019). While students with a high self-efficacy are likely to consider difficult tasks as challenges, those with low self-efficacy are likely to avoid tasks they consider difficult (Hattie, 2012). Students' self-efficacy and belief about their ability to utilise the skills required to write successfully develop from past experiences (Graham, 2019) and their interpretation of their writing in comparison to others (Klassen, 2002). Consequently, 'students need to experience success with writing in order to stay engaged' (Bazerman et al., 2017, p. 357), leading to further growth and increased motivation (Graham, 2019).

Students' self-efficacy is also influenced by their reaction to feedback, as highlighted by Bourne (2002). Bourne observed that students with lower self-efficacy perceived teachers' suggestions as 'corrections', while more confident students considered the teacher's feedback comments as encouragement. Effective feedback should be positive, supporting students' growth as writers by addressing specific points for improvement (Black & Wiliam, 2009; Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Beghetto (2005) noted that students who received feedback while working exhibited a positive attitude toward learning, along with higher levels of perseverance and willingness to take risks. Involving peer-to-peer sharing in the writing process through extended conferencing creates writing communities (Cremin & Myhill, 2012), fostering increased motivation, achievement (Graham & Perin, 2007; Graham et al., 2012; Wyse et al., 2018), and self-esteem (Storch, 2005; Wise & Chiu, 2011).

The environment and task significantly impact the motivation levels of early adolescent students (Klassen, 2002). Students who have negative writing

experiences often develop a mindset that they ‘cannot write’, leading to decreased motivation and challenges in producing written work (Johnston & Costello, 2005; Santangelo & Graham, 2016). However, students are motivated when given opportunities to write for genuine purposes (Graham, 2019) and provided with stimuli that match their interests, creating an environment that stimulates their imagination and allows for the development of their ideas (Johnson, 2004). Increasing motivation enhances engagement, resulting in deeper learning and improved resilience when facing challenges during the writing process (Wentzel & Miel, 2016).

Autonomy plays a vital role in internal motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Providing students with choices leads to positive academic outcomes (Reeve et al., 2004; Reeve & Jang, 2006). However, student choice has become scarce in many writing classrooms (Fletcher, 2001). Routman (2014) suggested that instead of solely focusing on raising achievement levels in reading and writing, teachers should inquire, ‘How do I engage students’ hearts and minds, so they want to read and write?’ (p. 41). Writing is a social act (Myhill, 2020). Within a writing community, students have fun, share their thoughts, feelings, and writing attempts as they collaborate (Heger, 2023, p. 153). Students identified three main elements crucial for their enjoyment of writing: a sense of belonging to a community of writers, freedom of choice, and the ability to use their imagination freely (Heger, 2023, p. 147).

Grainger et al. (2003) conducted a two-year study examining students’ self-efficacy and attitudes toward writing across eight schools in the United Kingdom. They found the majority of students in Year 3 and Year 4 held negative attitudes towards writing, with only 27% describing themselves as ‘good writers’, primarily due to the emphasis on punctuation and spelling. Gardner (2013) observed a similar trend where students labelled themselves as ‘rubbish writers’ because they had ‘poor’ handwriting or made frequent spelling mistakes (Gardner, 2013, p. 77). Similarly, a reciprocal relationship between the spelling and writing of Year 3-6 students was determined in a longitudinal study completed in the United States by Abbott et al. (2010). Research undertaken by Daffern et al. (2017) that examined NAPLAN Language Conventions tests and Writing tests found that 39% of the variance in students’ writing achievement was attributed to spelling, grammar, and punctuation skills. The researchers reported that boys were more impacted by the focus on these factors than girls, which subsequently affect their motivation, and

confidence to write. The findings support earlier the results of a survey of 618 students from grade 4 to grade 10 undertaken by Troia et al. (2013), who attributed motivation as the key factor accounting for the difference in writing achievement between genders.

Research conducted by Lenhart et al. (2008) found that students did not consider the writing they participated in outside the school environment as 'real writing', predominately due to writing completed at home being created electronically, whereas writing created at school was predominantly handwritten. However, although teachers cannot control students' attitudes towards writing, they can influence them (Fletcher, 2001).

3.7 Summary

The first section establishes the foundation by defining semiotics and offering an overview of linguistic, visual, spatial, audio, and gestural semiotic systems. It explores how communication is conveyed and interpreted through various modes, encompassing both verbal and non-verbal language to construct meaning.

This was followed by a section where Visual Literacy was defined and the extensive prevalence of visual images in society was discussed. The section highlighted the importance of cultivating students' perception, awareness, experience, and interpretation of visual information, deeming visual literacy a necessity in contemporary society. The process of creating mental images or visualisation was examined, and methods to aid students in overcoming difficulties with visualisation were explored. A segment on writing prompts introduced a review of research studies focused on the development of visual imagery. An overview of various visual resources used as prompts for students' writing was provided. The discussion covered categories of picturebooks, analysing the impact and influence of images on the reader, the interplay between words and pictures, and the process involved in 'reading' images to derive meaning. Picturebooks were recognised as valuable sources of visual information, contributing to the development of students' perception and critical thinking skills. The appeal of postmodern picturebooks and graphic novels was acknowledged as valuable resources for teaching visual literacy and aiding students in developing their writers' voice. Additionally, photographs and videos were identified as readily accessible sources of rich information, providing

texture and detail to create a connection with the viewer and evoke a sense of presence.

In the third section of the chapter, sensory elements and student engagement with the natural environment prior to or during writing were discussed.

In the next section of the chapter, the concepts of multiliteracy and multimodality were introduced. Multiliteracy was defined as the process of meaning-making through the semiotics of language. Multimodality was defined as a diverse set of methods through which meaning is conveyed, and their combined utilisation extends the depth of meaning. The process of meaning-making was elucidated, highlighting transmediation as the translation of content between sign systems and transduction as the reconfiguration of material into affordances for a new mode of transmission. The section also discussed the impact of advancements in digital technology, expressing concern about the disparity between students' frequent and proficient use of multimedia outside the school environment, and the underutilisation of these skills within the predominantly paper-based school environment. The capabilities of computer software and the necessity for schools to engage with multimedia and communication literacies to facilitate effective learning were explored, with collaboration identified as a key component of multimodal pedagogy.

The incorporation of multisensory experiences in the classroom, delivered through a multimodal approach that blends the traditional school literacy curriculum with contemporary literacy, utilising students' 'virtual school bags,' was reported to provide valuable sources of information and opportunities for engaging students through authentic experiences. This approach was noted to enrich students' classroom learning experiences and contribute to increased achievement. The segment concluded with a section on the Learning by Design project. The project's approach empowers students with increased responsibility for their learning, positioning teachers as learning designers and supporters. Assessment was framed as a tool for learning rather than a judgement of learning outcomes.

In the final section, a comprehensive review was conducted on both teacher and student self-efficacy. The section addressed the adverse effects of standardised assessment on teacher autonomy by narrowing the curriculum and assessment practices. Furthermore, it examined the influence of motivation and feedback on student self-efficacy and achievement.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the methodology implemented in this research study. It provides the background to the identified problem that directed the course of the research study, as well as details of the educational environment in which the study occurred and the assessment tools applied during the data collection, alongside the rationale for these choices. The following research questions guided the research:

1. What impact does a visual literacy intervention have on students' use of descriptive language and imagery in narrative writing?
2. What is the evidence that the visual literacy intervention is sustained two months after completion?
3. What are the implications of using visual literacy for a pedagogy of writing?

The first research question was addressed through a comparison of an analysis of the Vocabulary Rubric applied to the four narratives completed by the ten focus children. Likewise, the second question regarding the sustainability of the impact of students' participation in the intervention program was measured by a comparison of an analysis of the second post intervention narrative, Narrative 4, with the three previous narratives using the Vocabulary Rubric. The third research question was addressed by means of a combination of firstly, a review of the observations completed by the researcher and the classroom teacher on the impact of the intervention on the students' participation and engagement in the intervention program. Secondly, an analysis of the feedback provided by the classroom teacher and focus children in their pre- and post-intervention interviews. Finally, consideration of the implications of using visual literacy within a pedagogical approach to writing instruction considered the practical aspects, including access to resources required for successful implementation.

The chapter orients the reader to the approach applied to the study and clarifies the rationale for combining quantitative and qualitative methods within a predominantly interpretivist paradigm, embedded in a sociocultural perspective. A sociocultural theory of writing 'recognises that social factors shape the writing produced by children in school' (Pantaleo, 2009, p. 76). The pedagogical approach

employed to investigate the outcome of a writing intervention program is described, together with a detailed description of the role of the researcher in the research.

The research design is detailed within the framework of four phases. The first phase, 'planning', occurred prior to the implementation of the intervention program. Rationalisation for the selection of the setting in which the intervention occurred, the class teacher, assessment tools, and intervention resources is specified and described. The second phase, 'pre-intervention,' details the pre-intervention assessment, the process for the selection of student participants and subsequent pre-intervention interviews with the teacher and student participants. Phase 3, 'intervention', details each of the lessons that occurred over a 10-week period. A detailed narrative of each lesson, including photographs and transcripts of the teacher's instructions, is provided. Features of the program such as the outdoor environment and equipment used provide an overview of the key elements that supported the development of students' sensory awareness. Details of student responses, engagement, and dialogue during each lesson are presented in the findings in Chapter 5. The final phase, 'post-intervention', which involved, the completion of post-intervention assessment and follow-up interviews with the classroom teacher and student participants is described. Detailed analysis of the post-intervention, 'Brightpath', writing assessments and the post-intervention interviews are presented in Chapter 5. A section on ethical considerations relevant to this research study is followed by a discussion on how the researcher upheld integrity, determined trustworthiness, and delivered validity and transferability of the data are presented in the final section of this chapter.

4.2 Research Design

This section identifies and describes in detail the four phases of the research study. The phases of the research design are shown below in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1

Research Design

Phase 1: Planning

- Identification of Problem: Declining writing achievement.
- Research Sample Selection:
  - School – Researcher's place of employment.
  - Cohort – Year 5 – (3 classes).
  - One class from the cohort chosen as the experimental group.
- Writing Assessment tools:
  - Brightpath.
  - Vocabulary Analysis Rubric.
- Development of Intervention Program:
  - Resources

Phase 2: Pre-Intervention

- Experimental group complete Narrative 1: What's in the Box?
  - Narrative 1, graded using Brightpath Assessment Tool
- Participant Selection
  - 10 students selected as focus children from across the full range of scores achieved by students in Narrative 1.
- The 10 focus children's narratives analysed using Vocabulary Analysis Rubric.
- Individual Interviews:
  - Focus children participate in an individual pre-intervention interview with the researcher.
  - Experimental group's class teacher participates in pre-intervention interview with the researcher.

Phase 3: Intervention

- Data collected during the 10-week intervention program.:
  - Researcher Observations.
  - Researcher Reflections.
  - 10 focus children's writing samples.
- Narrative 2: Intervention Narrative:
  - 10 focus children's narratives graded using Brightpath Assessment Tool.
  - 10 focus children's narratives analysed using Vocabulary Analysis Rubric.

Phase 4: Post-Intervention

- Narrative 3 'Message in a Bottle':
  - All experimental cohort's graded using Brightpath Assessment Tool
  - 10 focus children's narratives analysed using Vocabulary Analysis Rubric.
- Narrative 4 'The Piano':
  - All experimental cohort's graded using Brightpath Assessment Tool.
  - 10 focus children's narratives analysed using Vocabulary Analysis Rubric.
- Individual interviews:
  - Focus children participate in an individual pre-intervention interview with the researcher.
  - Experimental group's class teacher participates in pre-intervention interview with the researcher.

4.3 Methodological Approach

This study sought to extend theory, construct knowledge, and obtain a complete understanding without preconceived judgements (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Walsham, 1995), by synthesising a quasi-experimental research design and a qualitative approach within an interpretive paradigm.

Interpretive research recognises that reality is shaped by observable human experiences within a social setting (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Interpretive research is insider-orientated as the researcher investigates the situation, setting, and experiences of participants to gain an understanding of the participants' experiences in real-life situations (Creswell, 2018; Patton, 2002) to make future predictions based on analysis of the data collected (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Neuman, 2014; Whiteley, 2012). Fieldwork is an important element of interpretive research, and it is common practice in educational research for researchers to gather and record data from their observations of students in their school environment (Walsham, 2006).

Qualitative research is explorative, with information gathered through open-ended exploration of human experience in the natural settings in which participants live and work (Creswell, 2013; Neuman, 2014; Sandberg, 2005; Whiteley, 2012). Detailed notes gathered by researchers in the field through active listening and observation of participants' use of nonverbal and visual cues (Creswell, 2013, 2018; Daniel & Harland, 2017; Neuman, 2014) provide a crucial source of information and evidence for triangulation of data, researcher reflection and interpretation of experiences (Daniel & Harland, 2017; Merriam, 2009).

A qualitative approach was employed in this study, with the researcher undertaking the role of participant observer of Year 5 students in the natural school environment. This enabled the researcher to observe students whilst the intervention program she had planned was embedded into the Writing program, which was delivered by the classroom teacher. While engaging in the role of participant observer the researcher recorded her observations of students in the form of detailed handwritten field notes. These observations and recordings provided crucial evidence for interpretation of the effect of the intervention program to answer the research questions.

Similarly, interviews are a common feature of qualitative research. Interviews allow researchers to gather information relating to participants' thoughts

and beliefs. In this research study, the researcher conducted individual interviews with selected students and the classroom teacher to obtain their perspectives and beliefs related to writing. The recorded interviews conducted before and after the intervention provided substantial data for analysis and interpretation of the participants' perspectives. Details pertaining to the interviews including questions posed are incorporated in the Phase 2 and Phase 4 sections of this chapter. Details of the responses given are included in Chapter 5.

Both qualitative research and quasi-experimental research support small sample sizes to enhance the collection of specific detailed information (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Creswell, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Yin, 1984) through access to the limited available resources (Patton, 2002). To gain an in-depth understanding of issues central to the research in the most effective way (Patton, 2002; Suri, 2011), purposeful sampling affords the researcher the ability to gain comprehensive understanding through the recording of deep, rich descriptions during observations of specific groups identified as relevant to the research study (Yates, 2004).

Although all students in the class participated in the intervention program and pre- and post- test assessments, analysis of data focused on 10 students selected as research participants. Restricting the focus sample size enabled concentrated observation of the participants during lessons and detailed analysis of multiple writing samples completed by the participants throughout the course of the research study. Details of the participant selection process are described in Phase 1 of this chapter.

Quasi-experimental research explores the effectiveness of an intervention or policy delivered to a group in a real-world setting, with data collected from pre- and post-tests undertaken at set points in time (Gopalan et al., 2020). A quasi-experimental design was applied to this research study, which used the results of pre- and post-test data collected from Brightpath narrative writing assessments as a measure of the effectiveness of the intervention on students' narrative writing. All students in the Year 5 class completed a pre-test prior to participating in the intervention program, which was graded by means of the Brightpath assessment tool, as described in detail in Chapter 1. Calibrated exemplars of writing samples set along the linear scale known as the Brightpath Teacher's Ruler, assigned numerical grades to each of the students' narratives. Post-test data was collected from the same students following the conclusion of the intervention program. The numerical scores

provided the quantitative data used to measure students' narrative writing over time and to determine any positive or negative impact of the intervention on students' narrative writing.

In addition, an interpretivist paradigm was applicable to this study because to determine the generalisability of the intervention and implications for writing pedagogy, the intervention program was delivered in the authentic setting of the participants' everyday school environment. Further, the data collection phase of the research study was restricted to the predetermined dates declared in the ethics application.

4.3.1 Purpose

The research study developed from a valid concern due to the participant school's declining NAPLAN writing achievement levels, identified from data provided to schools through Valuate. As detailed in Chapter 1, Valuate provides schools that are members of the Australian Independent Schools Western Australia Association with detailed analysis of an individual school's NAPLAN results. It also provides comparative data between the subject school and similar schools, and to all Australian schools. In addition to being aware of the declining NAPLAN achievement levels, as an educator in the school, the researcher was able to access and analyse data that was only available to teachers at the subject school, and would, therefore, not be accessible to an external researcher. Furthermore, her teaching position at the school afforded the researcher intimate knowledge of the school environment and pedagogical practices. Consequently, she was aware of the Primary School's leadership concern about the declining level of writing achievement and their subsequent plan to improve the teaching and assessment of writing. Likewise, the researcher was familiar with the teaching styles of individual teachers, gained from personal observation and immersion in the school community and classrooms. Additional advantages afforded to the researcher as an employee in the school included access to resources such as the student drive on the school's shared data network, flexibility with timetable changes at short notice, and the capacity to engage in discussions with the classroom teacher beyond the timetabled intervention program. The researcher applied this knowledge in the identification and selection of the year level and classroom teacher; the rationale for each selection is described in the planning section of this chapter.

The study examined multimodality and how meaning is made through intersemiosis, synthesising research methodology with Halliday's (1978) theory of social semiotics and the belief that children learn the semiotics of language in functional contexts. Semiotic systems and multimodality are discussed in detail in Chapter 3. The researcher sought to access students' prior knowledge of multiple sign systems, delivered in the form of images, sounds, gestures and words to tap into and further develop the semiotic toolkits they bring to school (Acevedo et al., 2023; Dyson, 2003; New London Group, 1996; Rose & Martin, 2012; Siegel, 2006).

Qualitative research in education looks beyond quantitative pre- and post-assessments and the generalisability of a wide population to identify similarities and differences in a representative sample group through recorded observations of everyday school life (Good & Brophy, 2003; Hill & McNamara, 2011; Kingsley, 2009). To understand the complexities of what happens in the classroom and capture authentic participation while remaining inconspicuous and being unobtrusive, qualitative researchers gather information in the form of written notes, digital photography, and video recording (Kingsley, 2009).

To obtain data that would explain the social phenomena through first-hand experience, participant observation is a common and valuable method of data collection, with the participant observer becoming part of the phenomena being studied (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Yin, 2014). Immersed in the research environment, the participant-observer role is time-consuming and complex (Freebody, 2003) and ranges 'from mostly observation to mostly participation' (Glesne, 2011, p. 64). The participant observer role enables a researcher to gain information through insider observation that is not accessible from an interview alone (Walsham, 2006; Whiteley, 2012). However, the role is complex and unstructured, with the researcher required to record observations of the participants in the form of quality, well-written descriptive field notes, audio recordings, and photographs while simultaneously engaging with the research subjects and reviewing artifacts (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Schensul & LeCompe, 2013).

To determine the impact of the intervention on the students' inclusion of visual imagery and descriptive language in their narrative writing, the researcher observed students in the classroom and the school environment throughout the intervention program. Rapport and trust were built during prolonged engagement in

the research setting are integral components of gathering information for research undertaken by a participant observer (Freebody, 2003; Mertler, 2014). Prior to the implementation of the research, the researcher's engagement with the class was limited to her presentation and explanation of the research study. However, during Term 3, she was in the classroom each Wednesday afternoon when the intervention lessons were timetabled, during the additional morning lesson, and during post-intervention assessments. Because she was known to the students as a teacher in the Primary School, a relationship was established that enabled the elements of trust and rapport to be developed earlier than might have been achieved by an outside researcher. The aim of a participant observer is to fit into the scene well enough to be ignored, even while conducting interviews, taking notes and photographs. Although the researcher's focus during the intervention was the observation of the students, she engaged with students by answering questions and providing behaviour management support, her interactions resembling the duties of an Education Assistant. Good classroom management is required to ensure the successful implementation of inquiry-based learning (Korkman & Metin, 2021), and the presence of an additional adult facilitated the implementation of the intervention program.

Students' language resources, literacy development, and social interaction are inextricably intertwined (Dyson, 1993; Health, 1993). In addition to the examination of documents and artifacts (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002), interpretive researchers seek to discover the participants' voice and point of view (Neuman, 2014). Interviews provide an avenue for researchers to gather information that has not been observed (Patton, 2002). To construct new knowledge (Merriam, 2009; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) and validate qualitative data, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with the participants prior to the commencement of the intervention program and again on its conclusion. Analysis of interviews provided an insight into the students' interpretation of their writing development and multiple sources of data for thematic interpretive analysis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The researcher gathered data from multiple sources throughout the course of the intervention, including interviews, observations, writing samples and assessments. Detailed records of observations provided thick descriptions which give context to the experience, through stated intentions and an organised process (Denzin, 2009). Participant quotations provide rich descriptions that increase the

authenticity and validity of the research (Cope, 2014; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Herrera, 2001). The researcher's handwritten field notes recorded words spoken verbatim by the students and teacher during whole-class discussions. She also noted her observations of students' actions and their interactions with each other. The researcher's observations are included in the detailed lesson summaries found in Chapter 5.

Kingsley (2009) asserted that 'visual images infuse a study with life that cannot be reached through a technical/rational approach alone' (p. 536), provide a running chronology of classroom, deliver 'the construction of truth' (p. 535), and provide insight into classroom culture (Prosser, 2007). To provide context for the study, during each lesson, the researcher recorded photographic evidence of student participation. Photographs taken by the researcher included throughout this chapter provide reference points for discussion (Merriam, 2009) and reflection.

4.3.1.1 Phase 1: Planning

Figure 4.2

Phase 1: Planning

Phase 1: Planning

- Identification of Problem: Declining writing achievement.
- Research Sample Selection:
    - School – Researcher's place of employment.
    - Cohort – Year 5 – (3 classes).
    - One class from the cohort chosen as the experimental group.
- Writing Assessment tools:
    - Brightpath.
    - Vocabulary Analysis Rubric.
- Development of Intervention Program:
    - Resources

The first phase, 'planning', began in Semester 2, 2017, with the identification of the problem that led to the research study. This was followed by determining the selection of the school context and sample group in which the research would occur. The next section of the planning phase concentrated on the selection of the teacher the researcher considered most appropriate to deliver the intervention program and obtaining his verbal consent to participate in the study. The selection of the appropriate tools to assess students' writing preceded the creation of the writing

intervention program and the selection of resources to be included in the program's delivery.

4.3.1.1.1 Identification of the Problem

The decline in the writing achievement of primary school students, as evidenced in the annual National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) assessments (Gardner, 2018a; Wyatt-Smith & Jackson, 2016), was also evident at the subject school, as shown in Figure 1.3. Although nationally, the Year 3 NAPLAN writing grades increased from 2014 to 2016, the subject school's Year 3 results fell significantly during the same period. Similarly, during the period from 2013 to 2015, Year 5 students' NAPLAN writing results consistently remained above the national average and mirrored that of the national scores; however, between 2015 and 2016 there was a steep decline in the school grades. In contrast to the steep rise in the school's Year 7 results between 2012 and 2013, marks fell steeply between 2014 and 2016. Although the school's Year 9 results had continued to fall from 2013 to 2016, the gradient was not steep; however, the national levels for the same year level remained constant.

As discussed in Chapter 1, concern about the Participant School's NAPLAN writing achievement led to a review of the writing instruction and assessment practices within the primary school to identify strengths and weaknesses in the current practices and writing programs. Subsequently, with the aim of improving the writing performance of the primary school students, the Brightpath writing assessment tool was introduced into the primary school. As detailed in Chapter 1, the 'Teacher's Ruler' provided teachers with benchmarks to measure student progress and criteria to assist with the identification of teaching strategies to assist students improve their writing.

The researcher identified consistent and reoccurring paucity of the inclusion of descriptive language and visual imagery, consequently, the narratives written by the students did not facilitate visualisation by the reader. Similarly, as shown in Figure 1.4, analysis of Year 3 and Year 5, 2016 NAPLAN writing identified vocabulary as an area of weakness, along with paragraphing, character, and setting.

4.3.1.1.2 Sample Selection

The participant school was selected for the research study because it was the location of the identified problem and it was the school in which the researcher was employed. Undertaking research at her place of employment provided a high level of

convenience. Further advantages that arose as a teacher in the school included access to students' personal information, such as diagnosed disabilities and academic records, including individual NAPLAN writing samples, and access to the school's data on Valuate. A description of Valuate was provided in Chapter 1. Another advantage afforded the researcher, which would not otherwise have been provided to an external researcher, included access to the student drive on the school network, which enabled the researcher to easily access the work saved by students during the intervention and to respectively save material on the drive to be shared with students. Additionally, as a Learning Support teacher, who was not bound by a set classroom timetable, the researcher had the ability to be flexible with access to the students and the teacher.

Inquiry-based learning requires students to apply higher order cognitive operations, such as: critical analysis and creative thinking, to solve problems and make connections (Murdoch, 2015). Following, professional development delivered by Kath Murdoch to teachers in the primary school, inquiry-based learning had become embedded in the daily morning routine of Early Years classrooms during morning investigation sessions. The pedagogy was progressively being integrated into the Middle and Upper Primary Years as students who had engaged in inquiry in the early years moved through the year levels. However, rather than delivering a session for investigations as in Early Year classes, the inquiry approach was introduced into Science and Social Science curriculum areas through scaffolded research projects. Integrated, holistic, and cooperative learning activities foster student engagement (Skinner et al., 2012). The writing intervention program engaged students in open-ended tasks that necessitated the employment of observation, creative and critical thinking skills, which correspond with the skills required in inquiry-based learning. While the pedagogical approach applied in the writing intervention program aligned with the school's pedagogical practice, it extended the inquiry approach to include the English curriculum.

Year 5 was selected for the research study because concerns about the standard of students' writing originated from analysis of Year 3 and Year 5 NAPLAN data. In addition, subsequent analysis of Year 5 students' Brightpath writing by the researcher identified a lack of descriptive language and visual imagery, from which the research questions were developed. Secondly, the research study aligned with the Year 5 Australian English Curriculum objectives focused on

the development of inquiry skills and understanding of how codes and conventions, and semiotic systems are applied (Bull & Anstey, 2019). At the Year 5 level, students: 'identify the relationship between words, sounds, imagery, and language patterns in narrative and poetry such as ballads, limericks, and free verse' (ACELT1617); 'experiment with language features and word choice using effects such as imagery, and metaphors' (AELT1800); and 'plan, draft, and publish imaginative and multimodal text choosing language features, images, and sound' (ACELT1701), (ACARA, 2020a).

Teachers shape the culture and atmosphere of a classroom; therefore, the selection of the teacher to deliver the intervention program was a carefully considered decision. In 2018, the Year 5 cohort consisted of three uniformly composed mixed-ability classes of between 30 and 32 students, taught by three experienced teachers, two male and one female. To enable the researcher to attend all lessons and gather specific, detailed information from a smaller sample size (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Creswell, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Yin, 1984), the intervention program was implemented in only one class. The class comprised 18 male and 12 female students. Only two male students were from homes in which English is a second language, and both had received all their education at an Australian school.

A teaching philosophy and pedagogical approach that supported collaboration, together with the ability to deliver engaging and interactive lessons, were considered an essential characteristic in the selection of the teacher and subsequently class for the intervention program. Because of her familiarity, established from working with classroom teachers, the researcher was conversant with the Year 5 teachers' individual teaching styles. She applied this knowledge to select the teacher whose attributes she considered the best fit for the delivery of the writing intervention program. A description of the teacher and reasons for his selection are detailed below.

As well as his pedagogical approach, the teacher selected was considered best suited based on his professional and personal attributes. Below is a brief description of the selected teacher's teaching experience, his personal attributes, and pedagogy, which led to his selection to deliver the writing intervention program.

Following the completion of a Bachelor of Education (Primary) in 1999, the teacher accrued 19 years of experience teaching Years 3-6. His first-year teaching

position was in a private school in a country town, followed by 13 years teaching Years 3-5 at a private PK-12 in the northern suburbs of Perth, Western Australia. In 2014, he moved to the subject school, where over the four years to 2018, he taught Years 4 and 5. Consequently, he was considered to have a sound understanding of the developmental needs of Year 5 students and relevant curriculum content knowledge.

Following the implementation of inquiry-based learning in the primary school, the classroom teacher enthusiastically introduced concepts into his classroom. He supported this approach and built a classroom environment where students felt safe to participate through the provision of a physical environment where students could choose where they sat, and collaboration was encouraged. The traditional classroom layout, with desks set out in rows facing the board and students seated according to a specified seating plan, was replaced with a flexible arrangement: students had no set desk, and there was no ‘teacher desk’. Instead, students had the option to work at standing desks, sit on couches, or on the floor with lap tables, or at a group of traditional desks. Fernandes et al. (2011) reported that allowing students to have choice in where they sit increases their level of comfort and willingness to actively participate in lessons. Throughout the lesson the teacher constantly engaged with students, the flexible seating enabling him to easily move amongst the students as they worked. Photographs of the students working collaboratively, typical of the class teacher’s approach, are presented in Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3

Group Writing Task

Engaging students in conferences during writing lessons is an element of the Process Writing approach developed by Graves (1983). As discussed in Chapter 2,

during writing workshops introduced by Graves, students are provided with extended time to write, allowing time for teachers to engage in conferences with students during the writing process. Calkins (1994) described writing conferences as the heart of writing workshops, with feedback focusing on the 'writer not the writing' (p. 228). However, to be effective, feedback should be both positive and explicit (Black & Wiliam, 2009; Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Termly Brightpath writing assessments provide the teacher with information about his students' current level of achievement, and the calibrated scale of the 'Teacher's Ruler' identified clear teaching points for instruction.

The teacher ensured students were also aware of their current levels of achievement and what was required to advance their writing to the next level by holding feedback conferences. The teacher engaged in two forms of conferencing: the first was predetermined and targeted a small group of students based on their Brightpath writing assessments. During feedback conferences with small groups of students achieving within the same Brightpath band, the teacher discussed the criteria required to progress to the next level, reviewing model writing samples from higher band levels. Feedback conferences of up to ten minutes duration was not held during writing lessons when new content was being delivered but when opportunities arose throughout the day.

The second form of conference was impromptu and involved the teacher engaging with an individual student or small group during the writing lesson. In contrast to summative feedback, conferences between the teacher and an individual or a small group of students during writing lessons aimed to stimulate students' thinking. These informal conferences, which lasted two to three minutes, occurred as the teacher moved around the room and identified students who he noted might be struggling with the generation of ideas, which inhibited their progress. Engaging in conversation, the teacher stimulated idea generation through open-ended questions. In addition, he encouraged students to refer to the Brightpath ruler chart displayed on the classroom wall during writing lessons.

The teacher reported that he aspired to instil a love of learning in students by focusing on authentic contexts, student interests, personalised learning, and task differentiation. Over several years prior to this study, the researcher had witnessed the teacher's passion for motivating and engaging his students, as well as his desire to increase his repertoire of teaching skills while supporting students in his class. In

contrast to classrooms where student interaction is not encouraged (Applebee & Langer, 2013; De Smedt et al., 2016) and the teacher monopolises classroom talk, leading to student disengagement (Bull & Anstey, 2019), the teacher encouraged student talk, providing lessons where the voices of students were equally heard (Alexander, 2018; Mercer & Littleton, 2007). He promoted collaboration (Alexander, 2018) and created a classroom where students felt safe to share their thoughts and ideas with each other, attempt new challenges, and link prior knowledge with new knowledge (Boyd et al., 2019; Resnick, 2015).

'Schools are complex places, with participants who have different roles and responsibilities and a wide range of goals, needs, and interests that are not necessarily compatible with those of the researcher' (Spada, 2005, p. 328). In previous years, in her role as a learning support teacher, the researcher supported students in the classrooms of all three Year 5 teachers. The researcher considered the selected teacher's teaching philosophy, pedagogy, and positive relationships with students, together with his spontaneity and aptitude to experiment, offered an ideal fit for the delivery of the intervention program. The intervention program incorporated student discovery as opposed to teacher-directed lessons. It employed an inquiry-based approach which encouraged student talk, promoted student voice within a curriculum area typically delivered by means of teacher-directed instruction and scaffolded models.

Spada (2005) identified the difficulty for researchers in finding teachers 'willing to participate in ways that are compatible with the research goals…and whose "natural" instructional styles matched with particular treatments' (p. 333). Spada also suggested that teachers' willingness to participate in research studies is determined by whether they feel the research is beneficial to them. Compatibility in philosophy and pedagogy was considered important for the successful implementation of the intervention program, which was created by the researcher yet delivered by the teacher. The researcher and the teacher had developed a good working relationship and rapport built on mutual respect and the ability to work in a classroom together. She considered the relationship advantageous, as rapport and trust had already been created and did not need to be built, as would be the situation if the research were conducted in another setting. In addition, the researcher was confident that the intervention program would fit seamlessly into the classroom culture created by the teacher. As a result of the intervention being delivered in the

real-world setting of participants' literacy lessons and the external school environment, generalisability of the intervention to comparable settings delivered ecological validity to the research findings.

4.3.1.2 Resources

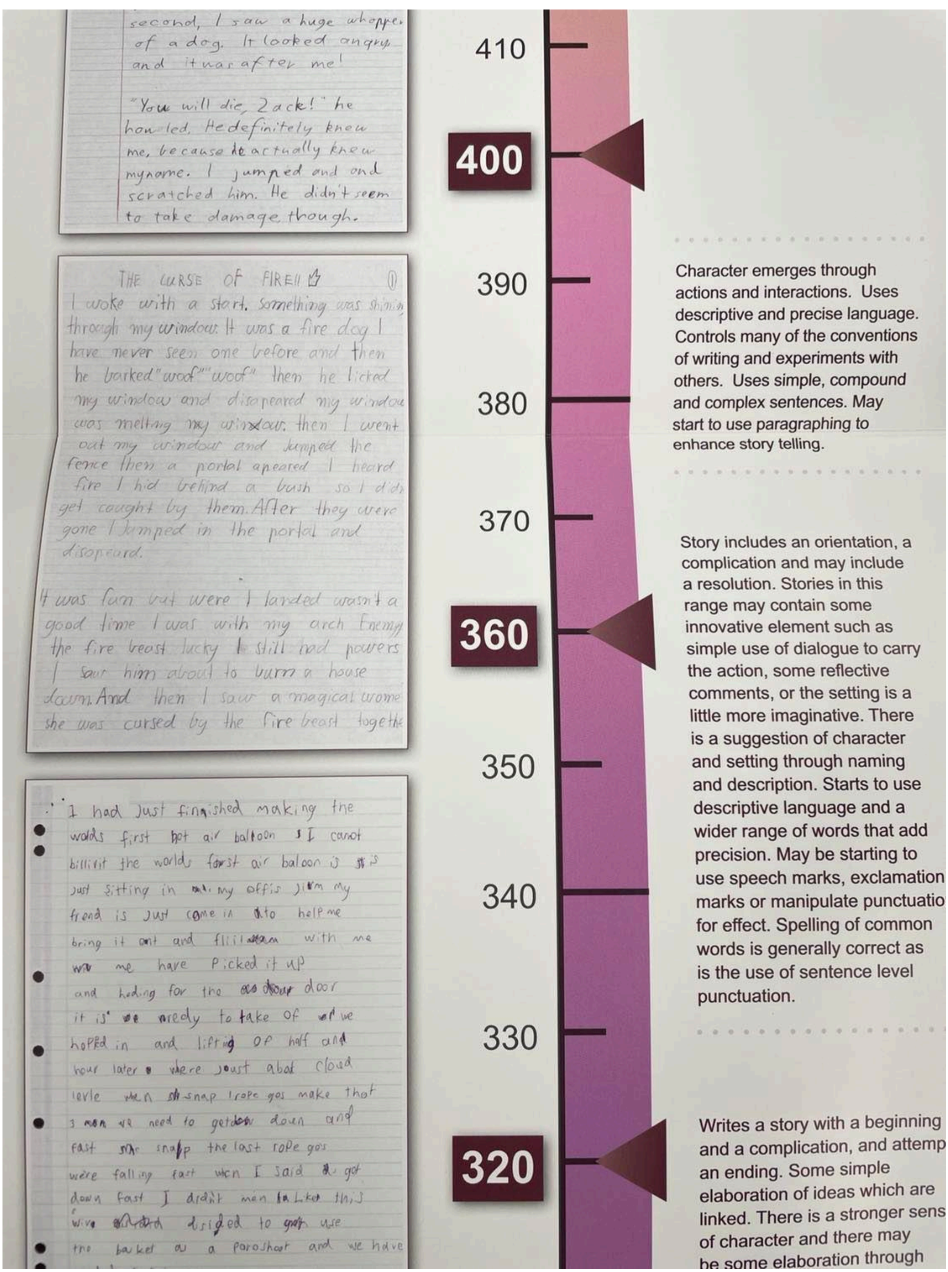
4.3.1.2.1 Brightpath Writing Assessment Tool

The Brightpath assessment tool, which was discussed in detail in Chapter 1, was introduced into the Primary School in 2014 to address the school's accountability for student achievement and to deliver consistency in the teaching and assessment of writing.

As explained in Chapter 1, the Brightpath assessment tool consists of a calibrated scale termed the 'Teacher's Ruler', which was developed following pairwise assessment of students' writing samples undertaken by teachers from Western Australian primary schools (Steedle & Ferrara, 2016). Pairwise judgements apply the principle of the 'law of comparative judgement' developed by Thurstone (1994). Moderation increases the validity and reliability of assessments, but the practice of moderation is time-consuming; however, the two-stage process used in the development of the Brightpath Teacher's Ruler allows teachers to make reliable on-balance judgements against pre-graded exemplars by identifying strengths and weaknesses (Humphrey & Heldsinger, 2019), enabling the task of moderation to be completed simply and efficiently (Brightpath, 2017, 2019; Heldsinger & Humphry, 2013). A numerical grade along the calibrated scale of the 'Teacher's Ruler' determines a level of writing achievement with a level of reliability between .95 and .97, with an accuracy of .9 considered to be very high (Heldsinger & Humphrey, 2014). Furthermore, descriptors set along the scale with deliver teaching points for further instruction. An example of the Brightpath 'Teacher's Ruler' is shown below in Figure 4.4.

Figure 4.4

Brightpath Teacher's Ruler



The Brightpath assessment tool was already integral to the school's assessment program, introduced into the Primary School in 2014 to address the school's accountability for student achievement and deliver consistency in the teaching and assessment of writing. Termly assessments of students' writing using the Brightpath assessment tool were conducted at the beginning of each term for students from Years 1 to 6. The Year 1 and 2 students focused on recounts, while the students in Years 4 to 6 completed either persuasive or narrative texts, the genres

targeted in NAPLAN. Brightpath provided teachers with a tool to accurately assess students' writing skills with increased frequency throughout the year, including the years when students do not complete NAPLAN (Years 2, 4, 6, and 8). Therefore, Brightpath was selected as a measurement tool in the study, providing a convenient means to examine the impact of the intervention through pre- and post- writing assessments without causing any inconvenience to the class program.

Brightpath provides teachers with a tool to qualitatively analyse students' writing by means of teacher judgement and a quantitative measure. The ipsative measurement of each student's progress between reference points provides a means for teachers to monitor individual students and cohorts throughout a year and over time. Therefore, the Brightpath writing assessment tool was used to measure the impact of the writing intervention program on students' narrative writing through pre- and post- assessments.

At the time the research was undertaken, Brightpath writing assessments required students to compose a handwritten text within a set time limit on a designated topic and genre. During assessments, the first 10 minutes are allocated to teacher and student discussion on the topic contained in the visual stimulus, followed by five minutes of independent pre-writing and planning, and then 30 minutes of writing time. The supervising teacher then informs students that there is a final five-minute period for proofreading and editing.

4.3.1.2.2 Vocabulary Analysis Rubric

In addition to being graded by the Brightpath narrative writing tool, narratives written by the student participants before, during, and after the intervention program were analysed using a vocabulary analysis rubric. The rubric was created by modifying a rubric developed by Gardner and Kuzich (2018) for their research on the impact on children's poetic writing following direct engagement with an unmanaged natural setting' (p. 429). The rubric developed by Gardner and Kuzich (2018) was considered applicable to the current study because of the common focus on identifying students' inclusion of sensory and figurative language in their writing. In addition, students in the research completed by Gardner and Kuzich (2018) completed their writing after either engaging in a sensory exploration of a natural environment or accessed photographs of the environment as a stimulus for their writing. An outline of the research conducted by Gardner and Kuzich was provided in Chapter 3. The tool was relevant to the study due to the similarities in

the research that sought to identify the impact of students' exploration of the outdoor environment and their sensory experiences and utilised photographs as a writing stimulus. However, this study focused on narrative writing, while the research conducted by Gardner and Kuzich studied the impact on students' poetry writing.

Categories included in the original rubric were visual, tactile, aural, olfactory, temperature, movement, simile, metaphor, and sensory repetition to analyse sensory repetition captured when two or more adjectives were used to describe one noun. The category of 'affective' was used to acknowledge the use of words to describe 'feelings associated to things in the environment' and the category of 'appreciation' encompassed 'the writer's sense of wonder' (Gardner & Kuzich, 2018, p. 433). The original rubric was modified by the researcher with the aim of providing a means to analyse the presence of sensory descriptors and visual imagery, and to acknowledge the predominance of 'action' words and record how students' language evolved from pre-intervention to post-intervention writing. For the purpose of this research study, a modified rubric consisting of six categories and 13 subcategories was created to analyse students' writing as below in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1

Vocabulary Analysis Rubric: Adapted from Gardner and Kuzich (2018)

SENSORY	Visual - See Tactile- Feel Aural- Hear Olfactory- Smell Taste
ACTION	Movement Adverbs
KNOWLEDGE	Temperature/Time Size/Location Adjectives/Description
EMOTIONS	Feelings
FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE	Simile/Metaphor
OTHER	Interesting Phrases or Clauses

The sensory category was divided into visual, tactile, aural, olfactory, and taste. This was followed by two categories classified as movement/action and adverbs. Students' ability to provide detailed descriptors was covered by the subcategories of knowledge, temperature/time, size/location, and

adjective/description. A 'feelings' category covered emotive descriptors, while 'figurative language' encompassed students' use of similes and metaphors. The final category of 'interesting phrases or clauses' was included to note phrases or clauses that improved the quality and engaged the reader's emotion, humour, or visualisation, which may otherwise not have been included in the analysis, as shown above in Table 4.1. The analysis, construction of categories, and coding of students' Brightpath narrative writing for visual imagery and descriptive language were both systematic and inductive. The application of the rubric, as it is applied to each of the Brightpath narratives written by each of the student participants, is demonstrated in the findings presented in Chapter 5.

Details of the intervention program implemented during Term 3 are elaborated in the next section. The Brightpath and the visual imagery rubric reviewed in this section were both utilised during the intervention phase to analyse students' writing. The intervention was planned for the third term of the four-term school year. This enabled the program to be included in the classroom schedule without affecting the collection of data or impacting what the classroom teacher was required to deliver as part of the Year 5 writing program. The first term was considered too early in the year, and the Term 2 writing program focused on preparing students for NAPLAN assessments in May. The fourth term consisted of only eight weeks, with frequent interruptions because of multiple end-of-year events; therefore, Term 4 did not facilitate the inclusion of the intervention program during this period. However, Term 3 provided sufficient time for the establishment of rapport and relationships between students, and between students and their teacher prior to their participation in the collaborative program. When teachers have developed a good rapport and authentic connection with their students, they are able to personalise communication (Acevedo et al., 2023; Burke-Smalley, 2018; Rose & Martin, 2012), enhance student motivation and engagement (Skinner et al., 2008; Skinner et al., 2012) and participation (Frisby & Martin, 2010). Frisby et al. (2014) reported that when rapport was developed between students and teachers, students were more willing to ask questions, which subsequently increased learning outcomes.

As the teacher was implementing the intervention program, designed by the researcher, his relationship and rapport with the students could impact the outcome of the research study. Further, by the third term, the teacher had had two terms to

acquire insight into students' academic capabilities and individual personalities and obtain a sound understanding of the students. Additionally, Term 3 was a 10-week term, and the research study intervention program was able to be seamlessly implemented into the classroom program.

The intervention program was scheduled into the timetable on Wednesday afternoons between 1:30 pm and 2:30 pm. The timeframe allowed a 10-minute period for students to settle after returning from lunch, during which it was common for students to read silently. In addition, 10 minutes at the end of each lesson provided a sufficient length of time for students to save their work and 'pack up' prior to dismissal at the end of the school day. The intervention program employed an inquiry and investigative approach, which required students to actively participate in a variety of creative and explorative activities as opposed to learning to master set literacy skills found in traditionally based literacy lessons. Therefore, the afternoon session was not considered detrimental to student engagement or achievement, as students physically participated and were actively engaged in each lesson. However, Brightpath assessments were timetabled to take place in the morning.

Within the intervention program, students were challenged to make observations and to retrieve their prior knowledge whilst participating in open-ended tasks. Rather than being told what they needed to know, an inquiry-based approach enabled the teacher to facilitate student learning by providing opportunities for students to explore and discover on their own. Collaboration and discussion between students were essential strategies promoted in the intervention program and an inquiry-based approach.

Each lesson, including instructions given and questions posed by the teacher, is detailed below in Phase 3. Chapter 5 presents an analysis of the lessons developed from researcher observations, samples of student writing, and feedback provided by the teacher and student participants during interviews.

4.3.1.3 Resources

4.3.1.3.1 Picture books

Although picture books are commonly considered a medium for young children, books with strong visual images appeal to readers in their young teens (Short, 2018). Prior knowledge and imagination are accessed by readers as they search for semantic information within the images, (Arizpe, 2013; Dean & Grierson,

2005; Serafini, 2014a). The semiotics, purpose, and types of picturebooks were detailed in Chapter 2.

Images in picture books provide a medium to develop perception, visual thinking, and literacy skills (Dean & Grierson, 2005; Massey, 2015; O'Neill, 2011; Pantaleo, 2014), assisting in the creation of text (Murphy, 2009; Pantaleo, 2009). A picturebook was selected as a key resource in the intervention program to provoke students' reading of semantic messages within the images. As the researcher had previously witnessed an unusually high level of student interest and excitement when *The Water Tower* (Crew, 1994) had been used as a writing stimulus in a Year 5 class, the text was selected as a source of visual image stimulus in the intervention program. A PowerPoint containing the illustrations of *The Water Tower* (Crew, 1994) (Appendix 17) was created by the researcher as a writing stimulus for students during the intervention program. Whilst the removal of text created a 'picture book without words' and not a 'wordless picture book' in the true sense, the illustrations were chronologically ordered and contained characters.

4.3.1.3.2 Photographs

As with the visual images located in picture books, photographs were a key feature of the intervention program. Photographs are a source of rich visual information (Choon-Lee, 2019; Ziller, 1990), with the high levels of colour, detail, and perspective provoking deep thinking (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006) and stimulating emotional and sensory responses (Lee, 2019; McLean & Rowsell, 2015). Digital text such as photographs or videos that have significance for the student writers, and that they are able to 'describe, narrate or explain the events around', assist in the development of 'writerly behaviours' (Dowdall, 2019). The inclusion of photographs taken by students themselves targeted students' recall of prior experiences and the creation of richer and more descriptive text.

4.3.2 Phase 2: Pre-Intervention

Figure 4.5

Pre-Intervention

Phase 2: Pre-Intervention

- Experimental group complete Narrative 1: What's in the Box?
    - Narrative 1, graded using Brightpath Assessment Tool
- Participant Selection
    - 10 students selected as focus children from across the full range of scores achieved by students in Narrative 1.
- The 10 focus children's narratives analysed using Vocabulary Analysis Rubric.
- Individual Interviews:
    - Focus children participate in an individual pre-intervention interview with the researcher.
    - Experimental group's class teacher participates in pre-intervention interview with the researcher.

At the end of Term 2, as part of the primary school's assessment schedule, the Year 5 students wrote a narrative that was assessed using the Brightpath assessment tool. The Brightpath assessment tool was described in detail in Chapter 1 and reviewed earlier in this chapter under writing assessment tool selection. It was common practice in the school to prepare students for the annual National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) testing by exposing them to previous years' writing prompts. The NAPLAN tests were described in detail in Chapter 1. The stimulus selected for the Term 2 Brightpath narrative was the 2009 NAPLAN writing prompt: 'The Box', shown below in Figure 4.6.

Figure 4.6

Writing Prompt 'The Box'

A 'cold writing task' involves students being provided with the subject and topic immediately prior to the writing assessment and not associated with content currently being studied. Instead of providing the students with a 'cold task' and just the 2009 paper stimulus, as shown above in Figure 4.4, the day before the writing task, the teacher placed a nondescript brown box in the classroom and prompted students to consider what could be inside. However, he did not mention that the writing task that was to follow the next day. The students completed their termly Brightpath writing assessment between 11:00 am and 12:00 pm. Following the instructions provided on the paper stimulus, the teacher instructed the students to write a narrative or story about a mysterious box titled 'What's in the Box?'.

4.3.2.1 Narrative 1: What's in The Box?

The narratives were marked simultaneously and separately by the classroom teacher and researcher using the Brightpath narrative assessment tool. While the classroom teacher marked the original handwritten script, the researcher marked a photocopy. Heldsinger and Humphry (2013, 2019) reported high levels of correlation between teacher judgements when using calibrated exemplars, with any

differences being a result of assessor interpretation. Although the researcher had less experience marking students' writing using the calibrated exemplars of the Brightpath assessment tool, the grades awarded by the teacher and researcher were consistently similar, as will be shown in the next chapter. Traditional face-to-face moderation provided an opportunity for assessors to discuss, reflect, and reconsider their grading. When there was a discrepancy in the marking of a student's writing amounting to more than 10 points, or if the grades placed the student in different bands of the Brightpath scale, the two assessors undertook a face-to face moderation process. The 10-point margin was determined because the developers of the Brightpath assessment tool found inter-rater reliability for Grade 5 narrative writing, referred to as a 'Person Separation Index' (PSI), occurred up to 0.960 points (Humphry & Heldsinger, 2019). The scores awarded to all Year 5 students 'What's in the Box?' narratives were placed in a distribution table, ranked according to the bands of the Teacher's Ruler.

4.3.2.1.1 Participant Selection

Grades awarded to the students' narratives provided the data source from which students were selected as participants in the research study. To ensure the 10 student participants were a fair representation of the distribution of grades across the class, the percentage of students within each band determined the number of students selected from each band. Scores achieved by the class ranged from 180 to 390 and encompassed five bands of the Brightpath Narrative Writing Teacher's Ruler, as shown below in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2

Pre-intervention Scores and Participant Selection

Brightpath Grades (Bands)	170-210	210-250	250-330	330-370	370-410
Number of students	2	6	9	9	4
Percentage of class	7%	20%	30%	30%	13%
Number of Focus Children	0	2	3	3	2
Percentage of Focus Children		20%	30%	30%	20%

Although three students received a score of 180, permission to participate was received from only one of these students. The researcher decided to exclude this student from the selection of participants due to his very low cognitive capacity,

difficulty engaging with age-level content, and the high level of adult support he required across all learning areas. From the remaining four bands, two students were selected from the top and bottom bands, and three students from the two middle bands. The 10 students selected were assigned pseudonyms against which the information gathered throughout the research study was retained. The distribution of student scores across the Brightpath bands and the number of participants selected from within each is shown above in Table 4.2.

4.3.2.1.2 Vocabulary Analysis

The 'What's in the Box?' narratives written by the student participants were analysed against the visual analysis rubric described earlier in this chapter. Whereas the Brightpath assessment tool delivered a holistic analysis of students writing, including the use of technical features such as punctuation, the vocabulary analysis rubric, described in detail earlier in this chapter, sought to determine a more detailed analysis of students' use of features of language. The vocabulary analysis rubric focused on the inclusion of descriptive words and phrases or clauses within specific categories of language, such as action, sensory, knowledge, emotions, and figurative language, to evoke visual imagery. In addition, the vocabulary analysis rubric provided a base measurement of the participants' narrative writing prior to participating in the intervention program. Individual results for selected focus students are further detailed in Chapter 5.

4.3.2.2 Interviews

Interviews are a key source of new information in interpretive research to determine the effect of the intervention program and explore the participants' feelings, thoughts, and perspectives, which cannot be observed (Patton, 2002). In addition, interviews provide the researcher an opportunity to explore questions developed from observations (Creswell, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Walsham, 2006). The researcher conducted individual, semi-structured interviews with each of the student participants and the class teacher. The open-ended questions and semi-structured interview format enabled the researcher to engage with the students using a more conversational approach than would have been possible with a strict format of questioning in a structured interview (Yin, 2014). Through naturalistic discussion, it was possible to respond spontaneously to answers with further questions designed to probe more deeply, elicit further information, and seek clarification where initial

answers were incomplete or vague. In this way, participants were able to provide rich extended responses (Freebody, 2003).

4.3.2.2.1 Student Participants

To obtain the participants' perspective on writing in and out of the classroom context, the researcher conducted individual interviews with the student participants before their participation in the intervention program. The interviews were recorded on the researcher's iPhone, which enabled her to be fully engaged in the conversation and focus on the students' responses. On the day of each interview, the audio files were downloaded to the researcher's computer and immediately deleted from the iPhone. The saved audio files were then transcribed verbatim by the researcher into a Microsoft Word document and later checked for accuracy against the audio recording.

Individual semi-structured interviews with student participants were conducted discreetly during two periods of the school day outside formal instruction to avoid disruption to classroom teaching. The first session occurred during 'day start' between 8:00 am and the beginning of the first period at 8:20 am. The second session occurred during daily 'silent reading' sessions, held immediately following lunch at the beginning of the afternoon session. The interviews were held in a room located across the corridor from the Year 5 class, which was occupied at the time of the interviews only by the student and researcher, and ranged in length from five to twelve minutes, depending on student responses to each question. To reduce potential power differences, the interviews were conducted in a relaxed conversation mode with both the researcher and student seated on chairs of the same height, without a barrier between them. Although windows delivered a view of the interviewer and interviewee to anyone outside the classroom, the classroom door was kept open throughout the interview. The recording device was placed on a shelf to the side, and the questions were on a small clipboard held by the researcher.

To build trust and rapport before commencing the recorded interview, the researcher engaged the students in casual conversation, provided reassurance that there were no right or wrong answers, and reiterated the guarantee of confidentiality and anonymity. A list of questions was developed by the researcher to ensure consistency across all the interviews during the interview. However, during the interview the researcher did not read verbatim, and the exact wording and order varied. The semi-structured approach with open-ended questions enabled the

researcher to engage with the students in friendly conversation and the ability to encourage responses by probing for further details or explanations as required (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

The interview questions (Appendix 11) were designed to obtain students' views of writing and to develop a profile of each student prior to their participation in the writing intervention program. Students were asked about their reading and writing habits at home and school. As discussed in Chapter 2, research has identified a correlation between students' reading habits and their writing achievement (Anderson et al., 2018; Graham et al, 2018; Kent & Wanzek, 2016; Kim et al., 2018; Lee & Schallert, 2016) and their use of descriptive language (Jouhar & Rupley, 2021). Students were questioned about their preferred genre and what they liked or disliked about writing. Researchers have reported that students' enjoyment of writing has decreased because of the narrow genre focus as teachers prepare students for success in standardised assessments (Cambourne, 2015; Radcliffe, 2012). Students were asked whether they believed their spelling ability influenced word choice in writing activities. Research undertaken by Grainger et al. (2003) and Abbott et al. (2010) found that the emphasis on correct spelling and punctuation led to students' negative attitudes towards writing. Poor handwriting has been identified as negatively impacting students' attitude towards writing (Gardner, 2013). To determine how the need to handwrite or ability to use a laptop to produce their narratives influenced students, they were asked if they preferred writing by hand or using a laptop. The questions were developed from areas identified in research that impact students' writing. Open-ended questions provided a base to compare students' opinions about writing after participation in the intervention program.

4.3.2.2.2 Class Teacher

The teacher played a vital role in the research study and implementation of the intervention program, and his experience and knowledge gained throughout his 18-year career of teaching across Years 3 to 5 offered a rich source of information. Prior to the commencement of the intervention program, the teacher participated in a semi-structured interview with the researcher. Open-ended questions sought to determine the writing instruction and assessment methods he implemented in his class and how he addressed the challenge of improving students' writing achievement. Questions also addressed his observations of students' writing across his 18 years as a primary school teacher. The teacher's professional knowledge

experience, and beliefs provided a source for comparison following his participation in the ten-week intervention program. In addition to the formal interviews conducted prior to and following the intervention program after each lesson the researcher and the teacher met, to review the previous lesson and discuss planned activities for the next lesson. The meeting provided an opportunity for the researcher to alter the pre-planned program and update the teacher if any alteration was necessary. Due to her employment at the subject school, these sessions were able to occur at times convenient to both the teacher and the researcher. The outcomes of these discussions were included in the researcher's journal, and details of any subsequent action taken are detailed in Chapter 5.

4.3.3 Phase 3: Intervention

Figure 4.7

Phase 3: Intervention

Phase 3: Intervention

- Data collected during the 10-week intervention program.:
  - Researcher Observations.
  - Researcher Reflections.
  - 10 focus children's writing samples.
- Narrative 2: Intervention Narrative:
  - 10 focus children's narratives graded using Brightpath Assessment Tool.
  - 10 focus children's narratives analysed using Vocabulary Analysis Rubric.

The intervention program aimed to deliver a writing program that developed students' visual perception, thinking, and simulated emotional and sensory responses through participation in engaging, interactive open-ended tasks including, sensory experiences in the outdoor environment. Observations collected by the researcher during the intervention aimed to capture students' participation as a source of evidence of the effect of the program.

Collaboration, classroom talk, and sharing ideas were key elements in each lesson of the intervention program. Students often become disengaged when teachers monopolise classroom talk (Bull & Anstey, 2019), whereas collaborative activities promote active learning (Bruning & Kauffman, 2016; Davies, 2009; De Smedt et al., 2016), which results in increased student motivation and self-efficacy, and thus improved writing achievement (Callahan & King, 2011; Yarrow & Topping, 2001).

In contrast to writing programs that focus on preparing students for standardised assessments with no development of writing skills (Gardner, 2018b; Helm, 2008), the writing intervention program created by the researcher, emphasised collaboration and students' active engagement. The promotion of interactive discussion and cumulative talk occurs when each speaker builds positively on the contribution made by the previous speaker (Alexander, 2018; Mercer & Littleton, 2007), and this activity aimed to build students' confidence in sharing their ideas, targeting a move away from teacher-dominated talk.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, Term 3 was deemed the most suitable for the intervention program. The researcher engaged in the role of facilitator and consultant, orientating the classroom teacher prior to the implementation of the ten-week intervention program and throughout the research period. The program was developed by the researcher; however, she did not expect the teacher to slavishly follow a predetermined script but accorded him professional trust to deliver lessons within, the outline provided, while allowing him to take advantage of incidental learning opportunities. This also allowed the researcher to maintain her position as a participant-researcher and thereby minimise 'interference' to the intervention. Examples of opportunities taken by the teacher occurred during the first lesson when the teacher incorporated a PicCollage he had created himself, where the written text contradicted his facial expressions and body language. While the photograph was of him looking sad and forlorn with his head in his hands, he had included the words, 'fun, young, energetic, cheerful, effervescent, vibrant, charismatic'. The paradox added a humorous element to the beginning of the lesson and subsequently enhanced students' positive engagement. The second spontaneous incident occurred during the walk around the school in lesson 5. The teacher seized the opportunity for students to watch the assorted formations of clouds moving across the sky. A third impromptu incident introduced by the teacher occurred at the beginning of the lesson 6 as the students began their outdoor photography excursion. In the courtyard outside the classroom, the teacher allowed a student to climb a tree to provide the class with a description of what he could see from his elevated position.

4.3.3.1 Data Collection

4.3.3.1.1 Researcher Observations

The researcher undertook the role of participant observer, recording detailed observations as handwritten, diarised journal entries. She did not follow an

observation schedule but noted events as they occurred. By focusing on the students, who were among the ten participants, the researcher ensured the verbatim transcripts of student and teacher verbalisations during whole-class discussions were accurately documented. During each lesson, the researcher noted her observations of student interactions with peers and engagement with activities. The handwritten notes were typed within 24 hours of each lesson and saved electronically. These observations assisted in the generation of recommendations for future teaching practice, reported in Chapter 7. The role of the participant observer requires the researcher to remain neutral and record all interactions accurately without bias. Brightpath assessments, writing completed during the intervention, and data collected by the researcher in the form of recorded interviews, transcripts, vignettes, and photographs related to each student were saved in individual files created for each of the ten focus students.

4.3.3.1.2 Researcher Reflections

The process of self-reflection enables a researcher to consider their influence within the research process. Glesne (2016) defined reflexivity as 'an awareness of the self in the situation of action and of the role of the self in constructing the situation' (p. 145). Each afternoon, following the day's lesson, the researcher digitalising her handwritten observation notes and recorded her personal thoughts, reactions, and interpretations (Merriam, 2009). These reflections enabled the researcher to 'stand outside herself' and look back at the research context (Whiteley, 2012). The researcher's retrospective analysis of the findings will be discussed in Chapter 6.

4.3.3.1.3 Student Files

Prior to the commencement of the first lesson, students were instructed to save their work in a folder on the student drive of the school network at the end of each lesson. This provided a source from which the researcher copied the contents to her computer after each lesson and ensured that all documents were dated accurately. Furthermore, the potential for students to accidentally delete files, leading to lost data, was eliminated.

4.3.3.2 Lesson 1

Lesson 1 was driven by the focus questions: 'What do you notice about people?' and 'How can you tell how someone is feeling?' and the learning intention 'cultivate an increased awareness of the correlation between body language, facial features, and expression'. The teacher introduced the concept 'A picture is worth

1,000 words' and presented a PicCollage he had created of himself on the whiteboard. The PicCollage is shown below in Figure 4.8.

Figure 4.8

Teacher's Pic Collage Lesson 1

Harste et al. (1984) identified the importance of semiotics and sign-making in literacy development, with gesturing and dramatizing as integral components of the writing process (Seigel, 2006) to communicate thoughts and feelings through body language and facial expressions (Jewitt & Kress, 2008; Kalantzis, 2016). The teacher encouraged the students to 'read' his facial expression and body language displayed in the PicCollage. Students were prompted to question whether the words he had written accurately described the expression and body language portrayed in his photograph, and to justify their reasoning. The teacher took this opportunity to add his personality to the program, engaging the students through humour. He had deliberately used words that did not describe the mood reflected in his facial expression or body language, but rather words that contradicted them. This challenged the students to apply gestural semiotics and 'read' the image, rather than 'read' the words.

In contrast to the PicCollage created by the teacher, students were set the task of creating a PicCollage that matched the written text to the expression and emotions portrayed in their image. Students photographed themselves and each other, after which they shared the descriptions they had written about their images either with a

partner or in a small group of their choosing. This was a form of drama, in that role-play was being used to produce actions and mood. Cremin (2009) reported students demonstrated higher levels of motivation when drama was used as a writing prompt, which resulted in an increased number of ideas and more emotive writing.

Collaboration was considered to be an important element in the first lesson to engage students in oral discussions with each other. The teacher facilitated student participation and directed learning, moving around the room, posing questions, and prompting students to look critically at their images and elaborate on their descriptions. Before the lesson ended, he paused the activity to allow a student to share and explain her PicCollage, which was projected onto the whiteboard. Subsequently, more students wanted to share their work with the class. Providing students with opportunities to share their ideas has the potential to increase their self-efficacy as writers (Bruning et al., 2013; Wright et al., 2019). An example of a PicCollage completed by one of the students is shown below in Figure 4.9.

Figure 4.9

PicCollage Student

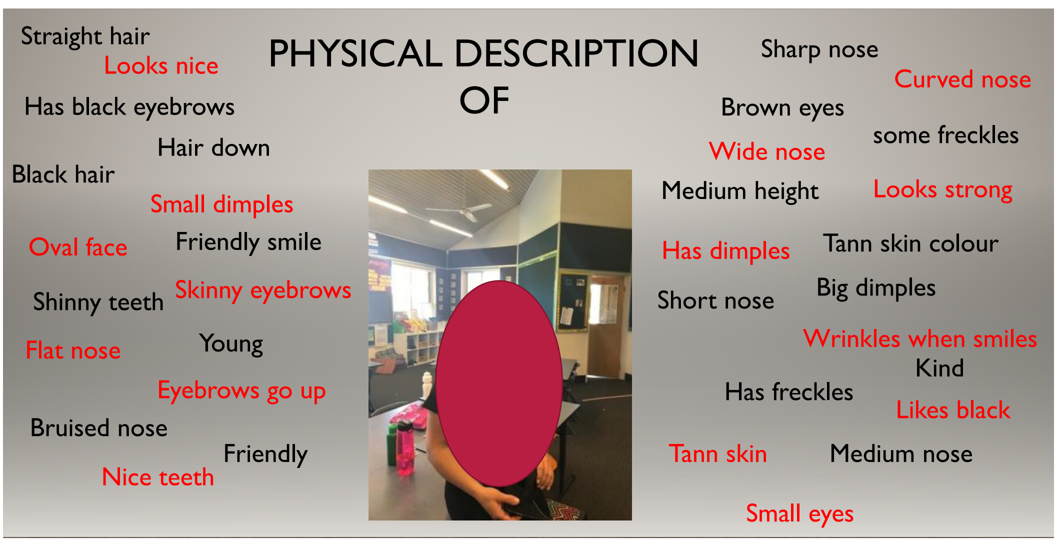
4.3.3.3 Lesson 2

The second lesson of the intervention program extended the analysis of visual images students completed in Lesson 1. To provoke students' thinking, the teacher opened the lesson with the question: 'Could you recognise someone by a description of them?' He then asked students what features and traits they would use to describe someone and recorded their responses on the whiteboard.

After completing the brainstorm, the class was divided into mixed-ability groups of three to four students, formed based on the proximity of where students were seated in the room. Each group was randomly allocated a photograph of a staff member, which they accessed from the shared student drive. The researcher had previously photographed a range of staff, including teachers, education assistants, and the primary school principal, all of whom were familiar to the students. Before creating their individual PicCollage of their allocated staff member, the students shared their observations and ideas with members of their group. As the teacher circulated among the groups, he encouraged students to expand their descriptions by considering other features they could use to describe the staff member, such as personality traits and whether this was revealed in the photograph. He challenged students further by asking, 'If the photograph was removed, would you be able to identify the person?' The combined use of a multimodal approach and collaboration aimed to encourage students to be active participants in their learning (Wyse et al., 2018) and to extend their learning through shared knowledge (Mercer, 2000; Mercer & Littleton, 2007). An example of a PicCollage is shown below in Figure 4.10.

Figure 4.10

PicCollage Staff Member



4.3.3.4 Lesson 3

The intervention program sought to implicitly develop students' visual observation skills rather than delivering explicit instruction in visual literacy and the elements of the semiotic code, such as colour, line, texture, point of view, and mood.

Without teacher-directed explicit instruction, students develop their visual literacy skills through critical thinking (O'Neill, 2011; Pantaleo, 2014) and shared analysis of how characters or objects are portrayed (Arizpe & Styles, 2003).

Lesson 3 focused on developing students' ability to search for visual semantic information in an image. At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher recapped the previously introduced expression, 'A picture is worth 1,000 words' and explained that they were going to 'read a book' without any words so that they could create a story based on their interpretation of the illustrations. He explained that the book was a story set in Australia and asked students what images came into their minds when they thought of Australia. He informed the students that the book was titled *The Water Tower* and asked students if they knew what a water tower was and where one could be found. The range of responses received is detailed in Chapter 5.

The Water Tower (Crew, 1994) is set in an Australian country town. The hot Australian climate portrayed through the colours of the dry grass and blue sky offered opportunities for students to make connections through their funds of knowledge. Although the students attended an urban school, Perth is bounded by long sandy beaches to the west, and dry farmlands, desert, and small country towns to the east and north. Located on the outer edge of the northern metropolitan city border, many students enrolled in the school commuted daily by bus from outlying rural farming communities. Further connections to the book were established with the main characters, two boys of a similar age to the Year 5 students.

The visual plot of the narrative begins with an illustration of the water tower looming eerily over the town at night. However, in the next illustration during the day, it stands alone, abandoned, and safe. The two main characters, Spike and Bubba, seek respite from the blistering heat and bright sunlight in the cool water of the water tower. While the text delivers the reader an innocent, carefree story of two boys seeking refuge from the heat, when focusing on the illustrations alone, the reader sees only the murky water and monster-like weeds, and fear on the boys' faces that something isn't quite right. The illustrations deliver conflicting messages with a small country town and stereotypically attired country townsfolk, but their piercing eyes appear possessed and the farmer's pitchfork threatening. The final illustration provokes further questions rather than a conclusion, with the eyes of the boy who swam in the water tower holding the same haunting gaze as the townsfolk.

As outlined in the intervention program designed by the researcher and discussed with the teacher before each lesson, prior to starting the slideshow, the teacher encouraged students to look carefully at the image beyond the obvious and think about what they could see and what messages were included in the illustration for the reader. He asked the students to think about how the illustrations made them feel, and suggested they imagine themselves in the illustration.

Implementing a strategy known as 'picture walk', the teacher led the students through the book's illustrations to activate prior knowledge and stimulate critical thinking through the analysis of the images (Dean & Grierson, 2005). The activity targeted the development of students' awareness of hidden messages in illustrations (Eilam, 2012; Pantaleo, 2013) delivered through nonverbal sign systems (Santas & Eaker, 2009). As the first image was projected onto the whiteboard, the teacher asked, 'What do you see?' 'Are there any clues and messages in the picture?' Instantly, without being instructed, students moved forward from their scattered positions around the room to be closer to the front and middle of the room, where they had a better view of the images. Students participated in whole-class brainstorming as each slide of the PowerPoint created by the researcher from the illustrations in *The Water Tower* (Crew, 1994) was projected onto the whiteboard. Responses provided by the students are detailed in Chapter 5.

After the presentation, students were instructed to choose a partner and write a storyline for an image of their choice. Shared writing at any stage during the writing process creates an effective environment for the development of students' writing (Fletcher & Turbill, 2015; Harris et al., 2006). For the remainder of the lesson, while participating in dialogic discussion with their partner, students were encouraged to use their imagination and consider possible options to 'what if?' questions (Craft et al., 2014). Although students created one shared text, each student saved a copy of their work into their individual file. Before the end of the lesson, students were given the opportunity to share their work with another group.

4.3.3.5 Lesson 4

Lesson 4 built on the concepts and tasks of the previous lesson. Students were tasked with creating an original narrative text to accompany the images in the picture book, *The Water Tower* (Crew, 1994), in self-selected groups comprising up to four members. Before beginning their writing challenge, examples of some of the

students' writing from the previous lesson were projected onto the whiteboard, enabling all the whole class to view the ideas of others.

Although students constantly view images, they mostly glance and do not search for advanced-level details in the images (Werderich et al., 2017). The task targeted the development of students' ability to carefully analyse illustrations to construct deeper meaning (Berger, 1973). Students were reminded to look for hidden details in the images, such as the image of the water tower present in every illustration, reflected in the characters' eyes. The teacher also stressed the need for all students to ensure that all members of the group contributed to the story.

While words and images are the primary source of communication, music is a significant contributor of meaning and sentiment (Hull & Nelson, 2005) with meaning obtained through the audio semiotic system, which interprets the pitch, rhythm, and volume to create an emotional response in the audience (Bull & Anstey, 2019). To create an atmosphere to match the eerie illustrations of *The Water Tower* (Crew, 1994) music titled 'The Twelve Titans', selected by the teacher, was played quietly in the background. The inclusion of music had the potential to cultivate an emotional response from the students, potentially also leading to an increase in the inclusion of emotive vocabulary in their writing. Excerpts from the students' writing are included in Chapter 5, and a photograph of students' writing their narratives below in Figure 4.11.

Figure 4.11

Collaborative Writing Group

4.3.3.6 Lesson 5

The learning intention of Lesson 5 was for students to 'apply their senses to develop awareness of the world and describe their observations' by focusing on 'what can you hear, see, feel, and smell?' The purpose of the lesson was to enable students to engage their senses to discover the range of sensory experiences that surrounded them and with which they engaged every day yet did not think about. The lesson aimed to take advantage of naturally occurring events in the school to develop students' powers of observation and enhance their senses to increase their use of descriptive vocabulary (Fjortoft, 2004; Gardner & Kuzich, 2018; Waite, 2010; Wyse et al., 2018). Taking advantage of the opportunity to extend the learning environment beyond the four walls of the classroom (Edward-Groves, 2011), the teacher informed the class that they were going to explore the school grounds and advised them to be extra vigilant, aware, and focused. He emphasised that they needed to engage all their senses to identify and describe what they could see, hear, feel, smell, and touch. Before leaving the classroom, the teacher explained that in addition to recording their observations on their laptop sketchpad they could take photographs using their laptop camera. Students frequently utilise the camera feature across all curriculum areas; therefore, they did not require instruction in how to use the device.

The lesson aimed to take advantage of students' natural curiosity as they explored the outdoor environment and to develop their perception and sensory awareness away from the confines of their classroom (Beames & Ross, 2010; Brannon, 2018; Gardner & Kuzich, 2018; Thorburn & Marshall, 2014). Choo (2010) found that engaging with sensory experiences prior to writing increased visualisation and students' ability to link mental images with words. It was anticipated that the sensory experiences would assist students' recollection of the experience and lead to the inclusion of descriptive language in their writing. Similarly, stopping to photograph what they saw encouraged students to think about and 'focus' on the details of their surroundings. The five locations were selected to enable students to focus on a predetermined sensory experience at each site.

Location 1: The first stop was a second-storey walkway overlooking the lower primary nature playground. To encourage students to focus only on the sounds they could hear, they were instructed to sit in an area where they were unable to see the playground but could apply their sense of hearing to the sounds. After students

had written their observations using the sketchpad on their laptops, they orally shared their responses with the class. The teacher prompted students for further elaborations to obtain additional details. For example, to the answer ‘squeaking’, he asked, ‘what is squeaking?’. He also sought further clarification from a student who declared he could hear the wind by posing the question to the whole class, ‘can we hear the wind?’, before adding, ‘what can we really hear?’. Figure 4.12 displays an image of the playground from the second-storey walkway.

Figure 4.12

Location 1 - Early Years Playground

Location 2: The second location was an area of the school grounds overlooking the sports oval. The high location provided students with a view of an extensive skyline, with a panoramic viewpoint over the many suburbs, out to the nearby ocean and further inland. Students stood against the railing at the edge of the grassed terrace between the fence and the school buildings, taking photographs and writing notes about what they could see on their sketchpads. Although the original sensory emphasis planned for the location was ‘sight’, this was extended to include ‘hearing’ to take advantage of the sporting event occurring on the oval. As with the first location, students were asked to move away from where they could view the activities on the oval but could continue to hear the action. In this setting, students were prompted to listen and write down the sounds they could hear. Details of the descriptions provided by students are included in Chapter 5. Figure 4.13 displays some photographs of the students making observations and the school oval.

Figure 4.13

Location 2 – School Oval

Taking advantage of the weather conditions, the teacher directed the students to lie down on their backs to observe the many shades of colour in the sky and clouds, as well as the cloud formations and their movement across the sky, as shown in the images in Figure 4.14.

Figure 4.14

Location 3 – Cloud Watching

Location 3: The location chosen as the third stop was the alfresco area of the school canteen. This was selected to provide students with the opportunity to apply their sense of smell. Unfortunately, although the canteen was next to the food technology rooms, due to the late time of day, few odours remained to engage students in their olfactory senses, as the canteen had long since closed and there were no classes cooking in the food rooms. However, after initial disappointment, one student noticed traces of sticky substances on the ground, and another found pieces

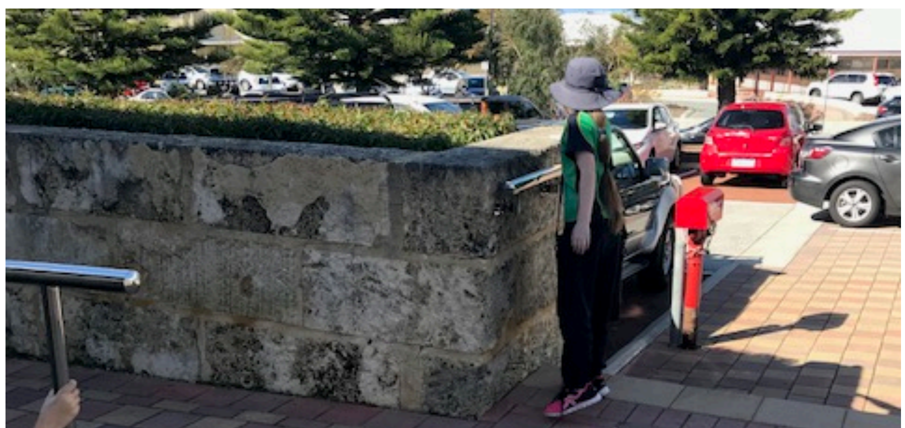
of popcorn. After this announcement, students needed little encouragement to engage their imaginations and made suggestions about what they could smell. In this scenario, students were relying on their prior knowledge to engage in the act of mental imagery.

Location 4: The final location was a narrow area between a section of the school buildings and the car park, which was selected to enable students to engage their sense of touch. Students felt and compared the contrasting surfaces of the limestone bricks, the metal handrails, and a low hedge. After sharing their descriptions, the teacher prompted a discussion about whether the answers provided descriptions of what the items felt like or the materials of which they were made.

As a result, students reconsidered their initial descriptions. The photograph in Figure 4.15 shows the physical sensory elements to which students were exposed to engage their sense of touch.

Figure 4.15

Location 4 – Textured Surfaces



4.3.3.7 Lesson 6

Lesson 6 was directed by the idea of looking beyond a glance to consider alternative perspectives, together with the concepts that 'A picture can say 1,000 words' and 'a blank canvas or empty page is an untold story'. The focus question for this lesson was: 'How do pictures tell a story?' The lesson began with the teacher advancing the notion of an 'untold story' as a 'blank canvas' by physically holding up a plain piece of A3 paper. Using *The Water Tower* (Crew, 1994) illustrations as a reference, he introduced the concept of images portraying mood, prompting a discussion on how an image produces an emotive reaction in the reader.

Explaining the lesson's activity, the teacher informed the students that they were going to explore and photograph other locations around the school, including the school's vacant block of land across the road. Students were encouraged to take an abundance of photographs as they explored stairwells, hedges, and the unkempt bushland across the road.

The teacher challenged students to look at the familiar environment with 'fresh eyes' and from different vantage points. He demonstrated what he meant by instructing a student to climb the tree in the courtyard outside the classroom, asking him to describe what he saw and how he felt from his elevated position, as shown below in Figure 4.16.

Figure 4.16

Climbing Courtyard Tree

Details of the lesson are included in Chapter 4. On their return to the classroom, students saved the photographs they had taken into their individual folders on the student drive.

4.3.3.8 Lesson 7

Students were tasked with reviewing the photographs they had personally taken in the previous lesson, selecting one, and creating a descriptive text using their chosen image as a stimulus. Jampole et al. (1991) found that viewing visual images immediately prior to writing increased originality and the number of imaginative words. After selecting their photograph and before commencing writing, students were encouraged to discuss their image with a peer. Flower and Hayes (1981) promoted the strategy of encouraging students to "verbalize everything that goes through their minds as they write, including stray notions, false starts, and

incomplete or fragmentary thought" (p. 368). Sharing thoughts aloud has been found to assist in the composition of written text and enhance student engagement (Bull & Anstey, 2019).

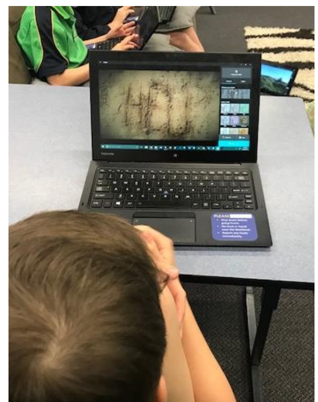
4.3.3.9 Lesson 8

Students were tasked with creating a story using photographs that the class had taken during their exploration around the school in Lesson 6. Prior to the lesson, to avoid students needing to sort through hundreds of photographs, the researcher sorted the photographs into two folders, which were placed on the student shared drive. One folder contained 23 higher-quality or unique photographs, and the other contained 96 photographs.

The teacher led the class through a 'picture walk', projecting the photographs from the smaller folder one by one onto the whiteboard and prompting them to think about what they could see in each image. The students contributed their thoughts and provided ideas about the images, with the teacher prompting for further elaboration as required. After all photographs had been displayed, the teacher explained the location and contents of the folders containing the photographs. In contrast to a single visual stimulus, as commonly used in NAPLAN and Brightpath writing assessments, the teacher informed the students that they were to select 10 photographs from either of the two folders to provide illustrations to assist them in 'telling their story'. He stressed that, although students were individually writing their own stories, they were also encouraged to share and talk about their ideas with each other. For the remainder of the lesson, students sorted through the folders, selecting photographs. Figure 4.17 shows students selecting images.

Figure 4.17

Students Selecting Photographs



4.3.3.10 Lesson 9

Lesson 9 was a continuation of the previous lesson. The provision of sufficient time to write has been recognised as a necessary feature for effective writing (Bearne & Wolstencroft, 2007; Calkins et al., 2012; D'Arcy, 1999; Ryan et, al., 2021; Wyse et al., 2018). Therefore, enabling the lesson to extend beyond a single writing session allowed students more time to brainstorm, develop a storyline, and share and discuss their ideas with their peers. Participating in shared talk increases opportunities for exploration and reflection on ideas (Boyd et al., 2019; Wegerif, 2013). Therefore, to encourage students to continue to develop their storylines, the teacher advised students to keep asking themselves questions, to talk with one another, and to share their developing stories. In addition, students felt safe and willing to share their thoughts, knowing they would not be judged as wrong in an environment in which dialogic talk is encouraged (Boyd et al., 2019; Resnick, 2015).

At the students' request to continue writing their stories the following day, rather than waiting another six days for the next scheduled lesson. After discussion between the teacher and the researcher, with some flexibility in the timetable due to the two weeks of annual swimming lessons, an additional lesson was able to be incorporated the next day. Callahan and King (2011) found that collaborative writing classes and the use of multimodal resources resulted in high levels of student engagement, with students motivated to continue with their writing.

4.3.3.11 Lesson 10

The lesson replicated that of Lesson 9, with students enthusiastically working on their stories as they had in the previous lesson.

4.3.3.12 Lesson 11

The ten lessons planned for the intervention program were completed ahead of schedule because two lessons were held on consecutive days in Week 9. This was made possible because of a modified timetable to accommodate annual swimming lessons held over a two-week period. However, the rescheduling of music and extension classes had resulted in the absence of some students during the writing sessions. Therefore, to accommodate students who were disappointed that they had not finished their narratives, they were allowed to continue to write or edit their stories; thus, the lesson timetabled for Week 10 became 'Lesson 11'. The additional

lesson provided time for those who had completed their narrative to share their work with their peers.

A summary of the intervention program described in detail above is summarised below in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3

Summary Intervention Program

Lesson 1
Following a modelled example, students photographed themselves and each other before creating a PicCollage of themselves.
Lesson 2
After being given a photograph of a familiar staff member, students worked together in small groups to create a PicCollage using the image.
Lesson 3
Students participated in a 'picture walk' as illustrations from The Water Tower (*Crew 1994*) were presented in a slide show. Students studied the images, shared their observations and with a partner selected one image for which they developed a storyline.
Lesson 4
In small groups students composed a narrative to accompany images from The Water Tower (*Crew 1994*)
Lesson 5
Students explored the school grounds during which they engaged their senses and recorded through photographs and notes what they could see, hear, feel, small and touch.
Lesson 6
After being challenged to look at the environment with 'fresh eyes' and from different vantage points, the students explored and photographed other parts of the school and a vacant block of land.
Lesson 7
Students selected one of the images they had taken themselves as a stimulus for a short descriptive text, sharing ideas with their peers as they wrote.
Lesson 8
Following a 'picture walk' of a selection of photographs taken by students during Lesson 6 students began to select 10 images as illustrations for a narrative.
Lesson 9, 10 and 11
Students continued to select images, and began to compose a narrative to accompany their selected images. During this phase students were encouraged to share their ideas and progress with their peers.

4.3.3.12.1 Narrative 2: Intervention Narrative

The narrative completed by students as part of the intervention program aimed to capture the impact of using photographs that the students had taken themselves as writing stimulus. Analysis of the narrative aimed to identify whether the images provoked emotional and sensory responses from the recall of prior

experience and subsequent inclusion richer and more descriptive language in their writing.

Although not completed under the timed conditions set for a Brightpath narrative, the same criteria were applied to assess the narratives. However, the grades did not form part of the termly writing assessment. As with the pre-intervention narrative, the researcher and teacher met to discuss and moderate their individual marking. In addition, while applying the Brightpath ruler, the researcher also applied the visual imagery rubric to the narratives written by the ten selected participants.

Graves (1983) described writing as a social act, with publishing and sharing writing with others being the final step in the writing process. The importance of students sharing their writing was supported by teachers who participated in the National Writing Project (NWP), who found that students needed purpose and an audience for their writing (Wyse et al., 2018). Two methods were used to share the completed narratives. A file was created on the class shared drive to enable the electronic sharing of the narratives. In addition, the class teacher printed a copy of each of the narratives and created a collective hardcopy book for reading in the classroom.

4.3.4 Phase 4: Post-intervention

Figure 4.18

Phase 4: Post-Intervention

Phase 4: Post-Intervention

- Narrative 3 'Message in a Bottle':
  - All experimental cohort's graded using Brightpath Assessment Tool
  - 10 focus children's narratives analysed using Vocabulary Analysis Rubric.
- Narrative 4 'The Piano':
  - All experimental cohort's graded using Brightpath Assessment Tool.
  - 10 focus children's narratives analysed using Vocabulary Analysis Rubric.
- Individual interviews:
  - Focus children participate in an individual pre-intervention interview with the researcher.
  - Experimental group's class teacher participates in pre-intervention interview with the researcher.

This section provides an overview of the two writing assessments and interviews with the class teacher and student participants that transpired after the

intervention program had been completed. Analysis of the narrative writing completed by students prior to, during, and after the intervention program established the extent to which the development of students' participation in the intervention program affected their use of descriptive language and visual imagery in their narrative writing. Assessment of the post-intervention narratives using the Brightpath assessment tool and the Vocabulary rubric provided information for triangulation of data and subsequent interpretation to measure students' narrative writing over time. The findings of the analysis and comparative results are presented and discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.

4.3.4.1 Post-Intervention Narratives

4.3.4.1.1 Narrative 3: 'Message in a Bottle'

In week 10, the final week of Term 3, the Year 5 class completed the post-intervention assessment (Narrative 2) titled 'Message in a Bottle'. The topic of the narrative was based on the Term 3, History study about the arrival of English prisoners sent to the penal colony at Fremantle, Western Australia. Students were tasked with featuring the concept of putting a message in a bottle during a sea voyage to Australia, as undertaken by English convicts. Although students were not provided with a visual prompt, they had acquired prior knowledge through immersion in the topic, and access to multiple visual resources throughout the term involving research and the creation of projects which were displayed in the classroom. As a result, students had sufficient background knowledge and access to visual cues that would provoke their prior knowledge and stimulate their imagination as they composed their narrative (Downey, 2009; Heath & Bhagat, 2005; Jimenez & Meyer, 2016; Pagliaro, 2014). Although, as part of a literacy program, writing different text types occurs across curriculum areas (Anstey & Bull, 2019), the integration privileged a whole language approach that emphasises the process of learning through immersion by creating connections to prior knowledge and relevant, interesting topics (Ivanič, 2004). This supports the findings of Fawcett and Hay (2004), who noted that after the completion of a unit of study, material displayed in the classroom enhanced students' memory recall. However, the narratives were specifically written for the purpose of the Brightpath assessment and were not marked as part of the Humanities and Social Sciences course. Using this Brightpath assessment as a post-intervention source of data enabled the intervention

program to fit into the school timetable with no disruption, while providing data for the research study.

As with the pre-intervention narrative, both the teacher and researcher marked the narratives independently to ensure inter-rater reliability and correlate the differing scores (Adie, 2014), with face-to-face moderation completed if the grades awarded differed by more than ten points or placed the student in different bands of the Brightpath marking scale. The final grades awarded to the post-intervention narratives provided data for comparison with pre-intervention grades and enabled measurement of both ipsative and cohort progress. Detailed analysis of these results is provided in Chapter 5.

4.3.4.1.2 Narrative 4: 'The Piano'

To gather evidence required to answer the research question about the impact of the visual literacy intervention program two months after it concluded, a second post-intervention narrative was completed by all students at the end of Week 1, Term 4. As an alternative to a paper visual prompt, and to provide students with an increased level of provocation through analysis and observation of visual and auditory elements, *The Piano* (Gibbons, 2011), a short, animated film, was selected as the stimulus for the second post-intervention narrative (Narrative 3).

The Piano, written and directed by Aiden Gibbons (Gibbons, 2011), is a two-minute and twenty-two-second video delivering a story about an old man. As the old man sits alone playing a grand piano, his thoughts about his past are portrayed. He imagines the ghost of his deceased wife joining him on the piano stool and vividly recalls his friend dying in his arms on the battlefield. The sad scenes are replaced by the happier memory of himself as a young boy receiving the gift of a wooden horse, which he rides. The past blurs into the present when the man's memories are replaced with images of his grandson riding the same wooden horse before joining him at the piano.

The strategic sensory visual and auditory elements of the film complemented those incorporated into the intervention program. Throughout the video, the camera angles, shades of colours, and tempo of music engage emotive responses in the viewer. Students were asked to interpret the message and write a short narrative to accompany the film under their choice of screenshot image taken from the video.

As with the previous narrative assessments, both the teacher and researcher independently marked students' writing prior to participating in moderation. In

addition, the researcher applied the Visual Literacy rubric to narratives written by student participants. The grades provided data for comparison with previously written narratives.

4.3.5 Interviews

Following the completion of the intervention program, the researcher conducted interviews with the student participants and classroom teacher. All interviews were recorded on the researcher's iPhone, which enabled the researcher to be fully engaged in the conversation and focused on the responses. Recorded interviews were downloaded to a computer and immediately deleted from the iPhone. Saved audio files were then transcribed verbatim into a Word document and reviewed to check accuracy; an example of a transcribed interview is shown in .

4.3.5.1 Student Participants

During the second week of Term 4, following completion of the intervention program, the researcher conducted a second interview individually with student participants. In addition to the grades awarded to narratives, to measure the success of the intervention, it was important to obtain students' impressions of writing lessons, their participation in the program, and the writing they produced.

All interviews were conducted in an unoccupied classroom, either during 'day start' or during 'silent reading' to be unobtrusive to the classroom program. Although the researcher had worked in the classroom with the students, she focused on building rapport and trust prior to asking questions regarding the intervention program. As with the pre-intervention interviews, to reduce potential power differences, the researcher and student sat on chairs of the same level, without a barrier between them, and the classroom door was kept open throughout the interview. The researcher sought the students' permission to conduct the interview and again provided reassurance that there were no right or wrong answers, and although they were being recorded, their responses would remain confidential.

The interviews differed from the interviews conducted prior to the intervention in that the researcher sought to learn the students' perceptions of the intervention and their writing. Although a list of questions () directed the course of the interview, the open-ended questions sought to engage students in a conversation with the researcher about their experiences. The questions were not read verbatim but guided the interview with prompts and redirection dependent upon the student's replies. Therefore, student responses steered the course of individual interviews

which provided an opportunity for the student participants to provide an authentic view of their experience. To identify their perspective, students were shown the texts they had produced during the intervention and asked how they felt about each task, what challenges they encountered as well as positive experiences. Although the length of each interview varied, the average time across all ten interviews was twelve minutes. The researcher transcribed the interviews verbatim; an example of one transcription is shown in . Students' assessment of intervention activities and writing topics together with their suggestions to improve writing lessons with the goal of increased student engagement, were identified. Students' responses gathered during the interviews are provided in detail in Chapter 5.

4.3.5.1.1 Class Teacher

The teacher was an integral part of the intervention program. He witnessed firsthand changes in the students' engagement, motivation, and levels of writing achievement; therefore, his feedback and impressions of the intervention program were fundamental sources of data. To obtain his perspective on the success of the intervention program based on his observations and reflections on the results, the teacher participated in two semi-structured interviews with the researcher. During the first interview, which took place in Week 10 of Term 3, the teacher answered questions based on his observations of students and their writing during the intervention program. Questions that led the discussion are listed below in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4

Post-intervention Teacher Interview Questions

What was your perception of the students' attitude and engagement during the lessons?
How did you find the activities?
What were the challenging aspects of the intervention program?
How would you describe the level of student engagement during the intervention lessons?
How did you find your interactions with students during the lessons?
How would you describe the level of student collaboration?
Will you use this sort of intervention or any elements of it in your teaching again?

During the second interview, the researcher and teacher discussed the pre- and post-intervention Brightpath assessment grades and vocabulary analysis of the participants. Although the researcher recorded her observations throughout the course of the intervention, the teacher's viewpoint provided another perspective as she sought the teacher's feedback on his perception of the students' attitudes, engagement, and levels of collaboration during the lessons. The researcher was

interested to find out how the teacher found the activities, whether he would implement any aspects of the intervention program into his teaching in the future, and if he thought the program would influence the students' writing in the future. The forty-minute discussion was recorded and transcribed by the researcher. A summary of the discussion is included in Chapter 5.

4.4 Ethics

Given that the research involved children and the active participation of the researcher, ethical considerations were acknowledged, and necessary permission was obtained through the provision of informed consent, which guaranteed no participants were coerced into participation.

Permission to conduct the research was sought from the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee in Term 4, 2017. Permission to conduct the research was granted by the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (HRE2018-0251), and throughout the study, the researcher abided by the rules set by the ethics authorisation to ensure that no participants were harmed or disadvantaged, and that guarantees pledged were honoured (see Appendix 3Appendix 3).

4.4.1 Permission

4.4.1.1 School Principal

Prior to the beginning of the research and to ensure he was aware of and knowledgeable about the content and timeline for the proposed research, the research study was discussed with the school principal in Term 3 of 2017. Upon receipt of his verbal consent for the research study to take place within the primary school, following the receipt of ethics clearance from Curtin University, written consent to conduct the study was received from the school principal (Appendix 4).

4.4.1.2 Brightpath

Permission was sought and obtained from the Brightpath administrator, Sandy Heldsinger, to use and identify the Brightpath narrative writing resources in the research study (see Appendix 8).

4.4.1.3 The Water Tower

Permission to incorporate the text and illustrations from the book *The Water Tower*, written in 1994 by Gary Crew and illustrated by Steven Woolman, into the research project was sought and received by the publisher, Era Publications (Appendix 9) and Gary Crew (Appendix 9).

4.4.1.4 Class Teacher

Written consent, with the same guarantees afforded to the school principal, was also obtained from the Year 5 classroom teacher, who had previously indicated his readiness to participate in the research study during discussions with the researcher.

4.4.1.5 Parent and Student Permission

The writing intervention program replaced the Term 3 writing program and required the participation of all students in the class; thus, a letter explaining the purpose and description of the research study was given to parents/caregivers and students of the Year 5 class, inviting all students to participate in the study. Full disclosure and information about the research were provided, including the right to withdraw at any point, a guarantee of privacy and anonymity with all data treated with respect, and the use of pseudonyms in place of student names to protect student confidentiality (Appendix 5). Separate returnable permission forms and invitations to meet and discuss the study with the researcher were provided to all parents/caregivers, accompanied by a separate letter addressed to students (Appendix 6). Information for detailed analysis was collected from only the 10 selected participants. To acknowledge the rights of the students and address the power imbalance created between the adult researcher and student participants, in addition to the written communication, the researcher addressed the class and explained the research and the content of the permission letter. Following the presentation, students were provided the opportunity to ask questions.

4.4.2 Validity and Transferability

The trustworthiness and validity of qualitative research are determined by credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability, with the researcher ultimately responsible for the credibility of the study (Yin, 2014). Merriam (2009) determined ‘the nature of the interaction between researcher and participant, the triangulation of data, the interpretations of perceptions, and rich thick descriptions’ (p. 166) ensured necessary rigor in qualitative research.

An essential component of research is the triangulation of data collected from multiple data sources at different times, places, and people, including follow-up interviews (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 2009; Mertler, 2014, 2019). Triangulation in social science seeks to ‘corroborate one set of findings with another; the hope is that two or more sets of findings will “converge” on a single proposition (Whiteley, 2012

p. 256). In this research study, qualitative and quantitative data were obtained using multiple instruments over an extended period enabled detailed recording of the researcher's observations.

Validity considers the appropriateness of interpretations of data collected and the degree of accuracy of those interpretations, defined by Neuman (2014) as 'how well an idea "fits" with actual reality' (p. 212). Students' narratives written as pre- and post-intervention assessments, together with the narratives written during the intervention, were graded against the Brightpath writing tool and analysed against the visual imagery rubric to determine the level of writing achievement and measure progress. Given that both assessment tools enabled the evaluation of students' written responses against set criteria, they provided evidence for the confirmation of validity.

The reliability of a study is determined by the ability of the study to be replicated Merriam (2009). Transferability was defined by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as the ability of a study to be replicated in another setting. Although educational research settings cannot be replicated exactly (Whiteley, 2012, p. 256), when provided with the context of a study, an outsider should be able to determine if the program is transferable and able to be replicated in other settings (Cope, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertler, 2014, 2019; Stake, 1995).

The quality and quantity of the data collected determine the effectiveness of research, not the sample size (Emmel, 2013). Although the sample size in this research was limited to one class of Year 5 students with a targeted focus on 10 participants, validation was achieved by means of 'thick descriptions' (Garvis, 2015; Yin 2014) recorded by the researcher during her observations and interviews. Detailed transcripts of recorded interviews, together with photographic evidence, provided valuable sources of evidence to enhance the validity and transferability of the intervention program to another setting.

4.4.2.1 Researcher Positioning

Researcher integrity, trustworthiness, and dependability are central to qualitative research (Neuman, 2014), with credibility determined by the integrity of the researcher (Patton, 2002; Merriam, 2009). Challenges with impartiality arise from conflicting roles and participant relationships (Wellington & Sikes, 2006), and an insider has an 'identity which is aligned or shared with participants' (Chavez, 2008, p. 475). However, educational research is commonly conducted within the

researcher's place of employment, and familiarity with the community can provide multiple levels of insight about human behaviour (Chavez, 2008).

Bias may arise at any time at any stage of a research study, with a researcher's role as an employee blurring lines (Atkins & Wallace, 2012). Merriam (2009) recommended that rather than endeavouring to eliminate bias, researchers should identify and monitor potential bias. To mitigate the potential conflict of interest that arose from the researcher's employment at the subject school and use position and background knowledge to shape analysis and interpretation of the data (Cope, 2014; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Spiggle, 1994), parents and students were informed of the researcher's participant observer role (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011). Although observations recorded by both insiders and outsiders can be affected by their individual identity and position (Chavez, 2008), the researcher sought to maintain a neutral stance throughout the data collection and analysis process, writing rich, thick descriptions of her observations. To ensure she did not influence the outcome of the intervention program, the researcher engaged with the students in the role of a support person while the teacher led the implementation.

The researcher acknowledged that as an insider, she had advantages such as ease of access, increased trust built through established relationships with the teacher, and the level of familiarity with the students (Atkins & Wallace, 2012). However, 'it is not uncommon for qualitative researchers to use their existing relationships and contacts for their research', particularly ethically sensitive' research (Silverman, 2013, p. 215). Furthermore, the researcher was a specialist teacher, not a class teacher, and she had not taught the students who participated in the research study.

While selection bias can influence research outcomes, the selection of student participants was based on a quantitative measurement, and students' narratives were graded independently by the class teacher and the researcher, followed by moderation. In addition, the selection of participants included levels of achievement across the range of grades, which eliminated bias and exaggeration of results through selection of students likely to positively respond to the intervention. The process used the Brightpath writing assessment tool, which was developed from the systematic marking of thousands of narratives, delivering consistent teacher judgement across schools and education systems. This approach ensured researcher

bias did not influence the grading of post-intervention narratives, and therefore the outcome of the research results.

The intervention program was delivered by the classroom teacher in the authentic setting of the classroom, with the participants completing the same task as the remainder of the class (Creswell, 2012; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Both the teacher and the researcher were present in each lesson, which enabled confirmation of the researcher's observations during debriefing sessions held between the teacher and researcher. In addition, both the teacher and the researcher had access to the students' work on the school network which is unlikely to have been accessible to an outside researcher. Additionally, debriefing sessions with the classroom teacher between lessons maintained a collaborative relationship (Glesne, 2011) through sharing observations and insights (Mertler, 2019) that provided moderation to the researcher's interpretation of her observations, delivering internal consistency (Creswell, 1998) and credibility.

To minimise any power imbalance, the classroom door was left open throughout the interview, and prior to starting the interview, the researcher chatted casually with each student to develop rapport. Although students had previously given their consent before commencing the formal recorded interview, the researcher sought the students' permission to ask questions and to record the interview. She also offered to stop recording the interview at any time the student requested. To further reduce the power imbalance and increase students' comfort during the interview, the researcher sat at the same level without any physical barrier between her and the student, with the recording device placed to the side (Atkins & Wallace, 2012). In addition, the researcher did not hold a position of employment above the classroom teacher and, therefore, held no level of empowerment over the classroom teacher, and no incentive gifts were provided to the teacher or students.

4.4.2.2 Limitations

Limitations are factors outside the researcher's control that arise because of weaknesses or problems (Patton, 2002). One of the common challenges of an intervention in an educational setting is the restriction of time and resources (Anderson & Shattuck, 2012). The course of this research was controlled by only being able to obtain an uninterrupted period of 10 weeks in Term 3. Additionally, although all students in the class participated in the intervention program, the selection of student participants was limited to only those whose parents had

provided written consent for their child to be a subject in the research prior to the data-gathering phase.

While the sample size of 10 students could be considered small, the number represented one-third of the class. Increasing the numbers would have reduced the quality of data gathered, particularly during the observation phase. The selected participants were known to the researcher and the teacher; they were not identified or grouped together in any way, thus enabling them to maintain their usual involvement in the class. Although filming or taping the classes and students in action during lessons would increase the volume of transcripts, the researcher undertook the role of participant observer. Ecological validity measures everyday life as a judgement, not a statistic (Andrade, 2018). Research must be authentic, reflecting realistic conditions and typical behaviour of participants. Spada (2005) stressed 'research carried out in real classrooms with real learners and teachers has a greater potential to inform classroom practice than research carried out in a laboratory' (p. 330). Without being invasive, the researcher was able to observe 10 students, record their contributions to discussions, and monitor them during outdoor activities, which could not have been conducted with the same level of depth if the number of participants had increased. Moreover, the ability of the researcher to engage in the participant-observer role enabled data to be collected under realistic conditions, which can be 'generalised in the real world', thus providing a context with high level of ecological validity (Kihlstrom, 2021). The participants were representatives of the cross-section of the Year 5 class; therefore, data obtained from students' results provided a credible sample and generalisation of results that could be achieved in a similar real-life setting. Furthermore, ecological validity is determined by the research study conducted in the real-life classroom setting without any alterations to that which already existed.

4.5 Chapter Summary

The beginning of this chapter reiterated the purpose of the study and restated the research questions which guided the research developed from the identification of students' limited inclusion of descriptive language and imagery in their narrative writing. A model of the Research Design outlined the process of data collection.

This chapter discussed the methodological approach and reasoning for the application of a mixed-method approach using both quantitative and qualitative

methods. The mixed-method approach of data collection, obtained from multiple forms of information—including archival records, interviews, observations, writing samples, and assessments—provided the researcher with rich and detailed data. An interpretivist approach was considered appropriate for this research study, given the mode of collection and contextual setting of the school environment, with the data collected during a normal school day in a Year 5 class in Perth, Western Australia. Details of the data collected assessment tools and activities were presented under each of the four phases of the Research Design.

The first phase: Planning, included sections on identification of the problem, sample selection, assessment tools, intervention program, and resources. The rationale for selection of the school and year level in which the research study took place was provided including convenience and flexibility, as the researcher was employed at the school. Reasons given for the choice of Year 5 as the year level for the study included literacy links in the Australia Curriculum matching with the research questions and the age of the students providing suitable maturity and cognitive ability to complete the activities in the intervention program. Acknowledgment of a teacher's influence on the culture and atmosphere of a classroom led to the selection of the class in which the study took place. A detailed description of the teacher's experience, teaching philosophy, and pedagogical approach which led to his selection was provided. The writing assessment tools used to evaluate students' narratives completed during the research study were outlined. The rationale for the implementation of the Brightpath assessment in the subject school as a response to the identified problem was provided, followed by an overview of the Teacher's Ruler and assessment procedure. The Vocabulary Analysis rubric used to measure students' inclusion of descriptive, sensory, and figurative language was described. The researcher developed the rubric by modifying the one created by Gardner and Kuzich (2018) for their research on students' inclusion of sensory and figurative language in poetry. The rationale for the use of and modifications to Gardner and Kuzich's rubric were identified and how they related to the research study. A summary of the intervention program was provided, beginning with the rationale for implementation of the program in Term 3 and the timing of lessons. The principal resources and rationale for their inclusion in the intervention program were discussed. Rationale for selecting the picturebook,

The Water Tower (Crew, 1994), was described as the strong visual images and the ability for students to make connections with the images and the characters.

The second phase: Pre-Intervention, described the Brightpath narrative 'What's in the Box?' completed by students and the selection of ten student participants from the distribution of grades awarded. The procedure implemented to interview the student participants and the classroom teacher prior to the intervention was described.

The third phase: Intervention, discussed the elements of collaboration, interactive activities, and discussions and the value of using the rich information from photographs in the study. A description of the teacher's role in the intervention study was examined with examples, his capability to provide 'realistic' lessons and not follow a prescribed script. A description of the researcher's role as participant observer, facilitator and consultant within the interpretivist approach provided a synopsis of the researcher's interaction with the participants and role in the data collection. Each lesson in the 10-week intervention program was described with details of the activities. The researcher's observations, and the analysis of writing samples for each lesson are examined in Chapter 5.

The fourth phase: Post-intervention, provided an overview of Narrative 3, 'Message in a Bottle', and Narrative 4, 'The Piano'. The narratives written by students graded using the Brightpath Writing tool and the Visual Analysis rubric, provided the comparative measure to evaluate the impact of the intervention program on the students' narrative writing. The section finished with an overview of the post-intervention interviews conducted with the student participants and the teacher.

This chapter concluded with a section on ethics and the permissions necessary to support the research study, as well as a section on how the study's validity, trustworthiness, credibility, and limitations were determined, including clarification of the researcher's positioning. The researcher's positioning included the maintenance of a reflective journal, photographic evidence, and transcripts of recorded interviews. In the following chapter, results and analysis of the results of the intervention program are provided and discussed.

Chapter 5: Findings

This chapter reports the findings of the quantitative and qualitative data collected throughout the study, which sought to answer three research questions:

1. What impact does a visual literacy intervention have on students' use of descriptive language and imagery in narrative writing?
2. What is the evidence that the visual literacy intervention is sustained two months after completion?
3. What are the implications of using visual literacy for a pedagogy of writing?

Findings from the data are presented in six sections that are aligned with the three phases of data collection identified in the previous chapter. The first section presents the feedback received during individual interviews with the classroom teacher and the ten student participants, which was collected prior to the implementation of the intervention program. The interviews sought to elicit the participants' views on writing and their writing practices. The second section discusses findings gathered from the researcher's observations during the intervention program. Included in this section are photographs, vignettes, and descriptions of the interactions between students and between the students and teacher. The third section is divided into two subsections. The first part delivers an analysis of the narratives assessed using the Brightpath narrative writing tool, with comparisons made between pre- and post-intervention narratives. In the second subsection, the vocabulary rubric is applied to narratives written by six of the ten student participants. Responses received from the ten student participants and the teacher during post-intervention interviews are delivered in the fifth section. The last section delivers an overall summary of the findings, which are discussed in Chapter 6.

5.1 Pre-Intervention Interviews

Prior to the intervention program, ten student participants and the classroom teacher were interviewed. The pre- intervention interviews were conducted to obtain the students' and the teacher's perspectives and beliefs related to writing prior to the implementation of the intervention program. This section provides a synopsis of responses, followed by a summary of feedback provided by the teacher. The information obtained provided a reference point for participants' attitudes and

perceptions of writing lessons prior to experiencing the approach applied in the intervention program.

5.1.1 Student Responses

5.1.1.1 Students' Feelings about Writing

During semi-structured individual interviews, the ten student participants provided spontaneous responses to open-ended questions (see Appendix 11) posed by the researcher.

The researcher sought to gather information about the students' perceptions of writing lessons and whether they enjoyed writing at school. Although students did not dislike writing, the factors that influenced how much they liked or disliked it ranged from the length of time spent writing, the need to generate ideas and the topic. Focus Child 1 (FC1) admitted that he did not mind writing at school, but stipulated that how he felt was dependent upon how long he had to write for because he becomes: '*annoyed if I have to write for longer than 15 minutes.'*

FC1 advised that although he did not enjoy writing at school, he found writing at home with his mother more enjoyable because they took turns typing and generating ideas. Focus Child 2 (FC2) acknowledged that while he did not dislike writing, he preferred the writing in Year 2 because the text was created by the whole class, whereas in Year 5, he had to create ideas himself and he believed he did not have a good imagination. Focus Child 3 (FC3) also acknowledged difficulty with idea generation, reporting that he often asked his friends or the teacher for ideas. The opposite experiences were reported by Focus Child 7 (FC7), who advised that she enjoyed writing about ideas that came to her mind, and Focus Child 8 (FC8), who reported that she liked to write creative stories because she had: '*a very imaginative brain and lots of ideas.'* FC3 also announced that he enjoyed creative writing because he liked: '*making stuff up, because it is fun, you can think in your head, and it can be funny.'* Whether the topic was interesting or not determined FC5's attitude towards writing. Focus Child 10 (FC10) professed that she liked writing at school because she was: '*pretty quick at writing … and it usually ends up being good.'* Neutral responses were received from Focus Child 4 (FC4), Focus Child 6 (FC6), FC8, and Focus Child 9 (FC9). FC4 added although he did not mind writing: '*I wouldn't like to do it for a career!*'

5.1.1.2 Students' Genre Preference

Students were asked whether they preferred one writing genre more than another and the reasons for their choices. Whilst six students identified a preference for narrative writing, two students preferred report writing and one preferred persuasive. FC4 declared he: '*does not like any more than another.*'

The generation of ideas was a common element in the students' reasoning featuring both positively and negatively in their genre preference. FC6 explained he preferred writing persuasive text more than narrative writing because: '*it's hard to think of an idea for a story and think about what is going to happen.*' Similarly, the two students who chose report writing as their preferred genre reasoned: '*it is easier to find information than think of what to write.*'

Narrative writing was the genre favoured by six students. Whilst FC2's selection was based on his enjoyment of reading stories and the belief that he was: '*not good at reports and not good at rhyming*.' other students described the enjoyment of being able to use their imagination when writing a narrative. For example, FC 3 stated he preferred narrative writing because he liked: '*making stuff up.*' Similarly, FC5 explained he liked to write: '*made up stories using crazy ideas from my crazy mind.*' FC7 found narrative writing easy because he had: '*so many ideas.*' gathered from what he saw. FC8 admitted to liking both report writing and narrative writing; however, how much she liked either one depended on the topic. She described herself as having: '*a very imaginative brain and lots of ideas.*' with a penchant towards: '*spooky and made-up stories.*' FC9 and FC10 both acknowledged they had an abundance of ideas, and the difficulty was deciding what to write because of the number of ideas they had. FC10 explained that her ideas developed from: '*stuff I have read or stuff I have seen or imagined.*'

5.1.1.3 Students' Writing Practice when not instructed

To identify their writing habits beyond timetabled writing lessons and set homework, students were asked if they participated in any writing of their own free choice and, if they did, when, how often, and for how long. Whilst nine students advised that they only wrote at school when instructed to by the teacher, one student, (FC8) relayed that during free time at school, she sometimes liked to write a story.

Although the frequency and purpose varied, nine students confirmed that they chose to write at home. The students' practice of utilising their free time to write at home contrasted with their choice not to write at school unless they were

instructed. Motives provided for writing at home included: '*to become a better writer,*' and '*to record stuff that happens at school about what's going on.*' Although FC2 admitted to writing at home, he emphasised that it was only when he was bored. Similarly, FC8 reported that she wrote at home to keep herself occupied. The frequency of home writing also varied. FC6 advised that he wrote every day, FC3 at least every second day. Both FC1 and FC10 stated they wrote at home about once a week for a period of approximately 15 minutes. FC8 reported a less frequent writing habit, stating she only wrote about once a month.

The types of text produced by students at home varied. While FC10 completed a journal about an online maths game she played, creative writing featured in the texts completed by six of the ten student participants. FC7 produced illustrated mini books; FC8 wrote stories and reports about animals; and FC9 wrote about random ideas that popped into her head. FC2 advised that he did not share his writing with anyone. Similarly, FC3 admitted to hiding his 'writing' in his wardrobe, and although it was completed daily about events in his life, he argued strongly that it was not a diary. In contrast, FC7 proudly shared his mini books with his family. Although most of the children participated in some form of writing at home, only one student shared his writing with his family.

5.1.1.4 Reading Writing Relationship

Research has identified correlation between reading and writing (Berninger et al., 2002; Jenkins et al., 2004), with both employing the visual semantic system together with oral and written language (Berninger et al., 2006; Shanahan, 2016; Shanahan & Lomas, 1986). Writing proficiency is measured by the richness, diversity, and sophistication of vocabulary (McNamara, et al., 2010) and time spent reading increases word knowledge and the ability to generate ideas and write descriptively (Jouhar & Rupley, 2021). Therefore, the identification of links between reading and writing is meaningful.

The researcher sought to ascertain any correlation between the students' reading and writing practices inside and outside the classroom and their writing achievement in the pre- and post-intervention Brightpath narrative assessments.

Feedback provided by students during their interviews revealed that the two participants who received the lowest scores in the pre-intervention assessment had contrasting reading habits. While FC1 admitted that he did not read at home, FC2 advised he read: '*every morning and night for at least an hour.*' Although he did not

like reading, FC3 advised that he sometimes read a book in bed or at school, whilst FC4 advised he read each night for up to ten minutes, and FC5 stated that he read for a period ranging between 20 and 40 minutes. Although FC7, FC8 and FC10 reported a routine of reading each night, they could not determine the length of time. Whilst FC9 conveyed a preference for watching television in the evening, she considered the 30 minutes she spent reading each night as: '*not that much.*'

Mythological adventure fiction books were identified as the most popular category of books among the students. FC2 described how he had developed an enjoyment of reading mythological books after reading *Percy Jackson* as a class novel and proudly announced that he had: '*just finished the Percy Jackson series of books and started the Olympus series.*' Similarly, FC5 indicated a fondness for mythological adventure fiction books and advised that he had finished reading the first two *Percy Jackson* books. FC6 extended his reading of fictional mythological novels to other books about Greek mythology. Likewise, in addition to reading the *Percy Jackson* series, FC7 announced he also like to read the *Harry Potter* fantasy novel series. FC10 announced that after reading the *Harry Potter* books, which she enjoyed, she had read *The Hunger Games*. In contrast to the books favoured by her peers, FC8 stated that she liked to read books about animals.

5.1.1.5 Handwriting or Typing

Orthographic skills including writing fluency have been found to impact the length and quality of students' writing (Berninger et al., 2008; Christensen, 2004; Feng et al., 2017; Graham et al., 1997), when provided the ability to type, students invest more time in the editing process Christensen (2004). Although students had access to their own laptops, the teacher utilised a combination of handwriting and typing in his writing lessons.

The researcher questioned students about whether they preferred to write by hand or type, and to describe their handwriting and typing competence. Eight of the ten student participants declared they would rather use their laptops because typing was faster, their hands became tired or sore when they had to handwrite, and editing was easier. FC6 explained this was because, '*you can easily push a button when you make a mistake … you don't have to use a rubber … there is no auto correct on paper.*' FC10 advised that she preferred to write by hand. She declared, '*I do not like the feel of paper and my hands get sore and sweaty after writing for a long time.*'

5.1.1.6 Impact of Spelling Ability on Writing

A student's ability to spell directly impacts their ability to write because as students focus on spelling words, their composition fluency and text production reduces (Berninger et al., 2006; Christensen, 2004; Graham, et al., 1997; Shanahan & Lomax, 1986; Summer et al., 2014). Consequently, limited spelling ability limits word choice (Quigley, 2022; Summer et al., 2014), and confidence as a writer decreases (Abbott et al., 2020; Daffern et al., 2017; Gardner, 2013; Grainger et al., 2003). However, the inability to spell a word correctly deterred only three of the ten student participants.

While FC2 explained that he '*uses words I know how to spell then I don't have to go over my work and edit lots*,' he added that if spelling was not marked, he '*might give it a crack.'* FC1 admitted that he needed '*to get better at spelling harder words.'* He confessed he only included 'easy words' he knew how to spell because he '*can't spell bigger words.'* This thought process was similarly reported by FC7, who stated that: *'if I don't know, I will try to spell it but if I know it's not right, I don't use I.'*

Students are reminded of the importance of knowing how to spell with the NAPLAN writing stimulus instructions advising writers to 'pay attention to your spelling, punctuation, and paragraphs' (NAPLAN, 2020). However, when students need to focus on the correct spelling of words during the writing process, their ability to create visualisations diminishes (D'Arcy, 1999). Furthermore, students' reluctance to incorporate words they understand but do not know how to spell reduces the richness of vocabulary in their compositions.

5.1.1.7 Writing Challenges

Students identified a variety of areas that they found challenging when tasked with completing a writing task. Formulating ideas was identified as the most difficult part by three students. However, the reasons for their choice differed. FC1 explained that writing was difficult because: '*you have to think, and then you have to write it, and then you forget, and you've got to think again.'* Yet FC8 found the opposite to be true because she had: '*so many ideas that I could just keep going.'* FC8's explanation aligns with Green and Sutton's (2003) finding that students became overloaded when trying to include all their ideas in their narratives, which subsequently restricts creativity. Using the correct punctuation and grammar, editing,

insufficient time, and sore hands were the other aspects that students identified as the most challenging.

5.1.1.8 Summary Student Responses

Student responses revealed that, although most student participants enjoyed writing, only one student participated in extra writing at school without being instructed to do so. Six students selected narratives as their preferred genre, while only two favoured writing reports and one writing persuasive text. Important insights gathered from the students identified that in contrast to writing at school, students chose to write of their own free will with nine of the ten student participants freely choosing to participate in writing activities at home. The home writing of six students aligned with a form of creative text: two in a diary format and one in a report structure. Another insightful finding resulting from the students' responses was the number of students who read for pleasure, with most students engaging in daily home reading. Of particular interest was how the text selected for class novel study had affected students' home reading. Analysis of student interviews identified a predominance of fantasy novels and mythological adventure fiction books in the reading habits of students following the reading of, *Percy Jackson* at school. Although prompts for further elaboration of answers provided were frequently delivered during the students' interviews, the responses offered by FC4 remained indifferent, regardless of the level of prompting.

5.1.2 Teacher Response

The researcher conducted a semi-structured interview with the classroom teacher prior to the implementation of the intervention program. During the interview, the researcher sought information about the teacher's pedagogy, how he viewed his current students' attitudes towards writing and their achievement, and how their writing compared with students he had taught in previous years. In addition, he was asked how he implemented writing lessons into the classroom timetable, his insight into the correlation between reading and writing, and his views on how writing lessons could be altered or improved. The feedback received is discussed below.

5.1.2.1 Students' Attitude and Motivation

The teacher identified students' attitudes and motivation as a major element affecting their writing and informed the researcher that his students '*consistently*

produce a page, but they won't push themselves anymore, and they won't go over and revise, check or improve their work.'

The teacher's observations support the findings of Hattie (2012), who established that students are likely to avoid tasks they perceive to be too difficult, which subsequently affects their self-efficacy and attitudes towards writing (Bruning et al., 2013; Wright et al., 2019).

The teacher also reported that he had observed a difference between genders. He described girls as demonstrating '*a more positive attitude towards writing, and a bit more imagination*'. Whereas he found boys '*shut down their imagination, and when you ask them to write something that needs ideas … they just don't really want to try and give anything*.'

The teacher's observations support those of Klassen (2002) and Troia et al. (2013), who witnessed the influence of self-efficacy and motivation on the writing attainment differences between boys and girls.

5.1.2.2 Student Achievement

The teacher noted that most of the students in his class were achieving levels within the Year 5 curriculum, as determined by results in the standardised Progressive Achievement Tests completed at the beginning and end of each year. He acknowledged that he was aware that the current Year 5 cohort has fallen below the National score in their 2016 NAPLAN writing. However, he believed his students were capable of producing work of a higher standard, but his Term 2 focus had been on preparation for NAPLAN. He revealed that the process of marking students' writing using the Brightpath assessment tool, along with the associated descriptors and teaching points, had facilitated the identification of areas for individual student improvement. The teacher's comments align with the concerns of teachers and researchers that the prioritisation on formulaic instruction used to prepare students for standardised assessments has not resulted in improved writing achievement (Applebee & Langer, 2011; Graham et al., 2011b), but the implementation of effective writing instruction can improve students' achievement (Bearne, 2017; De Smedt & Van Kerr, 2018; Graham et al., 2012).

5.1.2.3 Language and Vocabulary

The teacher recognised that his students' writing 'lacked descriptive language and vocabulary,' but noted that over the course of his 18 years' teaching Years 3, 4, and 5, the one element of students' writing that had not changed was the need for

'greater detail and elaboration.' This supports the analysis of the 2016, Year 5 NAPLAN narrative writing, as discussed in Chapter 1 and shown in Figure 1.4, which identified vocabulary as one of the weakest areas of achievement.

The teacher also expressed his concern that although weaker writers '*put in a great effort, and they can follow set structure of whatever we have to do but they don't know how to give greater details or how to elaborate*.' He suggested that this was because '*they just don't have the experience to write better*.'

The teacher's depiction of the students' writing as lacking descriptive details, particularly in relation to character and setting, aligned with the students' pre-intervention assessment of writing and the analysis of the school's 2016, Year 3 and Year 5 cohorts' NAPLAN narrative writing results, as shown in Figure 1.4. and discussed in Chapter 1.

Spelling was another element the teacher believed negatively affected students' writing achievement because '*although most kids know the how to spell correctly … they are not willing to go over their work and make corrections*.' The teacher's observations support the findings of Daffern et al. (2017), who identified that a 39% variance in NAPLAN writing scores was due to errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

5.1.2.4 Reading and Writing

As discussed in Chapter 2, research has identified a correlation between reading and writing (Andersen et al., 2018; Berninger et al., 2002; Graham et al., 2018; Jenkins et al., 2004; Kent & Wanzek, 2016; Lee, & Schallert, 2016; Roberts et al., 2008). The teacher recognised a correlation between students' reading and writing. However, he expressed his concern that, although it was good students were reading, he believed popular multimodal novels such as *The Diary of a Wimpy Kid* (Kinney, 2007) and *Tom Gates* (Pichon), he was also concerned that these books were not leading to the development of students' vocabularies. The teacher reasoned that this was because '*the books are mostly illustrations with a few words … they are not getting any good models of good writing*.' He further surmised that in his experience: '*Compared with those who stick to reading the same series of popular diary books like "Tom Gates", kids who are willing to read widely and over a variety of genres rather than the same typical series of books are more expressive in their writing.'*

However, popular diary series books with relatable texts are successful in motivating students to read (Christensen, 2006; Edwards, 2009; Lyga, 2006; McPherson, 2006; Reid & Serafini, 2018; Routman, 2014), which subsequently leads to an improvement in writing (Andersen et al., 2018; Graham et al., 2018; Lee & Schallert, 2016; Roberts et al., 2008) as a result of the increased word knowledge obtained through reading (Jouhar & Rupley, 2021).

5.1.2.5 Writing Lessons

The researcher sought the teacher's reflection on how he taught writing currently compared with how he had throughout his teaching career. He acknowledged that he was unable to provide '*standalone lessons for writing and science and separate grammar lessons*' as he had previously, owing to the need to ensure all curriculum components and teaching targets were met. He advised that, as a consequence, rather than providing isolated lessons, he incorporated writing lessons into other curriculum areas; for example, '*writing a scientific report to tick the box in science as well as the report writing box in English*.' However, the teacher felt this approach restricted the avenues through which to teach writing, resulting in limited opportunities for the provision of extended writing sessions.

The teacher believed that his students were capable of producing writing of a higher standard than they delivered in their formal writing assessments, and argued, '*there is scope to improve the teaching of writing if you are willing and able to invest the time into it.'* However, he identified the limitation of time to provide writing lessons which were not focused on preparation for standardised tests or incorporated into other curriculum areas was the greatest barrier to improving students' writing. He expressed his concern about the level of student disengagement in writing activities and believed increasing student engagement was the key to improving writing achievement. The teacher's views are supported by the research which found student engagement, motivation and achievement increased when students were able to utilise their own experiences and selected their own topic (Bifuh-Ambe, 2013; Fletcher, 2015; Gonzalez & Moll, 2002; Jouhar & Rupley, 2021; Radcliffe, 2012).

The teacher stressed the importance of providing students with a reason or purpose for their writing '*beyond completing a Brightpath assessment*.' He emphasised that '*there has to be a reason for writing and purpose for writing, such as writing a letter to someone famous.'* The teacher's convictions align with the

research findings that have established when the writing task is purposeful and has a real audience, students' levels of motivation, engagement, and writing achievement increases (Bull & Anstey, 2019; Graham et al., 2020; Green & Sutton, 2003; Quigley, 2022; Wyse et al., 2018).

5.1.2.6 Handwriting and Typing

The researcher sought information on the extent to which students used their laptops during writing lessons. The teacher explained that while students were encouraged to complete their brainstorming of ideas and initial planning using the traditional pen and paper methods, their compositions were produced on laptops. He estimated the typing speed of most students as similar to the speed of their handwriting; therefore, there was no advantage achieved by typing. The teacher's observation is supported by that of Christensen (2004), who suggested that any advantage to be gained from typing was dependent on a writer's level of orthographic-motor integration.

5.1.2.7 Summary Teacher Response

Responses provided by the teacher during the pre-intervention interview identified his belief that students have the potential to produce a higher standard of writing. While the teacher conceded that it was difficult to incorporate standalone writing lessons owing to curriculum demands, he identified attitude and motivation as key elements affecting students' success as writers. Another theme identified in the interview was the vocabulary students included in their writing. Students' lack of descriptive details and extended elaborations were described as areas of weakness that require development by the teacher; these were also highlighted in an analysis of NAPLAN results. The importance of providing students with a reason or purpose for their writing, beyond preparing for success in standardised assessments and writing for the teacher, was another area of concern identified by the teacher. He proposed providing students with a purpose and an audience for their writing would increase motivation, engagement, and writing achievement.

5.2 Intervention

The ten-week intervention provided an opportunity for the researcher to determine the impact of the writing program on the student's inclusion of visual imagery and descriptive language in their narrative writing. In addition to observing the interactions and behaviour of the students, the goal of the participant observer

was to record conversations and student input into classroom discussions to determine student engagement in the program. A summary of the observations made by the researcher during each lesson are presented in Sections 5.2.1–5.2.11.

5.2.1 Lesson 1

Integral elements of the writing process are thoughts and feelings (Harste et al., 1984; Seigel, 2006) that are communicated through body language (Jewitt & Kress, 2008; Kalantzis et al., 2016). The first lesson of the intervention program focused on developing students' awareness of the relationship between body language and mood or emotion.

The teacher introduced the lesson by making the statement, '*You will have heard the saying:* '*A picture is worth a thousand words,*' and presented on the board the PicCollage he had previously created, as shown in Figure 4.8, Chapter 4. In the image, the teacher's body language contradicted the descriptive words and phrases and clauses included in the slide. The intention of the paradox message was to engage students' interest using humour. In addition, the contradictory messages aimed to provoke students' thinking and promote original responses, as students needed to read both the image and the words.

After the initial laughter from the students at the image of their teacher subsided, he instructed the students to study his facial expression and body language and think about the message these portrayed and the descriptions he had included in the PicCollage. Students laughed, pointed, and shared their thoughts with one another before the teacher asked for students to share their observations with the class.

FC3 described the teacher's physical appearance using the term '*slouching.*' Another suggested that the teacher was '*tired and falling asleep.*' However, most observations focused on the teacher's mood, which was described by students as: '*negative, depressed and dark*,' '*unenthusiastic,*' and '*like he has no energy, and he is not bothered.*' FC8 surmised that this was because he was '*probably thinking, it is fruitless.*' And FC9 suggested that because '*he isn't smiling, he does not want to engage with anyone.*' Other suggestions made by the students included that the teacher could either be '*tired,*' or '*weighed down by life.*'

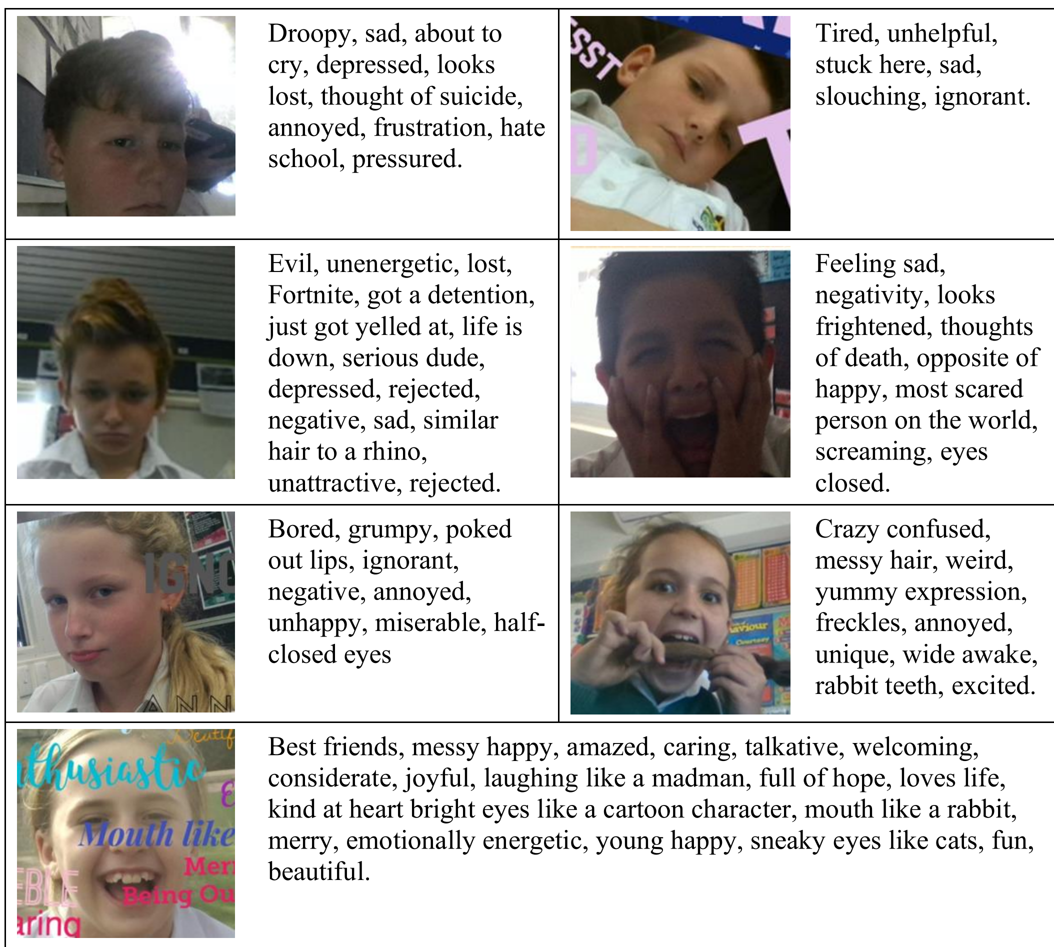
During the second part of the lesson, students were set the task of creating their own PicCollage. In contrast to the PicCollage created by the teacher, the words students used needed to match their body language. The teacher reminded the

students to consider how they positioned their body position and facial expression as they posed for their photographs. Students worked in small groups or with a partner posing as they created the photographs for their PicCollage. The students' engagement and enjoyment in the task was palpable as they laughed as they posed in a range of unusual positions, pulling funny faces, and taking photographs of each other. Participation in collaborative activities increases student motivation (Davies, 2009) and students' confidence and self-efficacy (Bruning & Kauffman, 2016).

After a period of ten minutes, the teacher instructed the students to begin to create their PicCollage. However, this was not a task to be completed in isolation, with students encouraged to share their thoughts and descriptions with each other. Throughout this period, the teacher walked around the room, stopping to chat to students about their progress, sometimes prompting for deeper elaborations of already formed ideas. One student, who was particularly engrossed in the task, excitedly as the teacher if she could share her PicCollage with the class. Following her presentation, many students called out, asking if they too could share their PicCollages with the class. This supports the findings of Conway and Amberson (2011), who found when students participate in collaborative tasks their willingness to share their work increases. Unfortunately, due to the time remaining in the lesson their request was unable to be granted. The language used by students in their PicCollages to describe their observations of their facial expressions, body language, emotion, and mood is summarised below in Figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1

Summary of Students' PicCollage



	Droopy, sad, about to cry, depressed, looks lost, thought of suicide, annoyed, frustration, hate school, pressured.		Tired, unhelpful, stuck here, sad, slouching, ignorant.
	Evil, unenergetic, lost, Fortnite, got a detention, just got yelled at, life is down, serious dude, depressed, rejected, negative, sad, similar hair to a rhino, unattractive, rejected.		Feeling sad, negativity, looks frightened, thoughts of death, opposite of happy, most scared person on the world, screaming, eyes closed.
	Bored, grumpy, poked out lips, ignorant, negative, annoyed, unhappy, miserable, half-closed eyes		Crazy confused, messy hair, weird, yummy expression, freckles, annoyed, unique, wide awake, rabbit teeth, excited.
	Best friends, messy happy, amazed, caring, talkative, welcoming, considerate, joyful, laughing like a madman, full of hope, loves life, kind at heart bright eyes like a cartoon character, mouth like a rabbit, merry, emotionally energetic, young happy, sneaky eyes like cats, fun, beautiful.		

During the lesson, students demonstrated the ability to work together and collaborate with each other without teacher interference or reminders about on-task behaviour. They were eager to contribute and did not need any encouragement to participate, confidently posing for the camera as they pulled funny faces. Students' engagement in the lesson and enjoyment of the lesson were evident, with one student heard to comment at the end of the lesson: '*this is fun.*'

5.2.2 Lesson 2

The lesson began with the teacher prompting students to think about what they see by asking the class the rhetorical question, '*Could you recognise someone by a description of them?*' He followed this by asking students to name physical features and personality traits used to describe people, recording their answers on the whiteboard as they were given. After the whole class brainstorm, the teacher requested students to form groups of three or four based on proximity to where they

were currently sitting. After the students had settled, the teacher announced that each group would randomly be allocated a photograph of a member of the staff, which they would analyse for features which could be used to describe that person. He explained that although they were sharing their observations, each student was required to individually create a PicCollage using the photograph. Finally, students were directed where to access the file containing the staff photographs and which image their group was assigned.

The classroom buzzed with excitement and laughter as students saw the photographs of the familiar faces. As they examined the images, all students actively contributed, making suggestions and discussing the features and characteristics they observed. The enthusiasm students demonstrated in wanting to share their work supports Conway and Amberson's (2011) finding that participation in collaborative activities increases students' willingness to share their work with peers. After discussing and with members of their group, the students completed their own PicCollage. The teacher circulated between the groups, prompting the students to consider features beyond those physically observable which would be included to enhance their descriptions. For example, asking if the photograph were removed, would they be able to identify the person based on the description they had created.

Students used terms such as '*browny, hazel eyes*,' '*sharp burnt orange*,' '*rose red,*' and '*plush pink,'* to describe the features they identified in the photographs of the staff member they were describing. Likewise, rather than describing hair as long or short, students used descriptions such as '*a bob*,' '*specks of grey*,' '*shoulder length,*' and '*frizzy, messy*.' Facial features were described by their shape, using terms such as '*oval,' 'square,' 'round,' 'straight,' 'curved,' and 'semicircle*.' All students, regardless of their level of writing achievement, were able to analyse the photograph, share their ideas, and observations during oral discussions, and subsequently extend their learning (Mercer, 2000; Mercer & Littleton, 2007). The lesson produced an effective learning environment utilising scaffolded instruction, social interaction, and verbal communication (Barnes, 2010; Bruner, 1997; Littleton & Mercer, 2013; Vygotsky, 1978) which resulted in students achieving more than they would have by working independently (Yarrow & Topping, 2001).

Descriptive language used by the students in their PicCollage is shown in Figure 5.2.

Figure 5.2

Summary Students' Staff PicCollage

	FC1 Small ears; wrinkly forehead; bum chin; friendly face; smile; chubby nose; hazel eyes; two caterpillars on his forehead; shiny bald.
	FC2 Bright as the sun; jolly; dirt-coloured eyes; friendly; ears are pointy; thoughts of happiness; very short beard; cheeks are puffy like a cloud; doubled chin; so strong he can lift a mountain; hair is going all the same way; puffy cheeks; friendly smile; flat ears; worried and scared; specks of grey hair; wrinkles above his eyes; baggy eyes; grey beard; tired or exhausted; looks cold
	FC3 Cat eyes; brown eyebrows; very white teeth; bruised nose; kinda tall; long hair; tanned coloured skin; wrinkles; flat nose; blunt nose; dimples; oval face. FC5 Very white teeth; kinda tall; cat eyes; hazel eyes, tanned skin colour; long hair; big smile; strong; bruised nose; black hair; black eyebrows; oval face; medium, blunt nose; dimples; wide nose; large forehead; puffy cheeks; baggy eyes; broad nose. FC6 Browny, hazel eyes; a pointy nose; a mild tan on her skin; thick scary eyebrows; shiny forehead; white teeth; mini gap in the middle of her head in her hair; long black hair; it is shoulder length. FC7 Black hair; smile; friendly; nice; tan skin; confident; puffy cheeks; long, black hair; big eyebrows; happy; positive; white teeth; hazel eyes; baggy eyes; smashed up nose.
	FC8 Sharp, burnt orange bob with a stilly, curled fringe; oval, deep patterned, hazel eyes; square glasses; rose red lipstick; smile is very wide and long; teeth are yellowish rectangles; face is like a light plush leather skin with micro freckles; square face; Orange, faded, neon coloured hair with a fizzy, messy hair style; dark patterned, hazel eyes; face is a square and plush peach with light pink cheeks and black, square glasses; medium sized nose with oval nostrils; a long neck.
	FC9 Light blond, straight short, white hair; oval shaped head; semicircle black glasses; light pink, skinny lips, dark pink, big lips; pale blond, skinny eyebrows; short jaw; large jaw; dimples, no freckles; curved brown eyebrows; round shaped head, soft grey and blue eyes' chubby cheeks; skinny, pale cheeks; flat, pierced ears; very straight, white teeth; shiny face; shiny forehead; light freckles' stern beady, light blue eyes; sharp nose; squinty eyes. FC10 White straight short hair; big shiny forehead; distracted eyes; stern blue eyes; freckles; wrinkles; round chin; round face; brown curved eyebrows; short jaw; dark pink, big lips; small ears; pale white skin; big squinting, round blue eyes; sharp nose; light pink lips; friendly smile; soft square glasses' large jaw; flat, pierced ears; very straight, white teeth, shiny chubby, dimpled cheeks, pale, skinny, softly shaped, blonde eyebrows.

5.2.3 Lesson 3

The activities of Lesson 3 focused on the development of students' abilities to decode visual images by reading semantic devices used in the illustrations from *The Water Tower* (Crew, 1994), utilising their prior knowledge (Eilam, 2012;

Mowat, 2002; Nodelman, 1990; Van Horn, 2008) of the Australian countryside, UFO's, facial expressions, and body language. Mowat (2002) described the power of an image to engage a viewer, attract their attention, and provoke their curiosity.

The teacher started the lesson by recapping the common expression, '*a picture is worth a thousand words*,' which had previously been introduced to students in Lesson 1. He then informed the students they were going to '*read a book,*' but by viewing only the illustrations. Next, the teacher told the students they would then write their own story based on their interpretations of the images. Before showing the students the illustrations that had been downloaded into a PowerPoint, the teacher informed the class that the story was set in Australia and asked students what immediately came into their minds. Instantly students called out: '*orange*,' '*sunset*,' '*desert*,' and '*green and gold.*'

Next, the teacher told the class the book was titled *The Water Tower* and asked the students where they thought the setting of the story could be based on the title. Suggestions put forward included: *'In the country, or on a farm, they need water tanks*,' '*In the desert*,' '*In a town, there are no cities in the desert*,' and '*Maybe Alice Springs.*'

The teacher explained to the students that he wanted them to look carefully at the illustrations, beyond what was obvious. He recommended they take apart the images and think about what they could see and consider if there were any hidden messages. The teacher suggested they consider the characters' personalities and maybe that the students could imagine themselves in the scene and think about how the image made them feel.

Figure 5.3

Front Cover Illustration 'The Water Tower'

From Crew, G. (1994). The Water Tower. Woolman, S. Illustrator.

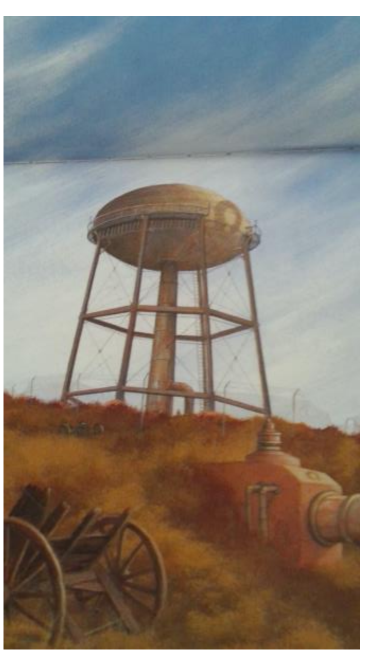
Immediately after the first image from the cover page of the book was displayed on the board shown above in Figure 5.3, there was a palpable elevated level of excitement and anticipation as the 'scary' image appealed to the students. The 'eerie' green glowing beams of light were not an image of the dry Australian countryside that the students had expected. As the teacher asked the students what they could see in the picture, without any instruction to do so, the whole class seamlessly moved forward from where they were sitting in the room to be closer to the board where they could have a better view of the image. The excitement in the class resulted in many students calling out their responses instead of waiting to be called upon by the teacher. Not wanting to deter the students' enthusiasm, rather than dominate the classroom talk and call on specific students, the teacher allowed the highly motivated and excited students to spontaneously share their thoughts. The first statement made by one of the students was: '*It looks like an alien with an eye and a beam of light.*' This was reinforced by another student, who added that: '*UFOs have green beams of light.*' An increased level of student participation was observed, with all students wanting to contribute their ideas, calling out their observations such as: '*It looks like water glowing green under the tower.*'

After the initial excitement waned, the teacher intervened and guided the discussion. When teachers encourage discussion and guide collaboration between

peers, students' motivation increases (Alvermann, 2002). One student pointed out her observation and stated: '*There are weird lines in the background*,' and another student suggested the water tower '*Looks like a massive eye.*' Further suggestions supporting the alien theory included the observations that: '*It's night, and UFOs come at night*,' and '*It looks like metal and UFOs are made of metal.*' There was constant chatter among the excited students, which continued until the next slide containing an image of the water tower during daylight was displayed as shown below in Figure 5.4.

Figure 5.4

Illustration Page 3 'The Water Tower'



From Crew, G. (1994). The Water Tower. Woolman, S. Illustrator

In contrast to the reaction received by the first slide, as the second illustration was presented, a collective and clearly audible groan was emitted from the students as the glowing green water tower at night, in the daylight turned into '*just a water tank.*' Observations made by students included: '*It looks really old, it's all orange and rusty*,' '*It looks like a symbol not an eye*,' and '*The green beam was actually just a rusty pipe that was lit up at night.*'

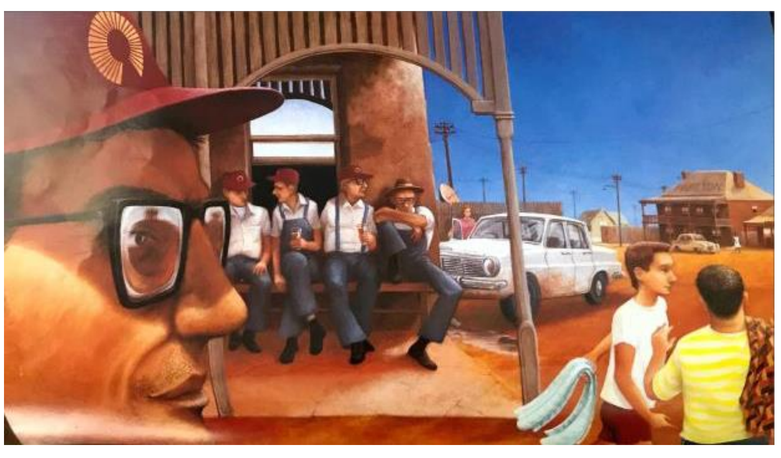
After the initial shock about the non-existent alien spaceship, the discussion moved from the water tower to the environment, with observations including: '*the*

grass looked wild,' and '*the grass is dead*.' Students were able to use their prior knowledge to make connections and associations with the semantic information in the images (Arizpe, 2013; Dean & Grierson, 2005; Serafini, 2014a, 2014b). For example, students' associated coils of barbed wire with danger and knowledge of geography and weather to assist in interpreting the image. One student rationalised that the setting was inland Australia because: '*There is an old cart from the 1900s, and it looks like it's in the outback.*' Another student, not willing to give up the sense of suspense, suggested that the type of fence implied: '*It's a dangerous place.*'

As with the first slide, the presentation of third slide shown below in Figure 5.5 aroused the students' interest and resulted in a blast of excitement and attentiveness from the students.

Figure 5.5

Illustration Page 4 'The Water Tower'



From Crew, G. (1994). The Water Tower. Woolman, S. Illustrator.

Elements within the image drew the students' eyes first towards the characters, then to the environment. Without waiting to be called upon to share their observations, students called out the following observations: '*Oh, he's creepy*,' '*Look you can see the water tower is reflected in his glasses*,' '*Their hats all have the same symbol*,' '*Maybe it's a company badge*,' '*It looks like the desert*,' '*It looks like Texas,*' and '*It is the 1900s; see the old car.*'

The teacher praised the students' analysis of the image and explained that the cars in the images were models from the 1960s. Students' background knowledge was applied to the discussion, with students relating the image of the dry Australian

outback to the dry desert land in Texas. They were also able to make comparisons with the model of cars in the image, noting that they were not the same as those seen today. Analysis of the image continued, with students providing further observations focused on the men in the image: '*The men are drinking beer, that must be a pub*,' '*The men aren't smiling; they look sad*,' '*They are wearing the same clothes; it might be their uniform*,' which was challenged with the comment: '*But their hats are different.*'

The collaborative approach applied by the students demonstrated their ability to listen to and extend ideas already shared by others. Following one student's statement: '*There are only men*,' another student moved up to the front of the room, touched the screen, pointed to a character, and stated: '*There is one woman, look there across the road*.' Immediately, another student called out '*And another there, getting into the car.*'

As the students' attention moved to the two boys, in addition to analysing the characters, they began to create and share possible storylines. A student suggested that one of the boys was holding a towel because he was: '*Sweating from the heat.*' Another suggested: '*They have got towels because they are going for a swim in the tank.*'

Focusing on the men in the illustration one student suggested: '*The men are unhappy because they are forced to work.*' Without receiving any direction or prompts from the teacher, the students began to propose further scenarios such as: '*Maybe there is no water in the town,*' and '*Or the people are stealing water.*'

Immediately upon viewing the fourth slide shown below in Figure 5.6, students made links with the previous illustrations with one student calling out: '*Look, he is at the water tank; you can see the broken fence that was in the other picture.*' This received chorused agreement from other students.

Figure 5.6

Illustrations Pages 6 and 7 'The Water Tower'

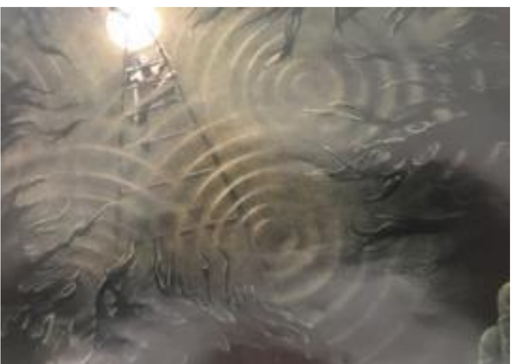
From Crew, G. (1994). The Water Tower. Woolman, S. Illustrator.

After examination of the characters' facial expressions, one student stated: '*The smaller boy looks surprised.*' This was contested by another student who proposed, '*or he could be scared.*' Another student added, '*He's looking up, look at the light in his eyes.*' Someone else offered, '*Yeah, he is probably thinking it is a long way up!*'

An audible exclamation of disgust emitted from the students as the fifth slide shown below in Figure 5.7 was presented.

Figure 5.7

Illustrations Pages 9 and 11 'The Water Tower'



From Crew, G. (1994). The Water Tower. Woolman, S. Illustrator.

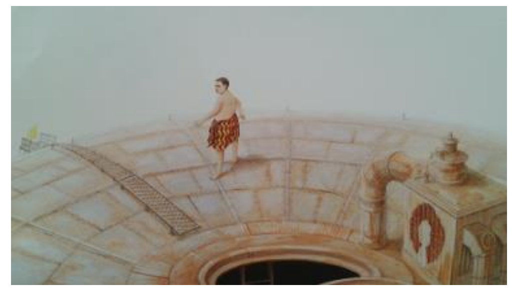
Comments made by the students included: '*Ewwww, there are plants in the water!*' and '*Yuk, dirt is falling in.*' However, one student disagreed that it was dirt and advised his peers: '*It's condensation, falling into the water, it disturbs the water.*' Without any direction from the teacher, the students' focus moved to the

characters, with suggestions made that the boy on the ladder: '*He looks scared,*' '*He's afraid,*' because '*he might be stuck!*' This was countered by another student who argued that it was a guilty look, not one of fear, and directed students to: '*Look at this eyebrows and mouth, he knows he shouldn't be doing it! He probably wishes he didn't go in now!*' Following, a brief discussion students formed a consensus that the boy was most likely scared because he had done something wrong, not because he was scared of anything in the water tank.

As the next two illustrations on slide 6, shown below in Figure 5.8 were displayed, the teacher asked the class if they thought both boys were wet.

Figure 5.8

Illustrations Pages 12 and 14 'The Water Tower'



From Crew, G. (1994). The Water Tower. Woolman, S. Illustrator.

One student moved closer to the screen, pointed to boy on the left, and made the allegation: '*That boy was naughty; the other wasn't.*' Pointing to the second boy, whose hair appeared dry, another student noted: '*Look at the position of the mouth, that says he is worried.*'

The teacher presented the class with the questions: '*Why does that boy have his hand on the other boy's shoulder and what does that mean?*' The consensus among the students was that the gesture was a sign of supportive reassurance and the boy was: '*encouraging him to go in for a swim and saying there it isn't a risk,*' and the action questioned: '*Why he didn't go in?*'

Readers have emotional responses to sensory information in picture books (Styles & Arizpe, 2001), and a maintained a person's thoughts, imagination, and emotional reaction was a result of their prior experience combined with their mood at a moment in time Vygotsky (2004). The students' funds of knowledge led to their emotional engagement with the characters based on their interpretation of the

characters' actions and emotions as portrayed in illustrations. For example, after viewing the image, shown below in Figure 5.9, which shows the boy who had entered the water running alone towards the town, one girl demonstrated her developing emotional engagement with the characters by indignantly exclaiming: '*He made him go in, and then he ran away!*' This statement was supported by another student who added the boy was going: '*To get the men with the hats and dob in his friend for going in the water.*' However, another student defended the boy's action, suggesting that: '*Maybe he saw something,*' which was supported with another student's suggestion that the boy: '*went to get help.*'

Figure 5.9

Illustrations Pages 20/21 and 22/23 'The Water Tower'

From Crew, G. (1994). The Water Tower. Woolman, S. Illustrator.

The students' comments indicate elevated levels of emotional engagement and presence in the development of the character and storyline that was being created by their interpretation of the images (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009; Hoeken & Fikkers, 2014). The indignation shown by one of the students suggests she identified the image of the boy running away from his friend as a negative action formed through past knowledge of having a similar experience (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009; Cohen, 2006; van Krieken et al., 2017). Furthermore, it is evident that these students are drawing on visual affordances in the images to make emotional connections with the characters (Cohen, 2006; van Krieken et al., 2017). The formation of a negative view of the character could be based on the students' interpretation of the character's personality developed from reading his facial expressions and actions in previous images. Similarly, the students who viewed the same image but identified the boy's action as a positive action formed their opinion based on their personal experiences and positively interpreting his character as portrayed in the illustrations.

As students moved their attention to the second image on the slide, there was an increased level of interest and excitement. Students manoeuvred themselves closer to the screen to examine the detailed features in the characters' faces in the second image. This action by the students suggests they were not merely having superficial glances at the images but were actively searching the images for details and messages. Students eagerly shared their observations: '*They look like aliens!*' '*Look at their eyes!*' '*You can see the reflections of the water tower in their eyes!*' '*They look like robots,*' and '*Look at that gigantic fork!*' Other remarks made by the students were directed toward potential storylines, such as '*They are not real people,*' and '*It's not a real town.*' However, not all suggestions followed the alien theme, with some students proposing: '*The boy ran into town screaming that his friend is in the water tower,*' '*The people look shocked,*' '*There might be a hole in the water tower and the water is coming out,*' and '*The water tower has collapsed.*'

The eighth slide which included the illustrations spread across pages 24 and 25 and the illustration on page 27 of the book is shown below in Figure 5.10.

Figure 5.10

Illustrations Pages 24/25 and 27 'The Water Tower'

From Crew, G. (1994). The Water Tower. Woolman, S. Illustrator.

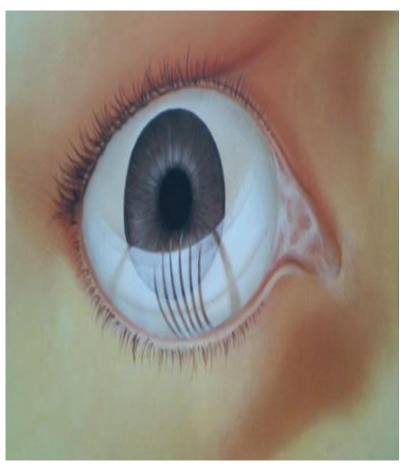
The first image showed the boy who had run back into town climbing through a window of an old house. The second image was a close-up of three townspeople. As with the previous slide, the students' focus was drawn to the image of the people, with particular attention given to the characters' eyes: '*The people are possessed*,' '*They have evil green eyes*,' '*They look like aliens*,' and '*You can see the water tower in their eyes.*' Again, the discussion led to suggestions of potential storylines. One student suggested that the townspeople had become possessed

because: '*There are roots in the water and the people drank the water.*' Another suggested: '*The boy who ran away poisoned the water and now everyone who drinks it gets possessed.*'

Removing the focus from the characters, one student pointed to the large fan-like shape behind the characters' heads and enquired: '*What is that thing behind them?*' However, the question remained unanswered before illustration was replaced with the next slide, when a collective gasp was heard the extreme close-up shot revealing an image of one large eye taking up the whole frame, shown below in Figure 5.11, appeared on the screen.

Figure 5.11

Illustration Page 29 'The Water Tower'



From Crew, G. (1994). The Water Tower. Woolman, S. Illustrator.

Moving to the front of the room and touching the screen one student pointed to the lower part of the eye and dramatically declared: '*It's the gigantic fork*!' Another added: '*The eye looks like the water tower.*' During the discussion about the illustration, students agreed that although the image was of only one eye, it portrayed fear and posed the questions: '*Is it one of the boys?*' '*Where is he?*' and '*What has he seen, what is he scared of?*'

The 10th and final slide contained illustrations from the last two pages of the book Figure 5.12. The first image showed the boy who had not previously entered the water, peering out of the opening in the top of the water tower, his hand gripping the rim with his eyes directly at the reader.

Figure 5.12

Illustrations Pages 31 and 32 'The Water Tower'

From Crew, G. (1994). The Water Tower. Woolman, S. Illustrator.

Instantly, multiple students called out their thoughts, which included: '*The other boy went in; his hair is wet now*,' '*They are both possessed*,' and '*Just like the people in the town*.' One student pointed out that the shape of the water tower was visible in one of the boys' eyes. Another student asked: '*But what happened, he ran away, why did he come back*?' This was answered with the following responses: '*He went to get help,*' and '*He doesn't look very happy.*' The teacher's employment of dialogic teaching during whole-class discussions grew students' willingness to share their thoughts and modify their interpretation after the contributions of others (Alexander, 2018). It was evident that the collaborative discussions enabled students to demonstrate 'interthinking' as their ideas and suggestions built on those provided by their peers (Mercer & Littleton, 2007). Students' social communication skills were further developed through the meaningful exchanges and sharing of ideas during whole-class discussions. In addition, dialogic talk, such as listening to their peers' perspectives, facilitated the development of students' cognitive skills and increased their vocabulary, regardless of their level of contribution. This internalised the thinking process and achieve more than they would by working alone (Kelly, 2008; Miell & McDonald, 2000; Vygotsky, 1978).

Students were set the task of selecting one of the illustrations and creating a short text to accompany the image. Although they were writing the text as a group, students were asked to ensure they each saved a copy of the text in their own individual files. Slide 8, which contained the illustrations of one of the boys climbing into a house through an open window and another, a close-up of the townsfolk

appearing to be in a trance, was the most popular image chosen by the students. The texts composed by groups which included at least one of ten students selected as focus children were examined by the researcher.

The text written by FC5's group was predominately action-led, with limited descriptive vocabulary. The text written by the group in which FC1 and FC4 were members detailed features they could observe, as well as describing action:

> 'that boy that has the orange hair and lots of freckles and a white shirt is running and all the other people look like they are possessed because of their eyes.'

FC2, FC6 and FC7 worked together to create a storyline that suggested it was:

> 'a simulation and the only real people are the kids that broke the simulated law.'

FC8 and her partner analysed the features they could see in the illustration:

> 'I see a lot of golden-yellow grassy hills and an old fruit and vege stand … some hay rolls with a narrow dusty dark ginger path.'

FC9's group selected Slide 10. The text the group produced described what they saw in the image with an imagined storyline:

> 'the boy … is coming out of the water tank possessed by the creature (aliens) in the water tank …. he has a green glow around him.'

Slide 10 was also selected by FC10 and her partner, their storyline included the concept of the boy being possessed:

> '… has been turned evil by something he might have seen in the tank … he has been submerged in the water … might be [a] toxic substance.'

Their descriptions of the characters combined visual appearance and emotional and personality characteristic:

> 'The second boy is annoyed and angry but the first looks triumphant and confident.'

Illustrations chosen by the students were predominately close-ups, which are created with the aim of drawing in readers (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; Painter,

2007). Students' interpretations of the images and development of a storyline were linked the characters' expressions within the images (Bearne, 2004; Lopatovska et al., 2016; Nodelman & Reimer, 2003), as shown in the text created by FC1 and FC4:

> 'people look like their [they are] possessed because of their eyes' and FC10 'his eyes look firm and angry with a keyhole shape.'

5.2.4 Lesson 4

The lesson began with the teacher explaining to the class that the lesson's activities were going to build on from the previous lesson. He advised the students they were going to work in small groups of up to four to create a narrative to accompany the illustrations from *The Water Tower* (Crew, 1994) which they had viewed and discussed previously. Prior to starting the day's task, the teacher presented some examples of the work they had completed in the previous lesson and reminded them to look carefully at the images and ensure all members of the group contributed. He then asked the students to sort themselves into groups, which they did very quickly and easily. Increasing students' autonomy elevates their level of internal motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). As students selected the peers they wanted to work with it was assumed compatibility and friendships were the basis for their choice. The speed and ease at which students completed this move showed evidence that they were comfortable and experienced in both moving into and working in groups.

To stimulate mood, and emotional responses (Bull & Anstey, 2019; Hull & Nelson, 2005) as the students wrote the teacher quietly played '*The Twelve Titans*' as background music. This action suggests that the teacher valued the importance of environment which has an impact on students' motivation (Klassen, 2002).

Within five minutes, two groups comprising of four girls independently recognised that they were experiencing difficulty collaborating effectively, and amicably decided to divide themselves into groups of two. However, two other groups of four students continued to work together. The writing approach applied by one group of four boys that included FC2, FC6, and FC7, involved each member independently composing the text on a mini whiteboard to accompany an illustration. Working through the slides one at a time, they stopped, shared, and discussed their ideas with each other to create one group-written text. The role of typing the text into their PowerPoint alternated between the group members.

Although the boys were able to work collaboratively and were very amicable, their approach proved to be extremely time-consuming. As a result, they were only able to complete text for two illustrations in the time allocated. Although the group established a clear plot their text did not include any descriptive details found in the image. An example of the text composed by the group is shown below:

> One day the aliens came down to earth from there [their] planet Sigmar to colonise our planet … there [their] mission to rule the universe now there target is earth there plan to enslave earth is to erase every ones [one's]memory … our setting is in simulation #6734 where our humans are Jimmy and Bob the simulation is of a western town and the water supply is the water tower alien eggs have been planted in the water tower … now the water is contaminated because as soon as the eggs are planted anything that drinks it becomes the eggs control.

The second group of four boys included FC1, FC3, and FC4. Unfortunately, as a consequence of none of the boys taking on a leadership role, the students struggled to organise themselves. However, aware of the difficulties the group was experiencing, the teacher monitored their progress, frequently stopping to assist providing encouragement, and asking probing questions. The boys composed text for the first three slides. The narrative, which was written in first person, included descriptions of elements in the images and the thoughts and emotions of the character. An extract of the text is shown below:

> One night I was looking through my window and I saw an alien probe … there's a green pole coming down so it looks like the horror movie I saw earlier … there's faint green lines coming of that could be radioactivity and there's an eye looking … I got scared and I went and hid under my covers thinking that they would abduct me.
>
> In the morning I looked out my window and what I thought was an alien probe was a water tower that was had a rusty pole in the middle of it that strangely glowed at night … eye figure was just a different shade of metal.

Taking turns to write the text for each slide was the strategy used by the group of three boys, which included FC5. After initially engaging in a group discussion when they all shared their ideas, the boys decided to share the slides

between themselves and independently compose text for their allocated slides. Unfortunately, upon merging the individual compositions, inconsistency was noted in the writing styles, with two students delivering an analysis of the image written in first person, while the third developed a storyline, named the characters, and wrote in future tense. However, punctuation was lacking in the texts created by all members of the group as shown in the extract below:

> I believe it is a water tank with poison water inside and its Possessing the whole town … looks like it's a monster or a UFO maybe there is a flood and the water tank is leaking.
>
> You can still see the water tank in the man's glasses … might be the leader of them … there might be a pool or maybe there up to no Good.
>
> Finn and Jake are near the fence … they might be going … if they go to the water tank and get caught they will be in trouble … Jake has a cheeky smile.

The group of three girls, which included FC8, wrote text for five slides. Their composition did not deliver a narrative but consisted of a detailed analysis of the images in each slide, starting with '*In this photo*' or '*In these pictures.*' However, they introduced emotion through the characters' thoughts and actions. A sample of the text produced by the girls is shown below:

> In the photo … The object in the middle of the photo looks to be like a [an]alien ship because of the bright neon green light … looks like there is sound … because of the neon green lines … edge of a grassy hill … looks to be hypnotizing because of the colour and how it is built with the big eye looking out on you.
>
> In this photo… untamed yellow-orangy grass… there is torn down wire fencing … broken old fashion cart and a pump with two silver pipes.
>
> In the photo … maroon-coloured caps with a dirty yellow the symbol seems to be the same as the one we saw on the water tank … sitting on the end has a different hat and seems to be tired and fed up.
>
> In … a broken wire fence … the golden-brown untamed grass. one boy looks unsure because of this facial expression and how his eyebrows are up … The

boy … has a grin of mischief … freckles going across his under eyes and nose, he has pointy ears and a blunt nose … looks to amazed.

FC10 and her partner completed text for six slides. Their composition was well punctuated, included detailed descriptions and established a storyline around the two main characters. Below are extracts from their PowerPoint:

> In a dry barren landscape … old, rickety and rusty water tower in the middle of the desert. It had many hidden powers … strange marking on the side that looked like a keyhole … an old broken-down wagon stranded alone only meters away…an orange, rusty water pump suppling water for the village.
>
> Not so far away … a peaceful village … James and Thomas, the towns youngest kid, had a plan … the same symbol … on everyone else's hats.
>
> James looked exited and confident, but Thomas looked scared … something was going to go wrong. The old water tower creaking in the wind.
>
> He felt worried as he descended … he could see strange swaying plants that curled round and knotted tightly around each other. The steel ladder was cold on his bare skin … in the cloudy and murky water he swore he could see something.
>
> Thomas looked worried as the sun burnt on their backs and shoulders … James looked confident and triumphant ... told him to go down and hop in the murky, utterly disgusting water … a foul smell.

Although students did not physically make any notes during the PowerPoint presentation and class discussion, their compositions included vocabulary used during the whole-class brainstorming session, providing evidence that they acquired knowledge subconsciously (Ivanič, 2004; Gee, 2001). In addition, the text created by FC10 and her partner incorporated an increased range of descriptive vocabulary. While potential storylines were also deliberated during the class discussion and students were tasked with creating a narrative to accompany the images, two groups did not develop introduce a storyline and only described what they saw in the images.

Working within small groups, students continued to engage in dialogic talk with meaningful sharing of ideas and information. Following whole-class analysis and discussion of the images, the texts produced by the students revealed a rich

range of sensory observations which would enable readers to visualise their own image as they read the text. For example, FC10 and her partner described: '*an old, rickety and rusty water tower,*' '*a peaceful village,*' '*water tower creaking in the wind*,' '*swaying plants*,' the feel of the ladder which '*was cold on his bare skin*,' and the water inside the tank was '*cloudy and murky,*' with a '*foul smell.*' Descriptions incorporated in the text written which demonstrated students' attention to details in the images included: '*golden-brown untamed grass*,' '*grin of mischief*,' '*bright neon green light,*' and '*freckles going across his under eyes and nose.*' Analysis of visual images combined with discussion enabled students to compose text which included a higher level of sensory descriptors.

5.2.5 Lesson 5

The activities of Lesson 5 sought to advance the students' sensory awareness of their physical environment by directing their focus to observe what they could hear, see, feel, and smell. The activity was designed to provide students with opportunities to engage their physical senses of touch, taste, and smell, in order to provide sources for descriptive language in their writing (Ehrenworth & Labbo, 2003; Kalantzis et al., 2016; Protherough, 1978; Vygotsky, 2004).

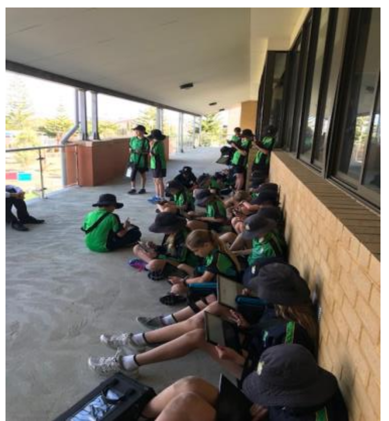
At the start of the lesson, the teacher explained to the students that they were going to explore the school grounds, but suggested they should be extra vigilant and notice things they might not normally notice. He advised the class that they would be focusing on the use of their senses and record their findings using the sketchpads and cameras on their laptops. Regular users of both forms of technology, the students did not require any instruction on how to use either of the tools. Outlining the structure of the lesson, the teacher explained they would be stopping at five separate locations, and upon their return to the class, they would have an opportunity to share their observations. Before they left the room, he reminded the students to bring their laptops. The teacher led the class across the courtyard outside their room, into the secondary building and up the stairs to the second floor. On exiting the building, they were in an area which overlooked the Early Years playground.

Location 1: The students automatically rushed forward to the edge of the balcony and started taking photographs. To calm the very excited students and guide their focus toward what they could hear, he directed the students to sit to one side of the walkway where they could not see the children in the playground. A photograph

of the students on the second story balcony above the playground is shown below in Figure 5.13.

Figure 5.13

Location 1



After their excited chatter ceased, the teacher instructed the students to listen carefully and note down the sounds that they could hear. After allowing the students enough time to record their observations, the teacher asked for volunteers to share what they had heard with the class. FC8 informed the class that she could hear '*voices.*' The teacher agreed that she was correct but prompted her to elaborate and provide further details by asking, '*But whose voices?*' '*What are they saying?*' and '*What can you tell about the voices*?' A student called out that she could hear '*singing.*' Again, the teacher prompted for further details asking '*What more can you tell me about the singing*?' '*Who is singing and what are they singing?*' Although the students were often able to name the object from which the sound emitted, they had difficulty describing the sounds they heard. For example, FC2 informed the class that he could hear '*toys.*' Seeking further details, the teacher asked, '*How do you know they are toys?*' and '*Can you describe what sound are they making?'* and '*What toys do you know that make that sound?*' A student responded that he could hear '*squeaking.*' The teacher countered by asking what he thought was making the squeaking sound. Whilst positive, the teacher's responses to the observations made by the students sought further elaboration and deeper analysis of the sound. For example, one student stated that he could hear '*the wind.*' The teacher responded by posing the questions '*Can we hear the wind?*' *What can we really hear?*' Building on the response given earlier and the teacher's feedback, a student called out that

they could hear '*the wind in the trees,*' to which the teacher replied, '*Yes, great answer, but is it the wind you can hear or maybe what the wind does?*' The students were given more time to complete their observations.

The teacher's responses and questions were designed not be negative judgements or categorise students' responses as right or wrong but to provoke further thought and expand original ideas. The interactions with students scaffolded dialogic talk, interthinking, and collaboration with the co-construction of analysis of students' observations acquired through recall of prior knowledge and experiences (Alexander, 2004, 2008, 2018; Mercer & Littleton, 2007). In addition, the students benefitted from hearing the observations and reasoning of their peers. A summary of the notes taken by the ten student participants is shown below in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1

Location 1: Student Observations

FC2	Bells, singing, talking, truck, teachers, laughter, swing.
FC3	Kids talking and screaming, laughter, teacher talking, bells, clapping.
FC5	Happy screaming, swing squeaking, singing, laughing, teachers talking, someone panting, heavy breathing.
FC6	Ringing, talking, singing, swings, ravens, laughing, running.
FC8	Laughter, screaming, running, bells, singing, teachers voice, swings, excitement, raven, wind.
FC9	Excitement, squeaking, ringing, shouting, singing, teacher's voice, laughter, yelling, swings, panting, talking, ravens, footsteps, clapping.
FC1, FC4, FC7. FC10	Absent/incomplete

Location 2: The students returned to ground level and walked through the secondary school to an area where they could look down on the school oval below. The position also provided a panoramic view over the nearby suburbs, west towards the sea, and east towards the hills. A photograph of students looking out across the oval and the oval are shown below in Figure 5.14.

Figure 5.14

Location 2

Although it was originally planned to focus on sight, taking advantage of the athletics carnival taking place on the oval, hearing was also included in the students' observations. As they stood next to the railing, students took photographs and recorded what they could see. After approximately five minutes, the teacher requested the students to move to an area where they either sat at some lunch tables or on the grass. The teacher asked the students to listen carefully and record what they could hear. The students were not as 'over excited' as they had been at the first location and quickly became engrossed in the task, focusing on listening for sounds. The teacher asked the students what they heard. One student said that he heard 'a gunshot.' Seeking further details, the teacher sought further elaboration: 'Can you describe what sort of gun?' FC10 offered that she could hear 'voices.' The teacher agreed that there were a lot of voices and prompted, 'What sort of voices? What can you tell me about the voices? Are the people yelling? Are they excited?' FC10 volunteered, 'One voice is using a megaphone.' FC3 described one of the sounds he heard as 'the whistling sound of the discus.' This answer was a good description of what he either heard or imagined he heard. The teacher redirected the focus to what the students had seen. One student stated that they could 'see the beach.' Another student quickly added that he could 'hear the waves crashing.' This provided evidence that the students were using their imaginative because the ocean was several kilometres away, and it was too far to hear or observe the waves crashing on the beach. The teacher acknowledged that there were waves crashing but advised the students that these were on a reef and not the beach: 'but on windy days we might be

able to smell the seaweed.' A summary of the vocabulary students recorded on their sketchpads is detailed below in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2

Summary Student Observation Location 2

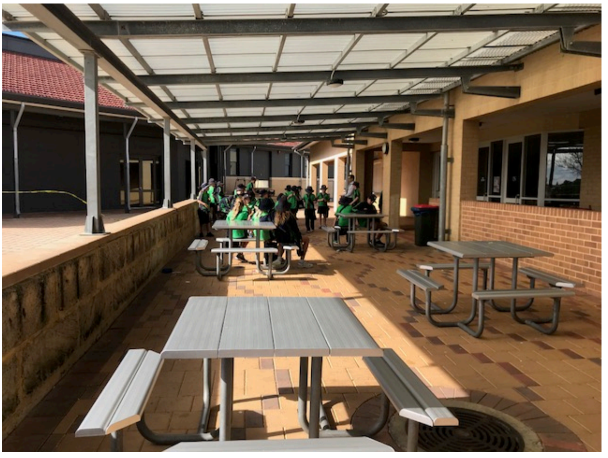
Visual	sea, dogs, park, cars, trees, grass, netball courts, clouds, moon, crowd, ocean, white and grey wispy clouds, sunny bright blue sky, little clouds, IGA, green grass, sun, palm trees.
Action	Running.
Aural	Talking, cheering, voices, car beeping, yelling, barking, gunshot, gun, megaphone.

Before moving on to the next location, noticing the blue sky was interspersed with clouds of different shapes, colours, and types moving across the sky, the teacher asked the students to lie on their backs and observe the sky.

Location 3: The teacher led the class to the alfresco area outside the Food Technology rooms and canteen as shown in Figure 5.15, where it was anticipated the students would be able to engage their sense of smell.

Figure 5.15

Location 4



Unfortunately, there were no cooking classes timetabled, and the canteen was closed. Conveying a positive attitude, one of the students noticed something sticky on the ground. Another student suggested that it was probably from '*a strawberry slushy*.' Remaining positive, students applied their imagination and prior knowledge, suggesting what they might have smelt had the canteen been open. After finding pieces of discarded popcorn on the ground, one student said that he could smell

'*salty popcorn.*' With little to engage the students the teacher led the class to the next location.

Location 4: The teacher led the class a short distance to a small area between the car park and one of the school buildings surrounded by limestone blocks and a hedge shown below in Figure 5.16.

Figure 5.16

Location 4

As the students sat on the steps, the teacher explained that the students were now going to engage their sense of touch. He suggested students feel and compare the textures of the limestone blocks, hedge, and the handrail. After the students had recorded their observations, they shared these with their peers. During this discussion, it was evident that the students' experienced difficulty generating vocabulary to describe texture. Instead, the students provided a visual description or described the material from which it was constructed or the object's purpose. However, one student described touching the limestone wall as 'exfoliating.' Another student found some moss growing on the limestone wall which she described as 'velvety.' Both descriptions show the students' ability to apply their background knowledge and prior experience with materials to describe their sensory experience. Further descriptions recorded and shared by the class are summarised below in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3

Location 4: Student Observations

Texture	Rough, smooth, soft, hard, velvety, cold, bumpy, wet, crumbly.
Other	Squeaky, exfoliating, metallic, sleek, moldy, mossy, chrome.

5.2.6 Lesson 6

At the beginning of the lesson the teacher held up a blank sheet of A3 paper. He said, '*This blank piece of paper represents an untold story*.' He then reviewed the previously introduced concepts of a picture being worth a thousand words and how readers interpret emotion, mood, and messages from images. He reminded the students how when they viewed the illustrations from *The Water Tower* (Crew, 1994) they experienced emotional reactions and obtained meaning from reading the characters' facial features and body language. The teacher recapped how the students had created their own narrative based on their interpretations of the images.

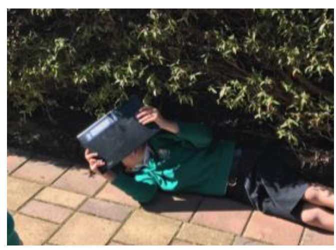
Providing an outline of the lesson, the teacher explained that they were going to explore the school grounds, but they were to, '*think outside the square,*' and '*view the world from an unfamiliar perspective*.' He added '*I want you to look at things differently than how you do every day. I want you to explore spaces and nooks and spots that you do not normally go and as you do I want you to take photographs.*' He explained that they would not be doing any note-taking but recording their experience through photographs. The students detached the top of their laptops and headed into the courtyard.

While he still had the students' attention, the teacher prompted them to think about how they feel and any thoughts they might have and to take lots of photographs. To demonstrate what he meant by different viewpoints and perspectives, the teacher asked one student to climb up one of the olive trees in the courtyard outside the classroom. At the beginning the students were overly excited and constantly chattering among themselves, therefore it was difficult to decipher comments made between the students as they explored stairwells, climbed under and through bushes, and clambered over gates or squeezed through a fence to explore the vacant block of land across the road from the school. Students' active engagement was evident as they placed themselves in unusual places and positions and

photographed common but typically unnoticed elements. Examples of positions and viewpoints photographed by the students, is shown below in Figure 5.17.

Figure 5.17

Contrasting Viewpoints

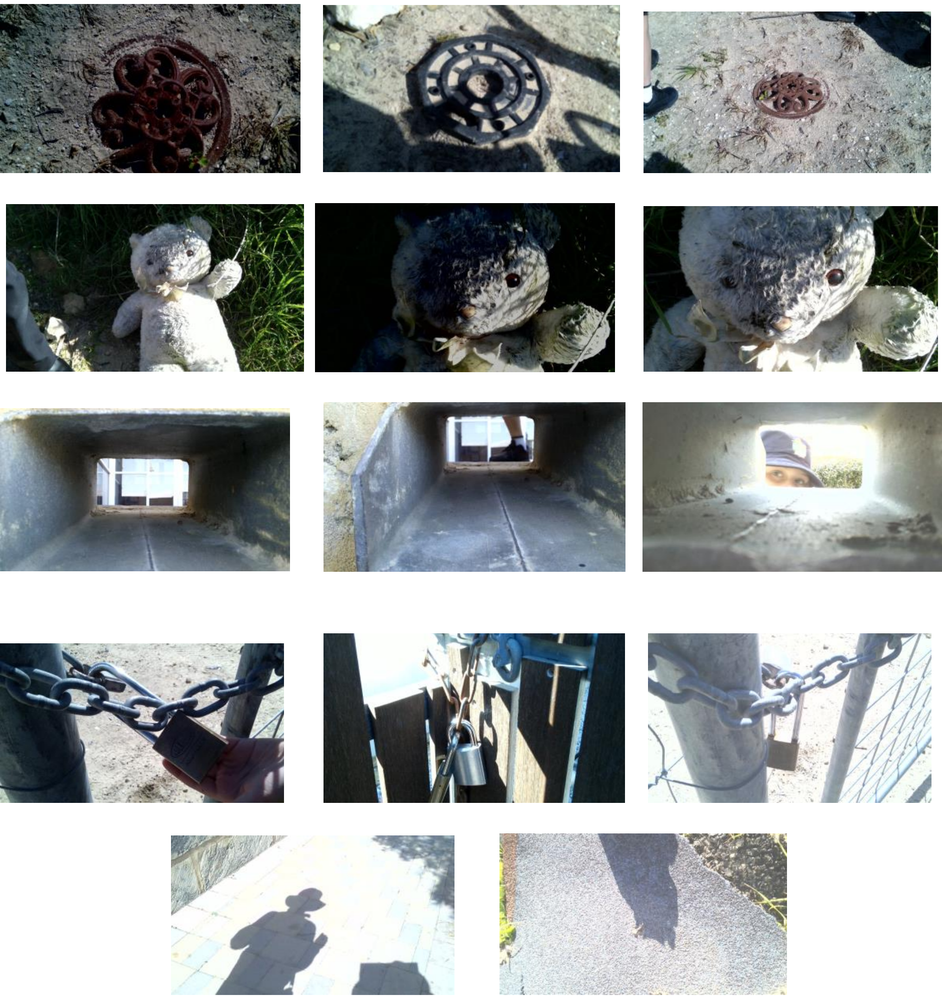


The students' enjoyment of the lesson was also evident in their excited chatter and reluctance to return to the classroom. On their return to class, the students were instructed to save the photographs they had taken into a folder titled Lesson 7 on the shared student drive. The researcher later accessed each of the student's individual folders and created a new folder in which she saved the photographs.

During her post-intervention interview FC8 proclaimed it was '*edgy to see something you don't see every day.*' Yet ironically, much of what the students photographed they do view every day, but not in the way they observed it during the lesson. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) identified the correlation between reading and understanding elements in the natural environment and reading and understanding visual images. Whilst viewing the visual images in earlier lessons, the students engaged their imagination and background knowledge as they analysed the illustrations and photographs. Subsequently, students applied a fresh perspective as they physically engaged their senses during their exploration of the outdoor environment. The students extended their observations to include aspects and objects they had considered previously. Following their detailed analysis of *The Water Tower* (Crew, 1994) illustrations, students applied their imaginations as they took photographs of what would normally be considered worth photographing. Although students photographed the same objects, such as a gap in a wall, a discarded metal object, padlocks, shadows, and an unwanted teddy bear within a short time frame, the images were not the same, as shown below in Figure 5.18.

Figure 5.18

Photographs of Objects

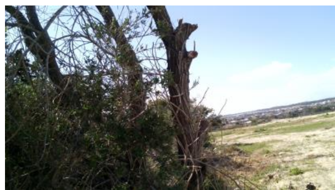


Although the students commonly used the cameras on their laptops during their normal school day for tasks such as recording themselves reading, they had not received training in either photography or visual literacy. Furthermore, during the intervention, students did not receive instruction on the taking of or manipulation of photographs or instruction in visual literacy. Yet, the photographs captured by students showed evidence of their awareness of visual elements of texture, contrast, and juxtaposition in their photographs. The photographs taken of what were otherwise typically dull, unnoticed objects provided an insight into the creativity and intrinsic knowledge held by students with use of perspective, angle, and lighting (McLean & Rowsell, 2015; Nodelman, 1990). This supports research undertaken by Hughes et al. (2011), who found that when tasked with creating graphic narratives using photographs. Digital technologies provide a key scaffold to enrich students'

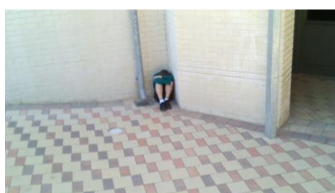
writing through elements such as promoting 'authorial confidence, intent, and audience awareness' (Dowdall, 2020, p. 89). The students required little instruction in media concepts because of the amount of time the current generation of children are engaged with multimodal devices and screen-based technology (Berman et al., 2008; Felten, 2008; Gardner & Kuzich, 2018; Maller et al., 2009; Soga & Gaston, 2016). The teacher's instruction at the beginning of the lesson to; 'Look at things differently … explore spaces and nooks and spots,' resulted in students photographs providing evidence of their implicit knowledge of camera angles, long shots, close-ups, colour, texture, contrast and juxtaposition. Examples of the photographs taken students demonstrating these qualities is shown below in Figure 5.19.

Figure 5.19

Texture, Contrast and Juxtaposition



The image captured contrasting environmental landscapes. Colour contrasts, dark bush in the foreground and light blue sky in the background. The barren land leads the readers' eyes toward to houses in the distance.



Emphasis in the image is directed towards the boy huddled in the corner. Depth is portrayed with the coloured tiled area in the foreground which provides a contrast to the plain concrete walls. The tiles draw create a vector which draws the readers eyes to the boy who is the focal point of the image.

The photograph of a plant has been taken from a birds eye view. The brightly lit light background contrasts with the vivid green leaves. Texture features in contrasts found in the image between the dry dead grass and soft green leaves of the plant.

The image is divided into three sections. The top and bottom sections are similar sizes with a smaller middle section dividing the two. The foreground comprises of barren land without any identifiable or key objects or people portrays isolation and loneliness.

Taken from a low angle the viewers eye is drawn towards the spikes which are highlighted against the background of the bright clear, blue sky. The photographer has deliberately composed the image with the spikes positioned in the middle of the image Texture is delivered through the limestone bricks.

An extreme close-up photograph of the word HELP gives an intimate feel. The letters scratched into the earth deliver a focus on earthy texture.

5.2.7 Lesson 7

The teacher explained to the class that during the lesson they were to look through the photographs they had taken during the previous lesson, choose one, and write a descriptive piece of text about that image. Composing text to accompany a photograph assists in the multisensory elements delivered in a photograph could evoke feelings and memories (Spencer, 2011). In addition, the composition of text to

accompany a photograph a student had personally taken enabled them to combine a visual observation with a personal emotive or sensory response. Productive talk transpires when students share and discuss their thoughts and ideas (Miell & McDonald, 2000) which enhances student engagement and assists in text creation (Bull & Anstey, 2019).

Students eagerly opened the folder where they had saved their photographs, proudly showing and discussing the images with their peers. As the students shared and discussed the images with the teacher and researcher circulating around the class conversations between students remained focused on the task.

Of the ten student participants four selected a photograph of the discarded teddy, two a photograph of bushland, one a photograph of boy and another a photograph of two girls walking across the vacant block of land. Although when orally describing what they could observe and hear during their expedition, the vocabulary used by the students in their written text extended beyond the obvious visual elements to include tactile, aural, olfactory, and emotional descriptors, as shown below in Figure 5.20. This outcome suggests that sharing their observations and promoting for further elaboration by the classroom teacher assisted student written composition (Bull & Anstey, 2019).

Figure 5.20

Summary Student Observations

Lesson Seven: Summary student observations

Smell: *Very bad*
Visual: *Old, grass - dry green; shadow covers half of the teddy face, rocks and tall grass, white bear, not cuddly, dirty, ripped, ugly, green mould.*
Tactile: *Fur still and stiff, wet.*
Emotion: *Scary, horror, creepy, possessed.*
Imagery: *Like a bear from a horror movie. Like a cat/someone poured acid on it.*

Visual: *Young bloke, barren land, dirty, gas pipes.*
Emotion: *Happy, creepy, loved.*
Imagery: *Looks like he is in his defence mechanism. Looks like he is happy to be dirty.*

Visual: *Chair, plants.*
Emotion: *Mysterious, creepy, lonely, ominous, scary, terrifying, demonic, paranoid.*

Visual: *Two girls, cream dusty path, bush, cream limestone wall, fence old brown logs, shrubs, leaves, big limestone rocks, houses, bag, untamed grass, lemony green grass.*
Aural: *Silence.*
Olfactory: *Air smells horrible waste and dried up plants.*
Emotion: *Lonely, fighting for their life.*

Visual: *Long green grass, dead trees, drooping flowers, bright yellow flowers.*
Tactile: *Sleek and soft, little breeze.*
Aural: *Eerily quiet, rustle of leaves, footsteps, silence.*
Olfactory: *Smell of plants muddled with waste, weird scent is sweet.*
Emotion: *Creepy, lonely, relaxing.*

5.2.8 Lesson 8

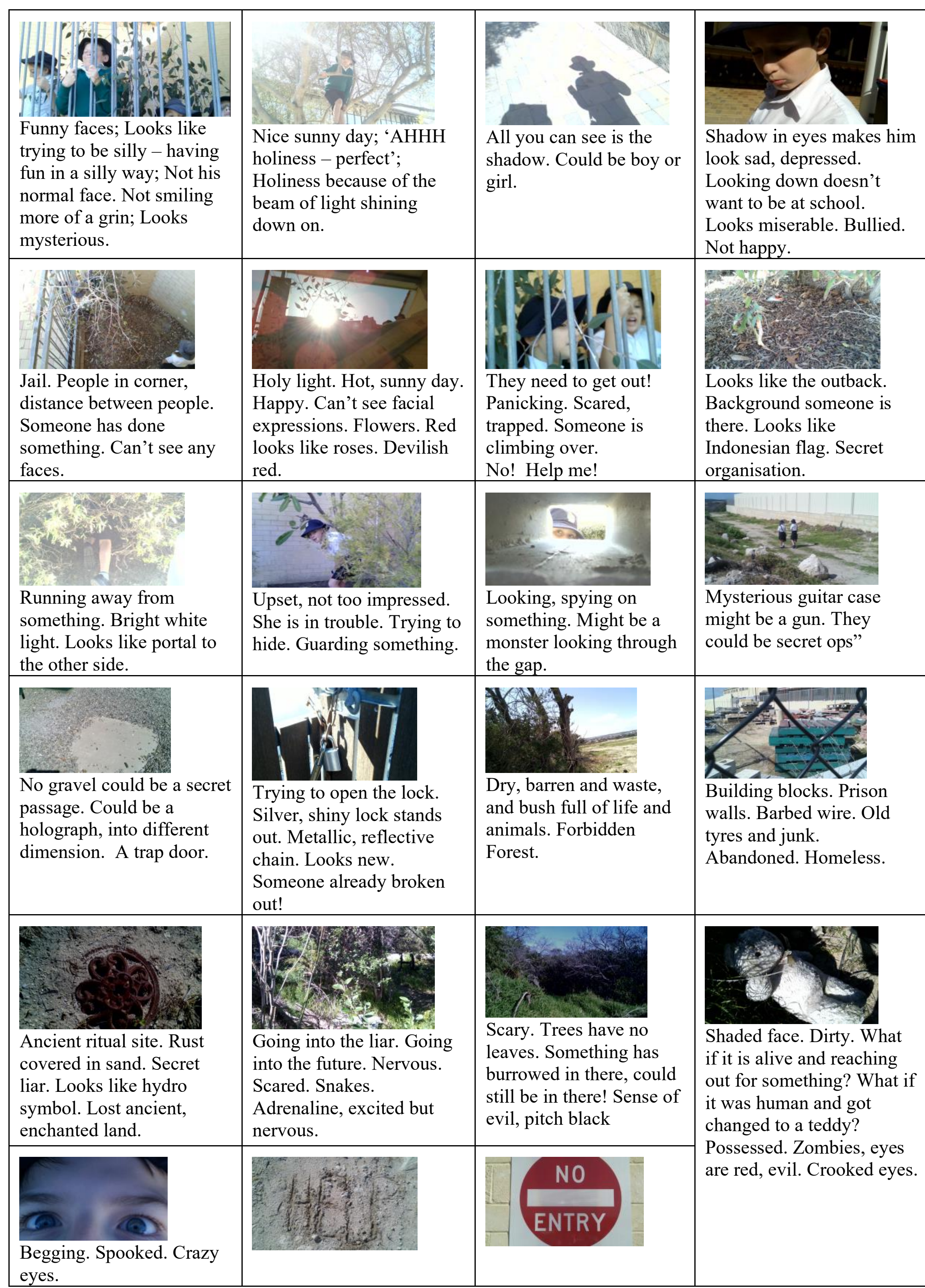
To ensure the selection of ten photographs was not overwhelming for the students and could be achieved in a constrained time limit, prior to the start of the lesson the researcher sorted through the hundreds of photographs that had been taken

by the students during Lesson 6. While the task was extremely time-consuming, many photographs were found to be very similar, with only a few of poor-quality. Ultimately, 27 photographs which the researcher considered to be unique or of a high standard were placed in one folder, and 96 in a second folder.

At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher informed the students that they were going to view and talk about some of the photographs that they had taken during their expedition around the school. One by one, 23 of the 27 images in the folder containing photographs selected by the researcher were projected onto the board. The teacher encouraged students to recall the physical and emotional reactions and trepidation they experienced as they walked around the undeveloped block of land and crept into the entanglement of bushes. Students were engaged and eager to share their thoughts, ideas, and suggested storylines. However, due to the volume of responses, it was at times difficult to record all contributions. A summary of the recorded responses is presented below in Figure 5.21.

Figure 5.21

Photo Walk Responses



Funny faces; Looks like trying to be silly – having fun in a silly way; Not his normal face. Not smiling more of a grin; Looks mysterious.	Nice sunny day; 'AHHH holiness – perfect'; Holiness because of the beam of light shining down on.	All you can see is the shadow. Could be boy or girl.	Shadow in eyes makes him look sad, depressed. Looking down doesn't want to be at school. Looks miserable. Bullied. Not happy.
Jail. People in corner, distance between people. Someone has done something. Can't see any faces.	Holy light. Hot, sunny day. Happy. Can't see facial expressions. Flowers. Red looks like roses. Devilish red.	They need to get out! Panicking. Scared, trapped. Someone is climbing over. No! Help me!	Looks like the outback. Background someone is there. Looks like Indonesian flag. Secret organisation.
Running away from something. Bright white light. Looks like portal to the other side.	Upset, not too impressed. She is in trouble. Trying to hide. Guarding something.	Looking, spying on something. Might be a monster looking through the gap.	Mysterious guitar case might be a gun. They could be secret ops"
No gravel could be a secret passage. Could be a holograph, into different dimension. A trap door.	Trying to open the lock. Silver, shiny lock stands out. Metallic, reflective chain. Looks new. Someone already broken out!	Dry, barren and waste, and bush full of life and animals. Forbidden Forest.	Building blocks. Prison walls. Barbed wire. Old tyres and junk. Abandoned. Homeless.
Ancient ritual site. Rust covered in sand. Secret liar. Looks like hydro symbol. Lost ancient, enchanted land.	Going into the liar. Going into the future. Nervous. Scared. Snakes. Adrenaline, excited but nervous.	Scary. Trees have no leaves. Something has burrowed in there, could still be in there! Sense of evil, pitch black	Shaded face. Dirty. What if it is alive and reaching out for something? What if it was human and got changed to a teddy? Possessed. Zombies, eyes are red, evil. Crooked eyes.
Begging. Spooked. Crazy eyes.			

After the last image had been shown the teacher explained to the students that they were going to create a picturebook, but first they needed to select ten photographs to use as illustrations. He directed the students to the location of the two folders containing the photographs previously selected by the researcher. The students were then reminded to select photographs which would help tell their story and encouraged them to continue to share their ideas with each other. As in the previous lessons students enthusiastically set to work chatting and discussing their photograph selection with each other. As the teacher circulated around the room, stopping to talk to students, they excitedly showed the teacher photographs they had selected with many explaining why they selected the image, what they liked about it or giving an overview of the storyline they were envisaging.

5.2.9 Lesson 9

The teacher told the students they were going to continue working on their individual narratives, which they had started in the previous lesson. He encouraged the students to look carefully at their photographs and use the images to help develop and guide the story. The teacher reminded the students that although it was an individual task they could brainstorm and talk about their ideas with each other. While not all students had finalised their photograph selection, most students were ready to begin writing their narrative.

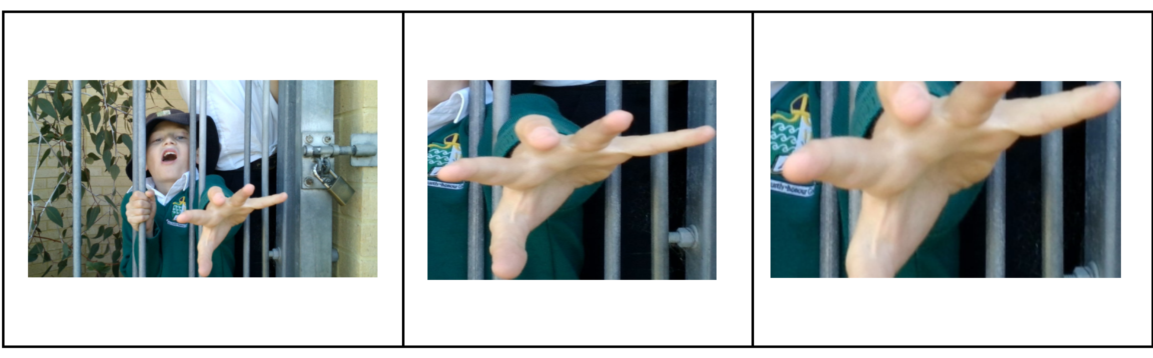
Their enthusiasm and enjoyment of the task were evident in their animated and expressive delivery of their story ideas, which they shared with a small group of their peers. Whilst FC1 delivered his story idea as an explanation, stating, '*This is a picture of ....*' FC3 expressively relayed his proposed story as if he were narrating a film. FC5 and FC7 were similarly expressive as they combined a description of the images with a detailed storyline, whereas FC10 and FC9 shared their ideas with each other as if reading a book. Both FC2 and FC4 appeared to lack confidence as they hesitantly shared their ideas.

Throughout the lesson, students willingly stopped their own writing to listen to their peers who were seated nearby and reciprocated by sharing their own progress. However, FC8 and another girl, who were seated together and who willingly shared their ideas at the start of the lesson, remained focused on their own work for the remainder of the lesson. As the students worked, the teacher reminded them to remember to think about who the characters are, what they are doing, and where they are.

Although students had access to 123 photographs, 19 of the 23 images students selected for their narratives were images that had been included in the slideshow presentation. Ten other photographs were also selected, with one image used by multiple children. After cropping one of the photographs he selected for his narrative, FC4 saved the new image into the shared folder. This cropped image was later selected by other students who also used in the image as an illustration for their narrative. The original and cropped images of this photograph are shown below in Figure 5.22.

Figure 5.22

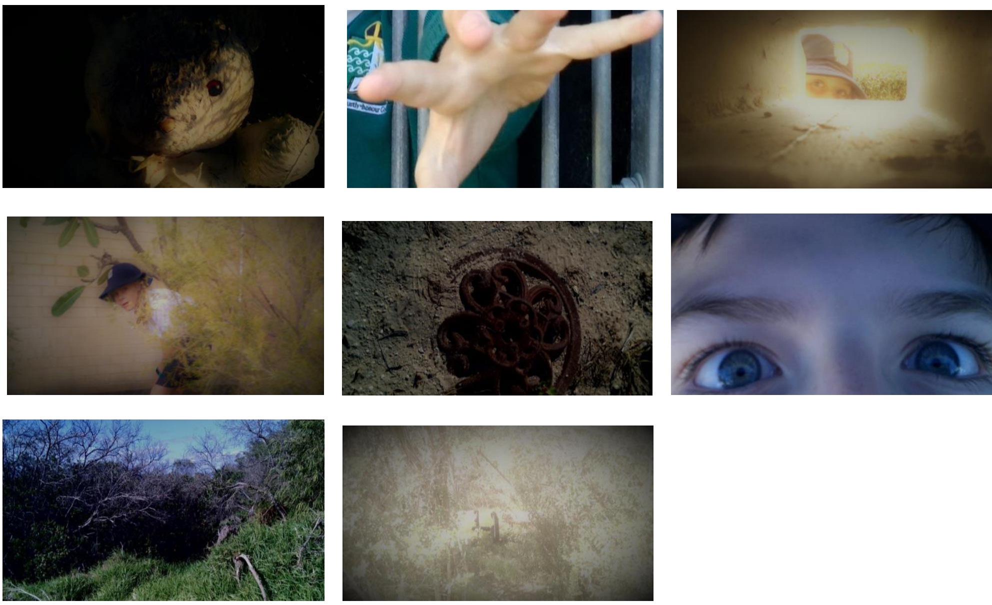
Cropped Images



FC4 spent a considerable amount of time manipulating the photographs he selected. He darkened, cropped, and filtered the photographs with a sepia colour tone. A comparison of the original and altered images is shown in Figure 5.23.

Figure 5.23

FC4 Modified Images



When the teacher informed the students that it was the end of the lesson and they needed to ensure they saved their work, they were so engrossed in their writing they did not want to stop. As they reluctantly packed away, several students approached the teacher and asked if they could continue writing the next day rather than wait another week for the next scheduled writing lesson. Because he was able to be flexible with the timetable and keep the momentum in students' enthusiasm, an additional lesson was scheduled for the next morning.

5.2.10 Lesson 10

Eager to start working the students settled into the lesson and continued to work on the narrative they had started writing the previous day. As in previous lessons, the teacher circulated around the room, stopping to talk to students as they worked.

The four students who were orally recording their narrative were again able to utilise the room across the hall. Elevated levels of confidence were shown by FC3 who spoke loudly and expressively as he made his recording. Although they were encouraged to use the photographs, generating ideas and finding words to describe them continued to be a challenge for the other three students. Many students experience difficulty with written composition due to limited vocabulary or

background knowledge (Hibbing & Rankin-Erickson, 2003). A photograph of one of the students orally recording his narrative is shown below in Figure 5.24.

Figure 5.24

Student Creating Audio File

5.2.11 Lesson 11

Outlining the plan for the lesson, the teacher explained that students who had not yet finished would continue to work on their narrative, whereas those who had finished could share their stories with each other. Only the four students who had orally recorded their narratives declared that they had finished, with the remainder of the class choosing to work on their compositions.

While the disruption of swimming lessons had created flexibility in the timetable, it also resulted in several students attending catch-up music lessons during the writing lesson. Consequently FC4, FC6, and FC8 were unable to work on their narratives during Lesson 11.

5.2.12 Intervention Narrative: (Narrative 2)

The Intervention Narrative (Narrative 2) delivered an opportunity for the students engage in writing a narrative over an extended period of time, during which they could share and discuss their work with their peers. In addition, the stimulus for their writing utilised photographs they had taken and chosen themselves during a sensory walk in nature. The narrative provided a source for comparison with the narratives written by the students under test conditions, including time constraints and teacher-selected stimulus. Although the researcher anticipated that students would complete a narrative within the allocated lessons, despite an extra lesson, this outcome was not achieved by all students. Of the ten student participants, only four

composed texts for all ten images. However, analysis of the narratives identified that during each lesson, students reviewed the text they had created in the previous lesson, either by editing previously written text or adding additional text. In addition to reviewing their writing, students reconsidered their choice of photographs, with both FC1 and FC9 reordering their original selection or adding additional images. Detailed analysis of six of the ten student participants' narratives is provided in Section 5.4, and a summary of the number of words written across the number of images each lesson is shown in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4

Summary Words and Images Intervention Narrative

	Lesson 8	Lesson 9		Lesson 10	Lesson 11	TOTAL	
	Images Added	Words over images	Images Added	Words over images	Words over images	Words	Images with text
FC1	5	425/5	5	678/6	768/6	1871	10
FC2	10	219/3		156/3	564/7	939	10
FC3	absent		10	334/6	-	334	6
FC4	10	0		654/3	absent	654	3
FC5	10	184/2		299/3	354/3	837	6
FC6	10	188/2		300/3	absent	488	3
FC7	10	122/1		439/2	644/2	1205	4
FC8	10	343/2		absent	absent	343	2
FC9	10	absent		635/3	1762/10	2357	10
FC10	10	265/2		1672/10	0	1937	10

Only four of the focus students were able to compose text for all ten images. Two of these students were the highest-achieving students in the pre-intervention narrative, while the other two were the lowest in the same assessment. Likewise, the same four students had the highest overall word counts, with the exception of FC7 who had a higher word count than FC2, but his composition covered only four slides. Nevertheless, it is acknowledged that the quality of a composition is not determined by the number of words written.

An increased number of words written by students in consecutive lesson indicated a growing momentum in their storytelling as their narratives unfolded. This was achieved by moving Lesson 10 to the day after Lesson 9, rather than the following week as originally planned. The flexibly enabled students to engage in the writing process (Graham & Harris 2013; Graves 1983). FC1, FC5, and FC6 increased their word count by approximately 160 percent; FC7 increased by 260 percent, and FC10 had an exceptional increase of 530 percent. The exceptions were FC3, who had orally recorded his narrative during Lesson 10, and FC2, who wrote fewer words in Lesson 10 than in Lesson 9. However, FC2 increased his word count 360 percent between Lesson 9 and Lesson 10, and FC9 180 percent. Due to her absence during Lesson 10 and 11, FC8 was unable to complete her narrative or demonstrate an increased word count. Similarly, FC4, who prioritised the manipulation of photographs over text composition, was unable to complete his narrative or provide a comparison between the volume of text written across the lessons. FC6 was absent during Lesson 11 and only composed text for 3 images.

Based on observations of student interactions and engagement during the lessons, the students enjoyed participating in the intervention, particularly the collaborative group activities. Even though all students remained on task during the writing sessions, not all of them were able to complete their narratives within the data collection phase. Bearne and Wolstencroft (2007) argue to effectively plan, draft, and revise, students require five or six writing sessions. Yet writing lessons typically involve students independently composing a text within a 60-minute period on a topic selected by the teacher or picture stimulus (Bull & Anstey, 2019; Lipscombe et al., 2015). In contrast the intervention program incorporated the elements, time, topic choice, response, and the learning community, Graves (1983) identified as key to the writing process. In hindsight, the timeline itself delivered a new challenge with students. Firstly, providing students a wide selection of slides

reduced time available for writing, as students spent at least one lesson selecting photographs and developing a storyline. In a traditional writing lesson five to ten minutes is allocated for the planning process. Secondly, students usually compose text in silence without sharing or discussing their ideas with each other, as they did while writing their narrative. It was evident students applied a recursive approach, reviewing, and editing their writing throughout the composition process. Consequently, time management was an issue because students were not practiced at writing over an extended period, as writing workshops and conferencing conflicts with curriculum and testing demands (Bull & Anstey, 2019; Dutro, et al., 2013; Hannon, 2000).

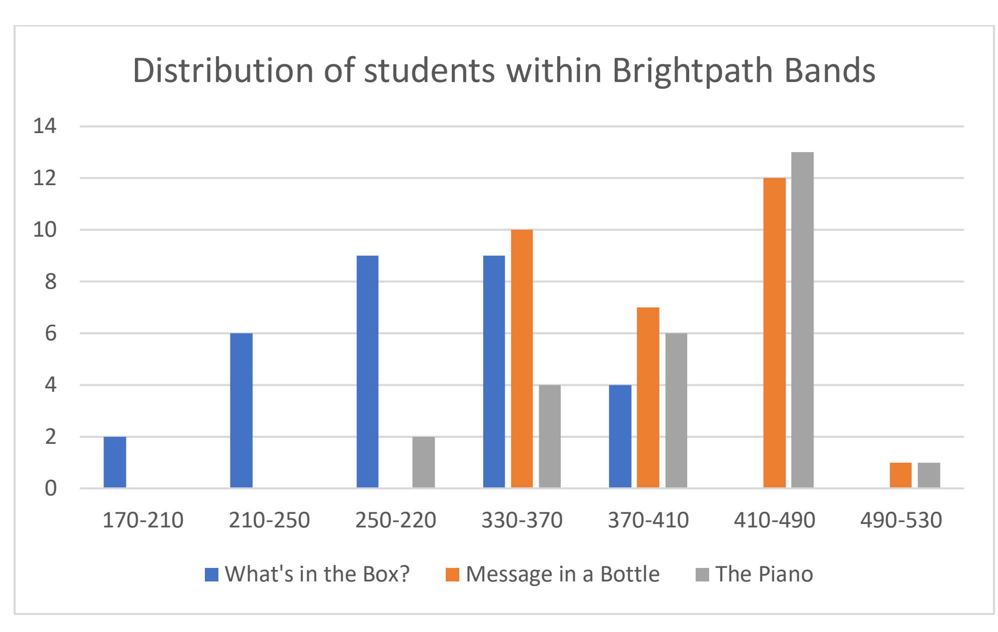
An opportunity was provided for students to complete their narratives at the beginning of Term 4. The narratives were later published and shared among the class electronically and in print form.

5.3 Brightpath Assessment of Narratives

This section reviews the results of the students' pre- and post-intervention narrative writing assessments, measured against the Brightpath Narrative Writing Teacher's Ruler. A comparison of the scores awarded to all students for each narrative and number of students across the Brightpath bands for each narrative is provided below in Figure 5.25.

Figure 5.25

Brightpath Narrative Band Distribution



Narrative 1: Although students were tasked with writing a narrative, the compositions were predominately short retells with some embellished recounts of the previous day, with only a few original narratives written. For example, below are extracts of two recounts written by FC6 and FC7, and an extract from the embellished recount written by FC8 followed by an extract from one of the original narratives.

> Everyone started wondering about the box then the box started shaking the table. I badly wanted to know what is inside the box. We started guessing what was in the box but no use, I think it something fragile like glass. (FC6)

> While Mr P was walking with the box and holding it as though it was full of glass. Then he tripped on the box landed on Z's desk and out of nowhere came "Z GET AWAY FROM THE BOX!" then Z ran. (FC7)

> …he pulled out a box filled with something that glowed like the sun, you couldn't see what was in there though. Next he went to the front of the classroom he opened the box it came out with this scent that smelled like bubble gum. … The lights were dark at this point. When I saw what else was in the box it was magical there were little light objects floating towards each person with a note attached when mine came it said soft as a flower powerful as the sun you come to me like waves In the sea then I felt this feeling coming up my spine and my eyes felt dead then I was falling into a deep deep sleep. (FC8)

An example of one of the few original narratives is shown below, however, the narrative did not align to the topic of the writing topic of 'What's in the Box?'.

> This story is about when I travelled to the future, it all started when I was walking. I was walking in the bush when I came across a weird looking figure, it looked ancient when I went closer to it smelt like rust but it started glowing suddenly it started to make a weird noise the ground started to crumble it formed a hole.

As described in Chapter 4 and presented in Table 4.1, scores for the pre-intervention narrative ranged from 180 to 390, with an average score of 299.

Narrative 2: The first post-intervention writing assessment, '*Message in a Bottle',* was completed in Week 10 of Term 3. In place of a picture stimulus,

students were asked to write about a convict's sea voyage from England to Fremantle. As outlined in Chapter 4, students had been studying the settlement of convicts to Australia during Term 3, and the walls of the classroom contained many displays arising from their study.

The scores awarded to the students for their writing spread across four bands of the Brightpath Narrative Writing Teacher's Ruler, with an average of 397. As shown below in figure 5.16, only three students did not achieve a higher score for their first post-intervention narrative than their pre-intervention narrative. Two students' scores decreased by 20 points, and one from 360 to 240. Conversely, the lowest score increased from 210 in the pre-intervention to 330 and the highest increased to 510 from a high score of 390 in the pre-intervention, with an average increase of 97 points. The three largest gains were made by FC8, who increased her score from 360 to 510; FC10, who rose from 380 to 510; and another student, who increased from 220 to 410. An extract from FC8's narrative shown below.

> One convict called Jim was vomiting from seasick another was dying of scurvy but I still had another virus. It was 1 month later and the Pamelia stopped in Indonesian to get supplies for the boat. When we went downstairs we smelt a smell of rotting toxic wood. It tasted like dead fish and rotten seaweed. (FC8)

FC6 received a score of 430 for his narrative. An extract is shown below.

> We were throwed in cells in the boat and there was a mini rock and I used the rock to dig a hole for years and I have a hole big enough to throw a bottle out. I found a bottle and ink was dropping from the roof and a feather tip in my pocket from one of the robberies I was missing a cap ... (FC6)

FC3 increased his score of 250 in narrative 1 to 380 in Narrative 3. An extract of narrative 3 is shown below.

> The confishons [conditions] ware [were] as ruf [rough] as war evrry [every] one was vomiting and getting very sike [sick] the gards [guards] that took us on the ship where [were] mene [mean] thay [they] would pock [poke] us with a sharp stick. The irony was scerry [scurvy] pepel [people] ware foling [falling] of [off] board or triing [trying] to excap [escape] but the gord

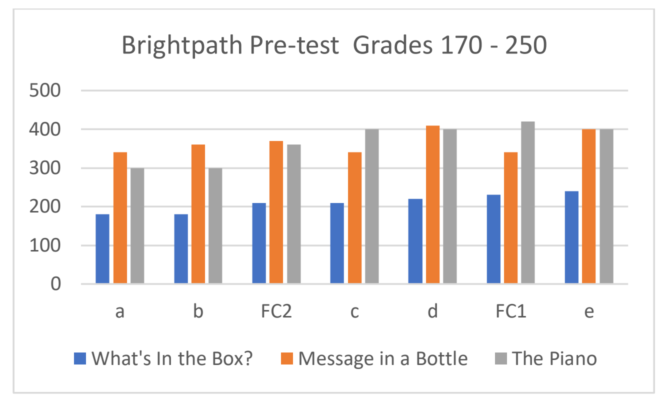
[guard] would grad [grab] you but if you swam away you would get shot. (FC3)

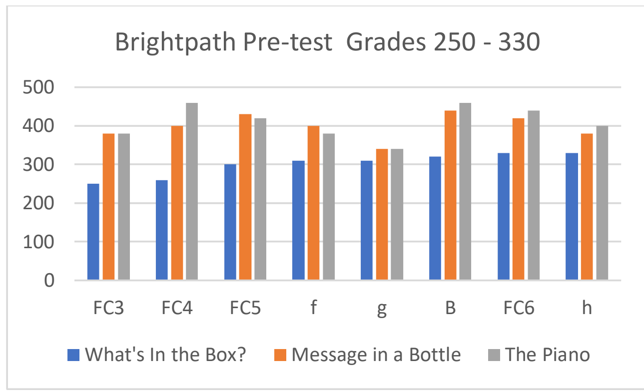
Narrative 3: The second post-intervention writing assessment, *The Piano*, was completed in Term 4 at the end of first week. As discussed in Chapter 3, students were tasked with composing a narrative to accompany the short, animated film, *The Piano* (Gibbons, 2011), which they viewed immediately prior to beginning their assessment. Unfortunately, four students were absent on the day of the assessment.

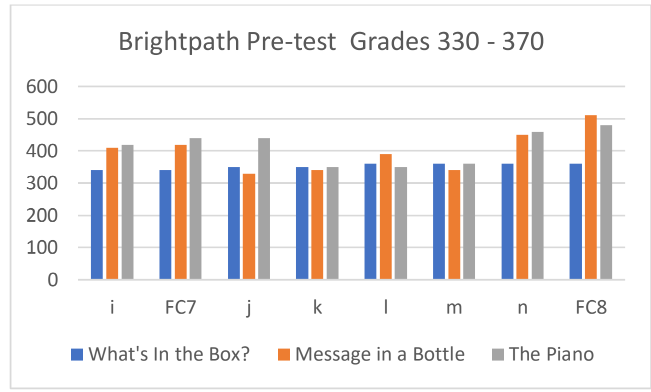
While two students' scores moved down into a band below the lowest for Narrative 2, all students achieved a higher score in Narrative 3 than in Narrative 1; however, eight received a grade lower than their Narrative 2 score. While five students' scores varied by only 10 and 20 points, the scores of three students differed by 40 and 60 points. Since all of these students were not one of the student participants their narratives could not be analysed further, nor could the students be interviewed. A comparison of the scores awarded to each of the students for the three Brightpath narrative writing assessments is shown below in Figure 5.26.

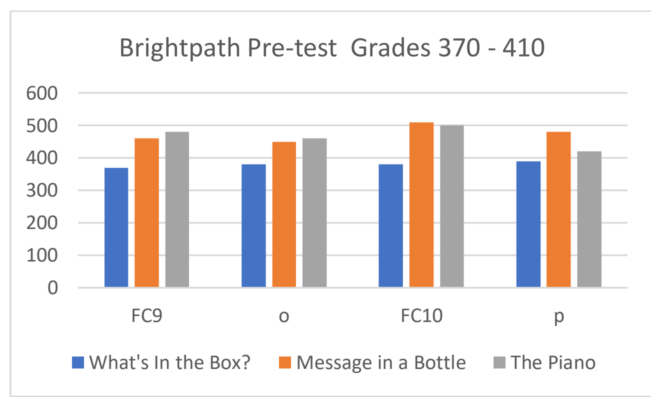
Figure 5.26

Pre- and Post-intervention Brightpath Narrative Writing Scores









The scores spread across five bands of the Brightpath Narrative Writing Teacher's Ruler. The results revealed that students who achieved lower scores in the pre-intervention assessment made the most progress in their writing following their participation in the intervention program. The average score increased from 299 in the pre-intervention assessment to 397, or an increase of 98 points in the first post-intervention assessment to 410, or an increase of 111 points in the second post-intervention assessment. In comparison, the average performance of 3,271 Western Australian Year 5 students assessed using Brightpath narrative writing in Term 2, 2020 was 354, and in Term 4, the average of 3,853 students was 369, an increase of 15 points (Brightpath, 2020). The average increases of 98 and 111 points achieved by students who participated in the writing intervention is considerably higher than the average 15 points achieved by the average Western Australian Year 5 student. This suggests the intervention program had a significant impact upon the students' writing, as measured through the Brightpath writing assessment tool.

5.4 Student Participants

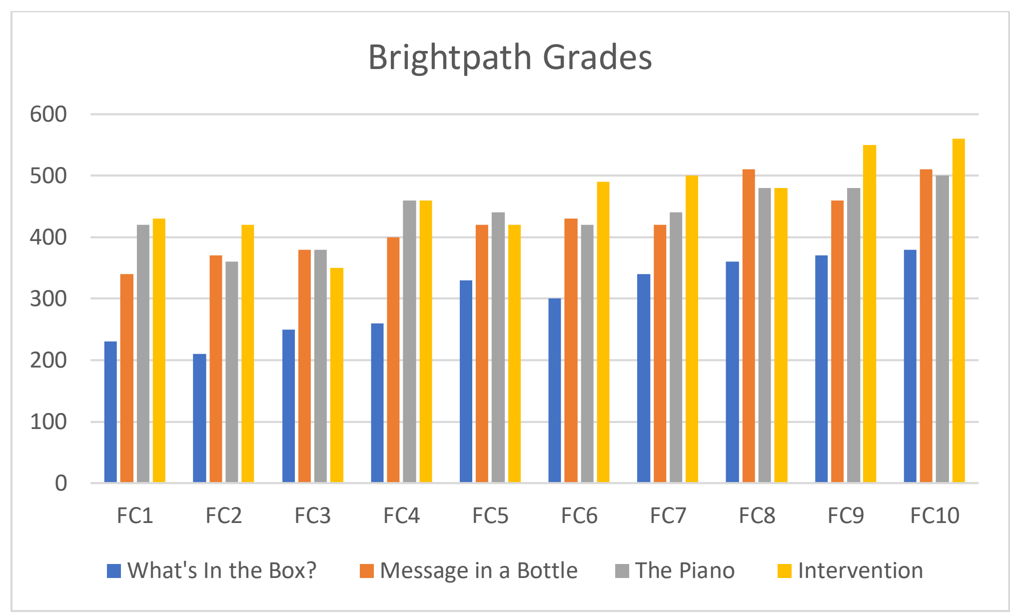
This section analyses the narratives written by the ten student participants during the study. The first part examines and compares student achievement following grading using the Brightpath narrative writing assessment tool. The second part considers the findings of analysis of six of the ten students' narratives using the vocabulary rubric.

5.4.1 Brightpath

Following their participation in the intervention program, all ten student participants increased their Brightpath scores, with individual increases ranging from 80 to 160 points. The mean average score increased from 303 to 421, and the highest from 380 to 510. As discussed in Chapter 3, although not completed under timed conditions, the narrative composed by the students during the intervention was also graded against the Brightpath Narrative Writing Teacher's Ruler. A comparison of the Brightpath scores for the ten student participants' four narratives completed by during the study is provided in Figure 5.27.

Figure 5.27

Focus Students' Brightpath Scores



The highest growth recorded between the baseline pre-intervention assessment and either of the two post-intervention narratives or the intervention narrative was achieved by FC2, who increased his score by 210 points. This was closely followed by FC1 and FC4, who increased their scores by 200 points. FC6's score rose by 190 points, and both FC9 and FC10 boosted their scores by 180 points.

The relationship between the word counts for each of the narratives and the corresponding Brightpath score is provided in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5

Word Count and Brightpath Grade

		FC1	FC2	FC3	FC4	FC5	FC6	FC7	FC8	FC9	FC10
What's in the Box?	Grade	230	210	250	260	330	300	340	360	370	380
	Words	194	119	209	180	213	209	219	613	402	778
Message in a Bottle	Grade	340	370	380	400	420	430	420	510	460	510
	Words	270	303	290	312	340	286	377	427	461	620
The Piano	Grade	420	360	380	460	440	420	440	480	480	500
	Words	358	148	229	679	284	217	238	366	365	598
Intervention	Grade	430	420	350	460	420	490	500	480	550	560
	Words	623	313	290	684	279	244	404	343	785	946

Note. Because the intervention narrative was written over more than one lesson, the total word count was averaged over the number of lessons in which each participant composed text.

Analysis of data indicates that there was no parallel increase in Brightpath scores and word count. Although five student participants wrote fewer words in their 'The Piano' narrative, they received higher scores than they achieved in their 'Message in a Bottle' narrative.

For example, FC2 achieved a score of 350 for his 'Message in a Bottle' narrative and 360 for his 'The Piano' narrative; however, his second post-intervention narrative contained 155 fewer words. Examples of FC2's two post-intervention narratives, which both fell within the 331 – 371 Brightpath band are shown below in Figure 5.28 and Figure 5.29.

Figure 5.28

FC2 Narrative 3: 'Message in a Bottle' Brightpath Assessment

I lived In England It was so cold and I nearly starved and died of hypothermia so I dicided [decided] to steal a loaf of bread and it will be a leased [at least] a size of your fist, but I will have to try to not get caught. Tonight, is the night that I steal the loaf of bread OK here I go wish me luck Hay come back with that dam it guys I was caught Fremantle Prison here I come.

THE DAY OF THE VOYAGE
Guys I'm sorry to say but the ship is awful the beds are awful were halfway to Fremantle prison so far one person has died to oxegen [oxygen] loss because he suffocated himself because he heard how they treated people that stole…

MESSAGE GOING OVER BOARD
So here I am going to throw the bottle in the sea and if you are reading this you have found my bottle …

331 – 371.

- **Story includes an orientation, a complication and may include a resolution.**
- **Stories in this range may contain some innovative element such as simple use of dialogue to carry the actions, some reflective comments, or the setting is a little more imaginative.**
- **There is a suggestion of character and setting through naming and description**
- **Starts to use descriptive language and a wider range of words that add precision.**
- **May be starting to use speech marks, exclamation marks or manipulate punctuation for effect.**
- **Spelling of common words is generally correct as is the use of sentence level punctuation.**

Figure 5.29

FC2 Narrative 4: 'The Piano' Brightpath Assessment

The old man is thinking about grief that has happed [happened] in his life. So he plays a sad song about grief. The old man is playing the piano with his deceased wife how they used to play … he [was] determed [determined] to be in the war…When his friend dies holding his hands and it feels to him that his life is ending. Then after his friend dies, he survived the war and gose [goes] home disapointed [disappointed]… He gives his grandson his most wanted toy … galloping around the piano leaping with joy and then with a gigantic leap… playing with his grandson and is teaching him.

331 – 371.

- **Story includes an orientation, a complication and may include a resolution**
- **Stories in this range may contain some innovative elements such as simple use of dialogue to carry the actions, some reflective comments or the setting is a little more imaginative.**
- **There is a suggestion of character and setting through naming and description.**
- **Starts to use descriptive language and a wider range of words that add precision.**
- **May be starting to use speech marks, exclamation marks or manipulate punctuation for effect.**
- **Spelling of common words is generally correct as is the use of sentence level punctuation**.

Similarly, FC3 achieved a score of 380 for both his 'Message in a Bottle' and 'The Piano' narratives; however, his second post-intervention narrative contained 61 fewer words. Due to his dyslexia diagnosis, and following the recommendations in his Individual Education Plan, he is not penalised for his spelling. Examples of FC3's two post-intervention narratives, which both fell within the 371 – 411 Brightpath band, are shown below in Figure 5.30 and Figure 5.31.

Figure 5.30

FC3 Narrative 3: 'Message in a Bottle' Brightpath Assessment

I lived in ingland [England] with a verry [very] pore [poor] life I hade [had] to stele[steal] lotse [lots] of my things that I have Now I comittod [committed] the crimes of stealing Bread Whine [wine] and munnys [money]. Why I commitid [committed] these cromes [crimes] because I was verry [very] pore [poor]. I was with my Brother Bobir. The way I was cohrt [caught] is by thay [they] set a net and camres [camera] and bang the trap got set on me and my brother [brother] so I cut the net and let him go I said run run away verry [very] far and never return. I hade [had] to go on a ship calld [called] the RM Capiner. So I have to go to the Swan river colony for 50 years I fealt [felt] very scerd [scared]and worid [worried] about my broth [brother] bobir.

The confishons [conditions] ware [were] as ruf [rough] as war evrry [every] one was vomiting and getting verry [very] sike [sick] the gards [guards] that took us on the ship where mene [mean]thay [they]would pock [poke] us with a sharp stick. The irony was scerry [scary] pepel [people] ware [were] foling [falling] of board [overboard]or triing [trying] to excap [escape] but the gord [guard] would grad [grab] you but if you swum away you would get shot. I felt seard [scared] my frend [friend] Max Olly nate and Jacob. I made lotas [lots] of frends [friends]. There was loudes [loads] of prodlemes [problems] wen [when]some won [someone] get el [ill] and was contagest [contagious] thay [they] may whord [would] get sote [shot] and throwen [thrown] over bord [overboard].

Whe [We] arive [arrive] in Swon [Swan] river colony. I throw this note over bord [overboard] so someone can find it and tell my brother that I sivived [survived].I hope my littel [little] brother finds my note so he can travel to cum [come] and see me. On the bech [beach] of ingland [England] my mane [main] consern [concern] is some one will see it so thay [they] mite [might] kill him or send him overe [over] here or I mait [might] go past him.

371 – 411.

- **Writes a narrative with a distinguishable storyline, including some events that relate to the resolution**
- **Writing may present a book chapter and therefore does not include a resolution**
- **There is a stronger sense of character and setting. Character emerges through actions and interactions. Uses descriptive and precise language.**
- **Controls many of the conventions of writing and experiments with others.**
- **Uses simple, compound and complex sentences.**

Figure 5.31

FC3 Narrative 3: 'The Piano' Brightpath Assessment

I was playing my piano I had memarys [memories] of my life.
Some good and some bad I ingoad [ignored] them.

My wife came I was playing the piano with her it felt good because me and her speret [spirit] played her favret [favourite] song this is me. Then she kissed me on my check [cheek].

Then my frend [friend] max oliver murray got shot I was crying because we ware [were] in the war I picked him up and ran the the medics thay [they] said there was nothink [nothing] to do and in 5 seconds he died. I wanted to get shot to feel his pane [pain].

My e one was I got a speshel [special] present my grandad it was a toy hores [horse] it was fun I was dreeming [dreaming] for this my hole [whole] life because it cost more then [than] $50 over my budget. I was riding it for years.

Then my yunger [younger] self played the pinao with me so I was happy that I sore [saw]my yunger [younger] self looked like we played my favfet [favourite] song play that song we played that good. I was injoying [enjoying] it I was crying with happy terrs [tears]we didn't stop playing and then he went I was crying I injoyd [enjoyed] it. It went throw [through] to the next day. I hade [had] an nap and wok [woke] up and torght [thought] it was fack [fake] but I relist [realised] it was real.

371 – 411.

- **Writes a narrative with a distinguishable storyline, including some events that relate to the resolution**
- **Writing may present a book chapter and therefore does not include a resolution**
- **There is a stronger sense of character and setting. Character emerges through actions and interactions. Uses descriptive and precise language.**
- **Controls many of the conventions of writing and experiments with others.**
- **Uses simple, compound and complex sentences.**
- **Experimentation may lead to clumsy sentences.**
- **May start to use paragraphing to enhance story telling.**

FC9 received 20 more points for her 'The Piano' narrative, although it consisted of 96 fewer words than her 'Message in a Bottle' narrative. Extracts from the two post-intervention narratives written by FC9, graded against the Brightpath Teachers Ruler are shown below in Figures 5.32 and 5.33.

Figure 5.32

FC9 Narrative 3: 'Message in a Bottle' Brightpath Assessment

Hello, my name is Sasha and I am an orphan girl from England. My parents died when I was five and the establishment took me and my brother to an orphaned kid home. I didn't really like England, it was dark and as cold as Antarctica. The orphanage was gloomy and I swear it was haunted… I grabbed my best clothes and then escaped through the back door. Elisa pulled me across the streets with despair… I heard a panting noise behind me. I turned around and realise that my younger brother Thomas had followed us here... "You and your little friends are being sent to the swan river colony so you can do hard labour for four years!"…

The ship all grimy and depressing stood tall at the dock. We got thrown on board by the establishment … The boat cramped with convicts was moving surprisingly fast for a ship. About three months later we arrived somewhere for only a day…I still thought it was 1850 but the Captain yelled it was the first day of 1851. There was a tiny window with the view of the ladder on the side of the ship. Suddenly an elderly man walked up to us he said what are you young kids doing on this ship. The old man then dropped to the floor. The captain came down picked him up and pushed him over board…

At the Swan river colony me and Elisa wrote a note and while we were working along the port dropped it in the water … will find it to come and save Elisa, Thomas and I.

Descriptor 410 -490

- **Adjusts writing to take account of audience, purpose and context.**
- **Writes a narrative which has an introduction, complication and a resolution.**
- **Familiar ideas, details and events are developed and relevant to the storyline.**
- **Characters emerge through description, actions, speech or narrative voice (thoughts and feelings).**
- **Setting is an integral part of the story.**
- **Demonstrates control over most language conventions and consistently uses precise verbs, adverbs, adjectives and descriptive phrases.**
- **May start to use sentence structure to enhance story-telling.**

Figure 5.33

FC9 Narrative 4: 'The Piano' Brightpath Assessment

In a dark room a speck of light bursted on an old man and his grand piano. As he played one of the first songs he remembered he wept and sobbed but at the same time smiled. The memories of the past taunted him. His head overflowing with greathful thoughts. The man took a deep breath and as he breathed out dust scattered on his face. His old skinny hands were moving across the piano gracefully. Suddenly noticing his wifes hands in a ghost like form playing the piano next to him. His calm but shocked face peered to the right of him. "Lisa, what, what?" the old man shuddered. His face gleaming with joy. "How… how…." The man blurted out. Instead of his wife replying she held his hands and faded away into thin air…

Staring up into the sky he thought more and more. Remembering the death of his friend. It was like he was really there. He stopped playing the piano. He remembered every detail. Both him and his friend were hiding behind a wall planning to stop the war. But one wrong move could change everything…

…remembered when he was young.... As he was riding around he bumped into his grandpa playing the piano he dropped his horse and sat on the seat with his grandpa and softly asked "Can I play?"

410-490

- **Adjusts writing to take account of audience, purpose and context.**
- **Writes a narrative which has an introduction, complication and a resolution.**
- **Familiar ideas, details and events are developed and relevant to the storyline.**
- **Characters emerge through description, actions, speech or narrative voice (thoughts and feelings).**
- **Setting is an integral part of the story.**
- **Demonstrates control over most language conventions and consistently used precise verbs, adverbs, adjective and descriptive phrases.**
- **May start to use sentence structure to enhance story-telling.**

These results support research findings that longer texts generally contain a greater number of repeated words (McCarthy & Jarvis, 2010). Assessors assess writing on lexical diversity, sophistication, and complexity of sentences of the text (McNamara et al., 2010; Vögelin et al., 2019).

5.4.2 Vocabulary Rubric

The vocabulary rubric, as described in Chapter 4, was applied to the narratives completed by the ten student participants. Due to the large volume of writing produced by the students throughout the intervention, a detailed analysis of

the language used by students in their narrative compositions was undertaken on six of the ten student participants.

5.4.2.1 Focus Child 1 (FC1)

Narrative 1: 'What's in the Box?': FC1's narrative Appendix 12: delivered a strong opening: 'The room got dark and scary'. The combination of the words 'dark and scary' created suspense and a foreboding sense fear. Written during the day when the weather was fine, without the support of a visual prompt, FC1's use of the expression grew from his prior knowledge and previous exposure to the term in literature. He was intrinsically aware the commonly used term 'dark and scary' would build tension and create a sense of mystery. Similarly, 'screamed' added to the tension he intended to convey in his narrative, but his story and vocabulary were simple, with an overuse of the words 'got', 'went', 'then', and 'so'. Although his narrative contained inadequate punctuation and inappropriate use of capital letters throughout, his level of spelling accuracy was high, with only the word 'cupboard' spelt incorrectly as 'carbide.' The vocabulary rubric (see Appendix 13) identified the inclusion of only one sensory description, 'dark' and two emotive words, 'fun' and 'scary.' Although he used simple vocabulary, FC1 developed the atmosphere of the classroom using the term 'she would spoil it...' which would mean 'there would be no fun for everyone else.' Time was represented by words and phrases commonly used during his school day, such as 'recess,' 'lunchtime,' 'before or after lunch,' and 'once or twice, or more.' Location and position descriptors related to the classroom setting for the narrative, a place he was very familiar and which he could see as he composed his text. For example, 'the room,' 'the carbide [cupboard],' 'Cindi's desk,' 'Clare's desk,' 'classroom,' 'Mrs Smith's class,' 'inside the box,' and, 'right next to.'

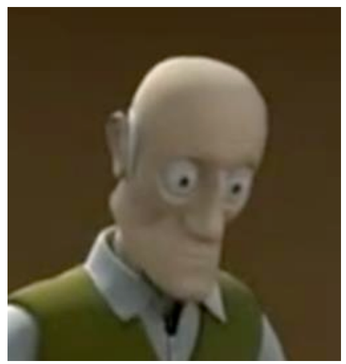
Narrative 3: 'Message in a Bottle': FC1's 'Message in a Bottle' narrative contained the same number of words as his pre-intervention narrative; however, he received a higher score. This was because, although he still misused capital letters and did not include commas or full stops, he did include apostrophes for contractions and an appropriately placed exclamation mark, thereby demonstrating a higher level of grammar and punctuation. While FC1 continued to overuse 'then' and 'so', he demonstrated the ability to engage the reader by introducing the characters and writing in first person (see Appendix 14). Although his narrative consisted of low-level vocabulary, writing in first person, FC1 imagined himself as a young homeless

boy living in England and described the characters' experiences using sensory vocabulary, which evoked the readers' empathetic response through the inclusion of an increased number of emotive words such as 'miserable,' 'annoying,' and 'sad'.' He also built tension through the expressions such as 'clinged [clenched] up like he was going to punch me,' 'he looked me in the eyes,' 'that is not going to be good,' and sympathy from the character's despair that they, 'had know [no] water or food,' who had to 'steal some food to survive.' Although FC1 used the word 'clinged' instead of 'clenched' because he explained the reason for 'a fist', the reader would still be able visualise the scene. Relying on prior knowledge and without the direct support of visual images, FC1's 'Message in a Bottle' narrative included a limited number of descriptions within the Knowledge category. Descriptions were broad with 'England,' 'our house,' 'a stor,' and 'down the road,' used to determine location, and '3 days' to establish time. FC1 included two implied facts in his fiction narrative: 'expensive,' and 'young boy.'

Narrative 4: 'The Piano': While not originally a character in his 'The Piano' narrative, after the fourth line, FC1 told the story in first person from the perspective of the old man. Although he continued to incorporate capital letters inappropriately throughout his text, his inclusion of full stops increased and he introduced speech marks (see Appendix 16). The analysis of FC1's narrative using the vocabulary rubric (see Appendix 17) identified mainly high -frequency words but an increased level of sophistication through the inclusion of some interesting phrases and clauses that told the character's story. For example, he inferred sadness as the described the ghost of the old man's wife as just 'an image in his head,' and how the old man 'thought of her in his mind.' FC1 scrutinised the old man's facial expressions to infer his emotions. He described the contrasting emotions of an old man who was 'unhappy' with his younger self who had 'fun', as shown below in Figure 5.34.

Figure 5.34

Contrasting Emotions. The Piano (Gibbons, 2011)



Similarly, he included the terms, 'bleeding to death,' and 'last word was…', depict sadness, whilst 'I don't want to die as well,' and 'had a chance to survive,' deliver hope. Another sensory description and inference FC1 included in his 'The Piano' narrative related to the war scene is shown below in Figure 5.35. Without explicitly stating that the soldier was shot, FC1 depicted the sound of gunfire with the onomatopoeia 'boom,' which he imagined because the animated film was only accompanied by melodious piano music, followed by '… I saw my Friend Fall over on the floor.' Location and position descriptors FC1 included in his narrative inspired by the war scene shown below in Figure 5.35, were 'by my side,' 'against a wall,' and 'on the floor.'

Figure 5.35

War Scene. The Piano (Gibbons, 2011)

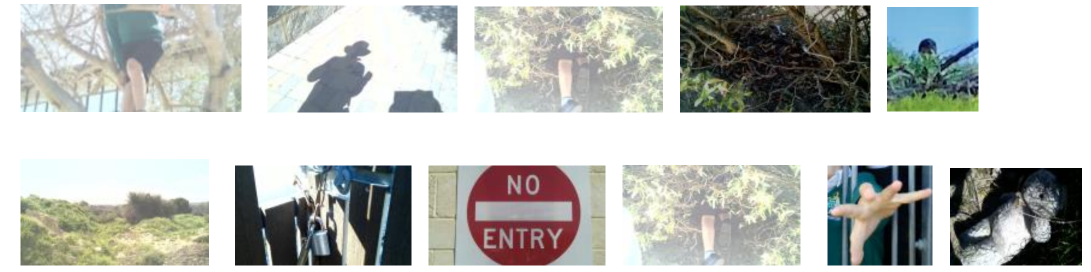
Additionally, in this narrative, FC1 demonstrated the ability to create a storyline that demonstrated links between the characters. His previous overuse of 'then' evidenced in his previous narratives was replaced with a greater variety of

time-indicating phrases, such as ‘a couple of seconds later,’ ‘all my life,’ and ‘as soon as.’

Narrative 2: Intervention Narrative: FC1 wrote his intervention narrative over three lessons, selecting five photographs during Lesson 8, deleting two photographs, and adding another five during Lesson 9 when he also commenced composing his text. FC1 edited his work throughout the writing process, adding additional text to each photograph and inserting additional photograph during Lesson 11. Evidence of editing is shown using different coloured text for each lesson (see Appendix 18). FC1’s text was framed around what he perceived in the images. FC1 sequenced to create a visual storyline (Figure 5.36) on which he built his narrative, *‘The Mysterious Great Escape’* (see Appendix 18). FC1’s narrative was based on the character Mike, who was hiding from the police. Reading the text which accompanied each photograph, it is evident how he utilised the sequence of images. For example, at the beginning, Mike is ‘*in the tree*’, when he ‘*sees a shadow,*’ before ‘*going into a hidey hole,*’ where ‘*all the leaves are poking Mike.*’ Mike is ‘*peaking over the bush,’* but the police cannot see him in the ‘*space with the big bush.’* But he is caught and his cell has ‘*a lot of locks*’ with a ‘*no entry sign.*’ He escapes goes into his ‘*hidey hole*’ gets caught and is back ‘*in his cell.’*

Figure 5.36

FC1 Photograph Selection



The storyline of his narrative originated from FC1’s interpretation of the visual images, with the text accompanying each photograph. His intervention narrative ‘Mysterious Great Escape’ (see Appendix 19) included descriptions that provided a means for the reader to visualise the scene because he detailed exactly what he could see in the photographs. For example, his first illustration was a photograph of a boy in a tree shown below in Figure 5.37. FC1 described how ‘Mike’, who was hiding in a tree, was ‘kneeling down on one foot and the other is

straight and his other hand is gripping on to another branch, his face is starting to go red,' and 'his face is looking really scared.' He elaborated by suggesting that because there were not many leaves on the tree 'Mike', who was 'really visible' should perhaps 'get out of the tree and find a better tree that isn't that visible.'

Figure 5.37

Climbing the Tree

The text FC1 wrote to accompany the photograph shown below in Figure 5.38 detailed exactly what he could see in the image. For example, he described how the teddy was 'really dirty', had 'a bow tie on its neck,' its 'eyes are black,' 'fur is all sticking up,' and 'nose is skin colour.' details of how objects were placed within the image. For example, 'teddy is on [an]angle,' 'there are dead stick all around the teddy and there is a stick on top of the teddy.' Detailing what he could see in the images was a strategy FC1 incorporated throughout his narrative. Subsequently, his narrative included an increased number of placement and location descriptions such as 'in front of,' and 'on top of,' and size, 'just enough room to put hands through the middle.'

Figure 5.38

Discarded Teddy Bear

FC1 enhanced his narrative through the inclusion of emotionally stimulating expressions such as ‘heart is pounding really fast,’ and ‘trying to stay really low and quiet.’ Further examples of visual descriptions FC1 included in his narrative based on the photographs, enhancing the reader’s ability to visualise the scene or character. These included ‘the grass is long,’ ‘spikes on the tree,’ ‘wearing black pants and a white t-shirt,’ ‘rocks and sand,’ ‘dead trees,’ and ‘Mike’s head peaking over the bush.’ The photographs provided a visual stimulus that engaged FC1’s imagination and helped him to build tension or excitement (see Appendix 19). For example, using the image shown in Figure 5.39 below, FC1 wrote ‘…Mike suddenly sees a shadow behind him…he starts running...hurt [heart] is pounding really fast… as he tried ‘to stay really low and quiet,’

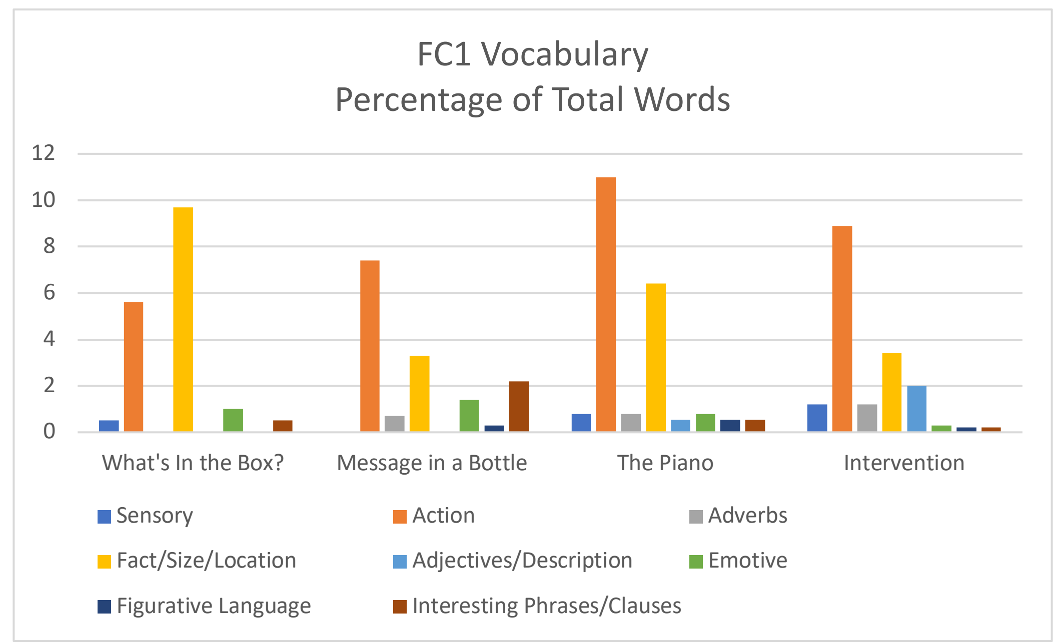
Figure 5.39

Shadows

FC1 also engaged the reader by asking the rhetorical question, ‘and who knows where Mikes cell is?’ (see Appendix 18) and included precise times, such as ‘12 am,’ and ‘12 hours,’ to general time periods such as, ‘couple of hours,’ ‘night,’ ‘day,’ ‘morning,’ ‘weeks,’ ‘twice,’ and ‘once again.’ Factual information in FC1 narrative included both real and imagined but delivered as fact within the storyline. For example, ‘it is a lot more darker [darker]when it is night,’ ‘10 feet high,’ ‘6 feet high with the width and around 25cm,’ ‘hole is for food and water or just to talk,’ and ‘one choice.’ A breakdown of the vocabulary FC1 incorporated into each of his narratives is shown below in Figure 5.40.

Figure 5.40

FC1 Vocabulary



As revealed in Figure 5.40, FC1 included vocabulary from each of the seven categories in both '*The Piano'* and the intervention narratives. When composing both narratives, FC1 was supported by a sequence of visual images, which assisted in idea generation throughout the writing process.

5.4.2.2 Focus Child 2 (FC2)

Narrative 1: 'What's in the Box?': FC2 wrote an original and imaginative text about zombies for his 'What's in the Box?' narrative (see Appendix 20). Although he demonstrated his understanding of paragraphs, using the second paragraph to delineate a change in time, FC2 did not describe the setting or develop characters and his text was action-orientated. As identified in the vocabulary rubric (see Appendix 21), FC2's only sensory description described, '*storm clouds were huge.*' However, he did include words such as '*barricaded*,' '*curious,*' and '*secure,*' in his text. Whilst FC2 did not include any emotional vocabulary in his narrative, he described how the main character in his intervention narrative felt '*relieved,*' '*sad,*' '*angry,*' '*rage,*' and '*happy.*'

Narrative 3: "Message in a Bottle': Written in the first person, FC2's 'Message in a Bottle' narrative delivered an engaging storyline written across three paragraphs, each of which represented a key period in the timeline. FC2 demonstrated limited use of appropriate punctuation and consistently in his narrative

moved between past tense '*it was awful and I had an idea,*' to present tense, '*I am going to throw the bottle*' (see Appendix 22). As shown in the vocabulary rubric (see Appendix 23), the language used by FC2 provided evidence of his knowledge of the topic. For example, he described how in England the characters '*nearly starved,*' '*died from hypothermia,*' and needed to '*steal a loaf of bread to survive.*' Describing the sea voyage, FC2 explained how the prisoners were lashed with the '*cat 'o' nine tails*' and had salt rubbed into their wounds. He described the sound made when sea salt was placed on a prisoner's wounds using the onomatopoeia '*splat,*' which caused the prisoners to scream '*in pain.*' Although FC2 did not include explicit sensory descriptors in his narrative, he included interesting descriptions such as '*at least the size of your fist,*' to describe the size of a loaf of bread. While FC2 included only one example of emotion when his character stated that he was '*sorry*' about the state of the ship, he was able to engage empathetic responses from the reader through his descriptions, such as the pain suffered by the prisoners was '*too hard to even handle'* and how the character '*nearly starved'* (see Appendix 23). FC2's included a mixture of known and original phrases and clauses. For example*, 'off went his body,*' '*the sharks are probably thinking food food food,*' a '*so I can be remembered when I die,*' *'bare the pain,*' and '*the pain is to [too] hard to handle.*' Demonstrating an awareness of his reader in the last paragraph, FC2 engaged the reader with the statement; '*If you are reading this you have found my bottle.*'

Narrative 4: 'The Piano': In contrast to his previous narratives, FC2 applied accurate punctuation throughout his 'The Piano' narrative. He delivered key events of his story in one-to-two-line paragraphs, which provided the reader with an insight into the thoughts and actions of the old man (see Appendix 24). Although no sensory descriptive words were used in his narrative, FC2's emotional engagement with the video *The Piano* (Gibbons, 2011) was evident in his writing. He engaged the reader's empathy through his interpretation of the old man's thoughts. Using visual cues, FC2 decoded the facial expressions portrayed in the old man's face as '*sad*' and '*disappointed*', which he explained was because the old man was '*thinking about grief that has happened in his life.*' FC2 included emotive words and expressions such as '*survived,*' '*deceased,*' and '*grief,*' '*it feels to him that his life is endin*g,' and '*leaping with joy*'. He contrasted these descriptions with how, at other times, the old man was '*happy*' and experienced '*joy.* (see Appendix 25).'

Narrative 2: Intervention Narrative: During Lesson 8, FC2 selected ten photographs as illustrations for his narrative titled 'An Extreme Escape'. He composed a narrative with a consistent storyline, apart from changing from present tense in the first two slides to past tense throughout the remainder of the story (see Appendix 26). FC2 did not edit his work during the writing process, with only additional text added each lesson. FC2 admitted that he was 'running out of ideas,' toward the end of his intervention narrative. Review of his narrative identified that he composed only 72 words to accompany slide 8, 45 words slide 9, and 40 slide 10. This was in contrast to approximately 100 for each of the first seven slides. Supported by visual images FC2 demonstrated his active imagination, composing text that went beyond describing the content of the image shown below in Figure 5.41.

Figure 5.41

'Jimmy' in Jail

FC2 wrote:

> 'Jimmy is in jail after they murdered someone he hated …and then he went to jail for a life sentence…wanted to escape …when the day guards change to the night guards and he was going to climb over the bards of his cell and jump into the portal…'

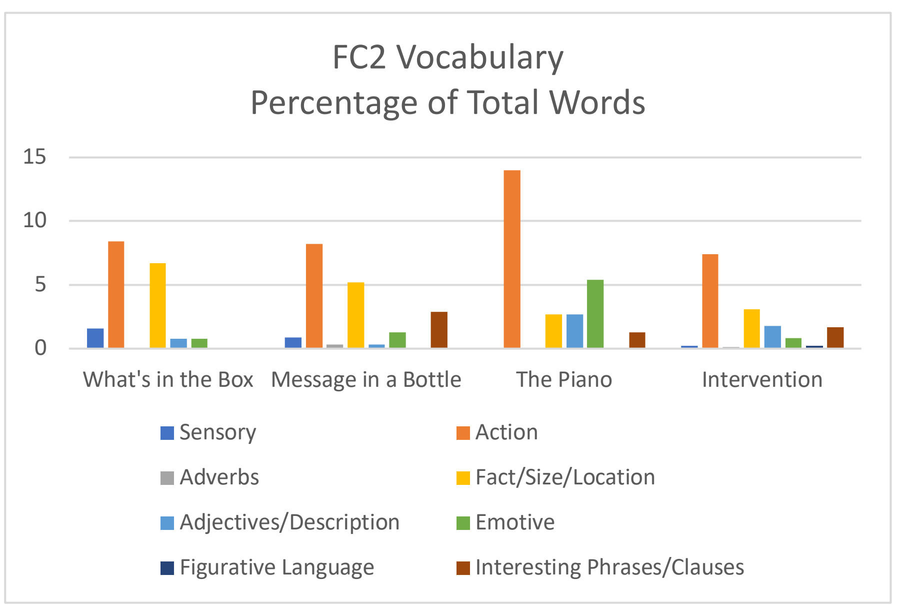
Analysis of the vocabulary FC2 included in his narrative is shown in Appendix 27. He included location-indicating terms such as '*over the wall,*' '*across the field*,' and '*in the tunnel*.' Time-indicating expressions employed by FC2 included '*every once and while*,' '*from this day forward*,' '*later that night*,' and '*when the day guards change to night guards*.' FC2 engaged the readers' emotions through the inclusion expressions such as '*the happiest day of his life*,' '*very*

peaceful,' '*relieved*,' and '*unescapable*.' In addition to the figurative phrases '*sneaky like a mouse*,' and '*like a flash*.' FC2 included mature descriptions such as, '*If you are really quiet you can hear him speak the language of the birds*,' and '*He was gone before you could say prodigy,'* Other interesting descriptions that FC2 included in his narrative were; '*turned against him*,' '*hide his identity,'* and '*hope that is was not a dream*,' '*today was the day of the great escape,'* '*rogue inmate in his natural habita,', '*guards around every corner,'* '*each night chip some of the stone away,'* '*the land was different than before,'* and '*people still say today.'*

As shown in Figure 5.42, FC2's intervention narrative included the largest vocabulary range with descriptors in all seven categories.

Figure 5.42

FC2 Vocabulary



5.4.2.3 Focus Child 4 (FC4)

Narrative 1: 'What's in the Box?': FC4's narrative comprised a short simple storyline built on a recount of the events of the previous day. He included apostrophes, commas, speech marks and paragraphs, maintained consistency of tense and used a variety of sentence starters throughout his narrative (see Appendix 28). FC4 had limited descriptive vocabulary beyond colours and '*bouncy,'* '*in the box,'* and '*in my class,'* and one figurative expression '*like there was nothing there,'* to describe how a teacher picked up and carried the box out of the room. This description delivered an element of surprise and contrasted with the previous

assumptions made by the students and actions of the classroom teacher, which alluded to something strange or scary inside the box (see Appendix 29). FC4's depiction of how the teacher's actions made some of the students feel *'scared'* was the only example of emotive language included in his narrative. He included two expressions which demonstrated an awareness of the reader *'to be fare [fair],'* and '*but for some reason I thought it was acting*' (see Appendix 28).

Narrative 3: 'Message in a Bottle': FC4 introduced the theme of stealing food to survive in the first paragraph in his 'Message in a Bottle' narrative, but because he continued to elaborate on life in England, the time allowed did not permit him to include a description of the sea voyage from England to Australia. FC4 incorporated paragraphs, accurate punctuation, including exclamation marks and ellipses, in his narrative and demonstrated his willingness to use words he could did not know how to spell, such as '*missrebell* [miserable],' '*orphenage* [orphanage],' and '*suspicises* [suspicious],' (see Appendix 30). His narrative was dominated by descriptions associated with time and location. For example, '*later*,' '*7 years later*,' '*6 years later*,' '*ten years*,' revealed the passage of time, while '*after that*,' and '*every day*,' indicated a point in time and '*longer time*,' compared time. Location was determined by '*England,*' the 'well,' 'house,' 'shelter,' 'jail,' 'local bakery,' 'hut,' '*orphenage* [orphanage],' '*prison*,' '*mall*,' and '*in a bus*.' FC4 described how his character felt '*awful*,' and '*sorry*.' He further engaged the readers' empathy through his descriptions of how they '*couldn't afford a lot of clothes or food*,' and it was '*freezing cold*.' Sensory descriptors FC4 incorporated into his narrative included taste descriptors: for example, '*yummy food and tasty drinks*' (see Appendix 31). FC4's description of his character's internal thoughts appeared to be genuine to the character. Although not set in current times, the universal concerns ensured the character was relatable.

Narrative 4: 'The Piano': In his second post-intervention narrative 'The Piano', FC4 increased his word count significantly, writing 679 words, for which he was awarded a higher Brightpath score of 460 (see Appendix 32). Written across four paragraphs, the narrative included speech marks and exclamation marks and a clearly defined storyline with an introduction, '*A long long time ago*,' complication, '*the old man's wife had died and three he still sat and played the same song non-stop*,' and resolution, '*his grandson smiled at him and said, "I love you*".' However, as in Narrative 2, FC4 continued to reference changes in time periods: '*3 years*

later,' '*10 years earlyer* [earlier],''*5 moth* [months] *later,*' and '*back to the present*.' Although '*dark room,*' and '*comfortable,*' were the only sensory descriptors FC4 included in his narrative, he engaged the reader and developed visual imagery through descriptions such as '*What he did was sit in a dark room and eating ice cream in the corner trying to forget about his loved ones,*' and '*picturing his wife next to him playing the same song they used to'* (see Appendix 33). FC4 continued to engage the readers empathy for his characters by describing how the old man's emotions ranged between '*happy*,' '*miserable*,' '*sad*,' or '*down*,' and how the old man's thoughts were sometimes '*worrying*,' or '*depressing*.' Likewise, his descriptions of the old was sitting '*in the corner,*' of '*a dark room,'* further engaged an empathetic response. Similarly, the inclusion of the expressions '*inside the room of hope, love and death*', '*picturing his wife next to him playing the same song*,' '*O [Oh] son I have missed you dearly in my hearts [heart],'* and '*trying to remember the happy times in his life,*' engaged the readers' emotions. This was contrasted with two positive expressions '*grandson smiles at him and said "I Love you.*' FC4 included the simile '*ran as quick as he could,*' to describe how the old man moved when the soldier rushed to rescue his injured friend (see Appendix 33).

Narrative 2: Intervention Narrative: FC4 titled his intervention narrative 'Unknown Apocalypse' (see Appendix 34). Although he selected ten photographs, FC4 only wrote text for the first three due to the amount of time he spent manipulating the photographs, which he either darkened, lightened, cropped, or filtered. Consequently, his narrative consisted of only 654 words written over three slides and did not reach a conclusion. However, within the text that he did produce, FC4 demonstrated correct application of language conventions and created a storyline that developed characters through their actions and internal and external dialogue. He included a variety of descriptions that determined the passage of time such as, 'now,' 'two weeks later,' 'one months' time,' 'next year,' 'two years later,' as well as nonspecific time determinants 'at last,' and 'forever.' He also included position and location descriptions such as 'lair, 'above the trees,' 'forest,' 'in a tree,' 'behind her,' 'by a tree,' 'around the corner,' and 'over her face.' While the text written by FC4 contained a high volume of action vocabulary and an overuse of 'and then', it equally contained sophisticated words such as 'lure,' 'revenge,' 'realised,' and 'underestimated' (see Appendix 35). Sensory expressions included tactile descriptions such as 'steely grip', aural descriptions like 'I heard some footsteps,'

and ‘heard someone talking.’ In addition, visual imagery was developed through expressions such as ‘she was screaming, kicking and punching the air,’ ‘I saw her little skirt just around the corner,’ and ‘I saw her face through the gap’ were inspired by the images below in Figure 5.43.

Figure 5.43

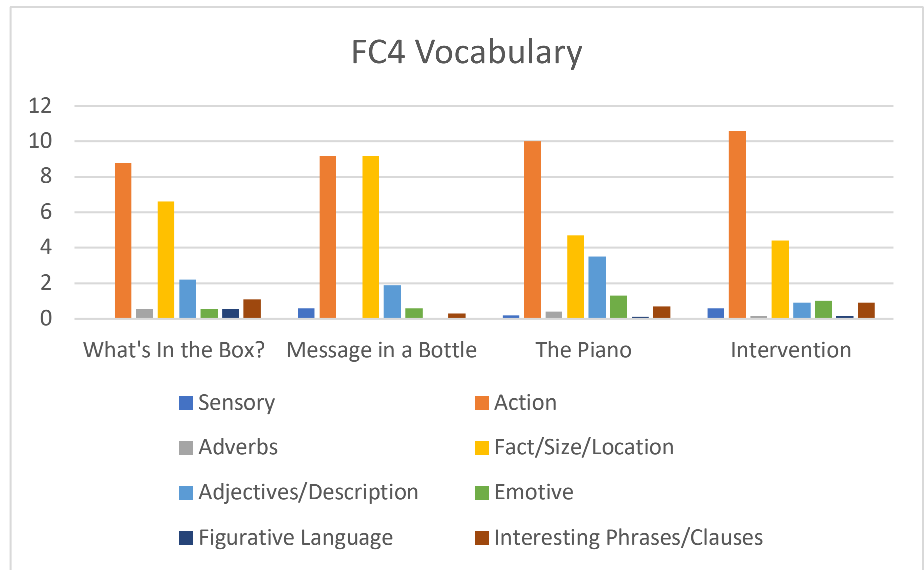
Image of Character Hiding

Written in first person, FC4’s narrative instantly engaged the readers’ empathy with his opening sentence: ‘This is my friend Ted; he is my only friend,’ suggesting loneliness. He further invoked a sympathetic emotional response in the reader with metaphor written in first person: ‘I was in my room crying my eyeballs out,’ and describing how the child experienced ‘worry,’ and ‘depression,’ feeling ‘sad,’ ‘sorry,’ and ‘nervous,’ but also ‘safe’ to further portray the depth of his characters’ sadness as he sat in his bedroom. He included a number of interesting expressions such as, ‘they underestimated me,’ ‘screaming, kicking and punching the air,’ ‘I built the courage,’ ‘steely grip,’ ‘taking a wander through the forest,’ and ‘like every or most mums do.’

Of the four narratives written by FC3, his intervention narrative was the only one to incorporate vocabulary from all categories of the vocabulary rubric. A breakdown of the vocabulary FC4 incorporated into each of his narratives is shown below in Figure 5.44.

Figure 5.44

FC4 Vocabulary



Although FC4's choice of words and expressions covered six out of the seven categories in his pre-intervention narrative, he increased this to seven in his intervention narrative when he incorporated sensory descriptors.

5.4.2.4 Focus Child 5 (FC5)

Narrative 1: 'What's in the Box?': Although FC5 demonstrated an understanding of the appropriate placement of full stops and commas, the five paragraphs he included in his 213-word 'What's in the Box?' narrative were not linked to a change of time or action (see Appendix 36). While FC5 demonstrated competence correctly spelling the words he used in his text, he repetitively wrote an upper-case S where a lower-case was required. Analysis of the narrative using the vocabulary rubric (see Appendix 37) identified the absence of sensory descriptors and figurative language. Although FC5 frequently used 'then' to indicate a change in action, he also included a variety of advanced time-indicating expressions such as '*a little while later,*' '*meanwhile*,' '*at that exact moment*,' '*it turns out that*,' and '*table by table,*' to show progressive movement. In addition, FC5 engaged the readers' emotional response through the descriptions '*dark and depressing*,' '*scared out of her socks*,' and '*I was happy.*' While he described the room as '*dark and depressing,*' in his opening sentence, in the third paragraph he detailed how the teacher '*turned the light on*.' Thus, '*dark*' is most likely to refer to the amount of light in the room rather than a depressive state.

Narrative 3 'Message in a Bottle': FC5 incorporated a range of action words, to describe location and time in his 'Message in a Bottle' narrative (see Appendix 38). While FC5 introduced the characters and setting and developed a well-structured storyline, he was unable to complete his narrative in the time allocated. Although FC5's narrative was predominately built on actions taken by the main character, as identified in the vocabulary rubric (see Appendix 39), he also created visual imagery with terms such as '*raggy old slippers*,' '*dark alley*,' '*a whole basket full of bread, pastry's* [pastries],' and '*there were mice everywhere*.' Writing in first person, he described the character's thoughts and actions using the expressions; '*I wish I hadn't done it*,' '*before I knew it,'* '*as fast as I could*,' '*got a nasty surprise*,' '*I felt sick*,' '*fatal diseases*,' and '*I wish I hadn't done it*.' He built a sense of danger and excitement using the terms, '*I sprinted down the dark alley*,' and '*now there was no chance of escapin*g.' FC5 included time, location, and factual details. Time was defined in precise measures such as '*one night*,' '*seven years*,' '*now*,' and approximate measures of time such as '*after*,' '*later*,' '*soon*,' and '*about an hour*.' Locations detailed in FC5's narrative included countries like '*England,'* and '*Indonesia*,' personal places such as '*in my house*,' '*on my nose*,' and broader settings, such as '*down the street*,' '*into a wall*,' '*against the wall*,' '*into the hole*,' '*on the ship*,' and '*in the foot*.'

Narrative 4: 'The Piano': FC5 maintained his first-person approach to storytelling in his 'The Piano' narrative (see Appendix 40). He demonstrated proficiency in the application of language conventions with the inclusion of speech marks, exclamation marks, appropriate paragraphing, and correct spelling of words such as '*ancient ruin*.' FC5 included time, location and fact descriptors in his second post-intervention narrative 'The Piano', '*Now*,' '*today*,' '*my 6th birthday*,' '*every second*,' '*all day*,' are examples of precise time descriptions FC5 included in his narrative, while '*after*,' and '*never,'* were less specific. Location and position descriptions included in his narrative arose from scenes in the video. For example, man's wife sat '*next to'* the old man as he sat at the piano and kissed him '*on the cheek'* and the soldiers hid '*behind an ancient ruin,'* where the old man held his dying friend '*in my hands*,' where he died '*in front of my own eye*.' FC5 used internal thoughts and dialogue to develop the main character, describing how he felt using the expressions, '*I love this piano*', and '*It's like my best friend exept* [except] *it is not living*'. In addition, he incorporated a range of words to describe these

actions, such as I '*wondered*,' '*screamed*,' '*howled*,' '*answered*,' and '*mumbled.*' As shown in the vocabulary analysis of his narrative (see). Although FC5's use of sensory vocabulary was limited to '*dark room,*' and '*hurt*,' he provided engaged empathetic responses in the reader in his description of how the old man felt relief when the bullet '*barely missed my head*,' sympathy as the soldier died as the old man '*held him in my hands when he passed out right in front of my eyes*,' and '*she turned to me and kissed me on the cheek in my imagination, which made me sad*.' The readers compassion is further engaged when the old man when he asks, '*Why me*?'

Narrative 2: Intervention Narrative: FC5 selected 10 photographs for his intervention narrative titled '*Johnny and the Teddy Bear of Doom*' and over the next three lessons created text to accompany the first six images (see Appendix 42). FC5 selected the photographs shown below in Figure 5.45, as illustrations in his intervention narrative. However, he only composed text to accompany the first six images. His sequenced the photographs to develop a story based on the main character, ten-year-old Johnny who '*was in jail,*' when the '*floor opened up*' and he travelled through '*the portal,*' hid '*in a bush,*' entered a *'hidey hole,'* and emerged in an *'abandoned wasteland,'* where he sees and speaks to '*two blobs.*'

Figure 5.45

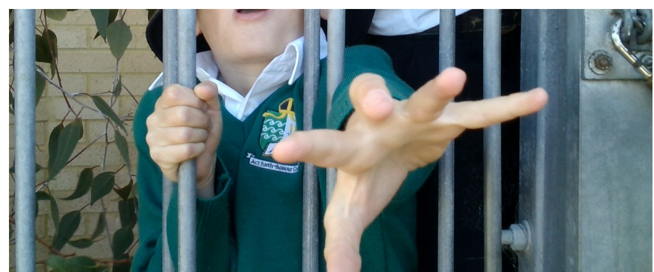
FC5 Photograph Selection

FC5 provided the reader with a detailed description of the main character, Johnny in his introduction, stating that '*Johnny was 10-year-old boy,*' who made '*poor decisions*,' was '*small for his age*,' and '*a mischievous monkey,*' with '*poor listening skills*.' The unknown creature was described as 'hideous'. Analysis of FC5's narrative using the vocabulary rubric identified an increase in the inclusion of descriptive language. FC5 incorporated a variety of adverbs, such as '*insanely*,' '*nervously*,' and '*occasionally*,' and time-indicating terms such as '*this instant*,' '*not*

too long ago', '*before*,' '*for a while*,' '*early*,' '*ages*,' '*never*,' and '*seconds later,*' in this text. To describe action he included the expressions: '*looked like he was traveling through space*,' '*played the game of his life*,' '*took a nap on his makeshift bed*,' '*vision went black*,' and '*waiting for its prey in the bush,*'; physical features: '*looked like an abandoned wasteland*,'; and thoughts: '*should he run or should he hide*,' and '*took that thought straight out of his head'* (see Appendix 43). In addition, FC5's narrative encompassed an increased range of sensory words and descriptions in comparison with other narratives completed during the study. For example, visual descriptions included '*man with long silky beard*,' '*two blurry moving blobs*,' and '*crooked bars*', and tactile descriptions included '*damp soil*,' and '*cold and wet wind*.' He used features within the image as a stimulus for his ideas, altering and elaborating on what was visible. For example, using the image shown below in Figure 5.46, he described '*crooked bars,*' and '*rusty bars.*'

Figure 5.46

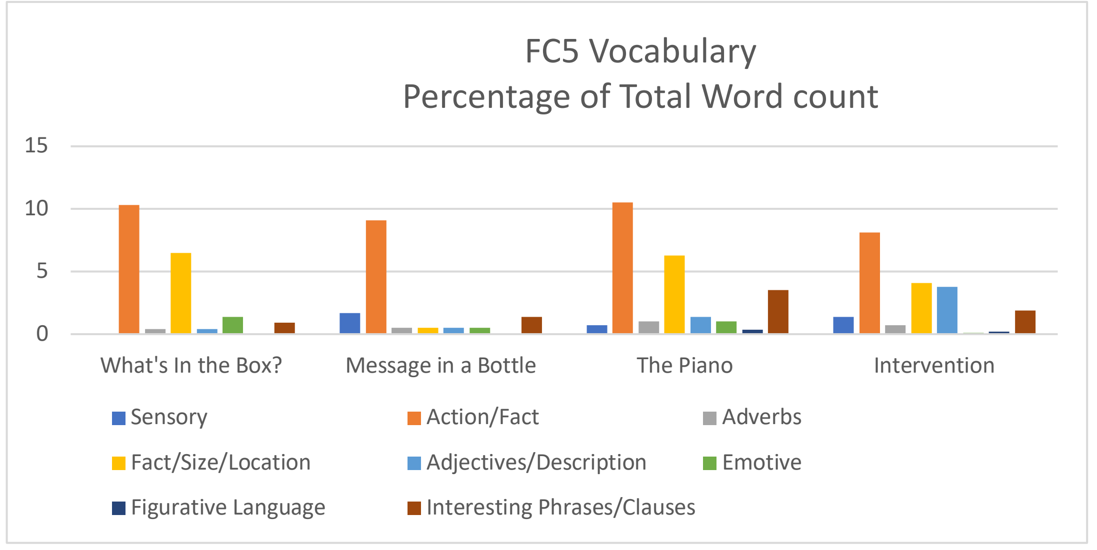
Boy Behind Bars



FC5 also incorporated the following aural descriptions in his text; '*heard moans and groans*,' '*heard a gunshot*,' and '*leaves around him rustle and faint footsteps*.' Likewise, FC5's text included the olfactory descriptive clause, '*smelt an odd stench of a strange flower*.' He engaged emotion and fear using the commonly used term, '*scared to death*.' A breakdown of the language FC5 incorporated into each of his narratives is shown below in Figure 5.47.

Figure 5.47

FC5 Vocabulary



Although FC5 included six categories of descriptive vocabulary in 'Message in a Bottle', his 'The Piano', narrative and intervention narrative contained descriptive expressions from all seven categories. During the composition of both 'The Piano', and the intervention narrative, FC5 delivered the visual stimulus as a sequence of images.

5.4.2.5 Focus Child 9 (FC9)

Narrative 1: 'What's in the Box?*'*: FC9's pre-intervention narrative 'What's in the Box?' written in the first person across four paragraphs introduced a complication, provided a resolution, and concluded with a 'one line statement' that '*the moral of the Storey* [story] *is to not trust the teacher*' (see Appendix 44). Writing it as a detailed recount rather than a narrative resulted in an overuse of the word 'then', with six of the 11 sentences beginning with 'then'. Periods of time were described by '*long wait*,' '*in the end*,' '*late*,' '*whole time*,' and '*at the end of the day.'* Further analysis of vocabulary used by FC9 in the narrative (see Appendix 45) identified location descriptions; '*Carly's desk*,' '*Year 5 classroom*,' '*Sara's desk*,' '*near the box*,' '*outside the classroom*,' '*on the sid*e,' and size descriptions; '*half of the students*,' '*couple of people,'* '*small brown towel*,' *and* '*average sized box*.' FC9 described the emotions experienced by the students in her narrative as '*scare,'* '*excited*,' '*disipointed [disappointed],'* '*miserable*,' and '*stunded [stunned].'* She included one aural description, including the '*slight squeal,*' made by a frightened student. Interesting descriptions FC9 included in her narrative included; '*our hearts*

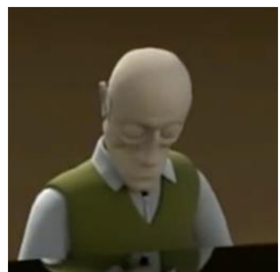
dropped,' '*their mouths were right open*,' '*span around in circles*,' '*snap it had been cut!*' '*scared the life out of her*,' and '*came to the conclusion*' (see Appendix 45).

Narrative 3: 'Message in a Bottle': FC9's narrative (see Appendix 46) consisted of three appropriately demarcated paragraphs in which characters were developed and settings described through the eyes of the writer. For example, her opening sentence addressed the reader: '*Hello, my name is Sasha and I am …*' FC9 incorporated a range of time-indicating expressions into her text such as '*every day*,' '*one day*,' '*someday*,' '*finally*,' '*as soon as*,' '*three months later*,' '*only a day*,' '*four years*,' '*first day of 1851*,' '*when I was five*,' and '*when my brother came back from school*.' (see Appendix 47). She integrated a range of sensory descriptors into her narrative. For example, visual; '*tiny window with the view of the ladder*,' tactile; '*cold and grimy,*' aural; '*a panting noise*.' In addition to describing how '*the ship all grimy and depressing stood tall at the dock*,' and '*so the whole street could hear me*' FC9 included the figurative description, '*dark and cold as Antarctica*'. FC9 engaged the readers' empathy through her descriptions of the scene, '*the orphanage was gloomy and I swear it was haunted*,' and built tension by describing '*I heard a panting noise behind me*.' FC9 described the emotions experienced by the characters using terms such as '*depressing*,' '*felt terrible*,' and '*despair*.'

Narrative 4: 'The Piano': In her narrative, FC9 included details of location and position such as; '*on his face*,' '*across the piano*,' '*next to him*,' '*to the right of him*,' '*into thin air*,' '*on the piano keys*,' '*into the sky*,' '*behind a wall*,' '*in the chest*,' '*in his hands*,' and '*on the seat*,' resulted directly from the visual images in the video. She varied the length of her sentences for effect— '*He stopped playing the piano. He remembered every detail'*—and incorporated her character's internal thoughts using direct speech, *'I remember the old days when I played the piano*' (see Appendix 48). The visual features within the video *The Piano* (Gibbons, 2011) inspired the visual descriptions FC9 included in her narrative. These included '*a dark room with a speck of light,*' '*the old man and his grand piano,*' '*dark room*,' '*speck of light bursted [burst] on an old man and his grand piano*,' and his '*calm but shocked face*.' The moving images in the video, a snapshot of which is shown below in Figure 5.48, inspired FC9's following descriptions of how the old man's, '*old skinny hands moving across the piano gracefully,*' how the old man's face was '*gleaming with joy,*' before he '*dropped his head to his chest.*'

Figure 5.48

Old Man Playing the Piano. The Piano (Gibbons, 2011)



In addition, FC9 increased her inclusion of figurative language in her narrative the expressions; '*In a ghost like form*,' '*face gleaming with joy*,' '*the man's hands dropped on the piano keys*,' '*dropped his head to his chest*,' and '*It was like she was really there*.' In contrast to the mainly negative emotions experienced by the characters in her first three narratives, the emotions described in FC9's 'The Piano' narrative were, '*calm,*' '*shocked,*', and '*joy*' (see Appendix 49). Other interesting descriptions FC9 used to enhance her story included; '*wet and sobbed but at the same time smiled*,' '*the memories of the past taunt him*,' '*his head was overflowing with grateful thoughts,*' and '*faded away into thin air*.'

Narrative 2: Intervention Narrative: During Lesson 9, FC9 selected 10 slides for her intervention narrative titled 'Disappearing Friends'. During the writing process, she altered the photo she originally selected for slide 6. The photographs she selected as illustrations for her narrative shown below in Figure 5.49, they provide evidence that they stimulated the storyline. The setting for her narrative was a place where '*half the world was urban and the other half bush,*' involving two ten-year-old girls who '*walked down a rocky path,*' before they get drawn into '*a dark hole,*' where they find an '*an ancient ruin.*' One girl '*peers down a dark a tunnel,*' hides '*behind a lime green bush,*' sees *'a pile of dead leaves and a spiky shrub,*' before entering a '*secret hideout,*' which leads into a '*magical garden,*' where she meets a '*magical nymph.*'

Figure 5.49

FC9 Photograph Selection

FC9 wrote a total of 2,357 words during Lessons 10 and 11, when she also altered two of the photographs she had previously selected (see Appendix 50). She orientated the reader, delivering a complication with well-developed ideas and a resolution with paragraphs indicating changes of time and action, and completed her story withing the time allocated (see Appendix 51). Written in the third person, FC9's narrative incorporated dialogue between the characters as direct speech throughout the story; however, this did not dominate the text. FC9 enhanced her narrative through her extensive range of vocabulary. She described time, location, fact, and size using the terms, 'every time,' 'by the second,' 'two seconds,' 'one minute,' 'few minutes,' 'finally,' 'forever,' 'never,' 'school break,' 'once again,' '2000's,' and 'a lifetime.' As well as common terms to describe locations such as 'city,' 'floor,' 'path,' 'in the distance,' 'around them,' 'everywhere,' and 'in the grass.' FC9 also included less common terms such as 'urban town/city,' 'in the wildlife,' 'in their hearts,' 'apartments in the city,' 'to safety,' 'in the forest,' 'in the nature,' 'air surrounding them,' and 'into their brains.' She used the terms 'tiny,' 'half of the world,' and distance; 'getting closer,' 'five kilometres,' and 'about two metres away from the end' to describe size and distance.

Supported by photographs, the quantity and range of sensory descriptions in FC9's intervention narrative increased. Her narrative incorporated descriptions from each of the visual, tactile, aural, olfactory and taste categories. Examples of the visual descriptions FC9 included in her narrative are; 'golden hair waving in the

wind,' 'rocks and broken concrete scattered on the bumpy floor,' 'lime green bush,' 'the dirt suddenly flowing over her shoes,' and 'light beamed through a hole,' 'the dark hole' and 'flourishing wildlife, bent trees and randomly growing plants,' 'tiny specks of glitter floated gracefully around her head,' and 'a giant ray of light beamed down onto Lisa's nose,' and 'pile of dead leaves and a spiky shrub' Figure 5.50 below.

Figure 5.50

Dead Leaves and Spiky Shrub

Examples of tactile descriptions included in her narrative are; *could feel the bush scraping her lower legs and upper arms'*, and '*the rough surface underneath her chest*' as she recalled how she moved amongst the bushes. Aural descriptions included; 'creaking stairs,' 'hear her heart pounding in her stomach,' 'tiny voices speaking,' and 'slight fluttering noise faintly brushing against the wind.' Olfactory elements FC9 incorporated in her narrative included; 'like chocolate,' and 'almost taste the saltiness.' Emotional descriptions FC9 included in her narrative encompassed both negative feelings, such as 'despair,' 'fear,' 'scared,' 'afraid,' 'guilty,' and 'betrayed,' in situations that were; 'traumatising,' 'frightening,' or 'disturbing.' She used the words 'like,' 'loved,' 'braver,' 'cheerful,' 'delight,' 'excited,' and 'safe and protected,' to describe positive emotions.

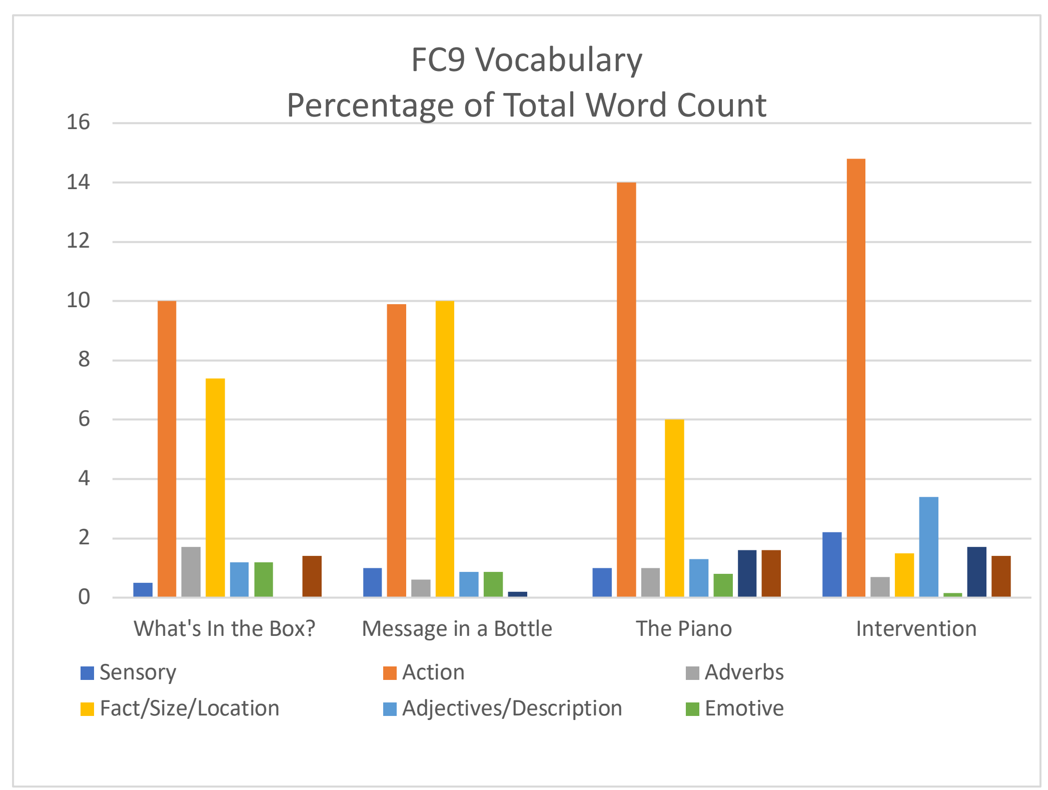
FC9's narrative delivered evidence of her extensive vocabulary and ability to incorporate rich figurative language throughout her narrative. For example, described, 'the traumatising sound of creaking stairs every time they stepped on a twig or branch lying on the freezing floor,' how, 'their hearts started racing like the speed of lightning, feeling the adrenalin and fear of getting lost,' and how the 'tiny

remnants of fear stayed in their hearts.' As well as including common similes such as, 'as cold as Antarctica,' 'cold as snow,' 'as bad as it looked,' and 'quiet as a mouse.' FC9 demonstrated her writing competence by including original similes: 'she was moving like a spider going up a wall,' 'face shone like a diamond,' 'waving in the wind as fast as a hummingbirds wings,' 'stuck to her finger like glue on paper,' 'as if the track went on forever,' and 'as if Cassie was haunting her.' In addition, FC9 included the following metaphors: 'caught her breath,' 'something caught her eye,' 'the waving grass skipped a beat,' 'a stroke of madness fell across her delighted face,' 'can see her with my eyes in my soul,' 'life blossoming everywhere,' 'a stroke of madness fell across her delighted face,' and 'the flaming sun burned in the distance.'

FC9 evoked the readers' empathy through descriptive expressions. For example, 'the orphanage was gloomy,' 'eyes started filling with tears,' 'tiny remnants of fear stayed in their hearts,' and 'the fear of dying slipped into their brain,' and tension: 'I heard a panting noise behind me.' A breakdown of the vocabulary FC9 incorporated into each of her narratives is shown below in Figure 5.51.

Figure 5.51

FC9 Vocabulary



FC9 incorporated six of the seven vocabulary categories in her pre-intervention narrative 'What's in the Box?' Although she included vocabulary in all seven categories in the following three narratives, the balance was more even in her 'The Piano', narrative. While FC9's intervention narrative included a higher percentage of action words, the story consisted of 2,357 words and the percentage of sensory words, adjectives and descriptive words also increased.

5.4.2.6 Focus Child 10 (FC10)

Narrative 1: 'What's in the Box?': FC10 wrote an elaborate recount consisting of 778 words across six evenly sized paragraph in her pre-intervention narrative 'What's in the Box?' (see Appendix 53). Initially the presentation of her writing was legible; however, by the last two paragraphs her handwriting had deteriorated and was barely readable (see Appendix 52). FC10 included time, location and size descriptors in her narrative (see Appendix 54). The time descriptors included: 'every time,' 'finally,' 'too late,' 'right then,' 'at lunch,' 'five minutes from home time,' 'before the end of the day,' and 'once she had left.' The location descriptors FC10 included were associated with items she could see in the classroom, for example, 'cupboard,' 'Zara's desk,' 'Caren's desk,' 'in the window,' 'onto the table,' and 'the chair it was on.' FC10 included two size descriptors, 'couple of people/children,' and 'a few.' She described the students' emotions as, 'disappointed,' 'excited,' and 'fed-up.' She also applied her imagination in her description of the box which she described as, a 'weird purple box that shook and emitted purple sparks,' that 'turned a warm yellow and started to rock from side to side.' FC10 described how one of the students, 'opened her mouth as if to show her astonishment,' 'opened her mouth but no sound came out,' and how all the students, 'longed and longed for the day to end.' In addition, to the rhetorical question 'had the teacher gone mad?' she included the following examples of figurative language, 'scaring the life out of her,' 'grin spread ear to ear,' 'opened her mouth but no sound came out,' and 'curse of silence.'

Narrative 3: 'Message in a Bottle': Throughout her post-intervention narrative, 'Message in a Bottle' (see), FC10 demonstrated her understanding of the conventions of written text with cohesive sentences and paragraphs that indicated changes of time and action. She recalled information that she had learned during the study, such as 'it is the year 1850,' 'England is cold and overpopulated,' and 'put on a ship … to the Swan River colony,' which orientated the reader, and detailed how

the prisoners slept in 'hammock,', were 'close to starvation,' suffered from 'scurvy,' and 'died of malaria,' and how the ship was 'tossed in the waves,' during the sea voyage. FC10 also included a number of commonly used measures of time, such as 'couple of hours,' '10 years,' 'every night,' 'today,' and 'tonight,' as well as the less common terms such as, 'until all the lights are out,' 'way too long.' Location descriptions included: 'in the waves,' and 'overboard.' Appropriate to her first person authorship, she included the expressions; 'when I was inside,' 'my home,' 'by my side,' 'beside me.'

Written in first person, FC10 developed her character and aroused an emotional response in the reader through the characters' internal dialogue, including descriptions such as '*I feel like I won't survive this one*,' '*you can see delight on his sagging face*,' '*I feel like I am more miserable than I have ever been or can ever be*,' and '*anger boils up in me and I walk away*.' FC10 integrated visual tactile and olfactory sensory descriptors in her narrative. Visual descriptions FC10 included in her narrative were; '*a pane of broken glass*,' '*drab grey clouds*,' and '*dark grey t shirts with huge holes*.' Tactile descriptions that engaged the readers' sensory responses included '*warm glowing light*,' '*soft snow*,' '*hard brick streets*,' and olfactory: '*smells like a dead cat*,' '*smells like wee*,' and '*smells like unwashed bodies*' (see Appendix 56).

Narrative 4: 'The Piano': FC10's narrative (see Appendix 57) which consisted of four paragraphs; the first set the scene and introduced the writer as the main character, from whose perspective the story developed and was maintained throughout the narrative. For example, '*I sat at my Piano*,' '*I open my sagging eye*s,' and '*I calmly continue*.' FC10's concluding sentence, '*i [I]found myself alone in my room with my piano*,' linked back to her opening sentence. She developed the main character through internal dialogue such as '*I start to ponder, what is my life?*', and '*I close my eyes to reflect further, I find it helps with the day's dramas*.' FC10 used the following terms to indicate time: '*instantly*,' '*a while*,' '*my past*,' and the '*future*.' FC10 incorporated a range of sensory description into her narrative. The visual descriptions she included focused on facial features or clothing. For example, '*bright green eyes*,', '*hair is ginger*,' '*small nose*,' '*shaggy grey hair*,' '*loose grey clothes*,' '*long sleeved army uniform*,' and '*limp arm*.' She described how during one of the war scenes the soldiers hid '*behind the wall*,' before one peeked '*around the wall*,' then fell to '*the floor*,' and died '*in my hands*' as shown in Figure 4.35. At

times, FC10 elaborated on the visual information delivered in images. For example, she described how the old lady's hair was '*drawn back in a tight bun'* but included an additional imagined feature, adding the old lady '*wears glasses*' as shown below Figure 5.52.

Figure 5.52

Old Lady

Tactile description such as '*damp*,' '*the soft feel of her hands*,' '*hard helmet*,' '*cold clothes,*'; aural descriptions '*loud bang*,' and '*blasts,*'; taste descriptions '*taste of dust and dirt fills my mouth,*'; and olfactory, '*horrible smell of smoke*,' and '*soap*.' (see). FC10 described the old man's '*loneliness*', '*anger*', and '*hurt*'. She further engaged the reader and enhanced her story through the inclusion of figurative language and interesting descriptions such as '*her heart drops*,' '*I feel the anger rising in my chest*,' '*smell and almost taste the soft breaths*,' '*I feel something bubble up inside me*.'.

Narrative 2: Intervention Narrative: FC10's narrative titled '*Portal to the Past*' comprised 1,937 words written over the following two lessons after she utilised Lesson 9 to select the photographs for her illustrations (see). Each slide was presented as a chapter in a book with an image and title. The narrative engaged the readers' emotions through sophisticated language choices that advanced the setting through the eyes of the character and through deliberately structured paragraphs. Detailed analysis of the vocabulary used by F10 identified her wide use of descriptive vocabulary. The text that accompanied her illustrations combined her literacy knowledge and her recollection of participating in the exploration of the outdoor environment. Written in the first person, location descriptors such as '*here*,' '*my home*,' '*behind me*,' '*inside,'* '*by my side*,' '*under my feet*,' '*under my breath*,' '*in my hut*,' '*in my mind*.' Other location and position descriptions included: '*in the*

woods,' '*the forest*,' '*in the distance*,' '*in the middle*,' '*across the wall*,' '*behind a tree*,' '*on the right*,' '*inside the hole*,' '*the change rooms*,' '*on the door*,' '*up the stairs*, '*down the stairs*,' '*through the tree*,' '*in the bush*,' '*into the hole*,' '*over the floor*,' *'the city*,' and '*the planet*.' The setting was implied using terms like, '*Australian raven.*' and '*urban environment*.' Small and big were the only terms FC10 included in her narrative to describe size, which she used to describe, a '*small building*,' '*small girl*,' and a '*big yellow bulldozer.*

The emotions experienced by the characters in FC10's intervention narrative ranged from '*happy*' to '*sad*' (see). Characters were described as experiencing or feeling, '*misery*,' '*disgust*,' '*shy*,' '*uncomfortable*,' '*guilt,'* '*sorry*,' '*surprise*,' '*fear*,' '*bad*,' '*love*,' '*anger,'* '*delight*,' '*annoyed*,' and '*hope*.' FC10 demonstrated sophisticated writing by linking the opening and closing scenes of her narrative. The first slide, which she titled '*The Old Life*,' began with '*When I was a child, I saw the world as a forest, endless and full of life*,' while the last slide as titled '*Ten Years Later*,' began with, '*Sara has grown up,*' and included the character's reflections such as '*we miss some things but we have gained some things…*' FC10 carefully selected images to support her text and deliver contrast and change of time. As well as common descriptions for exact times and periods of time such as '*today*,' '*year 2050*,' '*first day*,' '*time to go home*,' '*once a year*,' '*instantly*,' '*in an instance*,' '*the past*,' '*ten years*,' '*as soon as*,' and '*forever.*' She incorporated an advanced range of time-indicating descriptions in her narrative such as; '*in the last rays of sun*,' '*when I was a child*,' '*instantly*,' and '*once a year*.' FC10 also included a variety of size and location descriptors such as '*endless*,' '*under my breath*,' and '*in the distance*.'

The photographs inspired descriptions of her characters such as, '*tip of a hat,*' '*point of a nose,*' a '*ragged white shirt and short black skirt,*' '*brown-green eyes,*' '*light hair,*' and '*blue eyes and* '*my brown-green eyes were what set me apart*'.

At times FC10 described what she could see in the photographs, for example, '*the tree looks withered and leaves a dull green*,' and '*the sun shone through the trees', plants that used to be soft and friendly smelling are now rough and decayed*,' and as shown below in Figure 5.53 '*the plants were green and lush*'.

Figure 5.53

Lush Bush

Tactile descriptions, '*the plants felt soft and smooth*,' and '*sharp and hurtful,*'; aural descriptions, '*hear the rustle of bushes and howl of the wind,*' '*all you would hear was grasshopper or other animals thriving, like birdsong or the rustle of leaves*'. and '*the old leaves crunch under my feet,*'; and olfactory descriptions, '*air smells of gas and pavement*,' '*smells like lavender mixed with gum leaves,*' '*smell the sweet leaves on the fire*,'; and taste descriptions, '*the air used to taste like mint,*' and '*air tastes bitter and artificial*.'

The figurative language FC10 incorporated into her narrative was both sophisticated and original. For example, she included the following descriptions, '*the anger starts to boil up in me like a fire in the forge*,' '*the embers attempt to jump off*,' '*face lights up with delight*,' '*I feel a tang of guilt in my chest,*' '*slight chirp in my voice*,' and '*grassy paradise*.' Examples of other interesting expressions FC10 included in her narrative are; '*ruffled feathers and sharply focused eye*s,' '*I grew up with not a care in the world,*' and '*the sun shines softly over the old lands*,' '*the forest of our youth*' and '*the trees are beginning to be replaced by weeds, coiling like barbed wire, and brambles sharp and hurtful to anyone who touches it*.'

In addition to the photographs, she included as illustrations in her narrative, FC10 included features that were visible in photographs she had considered during the selection process in her descriptions but not included in the 10 she selected as illustrations. For example, her description of how '*the sun shining through the tree,*' may have been stimulated by the photograph shown below in Figure 5.54.

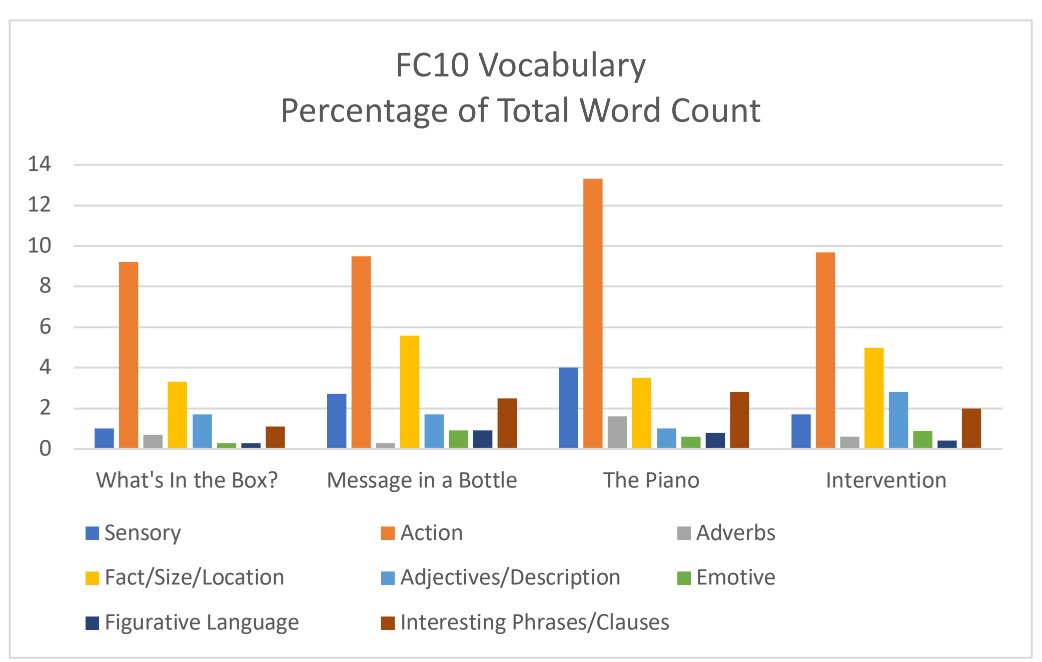
Figure 5.54

Sun Shining Through Tree

A breakdown of the vocabulary FC10 incorporated into each of her narratives is shown in Figure 5.55.

Figure 5.55

FC10 Vocabulary



All narratives written by FC10 included expressions from each of the seven vocabulary categories. The highest percentage of sensory descriptors, adverbs and interesting phrases and clauses were found in her narrative 'The Piano', whereas the highest percentage of fact/size/location, adjectives and descriptive words occurred in her intervention narrative. The stimulus for both narratives consisted of a sequence

of visual images, one in the form of a short film and the other a selection of photograph.

5.4.2.7 Summary Main Features Identified

As demonstrated the pre-intervention writing of students in this study exhibited a lack of creative depth and capacity to engage the reader. This was characterised by a limited development of character, or storyline, inclusion of emotive, or figurative language and limited inclusion of sensory descriptors and details that enabled the reader to visualise the scene. This arose from their acknowledged difficulty formulating ideas as detailed earlier in this chapter, and as evidenced in their writing, their difficulty describing settings, characters, and developing a sustained or developing storyline without the support of a visual prompt. This is substantiated by FC1's explanation that he found writing difficult because he could not think of ideas and didn't know what to write and his remark that viewing the illustrations from *The Water Tower* (Crew, 1994) made it '*easier to write because we got a glimpse of what to write'* and that '*writing with pictures*' helped him compose his intervention narrative. Similarly, FC5 reported his 'Message in a Bottle' narrative was '*not as good'* as the other narratives he composed during the intervention program because he was '*told what to write about*' and he had '*no pictures, just memory.*' Students were not provided with visual prompts and had to rely on their imagination and memory as they composed their pre-intervention narrative.

In contrast to their pre-intervention narratives, students' intervention and post-intervention writing was shown to deliver a greater awareness of the reader delivered through features such as: detailed visual descriptions of both settings and characters; development of characters portrayed through actions and interactions, thoughts and feelings; changes in time and action and greater inclusion of adverbs, adjectives and descriptive phrases. As evidenced above in the detailed summary of six of the focus children, when provided with a rich visual stimulus students provided greater descriptive details that subsequently enable the reader to develop a visualisation.

5.5 Post-Intervention Interviews

Following the completion of the intervention program, when the students had completed the second post-intervention narrative, the researcher conducted

individual interviews with the ten student participants and classroom teacher. Student and teacher feedback was considered to be an essential component in measuring the success of the intervention program and planning of any programs in the future. In addition to their level of competence, student motivation and engagement is influenced by factors such as enjoyment and interest in writing (Graham, 2018). Therefore, the interview questions sought feedback on their perception of the intervention program and the narratives that had been completed by students during this period. The participants were also asked for their suggestions on how to improve writing lessons in the future. The questions that guided the interviews (see) targeted the students' recall and reaction to writing each of the Brightpath narratives, the intervention narrative and writing completed in groups based on *The Water Tower* (Crew, 1994) illustrations.

5.5.1 Students

5.5.1.1 Narrative 1: 'What's in the Box?'

Students delivered a range of responses about their experience writing their narrative 'What's in the Box?' A summary of the students' responses is portrayed in the response provided by FC9, who described writing about the box as 'confusing, interesting, fun but hard at the same time'. FC3 misunderstood the task and attempted to write a recount. He stated that although '*it was easy at first, I forgot what happened; then it was hard*.' FC2 declared that he is not a '*creative person*' and recalled the idea for his story about zombies developed from playing the video game Fortnite. FC1 reported that he was disappointed with his mark, which he believed was a result of his absence the previous day when the teacher had presented the class with the large cardboard box to arouse their curiosity and imagination. FC3 reported that he thought the mysterious cardboard box created a lot of fun: '*the teacher did some funny things like falling over*.' FC5 was similarly impressed with the appearance of the cardboard because '*no teacher has done anything like that before*!' FC6 also enjoyed the novelty of the stimulus, stating '*it was fun to write; I have never done it before with characters and a box*.' However, role play with the cardboard box did not influence the writing of FC5, who declared that writing his story was '*just the same as any other story*.' Similarly, FC8 acknowledged that while some children may have benefited from the appearance of a real box, she did not need it. However, she did think the topic of a mysterious box was exciting and a '*bit*

like a horror story.' She liked the story she wrote because of the amount of detail she had included.

5.5.1.2 Narrative 3: Message in a 'Bottle'

Students gave varied responses to writing the 'Message in a Bottle' narrative. Neither positive nor negative, FC1 declared that he could not remember writing his narrative. The lack of a picture stimulus influenced the attitudes of FC3, FC5 and FC6. FC3 reported that he found it difficult to write a story about a bottle being thrown overboard because he was '*only given the title,*' and he '*couldn't think of anything to write*.' A similar response was received from FC5, who described writing the 'Message in a Bottle' story as '*dull … because we were told what to write and I had to rely on my memory*.' Similarly, FC6, maintained that it was challenging to write because '*We had to use our own mind and pictures would have helped a lot*.' However, the opposite was true for FC7, who declared that he did not require a picture stimulus and neither did he view any of the displays in the room for inspiration. FC7 added that he enjoyed writing 'Message in a Bottle' because '*my imagination is crazy. I don't know where my ideas come from*.' FC8 asserted that 'Message in a Bottle' was the easiest narrative to write because there were no limitations placed on her by a picture stimulus. She asserted, '*The ones with no pictures, you go into a completely different zone, pictures narrow you down. Say you took a photo of a back garden, the story must be there, it couldn't be in out of [outer] space*.' Both FC2 and FC10 enjoyed the topic because of their prior knowledge. FC10 declared that writing about the topic was easy because the class had just studied convicts, and she was able to use her knowledge of the subject. Conversely, FC2 reported that his ideas were a result of reading '*Moondyne Joe'* in class. He described his writing process as '*I had a picture in my head … but it takes at least five minutes, and when everyone else is writing I am still thinking about what to writ*e.' He added, '*I had enough time to write my story. I finished at least ten minutes before we had to stop*.'

5.5.1.3 Narrative 4: 'The Piano'

In comparison with a single visual image, the short, silent animated film 'The Piano' delivered a visual prompt inclusive of a passage of time. In addition to the visual prompt, an aural component through piano music accompanied the film. Furthermore, in addition to the visual and aural elements, the film implied a

storyline, which provided students with a framework on which to base their narrative.

Creating a visual plan in the form of a storyboard made it easier for FC2 to remember the film clip as he wrote his narrative. Likewise, FC3 recounted how he was able to recall the film and visualise '*the old man playing the piano*' after he started writing. Although FC1 also reported finding writing '*The Piano'* narrative easier, he was not able determine why. FC10 suggested that because the visual stimulus did not contain any words, she found writing 'The Piano' narrative easier. FC6 enjoyed writing the narrative because he was able to apply his own imagination to the visual images in the film. Likewise, FC7 '*got lots of thoughts and ideas*' while she was watching the film when she imagined she was in the story.

The music that accompanied the film engaged students' aural senses. While many students reported feeling sad after watching the film, there was a mixed response as to whether the music affected their emotions. FC7 was the only student who determined that although he enjoyed watching the film, he did not like the music. FC1 and FC3 described the experience as '*fun*' and recalled how the music had made them feel sad; however, they were adamant that the music did not have an influence on them. In contrast, the background music touched FC6, who maintained, '*The story would already have been sad, but the music changed everything*!' FC8 declared, '*I had so many emotions, because of the music*.' Similarly, FC9 described how the music brought out her emotions and made her feel sad, suggesting that because of these, she was able to '*remember it more in my brain,*' when she was writing.

5.5.1.4 Narrative 3: Intervention Narrative

Students were questioned about their experience writing the intervention narrative from the taking of photographs, selecting photographs as illustrations and the writing of their story. Positive feedback was received from students about their excursion to take photographs. The excursion, during which the students took photographs, was described as '*fun*' by FC10, who enjoyed the '*new experience*.' '*Fun*' and '*interesting*' were terms FC1 applied to the experience. He particularly liked finding evidence of homeless people and a 'Please do not open' warning sign. FC6 also reported that he liked the excursion around the school because he saw '*interesting stuff,*' he '*had never seen before.'* '*Getting out of the classroom,*' and

taking his own photographs were the highlights identified by FC4. Both FC2 and FC3 enjoyed taking photographs, with FC2 stating '*It wasn't like schoolwork*.'

While the selection of 10 photographs as illustrations for their narrative proved to be time-consuming, only three students described the task as difficult. The process proved too challenging for FC2, who confessed that he resorted to '*just using the same photographs as my friend*.' Similarly, FC5 advised that he also found the process of selecting photographs difficult, but he eventually altered his story to '*fit the pictures*.' FC10 reasoned that she had problems because there were '*too many good photographs*.' In contrast FC1, FC3, FC8, and FC9 reported no difficulty selecting their photographs, although FC1 clarified that he '*switched some of his photographs,*' during the writing process. FC7 did not use the photographs as a stimulus for his narrative, instead basing his story on a video he had recently watched. Consequently, his narrative had a supernatural element and he selected photographs to fit his story. Two students provided additional details about their preference for close-up photographs. The reason provided by FC2 was because '*there isn't anything in the background,*' and FC3 stated that removing the background '*makes it more scary* [scarier].'

The researcher sought to identify the students' viewpoints on the use of photographs they had taken as illustrations and if it helped their writing. During his pre-intervention interview, FC3 described he found writing difficult because '*you have to think and then you have to write it and then you forget and you got to think again.'* Because he did not have to keep thinking of ideas about what to write as he had a constant visual image, FC3 credited the use of photographs for making the writing task '*a bit easier*.' However, he identified the '*best part*' was '*choosing your own photographs and choosing what to write about*.' FC1 admitted that he originally needed help from his friends to develop an idea for his story. However, after he had chosen his photographs, he was able to compose his text. The photographs helped him to '*write better*,' but he '*ran out of ideas by slide 5.'* Similarly, FC10 believed her writing was better because of the photographs, but she suggested because she had '*been there and seen with her own eyes*,' this also helped improve the quality of her composition. Similar responses were offered by FC5 and FC6, who both declared that they wrote more than usual because the photographs helped with ideas. FC8 also believed her intervention narrative was much better than her usual compositions because there were multiple photographic prompts to help her generate

ideas throughout her story. However, she added that '*the photographs had so much detail in them, and you had to keep writing*.' FC9's story developed from a combination of photographs and her imagination; she changed her photograph selection '*as the story developed*.'

5.5.1.5 The Water Tower (Crew, 1994)

The researcher questioned students about the writing they completed during the intervention using the illustrations from *The Water Tower* (Crew, 1994) as a visual prompt. From the responses received, it was evident that the mysterious, suggestive illustrations combined with the opportunity to discuss the images, share ideas, and compose a narrative with peers had a positive impact upon the students' writing experience.

FC1 reported that writing was easier because the illustrations gave him 'a glimpse of what to write'. FC3 found the writing exciting because the illustrations were '*creepy and kind of cool*,' '*it was like movies,*' and '*the water tower looked like an alien ship*.' FC6 loved the mysteriousness of the pictures, which FC7 described as '*ominous.*' However, not all students like the illustrations. FC8 asserted that '*The pictures didn't make much sense*! *I didn't get the story*. *There wasn't much changing in each picture*.'

Positive responses were received from students regarding the opportunity to compose a narrative for the illustrations in group. Reasons offered by the students as to why they enjoyed composing text to accompany the illustrations included the '*freedom*' to work in a group, ability to '*listen to the ideas of others*,' '*expand on others' ideas,'* '*chat about it, describe what you think and write as a group*,' and '*it was something I have not done before*.' As a result of the combination of ideas, FC6 considered the writing his group produced was '*a bit better,*' than he would produce alone. FC4 reasoned that because the members of his group were '*about the same*,' no one dominated and they all contributed equally. She explained that her group '*worked well together,*' and '*expanded on each other's ideas*.' Although FC8 acknowledged that she prefers to work alone and does not like working with other students, she did not '*mind as much this time,*' because she was '*paired with an academically good student,*' and they both contributed ideas. Student feedback established positive support of a dialogic approach and their awareness that through cumulative, purposeful, and positive discussions they were able to support each other's' thinking and participation. In addition, having established a supportive

environment during whole class discussions when the teacher modelled that there are no incorrect answers, students were able to participate in small group discussions without the fear of embarrassment. Consequently, during the small group activities, students' articulated ideas, engaged in reciprocal talk without any one student monopolising the discussion. Vygotsky (1978) recognised the importance of dialogue and student responses supports the conclusion that students were able to internalise the thinking process and build on the ideas and thoughts of their peers 'interthinking' (Mercer & Littleton 2007).

5.5.1.6 Improving Writing Lessons

To capture students' voice on what might increase their level of motivation to engage in writing at school students were asked how writing lessons could be improved. Responses provided by students supported earlier findings that students like to write with multiple students, requesting '*more time to write*,' '*increased opportunities to write*,' and '*student choice of the topic*.' Researchers concede that creating text within set time constraints combined with set topics neither align with creative composition or authentic writing (Daffern et al., 2017; Gardner, 2018). It was evident that participation in the intervention which provided them with opportunities to actively engage with each other during the writing process (Graham & Harris, 2013; Bull & Anstey, 2019; Cremin, 2009, Hassett, 2008) influenced students' recommendations and assisted in the development of their awareness and voice (Cremin & Myhill, 2012; Vaughn, 2018). For example, FC1 suggested that '*the teacher could write too*', children could '*work in groups*,' and '*using photographs to help with ideas on what to write*,' all of which were elements in the intervention program.

Similar responses were provided by FC3, FC7, FC9, and FC10, who were eager to repeat the intervention experience in the future, particularly writing with the support of photographs for inspiration. FC3, FC7, and FC10 added that students should '*stay outside longer and take more photographs*.' Writing about their lived experiences has been found to improve students' connection to the topic (Bifuh-Ambe, 2013; Creely, 2019; Fletcher, 2015; Gonzalez & Moll, 2002; Radcliffe, 2012) creativity and motivation. Yarrow and Topping's (2011) finding that collaborative writing activities increased student motivation is supported by FC8's announcement, which contrasts with her earlier comment that she did not like working in groups. FC8 promoted writing in groups as something she would like more of in the future

because '*it just gets me so much more motivated*.' However, she clarified, '*I would have to be evenly matched with someone who can write well*.'

Additional time to complete their writing was important for FC6, FC7, and FC9 because they could write *'over a few days*,' their writing would be better. Researchers have identified the need to extend writing time beyond a single lesson in order to improve students' writing (Beringer et al., 1996; Calkins et al., 2012; Troia & Graham, 2002). The choice of topic supports students' development as writers (Bazerman, 2016; Cremin & Myhill, 2012; Fletcher, 2017) was considered a priority for improving writing lessons by FC5, who also suggested that students should be provided with increased opportunities to write. Writing on a computer rather than handwriting was another suggestion made by FC3 and FC7.

Although FC2 did not make any suggestions on improving writing lessons, he described the challenges he faced in these sessions. FC2 described himself as '*not a creative person*,' and he '*doesn't know what to do*,' when challenged with the task of writing. He identified time as his next largest challenge and was very aware that '*everyone else is writing and I am still thinking about what to write*.'

5.5.2 Teacher

Following the completion of the intervention program, the researcher conducted a semi-structured interview with the classroom teacher. The questions (see) sought to determine the teacher's perception of the students' engagement in the intervention program activities and if it would affect the students' writing outside of the program, how he found the program and if he would use any elements of the program in the future.

Observations made by the teacher were that students were more positively engaged in activities during the intervention program than they would be in a standard lesson. He also noted that students demonstrated increased confidence and willingness to share their emotional responses and experiences during their verbal interactions with peers and whole-class discussions.

While it is always '*fun*' to work outside the classroom, the teacher admitted '*this does not happen often or as much as it could*,' yet the activities, resources, and environment included in the intervention program '*were easy to access and students were actively engaged and part of the experience*.' He determined that because learning took place in authentic settings within the classroom and the school grounds, opportunities for him to assist the students arose intuitively during the

lessons. He found that the interactive sensory-seeking lessons provided opportunities for teaching at '*point of need*' and when students were struggling with ideas, he was able to incorporate prompting questions. The teacher described how he considered himself to be part of the lesson because '*you are with the kids; you are experiencing the same thing the kids are experiencing … it felt like more of an equal footing*.'

The teacher acknowledged that writing is considered a task that students complete independently in a set time limit. He reported a significant increase in students' willingness to share ideas with the class after they had worked in groups sharing their ideas and listening to each other's suggestions. The teacher also noted that students were more focused and involved than usual. He was surprised to witness how one low-achieving and often disengaged student thrived during the intervention, consistently and enthusiastically contributing to whole-class and small-group discussions. Another observation the teacher reported was the success of student-selected mixed-ability groups. He noted that the lower-achieving students incorporated the higher-level vocabulary they were exposed to during group discussions into their independent writing.

Setting a time limit was determined by the teacher to be the greatest barrier to student success. The teacher proposed, '*If you take away time as a factor, you can contain that continuity of effort and standard of work*.' He asserted that removal of the time limitation element for the composition of the intervention narrative had allowed students to complete their narratives, which increased the quality of writing produced.

Another observation the teacher considered a valuable inclusion in the writing program was the utilisation of technology and removing the requirement for students to handwrite their text. The teacher stated that because of typing and saving their text electronically, students allocated time to re-reading and editing their work during the composition process, as opposed to '*checking their spelling in the last few minutes*.'

The teacher expressed his satisfaction that by enabling a small number of students with literacy difficulties to verbally record their narratives, the students achieved greater success than they had previously. For example, because of recording his narrative verbally, the text produced by a student with dyslexia contained a higher word count than he had been able to produce by either handwriting or typing in the past. Further insight gained from his observations of

students during the intervention was FC4's concerted effort to manipulate photographs to produce the mood he wished to create in his story. For example, extensive cropping of images and applying the sepia feature to remove colour and deliver an element of horror.

As a result of his participation in the program and witnessing student positivity towards writing and their active engagement in the lessons, the teacher reported that he would incorporate the intervention program into his writing lessons in the future.

5.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter has delivered a rich, detailed description of the data collected during the research study. The first section analysed information collected during semi-structured interviews conducted with student participants and the classroom teacher prior to the intervention. Comparable results were recorded on the students' home reading and writing habits. Only one student did not participate in some form of writing at home, although most did not share their work and even kept it hidden. Students also reported daily reading habits, with the exception on one student. Creative writing was the most favoured text-type and spooky, mythological or adventure books the most common genre. Most students declared a preference for typing over handwriting, with their enjoyment of writing dependent upon the topic and the length of time they needed to spend writing.

During his pre-intervention interview, the classroom teacher recounted his belief that although the writing of his students was considered within the range of a Year 5 class, he believed they could deliver work of a higher standard. Challenges he considered prevented greater success were student attitude, lack of writing experience, and the limited time allocated to writing lessons owing to curriculum demands inhibited student progress.

The second section reviewed information collected from student work samples and the researcher's observations during each lesson of the intervention program. The researcher noted students' positive attitudes and active participation during classroom discussions and collaborative activities. This was particularly evident when *The Water Tower* (Crew, 1994) illustrations were shown and the subsequent inclusion of vocabulary shared during the discussions included in the writing produced. Students' visual literacy was demonstrated in their ability to

capture photographs that included texture, contrast, and juxtaposition without instruction. This was also evident in the editing of photographs by cropping and filtering the original images.

Subdivided into two parts, the third section analysed the narrative writing completed by students. First, the Brightpath Narrative Writing Teacher's Ruler, was applied to the writing completed by all students and results were presented under each narrative with a distribution of scores across the Brightpath bands and comparison of the pre- and post-intervention narratives. Second, a detailed analysis of the writing completed by the student participants noted no correspondence between word count and Brightpath grade. The application of the vocabulary rubric applied to the narratives completed by six of the ten student participants identified increasing inclusion of sensory vocabulary, figurative language, and interesting phrases and clauses following participation in the intervention program. Students' storytelling ability improved and descriptive expressions increased when supported by photographs throughout the writing process. An overview of the scores attained by the whole class and their distribution across the bands of achievement identified a positive increase, as shown in Table 5.4, and the achievement of similar scores between the two post-intervention narratives, as shown in Figure 5.23. A comparison of the student participants scores and word counts for each of the narratives identified that a high word count did not correlate with a high Brightpath grade. The results identified students' increased inclusion of a range and lexical quality of sensory and descriptive vocabulary and interesting phrases and clauses.

The fourth section provided a summary of the feedback provided by the students and teacher on their perceptions of the writing they completed throughout the course of the study. Three students reported that they found writing 'Message in a Bottle' difficult because they were not provided with a visual stimulus. This was considered an advantage by one student, while others confidently relied on their prior knowledge of the topic. Writing after viewing the short film *The Piano* (Gibbons, 1994) was a positive experience for all students, with students reporting the ability to recall the visual images making writing easier. Students also acknowledged having an emotional response to the music. The use of photographs as visual prompts and illustrations for their story was recognised by the students to make their writing easier and of a higher quality. Reasons students provided for this included that the photographs helped with idea generation and because they selected

the photographs, they also chose what to write about. Students reported enjoying writing to accompany the images from *The Water Tower* (Crew, 1994), predominately because they were ‘creepy’. The students reported they liked the illustrations and enjoyed writing with others.

Suggestions made by students on how writing lessons may be improved focused on time, with more time allocated in the timetable for writing as well as increasing the length of time to complete writing tasks. Other suggestions put forward included choice of topic and using a computer.

The teacher provided positive feedback regarding the activities in the intervention program and expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to take writing lessons outside the classroom. He reported an increase in the students’ active engagement and focus during lessons which he suggested was due to the structure of the lessons.

This chapter provided a detailed analysis of the data collected during the study. It addressed the three research questions. A discussion of these results is delivered in Chapter 6 and recommendations for arising from the findings provided in Chapter 7.

Chapter 6: Discussion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings outlined in Chapter 5, which emerged from data collected through interviews with student participants and the classroom teacher, researcher participant observation, and samples of students' writing completed during the research period.

As acknowledged in Chapter 2, the Cognitive Process model of writing, developed by Flower and Hayes (1981), recognises that writers formulate ideas by accessing information from their long-term memory throughout the writing process. Visualisations formed from these memories are transformed into verbal or written forms (Creely, 2019). However, this process may be inhibited by the cognitive load required in the creation of text, which impedes the retrieval of information from the long-term memory (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987). Compared to professional writers, who often base their ideas on personal knowledge and experience, student writers' 'funds of knowledge', are not always valued in schools (Gonzalez & Moll, 2002), particularly regarding the selection of writing topics or stimuli provided by teachers. For example, the picture stimulus typically used in Australia's high-stakes NAPLAN writing tests, has little relevance to students' lives and therefore may hinder students' ability to engage in the writing process (Bull & Anstey, 2019; Lipscombe et al., 2015). Consequently, because students need to build their ideas by extending existing ones (Leigh, 2012; Wyse, 2015), they may struggle to connect their prior knowledge with school-based writing tasks, which can lead to an impaired capacity to draw on the visualisation strategy. This can result in an inability to translate mental images into written text, and hence the creation of written composition may lack empathy, imagination (D'Arcy, 1999) and rich vocabulary, (Graham & Perin, 2007; Vögelin et al., 2019).

Although the practice of preparing students for success in standardised assessments fails to value students' funds of knowledge or their identity as writers, and despite the suggestion that motivation and engagement contribute to writing success (Cremin & Myhill, 2012) and that a highly prescriptive skills-based, formulaic approach fails to engage (Bull & Anstey, 2019; Cambourne, 2015; Radcliffe, 2012; Ryan & Barton, 2014) or motivate students (Reeve et al., 2004; Wyse, 2017), prescriptive skill-based pedagogy continues to be a dominant feature

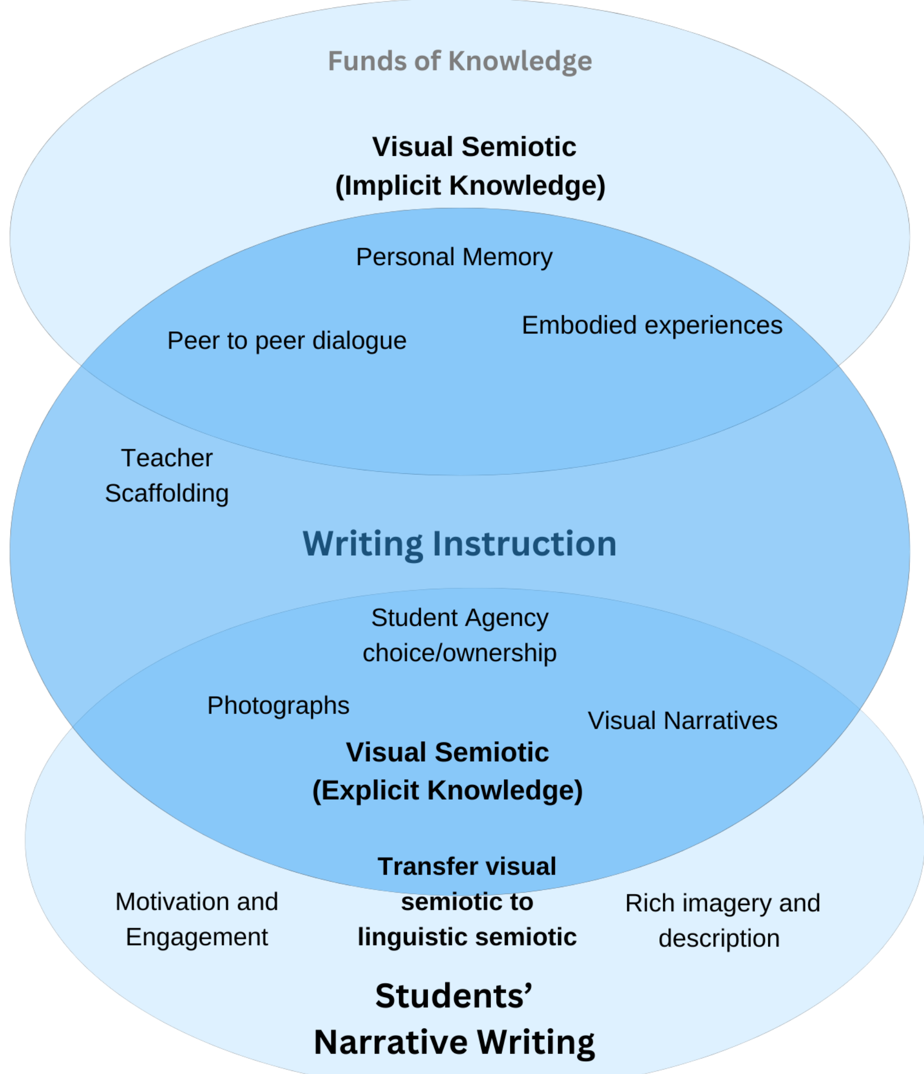
of writing instruction across Anglosphere nations (Barrs, 2019; Bloom & Van Slyke-Briggs, 2019; Cairns, 2021; Carey et al., 2022; Gannon, 2019; Gardner, 2018a; Jeffery & Parr, 2021; Perelman, 2018; Singh, 2018; Myhill & Clarkson, 2020). In a climate where the skills-based, pedagogic paradigm (D'Arcy 1999; Gardner 2012) is reinforced by high-stakes, standardised assessments (Caldwell & White, 2017; Ewing, 2018; Gardner 2018a; Gardner, 2018b; Graham et al., 2011, 2014; Myhill et al., 2020; Rooney, 2015; Spina, 2017; Thompson & Cook, 2014; Wyatt-Smith & Jackson, 2016) the successful application of the allied skills of writing (legibility, punctuation, spelling etc.) may become primary concerns for students to the detriment of content and creative expression.

6.2 Overview of Findings

The analytic model shown below in Figure 6.1 is posited as a systematically derived causal explanation, which also forms a framework for a pedagogic paradigm premised on the elicitation of students' latent funds of visual knowledge. The model provides a synthesis of the various elements that have been identified by the findings of this research study.

Figure 6.1

Student-Centred Pedagogical Approach to Writing Instruction



The darker blue circle in the middle of the diagram shown above in Figure 6.1, signifies that the pedagogical approach employed by teachers of writing in the English curriculum is an essential central element to a program's success. The model further indicates that when writing instruction engages the visual semiotic to stimulate students' implicit funds of knowledge, students are able to transfer their visual semiotic knowledge to the linguistic semiotic. As identified at the top of Figure 5.1, students are immersed in a world of visual images, where visual communication by means of television, films, digital games, advertising, photographs etc., is central to their lived experiences, interactions, and meaning

making. However, the visual semiotic remains an implicit fund of knowledge stored in the students' memory, unless it is activated by the teacher.

As can be seen from the pre-intervention narratives of the focus children in this study, detailed in Chapter 5, although the students predominantly demonstrated sufficient basic transcriptional skills necessary to function as writers, limited creative expression was exhibited. However, comparisons of pre-intervention and post-intervention writing samples identified students' creative potential as writers; a factor that may not be reflected in high-stakes assessments of writing, or in teacher generated writing activities. The findings, therefore, raise questions about the efficacy of standardised assessments to accurately identify and report what students may be truly able to achieve as writers.

Analysis of the findings suggests that the nature of writing instruction was a critical component of the intervention program used in this study. Bruner (1971) detailed three tiers of information processing and understanding. The first enactive phase involves the gathering and internalising of information through physical action and movement in a social environment. During the intervention prior to writing, students participated in physically engaging activities where they collected information. For example, in the early lessons of the intervention program, students considered how each person has distinct features that can be described and the role of facial expressions and body language in communicating meaning through observation and action. In later lessons, students explored the school grounds, where they demonstrated their natural curiosity as they climbed trees and crawled under bushes. Students recorded their observations digitally as notes and photographs while in the outdoor environment. The intervention program addressed student motivation by bridging the gap between writing in the school environment and the students' broader experiences. Activities within the intervention program focused on developing students' sensory awareness. Students engaged their senses in the outdoor environment and used photographs they had taken during their exploration as a stimulus for their narrative writing. Because the photographs were generated and owned by the students themselves, they served as an authentic resource that captured the students' attention and facilitated the generation of ideas.

The second phase of Bruner's model involves the mental recall of information in the form of visualisations. During the intervention, writing was considered a social and collaborative task, with students sharing their ideas and

knowledge rather than writing in isolation. Through engaging in the sharing of their ideas and listening to those contributed by others, students explored the illustrations in greater detail and consider different points of view. This in turn generated a wider range of ideas from which they drew during the composition phase of their narratives. Dialogic discussions held throughout the intervention program provided opportunities for students to recall and share their 'funds of knowledge' acquired from their own experiences outside school and their explorations of the school grounds. The new knowledge created through 'interthinking' within the interactive scaffolded lessons enabled students to become active participants in their learning (Alexander, 2004; Boyd et al., 2019; Mercer & Littleton, 2007; Resnick, 2015). This process created a sense of community (Dean, 2021) and supported the generation of ideas for writing. For example, during the scaffolded analysis of the illustrations from *The Water Tower* (Crew, 1994), and the photographs they had taken during their outdoor exploration, students shared their thoughts and ideas as they recalled their experiences and shared their observations.

The third phase of Bruner's model, symbolic processing, involves the use of symbols and language to represent and communicate information. This tier facilitates abstract thinking and the ability to manipulate concepts through language. The process assists express ideas that extend beyond their direct experience. During the intervention as students viewed and discussed photographs and illustrations, they recalled implicit knowledge related to symbolic representations. Later, in their role as writers, they communicated this information in linguistic form by increasingly including more complex ideas, metaphors, and abstract concepts that were directly to their experiences. For example, demonstrating empathy in their descriptions of the grief and sadness experienced by the old man in their Piano narratives and depicting the passing of time symbolically through descriptions of the changing landscape.

The discussion and explanation below provide an explication of the theoretical perspectives that underpin the model depicted in Figure 6.1 above postulate reasons for disparities between students' pre-intervention and post-intervention writing whilst identifying key elements of the intervention program that positively influenced the students' writing achievement.

Below is a detailed interpretation of the research findings, with supporting evidence showing that following their participation in the intervention program, students' narratives included a greater quantity and range of descriptive language

and imagery, compared with pre-intervention writing. This interpretation is framed within the context of the questions which guided the research.

1. What impact does a visual literacy intervention have on students' use of descriptive language and imagery in narrative writing?
2. What is the evidence that the visual literacy intervention is sustained two months after completion?
3. What are the implications of using visual literacy for a pedagogy of writing?

6.2.1 What Impact Does a Visual Literacy Intervention Have on Students' Use of Descriptive Language and Imagery in Narrative Writing?

To identify the impact of the visual literacy intervention program on students' use of descriptive language and imagery in their narrative writing, the vocabulary rubric developed for this study and originally shown in Chapter 4 (Table 4.1) was applied to the pre-intervention, intervention, and post-intervention narratives written by the ten focus students.

As demonstrated in Chapter 5, the pre-intervention writing of students in this study exhibited a lack of creative depth and capacity to engage the reader. This was characterised by a limited development of character or storyline, inclusion of emotive, or figurative language and limited inclusion of sensory descriptors. Students were not provided with visual prompts and had to rely on their imagination and memory as they composed their pre-intervention narrative. This arose from their acknowledged difficulty formulating ideas as detailed earlier in this chapter, and as evidenced in their writing, their difficulty describing settings, characters, and developing a sustained or developing storyline without the support of a visual prompt. As evidenced by the results reported in Chapter 5, following their participation in the intervention program, without any explicit instruction in visual literacy, students demonstrated their implicit knowledge during class discussions and their composition of narratives. Students demonstrated that they were able to synthesise, interpret and draw inferences from the visual information provided in the illustrations and photographs. This enabled students to integrate an increased number and variety of sensory descriptors in their intervention and post-intervention narratives.

The use of visual images as a pedagogic tool was found to be one of the key components that connected all features of the program. The resulting increased levels of engagement, initially in a creative process, through photography and

editing, and subsequently in the writing process, identified visual images as the element that unlocked students' implicit knowledge. This was evident through the visual images used in the program. A foundation for idea development, the visual images used as prompts for the students' narratives stimulated their memories and provided a link to their 'funds of knowledge'. In addition to reducing the students' difficulty in generating ideas, access to rich visual images during the writing process, decreased their reliance on long-term memory. Students accessed their implicit knowledge and developed as writers following their participation in the intervention program. Consequently, students were able to consider and combine several semiotic elements in their compositions, making considered word choices to deliver their intended message. This was evident in the analysis of the writing completed by students; for example, when writing in the third person, students delved into the emotions and experiences of the characters describing what the characters could see, hear, feel, taste, or smell.

The research found that following their participation in the intervention program, students demonstrated the ability to compose text that was significantly more engaging. The enhanced quality of students' narrative compositions delivered through descriptive language enabled readers to create visualisations. Analysis of students' narratives using the vocabulary rubric designed for this research identified an increase in the range of sensory descriptors and an increase in the inclusion of imagery and figurative language in their texts. The overall sophistication in writing quality resulted from the detailed descriptions, depth of ideas, and lexical diversity, resulting in students achieving higher Brightpath grades in their intervention and post-intervention narratives. These results were accomplished through the provision of rich visual images immediately before writing or as a stimulus throughout the writing process. Other factors that facilitated the advancement in quality and complexity of students' writing were accomplished by providing opportunities to engage their prior knowledge. This was demonstrated through the depth of topic understanding, which significantly contributed to students' ability to compose their narratives.

6.2.1.1 Illustrations

For example, the careful scaffolding of students' observations of semiotic features in the visual narrative of, *The Water Tower* (Crew, 1994), activated their funds of knowledge of the visual semiotic, making implicit knowledge explicit

knowledge. Once activated, as conscious knowledge, it is suggested that students were then able to use their knowledge of the affordances of visual semiotics, such as colour, proximity, framing etc., as cognitive 'triggers' for the generation of ideas, and then the translation of ideas into text. This process is similar to the first two stages of the cognitive process model of writing posited by Flower & Hayes (1981) and Hayes & Flower (1986), which was discussed above. However, the analysis suggested in this study locates the cognitive processes of: idea generation, working memory and translation, within a much broader sociocultural frame, both in terms of where ideas come from (the cultural contexts from which students acquire their implicit knowledge of visual media), and the classroom as a site of discursive meaning making.

The significance of visual images as a pedagogic tool is substantiated by FC1's comment that viewing the illustrations from *The Water Tower* (Crew, 1994) made it '*easier to write because we got a glimpse of what to write'* and that '*writing with pictures*' helped him compose his intervention narrative. Similarly, FC5 reported his 'Message in a Bottle' narrative was '*not as good'* as the other narratives he composed during the intervention program because he was '*told what to write about*' and he had '*no pictures, just memory.*'

Although picture books and graphic novels may contain complex themes, the themes, images and storylines align with the students' interests and arouse their imagination. (Murphy, 2009). Comprehension is gained through sensory information delivered through visual signs in the illustrations which arouse recall of memory and prior knowledge (Hibbing & Rankin-Erickson, 2003; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; Unsworth 2015; Maderazo et al., 2010; Martinez & Harmon, 2012; Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001; Werner. 2004). For example, comparable to real life, readers apply their implicit knowledge to interpret the characters' expressions and actions to interpret their emotions (Burke & Peterson, 2007; O'Neill, 2011). Visual elements which portray context deliver links to prior knowledge which support student engagement (Cremin, 2009; Jewitt & Kress, 2010). Additionally, understanding of multimodal text (Bearne & Wolstencroft, 2007; Youngs & Serafini, 2013), and awareness of sign systems engages students on a deeper level. Therefore, the use of postmodern picturebooks which capture the interest of young adult readers (Anstey, 2002; Murphy, 2009) provide a means to bridge the gap between students'

enjoyment of writing in the home environment and their enjoyment of writing in school environments.

To access students' implicit visual literacy knowledge and to be mindful of the students' interests and engagement with both graphic novels and videos, the picturebook *The Water Tower* (Crew, 1994) was purposefully selected to engage students. Employing similar strategies to those needed when watching television or a movie, reading post-modern picturebooks and graphic novels is an intuitive process where 'readers understand what is meant without words' (Oner, 2017, p. 527). The codes and conventions accessed by both readers of graphic novels and viewers of movies direct the reader's focus on visual cues within the social context, which determines perception delivered through elements such as colour, symbols, costume, setting, camera angle, and movement.

During the intervention, students were led through a 'picture walk' using the illustrations from *The Water Tower* (Crew, 1994). As explained in Chapter 2, a 'picture walk' is an interactive experience with students engaging in discussion as they are guided through images or illustrations that are designed to deliver a narrative or storyline. As also mentioned in Chapter 2, *The Water Tower* (Crew, 1994) was chosen as the visual resource for the program due to the age group of participants' known fondness for reading and viewing fiction, particularly spooky stories aligning with the illustrations in the book, which conveyed a spooky theme. Moreover, both the classroom teacher and researcher had observed a high level of engagement among Year 5 students with the illustrations in *The Water Tower* (Crew, 1994) in the past. Another factor that made the book a relevant choice was the setting of the story in an Australian outback town. This provided a familiar context for the students, allowing them to connect with their prior knowledge derived through their lived experience as Australian children. However, the choice of book may not have had the same impact on students from other locations who do not possess the same level of knowledge and familiarity with the setting of remote Australia.

Students' engagement with *The Water Tower* (Crew, 1994) was evident in their enthusiastic participation in the discussions and the subsequent writing activities arising from the examination of the illustrations. The dialogic nature of the lessons ensured students were active participants asking their questions to the group, which prompted further discussion. In addition, further to their responses to the

questions put forward by the teacher, peers, or themselves, students offered their observations and interpretations of the visual messages and signs within the illustrations. As the teacher led students through a 'picture walk' of *The Water Tower* (Crew, 1994) they made connections with the semantic information delivered through observable signs in the illustrations (Arizpe, 2013; Dean & Grierson, 2005; Serafini, 2014) which activated their prior knowledge. Each image was examined carefully, visual details were studied, and interpretations and predictions made with the teacher prompting students as necessary to make deeper observations. For example, the teacher asked provoking questions as part of the dialogic discussion to encourage students to access their funds of knowledge about the Australian countryside, UFOs, facial expressions, and body language developed within the social contexts of their daily lives (Arizpe, 2013; Dean & Grierson, 2005; Serafini, 2014). Students had gathered their funds of knowledge from reading books and viewing images including illustrations, television, movies, and their lived experience of the Australian countryside.

As evidenced in the dialogue detailed in Chapter 4, following the viewing the illustration shown in Figure 5.3, students excitedly made suggestions and theorised the water tower was a UFO. By asking purposeful open-ended questions, the classroom teacher encouraged students to think creatively to generate ideas. He challenged students to study the illustrations and look beyond the surface features of an image. The prompts and questions led to students making inferences and drawing conclusions based on the visual information in the images. For example, while their knowledge of UFOs would be limited to books, television, and movies, the students' lived experience and knowledge of the outback arose from the proximity of their home city to the Australian outback.

As identified and discussed in Chapter 5, *The Water Tower* (Crew, 1994) provided a source for students to apply their existing knowledge to access information delivered in images through recognisable signs to gain meaning by interpreting the nonverbal signs within the illustrations. For example, as detailed in Chapter 4, when viewing and discussing the illustrations on page 14 of *The Water Tower* (Crew, 1994) (Figure 5.8), the teacher posed the question '*Why does that boy have his hand on the other boy's shoulder and what does that mean?*' to the students. Another example of students' elicitation of prior knowledge of visual signs within the images and their inferential comprehension was delivered when they

associated the coiled barbed wire fence around the water tower as an indication of '*a dangerous place.*' An example of students' role in the dialogic discussion occurred when one student redirected the class discussion from the characters to the large fan-like object in the background of the illustration on Page 27 (Figure 5.10) and addressed the class by asking, '*What is that thing behind them?*'

Illustrations that comprised point-of-view shots delivered atmosphere. Close-ups of the characters' facial expressions enabled students to determine the characters' moods or emotions. As they considered the visual details in the illustrations, the students applied their awareness of spatial and gestural semiotics by reading facial expressions and body language to determine the characters' thoughts, actions and emotions such as fear, surprise, worry, shock, or anger (Bull & Anstey, 2019; Jewitt & Kress, 2008; Kalantzis et al., 2016). Composition of elements within an image delivered through positioning and point of view through close-up shots focused on one element or vectors, direct focus of the reader's eye thereby engaging the visual semiotic system (Bull & Anstey, 2019; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001, 2006; Metros, 2008). For example, as she viewed the illustration of the boy sitting on the ladder inside the water tower (Figure 5.8), FC8 studied the boy's facial expression to determine what emotion he might be experiencing. She proposed that he was feeling '*afraid*' and '*regretful'*, because he knew '*he shouldn't be doing it*!' and '*probably wishes he didn't go in…*'. Similarly, drawn to the character's eyes in the close-up of the townsfolk in the illustration on page 27 (Figure 5.10), students associated what was depicted in the image with their prior knowledge gained from exposure to how these elements are portrayed in books, movies, and television. Interpreting the '*creepy*' illustrations of the book, the students described the characters as '*possesse*d' because they had '*evil green eyes*.' Associating the eyes with aliens led to a student proposing that '*they are not real people*.' The eeriness of the illustration was extended when students became aware of the illustrator's placement of a water tower reflection in the characters' eyes, which was pointed out to the class. During his post-intervention interview student FC7 described how the close-up of the characters' eyes made it feel like the '*person was staring into your life or your soul*.' Likewise, based on the facial expression of one of the boys in the illustration on page 32 of The *Water Tower* (Crew, 1994) (Figure 5.12), one student remarked that the boy '*doesn't look very happy*.' Students also considered the significance of the body language depicted in the image and determined the message

portrayed by the placement of one boy's hand on the shoulder of another was a gesture of support and reassurance, which in that instance, delivered the unspoken message, '*there it isn't a risk*.'

As students accessed their visual semiotic knowledge, they simultaneously drew on their extended semiotic knowledge to interpret the obvious and hidden messages conveyed in *The Water Tower* (Crew, 1994) illustrations. For example, the stories students composed to accompany the illustrations from *The Water Tower* (Crew, 1994) included evidence that visual images had also stimulated the aural semiotic. While viewing an image of the water tower, FC10 and her partner imagined the sound it could be making, writing, '*the old water tower creaking in the wind*.' Similarly, FC10 and her partner associated knowledge of the smells that emit from stagnant water and their reaction to experiencing such an event in their description of the image: '*…the murky, utterly disgusting water. There was a foul smell filling the hot air that made them very uncomfortable*.' The expression, '*the ladder was cold on his bare skin*, FC10 and her partner included in their composition, likely resulted from a personal sensory memory. Correspondingly, the inclusion of the phrases in their written text developed from the writers' memories has the potential to similarly arouse the aural and olfactory 'imagination' of the reader. These activities guided students to an awareness of the role of the reader and the responsibility writers have to consider their audience when writing.

Evidence of students demonstrating their understanding and connection between reading graphic novels and their writing appeared in the narratives written by two lower-achieving students. Although not explicitly taught, onomatopoeia is a common feature in graphic novels, and comics. The cartoon characters may have influenced FC1's inclusion of '*boom*' in his narrative. As an avid reader of Greek mythology and the Percy Jackson series of graphic novels, FC2's inclusion of the onomatopoeic '*splat*' in his 'Message in a Bottle' narrative is most likely due to his familiarity with the comic-type text of graphic novels.

6.2.1.2 Photographs

Students demonstrated embodiment in their writing when their immersion in perceptually engaging images triggered sensory feedback (Schlussel & Frosh, 2023). This suggests an inherent process of intersubjective realisation on the part of the writer occurred as students centred their thinking from themselves as writers to the mind of the implied reader. Senses can be aroused through sight portrayed through

camera angles. Overhead shots create personalisation through embodiment, and close-ups lead viewers to imagine they can touch, taste, or smell the items in an image (Schlussel & Frosh, 2023). Viewing photographs of the environment they had recently explored stimulated their sensory recall (Kalantzis & Cope, 2023). Visual cues bring forth memories and visualisation of past experiences in the viewer's mind. The memory elicits sensory associations and emotional responses associated with the visual cues. Students were able to relate to the writing prompt, remembering their personal sensory experiences which inspired and enriched their writing. For example, the two aural descriptions, '*heard some footsteps,*' and '*heard… some talking,*' which FC4 included in his intervention narrative were comparable to aural observations made by students during Lesson 5. Viewing the photographs likely triggered FC4's memories of the responses and discussions that arose from students' observations during the lesson. Similarly, FC9's descriptions of the sound of '*tiny voices speaking,*' and '*slight fluttering noise faintly brushing against the wind,*' could be recalled from his own experiences in the outdoor environment during Lesson 5 when students were encouraged to listen carefully and describe what they could hear in detail. Likewise, FC9's, depiction of the smell of '*fries,*' '*chocolate,*' and '*sugary candy,*' was likely triggered by her recall of the discussion that occurred during Lesson 6, when the teacher encouraged the students to imagine what they might smell outside the canteen.

As demonstrated in Chapter 5, in Figure 5.36, Figure 5.44, and Figure 5.48, the students purposefully selected photographs for illustration in their picturebook narrative, to create a sequence and visual storyline. Similar to the images in a graphic novel, the sequencing of photographs assisted students in composing a storyline with an introduction, complication, and resolution. The sequencing also assisted students to develop cohesive linking of ideas with inferred action and events between the images, delivered through improved word choice, ideas, and organisation. The photographs reduced the demand on long-term memory and the overuse of 'then', which was particularly evident in the writing produced by students who were developing their sense of sentence structure and among the lower-achieving students. For example, in his pre-intervention narrative FC1's 'What's in the Box' narrative, which consisted of 194 words (see Appendix 12) 'then' appeared five times: '*Then Cindi started to walk Backwards Then Mr Smith slammed it on Clares desk and Then she screamed, Then Miss Scott came into the room…*'.

Although his 'The Piano' narrative (see Appendix 14) also included 'then' eight times, his narrative consisted of 359 words. However, with the support of images throughout the composition process, FC1's intervention narrative, which consisted of 1729 words, included 'then' only eight times (see Appendix 18). Similarly, of the 119 words written by FC2 in his 'What's in the Box?' narrative, 'then' was used three times (see Appendix 20). 'Then' also appeared three times in his 'The Piano' narrative, which consisted of 148 words (see Appendix 24), but only seven times with his intervention narrative, which consisted of 939 words (see Appendix 26).

The sequence of photographs employed as illustrations in their intervention narrative provided structure and created a visual timeline that portrayed the passing of time. Students recall the process of studying the illustrations and later composing text for the sequence of images from The Water Tower (Crew, 1994), which assisted them in creating a cohesive storyline. Additionally, the visual storyboard assisted students to include a greater variety of time-indicating terms. This was evident in the narratives composed by FC1. In contrast to his previous narratives, FC1's 'The Piano' narrative included a range of descriptions to convey the passage of time. For example, '*coupler [couple of] seconds later,*' '*all day long,*' '*a minute later,*' '*all my life,*' '*every day,*' '*never,*' '*as soon as,*' '*for ages,*' '*when I was a kid,*' '*all day long,*' '*half there [their] life,*' and '*when I was four.*' The sequence of photographs students selected as illustrations for their intervention narrative provided a visual timeline on which they based their composition. FC5 explained that he '*chose photos and connected them*' and reasoned that '*you could make up anything to make it fit*'.

Although all students demonstrated significant growth in their narrative writing as shown by the detailed results provided in Chapter 5, the lower-achieving students, as identified in the pre-assessment, demonstrated a greater reliance on the visual stimulus for idea generation. However, it is evident that the students identified as higher achieving in the pre-intervention assessment also accessed visual stimuli as a foundation for their writing and idea generation and used the same details for inspiration, upon which they elaborated using a stronger and more mature vocabulary and lexical density to enhance meaning. For example, FC9 noted that together with her imagination, the photographs inspired and helped her to develop her story, and FC8 stated '*it was easy to choose the pictures and I could put them in order easily'* but because the photographs had '*so much detail in them you had to keep writing.*'

Images that are rich in symbolism prompt thinking, engage the imagination, spark creative ideas and provoke thinking beyond the literal interpretation, eliciting the inclusion of figurative language and metaphors. This was evident in the writing completed by FC9 and FC10. Supported by the photographs, the two students incorporated a variety of original figurative expressions which demonstrated their sophisticated literacy knowledge and vocabulary. Examples of figurative language FC9 and FC10 incorporated in their intervention narrative included:

> 'waving in the wind as fast as a humming birds wings', 'a stroke of madness fell across her delighted face' and 'moving like a spider going up a wall.' (FC9)
>
> 'the anger starts to boil up in me like fire in the forge', 'world as a forest endless and full of life' and 'like a birdsong or the rustle of leaves.' (F10)

Further evidence of students applying their imagination to photographs was evident during Lesson 8 when the class viewed a selection of photographs they had taken, as shown in Figure 5.25. For example, they suggested the image of a group of students standing behind a gate, one with his arm reaching between the bars was in *'a jail'* and a strap across a girl's shoulder could be supporting *'a mysterious guitar case,'* which might *'hold a gun.'* Further submissions made by the students that demonstrate a heightened level of imagination included; a concrete slab surrounded by shingle shown below in Figure 6.2 becoming *'a trap door,' 'a secret passage,'* or '*a holograph into a different dimension.'*

Figure 6.2

Photograph of Concrete Surrounded by Shingle

Likewise, an old ornamental-looking rusty metal object poking out of the sand suggested an entry to *'an ancient ritual site,' 'secret lair,'* or a *'lost ancient,*

enchanted land.' During his post-intervention interview, FC3 advised that *'of some movies how you have to pick up the pavement to get to a secret portal.'* FC6 declared the photograph of the rusty object was his favourite because *'it has a symbol we don't know and it could mean something else in a different language.'*

Maintaining their investment in spooky themes, students suggested that the discarded old teddy bear was '*possessed'* or possibly *'a human that had been turned into a teddy bear.'*

The photograph of the two girls walking in the wasteland '*feels a bit creepy, kids walking alone in the bush – scary.*' These comments made by the students aligned with their earlier suggestions that the townsfolk in *The Water Tower* (Crew, 1994) were possessed. During his post-intervention interview, FC5 noted that the photographs had assisted his writing experience and that writing his narrative '*wasn't hard because you could make anything fit.*' For example, he imagined the image below in Figure 6.3 to be a '*portal*' which his character travelled through before emerging in an '*abandoned wasteland.*'

Figure 6.3

A 'Portal' and 'Abandoned Wasteland'

Viewing the photographs is likely to have triggered FC9's recollection of the class discussion or her own experience during the exploration of the outdoor environment. For example, FC9 described how the character in her story contemplated whether she should touch the object, describing how *'one half of Cassie's brain thinking that she should touch it and the other thinking it would be so much safer if she left it.'* FC9 may have similarly hesitated before picking up the rusty object shown below in Figure 6.4, either before or after she photographed it. Likewise, she may have found her fingers covered in '*rusty marks,*' leading her to

use her own experience to describe how the rust on the object stuck to her character's fingers *'like glue on paper'*.

Figure 6.4

Rusty Object

Similarly, the terrain in Perth, Western Australia, is typically dry and sandy because of the coastal location and the hot, dry climate. Her description of '*rocks and broken concrete scattered on the bumpy floor*' is likely to have arisen from her own experience as she walked across the sandy ground of the empty block of land, as shown in the photograph below in Figure 6.5.

Figure 6.5

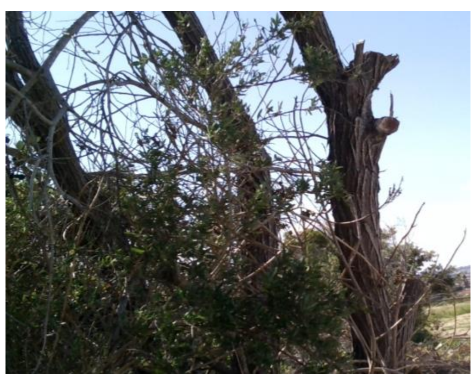
Sandy Ground

Supported by rich visual images, FC10's detailed descriptions enable the reader to imagine the scenes in the photographs. For example, her description of '*weeds coiling like barbed wire*' is likely to have arisen from a combination of her

imagination, her prior knowledge, and her memory of the discussion and analysis of illustrations from *The Water Tower* (Crew, 1994), shown below in Figure 6.6.

Figure 6.6

Image of Coiling Weeds and Coiling Barbed Wire



Photographs are a rich form of multimodal text (Choon-Lee, 2019; Cook & Kirchoff, 2017), with the ability to communicate 'vast amounts of information effortlessly' (Ziller, 1990, p. 37). Embodied writing 'paints a vibrant picture' (Yoo, 2021, p. 20) by bringing 'words to life by allowing readers to imagine what the writer may be feeling…' (Yoo, 2021, p. 22). Authors draw on their own personal experiences with fictional writing established in personal experience, with intensely remembered and emotionally charged events as imaginative springboards (Myhill et al., 2023, p. 418). Viewing photographs of the outdoor environment they had recently explored stimulated the students' sensory recall of the experience (Kalantzis & Cope, 2023) and subsequent word choices. The rich images facilitated students' thinking by delivering layers of detail that elicited their multisensory responses by stimulating memories of their own experiences. Their affective past experience memories enabled students to connect emotionally with the characters they created in their narratives. Recalling their lived experience of their exploration of the school grounds, students produced examples of embodied writing by detailing the mood or feeling they had experienced to the reader (Yoo, 2021). Moreover, the photographs activated the students' visual-linguistic schema for producing written language. This schema, or mental framework, delivered the cognitive means for students to bridge the gap between visual and linguistic information, to think creatively, consider alternative perspectives, and experiment with new ways to express themselves. Hansen's (2006) argument that 'digital technologies can shift our sense of bodies-as-

primarily-eyes to sensing how embodiment is also through skin and other senses' (p. 26) is supported by the feedback provided and writing produced by the students. For example, FC5 described the photographs as '*interesting*' and reported his writing was *'better than normal'* because *'you could describe it and have it in front of you to remind you.'*

During their exploration of the abandoned wasteland, students found evidence of a homeless person's 'camp', after which discussions amongst the students and the teacher's suggestion to move away are likely to have led to fear of the unknown person. For example, FC5 is likely to have recalled the sounds he heard during Lesson 5. This is evident when he introduces a *'bush camper'* who was *'camping and waiting for its prey,'* and *'scaring him to death'* in his narrative. His tactile, olfactory and aural descriptions are likely to have arisen from his own experiences when he ventured into and under the bushes during the exploration of the 'wasteland' as shown below in Figure 6.7. FC5 may have experienced the feeling of fear himself as he crawled in a tunnel created in the bushes, which he later recalled and included in his narrative through his character feeling *'scared to death'* when *'the leaves rustled.'* His description of how his character had *'two options'* and thought about *'turning back'* and the *'bush camper'* may also have been a recollection of how he felt at that time.

Figure 6.7

Photographs of Bushes

The embodiment demonstrated by the sensory descriptions included in students' narratives is indicative of the student's ability to interpret visual cues within images. Students were able to draw on their own personal experiences, which subsequently led to strong, realistic, and emotionally engaging text. For example, FC1 described how, although the boy had a '*good grip*' on the branch, his '*heart was*

pounding.' This depiction of the character's reactions is potentially related to his own experience of climbing trees. Additionally, FC1's description of a '*hidey hole*' that had '*no room to lay down*' could result from his personal experience crawling into the space in the bushes. Similarly, viewing the photographs likely triggered FC2's memory of how he felt '*sharp objects*' as he crawled through the undergrowth. Further evidence of the photographs stimulating students' recall of their own experiences of the environment in the photographs is provided in FC9's explanation that when she was writing her intervention narrative, as well as being *'inspired by the photographs,'* she also applied her *'imagination as well.'*

The photographs provided students with a visual reference throughout the writing process, reducing the demand on their memory (William & Larkin, 2013). Viewing the photographs evoked memories, prompted multisensory responses (Spencer, 2011; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006), and created a sense of being there (Bates, 2018), which fostered reflective thinking (Cappello & Lafferty, 2015; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). This enabled students to translate their understanding into written text. For example, FC10 advised she believed her writing in the intervention narrative was better because the photographs were taken by the students, and she had *'been there and seen with her own eyes.'* Likewise, FC8 explained she '*looked at the pictures and wrote about what it would feel like to be there.'*

FC8's description of her writing process and ease of sorting the illustrations for her narrative suggests her process of pre-planning before writing aligned with Myhill's (2009) category of writers who only pause briefly during the writing process. In contrast, FC3's responses align with the stop-starter and rapid switchers category described by Myhill (2009) as low-achieving writers who frequently use pauses as a means to manage the cognitive load required when translating ideas into written text. This is evident in the responses of FC3 in his pre-intervention interview, where he advised that he found writing difficult because '*you have to think and then you have to write it and then you forget and you got to think again.*' In his post-intervention interview, he declared the use of photographs made the writing task *'a bit easier*' and identified choosing his photographs and what to write about as '*the best part.*'

Evidence of students' appreciation of the supporting images was provided during post-intervention interviews. For example, FC5 described his 'Message in a Bottle' as 'dull' and 'not as good as his other ones [narratives]' because there were

‘no pictures, just memory.’ He suggested that his narrative ‘would have been better with pictures.’

Students’ responses in their post-intervention interviews suggested that the use of photographs as a visual stimulus throughout the writing process not only helped with generating initial ideas, but that the use of multiple photographs increased their ability to continue composing text. All students benefitted from the photographs. For example, FC9, one of the two highest achieving students in the study, stated:

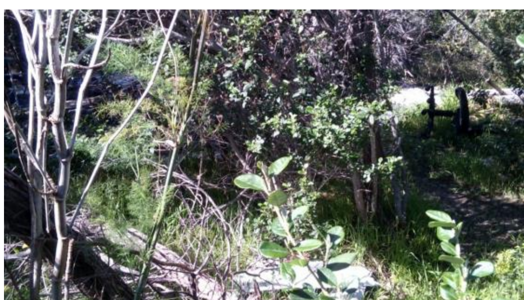
> ‘photos helped me come up with the story, but my imagination did as well; but I was inspired by the photos’.

The original selection of photographs provided students with a visual framework that guided their storyline and written composition. However, a review of the narratives, which were colour-coded and saved after each writing lesson, provided evidence that the students revised their original text. Provided with time and agency, FC10 also demonstrated the application of recursive writing during the composition phase. She both re-evaluated her selection of photographs and their organisation, considering which images best aligned with her developing storyline and edited her text. This is evidenced by FC10’s explanation that she ‘*swapped a few because they didn’t fit in with my writing,*’ which implies that the process of composition involved a transaction between the writer, the unfolding text, and the photographs as visual prompts. For example, as shown below in Figure 6.8, during lesson 10, FC10 re-read and edited the text she had written in Lesson 9.

Figure 6.8

FC10 Edited Text

Slide 1 The Old Life



Lesson 9 198 Words Lesson 10. Edited - 6 words added. (204 words)

When I was a child, I saw the world as a forest, endless and full of life. The air used to taste like mint and smell like lavender mixed with gum leaves from my home. The plants were green and lush and supplied us all we needed. The plants felt soft and smooth. All you would hear was grasshoppers or other animals thriving, like a birdsong or the rustle of leaves. The trees were so big and gave fruit and shade. Me and my best friend, Amy, used to play in the leaves, playing was what made me

Some students altered the order of their photographs or substituted one photograph for another during the writing process. For example, FC9 demonstrated a recursive approach to her writing as she reconsidered her original analysis of what was happening in the images. She described how she:

> 'chose some photos, but changed quite a lot throughout the whole thing, changed the order of them... as the story developed.'

Examples of the changes FC9 made as she wrote her narrative are shown below in Figure 6.9.

Figure 6.9

FC9 Edited Photo Selection

It is suggested that although the writing process is recursive, with writers planning, translating, and reviewing throughout the writing process, revision is typically a quick review of surface features such as spelling and punctuation (Myhill, 2009; Quigley, 2022) before submission. However, as is evident in the above examples, by employing photographs as prompts throughout the writing process, students demonstrated behaviours of high-achieving writers who plan and reflect during the translation stage (Myhill, 2009).

The photographs taken by the students themselves and used as illustrations for the intervention narrative provided students with a scaffold that assisted in the delivery of a cohesive and consistent storyline. Similarly, students' recall of their experience of analysing the illustrations of *The Water Tower* (Crew, 1994) and the subsequent creation of a storyline to accompany the images in small groups during Lesson 4, provided a model for students to create a visual narrative using the photographs before they wrote their narrative. Students demonstrated an ability to make deliberate and purposeful selections of photographs to create a visual storyline, regardless of their ability to compose text. The photographs provided students with visual prompts that facilitated the creation and maintenance of a storyline throughout the writing process, which subsequently improved the quality of their compositions.

6.2.2 What is the Evidence that the Visual Literacy Intervention is Sustained Two Months after Completion?

The improvement in students' writing resulted from their increased awareness of the reader as they engaged in the process of writing. Supported by rich visual images, students moved beyond telling the reader to showing the reader through their use of descriptive language and visual imagery in their compositions. This assisted students in writing more effectively by not stating the obvious but to 'show but not tell' (Myhill, et al., 2023). For example, FC5 did not describe exactly what he saw in the image but provided the reader with information to interpret. He did not tell the reader the man was 'old' but alluded to this through the sentence '*my grandson came…*' Similarly, students did not state that the old lady was a ghost, but suggested it through inferential descriptions. Stimulated by the affective self, FC2 described the lady as the old man's '*deceased wife*.' FC5 portrayed the old lady as a figment of the old man's imagination, and FC10 wrote 's*he is transparent and just a memory*.' These descriptions fostered a deeper sympathetic response in the reader than would have been achieved had the students simply stated that the old lady was a ghost.

Although intangible in reality, through imagination and association, an image possesses the power to evoke genuine emotions. Factors such as the intensity of colour, object size, angles, vectors, and textures play a crucial role in stimulating memory, influencing interpretation, and evoking emotional responses (Bull & Anstey, 2019; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001, 2006; Pantaleo, 2015). Vygotsky (2004) pointed out, 'every feeling, every emotion seeks specific images corresponding to it' and every feeling has internal expressions associated with the choice of thought images and impressions' (p.19).

Replicating the reading of visual cues delivered through body language and facial expressions, the students determined how the character might be feeling, transferring their emotional responses to their writing to evoke an emotional response in the reader. Increased depth and richness delivered through emotive and figurative language were apparent in students' narratives, which were supported by visual images. As shown in the analysis of the vocabulary rubric in the first section of this chapter, students demonstrated the ability to consider the emotional state of their character developing the character, through descriptions and narrative voice, which allowed the reader to fill in the gaps by applying intersubjective affect

(empathy). However, this was not gained from isolated words, but through the use of terms that targeted emotional responses in the reader and incorporated the strategy of writing in the first person to engage the reader.

Viewing the images and analysing the characters' facial expressions and body language helped students to determine the characters' emotions and imagine what the characters might be thinking or feeling, which they transferred to their writing. For example, writing from the character's perspective, the students created an intimate connection between the character and reader when writing in the first-person omniscient narrative voice. This was achieved because students were able to authentically imagine themselves in the setting and deliver detailed descriptions as they embodied themselves, as the character. This was further developed through descriptions of the characters' internal dialogue, which delivered a multi-layered storyline. Students' embodiment of the text engaged the reader's compassion, evoking empathetic responses. Students' visual descriptions of the scenes of an old man playing a piano in the darkness revealed their interpretation of the man's facial expressions and body language to indicate he was sad. Applying their intrinsic visual literacy knowledge the students described the old man's thoughts and feelings through emotional expressions such as; '*he is my only friend*' (FC4), '*Why me*?' (FC5), '*I held him in my hands when he passed out right in front of my eyes*' (FC5), and '*the memories of the past taunt him'* (FC9). FC10 wrote: '*I start to ponder what is my life*?', '*I close my eyes to reflect further, I find it helps with the day's dramas,*' '*my heart drops,*' '*I feel the anger in my chest rising,'* and '*I shout, not intending to.*' FC4 further sought to assist the reader in engaging emotionally but wrote his text in third-person and focussed on one character's inner thoughts, suggesting that the man's sad expression was because he could be thinking about '*the people or loved ones that he had lost, for example his wife or his friend or his mum and dad that have died.*' FC7 interpreted the old man as sad and lonely because '*sitting there all alone in a dark room with one light shining on him*', and '*playing the piano to calm*' himself because he was '*full of grief.*' Similarly, FC8 engaged the reader through her visual description which also engaged feelings of loneliness and sadness through her reaction depiction of an *'old man who sat at a piano…in a gloomy, dark and terrifying room with a couple of rays of bright light*'. FC4 created tension and anticipation with his words that described the depth of the old man's anguish when his friend died: '*the old man tried to save his friend but it was too late'*, '*he cried*

and cried and said "*No NOOOOO!!!*".' However, the students did not only focus on sad emotions. FC2 included times when the old man was '*happy*' and experienced '*joy*', and FC10 described the '*delight on his sagging face*' when he '*saw*' his wife next to him.

In contrast to their pre-intervention narratives, students' intervention and post-intervention writing was shown to deliver a greater awareness of the reader delivered through features such as: detailed visual descriptions of both settings and characters; development of characters portrayed through actions and interactions, thoughts and feelings; changes in time and action and greater inclusion of adverbs, adjectives and descriptive phrases. However, the provision of rich visual images as a writing stimulus enabled students to expand and improve their writing. For example, while neither adjectives/descriptive nor sensory categories appeared in FC1's 'What's in the Box?' or 'Message in a Bottle' narratives, but when supported with a visual stimulus, FC1 included detailed descriptions of the setting and developing characters through description, actions, speech, thoughts and emotions. Writing in the first person, FC1 represented himself as the old man in his second post-intervention narrative, 'The Piano', providing detailed descriptions of the images in the video while also elaborating on what he had seen. For example, he considered the visual elements of light, shade, and framing as he described himself as '*playing the piano in a dark room with a light above my head*.' Although light is not visible in the images, FC1 applied his prior knowledge to deduce this based on how light and shade fell on the old man's bald head, as shown below in Figure 6.10.

Figure 6.10

Old Man Playing the Piano. The Piano *(Gibbons, 2011)*

After viewing the video, FC1 determined that the old lady was a ghost. However, he did not 'tell' the reader but alluded to it using the term '*she was just an*

image in his head.' While it is most likely an expression that FC1 had 'heard' before, without viewing the video, he was unlikely to have used it in his writing. Yet, during the process of 'taking apart' the image shown below in Figure 6.11, FC1's internal thought was likely to have been 'she is in his head,' which subsequently triggered his recall of the expression '*an image in his head.*' The image inspired his inclusion of his description that the old lady kissed him '*on the cheek.*'

Figure 6.11

Old Lady Kissing Old Man. The Piano (Gibbons, 2011)

Although FC2 declared he could write without supporting images, he utilised the photographs to provide the scaffold on which his storyline was based. Likewise, FC2 interpreted the old man's facial expressions in Figure 6.12 as portraying sadness because his friend's '*life is ending*.' He interpreted happiness in the action of the boy on his hobby-horse, detailing how the boy was '*galloping around the piano leaping with joy*.'

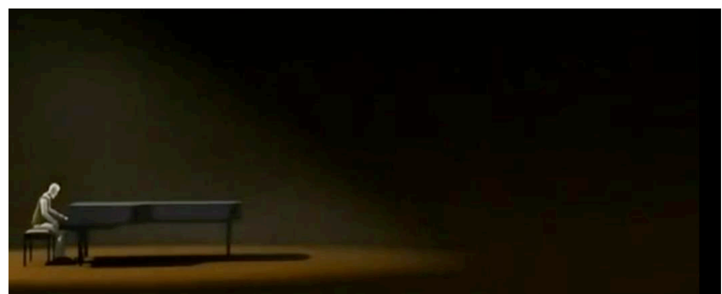
Figure 6.12

Contrasting Emotions. The Piano (Gibbons, 2011)

As demonstrated in Chapter 5, the visual depictions included by FC4 in his narrative provide evidence that the photographs he used as illustrations influenced his writing. For example, FC4's opening sentence featured the visual description of an '*old man*' playing '*his piano*' in a '*big dark room*,' which corresponded with the opening scene in The Piano (Gibbons, 2011) video, shown in Figure 6.13 below. The reiterated use of the word '*dark*' in FC4's portrayal of the old man in a '*big dark room…playing a dark and sad song*,' underscores to the reader that the room was not only dimly lit but also the old man's emotions were sombre, as his '*depressing*' thoughts '*make him feel down and miserable*.'

Figure 6.13

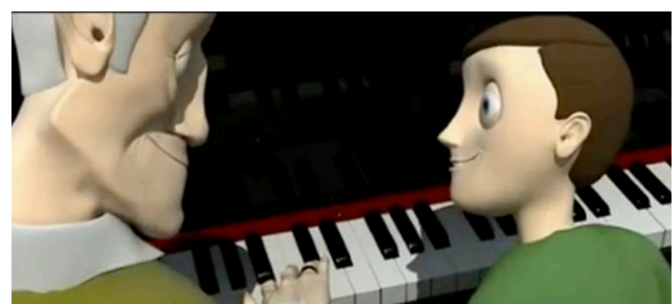
The Grand Piano. The Piano (Gibbons, 2011)



Students interpreted the emotions portrayed on the simple cartoon facial expressions of characters. For example, in the scene shown below in Figure 6.14, FC4 imagined that as the characters looked at each other and smiled, the young boy expressed his love for his grandfather by saying, *"I Love you*".'

Figure 6.14

Old Man and Grandson Playing the Piano. The Piano (Gibbons, 2011)



Similarly, FC9 identified and described the portrayal of emotion revealed in the old man's face, shown below in Figure 6.15, as demonstrating that he was '*calm but shocked,*' and the image of hands on the piano keyboard as '*ghost-like.*'

Figure 6.15

Old Man and Wife Playing the Piano. The Piano (Gibbons, 2011)

It is suggested, therefore, that students' implicit knowledge of visual semiotics triggered their awareness and use of their other senses. This led to students including aural, tactile, and olfactory descriptions related to their personal experiences, or thinking derived from their participation in the discussions in their writing. For example, as students viewed *The Piano* (Gibbons, 2011), in addition to engaging with the visual and gestural semiotics, by listening to the melancholy timbre of the music that accompanied the video, they simultaneously engaged with the audio semiotic.

Moving images delivered in film evoke greater emotional responses than static images (Davydov et al., 2011; Stafford, 2010). Elements of plot twist, and flashbacks, delivered through the storyline and dialogue between characters, influence viewer and reader responses, which are further enhanced by the inclusion of the aural semiotic in the form of soundtracks and environmental sounds (Kasper, 2000; Stafford, 2010). Students engaged with the audio semiotic as they listened to the melancholy timbre of the music that accompanied the video *The Piano* (Gibbons, 2011). The audio-visual elements heightened students' sensory experience, stimulating secondary sensory experiences and cognitive pathways (Schlussel & Frosh, 2023). The sequence of powerful images, combined with the audio soundtrack, created a sensory experience that added an embodied dimension, enhancing the interpretive aspects through sensory engagement. Consequently, the combination of sound, visual, funds of knowledge, and composition subconsciously deepened students' emotional response and produced an embodied experience

(Hesmondhalgh, 2013), which they transferred through embodied writing to the reader (Yoo, 2021).

Viewing *The Piano* (Gibbons, 2011) engaged the students' empathy and sympathetic responses. Employing their intrinsic visual literacy knowledge, students distinguished the contrasts of size between the man and the size of the room, and between the light and the dark. The atmosphere is also portrayed through the perspective and framing of both the contrasting close-ups, which highlight the man's facial expression in a dark room and the long shot of the man playing a grand piano in a dark room, which portrays sadness and loneliness. Reading the visual message delivered symbolically produced the intended emotional response in the students. They applied their intrinsic knowledge that dark colours convey a sombre atmosphere which influenced their interpretation of the old man's mood. As they viewed the video, students subconsciously recalled their analysis of facial expressions and gestures, and visual cues delivered through the photographs they took of themselves and *The Water Tower* (Crew, 1994) illustrations. This led to greater word choice and the composition of text that would evoke visualisations in the reader's mind and engage the reader's emotions.

The visual images assisted students in retrieving previous sensory experiences stored in their long-term memory (Ahmed et al., 2022; Barton et al., 2015; Bos et al., 2015; Cremin & Myhill, 2012; Gardner, 2018a; Troia & Graham, 2002), empowering them to develop richer and more sophisticated literary language (Cowan & Albers, 2006). Viewing the moving images in the video *The Piano* (Gibbons, 2011) delivered a visual storyline and assisted students in composing a narrative with grander temporal marking expressions such as '*at that exact moment*,' '*as soon as,*' or '*a little while later,*' which elevated the lexical level of the students' narratives. Students were also able to easily recall and visualise scenes as they wrote. Recall of the visual images also resulted in an increase in location and position descriptions in the students' narratives, such as '*on the piano keys,*' '*into the sky,*' '*behind a wall,*' and '*in the chest,*' enabling readers to visualise the scene described.

6.2.3 What are the Implications of Using Visual Literacy for a Pedagogy of Writing?

An examination of the findings identified the following key elements that had a positive impact on student achievement. As a result of employing these elements, the teacher was able to activate the students' implicit knowledge and make it explicit

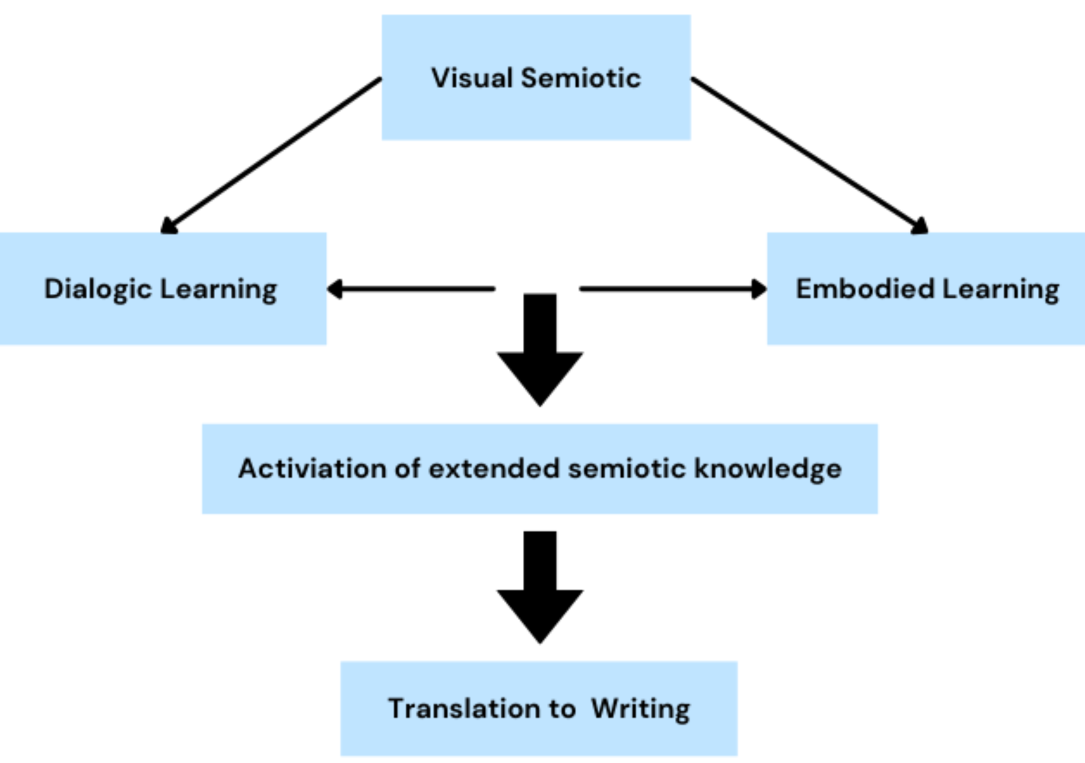
to them, which then enabled them to transfer implicit knowledge into explicit linguistic features in their writing.

- Accessing students' funds of knowledge through scaffolded instruction, with peer-to-peer dialogue and embodied experiences.
- Engaging the visual semiotic throughout the writing process.
- Providing students with writer agency.

As outlined above, this study employed a student-centred pedagogical approach to writing instruction that valued students' interests and funds of knowledge. It also engaged with the visual semiotic and combined students' cognitive knowledge and skills, their cultural and social capital, as well as their personal identity (Ellis et al., 2019). The intervention program engaged students' visual, spatial, audio, gestural, and linguistic semiotic systems, through the use of visual images, which assisted students in recalling prior memories (Alesandrini, 1984) and manifesting ideas (Whitley, 2013) (Figure 6.16).

Figure 6.16

Model of Learning Using Semiotic Knowledge



6.2.3.1 Scaffolded Instruction with Dialogic Discussion

Children implicitly acquire new knowledge and make meaning through their lived experiences (Suzuki, 2017). As a result of their exposure to visual stimuli in the community, the students in this study had internalised the codes and conventions of language and visual semiotics (Chandler, 2007; Cremin & Myhill, 2012; Graham, 2018; Ivanič, 2004; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Scaffolded instruction throughout the intervention program led students to access their implicit visual literacy knowledge by decoding visual signs such as facial expression, posture, gesture, clothing, physical orientation, and body proximity in visual images. As a result, students were able to demonstrate their implicit knowledge by making connections and reading the visual messages delivered through signs and symbols in the illustrations and photographs without the necessity of words (Oner, 2017). By engaging students in the scaffolded dialogic discussion associated with thorough examination or visual images, the teacher enabled the students' implicit knowledge to become explicit.

This approach enabled students to establish connections between the school environment and the external environment. The students' participation in the intervention program resulted in higher levels of student engagement, and motivation in school-based writing, as well as increased levels of descriptive language and visual imagery in their narrative writing. Being able to access their prior knowledge increased students' confidence which led to the production of longer and more cohesive texts. Additionally, students demonstrated an increased understanding of the importance of engaging the reader through their choice of words for effect (Myhill, 2009).

Writing is produced within a social context (Bazerman 2016; Graham, 2018) with knowledge acquired from exposure to cultural practices and social interactions in everyday life. Aside from those students who write for pleasure in the home, for the vast majority of students the classroom provides the main, if not the only, social context in which they write. Hence, their knowledge of writing as a cultural practice is likely to be framed by the dominant paradigm of writing that often informs the teaching of writing (D'Arcy, 1999; Gardner 2012). As stated elsewhere, this skills-based paradigm conforms to what Street (1984) refers to as 'autonomous literacy' and Meek (1993) has called 'schooling literacy'. Autonomous, or schooling literacy subjugates the agentic role of the student as a writer and privileges a 'skills-based'

paradigm, which Ivanic (2004, p. 225) associates with explicit teaching that emphasises syntactic accuracy. If, as was suggested by the interview responses from students in this study, such ‘top-down’ approaches to writing lead to students’ disengagement with writing and, as the initial writing samples show, a lack of depth in the visual impact of their writing, then it is suggested here that there is a need to reframe the dominant paradigm of classroom-based writing.

This study began from the premise that students’ engagement as writers might be ameliorated by developing a dialogic social context for writing in which students had choice and agency. Central to this work is a theory of writing in which students’ latent funds of visual literacy knowledge, derived from continual informal engagement with visual media, might be elicited by means of scaffolded dialogic teaching that is used to assist them in becoming creative writers of narrative texts that are rich in visual imagery. The method of writing instruction applied in this study was premised on a pedagogy that positions writing within a socio-cultural discourse, allied to a student-centred approach that promotes communication and dialogic discussions. Providing and encouraging students’ access to their ‘funds of knowledge’ was identified as a key element in this process. Through the process of ‘interthinking’ (Littlejohn & Mercer, 2013), students were provided with a means to share thoughts and ideas, as well as to reflect on and verbalise linguistic choices. The findings above, derived from assessments of pre-intervention and post-intervention, samples of writing suggest this outcome was realised. However, the question that remains is: why was the approach successful in this instance; how might we theorise a new paradigm of writing that draws on students’ latent funds of visual literacy knowledge? In the course of this chapter, the aim is to explicate such a theory in order to provide teachers with an explanation of not only what worked, but also a robust argument as to why it worked. The starting point for such an argument is the relationship of semiotic systems, in particular the relationship of the visual semiotic to the linguistic semiotic (Bull & Anstey, 2019).

As previously acknowledged, writing is produced within a social context (Bazerman, 2016; Graham, 2018). A dialogic approach was implemented during the intervention program, with the generation of ideas transpiring during whole-class scaffolded discussions and small group discussions. Dialogic discussion supports writing through the process of reflection and verbalisation of reasons for making linguistic choices (Myhill, 2020). During scaffolded lessons, the teacher encouraged

students to reflect and verbalise what they could perceive in images. The discussions afforded students a safe and supportive environment to clarify and refine their thoughts. This proved to be instrumental in the students' development as writers regardless of their contribution to the discussions. Following their participation in these interactive activities, students transferred the skills developed through dialogic discussion and analysis of the visual images to their independent writing. This was achieved by the synergetic effect that was produced from the collaborative activities and discussions in which students shared their ideas aloud, resulting in a rich pool of ideas for them to draw upon while writing.

Peer to peer dialogue, explicitly instigated by the teacher, helped to hone students' observations of visual images and how images function to create and convey meaning. In addition, it is suggested the exploration of concepts in the images during dialogic discussions evoked students' emotions, which helped to support their thinking. For example, while viewing illustrations from *The Water Tower* (Crew, 1994) without the supporting text, students became engaged in developing their own storyline. The students became emotionally engaged with the characters and the characters' actions based on how these were portrayed within the images, as evidenced by FC5's comment, that he '*looked at the pictures more because there were no words*' and that he '*wrote better because of the pictures*'. Upon viewing the illustration on page 20 of *The Water Tower* (Crew, 1994), students expressed their disappointment and disgust at the behaviour of the boy who left his friend at the water tower and returned to town alone. One student, upon seeing the illustration expressed her umbrage, indignantly exclaiming: '*he made him go in, and then he ran away*!' Viewing another illustration, the students determined that the same boy's facial expression portrayed fear, with the students who had developed a negative feeling towards the character, as demonstrated earlier pronounced: '*he knows he shouldn't be doing it*!' and '*he probably wishes he didn't go in now*!'

It was evident that the provision of rich visual images in the form of illustrations from visual narratives, combined with scaffolded dialogic analysis of images, triggered students' funds of knowledge. Students' reactions to the illustrations and active and enthusiastic contributions to the discussions validated the selection of the book as a resource to engage students in the writing intervention program. FC9 reported she enjoyed participating in the dialogic discussions and collective brainstorming activities '*because if someone has a good idea you can go*

and expand on it.' Furthermore, the combination of viewing images and open discussion, which triggered prior knowledge, also actuated their implicit visual literacy knowledge. The time invested in engaging in the scaffolded analysis of visual images supported the development of students' critical thinking and perception skills, which subsequently led to the increase in rich imagery and descriptions in their narrative writing.

The provision of opportunities and time to collaborate and discuss their ideas prior to and during the writing process, similarly increased students' motivation and enriched their writing (Alvermann, 2002; Arfe et al., 2016; Bruning & Kauffman, 2016; Costillo & Tolchinsky, 2018; Davies, 2009; Grainger et al., 2003; Mercer & Littleton, 2007; Wyse et al., 2018). In this way, students were engaged in a 'community of practice' (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This is a further exemplification of a sociocultural approach to writing in which students were enabled to learn from one another as 'critical friends.' Students' motivation to write is impacted by their level of confidence in generating sufficient ideas to compose text (Wright et al., 2019). The generation of ideas, which may be punctuated by staring at the blank page or screen, is an initial 'block' that all writers face from time to time, and developing writers, such as school students, often experience. This study suggests this initial 'block' may be obviated, or partially removed, by activating students' visual funds of knowledge. A second 'block' that can impede the writer, which is again more frequently experienced by developing writers, comes when the writer tries to translate ideas into text. In the context of this study, this involves the translation of ideas generated through the visual semiotic into the linguistic semiotic of the writer. However, the evidence derived from the findings of this study suggest that the use of students' visual funds of knowledge not only helped them to generate ideas but also assisted them in translating those ideas into narrative text. As evidenced in the analysis of students' narratives provided in Chapter 4, viewing the images stimulated students' memories of past experiences, including discussions that enabled them to compose their text.

Discussion and collaboration were initially promoted in the intervention program when students worked with a partner and in small groups taking photographs of themselves and each other. The teacher created a positive classroom environment where students felt safe to share their thoughts and ideas and to participate in discussions. As a result, students actively participated because they

felt their thoughts, opinions, and prior knowledge were valued. Active participation in the program enhanced student engagement and motivation. This was demonstrated during the intervention program when, under teacher guidance students interacted positively, discussing ideas, and supporting their points of view. Students were highly motivated to first express imagined emotions, facial expressions, and body positions, and later describe them orally and in writing. FC5 described the lesson as '*fun, because we had a lot of freedom. We haven't done anything like that before*!' He added that it was '*good working with friends*.' Another example of the students' engagement occurred when, without any direction from the teacher, students moved themselves forward to be closer to the board so they could have a better view of the images. The students' willingness to contribute grew throughout the program with increasing numbers of students, including those who did not typically share their ideas readily, offering their suggestions and volunteering to share their writing with the class. As a result of their participation in the dialogic discussions, students demonstrated increased engagement in the discussions and writing activities that followed.

6.2.3.2 Student Agency

Students in this study identified that the topic or subject matter was a key element that impacted their disengagement with writing in the school environment. It seemed that 'finding ideas' then became the most challenging aspect of writing for them as writers. To be specific, they attributed their dislike of writing at school to the lack of topic choice and general dislike of topics assigned by teachers. FC5 professed that how he felt about writing was determined by the topic. He advised that this depended upon whether, '*if it is interesting and made up*' and '*if I can choose the topic*'. Similarly, FC6 described the aspect of writing he found difficult was '*thinking up an idea for the story and what is going to happen*', but he '*liked writing*' if he got to select his '*own topic*'. Students are unable to successfully generate ideas if they are unable to engage with the topic due to lack of prior knowledge. FC10 recognised that her ideas came from her prior knowledge. She explained that her ideas usually '*come from where I have been, something I have seen or imagined*' because, although she didn't watch a lot of TV, she liked to read books. Ultimately, due to either a lack of interest or knowledge, students often fail to produce the expected volume of text in the time allocated, leading students to develop negative associations with writing and a belief that they '*cannot write*'

(Johnston & Costello, 2005; Santangelo & Graham, 2016). This was evident in the responses provided by students. For example, FC2 reported that he enjoyed writing when the text was composed as a class. He determined that his difficulty with generating ideas resulted from his lack of '*a good imagination*.' However, as evidenced in his intervention narrative when supported by visual images, his text extended beyond what was actually visible in the photographs, as shown in the text he wrote to accompany the photograph shown Figure 5.40.

A key component of the pedagogical approach implemented in the study was the privileging of students' agency as writers. This was achieved by involving students in the decision-making process, through the choice of topic, the collection, selection and editing of images, which they then sequenced to provide a scaffold for their narratives. Hence, from the beginning of the pedagogic process to the culmination of their writing, students were able to exercise choices at all stages of the creative process. This 'ownership' of choices was empowering, which, it is suggested, motivated and engaged them as writers. This finding aligns with that of Bruce (2009), who reported that when provided with choice of topic and format students exhibit an increased level of enthusiasm and desire to work beyond set class time. Students in this research study also revealed their engagement in the writing process and motivation to continue writing their compositions. This was evidenced by the students request to continue writing their narratives the next day, rather than wait until the next timetabled lesson.

Aligned with Graves' (1983) process approach to writing, and in addition to being allowed to choose their own topics, students were able to compose their narratives over an extended period. This emphasis on student agency was developed in the intervention program by giving students autonomy to select ten photographs as illustrations along with the theme of their intervention narrative. Student agency is one of the key elements of internal motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Having greater options and choices as agents of their own writing resulted in positive engagement in the lessons, and increased motivation to write (Alves-Wold et al., 2023; Bifuh-Ambe, 2013; Daniel, 2011; Edwards-Groves, 2011; Vasudean et al., 2010). One example of their increased level of motivation and engagement in writing lessons was evidenced by the students' request to continue writing outside the allotted timetabled lessons.

The students' investment in the creation of their assembled photographic images appeared to give them license to tell their own story; and to develop an authentic voice (Cappello & Lafferty, 2015). In addition, the freedom to choose their topics and to write about their world and life experiences enhanced the development of students' agency as writers (Joshua, 2007; Vaughn, 2018), which positively impacted their linguistic creativity (Bifuh-Ambe, 2013; Daniel, 2011; Fletcher, 2015; Gonzalez & Moll, 2002; Radcliffe, 2012). Narratives were established around adventure, scary, strange, or magical themes which also aligned with their reading interests (Allagui, 2021; Johnson, 2004). For example, in contrast to titles set by the teacher, like 'What's in the Box?' 'Message in a Bottle' and 'The Piano', students titled their intervention narratives, 'Unknown Apocalypse', 'An Extreme Escape', and 'Johnny and the Teddy Bear of Doom'. Furthermore, providing students with the freedom to choose their topic and theme based on the photographs enabled them to engage with ideas that aligned with their own interests and background knowledge. Hence, aspects of their agency and identity as writers became embedded in their compositions (Dyson, 2003; Gardner, 2018a; Rios-Aguilar, et al., 2011).

As demonstrated in the feedback provided during their post-intervention interviews, students were more engaged and motivated to write when given access to authentic resources. For example, FC1 recommended that future writing lessons include the use of photographs because they provided him with '*ideas on what to write.*' Similarly, FC4 suggested that students should be allowed to take 'photos and writing to photos.' He reported that he liked having the opportunity to take his own photographs as using them as a writing prompt was '*fun because you make a narrative of what you chose*.' FC5 also endorsed the intervention program, expressing his enjoyment of the writing activities and stating he would like '*to do the same thing again*.'

Students' participation in dialogic discussions during the intervention program fostered an interplay between pre-existing knowledge and the conversion of implicit knowledge into explicit understanding.

6.2.3.3 Prior Knowledge

As suggested by transactional theory, meaning is not entirely inherent within a text but is created through interaction between the reader and the text (Rosenblatt, 2018). The construction of meaning is influenced by previous experiences and prior knowledge, and the representation or portrayal of an object within an image

ultimately determines the viewer's response. A pivotal element of the student-centred intervention program employed in this research focused on developing connections between students' writing in the classroom and students' lives beyond the classroom. The teaching approach aligned with *The Strathclyde Three Domain Model*, which values students' interests and funds of knowledge without the need for didactic instruction (Ellis, 2017; Moll, 2019) and encourages students to apply their life experiences to their written compositions (Dyson, 2003; Gardner, 2018a; Rios-Aguilar et al., 2011).

Creating mental images or visualisations necessary for writing composition involves cognitive processing, visual perception, and the retrieval of images from long-term memory (Barton et al., 2015; Cremin & Myhill, 2012; Gardner, 2018a). If students are unable to utilise their funds of knowledge, they may struggle to generate the visualisations necessary for descriptive writing (Hibbing & Rankin-Erickson, 2002, 2003; Kellogg, 2013). Therefore, students' prior knowledge must be accessible (Abbott et al., 2010; Cragg & Nation, 2006; Kim et al., 2011; 2018) during writing composition, to enable the creation of visualisations from their memories and subsequent transposition into verbal and written form (Creely, 2019). One example from this study was that of FC7, who selected ten photographs and spent time adjusting and rearranging them in preparation for his intervention narrative. However, he explained that the idea on which he built his story was because:

> 'The morning before we got told to write I watched a video, and used the ideas in the story, it was a god sleeping under the water.'

This was evident in his writing, which comprised descriptions such as: '*human flesh and bone,*' '*sacrifice,*' '*reawaken the monster,*' '*octopus like head with mass tentacles covering his face,*' '*ancient ritual site,*' and '*cult of Cthulhu.*'

The visual imagery depicted in the film, which he had watched at home, formed part of his visual 'fund of knowledge' which he translated from the visual to the linguistic semiotic in the process of composition in the classroom.

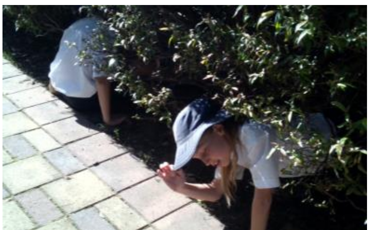
During the intervention program, students engaged with the outdoor environment. Participation in the non-writing activities, which focused their attention on engaging their senses, provided students with the knowledge required for writing (Graham et al., 2019). Engaging in multisensory activities generated new sources of

linguistic expression (Gardner & Kuzich, 2018). To assist the students in activating their implicit visual literacy, learning was taken outside the confines of the classroom. Here, students were encouraged to focus on developing their perception and sensory awareness. The teacher encouraged the students to '*look at things differently,*' '*explore spaces,*' '*nooks and unusual spots,*' and '*take photographs.*'

A key feature of the pedagogic approach adopted in this study was the immersion of students, as active agents, in the environment outside the classroom. During the exploration around the school grounds, the students were positioned as 'embodied learners' searching for serendipitous 'visual treasures' to photograph. Without intervention from the teacher, the students revealed their implicit knowledge of visual semiotics and insight into how meaning is made and delivered visually. This was evident in both their taking of photographs and editing the original photographs to create illustrations for their picture book narratives. However, due to the prior activation of their visual funds of knowledge in the classroom, they were discerning photographers. Instead of taking ad hoc photographs of anything, they purposefully collected images by applying their explicit knowledge of how the visual semiotic works and using the creative 'eye' of the photographer. For example, encouraged by the teacher to explore, students climbed trees, crawled into bushes and used a variety of camera angles, as shown below in photographs taken by the students in Figure 6.17.

Figure 6.17

Photographs: 'Different Perspectives'



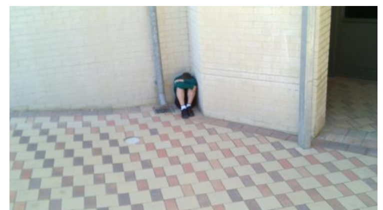
The photographs from their personal embodied experiences triggered students' personal memories, and actuated their implicit visual literacy knowledge, which, following their participation in dialogic discussions, they transferred to their narratives.

During her post-intervention interview, FC9 recalled how, during the exploration of the outdoor environment, she was *‘kind of imagining things that you could do.’* Although the teacher had not explicitly informed the students the photographs would be used as illustrations for a picturebook narrative, he did introduce the concept that a ‘blank piece of paper represents an untold story’, recapping the concepts that ‘a picture is worth a thousand words’ and ‘readers interpret emotion, mood and messages from images’. Therefore, it is possible that FC9 was preempting the purpose and rehearsing her writing as she took the photographs.

Despite not having received any formal photography instruction, the students were visually perceptive, which suggests they drew on their implicit understanding of visual imagery gained through their exposure to visual images in media such as film, television, the internet, and advertising (Stenliden et al., 2017). The photographs taken by the students were rich in visual information delivered through colour, perspective and detail (Choon-Lee, 2019, Cook & Kirchoff, 2017; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; Suchar, 1997; Ziller, 1990). Additionally, the students' photographs provided evidence of their implicit knowledge of the impact of camera angles, vectors, texture, contrast, and juxtaposition shaping their interpretation from perspective or viewpoint (Chandler; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). The photographs in Figure 6.18 both show the same boy huddled in a corner, sending messages of empathy or sadness.

Figure 6.18

Student Photographs: Contrast and Juxtaposition



The long shot employs vector lines created by the checked tiles and contrasting plain walls to draw the reader's eye towards the central point where the two walls meet and a boy sits in the corner. The large scale of both the towering background and patterned foreground contrasts with the small central figure, magnifying his isolation and implying a lack of safety and potential danger. In

contrast, the close-up contains greater detail with the focus on the character, not the surroundings. This encourages the viewer to consider the boy's emotional state and to imagine themselves in his position. The close-up is a photograph and not a cropped image, therefore, it was intentionally taken by the photographer which suggests implicit visual literacy knowledge in the purposeful taking of the photographs.

Students demonstrated their awareness of the impact of an image deliberately taking a photograph such as a close-up or altering the original photograph to gain the impact or effect they sought. For example, as shown below in Figure 6.19, FC3 included an extreme close-up image of the teddy bear in his narrative. He explained that he *'cropped the picture, snip-tooled it get rid of the rest of the body, makes it more scary [scarier].'*

Figure 6.19

Close-up Photograph of Teddy Bear

Similarly, although FC4 had limited experience taking photographs and no formal instruction in visual literacy, he cropped, lightened, darkened, and applied filters to the photographs he selected as illustrations for his narrative (Figure 6.20).

Figure 6.20

FC4 Manipulation of Photographs

Using the tools available on Google Photos, he modified the images to achieve the appearance and viewer impact he sought. For example, in addition to adjusting the brightness and contrast, FC4 used the filter feature to adjust the

saturation level and to tone down the colour by applying a sepia tone to deliver the desired aesthetic. He applied the cropping tool to the photographs to resize the image and effectively engage the reader, creating suspense by not showing the entire image, as shown in Figure 5.17. Further examples of his manipulation of photographs are shown in Chapter 5 (Figure 5.26).

The pedagogical approach applied during the study incorporated the elements of time, topic choice, response and learning community that Graves (1983) determined to be key to the writing process. These features of the intervention program delivered students autonomy and agency as writers, enhancing their engagement and motivation and subsequently improved writing achievement (Bifuh-Ambe, 2013; Fletcher, 2015; Gonzalez & Moll, 2002; Jouhar & Rupley, 2021; Radcliffe, 2012; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

6.3 Summary

Analysis of the findings revealed that writing instruction was the core element of the intervention program. As shown in Figure 5.1 situated in a socio-cultural perspective, the intervention program implemented in this research study employed a student-centred approach that significantly increased student engagement and motivation. A significant aspect of this approach involved allowing students to tap into their 'funds of knowledge'. Through collaboration and dialogic discussions, students were given opportunities to reflect upon their thoughts, ideas, and language choices.

Beyond providing a starting point for idea generation as students reflect on their own past experience (Bingol, 2023). Students demonstrated proficiency in using of multimodal technology beyond the classroom. The utilisation of laptops in the intervention program facilitated easy editing and reviewing writing during the writing process. Additionally, students exhibited the ability to capture photographs and later manipulate them to achieve the desired effect for their illustrations. The improvement in the students' writing in this study was evidenced by the Brightpath assessment tool and the vocabulary rubric together with observations reported by the teacher and researcher indicate that the pedagogical approach implemented during the study increased student motivation and engagement. Additionally, as evidenced in their post-intervention interviews, students expressed a desire to do more writing at school and for longer periods.

As identified during discussions and in the texts students composed to accompany *The Water Tower* (Crew, 1994), students' imagination and implicit visual literacy knowledge influenced their interpretations of the illustrations. For example, the old, rusty, water tower captured students' interest when it was portrayed to be a green glowing UFO at night. Likewise, students demonstrated strong reactions to the illustrations in which objects or characters were pictured as close-up images. Students transferred this experience as they sought to create the same reactions in the photographs they took themselves. Students photographed what were typically unobserved, overlooked objects or something they had created themselves that provoked their curiosity and imagination.

The significance of this study is encapsulated in the suggestion that providing students with access to their funds of knowledge, engaging with the visual semiotic, and giving students agency as writers, within student-centred writing instruction, were three essential elements to foster the successful transference from the visual semiotic to the linguistic semiotic. Children are exposed to and subconsciously acquire an understanding of the codes and conventions, and semiotics of visual representation at a young age (Ehrenworth, 2003), gained through the prolific volume of images they are exposed to daily. The students who participated in this study are considered to be 'digital natives' (Evans & Robertson, 2020; Palfrey & Gasser, 2011) with an implicit understanding of visual literacy collected in the social environment, including the ability to read environmental signs and symbols without the necessity of words (Oner, 2017). As revealed in Chapter 5, the students chose to write in a variety of forms at home without direction, where they engaged in a range of authentic writing activities. Yet, the students are reluctant writers in the school environment. However, while participating in the intervention programs, students' increased engagement and motivation which was evident, as demonstrated at the end of Lesson 9 when several students requested to continue composing their narratives the following day. As demonstrated, the findings identified the link between the visual, linguistic, and social semiotics, with the results showing that using rich visual images, as writing prompts, enables students to translate their implicit knowledge of the visual medium into the linguistic medium. This was evident in the way students manipulated the photographs they had selected and used them as illustrative 'marker' in their intervention narratives. For instance, FC4 allocated a substantial portion of writing sessions to the intricate manipulation

of photographs. Without any prior instruction, he demonstrated an intuitive grasp of, perspective, angle, and lighting, concepts acquired through his exposure to television and film, modes where visual images are used to tell stories.

Another fundamental aspect of the pedagogical approach applied in the study was granting students agency as writers, which provided authenticity to their writing. Students were provided with extended time to write, and allowed to engage in conversation with their peers and the teacher during the writing process stimulating the generation of ideas. The teacher undertakes the role of facilitator, promoting collaboration by creating an environment in which students felt safe to share their ideas.

After participating in the intervention program, students transitioned into 'authors' as they composed texts for readers. The findings of this research study demonstrate the significantly improved writing quality students can achieve when they adopt the writing practices of professional authors. For example, during the intervention program, students explored the outdoor environment where they engaged their senses. They brainstormed ideas with their peers and composed a narrative over several lessons. This provided students with ample time to discuss and reflect on their compositions and to re-read and edit their texts throughout the writing process, before submitting their work. The combination of semantic connections, internalisation of ideas, extended time for writing, and opportunities to discuss their ideas increased students' awareness of writing for the reader and empowered them to develop richer and more sophisticated writing. This was evidenced by the increase in the number and quality of sensory descriptors, figurative language, interesting phrases and clauses, and overall lexical cohesion.

Idea generation was identified as the most challenging aspect of writing. The study's success can be attributed to carefully selected visual resources, such as *The Water Tower* (Crew, 1994) and the school grounds, which connected with students' interests and funds of knowledge. The findings provide evidence that although children are immersed in a highly visual culture where they develop implicit visual literacy knowledge, for this to be transferred to their writing, they require opportunities to explore visual images in the classroom. It was further evident that when provided with visual images and agency as writers, students acquired a purpose for writing and were able to effectively communicate with their audience.

Visual imagery plays a crucial role in the students' everyday experiences and interactions. As revealed in Figure 6.1, visual images connected the various aspects of the intervention program. For example, through scaffolded instruction, collaborative activities, and dialogic discussions, the teacher assisted students in becoming conscious of their implicit visual literacy knowledge, gained through personal experiences and social interactions. The time dedicated to scaffolded analysis contributed to developing students' critical thinking abilities and perceptual skills. While visual images provided a source for the development of students' ability to write descriptively by stimulating emotional responses and facilitating cognitive engagement, the transformation of implicit knowledge to explicit knowledge is not automatic and involves a process of reflection, communication, and documentation. The students employed this process when they verbally expressed their observations of the visual information delivered in a range of images during dialogic discussions. Similarly, students applied the same approach as they composed their narratives. For example, they reflected on their previous experiences and knowledge as they interpreted and extracted the visual information in the images.

Although visual representation is less abstract than linguistic, as demonstrated in this research, students can compose text that includes advanced linguistic choices when supported by access to rich visual images that assist in the generation of ideas throughout the writing process. The rich visual images utilised as resources in the intervention study enabled students to access their implicit knowledge. The findings of this research study demonstrated that when students' focus was redirected to what they could see or imagine in rich visual images, they included rich visual imagery in their written compositions.

As demonstrated in this research study, although students often dislike writing in the school environment, they enjoy writing and choose to do so of their own accord in the home environment. Students engage more profoundly with a topic when they are presented with a stimulus that holds personal significance for them (Bingol, 2023). Writing prompts that are relevant and deliver a personal connection evokes a sense of authenticity and provide successful transference from the visual semiotic to the linguistic semiotic. The net effect is a more confident writing community, and one that is able to apply its knowledge of language to produce qualitatively better writing. This is demonstrated by general trends in the pre-

intervention samples characterised by writing that lacked sensory and descriptive vocabulary or interesting words or phrases that engage readers and evoke emotional responses. Conversely, post-intervention writing samples demonstrated students' ability to write purposefully with increased levels of sophistication and the intention of engaging the reader by creating a sustained storyline that also developed and described the characters, and setting with sufficient to high levels of detail as demonstrated in the analysis of students' narratives were provided for six of the focus students in Chapter 5.

Chapter 7: Recommendations

7.1 Problem

Globally, governments have adopted evidence-based educational policies, leading to the widespread implementation of high-stakes standardized assessments (Filiasov & Sweetman, 2023) that aim to mitigate disparities and enhance educational outcomes (Canaan & Mouganie, 2018). Despite the ongoing implementation of large-scale standardized assessments at national levels across various countries, which have influenced writing instruction to focus on preparing students for success based on narrow assessment criteria (Bousfield & Ragusa, 2014; Frawley & Davies, 2015; Jeffery & Parr, 2021; Salhberg, 2011; Singh, 2018), there has been no corresponding improvement in student achievement (Applebee & Langer, 2011; Au, 2022; Graham & Rijlaarsdam, 2016; Hursh, 2007; McCarthey, 2008; Wyatt-Smith & Jackson, 2016). Current writing instruction within the English curriculum is narrow and focused on technical skills, features assessed through standardised assessment, which do not engage teachers' or students' creativity. This positions students as producers of written text that complies with a checklist of pre-requisite skills at the expense of developing students' creativity and imaginative thinking (Caldwell & White, 2017; Carey et al., 2022; Gannon, 2019; McGaw et al., 2020; Perelman, 2018). Furthermore, writing within a restricted time frame set in standardised assessments does not allow sufficient time for the generation of new ideas recalled from knowledge stored in long-term memory (Ahmed et al., 2022; Barton et al., 2015; Cremin & Myhill, 2012; Gardner, 2018a; Troia & Graham, 2002; Wyse et al., 2018).

As a result of the gap between the types of writing students engage in at school and in the wider community, where they interact with various multimedia semiotic resources writing in the school does not engage students' prior knowledge or promote their identity as writers. Consequently, students are unlikely to be engaged or motivated in the writing tasks.

7.2 Research Aims

This research study sought to address a gap in research involving the visual semiotic through visual representations of sensory experiences to stimulate memory recall and idea generation. Situated within the sociocultural perspective and delivered through a student-centred pedagogy, the intervention program aimed to

motivate and engage students through scaffolded teaching, dialogic discussion, digital technology, visual resources, and authentic writing experiences.

The research is timely, and the findings contribute to the under-researched area of the impact of visual literacy and writing pedagogy. These findings contribute to the body of work on the use of visual semiotics as a means to improve the quality of students' narrative writing through identified teaching strategies that address the identified problems.

7.3 Recommendations

The findings of this research study and the implications of using visual literacy support a paradigm shift to move writing instruction towards a pedagogy that focuses on how students compose narratives for a reader and not for an assessor. However, this will require a redirection from the focus on conventional 'surface-level' skills. To foster effective writing instruction, it is essential that writing instruction encompass all the multifaceted aspects of writing development (Bazerman et al., 2017). Therefore, writing instruction should adopt a student-centred method targeting student motivation and engagement (Bull & Anstey, 2019), with the central focus on utilising visual images that enable students to access their funds of knowledge. This process will provide a source of student empowerment, leading to learner agency, which, in the case of this study, impacted their efficacy as writers. However, in order to achieve 'authentic interactional talk,' a radical change in power relationships is required, moving away from teacher-dominated talk to dialogic teaching (Bull & Anstey, 2019).

As demonstrated in the findings, student writing achievement can be significantly enhanced by engaging the teaching strategies addressed in the intervention program. When teachers are equipped with effective writing instructional strategies, they have the potential to open up new opportunities for students (Graham & Harris, 2019). However, the implementation of effective instructional techniques necessitates 'commitment, dedication, resilience, and professionalism from all stakeholders' through the provision of professional development and support (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

7.3.1 Visual Semiotic

The findings reveal that in the environment outside school, students are engaged and interact with multimodal semiotic resources in a range of authentic

writing activities. They have an implicit understanding of visual literacy collected in the social environment, including the ability to read environmental signs and symbols without the necessity of words (Oner, 2017). However, in order for implicit visual literacy knowledge to be successfully transferred to explicit knowledge, students must be able to access their 'funds of knowledge'. To ensure students' implicit knowledge becomes explicit, they need to be able to access their prior knowledge during the writing process. This can be achieved through the use of rich visual prompts centred on their experiences, evoking memories, sensory experiences, and enhances motivation. Based on the findings of this research, it is recommended that teachers utilise rich images to evoke students' interest and provide a stimulus for memory recall and a source of inspiration for idea generation. As demonstrated in the findings, photographs provide visual tools that serve as writing prompts, triggering memories, engaging senses and emotions, and igniting imagination. It is recommended that students have opportunities to take their own photographs that can be used as visual stimuli rather than generic purchased writing prompts.

7.3.2 Scaffolded Instruction, Dialogic Discussion and Collaboration

As evidenced during this research study, following their participation in the intervention program, the students included an increased use of descriptive language and imagery in their narrative writing. Teacher and student agency are central elements of the pedagogical approach applied in the study. As demonstrated in the findings, by engaging in activities such as exploring outdoor environments that are rich in stimuli and participating in 'think-alouds' assists students in transferring their implicit knowledge to explicit knowledge. For successful replication, it is important the teacher is confident in their ability to implement a student-centred approach that engages students in the writing process through dialogic discussion, open-ended tasks, and shared writing. This will require a radical change in power relationships and a paradigm shift, with a move away from teacher-dominated talk toward dialogic teaching (Alexander, 2004, 2018; Bull & Anstey, 2019). Therefore, to enhance successful implementation and improve teacher confidence and understanding of the above strategies, professional development and mentorship should be made available.

7.3.3 Funds of Knowledge and Writer Agency

The findings identified that the pedagogical approach of writing instruction is the central element of the program's success, with the teachers' approach being a

key component for successful implementation. Therefore, it is imperative that the teacher is attuned to the concept that all children, irrespective of socio-cultural background, possess 'funds of knowledge', much of which may be implicit to them. Such knowledge is often 'subjugated' (Foucault 2001), especially where the culture of the school and the culture of home do not align, as demonstrated by anthropological studies of literacy (Brice-Heath 1983; Street, 1984). Secondly, the teacher needs to use both their subject and pedagogical knowledge to elicit from students their funds of knowledge in order to make them explicit by carefully selecting topics that enable students to make connections with their prior knowledge.

Before writing, professional writers spend time developing their ideas by engaging in activities such as daydreaming, observing their environment, and gathering and recording ideas (Myhill, Cremin & Oliver, 2023). Just as professional writers access their knowledge and experience when writing, students need to be able to access their prior knowledge to retrieve mental images from their long-term memory (Barton et al., 2015; Cremin & Myhill, 2012; Gardner, 2018a). Furthermore, to assist students in producing their best writing, it is essential that students are provided with extended time to plan, draft, revise, and discuss their ideas prior to and during the writing process, as well as multiple writing sessions with peers in their writing community (Dean, 2021).

7.4 Limitations

Limitations that may affect the transferability and generalisability of the study are discussed below.

Teachers shape the culture and atmosphere of a classroom, and the pedagogical approach implemented in this research is considered to be an essential element of the intervention's success. The selection of the teacher in this study was deliberate due to his philosophy and pedagogy aligning with the pedagogical approach applied in the intervention program. The elicitation of students' funds of knowledge, visually and verbally, requires the development of a writing community where students feel safe to share their ideas. Therefore, a teacher's willingness and ability to apply a student centred approach with dialogic discussion, open-ended tasks, and shared writing will determine successful replication.

Another limitation of the study is the small size of the research participants. Data was collected from only one class of students, with an additional detailed

analysis of ten focus students within that class. Furthermore, the data collection did not involve a control group.

A final limitation is that the collection of data was restricted to a limited length of time due to curriculum commitments, which subsequently controlled the ability to measure the sustainability of the students' progress.

7.5 Future Research

There are several possibilities for future research that have resulted from analysis of the findings that are worth considering.

Firstly, to increase generalisability, the intervention program could be expanded to involve a larger sample size within one school or from multiple schools. Likewise, the study could be expanded by investigating more diverse populations, including children in regional and remote Australia, minority ethnic students, and international studies. Likewise, to measure the response to the intervention at different stages of writing development, the sample could be broadened to include students from across multiple year levels.

Little research has been conducted on the role of visual literacy pedagogy in the classroom (Friedman, 2021). It is, therefore, recommended that further research explores in greater depth students' implicit visual literacy knowledge, and the relationship between visual images, memory, and the linguistic semiotic, as well as the impact of a wider range of visual images as writing stimuli, to make the findings of this research more pedagogically valuable.

Another area future research can explore is the role of prior knowledge and idea generation during the writing process to develop students' agency as writers.

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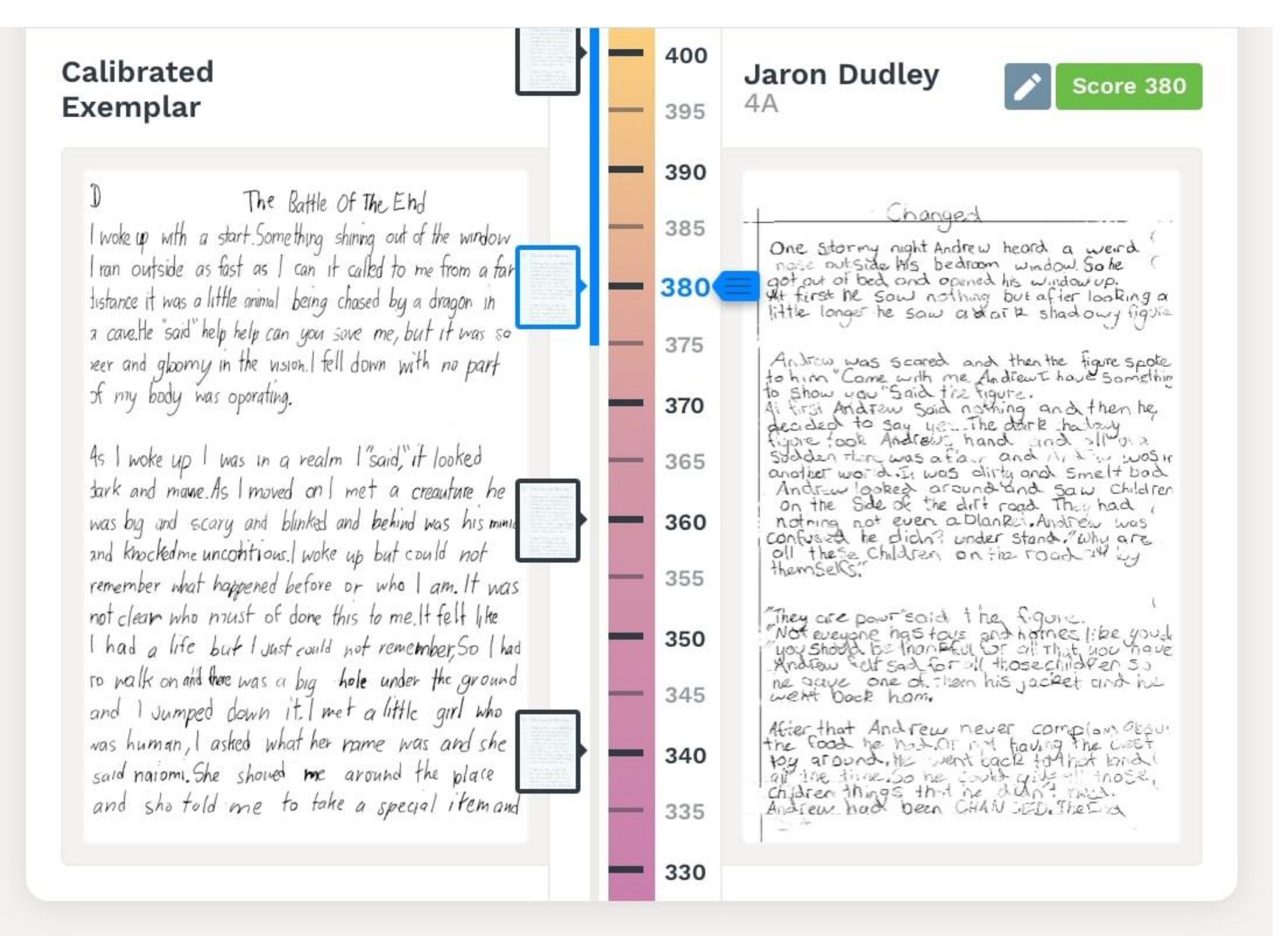
Appendices

Appendix 1: Brightpath Narrative Teachers Ruler



Appendix 2: Brightpath Narrative Band Descriptors

Score Range	Descriptors	Teaching Points
411 - 490	Adjusts writing to take account of audience, purpose and context. Writes a narrative which has an introduction, complication and a resolution. Familiar ideas, details and events are developed and relevant to the storyline. Characters emerge through description, actions, speech or narrative voice (thoughts and feelings). Setting is an integral part of the story. Demonstrates control over most language conventions and consistently uses precise verbs, adverbs, adjectives and descriptive phases. May start to use sentence structure to enhance story-telling.	Teach students how to: Develop imaginative or reflective elements (humour, drama, suspense, sympathy). Use detail for significant people and places in the story and to create tension. Use detail to describe special characteristics of characters (opinion, personality, status). Create a sense of atmosphere. Control language choice to enhance story. Control sentence structure to pace story and build tension. Use punctuation to control and pace story.
371 - 411	Writes a narrative with a distinguishable storyline, including some events that relate to the resolution. Writing may present as a book chapter and therefore does not include a resolution. There is a stronger sense of character and setting. Character	Teach students how to: Provide imaginative or reflective elements (humour, drama, suspense, sympathy). Adjust writing to account for audience, purpose and context. Use details to reveal uniqueness of character and/or setting; and relationships between characters. Use actions, dialogue, appearance to imply character and/or setting.

Score Range	Descriptors	Teaching Points
	emerges through actions and interactions. Uses descriptive and precise language. Controls many of the conventions of writing and experiments with others. Uses simple, compound and complex sentences. Experimentation may lead to clumsy sentences. May start to use paragraphing to enhance story telling.	Select language to suit audience and purpose and to enhance story-telling. Maintain noun/verb agreement and tense within a sentence. Position clauses correctly. Structure paragraphs to enhance story.
331 - 371	Story includes an orientation, a complication and may include a resolution. Stories in this range may contain some innovative element such as simple use of dialogue to carry the action, some reflective comments, or the setting is a little more imaginative. There is a suggestion of character and setting through naming and description. Starts to use descriptive language and a wider range of words that add precision. May be starting to use speech marks, exclamation marks or	Teach students how to: Use the complication to drive the story. Order events to lead to the resolution and develop the resolution itself needs to be developed. Craft a cohesive text (noun-pronoun referencing; temporal connectives such as *later*, *suddenly*, *meanwhile*; simple word associations to avoid repetition) and maintain tense and point of view across text. Character can emerge through actions, relationships, dialogue. Setting can be revealed rather than described directly. Use descriptive, precise phrases (adjectival, adverbial). Use speech marks, apostrophes and commas for phrasing. Vary sentence structure and type for effect.

Score Range	Descriptors	Teaching Points
	manipulate punctuation for effect. Spelling of common words is generally correct as is the use of sentence level punctuation.	
251 - 331	Writes a story with a beginning and a complication, and attempts an ending. Some simple elaboration of ideas which are linked. There is a stronger sense of character and there may be some elaboration through descriptions and actions. This may include naming an emotion or giving a little more detail about an action. Uses simple or common words that describe people, places or things and may use some descriptive or more precise words. There may be some attempt to vary sentences. May overuse 'then' and some sentences are run on. Some sentence level punctuation is correct. Spells some common words correctly.	Teach students how to: Help the reader to understand what happened and how it happened. Use the complication drives the story. Order events to lead to the resolution and develop the resolution itself. Provide details about character and setting dialogue can reveal relationships, and actions. Craft description so it's integral to story (e.g. actions signal character). Use descriptive phrases (adjectival, adverbial). Write simple, compound and complex sentences Position clauses and phrases within sentences. Use necessary or relevant punctuation.

Score Range	Descriptors	Teaching Points
211 - 251	Writes a story with a beginning and a complication. May name characters and setting but does not develop these. Uses simple or common words that represent people, places or things and may use some descriptive or more precise words. There is a stronger sense of sentence structure. Spells some common and/or high frequency words correctly. Uses some known letter patterns.	Teach students how to: Help reader to understand what happened and how it happened. Structure events so they lead to the resolution, and resolution itself needs to be developed. Provide simple details about character (how they look, act, feel, their relationship) and setting (time, place, weather). Select details so that they relevant to the story. Use descriptive, precise language (adjectives, adverbs). Write simple and compound sentences.
171 - 211	Demonstrates a beginning sense of story structure. Characters are named. Uses a small range of more common words and subject specific words. Some of the writing is difficult to understand. Spells some simple and a few common and/or high frequency words correctly. Elsewhere uses some known letter patterns to represent ideas. Words are generally demarcated and there is a sense of sentence structure.	Teach students how to: Provide the reader with more context in the orientation. Introduce the setting, characters and complication (when, where, who, what is the problem). Use the complication to drive the story Resolve the complication. Use their phonics knowledge to write words Speak in sentences and write sentences. Start a sentence with a capital, ending with a full-stop.

Score Range	Descriptors	Teaching Points
	Story may start with a capital letter and end with a full stop but there is very little correct use of punctuation.	

Appendix 3: Ethics Clearance

Appendix 4: Principal Permission

Appendix 5: Teacher Permission

Appendix 6: Student Participant Permission

Appendix 7: Brightpath Permission

Appendix 8: 'The Water Tower' Publisher Permission

Appendix 9: 'The Water Tower' Author Permission

Appendix 10: 'The Water Tower' Illustration Permission

Appendix 11: Student Pre-Intervention Interview Questions

Do you do any writing at school when not instructed to by your classroom teacher? *When do you do this writing?* *Is this a task that you must complete, or do you make the choice to write yourself?*
Do you do any writing at home that is not part of set homework? *If yes, what do you write, when, and how often?* *Is this writing something you do for enjoyment, or does it have a set purpose?*
Do you enjoy writing at school? *How do you feel when you are told you are going to complete a writing activity at school?* *Why do you think you feel this way?*
What do you find challenging when you are told you must complete a writing task? *Why do you think you feel this way?* *What do you think could help make writing more enjoyable/easy?* *In your opinion what would improve your writing?*
What sort of writing do you prefer? *For example, narrative, persuasive, report, poetry, procedure, free writing?* *Why do you prefer this type?* *Is there something about the other types of writing that you specifically don't like?*

Appendix 12: FC1 Narrative 'What's in the Box'

"What's in the Box?"

The room got dark and scary Mr Smith went to the carbide and got out a Box, Mr Smith slammed it on Cindi's desk. Then Cindi started to walk Backwards Then Mr Smith slammed it on Clares desk and Then she screamed, Then Miss Scott came into the room and took the Box into her class-room Mr Smith said to Sara to go check What's in the Box so Then Sara went in to Miss Scott's classroom which is right next to our class Room and Had a quick Check what's inside the Box Because she would spoil it for everyone and Everyone would know and There would be no Fun For everyone else. At Recess People in 4.6 Mr Smiths class They Asked Miss Scott if They could Look what's is in the box. Most people Had to say Please once or Twice or More to check what's inside. The Hole of the class Looked What was in the Box Most people in 4.6 Looked at Lunchtime or Before or After Lunch They Looked what is in the Box. But Me and Angela were not Here So we didn't know what was in The Box.

Handwritten text was typed and names changed

Appendix 13: FC1 'What's in the Box?' Vocabulary Rubric

Visual - See	dark
Tactile- Feel	
Aural- Hear	
Olfactory- Smell	
Taste	
Movement/action	slammed (2) screamed look/ ed (3) walk asked quick check (2) spoil
Adverbs	
Knowledge	
Temperature/Time	recess lunchtime before or after lunch 'once or twice, or more'
Size/Location	The room (2) the cupboard Cindi's desk Clare's desk classroom (3) Mrs Smith's class inside the box (5) 'right next to our classroom'
Adjectives/Description	
Emotion	fun scary
Figurative Language	
Interesting Phrases/Clauses	'Once or twice more'

Appendix 14: FC1 Narrative 'Message in a Bottle'

Message in a Bottle

I was lived in England And it was miserably in England. I was a young boy And I had know water or Food So I have to steal Food and Try and get Water but if I can't get Any Food That is not going to be good but I mostly Need Water because if you don't Have any water for 3 days you will die and My name is Allan And I'd got A brother called James And we both got kicked out of our House because it was too Expensive which is Really Annoying and sad For Me And James so we Kept on Running down the Road and Then Me and James saw A Man so we walked up to him and Asked him if I could have any Food for me and My brother and he Turned around and Looked me in the Eyes and Then I looked at this Hand and it was clinged up like he was going to Punch me So I Screamed HELP! And Me and James Ran as fast as we can and James is Faster Than me so he is lucky.

So Me and James came up to a store so we Had to steal Some Food to survive and get water From the see Through fridges And hoping that we don't get caught and when me and James go inside Everyone Starts to Look at me and James so we Just Kept on walking we saw the Fridge and we grabed Water for both of us and grabbed bread and other stuff for the bread and when we got near

Original text - Handwritten

Appendix 15: FC1 'Message in a Bottle' Vocabulary Rubric

Visual - See	
Tactile- Feel	
Aural- Hear	
Olfactory- Smell	
Taste	
Movement/action	steal die kicked turned around walked ran clinged punch screamed running look(ed) (3) saw survive caught grabbed (2) hoping asked
Adverbs	Really too
Knowledge	expensive young boy James is faster than me
Temperature/Time	3 days
Size/Location	England (2) down the road a store our house
Adjectives/Description	
Emotion	miserable annoying sad lucky
Figurative Language	Clinged up like he was going to punch me
Interesting Phrases/Clauses	'Ran as fast as we can' 'See through fridges' 'That is not going to be good' 'looked me in the eyes' 'it was miserable' 'I had no water or food'

Appendix 16: FC1 Narrative 'The Piano'

The Piano

There was a Old man in a dark Room Playing the Piano Thinking about his dead wife because he is unhappy about what happened, but he Thought of her in his mind and Like she was Still There With him but she is Just a image in his head and Then a coupler seconds Later the man wife kissed him on the cheek and Then I Thought about My Friend. I was Running up against a wall and he was by My side The he Told me "I'll Peek Then shoot at Them Then as soon as he Peeked and "boom" Then I saw my Friend Fall over on the Floor he wasn't dead he was gust bleeding to death and his last word his was "you my best Friend" and then he dies slowley and I cried and cried but I was Running away because I don't want to die as well. A minute later I stopped Running and I went to go hide somewhere so I had a chance of survive. Then again I thought of when I was a kid for Christmas I got a Toy and I would run around the House it was so fun to play with. All day long I would ask my dad if I could Play with it and the only reason why I asked is because I once broke something but I would hide then stop and start to play the piano. I started to play the piano when I was Four and would Play with my dad and mum because they were really good because they have been playing for half There life. And I have been Playing for ages and now I am 74 years old and I am in a room playing the piano in a dark room with a light above my head and the piano almost all my life I can remember my mum and dad Teaching me how to play and now I am really Good on the piano because my mum and dad and I loved them all my life and I saw them every day and I play because that's what I'm best at and I will never get bad. THE END.

Original text - Handwritten

Appendix 17: FC1 'The Piano' Vocabulary Rubric

Visual - See	light above his head dark room
Tactile- Feel	
Aural- Hear	Boom
Olfactory- Smell	
Taste	
Movement/action	thinking thought (3) running (3) kissed fall bleeding shoot survive cried (2) ran play(ing) (11) hide break remember teaching peek told dies ask (ed) (2) saw (2) stop (ed) (2) start (ed) (2)
Adverbs	Slowly really (2)
Knowledge	74 years old. Chance of survive.
Temperature/Time	'couple of seconds later' 'all day long' 'a minute later' 'all my life' 'half their life' 'every day' never as soon as 'for ages' dies slowly 'when I was a kid' all day long When I was four
Size/Location	*Dark* room (2) on the cheek by my side against a wall on the floor The house in a room
Adjectives/Description	Old dead (2) last best
Emotion	unhappy fun
Figurative Language	He thought of her in his mind like she was still there with him. But she is just as image in his had
Interesting Phrases/Clauses	An image in his head Bleeding to death and his last word was I don't want to die as well

Appendix 18: FC1 Intervention Narrative

Mysterious Great Escape

This is Mike he is in a really visible tree but he is also trying to hide from the police but it is really visible from the angle of where the police is going to come through and if the police do come Mike should run because the police is going to find Mike and put Mike in jail which Mike doesn't want that to happen same like a lot of people that went and they probably did the same thing as Mike is doing right know. He also has really good grip on the tree and his face is looking really scared and his heart is pounding and he has no clue what to do or should he get out of the tree and find a better tree that isn't that visible like the one that Mike is in because Mike is really visible but then Mike sees the police his heart starts to pound really fast hopping that they don't find Mike, in the tree or then he might go to jail even longer for hiding and running away from the police so he has to wait until the police are out of his sight so he can make a quick run away from the police. And if you look at his face he looks really nervous and scared and he has good grip on the tree so he doesn't fall out and he his kneeling down on one foot and the other is straight and his other hand is gripping on to another branch and it looks like he is in a city or something like that because of the building behind him and there are also more tree's then just one. And they look better than the one that Mike is in, I wonder why Mike didn't go in the other tree behind him because that tree is so much better than Mike's tree.

This is another picture of Mike but in this picture of his shadow and I'm guessing that he got out of

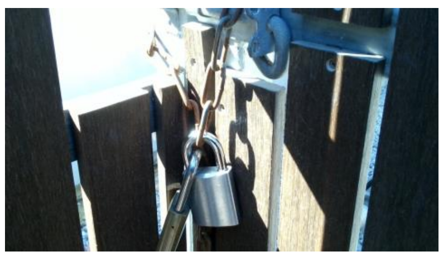
the tree and he saw the police go past so he started to sneak around and try to find a different spot and a better spot to hide in or else he is going to jail so he is going to find another spot to hide in not anywhere near the police. you can see the tree's shadow that he was in and it looks like he is also is trying to crouch down and he is trying to stay really low and quite because the police could be anywhere, but Mike suddenly sees a shadow behind him so he turns around and he sees a police so he starts running and hopefully he can get away from the police Mike's hurt is pounding really fast Mike's legs are starting to start to hurt a lot from all the police chasing after Mike and his face is starting to go red a lot and his stomach is hurting a lot and he has a stich that is really bad and stinging.

Mike is going into a hidey hole so he cannot get found so he doesn't go to jail but that is a good hiding hole but if he gets found he will be really stressed out and try and run away again but I don't think he can run and hide once again because they have already ran twice but if he does run once again he will be on the most wanted so more police will be coming for Mike. The morning that Mike was in the hidey hole he heard some noises and Mike started to crawl away and run once again. Mike started to shake and get scared because this might be were Mike goes to jail so he has one choice is to find another place to escape the police hopping that the police wouldn't find Mike.

This is where Mike was hiding and it looks like it wouldn't be nice because of all the spikes on the tree and also all the leaves that are poking Mike if I was Mike's I would find a new spot to go hide into that spot maidenly go into it the spot and also there are is no room to lay down in and if he was hiding he would have to stay in there for 12 hours because the time Is 12am so I wouldn't like epically now that there are more police coming for Mike has think of something before there find Mike there are many opportunities to run but you have to think of the best time to run from police because they are trained hard and a lot more so Mike has to go when it is night so it's harder for the police to see Mike because it is a lot more darker when it is night but in day the police could easily see Mike.

This is Mike peaking over the bush and as Mike is doing that he sees police down where he is looking so he starts to breath heavy and his heart is pounding so then he hides down because of how long the grass is and there is a big thick stick in front of Mike and you can only see Mike's head peaking over then Mike goes into a big bush to hide in for a couple hours to make sure the police is gone

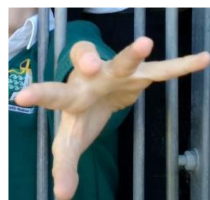
This is the area that Mike is hiding in and it is very green and Mike is also wearing green so the police couldn't find him and there is so much space like a big bush flowing against the wind and all the trees blowing as well so it also looks very nice with all the rocks and sand and there are some dead tree's but if the dead tree wasn't there it looks amazing but once again, even though Mike is in a spot that there is a lot of tree's the police still can find Mike but then once again Mike see's the police and they are heading in Mike's direction like they could see Mike but Mike just stayed where he is because he thinks it is a good spot but when the police got really close Mike's started to breath heavy and Mike's heart is pounding so fast. and then the police look in the bush that Mike is in and Mike tries to stay hidden but the police look around in the bush area and the one that Mike is hiding in a police says found him so Mike tried to escape but they surrounded by police so mike surrender to the police so the police to Mike away.



This is Mike's cell it has quite a lot of locks because I'm guessing he is on most wanted for running and hiding for weeks now so that is probably why Mike has so much locks the locks look rusty and old the planks of wood are small planks but I don't know how tall Mike's cell is but I'm estimating around 10 feet high and I don't know how long the cell is but it is probably big and there are 3 I wonder what is inside because that would be cool to see what is inside his cell but it looks very protected and a lot of locks so Mike can't get out of his cell and the wood and small and old and in one plank of wood there is a dot and you can see through and there is a big square that goes through two pieces of planks and I'm guessing that the hole is for food and water or just to talk to Mike.

This is the entry of Mike's cell and it says no entry because he is a wanted prisoner and if he escape he is so wanted and the brick wall behind the sign looks old and there are white on it and also every brick peace there is a curve and inside the sign there is a white line to keep the words separate and the words are white and the things that the words are behind is red and next to the red is white and that is the sign and also and the wall of bricks are around 6 feet high and the width and around 25cm and who knows where Mike's cell is.

Mike is going into a hidey hole so he cannot get found so he doesn't go to jail but that is a good hiding hole but if he gets found he will be really stressed out and try and run away again, but I don't think he can run and hide once again because they have already ran twice but if he does run once again he will be on the most wanted so more police will be coming for mike. The morning that Mike was in the hidey hole he heard some noises and Mike started to crawl away and run once again. Mike started to shake and get scared because this might be were Mike's goes to jail so he has one choice is to find another place to escape the police hopping that the police wouldn't find Mike.



This is Mike's hand and this is another side of his cell and there is metal poles instead of wood planks and there Is just room to put his hand through the middle of two poles. Mike's hand looks like he wants to get out of the cell the poles look rusty and between the end metal poles there is a big screw to hold the two poles together and like I said he is wearing green and also that means his cell is big because there is two entrances to Mike's cell and it looks like behind Mike there is another person and he is wearing black pants and a white t-shirt and under Mike's jumper there is a white shirt as well a the other person behind Mike, and also maybe the other person is trying to climb out of the cell

This is Mike's teddy that he dropped as he was running away from the police and it looks like it got really dirty and there is a lot of grass where the teddy is. There is dirt that the teddy is laying on and the teddy has a bow tie on it's neck and it looks like the teddy is saying help from his arm pointing up in the sky and if you look at his leg it has dirt and other stuff on it and the teddy's fur is all sticking up and the teddy's nose is skin colour and it's eyes are black. Next to the teddy there is dead grass and sticks al around the teddy and there is a stick on top of the teddy and the grass is long and slim and the teddy is on a angle and all the grass is blowing over to the teddy from the wind that is strong. And he will escape to do anything to get this teddy so then Mike will try anything.

Appendix 19: FC1 Intervention Narrative Vocabulary Rubric

Visual - See	planks of wood are small Grass is long and slim Teddy has a bow tie on hits neck face is looking really scared Brick wall behind the sign looks old His face is starting to go red wearing black pants and a white t-shirt Only see Mike's head peaking over Rocks and sand and some dead trees big thick stick Trees shadow Dead grass and sticks all around the teddy eyes are black Face looks really nervous and scared spikes on the tree teddys fur is all sticking up and the teddy's nose is skin colour and its eyes are black 'he has good grip on the tree…he kneeling down on one foot and the other is straight and his other hand is gripping on to another branch'
Tactile- Feel	Stinging hurt
Aural- Hear	Heard some noises quiet
Olfactory- Smell	
Taste	
Movement/action	Hide /s/ ing (9) run/s/ing (12) find (11) protected grip/s /ing (3) wait sneak crouch crawl escape (4) dropped look/s/ing (21) hoping (2) saw blowing (2) shake poking peaking (2) think/s (4) breath heavy (2) climb kneeling fall estimating turns around guessing (3) pounding (4) say/s/ing (3) pointing surrender wonder found (3) ran/run/ing (12) lay/ing (2) stay/ed (4) see/s (12) talk surrounded protected try/ing (7)
Adverbs	Really (13) suddenly fast (3) especially easily Heavy (2)
Knowledge	one choice no clue prisoner more trees than just one hole is for food and water or just to talk Two entrances metal poles instead of wood planks harder for the police to see Mike because it is a lot more darker when it is night area …is very green and Mike is also wearing green so the police couldn't find him
Temperature/Time	twice night (2) 12 hours couple of hours 12 am morning once again (5) weeks day longer
Size/Location	10 feet high 6 feet high with the width and around 25cm no room to lay down in a really visible tree in the tree not anywhere near the police hidey hole now just enough room to put hands through the middle of two poles new spot good spot his cell is big under Mike's jumper behind Mike (2) Next to behind him (2) anywhere 'over the bush' 'in front of' Mike's/the cell (4) jail (4) inside the entry up to the sky on an angle 'all around the teddy' 'on top of teddy'
Adjectives/Description	good (2) better (3) wanted quick strong one different bad big (4) black dead amazing old (2) small (2) cool white (4) red metal wood dirty long slim best
Emotion	scared nervous amazing nice hurt stressed out
Figurative Language	Looks like he is in the city or something Looks like it wouldn't be nice Hand looks like he wants to get out of the cell Looks like the teddy is saying help from his arm point up in the sky so much space like a big bush flowing against the wind
Interesting Phrases/Clauses	Heart is pounding (*really fast)* Trying to stay really low and quiet Estimating around 10 feet high And who knows where Mikes cell is.

Appendix 20: FC2 Narrative 'What's in the Box?'

We were in the class, a box appeared on Mr Jones's desk and everyone was curious about the box. So he went to go look in the box and he was eaten by a zombie and then I took out my scar and shot the creature then the squad came and made all the students leave the school and lock your doors at home and close all the windows.

And at the end of the day they had the school all secure. The squad had the box barricaded whith metal in there town the storm clouds were huge then all of a sudden it started to thunder and when it hit the ground the zombies came from the ground.

Original text - Handwritten

Appendix 21: FC 2 ‘What’s in the Box?’ Vocabulary Rubric

Visual - See	Storm clouds were huge
Tactile- Feel	
Aural- Hear	thunder
Olfactory- Smell	
Taste	
Movement/action	appeared look eaten shot barricaded hit leave lock close took out
Adverb	
Knowledge	Secure storm clouds
Temperature/Time	‘end of the day’ ‘All of a sudden’
Size /Location	In class on Mr Jones’s desk the school the ground (2)
Adjectives/Descriptions	Huge, curious
Emotion	
Figurative Language	
Interesting Phrases/Clauses	

Appendix 22: FC2 Narrative 'Message in a Bottle'

FC2 Message in a Bottle

I lived In England It was so cold and I nearly starved and died of hypothermia so I dicided to steal a loaf of bread and it will be aleased a size of your fist, but I will have to try to not get caught. Tonight, is the night that I steal the loaf of bread OK here I go wish me luck Hay come back with that dam it guys I was caught Fremantle Prison here I come.

THE DAY OF THE VOYAGE

Guys I'm sorry to say but the ship is awful the beds are awful were halfway to Fremantle prison so far one person has died to oxegen loss because he suffocated himself because he heard how they treated people that stole 15 lashes with a cat 'o' nine tails and then with pure sea salt they rubed into the wounds and they did that about 4,5 times but it 17 about and then the doctor comes whith the pure sea salt and splat you will be swerring and screaming because the pain is to hard to even handle so that dude did the right thing to end his life so he does not have to bear the pain so off went his body the sharks are probably thinking food food food food and that way the most grusome bit about the voyage other than that it was awful and I had an idea why don't I make a bottle to throw it over board so I can be remembered when I die.

MESSAGE GOING OVER BOARD

So here I am going to throw the bottle in the sea and if you are reading this you have found my bottle and I jeated the bottle from the back of the ship and the Establishment didn't know what hit them.

Original text - Handwritten

Appendix 23: FC2 'Message in a Bottle' Vocabulary Rubric

Category	Vocabulary
Visual - See	
Tactile- Feel	Pain (2)
Aural- Hear	splat
Olfactory- Smell	
Taste	
Movement/action	starved, die/d (3), decided, steal, try heard, suffocated, stole, lashes, reading found, rubbed, swearing, throw (2), caught screaming, thinking, remembered, hit, wish caught (2), say
Adverbs	nearly
Knowledge	hypothermia, overboard, 15 lashes with a 'cat of nine' tails 'died oxygen loss', pure seas sale rubbed into the wounds Voyage
Temperature/Time	tonight, cold, night, day
Size/Location	England, halfway, Fremantle Prison, the sea Loaf of bread – size of your fist, back of the ship
Adjectives/Description	Gruesome, awful
Emotion	sorry
Figurative Language	
Interesting Phrases	'At least the size of your fist' 'Hard to handle' 'Bare the pain' 'Most gruesome bit' 'Pain is too hard to even handle' 'Off went his body' 'Sorry to say' 'I jetted the bottle' 'didn't know what hit them'

Appendix 24: FC2 Narrative 'The Piano'

The Piano
The old man is thinking about grief that has happed in his life. So he plays a sad song about grief.

The old man is playing the piano with his deceased wife how they used to play then she kissed the old man.

And when his wife died, he determed to be in the war, and he saw his friend get shot.

When his friend dies holding his hands and it feels to him that his life is ending.

Then after his friend dies, he survived the war and gose home disapointed and sad about the loses the he has.

He gives his grandson his most wanted toy and he is happy that he is happy.

He is galloping around the piano leaping with joy and the with a gigantic leap and he was on then he plays and is playing with his grandson and is teaching him.

Original text - Handwritten

Appendix 25: FC2 'The Piano' Vocabulary Rubric

Visual - See	
Tactile- Feel	
Aural- Hear	
Olfactory- Smell	
Taste	
Movement/action	thinking play/s/ing (5) kissed die/s/d (5) saw shot holding survived galloping leap leaping teaching gives
Adverbs	
Knowledge	
Temperature/Time	
Size/Location	gigantic war (2) home
Adjectives/Description	Old (3) deceased
Emotion	sad (2) disappointed joy grief (2) happy (2)
Figurative Language	
Interesting Phrases/Clauses	'It feels to him that his life is ending' 'Leaping with joy'

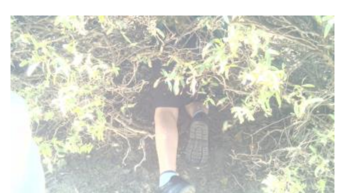
Appendix 26: FC2 Intervention Narrative

An Extreme Escape

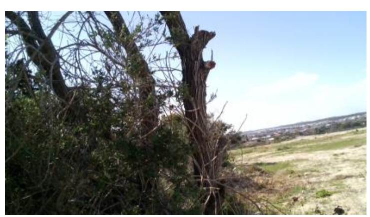
Jimmy is in jail after they murdered someone he hated and then he went to jail for a life sentence and he was so over in tired of the prison he was already there for 2 years and wanted to escape so he was going to when the day guards change to the night guards and he was going to climb over the bars of his cell and jump into the portal and get to the prison walls then go through the secret tunnel to the outside place and hide his identity so he does not get caught but Jimmy is a rich man so he can just buy a block of land in the open world.

Today was the day of the great escape but it will be a risky path with the guards around every corner he will face but he will just have to be as sneaky like a mouse but he will need some help from his fellow inmates his cell mate was a very crafty man and he had so many posters on the wall and he had a nice wash stone pickaxe witch was very strong to carve stone away the stone very easily so he could carve in the wall some ladders and then when the guards come he would put the poster over the chipped wall when then ladder was finished he jumped over the wall when the guards were switching and got to the portal and jumped in and he was gone before you could say prodigy.

When he came out of the portal and appeared just outside the walls of the prison and he saw the day guards walking out of the prison and the it was stealth that got him off the radar and guards did not notice him and just as he got across the field one of the guards said you we got a rouge inmate in his natural habitat after him and the guards chased Timmy to the tunnel and then like a flash and ducked and skidded in the tunnel and the guards stumbled in the tunnel.



The tunnel was a very long dirty path and it was a two day journey and it was a very spacy tunnel and there was lots of sharp objects the guards are getting close because Timmy could hear them coming so he decided to crawl a little bit faster and within a few minutes he decided he had lots them and decided to rest and then the next day he saw light and then he was so relived he smacked himself in the face to hope that it was not a dream but it wasn't so he was so happy he was doing a victory pose but it was hard since he could not stand.



Once he was out he preside the gods for the victory and escape but he found the land different than before because he has been in prison and in that time that he has been in prison the world has changed so much he does not know a lot of the stuff that has happened in the world but he knows that he is a rich man so he knows that he can just buy a house or he can build one but he can just build on to his own liking so he went to a real estate and bought a block of land in a nice neighbourhood that was very peaceful so he finally thought in his life he have a normal one.

But he still every once in a while he still likes to visit the tunnel that he escaped out and had the most happiest day of his life but he can still remember the night mares that happened in that prison but he is happy it has shut down because the owner of the prison said to the government that the prison was unescapable and if someone ever escapes the prison it will shut down so Timmy helped all of the people that were in that tragedy.

And even from this day forward he walks with his friends from the prison and talk about stuff that happened in the prison and how angry the warden was when he heard that you escaped he killed one of his guards in rage then all of the guards turned against him and through him in one of the prison cell and left him there to rot and starve and die of thirst and he did it was a sad ending and he was never seen again Bum Bum Buuuuuuum. But Timmy had other friends that were called Drew and Sam and they decided to stay with Timmy.

And this is a self-portrait of Timmy in the good old days but there was this other person that looked like this and he wanted to kill Timmy because he was so annoying and that is why Timmy's friends were with him to keep him safe so he will not die but the person that want's to kill him is trying to right now how knows what he will do now.

Later that night that person came and stole Timmy and he was never seen again but his friends still look for him now but they never ever found him, so they assume that he is dead and they did not waste there life no more.

Appendix 27: FC2 Intervention Vocabulary Rubric

Visual - See	'a light' 'long dirty path', 'so many posters on the wall', 'wash stone pickaxe'
Tactile- Feel	Sharp objects
Aural- Hear	
Olfactory- Smell	
Taste	
Movement/action	murdered escape/s/d (6) climb buy switching jump jumped (2) caught help/ed (2) appeared decided (2) walk/s/ing (2) ducked skidded crawl speak stumbled stand build visit talk kill/ ed (3) die stole shut down (2) rot starve look/ing/ed (3) floating smacked remember waste assume notice carve (2) saw (2) chased found turned against say (3) speak hope victory pose praised threw said (2) see/n (3) relieved heard
Adverbs	easily
Knowledge	unescapable 'die of thirst'
Temperature/Time	'When the day guards change to night guards' 'life sentence' finally today 'Later that night' '2 years' 'Every once and awhile' 'in the good old days' 'few 'minutes' 'from this day forward' 'two day journey' 'the next day' 'Once he was out' now
Size/Location	jail (2) prison (5) prison cell in the air 'over the wall' 'out of the portal' 'outside the walls of the prison' 'across the field' 'in the tunnel'
Adjectives/Description	secret rich great risky crafty chipped annoying nice (3) stone strong natural long dirty hard normal
Emotion	hated relieved angry happy sad very peaceful rage 'the most happiest day of his life'
Figurative Language	Sneaky like a mouse Like a flash
Interesting Phrases/Clauses	Today was the day of the great escape turned against him hide his identity rogue inmate in his natural habitat guards around every corner each night chip some of the stone away he was gone before you could say prodigy to hope that is was not a dream the land was different than before but people still say today if you are really quiet you can hear him speak the language of the birds He was never seen again his cell mate was a very crafty man it was the stealth that got him of the radar did not notice him

Appendix 28: FC4 Narrative 'What's in the Box?'

In 5.1's classroom it was all boring but then my teacher toke out a white box. When he was moving the box, Mr Bain triped over and nearly killed Zana. But whenever Mr Bain walks passed the box it always started to shake or move. However, after he found the box Mr Bain started to act wirred he even started to talk to be fare he was acting like gofen. Sometimes he let a student look in side through the box hole. Before Mr Bain made a few kids scared because when he stuck his hand in the box he said "gwwwww" any way some kids in my class said it was green and red some said it was a bouncy ball or lollipops but no one knows.

Mr Bain let Sara look in the box but just before, she could look inside Miss Scott walked in and said I need the books so she grabs the box and walked out of the class room like there was nothing in here but for some reason I thought it was acting.

Original text - Handwritten

Appendix 29: FC4 ‘What’s in the Box?’ Vocabulary Rubric

Visual - See	
Tactile- Feel	
Aural- Hear	
Olfactory- Smell	
Taste	
Movement/action	Tripped walk/s/ed (3) killed talk look (3) grabs acting shake or move found said (2)
Adverbs	nearly
Knowledge	act weird
Temperature/Time	sometimes before (2)
Size/Location	In the box (2) in my class classroom (2) inside (2) few
Adjectives/Description	White green red bouncy
Emotion	scared
Figurative Language	Like there was nothing in there
Interesting Phrases/Clauses	To be fair But for some reason I thought it was acting

Appendix 30: FC4 Narrative 'Message in a Bottle'

Message in a Bottle

I lived in england with my brother, Mum, dad and dog the place was dangerous and missrebell and freezing cold. We did not have a lot of money so we couldn't aford a lot of clothes or food So yes we did starve a lot we were clod like for a example all the TIME! Our clothes were dirty as. And every day We were forced to get water from the well and we had to walk 2 km there and back. After that we had to go shopping for some food and a lot of boring stuff. 7 years later my mum and couldn't aford us so they kicked us out of the house. So we lived in a orphenage and my brother and I Just couldn't handle it any more, we ran away from the orphenage and went to a local bakery and I stole some bread and my brother stole some drinks and also some more bread and then sprinted away from the bakery and we hid in a bush and snacked on the, bread, drank lots of water and juice and saved some more bread and water for later because I didn't want to starve So we made a shelter and hid our food and water so if any one came into our little hut they could not find our yummy food and tastey drinks.

I did not want to steal again because I dindn't want to make the POPO suspicises that we were the kids that robbed the bakery…….. get a longer time in prison. So I didn't have to eat that gross food any more. And 6 years later we couldn't handle ourselves We robbed the bakery and went to the mall and stole more food and we latter we got arrested and sentenced for ten years in Prison and had to stay in jail.

Original text - Handwritten

Appendix 31: FC4 'Message in a Bottle' Vocabulary Rubric

Visual - See	
Tactile- Feel	
Aural- Hear	
Olfactory- Smell	
Taste	Yummy food and tasty drinks gross food
Movement/action	starve walk shopping kicked us out ran away stole (2) sprinted away hid snacked drank saved starve (3) find steal robbed eat robbed (2) stole (2) arrested sentenced lived (2) afford forced
Adverbs	
Knowledge	couldn't afford a lot of clothes or food/us
Temperature/Time	'Freezing cold' 'all the time' 'every day' 2km longer time 7 years later 6 years later ten years for later After that later
Size/Location	England the well the house shelter jail local bakery (2) In a bush hut orphanage (2) prison a lot (4) the mall
Adjectives/Description	dangerous dirty boring little yummy tasty
Emotion	Miserable suspicious
Figurative Language	
Interesting Phrases/Clauses	'we were cold like for example all the TIME'

Appendix 32: FC4 Narrative 'The Piano'

The Piano

A long long time ago in a big dark room there sat an old man and his wife the old man sat and played on his piano non-stop in a dark room playing a dark and sad song. Every day his wife sit's and plays the piano (3 years later) The old man's wife had died and there he still sat and played the same song non-stop. (10 years earlyer) the old m was forced to go to war and the old man and his friend the old man's friend said "I'm going to peek and try to shoot one!" The old man said "OK but please be careful I don't want to loose you in the war." And his friend said "I will" soon as the old man's friend peeked he got Shot. The old man ran as quick as he could. the old man tried to save his friend but it was to late there layed the old man's friend, The old man cried and cried and the old man said " No a NOOOO !!!!" so back to the present. The old man sat her playing on his piano maybe think about the people or loved ones that he has lost for an example his wife or his friend or his mum and dad that have died. No the old man took a brake from his piano so what he did was sit in a dark room and eating ice cream in the corner trying to forget about his love ones. The next day he woke up and then played on his piano picturing this wife next to him playing the same song that they always use to and trying to remember the happy times in his life.

Inside the room of hope, love and death. Again the old man was playing on his piano and of course it was the same song that he always used to play. He got up to go to the shops to buy Food and drinks and some antiques which he uses in his spare time when he finally takes a rake of his piano. So he bought some nice toys pillow to use to rest his and he also bought a brand new chair that has a back rest so when he tried his brand new limited addition chair and the old man sat on the chair and said "Ohh ahh so comfortable and new". So when he played his piano he played better than ever and he was having a good time rather than worrying about his family and all of the depressing stuff that make him feel down and miserable and all of that stuff that no one want to feel like and he was just smiling having. A good time (3 years later)

It was one of the older kids birthday and the old and left his dare sad house to his son's birthday when he arrived they were having a good time and the his wife said "OK OK everyone time to sing happy birthday to my very special birthday the old man did a and… hi inside the room of hope love and.

So said "father! It's so great to see you again after all of those years you have come to visit me" The old man said "O son I have missed you dearly I my hearts. Why have you never come to pay me a visit." The son said it's ok I've are going to finish singing happy birthday and eat cake. Care for a slice "The old man said " No thank you I'm good.
5 moths later
his son and wife left for a holiday and the old man had to babysit their kid so the old man bought him a cool horse toy he ran around the house all day and then he said " Umm grandpa can I please play the piano with you". The old man said sure and they played and finish the same note and his grandson smiled at him and said "I Love you"

Original text - Handwritten

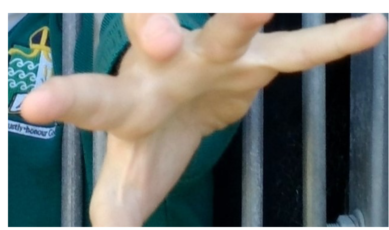
Appendix 33: FC4 'The Piano' Vocabulary Rubric

Visual - See	Dark room, old man, piano,
Tactile- Feel	comfortable
Aural- Hear	
Olfactory- Smell	
Taste	
Movement/action	Play/s/ed (14) sit/s/sat (7) died (2) shot ran (2) peek shoot peeked bought (3) think cried (2) eat/ing (2) forget buy lost woke up remember babysit visit a break bought (3) save smile/ed/ing(2) said (8) lose try/ing/ed (3) rest arrived missed finish singing
Adverbs	Still finally dearly
Knowledge	Older
Temperature/Time	A long time ago three years later the present Too late Every day the next day spare time All day 3 years later 5 months later non-stop 10 years earlier older kids birthday soon always 'happy times' years never
Size/Location	Dark room (2) war 'in the corner' house 'on his piano' (3) 'next to him' 'inside the room' (2) 'on the chair' 'around the house'
Adjectives/Description	Big dark old (2) *(24) repeated* better same(3) Nice 'brand new' (2) new good (4) 'limited edition' Bare special great cool same
Emotive	Happy worrying depressing miserable sad (2) 'dark and sad' 'feel down' love
Figurative Language	Ran as quick as he could
Interesting Phrases	'Dark and sad song' 'inside the room of hope, love and death' 'brand new limited edition' 'care for a slice' picturing his wife next to him playing the same song' 'trying to remember the happy times in his life' 'his grandson smiles at him and said "I love you".

Appendix 34: FC4 Intervention Narrative

Unknown Apocalypse

This is my friend ted he is my only friend. I get home schooled because when I go to school I get bullied so now I want my revenge on all the people who laughed at me or made fun of me. THEY UNDER ESTIMATED ME. So I get home schooled and now my mum says I can't be home schooled forever so she put me into the same school next year. I was in my room crying my eyeballs out and then my mum came into my room and of course like every or most mums do she came into my room trying to cheer me up even though she was the one that put me into my depressing mood. And she said "not to worry she was just joking she was going to send me into knew school and I told the head master of the school if you are getting bullied or teased or you just don't feel safe or sad you should just go to him alright". And then I said "ok."



Two years later I just couldn't help myself all of the people that bullied me were going to be sorry because I am coming for those people to get my revenge. At last I built the courage not to injure the victims I just wanted to kidnap then and then make fun of them like saying take the L. so I decided to start my kidnapping in 1 months' time so I can prepare, think of how to capture them I was thinking to lure them buy making or buying cupcakes and hotdogs. While I was setting the trap up I heard some footsteps and then I hid by a tree trunk and then I heard some talking I got so a little nervous so I climbed up a tree I then I realised that it was the group of bullies that bullied me the whole way through high school so I could not help myself I lowered myself down and then I grabbed one of the bullies and then I gave him a steely grip and then I pulled him up and above the trees and then I was pulling him to my secret lair and then the bullies head out of the big door and screams and then The doors slam close.

So I had one of the bullies in my lair now I just have to capture the rest so now I was thinking of try to I don't know maybe lure them into a mall or a shopping centre and then just ask them do you know where the milk is.
Ok so 2 weeks later I stalked the bully gang and then I saw them walk into a shopping centre and then I said "Perfect" and then I went into the shopping centre and then I overheard then speaking about how their one friend disappeared when we were taking a wander through the forest. So they all split apart and then one of them it was a girl called charlotte I went up to her I said "do you know where the milk is" and then she said "yes I do" and then I said "can you show me" and then she said "I don't see why not" and then when she was showing me were the milk was I saw a hammer and then I tried to hit her and then she ran away. I saw her little skirt just around the corner and then I saw

her face through the gap and then I took a photo and then climbed into a tree and jumped down behind her and put a bag over her face while she was screaming kicking and punching the air and then I took her to my lair and tided her to the same pole as the pole and left them there

Appendix 35: FC4 Intervention Narrative Vocabulary Rubric

Category	Vocabulary
Visual - See	Saw… her little skirt saw… her face through the gap
Tactile- Feel	
Aural- Hear	Heard… some footsteps heard… some talking
Olfactory- Smell	
Taste	
Movement/action	bullied (4), laughed, ran away, 'home schooled' (3) 'cheer me up', joking, send, told teased, help, tied, grabbed grip, built, injure, kidnap/ing (2) decided, capture, punching, prepare think/ing (2), lure (2), buying, stalked hid, climbed, realised, split scream/s/ing (3), capture, ask, wander walk, disappeared, kicking, 'lowered myself down' jumped, 'slammed shut', pull/ed/ing (2), split apart saw (4), speaking, wander, showing me revenge (2), underestimated, say/s/ing (2), trying said (4), overheard
Adverbs	steely
Knowledge	
Temperature/Time	Forever, next year, crying, two years later One months time, two weeks later, 'at last', now
Size/Location	school (2), my room (2), high school, lair (3) 'above the trees', mall, shopping centre(3), forest in a tree, behind her, the air, the pole by a tree, around the corner, 'over her face'
Adjectives/Description	Only, new, little (2), big secret
Emotion	worry, sad, fun, Depressing mood safe, sorry, nervous
Figurative Language	'crying my eyeballs out'
Interesting Phrases/Clauses	'they underestimated me' 'screaming, kicking and punching the air.' 'I built the courage' 'steely grip' 'taking a wander through the forest' 'of course, like every or most mums do'

Appendix 36: FC5 Narrative 'What's in the Box?'

FC5 What's in the Box?

The room waS dark and depreSSing and Mr Smith was talking about what waS in the box that he got out of the mysteriouS cupboard. Meanwhile he tripped over the carpet and the box flew out of hiS handS and landed on SaraS deSk and Scared her out of her SockS.

Mr Smith Put hiS finger in and it, all of a Sudden bit him. Then one of the Students jumped up to look but he got Screamed at him (no SurpriSe) So he Sat down.

Then at the exact moment when Sophia waS about to look MiSS Scott walked in the door and turned the light on which hanged all of my thought which I forgot when She took the box. Then She Sent Scott into her claSSroom to look.

Scott looked in the box but when he came back, he could not talk at all. A while later he had Sent Mike SaSha and Charlie aS well. It waS nearly the end of the day and table by table our teacher let uS look in the box.

It turnS out that the time inSide the box waS a whole lot of lelipopS and we each got to chooSe one in the oppoSite order of the laSt time, and I waS happy.

Original text - Handwritten

Appendix 37: FC5 'What's in the Box?' Vocabulary Rubric

Visual - See	dark			
Tactile- Feel				
Aural- Hear				
Olfactory- Smell				
Taste				
Movement/action	talk bit turned scared turned	talking sat look/ed (3) choose sent (2)	tripped jumped forgot landed choose	flew screamed hanged walked
Adverbs	nearly			
Knowledge				
Temperature/Time	A while later 'At that exact moment'	end of the day	last time 'all of a sudden'	
Size/Location	The room Sara's desk	in the box (4) in the door	'over the carpet' 'into her classroom'	
Adjectives/Description	dark			
Emotion	scared	happy	depressing	
Figurative Language				
Interesting Phrases/Clauses	Table by table Scared out of her socks			

Appendix 38: FC5 Narrative 'Message in a Bottle'

I lived in England, with my older brother Johnathan not that I wanted to. FirSt of all in my houSe the roof waS leaking my clotheS were dirty, I had no money and me and John could barely get enough food. Then one night I was walking down the Street I Saw the owner of the bakery was leaving and the door was unlocked So I Sprinted as faSt aS I could in my raggy old Slippers to the door and took a whole basket full of bread, pastryS, and other amazing goodS. But Soon later I found out the owner was only picking her Son up from Somewhere So aS I was leaving, I got a naSty Surprise which was the Establishment charging at me Screaming put your hand where I can See them. So I Sprinted down he dark alley when I realiSed I was running into a wall, I know So Smart any way I tripped and twisted my ankle then before I knew it my face was preSSed againSt a wall. Then I noticed a hole in the wall and I thought I was the luckieSt perSon ever, I crawled into the hole then a rat jumped onto my face and Started to chew my noSe. I ripped it off my nose and ditched it at the establiShment, he went pSycho. I ran away but I got Shot in the foot by backups. Now there was no chance of eScaping. After I found out my Sentence, I wanted to commit Suicide. I waS Sentenced to Seven years. I wish I hadn't done it.

I felt Sick when we got on the Ship. There were mice everywhere, there were people with fatal diSeaseS. About an hour into the trip I felt Seasick and extremely hungry. When we Stopped at IndoneSia I thought about eScaping but the amount of guardS put me of. When we Set of from IndoneSia, I met a guy called Scott who Seemed nice, but I didn't know if I could truSt him.

Original text - Handwritten

Appendix 39: FC5 'Message in a Bottle' Vocabulary Rubric

Visual - See	'raggy old slippers' 'dark alley' 'whole basket full of bread, pastry's and other amazing goods'			
Tactile- Feel	'I felt sick' /seasick hungry			
Aural- Hear				
Olfactory- Smell				
Taste				
Movement/action	leaking leaving tripped noticed ripped escaping wish charging	walking screaming twisted thought ditched 'commit suicide' trust see	sprinted realised crawled jumped ran stopped saw sentenced	picking running pressed chew shot met 'found out'
Adverbs	Extremely	barely		
Knowledge	England Indonesia (2)	older brother	'fatal diseases'	
Temperature/Time	'one night' 'about an hour'	later now	soon after	seven years
Size/Location	'in my house' 'against the wall' 'onto my face'	'down the street' 'in the wall' 'in the foot'	'into a wall' 'into the hole' on the ship	'my nose' (2)
Adjectives/Description	Dirty Nasty	raggy luckiest	old nice	dark psycho
Emotion	Surprise			
Figurative Language				
Interesting Phrases/Clauses	'Before I knew it' 'Basket full of bread, pastrys and other amazing goods' 'I wish I hadn't done it' Got a nasty surprise 'as fast as I could'			

Appendix 40: FC5 Narrative 'The Piano'

In a dark room I Sat at my piano playing my favorite Song when I wondered to myself why don't I let more light in, but that thought led to me thinking about why I don't look for a freind. "I love thiS piano" I Said to mySelf quietly "It'S like my beSt friend exept it is not living. "So maybe I don't need a friend I mumbled, "no that would not be like me"

All of the thought about friendS made me think about my wife Sitting next to me playing with me then she turned to me and kissed me on the check in my imagination which made me sad. After she faded out of my imagination when I opened my eyes "Why me" I screamed at myself when she disappeared.

Now I'm at war when a gunShot barely miSSed my head. When my beSt friend got Shot and fell to the ground. So, I pulled him behind the only cover we had behind an ancient ruin and I held him in my hands when he paSSed out right in front of my own eye. That really. Hurt, "NOOOOOOOO!!" I howled.

Being a child was great, I Still remember my 6th Birthday when I got my favorite toy, I uSed that every Second of my life I could but today I could never have that much energy to play on that toy horSe all day. If I was Still Six I would never have to go through what I did have come through. My grandSon came and Sat next to me and aSked if he could play with me and of courSe I anSwered yes. It's impoSSible to Say no to him.

Original text - Handwritten

Appendix 41: FC5 'The Piano' Vocabulary Rubric

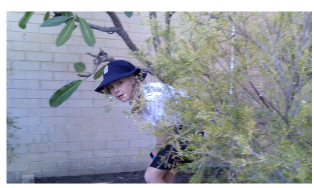
Category	Vocabulary
Visual - See	dark room
Tactile- Feel	
Aural- Hear	
Olfactory- Smell	
Taste	
Movement/action	sat, kissed, screamed, look, howled, wondered, held, thought (2), play/ing (4), opened, fell, remember, look, think/ing (2), turned, disappeared, pulled, asked, said, mumbled, faded, shot, 'passed out', answered, living
Adverbs	Quietly, barely, really
Knowledge	'ancient ruin', 'only cover we have', impossible
Temperature/Time	after, today, 'every second', 'my 6th birthday', 'all day', never, now
Size/Location	'on the cheek', war, 'behind an ancient ruin', 'in front of my own eye', my head, 'in my hands', 'next to me', the ground
Adjectives/Description	Best, great, favourite, toy, best
Emotion	love, sad, hurt
Figurative Language	Like my best friend expect it is not living
Interesting Phrases/Clauses	'That thought led me to thinking' 'it is not living' No, that would not be like me' In my imagination. Faded out of my imagination. 'Gunshot barely missed my head' 'held him in my hands' 'passed out right in front of my own eye' 'being a child was great' 'impossible to say no'

Appendix 42: FC5 Intervention Narrative

Johnny and the Teddy Bear of Doom

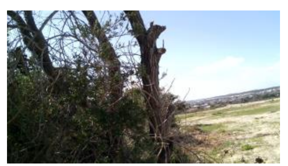
Johnny was a 10 years old although he occasionally got called 2 or 3 years old because of his poor decisions and humour. He was small for his age and his mother called him a mischievous monkey as he always got sent to bed early or got a time out, and he also had very poor listening skills. He was in jail for stealing a basketball signed by Lebrun James, Stephen Curry and Michael Jordan even though he had never played the game in his life. Johnny was insanely desperate to get out of there and find his way home. In this prison he smelt an odd stench of a strange flower, he saw crooked bars and down inmates, he heard moans and groans as well as feeling rusty bars and being squished in to a tiny space with many others. Johnny was daydreaming about a strange man with a long white silky beard who popped out of a hole in the ground to set him free

At the exact moment Johnny started his giant morning groan the floor opened up and a strange man with a white long and silky beard popped out and he said "If you want to escape jump down here this instant" so Johnny nervously said sure with a soft voice and slowly slid in to the hole, but as he was sliding in to the hole he was thinking to himself what if this is a trap? The strange man helped him down and Johnny's vision went black and it looked like he was traveling through space in some sort of see through tunnel thing. After he was in the tunnel for a while he got stretched out and then thrown out on the other side of the prison wall. Although he was on the other side of the wall the strange man said he needs to repay him with a teddy bear.



At the exact instant Johnny popped out of the portal and started walking towards the bush to look for a plant or animal to eat. Johnny lit a fire and took a nap on his makeshift bed, but just as he started to lie down, he heard the leaves around him rustle and faint footsteps on the damp soil. At this point he was getting scared and he didn't know what to do, should he run, or should he hide? As the sounds got closer Johnny was getting ready to flee a cold wet wind blew his fire out and it was only now, he was realizing how dark and cold it actually was when he didn't have his fire. Seconds later Johnny saw the hideous creature that was scaring him to death, so he sprinted his but to hopefully get away from what he nick-named Bush camper because it was camping and waiting for its prey in the bush.

As Johnny was running he found a hidey hole and crawled in to it to escape from that big-foot thingy that he saw not to long ago, and just as he thought he lost it the leaves rustled again leaving him scared to death but it turns out it was just a Kiwi Bird. When he was in the bush it was a bit like a "secret" tunnel so he followed it as far as he could when he came to an end and he had two options to choose from. He sat there for a while thinking of what to do should he go to the left or right. He started thinking about turning back but he just remembered about the "bush camper" so that took that thought straight out of his head. Johnny had just been sitting there for a while now and it was getting dark so he just decided to pick now or he would get nowhere.



When Johnny came out the other side of the hole he chose the side that looked like an abandoned wasteland because he could see dangers like snakes, glass and other animals easily. There was also no spikes that will prick him. So he started walking across the dead looking area when he noticed two blurry moving blobs ahead of him he wasn't sure if he should engage the "blobs" or stay away. Johnny chose to walk closer to the "blobs" when he heard a gunshot coming from the direction they "blobs" were so he decided to go back to where he was before just in case he became a victim.

Johnny decided to risk it go up to them and see if they are friendly and if they have food or water to spare as Johnny has not had any in ages. When Johnny caught up with them, he ask kindly "would you have any spare food or water by any chance" they responded "Sorry we don't but we are heading home now, and we have food and water there if you want to come and get some with us". "Sure" Johnny replied

Appendix 43: FC5 Intervention Narrative Vocabulary Rubric

Visual - See	'Man with long silky beard' Crooked bars dark Two blurry moving blobs
Tactile- Feel	Damp soil 'Cold wet wind' rusty bars
Aural- Hear	'heard moans and groans' 'heard a gunshot' 'leaves around him rustle and faint footsteps' Leaves rustled
Olfactory- Smell	'smelt an odd stench of a strange flower'
Taste	
Movement/action	listening stealing played find squished daydreaming opened slid sliding thinking (3) repay jump walking (2) eat lie down run running hide flee caught blew realizing waiting found escape (2) decided (3) turned remembered sprinted thought (2) crawled noticed responded replied signed popped (2) opened helped thrown lit prick decided (3) stretched followed saw thrown repay nap camping called sat 'turning back' sitting pick (2) 'stay away' see ask
Adverbs	Occasionally insanely nervously slowly friendly kindly
Knowledge	10 years old small for his age Secret tunnel 'Abandoned wasteland'
Temperature/Time	'The exact moment' 'exact instance' cold now (4) 'seconds later' 'for a while' 'this instant' early Not too long ago ages never
Size/Location	jail home prison in the ground the floor the hole (2) through space tunnel (2) 'other side of the prison wall' the portal the bush (2) nowhere 'other side of the hole' before
Adjectives/Description	poor (2) small odd strange (2) crooked rusty tiny strange (3) long (2) white (2) silky (2) giant moaning soft see-through makeshift damp cold wet hideous kiwi secret 'dead looking' blurry spare
Emotion	scared
Figurative Language	'Looked like he was traveling through space' 'looked like an abandoned wasteland'
Interesting Phrases/Clauses	'vision went black' 'Scared to death' 'he was small for his age and his mother called him a mischievous monkey' 'insanely desperate' hideous creature 'See dangers like snakes, glass and other animals' 'Because of his poor decisions and humour' 'he also had poor listening skills' 'took a nap on his makeshift bed' 'waiting for its prey in the bush' 'He had two options to chose from' 'mischievous monkey' 'played the game of his life' 'should he run or should he hide' 'he had two options to choose from' 'took that thought straight out of his head'

Appendix 44: FC9 Narrative 'What's in the Box?'

I was quiet year five classroom, when they were waiting for their late, clumsy teacher, you would think all the students would be mucking about and chatting, but the poor students were to scared to move. Then the clumsy teacher (Mr Smith) walked in carefully with a average sized box. Then he tripped on a cushion, span around in circles and landed on Sara's desk. It scared the life out of her! Then half of the students got scared and the others were exiteted. Mr Smith warned everyone to not go near the box. He lifted it up and carefully put it on Carly's desk, she let out a slight squeal. Then Mr Smith rushed outside of the classroom. Then all of the kids rushed around her and tried to open it. Then Mr Smith case back in quickly grabed the box and started talking to it and did not show anyone. Werid? So he placed his finger and snap it had been cut!

He allowed a couple of people to look inside they still did not know what was in the box. Then the lights turned off and Miss Scott came in and asked for the box back. We were all stunded, disipointed and miserable that he gave the box to her! She walked outside and placed a small brown towl on top of the box. It was a long wait but Miss Scott came out of the classroom. And the lights turned on. Mr Smith quickly send in Sophia who looked in the box. She was not able to speak. Miss Scott came back in. Are hearts dropped.

Mr Smith allowed other people to look in the box, but they weren't able to speak. We sat quietly then Mr Smith came to the conclusion to tell us he was lieing to us the whole time so he went and got the box and took it in again. He slowly placed it on the side and let Carly placed her hand in she was also not able to speak.

At the end of the day Mr Smith allowed one group by one group to see in the box the first people looked in and their mouths were right open, same with the next until they were all finished. It was lollipops! And in the end we all got a lollipop.

The Moral of the Storey is to not trust the teacher.

Original text - Handwritten

Appendix 45: FC9 'What's in the Box?' Vocabulary Rubric

Visual - See	
Tactile- Feel	
Aural- Hear	quiet slight squeal
Olfactory- Smell	
Taste	
Movement/action	waiting mucking about walked (2) think chatting tripped span around landed speak (3) tripped lifted warned open lying wait grabbed talking cut squeal asked look/ed (4) lights turned off lights turned on rushed show placed (4) allowed (3) sat tell see trust
Adverbs	carefully (2) quickly (3) quietly slowly
Knowledge/	Conclusion first people finished
Temperature/Time	'Long wait' 'in the end' late whole time At the end of the day next
Size/Location	Year 5 classroom half of *the students* all of *the students* *poor* students average sized *box* Sara's desk near *the box* Carly's desk slight *squeal* couple *of people* inside in the box (3) on the side outside *of the classroom (3)* around her small *brown towel* top *of the box*
Adjectives/ Description	clumsy (2) slight Weird brown
Emotion	scared excited disappointed miserable stunned
Figurative Language	
Interesting Phrases/Clauses	'Scared the life out of her' 'Our hearts dropped' 'Mr Smith came to the conclusion' 'their mouths were right open' 'snap, it had been cut' 'span around in circles'

Appendix 46: FC9 Narrative 'Message in a Bottle'

Hello, my name is Sasha and I am an orphan girl from England. My parents died when I was five and the establishment took me and my brother to an orphaned kid home. I didn't really like England, it was dark and as cold as Antarctica. The orphanage was gloomy and I swear it was haunted. Everyday when my brother went to school I stayed at the orphanage to clean and cook. I always wondered what it was like to go to school. One day when my brother came back from school I decided to go to the markets to get food for my brother, my friends and my best friend Elisa came with me to the market. I grabbed my best clothes and then escaped through the back door. Elisa pulled me across the streets with despair. Finally we were there. I heard a panting noise behind me. I turned around and realise that my younger brother Thomas had followed us here. I took a piece of bread off the stand and suddenly the establishment was pulling Elisa Thomas and I to the ship. I didn't realise it costed money I shouted so the whole street could hear me. As I got closer to the ship the leader of the establishment said "You and your little friends are being sent to the swan river colony so you can do hard labour for four years!" I felt terrible.

The ship all grimy and depressing stood tall at the dock. We got thrown on board by the establishment. As soon as the door locked the ship named the explorer left port. We were the only kids on board. The boat cramped with convicts was moving surprisingly fast for a ship. About three months later we arrived somewhere for only a day. I Didn't know exactly what happened but the boat pushed some crates off and the people on the island pushed some back. Then I realised we were in Indonesia I still thought it was 1850 but the Captain yelled it was the first day of 1851. There was a tiny window with the view of the ladder on the side of the ship. Suddenly an elderly man walked up to us he said what are you young kids doing on this ship. The old man then dropped to the floor. The captain came down picked him up and pushed him over board. "Wow?" Elisa said.

At the Swan river colony me and Elisa wrote a note and while we were working along the port dropped it in the water so the establishment did not see. We hoped that someday our friends from England will see them. In our notes we begged whom will find it to come and save Elisa, Thomas and I.

Original text - Handwritten

Appendix 47: FC9 'Message in a Bottle' Vocabulary Rubric

Visual - See	tiny window with the view of the ladder					
Tactile- Feel	Cold	grimy				
Aural- Hear	' *I heard a* panting noise'					
Olfactory- Smell						
Taste						
Movement/action	clean escaped thrown panting followed swear arrived	cook shouted locked turned around pushed (3) haunted yelled	stayed save arrived realise/d (3) yelled dropped wrote	wondered pulling pushed hoped walked sent working	decided find pulled picked working hard labour see (2)	grabbed begged wrote find died left port
Adverbs	Suddenly (2)	surprisingly fast				
Knowledge	orphan	younger	Ship named the Explorer			
Temperature/Time	everyday 'only a day' when I was five.	one day four years 'when my brother came back from school'	finally 'first day of 1851'	as soon as 1850	three months later 1851 someday	
Size/Location	England (2) Orphanage (2) Behind me The port (2) In the water	Indonesia the market (2) the stand the island in our notes	tiny *window* the back door the ship (5) side of the ship	school (2) across the streets the dock the floor	Swan River colony on board (2) overboard	
Adjectives/Description	Gloomy	elderly	young	old		
Emotion	despair	'felt terrible'	depressing			
Figurative Language	Dark and cold as Antarctica					
Interesting Phrases/Clauses	'so the whole street could hear me' 'I swear it was haunted' 'the ship all grimy and depressing stood tall at the dock'					

Appendix 48: FC9 Narrative 'The Piano'

In a dark room a speck of light bursted on an old man and his grand piano. As he played one of the first songs he remembered he wept and sobbed but at the same time smiled. The memories of the past taunted him. His head overflowing with greathful thoughts. The man took a deep breath and as he breathed out dust scattered on his face. His old skinny hands were moving across the piano gracefully. Suddenly noticing his wifes hands in a ghost like form playing the piano next to him. His calm but shocked face peered to the right of him. "Lisa, what, what?" the old man shuddered. His face gleaming with joy. "How… how…." The man blurted out. Instead of his wife replying she held his hands and faded away into thin air. The mans face dropped again and spoke to his piano in an orderly fashion. "I remember the old days when I played the piano with my wife before she died."

The mans hands dropped on the piano keys. He took a breath and started playing again. This time the memories took him to the great of world war 2. Once again he sobbed dropped his head to his chest. He remembers one of his best friends form his childhood. Staring up into the sky he thought more and more. Remembering the death of his friend. It was like he was really there. He stopped playing the piano. He remembered every detail. Both him and his friend were hiding behind a wall planning to stop the war. But one wrong move could change everything. His friend said "Should I fire?" And the man nodded. His friend jumped out and got shot in the chest. He held the man in his hands as he died.

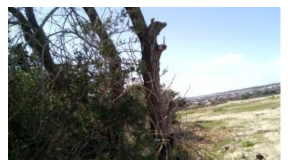
He sprung right into his normal self and remembered when he was young. He got a present from his grandpa which was very rare. The boy opened his present and started riding around on it. As he was riding around he bumped into his grandpa playing the piano he dropped his horse and sat on the seat with his grandpa and softly asked "Can I play?"

Original text - Handwritten

Appendix 49: FC9 'The Piano' Vocabulary Rubric

Visual - See	dark room a speck of light old skinny hands calm but shocked face
Tactile- Feel	
Aural- Hear	
Olfactory- Smell	
Taste	
Movement/action	played (3) scattered wept sobbed (2) smiled taunted sat (2) breathed playing (4) peered shuddered faded away replying gleaming spoke died (2) hiding thought planning nodded jumped sprung shot riding (2) bumped asked fire noticing remember/s/ed (5) bursted blurted out overflowing scattered held (2) fire took a breath stop/stopped (2)
Adverbs	Gracefully suddenly orderly softly
Knowledge	grand piano rare World War 2
Temperature/Time	'same time' 'this time' 'once again' 'old days' from his childhood 'when he was young'
Size/Location	Dark room on his face across the piano next to him To the right of him into thin air on the piano keys. Into the sky behind a wall in the chest in his hands (2) On the seat
Adjectives/Description	Old *man (2)* first *songs* *grateful* thoughts *old skinny* hands
Emotion	calm shocked joy
Figurative Language	'In a ghost like form' 'Face gleaming with joy' 'the mans face dropped again' 'The mans hands dropped on the piano keys' 'dropped his head to his chest' 'It was like he was really there'
Interesting Phrases/Clauses	'speck of light bursted on an old man and his grand piano' 'He played one of the first songs he remembered' 'wept and sobbed but at the same time smiled' 'Took a deep breath and as he breathed out dust scattered on his face' The memories of the past taunted him' 'His head was overflowing with grateful thoughts' 'old skinny hands moving across the piano gracefully' 'his calm but shocked' 'gleaming with joy' 'Faded away into thin air' 'dropped his head to his chest' It was like he was really there' 'staring up at the sky he thought more and more' 'one wrong move could change everything' 'held the man in his hands as he died' 'but one wrong move'

Appendix 50: FC9 Intervention Narrative



It was an ordinary day in the 2000's, when two young girls the best of friends were off on school break. They wondered why half of the world was urban and the other bush. It occurred that one liked the bush and outdoors, and the other loved the city. These two girls by the names of Lisa and Cassie. were only ten years old and had a lot to learn about life. Suddenly it hit Cassie that they should go exploring in the wildlife while it lasted, because that is what she had always wanted to do. Lisa had other thoughts she thought that they should go back to their apartments in the city, just in case anything bad happened. Cassie looked at Lisa despair and said "Why go home to safety when we can stay here in the flourishing wildlife, bent trees, and randomly growing plants." explained v, trying to persuade Louisa to stay. Louisa still wanting to go to the city willingly said she would go with Cassie into the forest. On one condition ~~rule~~ if something happens that she would defend for herself and run away. The growing flourishing plants were waving in the wind as fast as a hummingbirds wings. Adding to this the traumatising sound of creaking stairs every time they stepped on a twig or branch lying on the freezing floor.

As Lisa and Cassie walked down the rocky path, their hearts started racing like the speed of lightning, feeling the adrenalin and fear of getting lost. "I don't think this is your smartest idea Cassie." Lisa said. Her face dripping with sweat. "Ohh please your fine!" shouted Cassie trying to hide her fear. Even though she was just as scared as Lisa. Rocks and broken concrete scattered on the bumpy floor, almost as if there had just been a war. The girls getting closer by the second to what was hiding in the nature. Cassie trying to act cool and non afraid, wiped the sweat of her face and considered going back to the city. Lisa's face shone like a diamond in the polluted air surrounding them. All of a sudden it wasn't frightening and disturbing anymore. The flaming sun burned in the distance absorbing any water around. Step by step their confidence built up, but still a tiny remnants of fear stayed in their hearts. Everywhere they looked junk was spread around them. Neither of them knew where they were going. About two metres away from the end they spotted something nobody will never experience in a lifetime!

A dark hole gloomed in the dark daylight. Drawing the two young girls into it. The grass suddenly swaying in the wind. Life blossoming everywhere apart from the tall dead trees covering the deep burrow. The girls could not help feeling sucked in to the burrow. Cassie feeling braver by the second walked closer to this unique hole. Louisa trailing behind her shouting "Stop, Stop, come back now its not safe." As the sun light got darker by the second, the waving grass skipped a beat and drooped in the semi darkness. It was as cold as Antarctica and the girls as cold as snow were forced the hide in the grass. They knew that something was watching them. The fear of dying slipped into their brains and they decided the best option was to go down the gloomy hole. Louisa nagged Cassie that they should just go back home. But as always Cassie thought different. Louisa almost crying grabbed to Cassie's arm in despair, drooping like the grass. Cassie went running down to the hole, whilst Lisa tiptoed down. "On the count of three jump" said Cassie. "One, Two, Three!" They jumped into the hole. Surprisingly it wasn't as bad as it looked. It was bright and cheerful. Suddenly, ~~Lisa found a~~ Lisa smiled at Cassie, and for once Cassie smiled back. The two almost like sisters hugged each other in delight. It was like a tiny cottage in that hole. Cassie looked around curiously in search of an item. Suddenly something caught Cassie's eye. She dropped down and brushed off the sand around it.

It appeared to be an ancient ruin. "Cassie stop, why are you doing this!" Louisa whispered. "Do not touch it!" Lisa shouted. "I think it's an ancient ruin," whispered Cassie. "You're right we should hand it in to the authorities," interrupted Louisa. Cassie still looking fascinated about this object, got even closer to it. Thoughts ran though her brain. One half of Cassie's brain thinking that she should touch it and the other thinking it would be so much safer if she left it, and turned it in. The blank but cozy landscape made Cassie feel guilty. It was strange really because Cassie never felt guilty. Lisa was waiting for a response, but she never got one. Cassie now almost laying on the floor, slightly poked it. She felt as if the world only evolved around her. The rust on the object stuck to her fingers like glue on paper. As she picked up the object Louisa felt betrayed that Cassie had ignored her. Cassie felt the most powerful and controlling she had ever felt. Lisa suddenly felt so scared she decided to run off back home. As Lisa ran Cassie was amazed, she dropped the ruin on the floor and stared at the flowing pink flowers in front of her. Suddenly they fell to the floor. Cassie standing there amazed thought what she could do with her new powers. She ran far away from any known life and hid with only herself and her school bag. A stroke of madness fell across her delighted face. Now everybody will know her name.

Cassie peered down a dark tunnel. Only to see disasters happening to the people of the world. Hurricanes, earth quakes and Tsunamis were everywhere. Light beamed through the hole, so much it could blind any person in its way. Cassie. could not help wondering where on earth Lisa was and if she was safe or not. Thinking of Lisa only made Cassie feel guilty. Cassie's ocean coloured eyes started filling with tears. She wondered why she had done this in the first place. Cassie came to a conclusion and decided to go her own way and to live her life. She curled her head down to her chin for two seconds then rose it again. Her head came peering above the wall. Power came to her mind. As she stared at the urban town it reminded her of Lisa, once again tears started filling her eyes, but they stopped as soon as she remembered that Lisa was running home to safety.

As Lisa passed though the urban city, crossing streets and running though stores, she remembered Cassie face. It was almost as if Cassie was haunting her. As she walked past McDonalds she could smell fries. She could almost taste the saltiness. When she got past McDonalds she felt as if she was about to faint, literally she had just ran about five kilometres without stopping. She stopped at a small park across the road and hid behind a lime green bush. Louisa could feel the bush scraping her lower legs and upper arms. She stood there waiting and hoping Cassie would come back. She could hear her heart pounding in her stomach. Her golden hair waving in the wind. The dirt suddenly flowing over her shoes. Lisa remembered that she was only a few more streets away from the park. So she caught her breath and started running again, passing more streets and traffic. Her mouth wide open said to herself that she would be fine and Cassie was probably trailing after her. As Lisa sprinted across the urban city, something caught her eye. Once again Lisa then felt perfectly safe and protected. Why did Lisa feel like this? After all she was a very good citizen.

Lisa bent down to get a better look, and saw a pile of dead leaves and a spiky shrub. She could feel a rough surface underneath her chest but decided that was not important right now. She brushed down the old leaves to find a post with the colours red and white in a diagonal formation on it. She looked to one side and saw a ray of light reflecting down onto her pale skin. She rolled over to the other to see a dark swampy colour flooding the ground near it. She placed herself on the ground so that she could hear by placing her ear close to the shrub. For one minute she stayed as quiet as she could. She could hear tiny voices having a conversation on the other side. Lisa thought she was dreaming but did it again. This time she heard the same tiny voices speaking but this time there was a slight fluttering noise faintly brushing against the wind. "What?" Lisa said out loud. Suddenly the small voice stopped and it was as quiet as a mouse. Once it had been a few minutes Louisa got the urge to touch the sign she had found earlier. Her hand rising to touch quickly jumped back to her chest as she muttered the word, wow. Lowering her hand to the sign she thought about what would be behind the shrub. Speeding up her hand dropped onto the sign and………

The shrub had turned into a door reviling a secret hideout. As soon as the door opened Louisa rushed through it. She crawled under and saw massive leaves filling every area they could. A giant ray of light beamed down onto Lisa's nose. As she got further into the hole, her head poked out into a lush garden, that only a young child could imagine. Moss was growing on everything she could see. Stepping stones were scattered across the ground. Tiny specks of glitter floated gracefully around her head. She crawled out of the hole in a static way and fell on the ground. Lisa stood up straight and brushed the dust off her white blouse. Thinking she was dreaming she pinched herself, but still remained in this magical garden. Lisa started running down the uneven track of concrete stepping stones. She could smell a sugary type of candy as she ran through the forest. She felt as if the track went on forever. Finally she got to the end of the track but she hit a dead end. A limestone wall stood right in front of her. Sticking her soft, small feet into the narrow holes she was moving like a spider going up a wall. When she got to the top there was a path of bushes along the side of new stepping stones.

She dropped off the wall landing on her feet and started walking on the stepping stones. As she got further and further into the path a small head popped out of the bushes, which left Lisa in fright. "Hey there little one, I'm Acorn the magical nymph, what brings you here?" said the tiny person. "I am Lisa and I am running from my friend. We were in a dark hole and she touched an ancient ruin and she just turned evil and, and.." "Well I can help with that!" interrupted the little nymph. "I was blessed with the powers of nature and finding friendship, it even says so on my shirt," Acorn said enthusiastically. "Come here Lisa, and tell me what your friend looks like." "Well she has blond hair, blue eyes, smells like chocolate, is very loud and noisy, and is very excited about trying new things," said Lisa. "Oh she will be easy to find, I can use all of my magic senses to track her down. I can see her with my eyes in my soul, I can smell her with my nose that covers long distances, I can hear her with my extraordinary ears, and I can sense her presence with my mind reading skills. One question does she taste like chocolate too?" said Acorn. "I don't know, I have not bitten her before?" replied Lisa. "Ah ha found her she is hiding next to a green bush and a spiky tree down at the state park." "I suggest you be on your way now," said Acorn. "Thanks !" said Lisa as she ran out of the hole and off to find Cassie.

Lisa ran as quick as the cars on the road all the way down to the state park. When she found the state park she wiped the hot sweat off her face, and ran towards the spiky trees and green shrubs and sure enough Cassie was crouching on the ground near a green shrub and a pointy tree. Lisa looked down at Cassie in despair. Tears immediately burst into both of the girls eyes. Cassie tried to avoid eye contact with Louisa. But Lisa was always there. “Come on Cassie!” Lisa panted in despair. “And we can go back home.” “Take my hand,” Lisa exclaimed. “I don’t want to hurt you Louisa!” shouted Cassie. “I don’t care if you hurt me as long as you’re safe Cassie,” Lisa said softly. “Cassie sighed. “I’m sorry I did this,” Cassie said softly taking Louisa's hand. As Cassie stood up she no longer felt bad or guilty and a matter of fact evil at all! “I’m back to my normal self!” Cassie exclaimed loudly. “I knew this would happen," Lisa spoke softly. “We don’t have to remember this day if you want to Cassie,” said Lisa. “I would like that,” said Cassie as the two of them hugged each other in delight. “Now promise me you will never do that again,” said Lisa. “I promise,” said Cassie. “Now should I buy the red high heels or the blue high heels,” Lisa questioned. “Oh Lisa,” said Cassie.

And that is the end of the story. The two girls finally got together again. After their experience they have been out in the woods many times but have not touched any strange items. They continue to be best friends forever. Also Lisa got her new red high heels.

Appendix 51: FC9 Intervention Narrative Vocabulary Rubric

Visual - See	'a dark hole' 'Light beamed through a hole' 'Lime green bush' 'golden hair waving in the wind' Pile of dead leaves and a spiky shrub. 'Saw massive leaves filling every area they could' 'Rocks and broken concrete scattered on the bumpy floor' 'Everywhere they looked junk was spread around them' Tall dead trees 'a giant ray of light beamed down onto Lisa's nose' Moss growing on everything she could see. 'tiny specks of glitter floated gracefully around her head'
Tactile- Feel	bumpy cozy Spiky shrub freezing floor 'bush scraping her lower legs and upper arms' 'rough surface underneath her chest'
Aural- Hear	creaking stairs loud and noisy tiny voices having a conversation hear her heart pounding in her stomach tiny voices speaking 'Slight fluttering noise faintly brushing against the wind'
Olfactory- Smell	smell fries Sugary type of candy Smells like chocolate
Taste	Almost taste the saltiness Taste like chocolate
Movement/action	wondered (2) exploring persuade growing (2) defend waving (3) stepped walked (3) lying dripping shouted (3) scattered (2) wiped (2) considered hiding (2) burned absorbing 'step by step' swaying blossomed sucked skipped slipped drooped/ing (2) decided (4) nagged crying grabbed running (6) hugged (2) brushed appeared whispered (2) interrupted (2) turned (3) poked (2) ignored laying betrayed forced dropped (4) crossing fell (3) standing peered beamed. (2) hide (2) curled haunting faint thinking smiled (2). 'Bent down' rolled dreaming (2) growing (3) floated crawled bitten crouching promise (2) buy questioned touched (2) hit (2) exploring imagine sprinted exclaimed (2) replied thought hide shouting tiptoed jump/ed (4) touch (4) panted sighed waiting (2) hoping hid (2) thought (4 pinched brushing muttered floated popped ran (8) run (2) occurred looked defend waving stepped dripping shouted scattered act cool considered burned spotted experience Drawing swaying forced smiled (2) caught brushed Watching dying Looked said (19)
Adverbs	Suddenly (4) flourishing willingly growing All of a sudden Surprisingly
Knowledge	urban town/city ten years old ancient ruin condition confidence best option
Temperature/Time	freezing 'every time' 'by the second' (2) 'Two seconds' 'one minute' 'few minutes ' finally forever 'school break' 'once again' 2000's school break In a lifetime never
Size/ Location	Five kilometres half of the world in the wildlife in their hearts apartments in the city to safety randomly growing in the forest city (2) floor (2) path getting closer in the nature air surrounding them. in the distance tiny (2) around them about two metres away from the end everywhere closer to the unique hole in the grass into their brains back home into the hole around it
Adjectives/Descriptions	Ordinary young (2) bent rocky Smartest bumpy polluted flaming Tall dead unique gloomy Bright cheerful curiously

Emotion	despair fear (4) scared afraid braver cheerful delight excited guilty 'safe and protected' betrayed liked loved traumatising non afraid frightening disturbing
Figurative Language	'Waving in the wind as fast as a hummingbirds wings' 'Their hearts racing like the speed of lightning' 'As if there had been a war' 'Face shone like a diamond' 'Cold as snow' 'As bad as it looked' 'Stuck to her fingers like glue on paper' 'quiet as a mouse' 'moving like a spider going up a wall' 'the waving grass skipped a beat and drooped in the semi darkness' 'it was as cold as Antartica' 'drooping like the grass' 'Flaming sun' 'it was like a tiny cottage in that hole' 'the rust on the object stuck to her fingers like glue on paper' 'As if the track went on forever' 'A stroke of madness fell across her delighted face' 'It was almost as if Cassie was haunting her' 'I can see her with my eyes in my soul,' 'Life blossoming everywhere' 'A stroke of madness fell across her delighted face'
Interesting Phrases/Clauses	'had a lot to learn about life' 'Flourishing wildlife, bent trees and randomly growing plants' 'Face dripping with sweat' 'Feeling the adrenalin and fear of getting lost' 'Polluted air surrounding them' 'The flaming sun burned in the distance' 'Tiny remnants of fear stayed in their hearts' 'Spotted something nobody will never experience in a lifetime' 'Swaying in the wind' 'The fear of dying slipped into their brains' 'Looked around curiously' 'Ocean coloured eyes started filling with tears' 'Curled her head down to her chin' 'Caught her breath' 'Something caught her eye' 'Ray of light reflecting down onto her pale skin' 'Tears immediately burst into both of the girls eyes' 'Slight fluttering noise faintly brushing against the wind' 'A dark hole gloomed in the dark daylight'

Appendix 52: FC10 First and Last Paragraph 'The Piano'

I Sat at my Piano, in a dark and damp room, My Shaggy grey
hair covered my eyes as i sit in my cold clothes. I start to
ponder "What is my life?" The room has a familiar smell to it
and as my hands touch the piano i am instantly calmed and
head into my past, The dark Piano was smooth and shining
in the little light. had and close my eyes, reflecting.

I feel i want to give it to Joey. I place it down and
call him "Hey, Joe. I have a present for you!" I try to
sound calm. He sprints toward it and goes strait to
his knees, His small hands slide under the lid and he
closes his eyes. Joey is wearing loose grey clothes and
his hair is ginger, When he opens it he finds a toy
horse and instantly jumps up to start to play. For
a while his skips around merrily making sounds and
using his huge imagination. As I play steadily. When
i stop hearing the sound i look to see him sitting
next to my, Playing as well then he finishes off
the song with me and disappears and i found myself
alone in the room with my Piano.

Appendix 53: FC10 Narrative 'What's in the Box?'

It was a normal day in a dark and quiet classroom, when Mr Payne the crazy teacher went to the cupboard to grab out a weird purple box that shook and emitted purple sparks. While he was carrying the box to the front of the class he tripped over a cushion and the box flew on to Zara's desk scaring the life out of her. As she moved away slowly, then Mr Payne shook then got up and picked up the box and dumped it on Caren's desk, she let out a sight squeal and moved away as well. The purple sparks started to shoot out more quickly and violently. Every time someone walked past the odd box shakes and shakes. Then Mr Payne took the box and dumped it up the front, he put his hand in it then took it out as the students saw his fingers bleeding.

"Can you guess. What's in the box" he asked the class, there was lots of chattering as everyone wondered what's in the box. Mr Payne let Tina look in the box and a grin spread ear to ear. Everyone asked Tina about it and she opened her mouth, but no sound came out. Her eyes spread wide she sat back down and went to start writing about it. Everyone started to freak out as Tina was normally chatty and she was completely silent right then a couple of people put their fingers in the box and like Tina could not say a word to anyone. "but can't we just a have a look in the box" chanted the whole class.

At lunch everyone was thinking about the box and when they looked in the window, they saw Mr Payne talking to it. A couple of children freaked out and thought the teacher had gone mad? When they went back Mr Payne was still talking to the box. Tell us what's inside?" yelled Steph. Mr Payne let her look in the box, and she came out silent everyone tried to ask her what was inside. Mr Payne started talking to the box again" It's OK". Everyone's started to think he was going mad. A different teacher came into the room her name was Miss Smith and she said, "I'll need my box back now". Mr Payne tried to stop her taking it "but we just want to look in the box!" but it was too late Miss Smith had already taken it into her room.

All the students where very disappointed as they all wanted to look in the box that spat sparks. Mr Payne sent the silent Steph to sneak into Miss Smiths room once she had left to get some books. The door was ajar, and she tried to sneak in as Mr Payne came with her and he carried the box out on to a table and placed it down carefully he let Steph look in it. Again, and she opened her mouth as if to show her astonishment that it had changed the purple sparks were now pink and blue. The box had turned a warm yellow and started to rock from side to side, then they saw Miss Smith coming and smuggled the box back into their room.

Many more students started to beg Mr Payne to sneak into Miss Smith's room and he let a few go but came back like all the others silent. Mr Payne said "whoever looks in the box will gain its curse of silence. The curse can only be broken when everyone has looked in the box!! Mr Payne refused to let anyone else look in the box, then he went into Miss Smith's room and took the box, he put it up the front where no one could touch it then he let Caren put her hand in the box as she felt a wrappers, when went back to her table she could talk but when the box was mentioned she was silent.

All the students were starting to get fed up. They kept shouting "What's in the box! We want to know now!" but Mr Payne always said, "wait till the end of the day now get to work!" All the students longed and longed for the day to end so they could see what's in the box there were lots of groans while they waited. Then finally it was five minutes from home time the lights suddenly turned on as the contents of the box spilled out as the chair it was on was knocked. "It's full of lollipops" said an exited Glenda "Yum". Everyone ended up getting one before the end of the day.

Original text - Handwritten

Appendix 54: FC 10 'What's in the Box?' Vocabulary Rubric

Visual - See	Dark
Tactile- Feel	
Aural- Hear	quiet silent (5) 'lots of chattering'
Olfactory- Smell	
Taste	
Movement/action	grab emitted waited (2) carrying carried tripped flew shook (2) picked shoot dumped bleeding chattering asked (2) opened (2) 'freak out' wondered chanted thinking tell looked (10) talk/ing (4) smuggled groans spat sneak rock beg refused shouting wait turned felt knocked mentioned see/saw (4) yelled spilled shakes (2) walked squeal guess sat thought guess writing. said smuggled knocked
Adverbs	Slowly quickly violently completely carefully suddenly
Knowledge	
Temperature/Time	'Every time' 'At lunch' 'too late' finally 'five minutes from home time' 'before the end of the day' right then 'once she had left'
Size/Location	Classroom cupboard front (2) Zara's desk Caren's desk Couple of (2) in the window room (5) onto the table a few her table 'The chair it was on'
Adjectives/Description	Crazy weird purple (4) sight odd chatty Mad (2) different pink and blue warm yellow
Emotions	Disappointed excited 'fed up'
Figurative Language	'scaring the life out of her' 'her eyes spread wide' 'Grin spread ear to ear'
Interesting Phrases/Clauses	'Opened her mouth but no sound came out' 'The door was ajar' 'the box had turned a warm yellow and started to rock from side to side' 'curse of silence'. 'longed and longed for the day to end' 'weird purple box that shook and emitted purple sparks' 'had the teacher gone made?' 'She opened her mouth but no sound came out' 'she opened her mouth as if to show her astonishment' 'rock from side to side'

Appendix 55: FC10 Narrative 'Message in a Bottle'

It is the year 1850, and I am close to starvation. My home, England is cold and over populated, the sky's that I see are always filled with miserable drab grey clouds. It is a cold, dark and wet day today. I sit with my brother, Louie, is crouched over miserably by my side. We both wear dark grey T-shirts with huge holes on them. Then I see a warm glowing light from the baker. I spring too my feet and whisper shout to Louie "Hey, Louie, that light, it looks like they are baking Bread!" Louie's face lifts and you can see delight on his sagging face. He leaps to his feet beside me. I suspected right I smell bread. "Tonight we go in and get some food, agreed?" I say almost brightly. "But what if we get caught by the Establishment? Never mind I'm too hungry" he says. Where he sat, the soft snow had formed a silhouette, a grimy one though. We wait for a couple of hours until all lights are out and we went in through a pane of broken glass. When I was inside I felt an odd chill down my spine, but we keep going the amazing smell of bread. We have been living on the hard bricks streets as orphans for way too long. As we see the bread I break into a speed walk. When I touch it the tips of my fingers warm and my stomach rumbles. Louie drops a plate right when the Establishment are strolling past "Louie how can we steal when you're such a cluts!" I shout stupidly. The face of the Establishment light up and they shoot injuring my leg and Louie's arm. We are taken and sentenced to 10 years in goal for attempted stealing.

We are put on a ship called the "Marina" and are being shipped to the Swan river colony. The ships quarters are dark and uncomfortable as we sleep in hammocks. "Louie, how did we get in this mess?" I ask. The reply with "You" anger boils up in me and I walk away. Our food is horrible and smells like a dead cat. But I eat it anyway, its food I guess, better than nothing. The marina is tossed in the waves and I almost fall out of my hammock. It's like this every night. In the quarters it smells like unwashed bodies. Today someone, by this looks he was about forty, died of malaria. To my surprise they threw him over-board. I guess it was because he would have smelt. Or maybe to stop the disease from spreading. There are so many members of the Establishment on board it is hard to believe, almost as many as there are convicts! That's what they call us. I don't think I enjoy it much. The very walls of this ship can give you a splinter and it smells like wee.

I decide to write a note, so people might remember me. There has been an outbreak of diseases on board and I feel like I won't survive this one. I was lucky to survive the scurvy and malaria. We have lost at least half of the people on board, including my brother Louie. I think we are almost at the Swan river colony. There have been so many people thrown overboard. I have lost my count. I hope someone in New South Wales will come and get me from the huge hole of a ship that I am on. Even though I have food and am supplied with what I need to live I feel like I am more miserable than I have ever been or can ever be.

Original text - Handwritten

Appendix 56: FC10 'Message in a Bottle' Vocabulary Rubric

Category	Vocabulary
Visual - See	'drab grey clouds' 'Dark grey t shirts with huge holes' dark 'warm glowing light' 'a pane of broken glass'
Tactile- Feel	wet 'soft snow' grimy 'Hard brick streets' uncomfortable tips of my fingers warm chill
Aural- Hear	
Olfactory- Smell	'Smell bread' (2) 'smells like a dead cat' 'Smells like wee' 'smells like unwashed bodies'
Taste	
Movement/action	sit crouched whisper baking sagging leaps suspected agreed caught touch sat 'speed walk' strolling steal stealing shout (2) shoot injuring shipped reply sleep boils eat tossed fall died threw stop believe write decide survive lost thrown think (2) count hope supplied sentenced remember guess (2) smelt rumbles see (3) agreed say touch drops steal injuring ask walk survive (2)
Adverbs	'almost brightly'. stupidly
Knowledge	1850 overpopulated orphans "Marina" forty 'died of malaria' close to starvation convicts scurvy
Temperature/Time	cold (2) warm tonight 'couple of hours' '10 years' 'way too long' today 'until all the lights are out' 'when I was inside' every night
Size/Location	England my home 'Swan River colony' New South Wales 'By my side' beside me ships quarters (2) hammocks (2) In the waves overboard (2) 'at least half ship
Adjectives/Description	Drab grey (2) huge (2) sagging odd Amazing hard horrible about forty
Emotions	Miserable/ly (2) delight hungry surprise
Figurative Language	'Smells like a dead cat' 'smells like unwashed bodies' 'face lifts and you can see delight on his sagging face' 'smells like wee' 'the face of the Establishment light up' 'anger boils up in me' 'anger boils up in me' 'my stomach rumbles'
Interesting Phrases/Clauses	'close to starvation' 'dark cold and wet' 'spring to my feet' 'Warm glowing light' 'whisper shout' 'tips of fingers warm Soft snow had formed a silhouette, a grimy one though' 'the very walls of this ship can give you a splinter and it smells like wee' 'see delight on his sagging face' 'tossed in the waves' 'than I have ever been or can ever be' 'odd chill down my spine' 'I break into a speed walk' 'feel like I won't survive this one

Appendix 57: FC10 Narrative 'The Piano'

I sat at my Piano, in a dark and damp room My shaggy grey hair covered my eyes as i sit in my cold clothes. I start to ponder "What is my life?" The room has a familiar smell to it and as my hands touch the piano I am instantly calmed and head into my past. The dark piano was smooth and shining in the little light i had and close my eyes, reflecting.

I open my sagging eyes and see my wife. If feel something bubble up inside me, hurt and loneliness. I continue to play and she joins me "Albert, remember our song?" I do slightly but continue to play. She adds a diffrent beauty to it. Her hair is drawn back in a tight bun and she wears glasses. Though she is transparent and just a memory and I know that I feel like she really is here "Lisa?" I say quietly. She turns to me with wide eyes and I can smell and almost taste the soft breaths that i remember her for. I remember the soft feel of her hands "No, Albert. You are only remembering me. I am not here" She says sofly. My heart drops and she kisses me on the cheek and fades slowly away. "Ohh" I sigh and close my eyes to reflect further, I find it helps with the day's dramas.

It hits me hard, the horrible smell of smoke and the sound of blasts. I look down to see myself wearing a light, long sleeved army uniform. I touch my head and feel a hard helmet. When I try to breathe the taste of dirt and dust fills my mouth. The sky is a dusty brown then i see him, My best friend. "Mark!" I shout not really intending to. "Hey Al!" We are moving forward!" He pops his head around the wall that we are sheltering behind. There is a loud bang and he falls to the floor. It looks horrible and he is bleeding. "No, Please No! Mark," I feel the anger in my chest rising. But i have to get to him, I'm a medic after all. I grab Marks limp arm and drag him behind the wall. I hold up his head and take his pulse. It is slow and soft. "Stop struggling!" You're dying here!" I say stressed, "No No, I'm past that" he says grinning. When his smile drops, and he falls I feel my fingers back on my piano.

I calmly continue and i see my future grandson. He is small and harmless. He has bright green eyes and a small nose. "Hey Joey, my boy" I say. He is skipping around, and he smells like soap. Suddenly there is a long box in my hands. I feel I have to give it to Joey. I have it down and call him "Hey Joe, I have a present for you" I try to sound calm. He sprints toward it and goes straight to his knees. His small hands slide under, he did, and he closes his eyes. Joey is wearing loose grey clothes and his hair is ginger. When he opens it he find a toy horse and instantly jumps up to starts to play. For a while his skips around merrily making sounds and using his huge imagination as I play steadily. When i stop hearing the sound, I look to see him sitting next to me, playing. Ok we then he finishes off the song with me and disappears and i found myself alone in the room with my piano.

Original text - Handwritten

Appendix 58: FC10 'The Piano' Vocabulary Rubric

Category	Vocabulary
Visual - See	dark 'sky is a dusty brown' 'bright green eyes' she wears glasses 'shaggy grey hair' 'long sleeved army uniform 'His hair is ginger' loose grey clothes 'hair is drawn back in a tight bun' 'limp arm' 'small nose'
Tactile- Feel	Damp 'hard helmet' smooth Cold clothes 'soft feel of her hands' 'fingers back on the piano'
Aural- Hear	'loud bang' 'Sound of blasts'
Olfactory- Smell	'familiar smell' 'horrible smell of smoke' 'smells like soap'
Taste	'almost taste the soft breaths' 'taste of dust and dirt fills my mouth'
Movement/action	covered, remember (4), sheltering, stressed, disappears, remember/ing (4), open/s (2), jumps, moving forward, found sit/ing (2), turns, falls (2), grinning, touch, reflecting, continue (3), helps, pops ponder, reflect/ing (2), bleeding, hits, breathe, sat, adds, look down, hold up calmed, play/ing (5), struggling, skip/s/ing (2), dying, touch (2), wears, try, opens fades, kisses, grab, sprints, jumps, close/s (3), say /s (2), see (2), hearing find (2), sigh, drag, slide, look/s(3), joins, drops(2), call
Adverbs	suddenly (2), calmly, instantly, merrily, slightly, steadily, quietly, softly, slowly
Knowledge	Transparent, medic
Temperature/time	Cold, a while, day's, future
Size/Location	'at my piano', Around the wall, To his knees room (3), the floor, under my past, behind the wall, next to me here, in my hands on the cheek, toward it
Adjectives/Description	dark, hard, grey sagging, slow, huge tight, soft horrible (2), small (2) light, harmless long, loose
Emotions	Loneliness, anger, hurt, calm
Figurative Language	'My heart drops' His smile drops 'Smells like soap 'I feel the anger in my chest rising' 'feel like she really is here'
Interesting Phrases	'dark damp room' 'I start to ponder' 'shining in the light' 'she adds a different beauty to it' 'taste of dust and dirt fills my mouth' 'I shout, not really intending to' 'instantly calmed and head into my past' 'not really intending to' 'shaggy grey hair covered my eyes' 'I open my sagging eyes' 'fell something bubble up inside me, 'she turns to me with wide eyes' 'the soft feel of her hands' 'It's slow and soft' 'touch my head and feel a hard helmet' 'I feel my fingers back on the piano' 'I can smell and almost taste the soft breaths that I remember her for'

Appendix 59: FC10 Intervention Narrative

The Old Life

When I was a child, I saw the world as a forest, endless and full of life. The air used to taste like mint and smell like lavender mixed with gum leaves from my home. The plants were green and lush and supplied us all we needed. The plants felt soft and smooth. All you would hear was grasshoppers or other animals thriving, like a birdsong or the rustle of leaves. The trees were so big and gave fruit and shade. Me and my best friend, Amy, used to play in the leaves, playing was what made me adventurous and curious, or that's what Amy says. We knew when it was time to go home because you could smell the sweet leaves on the fire and see the smoke. We all lived together, relying on each other. You could trust anyone. We only took what we needed and we were all equal, no matter what we have done or who we were. Life was happy and easy when we worked as a team. When I grew to maturity I had to stop playing in the woods and work, and I found that having a friend was so very vital and losing people very hard.

Man and Machine

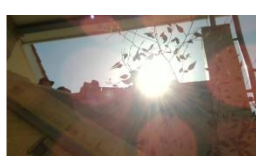
Now I'm thirty I have freedom from my family, so does Amy. We set of to the forest of our youth the first day that we could. Now we are here I wish we never came. The air smells of gas and pavement. I manage to find a single nice-ish looking leaf and munch on it, to my surprise it is withered and tasted like bad apples. The plants that used to be soft and friendly smelling are now rough and decayed. Amy and I want to do something about this destruction. We feel sorry for the sad. We saw an Australian raven fly over with ruffled feathers and sharply focused eyes while a big, yellow bulldozer cuts down trees in the distance. The trees are beginning to be replaced by weeds, coiling like barbed wire, and brambles sharp and hurtful to anyone who touches it. Amy says she senses something bad is happening. I feel it too, it's not a nice feeling at all.

Finding the Good

We need to find people who agree with us, to stop this misery here in Australia. As we move towards the building the air tastes bitter and artificial. It smells of gas and the buildings are pristinely ordered and white, apart from a small part with a tree in the middle. I stroke my hand across the wall, and they are smooth, and I look at the urban environment in disgust. I see the tip of a hat then the point of a nose behind I tree enclosed in bars. The tree looks withered and the leaves are a dull green. To our surprise, the face of a girl appears, assessing us. Amy says softly "hello? Are you all right there?", I give Amy a look of surprise, as she is usually shy and keeps to herself when she's not with me. The girl wears a ragged white shirt and a short black skirt. "We are Gwen and Amy what's your name? we want to help save the planet, will you trust us and come out?!" I say with a slight chirp in my voice. The girl replies "I'm Lisa, I don't know if I can't trust you, you look like bush folk. Yes, I want to save the planet, but I don't think bush folk are the answer." Lisa comes out from behind the tree and says, "we will shake, you won't backstab me and I'll trust you". I think she must be the superstitious type; she's got nothing to fear from us, we just want to help! We shake and Lisa tells us to follow her and we oblige as we near into a bricked building on the right.

The Way In

We walk in a semi orderly fashion inside and as we look through the holes in the walls we see rows upon rows of the same clothes that Lisa wears, She says to us "put your hand inside the hole and you will pull out clothes". I did so and as soon as I pulled out, I was gripping clothes. "Go to the change rooms and put on your clothes, by the way it's the year 2050" she said. We obeyed. The clothes where tight and completed with a black hat and on it was an emblem. As Amy and I walked out we looked almost identical as Lisa my brown-green eyes were what set me apart. When we walk out onto what Lisa calls a street and every girl here has light hair and blue eyes whilst the boys have darker hair and green eyes. Everything is so orderly here, the way people walk, talk and even open things are exactly the same. We try to fit in but fail quite badly, our gait is fast and we walk slightly on a limp as well. People shoot looks at us that make me feel very uncomfortable.

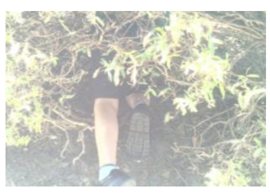


Life of the City

We turn into a small building that says Lisa on the door and are welcomed to something a little like home. The air smells like smoke and the embers are almost jumping off the blazing fire. There are people up the stairs as the sun shines through the tree. "It's not much but its home, and up there are my family" Lisa said almost sadly. Amy comforts her by saying we love it!". It is quite a beautiful sight to see people like us in the city, yes they call us "Bush Folk" but I feel like I can trust Lisa. A small girl runs down the stair and embraces Lisa "This is Sara my younger sister, she's a bit wild" She giggles. The city I find is often disgusting how little trees there are. In the bush (that's what they call where is live). "This is the first tree I have seen in the city." I say. "Well, that's because it's the only tree in the city, sad, isn't it?" She says almost regretfully. I feel a tang of guilt in my chest and I feels sorry for her. I grew up with not a care in the world, playing and having fun. While Lisa and her family were struggling to keep their tree alive.

The Portal

The anger starts to boil up in me like fire in the forge and I say to Lisa's family " I have heard of a legend, from my people, there is a portal to the past, where it is all happy and forgiving, today we should look for it, I feel sorry that this must be the only tree that you have seen in your life!". Lisa's happy face changes to one of deep concentration. "Ok we will go, but you must promise to provide for us." She blurts out. We start off all following the uniform actions of the other residents if the city, until we reach the edge. I take a breath of my old home and travel into it. My hands release from fists and I smell the old gum. I take nine leaves and give everyone one. Amy knows what to do and chews on it, but Lisa's family has not a clue. "eat it" I say. They take a cautious chew and Sara's face lights up in delight. "Yummy, Lois its yummy! I want more" she giggles and starts to run around. "so Lisa hey" I snicker "oh be quiet, I told you she was wild!" she says half annoyed half joking.



Into the Abyss

We travel further into the bush in hope of finding the strange hole that opens once a year and transports you into the past. Sara's being carried now she's tired out. I hear the old crickets and the birds sing delightfully. The old leaves crunch under my feet and the air tastes fresh and full. "This is home" I whisper under my breath; I hear Amy say it too. Then we come across a strange hedge, green and bright with a hole that ends in darkness. Amy says "I'll go first" continently and crawls right into the hole. "This is your last chance to back out" Louisa's mother and father agree, you go with Sara, she'll love it there, bye honey" Tears well in Lisa's eyes I can see it "bye mum, bye dad" she chokes, and she crawls into the hole. I am last to go in and the tunnel seems endless "That's all of us "I whisper, and I hear the rustle of bushes and howl of the wind and then I see light. I crawl as fast as I can and in an instant, I'm standing up in a grassy paradise.

No Going Back

I look behind me too see the hole and it's not there, just a bush and thorns. In the last rays of the sun we start a fire and put Sara to bed. Just like Lisa's old home fire the embers attempt to jump off. I pick leaves while Amy teaches Lisa how to hunt and build a hut, by the end of the night we have built a camp for ourselves. Lisa asked us to go back to the camp and sleep. May as well, no one can stay awake forever. I close my eyes in my hut and fall asleep almost instantly. The hot sun shines on the dying fire. I get up and stretch my arms and I walk out then chew a leaf in deep thought. Did Lisa really want to come here? Is she happy? I guess she's just mourning the fact that she might not see her mum and dad again. I find her playing with Sara, as happy as can be and all those thoughts are wiped out of my mind.

The New Ways

The echidna's spines are trailed all over the floor of leaves and sticks. As I pick it up I take it to Sara, she loves playing with echidnas! Everything is new to them, including our apparently unusual diet". I don't understand how they are having a hard time adapting. I go to the spot where I estimate me, and Amy first met and realise that there is thick underbrush. Then common scene gets me. I'm in the past, we were never meant to exist now. I am enjoying the new life now. But there have been some adjustments even for us. Like there is less land to roam and if we want more, we have to cut things down, which we don't want to do because that's the very reason we came here, to get back to wildlife. Lisa is proving to be quite useful at making tools.

10 years later

Sara has grown so much now and I am now forty, same with Amy. We have been living here for ten years and are very happy. Of course, we miss some things but some things we have gained. Lisa has stopped being superstitions and has started to fit in more. I have bonded with everyone I feel. The grass is greener than ever and the trees are starting to fall down but new ones have quickly grown in their place. This is the best place I have ever been. No rules, Freedom and fun. I am so relieved that I chose to be here, with everyone by my side. The sun shines softly over the old lands and we are all happy. My paradise.

Appendix 60: FC10 Intervention Narrative Vocabulary Rubric

Visual - See	'see the smoke' big yellow bulldozer 'tip of a hat' 'point of a nose' 'the tree looks withered and leaves a dull green' 'brown-green eyes' 'ragged white shirt and short black skirt' plants were green and lush 'light hair and blue eyes 'the sun shines through the tree' green eyes
Tactile- Feel	'the plants felt soft and smooth' rough sharp smooth (3) soft 'sharp and hurtful'
Aural- Hear	'hear was grasshoppers or other animals, thriving' 'like a birdsong or the rustle of leaves' 'hear the rustle of bushes and howl of the wind' 'the old leaves crunch under my feet' 'hear the old crickets and the birds sing delightfully'
Olfactory- Smell	'smell like lavender mixed with gum leaves' 'smells of gas' ''smell the sweet leaves on the fire' The air smells like smoke' 'air smells of gas and pavement' 'smell the old gum' Friendly smelling
Taste	'the air used to taste like mint' 'tasted like bad apples' 'air tastes bitter and artificial' 'air tastes fresh and full'
Movement/action	supplied play/ing (12) relying run/s (3) worked fall (2) replaced touches senses munch find/ing (5) surprise (3) cut (s) (2) fly agree (2) stroke standing appears assessing save (2) replies shake (2) backstab help (2) follow walk/ed (6) look/s/ed (10) wears (2) pull/ed (2) gripping observed obeyed ail limp turn giggles welcomed jump/ing (2) comforts embraces shines blurts promise travel (2) release eat chew/s (3) joking snicker talk whisper(2) chokes teaches crawl/s(3) hunt build roam living grown sleep built stretch guess mourning wiped adapting estimate grown (2) bonded oblige playing (5) grew trust (5) munch annoyed following trust enjoying 'put on' proving adapting pick (2) understand snicker 'take a breath' saw thieving say/s/ing (6) stop work found manage decayed replaced tells touches feel help see/n (3) trust (2) 'come out' (2) think (2) shoot said call (2) say/s (3) joking opens forgiving provide told transports hear trailed 'back out' thought wiped
Adverbs	sharply pristinely softly usually 'semi orderly' orderly badly slightly sadly regretfully delightfully contently instantly
Knowledge	Thirty Australian raven decayed destruction legend forty ten years Australia vital freedom younger sister
Temperature/Time	First day 'in the last rays of sun' never 'end of the night' forever instantly today the past 'time to go home' 'once a year' 'the first day that we could' now (2) year 2050 'as soon as' 'when I was a child' 'in an instance' 'the end of the night'
Size/Location	endless home big (2) 'in the woods' 'the forest' here (3) single 'in the distance' Australia the building wide apart 'in the middle' across the wall 'urban environment' the planet (2). 'behind a tree' (2) 'one the right' inside my home (2) 'inside the hole' 'the change rooms' small building 'the city' (5) 'on the door' last 'up the stairs' 'behind me' 'through the tree' 'old home' 'down the stairs' 'in the bush' (2) 'under my feet' 'into the hole' (2) 'the camp' 'under my breath' 'in my hut' my mind 'holes in the walls' 'the spot' 'best place' 'by my side' 'all over the floor'

Adjectives/Description	Green (3) Curious Ruffled Enclosed in bars Black (2) Tight Small Old (3) Bright New	lush sweet focused dull slight 'brown-green' wild (2) cautious 'grassy paradise' less	soft hard yellow ragged bush 'folk' (2) blazing 'fire' disgusting strange deep	smooth nice (2) bitter white bricked 'building' beautiful little fresh unusual	adventurous withered artificial short first uniform 'actions' strange thick
Emotions	happy (4) disgusting bad (2) annoyed	misery guilt sad hope	disgust sorry (3) love/s (2) e	shy surprise (2) anger	uncomfortable fear (2) delight
Figurative Language	like a birdsong or the rustle of leaves' 'saw the world as a forest, endless and full of life' 'the anger starts to boil up in me like fire in the forge'. 'the embers are almost jumping off the blazing fire 'world as a forest endless and full of life'			'a little like home' 'weeds coiling like barbed wire' 'the forest of our youth'	
Interesting Phrases/Clauses	'The air used to taste like mint and smell like lavender mixed with gum leaves form my home' 'having a friend was so very vital and losing people very hard' 'Our gait is fast and we walk slightly on a limp as well' the plant were green and lush' 'the trees were so big and gave fruit and shade' 'ruffled feathers and sharply focused eyes' 'now that we are here I wish we never came' 'rows upon rows of the same clothes' 'my brown-green eyes were what set me apart'. 'walk in a semi orderly fashion' 'it's not much but its home' 'it's quite a beautiful sight to see' 'I grew up with not a care in the world' 'she senses something bad is going to happen' 'face lights up with delight' 'tears well in Lisa's eyes' 'grassy paradise' 'the embers attempt to jump off' 'trailed all over the floor of leaves and sticks' 'keeps to herself when shes not with me' 'struggling to keep their tree alive' 'all following the uniform actions of the other residents' 'Lisa's happy face changes to one of deep concentration'			'made me adventurous and curious' 'life was happy and easy' 'when I grew to maturity' 'now rough and decayed' 'grew to maturity' 'slight chirp in my voice' 'we looked almost identical' 'sun shines through the tree' 'I feel a tang of guilt in my chest' 'portal to the past' 'my hands release from fists' 'hole that ends in darkness' 'tunnel seems endless' 'In the last rays of the sun' 'the hot sun shines on the dying fire' 'the sun shines softly over the old lands' 'not a care in the world'	

Appendix 61: Post-Intervention Student Interview Questions

Brightpath Pre-Intervention: Narrative 1 'What's in the Box?'
Can you remember writing that story? *Did you enjoy writing the story?* *Did you like it when the teacher brought the box into the classroom. Did it help you write?*
Intervention Lessons/Narrative 2: Intervention Narrative
Did you like working/writing with other students? *What parts of the writing lessons did you like or not like?* *Did participating in the incursion and taking photographs help your writing?* *Did you take any of the photographs you selected for your story yourself?* *Did you edit your story or change the order of their photographs or selected different photographs during while you were writing the story?* *Did you manipulate or alter the photographs? Why?*
Brightpath Post-Intervention: Narrative 3 'Message in the Bottle'
Did you enjoy writing the story? *How did writing this story compare to writing other stories*
Brightpath Post-Intervention Narrative 4 'The Piano'
Did you enjoy writing the story? *How did writing this story compare to writing other stories*
NAPLAN
Can you remember the writing you completed for NAPLAN? *Did you enjoy writing a persuasive text? Why/Why not?*
Writing Lessons
How can teachers make writing better? *What would make writing lessons more fun/enjoyable?*

Appendix 62: Post-Intervention FC8 Interview Response

Researcher: Can you recall writing the "What's in a Box?' story.
FC8: Yes, I found it very exciting I have never really written a story like that, it was kind of a bit of a horror story

Researcher: Did you enjoy writing the story?
FC8: I really did enjoy it. It was easy, because me and my friends were playing this game at lunch time and making up this haunted really cool story and I had some inspiration from that game to make a story like this.

Researcher: Did you like it when Mr P brought the box into the classroom. Did it help you write?
FC8: Sometimes what Mr P did with the box helped. Sometimes it was good because you could actually observe what he was doing. Some other kids might have needed him to but I didn't need it and I made a completely different story to what he was doing.
S*ometimes I like writing depending on the topic. I like writing about animals I do not like writing about everyday stuff*

Researcher: How did this story compare to ones you have written in the past?
FC8: I have got a higher mark on one I have done recently but I thought this one was better. Because I had more detail on what was happening throughout the story. But actually, I do like that story.

Researcher: What part of the writing lessons did you like or not like? For example, the activities and the book The Water Tower?
FC8: I didn't like it because the pictures didn't make much sense. I didn't get a story from the pictures, there wasn't much changing in each picture.

Researcher: What about working with and writing with other students, did you like or enjoy that?
FC8: Working in a group is OK sometimes. If the kids you are paired with are a bit lower than you so you just take over and write it yourself. But this time I was paired with an academically good student and one that was a tiny bit lower but we all contributed ideas. I guess pictures helped.

Researcher: Tell me about writing your picturebook. Did going around the school taking the photographs help with your writing?
FC8: I really enjoyed taking the pictures. I have never been taught how to take photos,…. Yeah press the button. But the writing about the story some pictures weren't very easy to do because they had so much detail in them and you had to keep writing. Looked at pictures and wrote about what it was feel like to be like there.

Researcher: How did you choose what photographs to use? Did you take any of the photographs you used in your picturebook yourself?
FC8: It was easy to choose pictures and I could put them in order easily. It is easy to write about because they were mysterious. I like mysterious things and HELP written in the sand looked mysterious. I wrote the whole story. Normally in the beginning of the movie you don't jump right into the main character there is something a cool beginning so near the middle of the story and the two girls had to go into the wasteland. I am in the photos and I did take one photo. I didn't know it was going to turn out so good, but now it is one of the main bits of the story because it actually tells a story.

Researcher: Can you recall writing the 'Message in the Bottle' story? Did you enjoy writing this one? How did it compare to your other stories?
FC8: I like writing this one. The ones with no pictures because you go into a completely different zone, pictures narrow you down, say you took a photo of a back garden the story had to be there it couldn't be in out of space. Or classroom so a lot more freedom without pictures.

Researcher: What about writing 'The Piano? Did you enjoy writing this one? How did it compare to the other stories?

FC8: This is the one where I got higher marks than the spooky story but I didn't write much on this one, but Abbey wrote about 3 pages but I got more marks than her.
We watched the video. I liked watching the video. I actually enjoyed it because it had so many emotions in it and so many different camera angles. There were so many close up and wide angles. The music helped with emotion.

Researcher: Can you remember what you wrote for NAPLAN? It was a persuasive text.

FC8: Yes, I really enjoyed writing about a Lazy lounge because it was really fun to come up with an idea that we can really use at school. I usually prefer narratives but with this one I actually liked it. We did a lot of it persuasive writing in year 4 and 3 but the narrative is like we have more freedom. Overall, I really prefer the narrative more than persuasive.

Researcher: How do you think teachers can make writing lessons better?

FC8. I think it would be better if we are allowed to work in groups when writing because it just gets me so much more motivated. I have so many different ideas and they have different ideas but you would have to be evenly matched with someone who can write well and you shouldn't have to drag someone else along.
Mr P gives us so much group work I really like it.