Facilitating reflection in post-graduate writing practice

submitted by

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in fulfillment of the degree

Doctor of Education

in the

Faculty of Education

at the

Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University

January 2008

Supervisor: Dr Robert Gerber
DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own work and that it has not previously been submitted for assessment to another university or for another qualification.

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PORT ELIZABETH

30 January 2008
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The financial assistance of the National Research Foundation toward this research is hereby acknowledged. Opinions expressed in this document and the conclusions reached are those of the author and are not necessarily to be attributed to the National Research Foundation.

I am privileged to have had the support of my wife Ana through this whole period of my research: without her, this journey would have been of no value.

I am grateful for the guidance of my supervisor, Dr Robert Gerber, during important phases of the research.

It was an honour to have worked with those colleagues who volunteered to be participants in this study: we all experienced significant learning.

I am indebted for the professional assistance of Dr Alette Delport and Ms Eileen Scheckle when my destination was in sight.

As a South African higher education practitioner in the 20th century, my career was eventful. I am deeply grateful for the presence of my wife, and both our children, Shaun and Yurissa, who were part of my maturation as a practitioner researcher.
University teaching staff are employed because of their knowledge in their particular disciplines. Many do not have a qualification to teach at a higher education institution upon commencement of their academic career. In that group there are few who have the research experience required to assist at post-graduate level. This should be developed as one of the three core activities of higher education, in which they have to be involved.

This study is the result of a problem that I encountered as a higher education practitioner. In keeping with my being a practitioner researcher within an action research paradigm, this report is written mainly in the first person. The study reports on how my personal theories grew over a period resulting in the need to constantly improve my own practice. These personal theories culminated in the development of an instrument (ADaM), to assess writing. ADaM was used primarily to facilitate reflection in post-graduate writing practice. In this study, there were three sets of workshops comprising 13 practical sessions each, where lecturers engaged with the process of reading, writing, computer-mediation and, to a limited extent, with the concept of mentorship. The purpose was to answer the research question: Can a writing assessment instrument be used to sensitise staff teaching post-graduates to reflect on the complex nature of producing and assessing academic writing?

At two points during the 13 practical sessions, data was gathered through semi-structured interviews. The data has been analysed using a form of grounded theory referred to as remodeled grounded theory. Since the analysis traversed both the quantitative and qualitative paradigms of research, it was necessary also to place the study within the third paradigm, referred to as mixed methods research. The analysis has been presented via a series of relationships generated first by open coding, then axial coding and concludes with selective
coding. In addition, the comments of an independent coder were used to validate the analysis.

In accordance with classic grounded theory, it was only after the analysis of the data and the emergence of a substantive theory that I referred to existing theory in the penultimate chapter as validation of my findings. The findings from the study, together with existing literature, allowed me to conclude that “Creating an awareness of writing assessment sensitises academics to their roles as HE practitioners particularly in the areas of writing and mentorship in post-graduate supervision”.
# Table of Contents

Front Page  
Declaration ii  
Acknowledgements iii  
Abstract iv  
Table of Contents vi  
List of Tables x  
List of Figures xii  
Abbreviations and Acronyms xiii

## Chapter One

1  INTRODUCTION: PREPARING THE CANVAS  
   1.1 INTRODUCTION  
   1.2 MY CAREER AS CONTEXT  
   1.3 WHAT IS BEING INVESTIGATED  
   1.4 THE RESEARCH QUESTION  
   1.5 THE RESEARCH PROCESS  
   1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY  
   1.7 LITERATURE REVIEW  
   1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY  
   1.9 ORIGINALITY OF THE RESEARCH  
   1.10 ASSUMPTIONS AND DILEMMAS  
   1.11 A BRIEF OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS  
   1.12 CONCLUSION

## Chapter Two

2  PERSONAL THEORIES: PAINTING THE BACKDROP  
   2.1 INTRODUCTION  
   2.2 THE CONTEXT OF EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA  
   2.3 ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT  
   2.4 KNOWLEDGE AND POWER RELATIONS
| 2.5 | MY EXPERIENCE WITH WRITING | 24 |
| 2.6 | THE DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONAL THEORIES | 25 |
| 2.7 | REFLECTION | 36 |
| 2.8 | REFLECTION ON PERSONAL THEORIES | 38 |
| 2.9 | FACILITATING WRITING AND WRITING ASSESSMENT | 39 |
| 2.10 | PROPOSITIONAL THEORY vs DIALECTICAL THEORY | 43 |
| 2.11 | CONCLUSION | 46 |

**Chapter Three**

| 3.1 | INTRODUCTION | 48 |
| 3.2 | RESEARCH PARADIGMS | 49 |
| 3.3 | MIXED METHODS RESEARCH | 55 |
| 3.4 | ACTION RESEARCH | 56 |
| 3.5 | GROUNDED THEORY METHODOLOGY | 62 |
| 3.6 | RESEARCH DESIGN | 65 |
| 3.6.1 | The sample | 65 |
| 3.6.2 | The practical sessions | 66 |
| 3.6.3 | Interviews | 67 |
| 3.7 | VALIDITY | 69 |
| 3.8 | CONCLUSION | 70 |

**Chapter Four**

| 4.1 | INTRODUCTION | 72 |
| 4.2 | PREPARING THE PARTICIPANTS | 72 |
| 4.3 | DATA COLLECTION | 74 |
| 4.3.1 | STAGE 1 - Mentorship | 76 |
| 4.3.2 | STAGE 2 - Active reading | 77 |
| 4.3.3 | STAGE 3 - Academic writing | 80 |
| 4.3.4 | STAGE 4 - Computer mediation | 86 |
# Chapter Seven

## CONCLUSION:
**FRAMING THE PICTURE**  
175

7.1 INTRODUCTION  
175

7.2 ANSWERING THE RESEARCH QUESTION  
176

7.3 SYNTHESIS  
177

7.4 DEDUCTIONS  
178

7.5 FINDINGS  
180

7.6 RECOMMENDATIONS  
182

7.6.1 Professional development  
182

7.6.2 Research writing  
182

7.7 NEED FOR FURTHER RESEARCH  
183

7.8 FINALE  
183
# List of Tables

## Chapter Four

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Data collection with group 1 and 2 (EBIT) and group 3 (HUM)</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Outline of Session 1</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Outline of Sessions 2 → 5</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Outline of Sessions 6 → 9</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Outline of Sessions 10 → 13</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Chapter Five

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Example of the open coding process</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>OPEN CODING: 1st set of interviews-initial version</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Excerpt: EBIT Group 2, 2nd set of Interviews</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4(a)</td>
<td>OPEN CODING: 1st set of Interviews</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4(b)</td>
<td>OPEN CODING: 1st set of Interviews - refined version</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>OPEN CODING: 2nd set of interviews-initial version</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>Excerpt: EBIT Group 2, 2nd set of Interviews</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>Excerpt: HUM Group 3, 2nd set of Interviews</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>OPEN CODING: 2nd set of interviews-refined version</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.8(a)</td>
<td>Excerpt: EBIT Group 1, 1st set of Interviews</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.8(b)</td>
<td>Excerpt: EBIT Group 2, 1st set of Interviews</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.8(c)</td>
<td>Excerpt: HUM Group 3, 2nd set of Interviews</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>AXIAL CODING: Reading</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.10</td>
<td>Theoretical comparison (EBIT Group 2, 1st set of interviews)</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.11</td>
<td>Theoretical comparison (EBIT Group 2, 2nd set of interviews)</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.12</td>
<td>Theoretical comparison (HUM Group 3, 1st set of interviews)</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.13</td>
<td>Theoretical comparison (EBIT Group 1, 1st set of interviews)</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.14</td>
<td>Theoretical comparison (EBIT Group 2, 1st set of interviews)</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.15</td>
<td>AXIAL CODING: Writing</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.16</td>
<td>Theoretical comparison (EBIT Group 1, 1st set of interviews)</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.17</td>
<td>Theoretical comparison (EBIT Group 2, 1st set of interviews)</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.18</td>
<td>Theoretical comparison (EBIT Group 1, 1st set of interviews)</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.19 Theoretical comparison (HUM Group 3, 2nd set of interviews) 118
5.20 Theoretical comparison (EBIT Group 2, 2nd set of interviews) 119
5.21 Theoretical comparison (HUM Group 3, 1st set of interviews) 119
5.22 AXIAL CODING: Computer awareness 122
5.23 Theoretical comparison (HUM Group 3, 2nd set of interviews) 122
5.24 Theoretical comparison (HUM Group 3, 2nd set of interviews) 122
5.25 Theoretical comparison (HUM Group 3, 2nd set of interviews) 122
5.26 Theoretical comparison (HUM Group 3, 2nd set of interviews) 123
5.27 Theoretical comparison (HUM Group 3, 2nd set of interviews) 123
5.28 AXIAL CODING: Mentorship 126
5.29 Theoretical comparison (EBIT Group 2, 2nd set of interviews) 126
5.30 Theoretical comparison (EBIT Group 2, 2nd set of interviews) 126
5.31 Theoretical comparison (EBIT Group 2, 2nd set of interviews) 127
5.32 Theoretical comparison (EBIT Group 1, 2nd set of interviews) 127
5.33 Theoretical comparison (EBIT Group 1, 2nd set of interviews) 127
5.34 Theoretical comparison (EBIT Group 1, 2nd set of interviews) 127
5.35 Theoretical comparison (EBIT Group 1, 2nd set of interviews) 128
5.36 Theoretical comparison (EBIT Group 2, 2nd set of interviews) 128
5.37 Theoretical comparison (EBIT Group 2, 2nd set of interviews) 129
5.38 AXIAL CODING" Higher Education 135
List of figures

Chapter Two
2.1 Personal Theory 1  27
2.2 Personal Theory 2  28
2.3 Personal Theory 3  29
2.4 Personal Theory 4  30
2.5 The Original ADaM (2000) instrument  32
2.6 Personal Theory 5  34
2.7 ADaM essay assessment instrument (2005 version)  35
2.8 Revised Personal Theory 3  39
2.9 Personal Theories leading to the development of 13 practical sessions  42

Chapter Three
3.1 An illustration of the action research process  59
3.2 Interview structure continuum (Merriam, 2002, p.73)  68

Chapter Four
4.1 Facilitating academic writing assessment  75
4.2 Example of MS Comment® application  88

Chapter Five
5.1 An emerging theory  140

Chapter Six
6.1 Levels of competence  148
6.2 A writing continuum  149
List of References

Appendices

Appendix A (Entrepreneurship; ICT) 196
Appendix B (Science X2; Crime X2) 201
Appendix C (Worms, words and things... X3) 205
Appendix D (Writing according to Adam) 209
Appendix E (Independent Coder letter; Transcript notes) 210
Appendix F (explanatory notes on open coding: 1st set of interviews - Table 5.2) 214
Appendix G (explanatory notes on open coding: 2nd set of interviews - Table 5.5) 219

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AD Academic Development
HE Higher Education
HEI Higher Education Institution
HAI Historically Advantaged Institution
HDI Historically Disadvantaged Institution
HBI Historically Black Institution
HWI Historically White Institution
MTI Mother Tongue Interference
NS Native speakers of English
NNS Non-native speakers of English
Chapter One

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Staff teaching post-graduate students at some higher education institutions (HEIs) have seldom received pointers to or had instruction in strategies to assist them to be better writers of academic research (Naidoo & Tshivhase, 2003). Part of the problem is that writing is the product of a series of complex processes on which these staff members do not focus. The writing process is a reflection of the mind which in turn draws on a multitude of sources for its production, some of which are likely to be thinking, reading, language awareness and computer awareness. If this is true, then is writing an isolated skill or is it one of a series of complementary skills that culminate in the production of written work? Also, does the assessment of writing play a role in the production of written work?

This research explores how one can conscientise staff to the complexity of the writing process by focusing on their ability to assess writing. This has been done through a process that, in my opinion, forms part of three primary elements of writing. These are reading strategies, writing strategies, and the mediation of computer technology. A secondary element, namely, mentorship, is factored into
the conscientising process too. It remains to be seen whether these elements, meant to supplement an application of a writing assessment instrument, can draw attention to the complex nature of writing at post-graduate level. It is this process that plays itself out in Chapter Four and Chapter Five of this study.

Often, an air of secrecy surrounds the allocation of marks to students’ writing. There appears to be an absence of criteria for the assessment of essays at undergraduate level, a situation that becomes more complex during post-graduate research. A further observation is that generally, staff appear to be ill-equipped to respond to cultural differences, accompanying languages as well as language varieties. Flower, Stein, Ackerman, Kantz, McCormick and Peck (1990, p.4) refer to the Applebee (1981) study which indicates that in research on writing in American high schools, there exists “a limited literacy in which writing is merely a tool for testing recall of content”. In subsequent longitudinal research in American primary schools, Applebee, Langer, Jenkins, Mullis, and Foertsch (1990) discovered that students who do more than two hours homework, daily, demonstrated greater writing proficiency than those doing homework for one hour. I am unaware of any similar studies done across South African higher education institutions to indicate whether the amount of writing in English at undergraduate level influences writing in English at post-graduate level.

This study attempts to provide strategies and a form of support for staff teaching post-graduate students when assessing their students’ work as well as when reviewing their own writing. It is expected that these research findings in Chapter Seven could be used in higher education, particularly in professional development initiatives.
1.2 MY CAREER AS CONTEXT

A significant part of my career, that is, between 1988 and 2001, has been to facilitate the teaching and learning of students in higher education. I became sensitised to the South African academic development milieu and to the deficiencies faced by writers and speakers of English as a second or sometimes a third language. After 2001 there was a period of consolidation of ideas gleaned through practice when I worked with HEI staff. During this period that I realised there was a dearth of information on the professional development of HEI staff.

My interest in academic development (AD), as outlined in Chapter Two, began when I first taught English as second language to first-year students at a technikon in Durban. I did not subscribe to grouping students according to their language usage and subsequent perceived competence, for instance, by referring to their usage as English as a Second Language (ESL). I preferred to describe the phenomenon as students who spoke English as Another Language (EAL). This was manifest in a subsequent post, when I was part of a department that facilitated students’ reading and writing strategies in a computer-assisted environment at a university in Durban. I made a conscious effort for the staff to acknowledge students’ mother tongue as being important and a factor when designing any language intervention. In my next appointment, I was responsible for the capacity building of graduate students and co-ordination of a faculty-wide student mentorship programme at the same university in Durban. This range of student AD experience laid the groundwork for my next post of coordinating a writing centre at a technikon in Port Elizabeth from 2000-2001.

As a language practitioner in student AD, I was not in a position to sensitisie staff to understand the relationship between reading and writing and to regard this as a critical academic literacy. It was only between 2001 and 2005 that I was able to bring into play my experience when generating what grew into personal theories regarding my own understanding of a link between reading and writing.
This underpinned the facilitation of professional development of HEI teaching staff at a university in the Gauteng Province, where I was able to draw attention to the importance of strategies to support academic writing.

Further to my work in higher education concerning language awareness, student AD and the professional development of staff, during the nineties some colleagues requested my assistance with the final drafts of their theses. I noted that all three researchers, who were at different HEIs and researching within education, social science and natural science, commented on their supervisors’ resourcefulness when offering research guidance. However, none of those supervisors was able to offer guidance on the actual writing of the research. This led to my interest in raising the awareness of staff, particularly those teaching postgraduate students, to the intricacies of writing strategies. It seemed important to draw attention to the writing process as well as to develop an uncomplicated method to measure and to assess academic writing.

By 2002 I had assisted a further eight post-graduate students by reading their completed Master’s degrees. There were three in Commerce, two in Information Technology, two in Education and one in Economics, the latter written in Afrikaans. It was during this period, once I had begun to facilitate the teaching, learning and assessment of higher education teaching staff, that sensitising them to the complexity of writing became a workable proposition.

1.3 WHAT IS BEING INVESTIGATED

An emerging focus in my career was on the importance of structured written communication being the canvas on which the academic content of the postgraduate student would be painted. This implied that capacity development would be required for staff supporting students’ writing, something for which few staff find the time to do. As a result, I reassessed my academic responsibilities at
a time when my job entailed supporting staff rather than supporting students. In order to assist such staff to interpret and to assess others’ writing I developed ADaM, an instrument to assess writing. I believed that developing the ability to critique while assessing writing would lead to the process being internalised. I hoped that, eventually, such staff would use such a mental template to generate and to inform their own writing practice.

This research will investigate whether the elements of mentoring, reading and computer mediation, as well as the instrument to assess writing, ADaM, would generate sufficient reflection amongst staff for them to be sensitised to the complexity of the writing process.

1.4 THE RESEARCH QUESTION

I will use the following main question as a focal point in this research:

Can a writing assessment instrument be used to sensitise staff teaching post-graduates to reflect on the complex nature of producing and assessing academic writing?

The above focus that is presented as a research question needed to be unpacked in order to be examined. In order to answer this question it was broken down into sub-questions below.

- How did the instrument develop?
  The particular type of writing assessment instrument that was used in the study is important to the research. It is therefore necessary to describe, firstly, how the instrument was conceived and secondly, why its application would be appropriate.
• How can the intervention be implemented?
   An explanation is needed to illustrate how the instrument, embedded in mentorship, reading, writing and computer-mediation, was used in this study. This will create the relevant context.

• What was the effect of the implementation process?
   To determine if the writing assessment instrument had any effect on the sample, participants were interviewed and their perceptions analysed. It is this analysis that will be used to provide a response to the research question.

1.5 THE RESEARCH PROCESS

Action research as a methodology (McNiff, 1995; McNiff & Whitehead, 2006; Whitehead & McNiff, 2006) focuses on researchers aiming to improve their practice. Between 1988 and 2001, continuous reflective practice in student AD in higher education led to my generating a set of personal theories. This reflective practice generated in me the need to regard myself as a ‘practitioner researcher’, as described in Chapter Three.

The action research process has illuminated my understanding of reflexivity, the need for continuous reflection and the importance of being continuously critical in higher education. This has led to substantial grounding for my practice in higher education and what I have come to realise as my work as a practitioner researcher.

My writing style has also been influenced by my understanding of being a practitioner researcher. My style has developed into subjective reflection rather than objective reporting. For instance, I have written Chapter Six, the review of literature, in the conventional form where, as a researcher, I report in the third
person. This writing style generally discriminates between researchers and the 
object of their attention so a semblance of objectivity is maintained.

The five theories developed in Chapter Two were generated over a period of 
twenty years and can be seen as a longitudinal action research process. These 
Personal Theories were based on my observations of effective student learning, 
writer self-correction and the positive effects of peer mentorship. Four of these 
theories, specifically those on effective student learning, namely, Personal 
Theories 1 and 2, and writer self-correction as illustrated in Personal Theories 3 
and 5, led to my interest in a holistic approach to assessing writing at post 
graduate level. Personal Theory 5 resulted in the development of the writing 
assessment instrument which may be regarded as central to the study.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The instrument to assess structured academic writing, called ADaM, was 
developed and became the focal point of a series of practical sessions I 
facilitated for staff teaching post-graduate students at a university in Gauteng. 
The practical sessions generated the data for this research.

I will draw on the fieldwork in the form of six interview transcripts of colleagues 
with whom I have shared the collective experience of this series of practical 
writing sessions. As this will be a joint reflection of understanding my own 
practice as well as that of my colleagues as research participants, I have chosen 
to vacillate between the first and the third person in reporting this research.

I cannot ignore the qualitative side to my experience as it affects not only 
“qualities out there but are also manifest in the things that we do and make 
(Eisner, 1998, p.8). It would not be possible to exclude myself from what I 
consider my practice or from this research process. It is with this in mind that
most of this research has been written in the first person. Further, as a practitioner researcher, it is appropriate to present this research report in the first person as it provides evidence from a researcher’s point of view. In addition, as I will be reflecting on my own practice as well as the reflection of the research participants, I will illustrate Denzin and Lincoln’s (1998, p.361) suggestion that a “deepened understanding of a Self depends the text”.

I will follow the path of interpretative research to share personal experiences of South African higher education steeped in awareness of language and writing. In order to unpack the South African experience I need to locate myself “somewhere along the dimensions of time, place, the personal and the social” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p.53). Hence, the nature of the study is mainly qualitative in nature, what Stringer (2004) refers to as naturalistic inquiry.

Grounded theory (Glaser, 2004; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) was central to the coding of the data. This in turn, facilitated the analysis of the data. A central, or core category, as well as new theory has emerged from these analysis procedures. Hence, the analysis drew my attention to the importance of inducing theory rather than deducing it when operating within an interpretive paradigm. This leads naturally to understanding this research from my own perspective and acknowledging this perspective. Before any theory could be induced, I had to determine, quantitatively, if such conclusions could be justified from the data. That is why the concept of mixed methods research (Cresswell, Shope, Clark & Green, 2006; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Yin 2006) is included in the study. All the above is described in Chapter Three.

The underlying principles of grounded theory state that theory will emerge from the coding procedures. A full and relevant review of literature has been done in support of the emerging theory and appears in Chapter Six.
1.7 LITERATURE REVIEW

Theories (Boud, Cohen & Walker 1993; Dewey 1910, 1916, 1938; Mezirow 1991) around experience and learning are foregrounded. Since a focus of the study is on the theoretical underpinning of student writing and to a lesser extent on staff teaching students how to write, the research also pivots around knowledge and power and power relationships (Ball 1990; Foucault 1971; Kincheloe 1991).

The focus shifts specifically to the use of language. This is done in the context of written communication and language issues (Hondy 1994; McDermott 1995; Moser, Mulder & Trout 1998; Wood 1997), applied linguistics (Brown 1991; van Els, Bongaerts, Extra, van Os & Janssen-van-Dieten 1989) and academic writing (Cresswell 2000; Morss & Murray 2001; Mowl & Pain 1995). Reading (Buzan 1988; Smith 1985) and language activities are included and culminate in an examination of the notion of reflection (Polanyi 1966; Schön 1991; Thorpe 2000).

The literature review deals with conceptual issues in the knowledge domain of language and writing.

1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Capacity building and empowerment has been a significant part of the post-1994 democracy and liberation in South Africa. In pre-1994 South Africa, during white government hegemony, most black South Africans were oppressed.

A major injustice perpetrated by the pre-1994 education system was that it set out to create artificial boundaries among all South Africans. There was a time when there was a multitude of Education Departments. Besides the formal divisions in education, Alexander (1987, p.45) describes the vista of “antagonistic feelings of difference between language groups (Xhosa, Zulu, Sotho, Tswana,
etc.), ‘religious’ groups (Muslim, Hindu, Christian, etc.), ‘cultural’ groups (Griqua, Coloured, Malay, etc.)” and so on, because of their being kept apart. These ‘antagonistic feelings of difference’ still prevail among some adult black South Africans today, although there is growing sensitivity towards culture and language among the university-going generation of students. Although a growing number of students are beginning to disregard these artificial boundaries at institutions, the majority of black students still come from an under-resourced school environment. This study aims to assist post-graduate academic staff to allow their students to move beyond the boundaries.

As a means of creating access for more students, a growing number of HEIs have offered coursework masters programmes. In these programmes the students are required to register for a number of taught modules and then to write a treatise for half or a third of the credits of the qualification. Over the years, it has been observed that many of these students choose to exit the programme, for instance, with a post-graduate diploma in education because they are unable to write their treatises. It is through this study that academic staff, by being sensitised to the complex nature of writing, could help future students to complete their Master’s programmes.

The object of this research is for staff teaching post-graduate students to encourage their students to focus on the writing of research. Their being sensitised towards understanding the complex nature of writing, especially the process and the assessment of writing, could help such staff to build post-graduate capacity thereby facilitating better writing of research in higher education.

The “development and acceptance of new, shared values” to which Fourie (1999, p.277) refers, could imply a change in supervisor attitudes. Each HEI is eligible for a substantial Department of Education subsidy, for a completed doctoral and Master’s degree.
If this were an ideal world, it would be reasonable to assume that a supervisor’s role is not merely to attract funding but to build research capacity in a post-apartheid South Africa.

1.9 ORIGINALITY OF THE RESEARCH

The originality of this study is in the creation and subsequent application of a writing assessment instrument named ADaM. The instrument, ADaM, is the product of the convergence of personal theories that grew out of my experience in higher education. By explaining how this instrument is part of a series of practical sessions conducted with three groups of staff teaching post-graduate students, I will also expound on the research design. This instrument is the result of what may be regarded as a longitudinal action research methodology spanning a few decades.

1.10 ASSUMPTIONS AND DILEMMAS

At the heart of this research is a need to encourage selected staff teaching post-graduate students to include in their supervision, some sensitivity towards the complexity of writing. This research assumes that some staff who teach as well as supervise post-graduates, do not regard writing as having an impact on students’ personal growth. Such supervisors might not foresee that they could also benefit from the exposure to being sensitised to the complexity of writing.

The above assumption was made while reading post-graduate students’ research between 1994 and 2001. My experience facilitating the academic development of students and work in the professional development of staff led me to realise that I needed to draw attention to the complexity of academic research writing. Hence, I drew attention to active reading skills strategies for academic writing.
and computer-mediated assessment of writing as primary elements. As a secondary element, I included an awareness of the practice of mentorship.

While a secondary objective in this research is to observe the effects of the assessment instrument via a series of practical sessions, the primary objective is to gauge whether post-graduate teaching staff would be influenced by this holistic approach to writing. As higher education practitioners, if such staff put writing on their agenda when teaching or when conducting supervision, then post-graduate researchers might be encouraged to take writing more seriously.

A further assumption is that staff responsible for post-graduate students may better understand the complexity of writing through hands-on experience. In my opinion, these staff members needed to experience strategies in and assessment of writing so they could reflect, with some authority, on those writing strategies required, as well as on the assessment of writing. It is possible that a holistic and constructive engagement could influence the quality of one’s writing.

A natural dilemma I face is the notion of validity and how to achieve this using the approach I have chosen. I should be able to justify the research in terms of descriptive validity (Johnson, 1997) during the conducting of the practical sessions while theoretical validity and interpretive validity (Johnson, 1997) should be present in the data analysis. Some of these issues should also be addressed by the rigor offered within grounded theory.

The use of grounded theory will enable me to validate any emergent theory via the corresponding literature that may exist. I will also attempt to validate this research through use of literature. There is also the issue of researcher bias, which I hope to address through validation of my own experience as an HE practitioner.
1.11 A BRIEF OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

Below is a breakdown of this research account:

- Chapter One as an introduction provides an overview of the study: Preparing the canvas;
- Chapter Two expands on the generating of personal theories and the development of the assessment instrument: Painting the backdrop;
- Chapter Three presents the research methodology in terms of related literature: Mixing the colours;
- Chapter Four describes the data collection procedure: The broad brushstrokes;
- Chapter Five presents the data analysis and using grounded theory attempts to find patterns or differences across all three groups of participants: Painting the picture;
- Chapter Six provides a literature survey in support of the research findings: Adding perspective; and
- Chapter Seven presents the conclusion and the research recommendations: Framing the picture.

1.12 CONCLUSION

During an address at Rhodes University in November 2004, Minister Pandor from the Ministry of Education, stated that one of the ministry’s challenges was “the continuing pursuit of the fundamental transformation of higher education to create a responsive, credible and efficient sector” (Pandor, 2004). Her belief is that transformation in HE means staff re-examining HE curricula because “a changing society requires adaptive intellectuals” (Pandor, 2004).
A personal concern has been that in 2004, transformation should have been part of all HEIs’ institutional consciousness. While a growing number of South African HEIs have a transformed profile, it is also noticeable that transformation has not filtered down to the operational level in many of those institutions. The result is that while many claim to have transformed in terms of their student profiles, this not always true of the staff profiles. The question regarding how HEIs in South Africa are addressing the need for ‘adaptive intellectuals’ remains unanswered.
Chapter Two

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will provide an overview of aspects of education in South Africa that are relevant to this research. I will sketch the nature of the educational experience for those with access to secondary and tertiary education. The post-1994 period accelerated the transition from apartheid but did not eliminate the power relations of the past. Institutional epistemologies are seldom made transparent or addressed in the hallways of higher education and results in power bases often remaining intact.

Against this backdrop, I will present my experience in higher education that led to the development of five personal theories. This occurred during my involvement with student academic development initiatives in higher education. Four of the personal theories led to the development of an instrument with which to assess writing. That instrument is embedded in this research.
The dilemma that exists in this research is one of convention. My personal theories are based on my experience as a higher education practitioner committed to building student capacity. As my experience is generally based on a tacit understanding of implementation before verification, seldom have I looked to theory for assistance, but have relied on my experience.

Convention demands that this research conforms to a pattern yet I would be untruthful if I did so. Therefore, I shall present my personal theories here, in Chapter Two, against the backdrop of appropriate literature. Then, after the data analysis in Chapter Five, I will review some of the literature again to validate my findings in Chapter Six. I hope that this will sustain an alternative logic for this research.

2.2 THE CONTEXT OF EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

One reason for my facilitating the development of post-graduate research writing in this research may be attributed to the pre-1994 apartheid education policies. Those policies enforced separate and under-resourced educational opportunities for most black South Africans. That period was followed by conscious political transformation in the post-1994 period. Accordingly, my present understanding of redress in South African higher education is synonymous with the appropriate creation of academic scaffolding. Scaffolded intervention is to assist all post-graduate students, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, to become scholarly writers.

In 1948, when the white National Party government came into power, they deliberated over educating native black South Africans, whom they referred to as the Bantu people. The Eiselen Commission, tasked with generating blueprints for government, “informed the promulgation of the Bantu Education Act officially implemented in 1955” (Kissack & Enslin, 2003, p.37). It was declared in
parliament that the Bantustan plan “intended to do for Africans in South Africa what the British government [was] doing in Basutoland” (Luthuli, 1982, p.178). The Xhosa people would live in the Transkei, the Zulus in Zululand, and so on. Historically, before 1948, there had already been significant divisions among white South African universities. For example, the University of Cape Town (UCT), the University of Witwatersrand (WITS) and others, were exclusively for white English-speaking students; the University of Stellenbosch (US), the University of Pretoria (UP) and others for white Afrikaans-speaking students. These are known as historically white universities (HWUs). As an undergraduate student in 1973, I was restricted to attending the University of Durban-Westville for Indians and in 1980, I had to apply for Ministerial permission to register a Master’s degree at WITS.

In a longitudinal study examining data on the South African secondary school system since 1910, one conclusion Fedderke, de Kadt and Luiz (2000) reach, is that race and not class, fashioned most educational opportunities in 20th century South Africa. Reddy (2000, p.79) concurs and upon examination of subsidy levels for higher education (HE) learners, concludes that the inappropriately weighted resource distribution between so-called advantaged and disadvantaged institutions in South Africa resulted in significant inequities, particularly during the pre-1994 period. According to Reddy (2000, p.79), annual subsidies ranged from R10, 400 per learner at historically advantaged institutions (HAIs) to R6, 200 per learner at historically disadvantaged institutions (HDIs).

Odora-Hoppers (2000, p.2) views education as a transmission of “attitudes, knowledge, norms, skills, techniques and values in accordance with the diversity of educational realities”. Regardless of who delves into the notion of education, the effect of apartheid must be included as a factor when reporting on black South African learners, especially in the light of concrete manifestations of preferential subsidies, as pointed out by Reddy (2000, p.79) above. During the
1990s, transformation in higher education in South Africa was driven and defined by its past imbalances.

This is specifically in the context of the Education White Paper 3 that refers to fundamental yet broader issues within its reference to “A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education” (Department of Education, RSA, 1997). Besides suggesting a framework for implementation, the Education White Paper 3 also recognised “strategic interventions and levers necessary for the transformation of the higher education system” (Higgs, 2002).

Although Fourie (1999) suggests that transformation in HE is not about change in staff and student composition or in governance, but about revisiting organisational cultures and the mutual acceptance of new values, these changes should not be ignored. According to Fourie (1999, p.277), stakeholders, especially the academic staff, may be able to accept new value systems through basic mindset changes referred to as “cognitive transcendance”. When needing to integrate staff HEIs should take cognisance of the varied opportunities to which staff from racially separated institutions would have been exposed. Erstwhile Minister of Education, Asmal, was of the opinion that transformation in HE relies on its academics to “ground their work in research projects of the “muddy-shoes” and the “dirty-hands” variety, dealing with transformation of real lives” (Asmal, 2004, p.17).

The change in the HE learner profile at certain universities made it necessary for mainstream academic staff at those HWUs to be exposed to Professional Development programmes. However, in my experience, it was rare that professional development activities included sensitising academic staff to issues of language awareness or writing strategies. Brice-Heath (2000, p.3) observes “Few teacher education programmes saw the need to inform teachers about how language works, how context matters… in understanding learning”. This is
especially true, as “many academics do not consider it their ‘job’ to teach students these [writing] skills” (Nightingale & Archer, 2000, p.132).

Any constructive responses to and comments on student writing by teaching staff at HE level consumes much time (Somers, 1984; Raimes, 1991), and it is often the case that lecturers do not have the time to support learners’ writing. Lecturers are more likely to be positive with conscientious learners rather than those learners who appear to be indolent (Rountree, 1997). I believe that this research has the potential to build the confidence of staff teaching post-graduate students regarding the complex nature of writing at post-graduate level and accompanying reflective practice.

### 2.3 ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT

Academic development interventions were undertaken by certain South African higher education institutions (HEIs) during the late 1980s to offer appropriate teaching and learning support. Initially known as Academic Support Programmes (ASP) during the 1980s, then as Educational Development (ED) and Academic Development (AD) in the 1990s, interventions were developed specifically for non-native speakers of English at South African HEIs. At the time, these programmes were to support black South African students, most of whom were from poorly resourced schools. Hence, they were disadvantaged when entering an HEI environment.

Those HEIs offering ASP, ED or AD, were committed to develop alternative introductory courses and to adapt existing ones and accompanying curricula. An important paradigm shift within AD was to reposition the interventions from their representing an *adjunct* model, with concurrent enrollment “in two linked courses - a language course and a content course” (Brinton, Snow & Wesche, 1989, p.16), to an *integrated* model. While the *adjunct* model provided remedial
academic support, the *integrated* model focused on cognitive demands of subjects thereby encouraging departments to recurruculate with in-house and in-course scaffolded support.

At high school, an absence of English speaking teachers resulted in my spending a frustrating three years translating notes from Afrikaans into English. This experience provided a different perspective for me when I entered university as a lecturer. HEI support programmes were constructive and discipline-specific, but assumed that all students had had the same educational foundations at school and, therefore, would be able to benefit from such interventions. The same action prevailed in some departments where there was a survival-of-the-fittest attitude towards students. In my opinion, growing numbers of first-entry students needed AD interventions that were sensitive to students’ mother tongue as well as to the respective subject disciplines.

AD interventions were frequently informed by the work of theorists and seldom by the practice of practitioners in the field. Past editions of the South African Journal of Higher Education will confirm this pattern. A Cook’s tour reveals two papers regarding writing and ASP in the same issue by Moyo (1995) and by Paxton (1995), one paper regarding chemistry skills by Mammen and Immenda (1994), another paper on academic development by Walker and Badsha (1993) and one on engineering skills and disadvantaged students by Potter and van der Merwe (1993). While the accepted practice for publication is that research papers are validated by researchers of note, such theory is not always helpful in practice. Most AD practitioners wrote papers using theories that had been developed and verified outside Africa and then applied these theories to a South African higher education scenario. These were sometimes inappropriate when dealing with language issues. Besides, historically disadvantaged institutions had very few journals in their libraries so we seldom had access to AD research.
Most applied linguists’ evidence regarding second language acquisition was rooted in non-South African linguistic research. For instance, there are phenomena such as acculturation and pidginization (Schumann, 1978), interlanguage (Selinker, 1972), error analysis (Corder 1981) conditions for second language learning (Spolsky, 1989) and general linguistic issues (Ellis 1998). I regarded it inappropriate for those AD practitioners to be drawing on such theories. More linguists should have investigated the problems of students in a South African HEI context who were not mother-tongue speakers of English. It is possible that as a non-linguist I had decided that a linguist, like those cited above “by the process of decontextualization, cuts language off from its connection with natural circumstances of use” (Widdowson, 1984, p.51). Besides this, there is also the perspective of Glaser and Strauss (1967, p.10). This is regarding the presence of the “great man theory” where, in the presence of a renowned researcher, one is overwhelmed to the extent that one becomes uncritical of one’s own ability.

When I received Ministerial permission to attend WITS to do a Master’s degree in 1980, I realised that I could communicate, formally, in writing, with my designated supervisor. I experienced fewer frustrations because I was able to write whatever I wanted to as long as it was supported with appropriate evidence. The physical distance between my supervisor in the province of Gauteng and my being employed in kwaZulu-Natal led to increased personal reflection. My supervisor encouraged me to maintain an intellectual conversation by engaging me in an interpersonal dialogue by thinking about my research. At no time was I made to feel that I was inferior in that environment.

AD staff using non-South African theory seemed to set themselves apart from the South African students with whom they worked. This could be seen as them using their theory to elevate themselves as NS from the level of the NNS students resulting in their maintaining a form of power relations. Students
resisting such intervention because it implied they were not good enough marred AD of the 1980s and 1990s.

2.4 KNOWLEDGE AND POWER RELATIONS

Ball (1990, p.2) explains that discourses amongst people are not just about a demonstration of their capacity to speak but about what they can say and what they can think. Ball (1990), writing about Foucault’s views on education and knowledge, states that Foucault believes that discourses do not simply classify objects. The creation of meaning in discourses is subject to the language used. A significant aspect of the language of discourse, according to Foucault, is the social and institutional standing of those within the discourse. Power relations will exist because of their status. Consequently, it is likely that meanings generated within discourses are governed by the institutional practices of those generating the discourse and not just by their use of language. It is for this reason Foucault believes there are different perceptions of the world within different discourses.

According to Ball (1990), one element at the core of Foucault’s understanding of the power of discourse, is that its meaning is generally produced by a social process within society. One site that is critical to the production of meaning and the generation of multiple discourses is an educational institution. This is especially true if we accept the following: “Every educational system is a political means of maintaining or modifying the appropriateness of discourses with the knowledge and power they bring with them” (Foucault, 1971, p.46 in Ball 1990, p.3). Foucault, in Ball (1990), is especially concerned with the divisive practice of the current system of education. This is how AD was perceived by those disadvantaged students during the 1980s and the 1990s.
Foucault is against the content of research findings and writings within such educational niches that become embedded in class structures and resultant discourses. The subsequent labeling of classes leads to further power struggles within the parameters of power relations. Such divisiveness affects the student who is classified and contained within these discourses and who is rendered powerless. Hence, Foucault believes that it is within the institutional practice of those who generate discourses that the power base of discourses is located rather than within the use of language in discourse. There is little evidence of such scenarios on paper but I have experienced this in all the HEIs at which I have been employed since 1980.

During the period of this research, that is, 2003-2004, participants would have encountered students who would have entered higher education during the late nineties. At this stage, HAIs were just beginning to change their policies on access and starting to allow students of colour onto their campuses. This provided fertile ground for the development of power relations between the staff and especially those students who, previously, had been refused access. It is expected that participants may be encouraged to speak about power relations during the 13 practical sessions.

In the context of South Africa, stilted thinking can be expected in some HEIs. It would appear that people generally and academics specifically, exhibit the need to acquire and to possess knowledge. Whether the need springs from generating research, from reading books, from dialogue with other academics or from hearsay, Moser, Mulder and Trout (1998, p.2) propose that “we recognise value in possessing knowledge…or at least the resulting power” arising from that knowledge. The Moser et al. (1998) assumption is that there tends to be both internal and external pressure on us to acquire knowledge.
2.5 MY EXPERIENCE WITH WRITING

At university and beyond, academic writing was always done under pressure, was often assessed and occasionally done for peer recognition. My own experience includes a long essay at Honours level (1979), a Master’s dissertation (1984), a mini-dissertation in a course-work Master’s (1997), a number of shorter conference papers (1986-1997) and two journal articles (1999; 2003).

When I was at school, additional reading was encouraged, occasionally, and as far as writing was concerned, I regurgitated only what was required so that a mark could be awarded. This was in keeping with the idea that a poor teaching, learning and assessment philosophy merely “teaches us that we write to display what we already know, not to discover new ideas” (Krashen, 2003, p.77). I observed that at university, the writing of assignments required multi-tasking between writing and allied inputs, such as reading, thinking and debating. In addition, it was wise to seek opinions of senior students and academics that were willing to engage dialectically. In a Hegelian sense, this is where I would muddle through an argument in order to make sense of it, and then request senior students’ or lecturers’ points of view. The result would be that the “initial thesis meets opposition or antithesis [resulting in a] new thesis or level of understanding” (Rosie, 2000, p.3). In retrospect, I now understand that in such dialectic, the stages from thesis to antithesis can lead to synthesis if one keeps an open mind.

Such constructive intrapersonal debate is present in Schön’s (1991) reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. The draft-revise-draft stage of an essay may be compared to a Schön-like cyclic process of reflection-in-action, namely, thought, leading to reflection-on-action, namely, recording of thought. I believe that the construction of thought becomes a precursor to the recording of thoughts during the writing process. Hence, most writing tends to be part of a reflective process. Reading widely can also have a positive effect on one’s writing.
As an undergraduate student, my writing did not blossom. This could have been the result of the negative perception of regarding myself as non-white during the apartheid days. I could neither regard myself as white nor affirm my being black. During my experience as a student at a university in kwaZulu-Natal (1973-1979), my middle-of-the-roadness did not inspire me to find my identity. Apartheid had been skillful in contrasting the nature of black and white South Africans rather than drawing comparisons between them as South African citizens. There was "something to fear in the idea of the black man assuming his rightful place at the helm of the South African ship" (Biko, 2005, p.98). Only when I refused to lend myself to the colonialist attitudes and accompanying discourses, a process that occurred while at university between 1973 and 1979 did my uncritical nature dissipate. I was “into touch again with [my] people” (Fanon, 2001, p.36). This newfound quality made me question my role in higher education. It was at this stage that I felt confident enough to attempt a Master’s degree at WITS.

2.6 THE DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONAL THEORIES

My career as an academic in higher education informed my own critical approach and sensitivity to language teaching and its practice. My career and experience as an academic had a direct impact on my practice.

- **HEI-1, a University in kwaZulu- Natal, (1980-1984)**

  I was appointed as a lecturer in Dramatic Art in 1980 at a university, HEI-1. Living in and teaching at such an institution in the 1980s had a positive influence on my perception of higher education in an apartheid-ridden South Africa.

Most of the students at this university were black South Africans who had had little experience of the culture, language and history of non-black South Africans. They also had no frame of reference for Western history, bar what was in textbooks. Hence, the examinable Dramatic Art subjects at HEI-1 were initially
very different to Dramatic Arts subjects offered at any historically advantaged institution (HAI) in the same province. Our external examiners were located at a specific HWI and their Drama Department was our guide and caretaker. This HAI had an exclusively white first-entry student population with an abundance of resources. Their students also had access to a modern, fully equipped theatre supported by technical staff as well as smaller spaces designed as informal theatres. The HEI-1, on the other hand, had a single space resembling a school hall that had a few stage lights and nothing else. I experienced first-hand, the result of apartheid and differentiated higher education spending based on race as indicated by Reddy (2000) who discovered subsidies per student in the 1990s were discriminatory and depended on whether it was a historically white or a historically black HEI.

While there was a serious lack of resources and facilities at HEI-1, I observed an abundance of enthusiasm to learn. This was evidenced in student attendance at any extra classes generally held late in the afternoon or over weekends. This lead to the ability of students to improve gradually on areas where they were challenged. In certain areas, students at HEI-1 needed to work twice as hard as their HWI counterparts. For instance, at HEI-1 there were no tools or materials to build scale models of theatre sets. So, instead of balsa wood they became creative with alternative materials, such as cardboard. In addition, few rural students had been exposed to any classes in art, woodwork or metalwork at high school, as their urban counterparts were likely to have been.

This HEI-1 experience culminated in an observation that grew into my first personal theory. Personal Theory 1 is based on the notion of nurturing and respect. I grew to learn and to respect the Zulu culture and the isiZulu language. Students too developed varying levels of understanding and an appreciation for the theatre crafts and skills in my classes at HEI-1.
HEI-2, a Technikon in kwaZulu-Natal (1985-1990)

In 1985, I accepted an appointment as Lecturer in Communication, teaching both English and Afrikaans, at HEI-2. Subsequently, I discovered that Communication 1, a service course compulsory for all students, had a curriculum based on the assumption that all students were native speakers (NS) of English.

The curriculum of this service course was insensitive to differences between English and isiZulu, spoken by the majority of HEI-2’s black students. I observed that most non-native speakers (NNS) of English were disadvantaged by the course and hence performed poorly during examinations. The Communication 1 course placed NNS students at a disadvantage by not providing them with appropriate information to cope with their examinations or the English language skills to apply in the workplace after graduating. My belief that NNS students were entitled to some form of intervention, resulted in my successfully lobbying the HEI-2 management to establish a Bridging English unit. This unit had a positive effect on those NNS students’ understanding of English as another language. Evidence of this was in the increased pass rate of NNS students in the Communication 1 examination, particularly those attending the programme of the Bridging English unit.

My second personal theory developed out of an empathy and sensitivity to acknowledge the importance of one’s language and culture. My having to learn Afrikaans at high school was probably similar to these students learning English hence there was an element of mutual respect for their plight. I attempted to
bridge the knowledge base of students whose mother tongue was isiZulu by sensitising them to similarities and differences between both the written and the spoken communication in English and in isiZulu.

Figure 2.2  Personal Theory 2

PERSONAL THEORY 2: *Students’ written English may be improved by raising their self-esteem and by empathising instead of by imposing unfamiliar and often contradictory rules and values.*

- **HEI-3, a University in kwaZulu-Natal (1990-1997)**

In October 1990, I left HEI-2 to join a university, HEI-3. I was appointed coordinator of a team in a newly established computer-assisted language education unit.

At the time, HEI-3 Council members believed that their English Department’s language courses could not satisfy the need of growing numbers of students who were non-native speakers of English. In addition, they had the idea of combining basic computer skills with language exercises to facilitate English language acquisition and increase student throughput. Because of this rationale, Council resolved to establish such a unit for three years. In 1990, a language usage division was established and funded primarily from Council funds. Staff comprised three linguists and two language practitioners.

In the division of language usage all language intervention classes comprised a formal lecture with worksheets and written exercises for 70% of the periods with the 30% dedicated to an application of the theory via computer-assisted language programs. While we noted that students scored well in all their computer-assisted exercises, many lecturers indicated that there was little evidence of newly acquired writing strategies when students returned to their
departments. This led to our introducing an academic writing programme with the third-year social science students. The majority of students’ completed assignments bore evidence of specific strategies introduced, such as revised paragraph structure containing a main-idea, sub-idea and supporting evidence; the use of transition words; and appropriate pronoun referencing. There was significant evidence of a transfer of skills and strategies in writing with third-years rather than with first-years. It was likely that forthcoming degrees created a positive mental environment for higher intrinsic motivation so students’ motivation was “guided by an interest in the task itself” (van Els, Bongaerts, Extra, van Os & Jansen van Dieten, 1989).

Besides the constructive comments by the faculties interviewed, the language unit had reflected on its work and generated research papers on assessment (van der Ham, 1991) applied linguistics (Hondy, 1991; 1994) computer-assisted language learning (Naidoo & Naidoo, 1991; Naidoo, 1995) and reading (Naidoo, 1993; 1994; van der Ham, 1992).

The unit’s lifespan was extended beyond the initial three-year period up to December 1997. At this stage, a change in the HEI-3 management and their need to cut costs led to an unfortunate decision by Council to close the unit.

The next personal theory was a consequence of comparing previous encounters of facilitating Bridging English at HEI 2 based on my experience. This was in contrast with a strictly rule-governed approach using applied and general linguistics in the computer-assisted language-learning unit at HEI 3.

Figure 2.3  Personal Theory 3

| PERSONAL THEORY 3: there is a better chance of error correction and language skills transfer with the written English of senior students, namely, third-year students, than with that of the first-entry intake of students. |
• HEI-3 - University in kwaZulu-Natal (1998-1999)

In the two years in my new position at the same university, namely HEI-3, I was responsible for a broad portfolio of activities. I assisted the Faculty with first-year registrations, I mentored newly appointed junior staff and co-ordinated the Faculty’s Student Mentorship programme. The Faculty’s Student Mentorship programme reinforced a perception with regard to students’ affective domain. The “emotional side of human behaviour” (Brown, 1987, p.100) was nurtured when constructing a platform for student empowerment. Peer mentoring “is holistic, offering social and academic support” (Naidoo, 1999, p.221) and hence offers the first-year mentee a structured support system.

While in this new post at HEI-3, another personal theory developed that was based on seven years of observations in computer-assisted language learning. I believed that that not all post-graduate students, particularly non-native speakers of English, were sufficiently confident to be competent writers of English after three or four years of under-graduate study. However, such post-graduate students understood the trials of being a first-year student at HEI-3 as well as having the advantage of being native speakers of isiZulu. Therefore, they could empathise with under-graduate students better than most staff. Appointments as peer-mentors led to significantly increased levels of confidence in such post-graduates which had a direct influence on the manner in which they offered “social and academic support” (Naidoo, 1999, p.221).

Figure 2.4 Personal Theory 4

PERSONAL THEORY 4: a faculty-specific peer-mentorship programme can have a positive influence on the self-esteem of its post-graduate mentors, which, in turn, can increase the self-esteem of their under-graduate mentees.
The writing process and providing feedback on writing started to develop at HEI-3. This approach took root after reading two doctoral theses in Education and a master’s dissertation in Statistics between 1994 and 1998. It was an important element of my conviction that writing centre activities needed to focus on facilitating writers’ needs and personal growth through some form of support.

- **HEI-4, a Technikon in the Eastern Cape (2000-2001)**
  The post of Writing Centre Coordinator at HEI-4 in the Eastern Cape allowed me to explore academic writing and computer-mediation with under- and post-graduate students as well as with teaching staff.

At the Writing Centre, in 2000, I started to develop a criterion-referenced writing assessment instrument designed to help with the assessment of academic writing. Academic staff at HEI-3 had constantly requested advice on the assessment of writing and similar requests arose at HEI-4. While an indeterminate number of assessment instruments and rubrics were available on the internet, not all of them were user friendly. I had assumed that many writers had the ability to recognise error-free writing; hence, I assumed it was possible to design a specific assessment instrument. An instrument to assess writing could be examined and assessed from three perspectives:

1. **Audience**, a macro perspective, namely, to whom the writing was directed and the appropriate pitch or style;
2. **Development**, a language perspective, namely paragraph development and structure as the building blocks containing main ideas of an essay; and
3. **Mechanics**, a micro perspective, namely, the technical use of, for instance, transition words and pronoun referents that develop cohesion in writing.
Measurement and the associated function of assessment generally involve assigning numbers within fixed guidelines and rules. For essay writing I believed it was important to measure and to offer suggestions regarding the writer’s product without making value judgements on the writers themselves. Hence, I was not attempting to “measure particular characteristics of individuals or objects” (de Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delport, 2002, p.166). Through the assessment instrument, I was also attempting to bolster the confidence of writers by assigning them the role of assessors, or lecturers. The symbol to be assigned to the quality of the writing would be described as being acceptable or unacceptable. Combined with the notion of measurement and assigning of symbols was a writing conference approach, where interaction was weaved into self-correction of language. When applying a writing conference approach,
writing centre staff members were consciously applying a facilitation process. Writer errors were highlighted through question and answer rather than by providing answers. The writing conference approach allowed writers to become familiar with their common errors in order, eventually, to self-correct.

Rather than view the writing centre from a conservative perspective, where “writing centres are effective when they advance a mastery of skills” (Murphy, 1995, p.118) the approach was to view it from a liberal perspective “in which literacy education is the catalyst for the empowerment of intellectual abilities” (ibid).

The centre transformed from one of supporting HEI-4’s staff and students with peripheral activities, such as presenting lectures on plagiarism, to an environment where the focus was on a one-to-one conference writing approach. A test of our success was a conscious decision not to advertise the writing centre service through the usual medium of posters across all campuses. Despite the complete absence of advertising, there was significant growth in the number of students and staff making use of our service.

Between 1994 and 2000, I completed the professional reading of 20 theses. What struck me were the varied styles of writing and the varied levels of writers’ voice. Albeit clichéd, the maxim that writers’ voice cannot be taught but has to be nurtured was important when I started to reflect on the way writers handled their theses. Among the above, the few without a voice happened to have been written by black researchers. I could not say whether their muted voice was the result of (i) separate development that had entrenched separate standards, (ii) the majority of black students and researchers having to write in English as second or third language or (iii) whether it had been a combination of all these factors.
A growing awareness of the need to support practitioners in developing their capacity for writing led me to reassess my practice. By 2000, I regarded myself as a professional reader and not as an editor. I interpreted earlier requests for me to ‘attend to my language’ as the need for me to suggest improvements on writers’ work rather than replacing their writing with mine. This reinforced my understanding of retaining voice in writing. In the professional reading of completed theses and dissertations, I consistently applied a writing conference procedure.

Using a writing conference approach I drew attention to areas of error and then suggested possible solutions to the writer or researcher rather than rewriting their work. Up to 2000, my comments and feedback had been handwritten. However, in recent years, access to e-mail and to word-processing programs have resulted in my using MS Comment® as a platform for my comments. The use of electronic prompting using this approach has become standard practice in my professional reading.

The last personal theory developed through a combination of my work at HEI-4 as well as my practice as professional reader.

Figure 2.6  Personal Theory 5


The writing conferencing approach led to a significant increase in staff and student attendance at the Writing Centres compared to previous years. The development of the ADaM instrument and the writing conference approach also produced a paper at the South African Applied Linguistics Association

The most recent version of ADaM is in Figure 2.7 below and should be compared with Figure 2.5, the original version. The five-point scale was the result of suggestions by participants in the study. They wanted to be able to distinguish how far away from ‘acceptable’ the quality work they were assessing was. Discussion of this choice by participants appears in the analysis.

Figure 2.7 ADaM essay assessment instrument (2005 version)
• **HEI-5, a University in Gauteng (2002-2005)**

I joined a professional development unit at HEI-5 in 2002 where I was one of a team assigned to facilitate best practice in teaching, learning and assessment in a faculty. I was also responsible for initiating an education induction programme for novice lecturers assigned to teach computer information literacy to all first-year students.

This is where the data for this research was generated. There were teaching staff and HODs willing to participate in the research, as they believed participation could lead to their acquiring new skills and strategies for their own academic writing. There were also post-graduate students from various countries on the African continent for whom English was not a first language. At HEI-5, I was also involved in a comparative study examining supervisor exposure to writing strategies at two Gauteng universities (Naidoo & Tshivhase 2003).

### 2.7 REFLECTION

Schön’s notion of metacognition and of reflection spans Thorpe’s (2000) perspectives above. He (Schön, 1991, p.49) describes one’s spontaneity and intuitive actions during one’s many daily activities, as generally done unconsciously, as it is tacit. This is implicit in what we do and Polanyi (1959; 1966) refers to this ability as “tacit knowing”. Schön (ibid.) suggests that countless practitioners are dependant on their ability to recognise and then trouble-shoot problems and without the ability of “knowing in action”, they would be unable to offer any diagnoses. He goes so far as to suggest that even when one’s judgement is based on research, one is still “dependant on tacit recognition” (Schön, 1991, p.50). This corresponds to Mezirow’s (1991) ‘meaning schemes’ and ‘meaning perspectives’ referred to earlier in this Chapter.
'Knowing-in-action' is used by Schön in “the characteristic mode of ordinary practical knowledge” (1991, p.54). It must be borne in mind that practical knowledge was once classified under technical rationality. This was when the rise of technological and scientific movements led to a worldview dominated by science resulting in the notion that man would only advance by controlling science to develop technology. The positivist movement spawned by this thinking imagined that nature’s laws were “constructs created to explain observed phenomena, and science…a hypothetico-deductive system” (Schön, 1991, p.33). However, the notion of practice presented an inconsistency within positivist doctrines. Practical knowledge could not easily be analysed and reduced to the kind of logic, for instance, prevailing in mathematics and physics, so it was regarded as that knowledge providing a means to an end. In the realm of practice, the question of how one ought to act “was reduced to a merely instrumental question about the means best suited to achieve one’s ends” (ibid.). The development of relationships around cause and effect within science easily induced further notions of instrumental relationships.

Schön (1991, p.34) further suggests that the disciplines of engineering and of medicine became “models of instrumental practice” by adhering to the model of applying means to reach ends. That was during the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century. However, between the 1960s and the 1980s, Schön describes the crisis of confidence in the professions, especially in America, leading to a shortage of teachers, scientists, physicians and engineers. He speculates, counter to the notion of practice being equated to the ‘means to ends’ philosophy, that there was new and growing awareness of the “complexity, uncertainty, instability, uniqueness, and value-conflict – which do not fit the model of Technical Rationality” (Schön, 1991, p.39). While technical rationality espouses problem solving within professional practice, it does not address the notion of the setting of problems. Schön, in a later publication, and a slightly different context (1995, p.29) expressed this in the following way: “We need to think of practice as a setting not only of the application of knowledge but for its generation.”
2.8 REFLECTION ON PERSONAL THEORIES

While working at HEI-4 (2000-2001) I was able to reflect on a number of areas within academic development in which I had been involved. This reflection-on-action (Schön, 1991) of academic writing, generally produced by non-native speakers of English, led to the personal theories I had developed.

At the writing centre, I had initiated a writing conference approach to assisting writers with their writing, to “edit” post-graduate mini-dissertations. A similar situation arose at HEI-5 (2002-2005) where there were staff who were doctoral students requiring professional reading of their theses. I believed that writing conferencing was a conscious approach to provide interpersonal and intrapersonal feedback required by senior students.

In addition, there were affective variables such as motivation. There is intrinsic motivation, that is, “degree of effort the learner makes to learn an L2 as a result of interest generated by a particular learning activity” (Ellis, 1998, p.140) and instrumental motivation, that is “degree of effort the learner puts into learning an L2 as a result of the desire to achieve some functional goal” (Ellis, 1998, p.140). Although the work of Ellis (1998) focused on L2 learners, these efforts required of learners apply to anyone who has to foreground their writing ability. Whether intrinsic or extrinsic, I observed that motivation played a significant role in post-graduates' willingness to improve and to self-correct their language.

The fact that the third-year or post-graduate students were more experienced than first years was a relevant and a determining factor in my theory. I concluded then that the third theory: there is a better chance of error correction and language skills transfer with the written English of senior students, namely, third-year students, than with that of the first-entry intake of students, needed be amended.
REVISED PERSONAL THEORY 3 (2000) = self-correction occurs more successfully with motivation and experience.

The 13 practical sessions that will be described outline the basis of my approach to being a practitioner and a researcher. Schön (1995) states that we should regard practice as an instance where we apply as well as generate knowledge. I have generated personal theories that have led to the development of the ADaM assessment instrument, an example of the application of my knowledge. ADaM was embedded in a series of 13 practical sessions that explored reading, writing and essay assessment. During the 13 sessions, two interviews were held and these became the data for this research. Using a grounded theory approach, the data analysis yielded new theory so that new knowledge was also generated.

The term ‘reflecting-in-action’, introduced by Schön, is the common sense approach to understanding how one does things, allied to Polanyi’s (1966) “tacit knowing”. Here, Schön’s phrase describes how one thinks about one’s action when one is carrying out that action, which is like ‘thinking on one’s feet’. Sportsmen often reflect on specific actions in order to perfect a particular movement that makes their game successful. Schön, an accomplished musician, uses the example of jazz musicians who, during improvisations, “feel where the music is going and adjust their playing accordingly” (1991, p.55).

2.9 FACILITATING WRITING AND WRITING ASSESSMENT

At HEI-5, I was requested to undertake professional reading of long research essays of post-graduate students’ from Ethiopia, Kenya, Cameroon, Uganda as well as of Afrikaans speakers from South Africa. While these researchers’ writing displayed errors, that is, “Deviations in usage which result from gaps in learners’
knowledge of the target language” (Ellis, 1998, p.139), that are likely to have been due to mother-tongue interference, native speakers of English were guilty of their writing displaying mistakes, that is “Deviations in usage that reflect learners’ inability to use what they actually know of the target language” (Ellis, 1998, p.141). I had observed the latter phenomenon at HEI-2, HEI-3 and HEI-4.

The notion of errors and mistakes could be part of a subliminal influence behind the development of a writing assessment instrument but this issue will not be raised in this research. The other part of the rationale for the development of the writing assessment instrument is in the amendment to Personal Theory 3.

I had noticed at HEI-2 and HEI-3 that AD staff at most HEIs were always the first to be axed when senior HEI management carried out cost-cutting exercises. This had become a predictable part of being in AD in South Africa and led to frustration as, ultimately, my academic integrity was at risk. This had a direct influence on me and resulted in a conscious decision to shift focus and to explore the professional development of senior students and academic staff.

Most of my Personal Theories contributed to the conceptualisation and development of a practical programme of 13 sessions to teach reading skills, writing strategies and assessment of writing. The first two Personal Theories to contribute towards the development of the writing programme are:

- PERSONAL THEORY 1 (1980-1984): Students learn more successfully when encouraged to grow at their own pace and they blossom from the inside rather than having values superimposed from the outside; and

- PERSONAL THEORY 2 (1985-1990): Students’ written English may be improved by raising their self-esteem and through empathy instead of by imposing unfamiliar and often contradictory rules and values.
Smith (1994, pp. 35-39) describes writing as a way of indirectly accessing knowledge that we cannot explore directly as something tangible. In that sense, writing becomes a product of one’s thoughts and is quite personal. Accordingly, Smith (1994, p.37) speculates that facets of our individual theories that are undeniably personal are “skills, feelings, and intentions”. A skill, according to Smith, is not merely carrying out an action but is an action that can transform one’s world. In addition, performance of a skill is often governed by a period of time. It is relatively easy to describe in words an action such as washing one’s face if one ignores the timing of the order of the action. Hence, it is more difficult to describe the same action if one were to describe how to massage one’s face using the fingertips. A skill requiring intricate timing is not easily described, as such a sequence of events requires language to function in a way it cannot. Skills are often not easily described but more easily learned through practice.

A second personal facet of one’s individual theories would be the feelings and attitudes that permeate our perceptions of the world. According to Smith (1994, p. 38) “we never learn anything neutrally, without feeling…” because we attach a value to almost everything we do. We often know that we disapprove of something or someone but sometimes forget why. Another personal facet is one’s intention. If an intention constitutes the essence of learning, then it must be a critical part of writing as we always write with a purpose in mind. Notwithstanding the above, intentions are difficult to separate from the actions they generate, such as when or why one writes or types. Smith (1994, p. 38) describes this phenomenon in the following way: “a very general intention - I call it global - carries along with it and generates a number of smaller intentions - call them focal - that are essential to their execution”.

Another two Personal Theories that have contributed towards the development of the practical writing programme are:
• REVISED PERSONAL THEORY 3 (2000): *self-correction occurs more successfully with motivation and experience*; and

• PERSONAL THEORY 5 (1994-2000): *a writing conference approach to support academic writing can encourage novice researchers to self-correct through constructive prompting.*

While Personal Theory 4 (1998-1999) deals with peer-mentorship facilitating growth of post-graduate mentors and is an element of the 13 practical sessions, I believed that it was not a criterion of the writing assessment instrument, ADaM. For this reason, only one session out of the 13 was spent on mentorship, through the written material provided. Figure 2.9 can be seen as a diagrammatic representation of the consolidation of my personal theories leading to the 13 practical sessions.

Figure 2.9  Personal Theories leading to development of 13 practical sessions
2.10 PROPOSITIONAL THEORY vs DIALECTICAL THEORY

Whitehead and McNiff (2006) distinguish between different kinds of theory, namely, propositional theory, dialectical theory and living theory. While propositional and dialectical theories may be attributed to Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle, living theory is a recent phenomenon drawing an increasing amount of attention and will not be considered in this research.

Whitehead and McNiff (2006, p.30) further suggest that in propositional theories, knowledge is “grounded in the quest for certainty, and…communicated in the form of general statements in response to particular answers”. Researchers espousing propositional theory believe they are providing the ultimate truth and their thinking is structured around an ‘either-or’ format postulated, originally, by Aristotle.

I differ with Whitehead and McNiff (2006) as I am of the opinion that the skills domain can be used to assist one to delve into and reach a level of knowledge generation. For instance, the 13 practical sessions to which staff were exposed in this research drew attention to the competencies required in order to become a better writer. A key element was participants’ engagement with ADaM. Although ADaM is an illustration of propositional theory, the original instrument (Figure 2.5) did not offer a numerical value, for example, as some rubrics might. It provided a sounding board for the user to determine a general value after reflection on the evidence provided in the written work. The 2005 version had been changed as a result of research participant needs in 2003 and 2004. They were not comfortable with the presence of a tick ✔ and a cross ✗ and preferred a familiar value.

As a sounding board, ADaM supports users when they delve into what I have assumed is knowledge tacitly resident in the user’s mind. The resident knowledge, underlying this research, allows users to formulate an opinion on
someone else’s written work. The opinion is not based on criteria that indicate how that writing is being appraised, but I believe it is based on a form of mental template. ADaM sets out to provide three broad categories of assessment criteria that shift from macro to micro level of appraisal, namely, writers’ Audience (A), the Development of the writing (D) and the Mechanics displayed in the written work (M). These three categories, while leaning towards a propositional theory as they provide structure around an ‘either-or’ format referred to above, also develop a sense of a dialectic as they allow the user’s tacit knowledge to surface. The fact that ADaM users are guided by three categories, namely, A, D and M, and then have to decide whether the writing is acceptable or unacceptable for each criteria, I believe, generates a level of antithesis in the mind of the user. In my opinion, the final appraisal that covers all three assessment categories provides a balanced view of what users regard as being an example of good writing. In that sense ADaM cannot be regarded as propositional but leans towards the dialectic. ADaM also can facilitate the induction of knowledge. This occurred during the practical sessions in this research through the increasing challenges posed by levels of difficulty in the appraisal of student essays to journal articles.

I believe that ADaM has criteria broad enough to encourage an intrapersonal debate during an appraisal of written work. In addition, the categories are open to change, as is the entire instrument. Where Figure 2.5 illustrates the original 2000 version of the ADaM instrument, Figure 2.7 represents the amended 2005 version of ADaM. While ADaM may resemble a propositional theory, it cannot be regarded as an ‘ultimate truth’ and, hence, is not a propositional theory.

Whitehead and McNiff (2006, p.31) describe knowledge in dialectical theories as being “fluid and open as they are grounded in contradiction”. In dialectics mode, researchers regard knowledge as being subject to change as there are elements in all events and experiences that contradict one another. These ideas about thinking emanate from especially Aristotle’s notion of there being an ‘either-or’
format. Aristotle’s law of contradiction states it was not possible for some entity, simultaneously, to exhibit properties of one thing as well as another thing. Here, Aristotle was referring to elements of thinking and the workings of the mind, as opposed to real-life experiences.

There is a need for dialectic at a micro level in order to improve one’s reflective practice as a writer. The more examples or writing one is able to recognise as acceptable or unacceptable, the better. In this research a few participants were challenged to rethink their personal philosophies and did so because of the nature of the practical sessions, the trust built between us and the fact that we were in small groups. As a researcher and a facilitator of the practical sessions I was able to encourage one participant in each group to rethink her approaches to their practice and to realise there was room for improvement and that HE practitioners are not always experts.

Kincheloe’s (1991, p.1) view is that the “technicalization of work”, across the board, has created situations where experts, or those deemed to be professionals, are solely responsible for attesting to the validity of knowledge. Hence, society has used knowledge as a source of power, leading to what Kincheloe (1991, p.1) refers to as tendencies that are “anti-democratic”. Over time, such tendencies have gradually undermined one’s own sense of authority and one’s self-confidence by enforcing a reliance on experts to the detriment of the growth of one’s own knowledge. Even as parents caring for our own children’s welfare, we are dependant on a “professional oligarchy of doctors, psychiatrists, welfare workers, civil servants, and social science researchers who constitute this so-called industry” (Kincheloe, 1991, p.2).

A possible solution to the stranglehold of this ‘industry’ on knowledge is the creation, in all spheres of life, of groups of people who would form communities of competence. I would support Kincheloe (1991) and examine another underlying aspect of this research, namely, communities of competence. This
supports my own experiences in higher education, outlined in Chapter One (pp. 1-4), as being significant to this research. Of importance is the development of personal theories that I structured around scaffolded interventions, so that there was limited dependency on the support offered in academic development initiatives. Staff and students in HEIs needed to recognise and then to take cognisance of their challenges in order to modify their level of competence. I believe this is embedded in all five personal theories in Chapter Three. In most instances, there was a need to bolster students’ affective variables such as self-esteem issues, in order to deal with learning issues so they in turn could assist others. Besides self-assessment and the need for critical reflection, it is also necessary to take into account how one structures meaning.

Jarvis (1999, p.68) regards reflective practitioners as those “not just responsive to the changing conditions of their practice; they are proactively asking questions about it”. As a practitioner, I was also engaged in “a form of enquiry that enables practitioners everywhere to investigate and evaluate their work” (McNiff & Whitehead, 2006, p.8) in order to improve it. Hence, action research has a pivotal role in the study which is supported by Schön’s (1991, p.308) view that practitioners may become “reflective researchers in situations of uncertainty, instability, uniqueness and conflict”. This description applies to higher education during the latter part of the 20th and early 21st century and my having been a black citizen in a pre-1994 South Africa.

2.11 CONCLUSION

Chapter One presented a context of me in terms of my experiences in higher education. Having worked in higher education my practice did not occur in a vacuum. Hence, this chapter provides, often retrospectively, some of the theories that have influenced my practice over the years.
Personal theory 1, 2, 3 and 5 described above, examine what I regard to be primary elements that supplement writing skills and strategies, namely, active reading, academic writing strategies and computer-mediation. Each of these, including the brief session on mentorship, collectively, form the basis of this research and constitute my practice as a researcher and a practitioner during my career in higher education. These experiences have led to the development of the writing assessment instrument, which is central to the research. This answers sub question 1 of my research question: “How did the instrument develop?”

Before describing how the personal theories impact on the study, the underpinnings of the methodology will be examined.
Chapter Three

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a justification through the literature, for my choice of methodology for this research. The paradigm that I have chosen is the result of my philosophy embedded in this research. The theories around Action Research and Grounded Theory are extrapolated to explain which aspects are appropriate to the study. Details of the research design are then described as preparation for how the data were collected in the following chapter.

The socio-political circumstances arising from the first democratically elected government in South Africa in 1994 lead to a gradual transformation from the old into a new South Africa. This impacted directly on “the meaning, context, and experience of the traditional voices who [originally] dominated these dialogues” (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, p.18). During the last two decades in South Africa, this gradual transformation has led to changes in the notion of citizenship. In higher education it has meant that South Africa needed to balance a “concern for equity and social reconstruction [with] global changes in the role of universities” (Moore,
In South Africa, this translates into improved and increased access to higher education for students, especially those who are non-native speakers (NNS) of English.

Researchers’ completed theses and dissertations guarantee lucrative Department of Education subsides for HEIs. It is bewildering that post-graduate teaching staff are sometimes not trained by their HEIs to facilitate post-graduate writing. Naidoo and Tshivhase (2003, p.233) in a comparative study of academic staff in two faculties at two different South African HEIs conclude that it is reasonable to assume that academic writing is not “dealt with adequately during the pre-graduate study period of [their] sample of novice researchers”.

It is in the context of a macro view, that is, a changing socio-political landscape, as well as a micro view, that is, needs-driven higher education practice, that data for this research project was collected during practical sessions conducted at an HEI between 2003 and 2005.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGMS

Stenhouse in Bassey (1990a, p.35) describes research as entailing “systematic, critical and self-critical enquiry which aims to contribute to the advancement of knowledge”. In order for it to be ‘systematic’ and an ‘enquiry’, research needs to be conducted and its data analysed within a framework using a research paradigm that, ideally, is also suited to the researcher’s own philosophy. Bassey’s (1990b, p.40) interpretation of a research paradigm is a “network of coherent ideas about the nature of the world and of the function of researchers…that conditions the patterns of their thinking and underpins their research actions”. He draws a useful distinction between different research paradigms.
Firstly, there is the positivist research paradigm where it is accepted that some form of reality exists regardless of the existence of people. A positivist view would be that such a reality exists somewhere out there and may be “expressed as factual statements” (Bassey, 1990b, p.40). As positivist researchers do not regard their own presence in the research as significant, they are likely to write research reports in the third person. Secondly, there is the interpretive research paradigm where such researchers regard reality as “a construct of the human mind” (Bassey, 1990b, p.41). While there would be multiple interpretations of a single event by different interpretivists, positivists are likely to have one interpretation and will assume that other positivists would arrive at the same conclusion. The interpretivists believe their presence and interaction could change a situation, so when writing their research reports they are likely to write in the first person and to use personal pronouns such as “I” and “me”.

Thirdly, there is action research, which Bassey (1990a, 1990b) sees as subtly different. Hammersley (2000, p.393) presents food for thought regarding issues of educational research within the paradigm of qualitative enquiry and viewing the relationship between practice and research, suggests examining the notion of “the ‘enlightenment model’ [where research provides] resources that practitioners can use”. This is in contrast with the “engineering model” (Hammersley, 2000, p.393) which suggests that educational research should use experimental methods to determine its contribution to practice, but by doing so is not offering choice but “telling them what is best to do”. Where positivists and interpretivists attempt to describe phenomena, “the action research paradigm is about actors trying to improve the phenomena of their surroundings” (Bassey, 1990b, p.43). Action research is about practitioners reflecting on and improving their practice while inviting their peers, regarded as critical friends, to offer critique too.

In the context of being an HEI practitioner, I have leaned towards action research as I have generally invited colleagues and senior students to reflect on my practice. This would be in the academic development of students and in the
professional development of staff where I would present new approaches and request feedback on my practice.

In contrast with the normative paradigm, where human behavior is governed by rules and should be scrutinised according to the rules of natural science, the interpretive paradigm “is characterized by a concern for the individual” Cohen and Manion (1996, p.36). A normative researcher attempts to present a theory of human behavior that is validated through research methodologies that are complex and tend to be removed from the familiar world of experience into an abstract world. In contrast, an interpretive researcher starts with the individual and tries to make sense of a world by which they are surrounded. According to Cohen and Manion (1996, p.37) this gives rise to emergent theory that emanates from specific circumstances so that data “will be glossed with the meanings and purposes of those people who are their source”.

In this research, the intention has not been to control any variables, as the aim is to portray the “freedom and natural development of action and representation” (Henning, van Rensburg & Smit, 2004, p.3) generally found when operating within a qualitative framework. This research is located firmly in the interpretative paradigm.

Research methods refer to data gathering procedures in educational research so that inference and interpretation may allow one to explain and to predict. This explanation was borrowed from the model of positivism and pure science research, and, for instance, refers to predetermined questioning techniques and experiments and the recording of measurements. However, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2002, p.44) amend their view to acknowledge the existence of research methods in the interpretive paradigm in which this study is rooted. Under research methods, they include “participant observation [and] non-directive interviewing” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2002, p.44). The need for me to write in the first person was established earlier and will appear later. It is the
'non-directive interviewing' that is significant here because it corroborates the need for reporting in the first-person. Allowing the participants to converse relatively freely presented me with opportunities to probe, in a non-directed manner, what they really felt about their participation in the research. I was attempting to see each participant as an individual rather than as a subject.

Higher education has been the exclusive domain for doctoral students and academics to generate research as, traditionally, they were the most skilled and worked in supportive and well-resourced research environments. However, this scenario is gradually changing. Schön (1995) describes a new and interesting research dilemma among professional practitioners. The dilemma revolves around rigor and relevance in research and he conceptualizes this in geographic contrast. He speaks of the hard high ground or the mushy swamp of the lowland. The research problems of the high ground tend to be about problems that may be solved as they “lend themselves to solution…[via] research-based problems and technique” (Schön, 1995, p.28). However, in the swamp of the lowland, “problems tend to be messy and confusing and incapable of technical solution” (Schön, 1995, p.28). Ironically, it is in the swamp of the lowland where research and associated problems may be of greater relevance to the man in the street. Hence the dilemma of professional practitioners as researchers is either to stay on the hard high ground and, with relative ease, solve problems with the required rigor, or to slide down to the lowland swamps where rigor is not always possible but where problems are relevant.

I see my practice and my research as being rooted in Schön’s lowlands swamps. It must be emphasized that in the swamps, sometimes, there are a greater number of variables that must be viewed as threats when attempting to validate such research from the perspective of inducing rather deducing theory. There are fewer opportunities to establish descriptive, interpretive or theoretical validity (Johnson, 1997). However, the rationale for the validity is as strong as the rationale for using alternative methodologies.
There are a greater number of alternative methodologies in research nowadays compared to the restricted set of approaches deemed acceptable in the past. It is reasonable to assume that an explanation for these blended methodological approaches could be the changing socio-political environments and emerging discourses that call for fresh approaches to research methodologies. Research in the domain of the human and the social sciences within higher education, could straddle the equivalent of Schön’s (1995) lowland swamps and the hard high ground especially when so-called scholar-practitioners, as researchers are becoming “knowledge brokers” (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, p.36).

In the realm of shifting worldviews, Hillier and Jameson (2003, p.40) acknowledge the importance of the scientific paradigm as presented by Kuhn (1970). Seeing that “theories were comprehensive orderings of reality in which the whole was in some sense prior to its parts” (Bullock & Trombley, 1999, p.625), scientific practices all functioned within theoretical frameworks that Kuhn refers to as paradigms. There were strict regimes to be followed within such a worldview or paradigm. Within the higher education sector, however, Hillier and Jameson (2003, p.40) reflect on the presence of “different perceptions and perspectives”. They question our reliance on creating laws through measurements and challenge the acceptance of the scientific paradigm as a benchmark. The result is an alternative, “the illuminative paradigm… [which] accepts that there are multiple perspectives, something the scientific paradigm cannot allow” (Hillier & Jameson, 2003, p. 40). Hillier and Jameson (2003) argue that their critique is within the bounds of the notion of a paradigm, as the suggested alternative represents dissenting voices challenging the existing paradigm and worldview.

It is necessary here, briefly, to examine the notion of social realities. Burrell and Morgan in Cohen and Manion (1996, pp.6-9) present assumptions that colour the way we conceive of social realities in a non-positivist world. Firstly, there is the assumption of an ontological kind, that is, where one determines whether one’s
social reality is rooted within and generated by one’s consciousness internally or whether the reality exists and exerts influence on one from outside. Secondly, there is the assumption of an epistemological kind, that is, the nature and form of knowledge bases, how one acquires knowledge and how it is passed on to others. Thirdly, there is the assumption made regarding humans and their environment. Humans can be both the data generators in a study - where they are participants - as well as the drivers of the research - where they are designers and initiators. This should have some direct influence on how one chooses and then implements the research methodology.

The third assumption above is peculiar when viewed from the perspective of human beings and their environment. It is sometimes unrealistic to sustain an objective, third persons’ point of view for the sake of the positivist convention of non-insider research. This is particularly true when the designers and initiators who are the researchers are in direct communication with the data generators of a research project. The convention of maintaining objectivity within positivism could be compared to the notion of bracketing within phenomenology. Also, it is possible that an element of artificiality could prevail when reporting research in the third person.

In this research, the delivery of what could be termed skills-based knowledge as part of a dialectic relationship between theory and practice leads to the creation of practitioner research. In such research there is selective use of first-person and third-person reporting in the research. By writing some chapters in the first-person, “I”, as researcher, I will be supporting the view of Bateson, in Clandinin and Connelly (2000, p.9). She suggests that writing in this form moderates the voice of the author so as not to be viewed as a “timeless authority”. This is reinforced by Eisner (1998, p.29) who states, cynically, that writing in the third person in certain disciplines, supports the notion that “presence of voice is thought to be a liability…".
I want my voice to be heard through this study. This research examines my practice and is based on the growth of my personal theories. Hence, the methodology of action research together with the underpinnings of a grounded theory seems to be best suited to the research.

Classic grounded theory seeks to generate data theory through induction. I started with a research question that, according to Glaser (2004) presents establishing a preconceived problem. I avoided a literature review early on and had participants “venting issues rather than encouraging them to talk about a subject of little interest” (Glaser, 2004, p.12) both of which represent classic grounded theory. As my data collection was not driven by results of preceding findings, I did not follow the theoretical sampling route. In addition, I opted for data summaries by reducing text to symbolic form for ease of quantitative analysis. Implicit above, is that I leaned on qualitative data analysis (QDA) rather than classic grounded theory. Hence, I will refer to my approach as being remodeled grounded theory. Glaser is quite clear that he opposes the “mixing of QDA and GT methodologies [as it will lead to] downgrading and eroding the GT goal of conceptual theory” (Glaser, 2004, p.2).

3.3 MIXED METHODS RESEARCH

While the major part of my research revolves around the qualitative paradigm, when categorising the responses of the participants it was necessary to depict the data and perform simple analyses in the quantitative paradigm. In pursuing a combined approach, de Vos (2002) refers to Creswell’s three models, namely, the two-phase model, the dominant-less-dominant model and the mixed methodology model. This study sits squarely within the dominant-less-dominant model as the theoretical underpinning is action research. Further, the analysis is based on a remodeled grounded theory approach that is qualitative in nature. It
was only during the coding process that numeric values were used to locate dominant categories. Hence, I had started to mix the research paradigms.

Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004, p.14) refer to what was once regarded as ‘incompatibility’ where Howe (1988) states “that qualitative and quantitative research paradigms, including their associated methods, cannot and should not be mixed”. The authors, however, “present mixed methods as a third research paradigm in educational research ” (ibid.). This ‘third research paradigm’ creates a platform for one to “mix and match design components that offer the best chance of answering their specific research questions” (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p.15).

It is important to note that such an approach cannot be successful without the researcher attempting to “tighten the use of mixed methods” (Yin, 2006, p.42) so they represent one study. Mixed methods research represents a “methodology and a method…[involving] collecting, analyzing, and mixing qualitative and quantitative approaches” (Cresswell, Shope, Clark & Green, 2006, p.1) in one research study. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004, p.22) cite Onwuegbuzie and Teddlie’s (2003) description of the seven-stage process of mixed methods data analysis. Two of these stages are data reduction, namely, through qualitative data “reducing the dimensionality [of the data through memos and] describing pictorially the qualitative data”. This study employed a mixed methods paradigm.

### 3.4 ACTION RESEARCH

Adelman (1997, p.81) cites Wright Mills who describes action research as Kurt Lewin depicted it in the 1940s: “Action research gives credence to the development of powers of reflective thought, discussion, decision, and action by ordinary people participating in collective research on ‘private troubles’”. The reference to ‘private troubles’ is likely to be a common bond amongst participants
involved in such an action research approach. Lewin fled from Germany to the United States in the 1930s to work as an academic, during which time, his work as a consultant in a factory gave rise to a series of observations.

It is also noted by Adelman (1997) that Lewin discovered that factory labourers who first discussed their problems and then reached consensus on a solution, were more productive and had higher morale than those amongst whom there was no participation. Lewin subsequently recognised that amongst the experimental and control groups, the successful groups, after having investigated their problem, would then “make decisions, monitoring and noting the consequences” (Adelman, 1997, p.82). Years later, after Lewin’s death in 1947, that collaborative process was formally researched and described as an avant-garde form of democracy in industry that is described today as participative action research.

A critical response by some to Lewin’s pioneering work was that while action research was effective at improving productivity, it was unable to provide labourers with a framework questioning the “power bases that define social roles and strongly influence the process of change” (Adelman, 1997, p.84). This issue is supported by Mitchell-Williams, Wilkins, Mclean, Nevin, Wastell and Wheat (2004, p.337) when they refer to the presence and influence of those within a collaborative group and belonging to higher education institutions who tend to have “…considerable ‘institutional’ power” (2004, p. 337). Wielding power is not as obvious when working cooperatively, especially when, for instance, one accepts the stance of an informed member of the group and believes that democracy will prevail. However, in the Mitchell-Williams group’s experience they “sought to develop collaborative power, rather than exercise authoritarian power” (2004, p.337) all of which was dependant on personal qualities and how these presented themselves. Taylor (1998, pp.108-109) concurs with the notion of reviewing the rights between researchers and those being researched. She suggests that Lewin’s examination of those groups of people who were
disadvantaged socially in democratic processes, led to the notion of action research and created equal status between researchers and the researched. It is this form of equality that I strived to achieve in my practical sessions.

According to Carr and Kemmis (1986) in McNiff (1995, p. 2) action research is a type of inquiry where, together with participants, one reflects on oneself. This is in order to bring about an improvement in “the rationality and justice of (a) their social or educational practices, (b) their understanding of these practices, and (c) the situations (and institutions) in which these practices are carried out (McNiff, 1995, p. 2). Explicit in the ‘action’ of action research is to bring about action and change, while implicitly, it hopes to effect “change in people’s lives, and therefore in the system in which they live” (McNiff, 1995, p. 3).

Within educational research, action research may be applied to large-scale enquiries into the effects of culture on individuals, or to small-scale investigations examining individuals who may be responsible for minor changes that could affect society in the future. In higher education, action research could encourage lecturers to be critical of their teaching and, upon self-reflection, to be prepared to make changes.

Action research is a research approach that, in a qualitative paradigm, involves conducting research with participants, in contrast with a quantitative paradigm, where one is likely to conduct research on subjects. McNiff (1995, p.5) suggests one traditional view of educational research is a “machine-mindedness…based on a method which tries to measure and quantify, as if people are entirely predictable” (McNiff, 1995, p. 4). Action research can encourage all who teach - whether in primary schools, secondary schools or in higher education institutions - to develop best practice and strive to continually improve on this by being critical of their teaching. This may be achieved by “using this self critical awareness to be open to a process of change and improvement of practice” (McNiff, 1995, p. 5).
From Kemmis’ simple model of the action research cycle of plan, act, observe and reflect there have been numerous interpretations. McNiff (1995) illustrates the spiral steps of action research as a series of cycles. In Figure 3.1 below, is my own interpretation based on the “formal schemes of Stephen Kemmis, John Elliott and Dave Ebbutt” (McNiff, 1995, pp.22-46) as well as Zuber-Skerritt (1995) in Hatten, Knapp and Salonga (1997). O’Brien (1998, p.3) describes the Susman (1983) cycle, comprising diagnosis, action planning, taking action, evaluating, specifying learning and then back to diagnosing. I will opt for the original and most simple version in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1 An illustration of the action research process

What has been attempted in Figure 3.1 above, is to depict more than one layer in each set of investigations. There are sequential events as indicated in the three-dimensional layers. After planning the research one acts on the plan that leads to observing the action in order, finally, to reflect on what transpired. While these sequential events may give rise to a number of subsidiary issues, the action research process always provides a central focus for the issue at hand. After Lewin, various authors have approached and described its cyclic or spiral nature differently: Kemmis and McTaggart (2000) have named the cycles “plan - act and observe - reflect” while Stringer (1999) referred to them as “look - think - act”.

59
McNiff and Whitehead (2006, p.8) state that the nature of action research is distinctive from other types of research as it is done by “practitioners themselves rather than a professional researcher, who does research on practitioners, as is the case in traditional forms of social science research”. Here McNiff and Whitehead (2006) imply that action research does not fall into the category of ‘traditional’ social science research.

Qualitative researchers, like myself, often carry out “an etymological analysis of a concept as part of their description of a phenomenon” (de Vos et al., 2002, p.31) as I am doing presently, to increase the depth of understanding of a term. Such may be true also of research in general, where each of us is attempting to create the ultimate “great man theory” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) or grand theory. This is encouraged by “universities continuing to increase the fragmentation of knowledge by rewarding specialization” (Heron & Reason, 2002, p. xxvii).

Traditional academic research may be described generally as mutually exclusive, where the researcher is responsible for the “the thinking that goes into the project and the subjects only contribute the action to be studied” (Heron & Reason, 2002, p.179). Action research, according to Heron and Reason (2002), is research with people rather than on them. This is supported by Carson (1990, p.167) who locates action research within education where “we may develop our understandings while at the same time [bring] about changes in concrete situations”. It is also agreed that the focus of action research is on gaining insight into specific problems rather than on scientific knowledge that is generalisable (Cohen & Manion, 1996; Kincheloe, 2003).

Educational action research has been linked to teaching and to teachers as researchers (Kincheloe, 2003; McNiff & Whitehead, 2006). Cohen and Manion (1996, p.186), although locating action research “in the social sciences” acknowledge that there is an educational context for this approach and cite Stenhouse (1979) who states that action research should generate ‘a theory of
education and teaching of education accessible to other teachers’. McNiff (1995, p.20) offers further clarity regarding the locating of action research, by looking at its application “not only to observe, record and describe the work in that field, but to widen the perspective and make the investigation itself educational”. In 1976 Whitehead engaged with action research in order to create supportive networks “for teachers in classrooms to regard themselves as legitimate researchers” (McNiff, 1995, p.20). This led to Whitehead (1988, p.41) stating that “it is possible to create a living educational theory which can be related directly to practice”. Whitehead and McNiff (2006, p.32) elaborate “as we practice we observe what we do and reflect on it”. When we examine what we are doing, why we want to do it and subsequently test our claims via others’ critique, then surely such “theories are our living theories” without them being untouchable theories.

Action research is an approach where “the validity and value of research results are tested through collaborative insider-professional researcher knowledge and application processes” (Greenwood & Levin, 2000, p.94). They also believe in action research because “the integrity and the professional knowledge of the researchers is a key element” (Greenwood & Levin, 2000, p.105). I support Greenwood and Levin’s contention in this research. The development of this study around my HE experiences is in line with Greenwood and Levin’s focus on the researcher’s knowledge. It has always been important for me, as a practitioner, to examine my own practice. As explained in Chapter One, a dilemma in this research was my wanting to generate theory that was fresh and emergent and not initially reliant on other theorists’ validation. In addition, it was necessary for me to reflect, constantly, on what was important to my practice in order to improve it. Ultimately, this gave rise to a series of personal theories that framed my ontology and created personal theoretical frameworks for my practice. Action research facilitated the convergence of the personal theories into ADaM. The assessment instrument ADaM, is an example of what is possible through
constant reflection by a practitioner rather than by some professional researcher (McNiff & Whitehead, 2006).

3.5 GROUNDED THEORY METHODOLOGY

It is reasonable to assume that both qualitative and quantitative research focuses on producing findings. Although a quantitative researcher might be attracted solely to ascertain validity, reliability and generalisability of data, the qualitative researcher “should focus immediately on the substance of the findings” (Strydom, Fouché & Delport, 2002, p.339). In order to bring a sense of structure and meaning to the morass of data comprising more than 120 pages of transcript, it was necessary to analyse the data systematically. I opted for a remodeled grounded theory (Glaser, 2004, pp.1-24) approach to the analysis of the transcripts that will become the research data.

Grounded theory is based on theory being drawn from data. In this research, the data has been generated by a series of 13 practical sessions. During one of the practical sessions, research participants were asked to critique a writing assessment instrument called ADaM. ADaM grew out of the need driven by four personal theories developed during my work as an academic development practitioner at three higher education institutions between 1988 and 2001, a process described in Chapter Two. In the 13 practical sessions that generated the data in this research, ADaM features in the latter half. The effect of ADaM on the participants, whether it was able to sensitise post-graduate teaching staff to writing and assessment, especially the unintended consequence of my need “to elaborate or extend existing theory” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.12.) remains to be seen in the data analysis chapter.

The grounded theory research strategy is that of generating rather than verifying theory and “used by persons in practitioner fields such as education” (Strauss &
Corbin, 1998, p.9). According to Strauss and Corbin (1998) grounded theory is a reference to a methodology in which theory eventually emanates from analysis of the data. As a consequence, the natural relationship between the collection and the analysis of data eventually gives rise to theory. The emergence and subsequent generating of theory from data rather than verifying preconceived theory captures the essence of grounded theory.

Glaser and Strauss developed this inductive method of generating theory in the 1960s, known as grounded theory. In order to apply comparative analysis one takes so-called slices of data upon which one will have a variety of “views or vantage points from which to understand a category and to develop its properties” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p.65). The constant comparative method comprised comparing incidents in each category, integrating categories and properties, theory delimitation and then writing up the theory.

Qualitative research most often describes a research type where “statistical procedures or other quantification” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, pp.10-11) are not used to generate findings. While located in a qualitative paradigm, applying a grounded theory approach comprising three levels of coding to interpret data generates elements of induction and deduction. Strauss and Corbin (1998, p.136) state that although grounded theory encourages theory induction, when conceptualising data, one is engaged in interpretation, and that “an interpretation is a form of deduction”. Therefore, one has to acknowledge the relationship between deduction as encouraged in the sciences, as well as induction as encouraged in grounded theory. Hence, it is acceptable to employ the mixed method (Lichtman, 2006) for analysing the data. Because of using a mixed method research approach, referred to as the third paradigm in section 3.3 in this chapter, I have deviated from applying a pure classic grounded theory approach. I have used remodeled grounded theory to analyse the data. The term ‘remodeled’ is based on Glaser’s (2004) opposition to the mixing of qualitative
data analysis with grounded theory methodology, mentioned in section 3.2 in this chapter.

In this research, the data will be analysed applying the grounded theory approach of coding and constant comparison. Strauss and Corbin (1998) present more detail regarding “careful application of coding paradigms” (Denscombe, 2003, p.123) during data analysis, than that offered in the seminal text by Glaser and Strauss (1967). There are three underlying principles in the coding process as outlined, briefly, below by Strauss and Corbin (1998, p.73) and fundamental to developing theory through an inductive method such as grounded theory.

Firstly, there is the procedure of asking questions, a strategy used to flesh open the inquiry; and which drives analysis. Secondly, one has to make constant theoretical comparisons, a strategy used to stimulate the creation of properties and various dimensions within categories and functions as a vehicle for analysis. Thirdly, there is the theoretical sampling, a strategy used to sample emerging concepts from the sorting and categorising phases.

These underlying principles above underpin three types of coding used to interpret data through a grounded theory approach. It is the coding approach of Strauss and Corbin (1998) that will be used in the analysis in Chapter Five. The approach used the following:

- Open Coding that is, identifying concepts and their properties and dimensions;
- Axial Coding, that is, where categories are linked to their sub-categories; and then
- Selective Coding, which is, selecting and refining theories.

Action research and grounded theory may be combined successfully because both approaches support emergent theory. Action research and, to an extent, grounded theory, both support the examination and improvement of one’s practice.
The iterations described using the theory of action research allows it to be flexible and should lead to the gradual unfolding of the research process consistent with the researcher’s own increasing insight into the investigation. This gradual and increasing insight into the theory and the research methods of action research make it possible for both the content and the process to be emergent. This is one characteristic that action research shares with grounded theory.

3.6 RESEARCH DESIGN

3.6.1 The sample

Sampling has been based on cohorts being non-probability samples, where there is a strong element of the sample not being representative of a group. While such non-representivity is apparently a disadvantage, I regard this approach as an advantage as I wanted staff to participate willingly and for the selection to be as uncomplicated as possible.

I was invited to present my personal theories regarding post-graduate academic writing to twenty staff from the Faculty of Engineering, the Built Environment, and Information Technology (EBIT) in 2003. Five of those EBIT attendees agreed to attend the workshops at negotiated times and dates. While they constituted a single cohort, the negotiated dates and times resulted in their being divided into two EBIT groups. Subsequently, members of what became EBIT Group 1 and EBIT Group 2 referred me to their colleagues in other faculties. Eventually, in 2004, I was able to find another group of three staff from the same department in the Faculty of Humanities (HUM). After my presenting my personal theories regarding post-graduate academic writing they too agreed to participate in my research and become the third group, HUM Group 3.
According to Cohen and Manion (1996, p.88) the selection of the first cohort of research participants from EBIT may be termed a *convenience sample*. Strydom, Fouché and Delport (2002, p.207) also cite “convenient, availability or haphazard sample”. While ‘convenient’ and ‘availability’ are appropriate I disagree with the notion of ‘haphazard’. The difference in opinion is based on my seeking participants, specifically HEI academic staff, displaying the most “characteristic, representative or typical attributes of the population” (ibid.). Hence this first cohort could also qualify as a purposive sample. Cohen and Manion (1996, p.88) state that a *convenience sample* is a selection of “the nearest individuals to serve as respondents and continuing the process until the required sample size “ is reached. In this instance there was no ‘required sample size’ but a willingness to participate based on my explanation of the research, my Personal Theories regarding academic writing all in the context of the 13 sessions and the perceived need of the academics concerned.

Regarding the second cohort and third group, namely, the HUM research participants their selection was the result of *snowball sampling* (Cohen & Manion, 1996, p.89). This is when a researcher comes across a small number of participants displaying required characteristics, in this case a willingness to participate based on my explanation of the research.

### 3.6.2 The practical sessions

The 13 practical sessions, to be described in Chapter Four, contained the theory and the practice of elements that, in my opinion, would contribute to improved writing practice among post graduate teaching staff in higher education. The primary elements were (i) active reading, (ii) academic writing strategies and (iii) computer-mediation. Each of these have formed the basis of this research and constitute my own practice during my career in higher education. A fourth element, mentorship, was included as a single practical session as I believed it could be useful for the groups to be exposed to this phenomenon.
A primary focus of this research and the topic of Session 9 of the sessions on academic writing, was an essay assessment instrument called ADaM. This instrument developed out of my own practice, as indicated in Chapter Two. Piloted in 2000, ADaM had been created to facilitate essay assessment by means of applying three sets of criteria. Although the instrument and its associated criteria was originally developed to facilitate students’ assessment of others’ and improvement of their own writing, in this study it was used to sensitise academic staff. Hence, rather than merely examining the effect of assessment, I decided to locate the writing assessment instrument in the context of the 13 practical sessions. I hoped that academics could engage with writing from a holistic perspective as I had been doing between 1988 to 2003.

3.6.3 Interviews

A consequence of the medium of television talk-shows is that interviews are commonplace and have a common bond with interviews conducted in research, namely, to generate information. Interviewing is widely applied when collecting qualitative research data and is dependant on a “person-to-person encounter” (Merriam, 1998, p.71). Such encounters range from highly structured to unstructured.

For the data collection procedure in this research I negotiated the time and date with the participants and then conducted an unstructured interview with each of the three groups. Firstly, this choice was based on the need to have a conversation with them in order to unearth appropriate feelings and thoughts regarding the 13 sessions they had experienced. I wanted the participants to offer critique on the writing assessment instrument in Session 9 of the 13 sessions and to reflect, retrospectively, on the entire process after completion of Session 13. It was unlikely that this could have been achieved effectively and in depth without conducting interviews. An inherent danger when using a structured
interview technique is that one merely solicits those notions predetermined by the researcher, something I tried, consciously, to avoid.

Unstructured interviews would also encourage participants to respond as peers in the research process rather than as subjects in an experiment. Using unstructured interviews should indicate that, as the researcher, I was not willing to engage in ‘predetermined notions’. Further, this should indicate that, through an exploratory process, I would want to glean the interviewee’s perspective of a phenomenon rather than superimpose my own.

Figure 3.2 Interview Structure Continuum (Merriam, 1998, p.73)

While I hoped to subscribe exclusively to an unstructured interview there were times when it was necessary to present a “mix of more or less structured questions” (Merriam, 1998, p.74) thereby subscribing to a semi-structured interview. This is indicated as the mid-point in the continuum illustrated in Figure 3.2 above. The essence of such an interview with mostly open-ended questions is to ensure that questions are worded flexibly so that there is an appropriate mix of semi-structured and unstructured questions.

In keeping with Schön’s (1995) notion of reflection-on-action and reflection-in-action in research such as this, it is important to identify and draw on respondents’ theory-in-action and their actual opinion rather than on their
espoused theories. While this is difficult to verify, I am of the opinion that there is a greater chance of obtaining realistic opinions during unstructured interviews.

The primary data for this research project was drawn from the content of transcribed interviews conducted with three groups of participants and held during 2003 and 2004. Participants volunteering in the research were exposed to 13 practical sessions during which two sets of interviews were held. The first set of interviews, held during Session 9, has been named the 1st Interview in this research, and the second set, held after the final Session 13, has been named the 2nd Interview.

The nature of knowledge, especially within the human sciences and the social sciences, has been changing over the years. Changes range from challenges to “epistemological paradigms or models of valid knowledge; research methods or how knowledge is produced; [to] cultural voices and social perspectives” (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, p.1). Researchers acknowledging such changes would also question their approaches to research methodologies and accompanying paradigms.

3.7 VALIDITY

Regardless of whether the existence of knowledge has been established, as in conventional hypothesis verifying research, or not, as in grounded theory where there is emergent theory, validity is an issue. In order to write about theory that is valid, I have attempted in this research to provide an “explanation of the data, not merely a shorthand description of them” Kaplan (1999, p.89).

I need to be aware that using interviews as research data can also provide a high level of invalidity because of researcher bias. However, Cohen and Manion (1996) suggest that overly structured interviews do not necessarily increase
validity. Cohen and Manion (1996) cite Kitwood (1977) who claims that when reliability of interview data is increased because of a greater structure, the validity of the interview is decreased. This is because of the absence of the “distinctively ‘human element’ in the interview” Cohen and Manion (1996, p.282).

Against these queries, I will cite Johnson’s (1997) three types of validity. The first type, descriptive validity, is to use an external observer to examine observations, something that was not realistic as it had taken a few weeks to develop a relationship of trust between the participants and I. The second type of validity is interpretive validity where there is an accurate portrayal of the meaning conveyed by participants. This is important because of the need to interpret the inner world of the participants. Johnson suggests that getting participants to see the transcripts and to provide feedback is important. In this case, all participants acknowledged telephonically that my interpretation of the interviews is correct and approved of the transcripts. I have also managed to get an outsider interpretation by getting an objective point of view of the data from an independent coder. This will be included in the analysis and the conclusion in this research. The third type of validity is theoretical validity. This is when theory emerging from the research is in line with the data and is justifiable. This will be addressed in the analysis in Chapter Five.

3.8 CONCLUSION

There are a few important points that need to be remembered in this chapter. Firstly, the research methodologies of action research and grounded theory appear similar in their peculiar underpinnings and both facilitate the emergence of something new. They also are both strongly rooted in reflection. However, the two issues to remember are that both methodologies served different purposes in this research.
Action research and reflective practice were significant in my own practice as an academic development practitioner. It was the plan-act-observe-reflect cycles that were a strong influence in the progress of academic development initiatives. This was at a time when there was little or no relevant theory from which to draw. There was also a useful similarity between the notion of process writing, using the draft-revise-draft method and the action research iterations. Action research was used as the driving force behind the development of ADaM and its data generation in the following chapter, Chapter Four. ADaM was part of a longitudinal action research process that led to my five personal theories and spawned the ADaM assessment instrument. ADaM is embedded in the writing component of the 13 practical sessions that will be described. Action research will also form a minor part of the reflective process of observing and reflecting during each session in the conducting of the practical sessions.

The collection and analysis of the data was underpinned by grounded theory using its three-layered coding process. This involved an iterative sorting and categorising process out of which, it is expected, that a theory would emerge. Grounded theory is what will be used to analyse the data in Chapter Five. The data gathering process during the 13 practical sessions will be described next in Chapter Four.
Chapter Four

DATA COLLECTION: THE BROAD BRUSHSTROKES

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Traditionally the research methodology chapter includes the data collection. I have chosen to separate the data collection from the theoretical justifications for my methodology. This enables me to allow the reader to shift focus to the central part of the study. Although the practical sessions were repeated with three groups, this chapter describes the 13 practical sessions just once. Any general observations made during each stage are also mentioned.

4.2 PREPARING THE PARTICIPANTS

As stated in Chapter Three, in 2003 I was invited to talk to interested staff in the Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology at HEI-5. There, I raised four issues. These were my personal theories on academic writing, the aim of a series of practical sessions on assessment and writing, what participants could gain from attending and what I hoped to gain from them, the
research participants. I was given two opportunities to address staff and decided on two presentations.

The first presentation was on what may be considered to be the superstructure of research, namely, the conventional positivist approach where research is required to refute or confirm hypotheses. This presentation was facilitated by a colleague who had collaborated with many research teams that had published a large number of local and international research papers in the field of medical science. Her focus was predominantly quantitative and she functioned comfortably in a positivist paradigm. This presentation does not form part of the data.

The second presentation was to the same group of interested staff, a fortnight later. It had a qualitative slant, was rooted in the interpretive paradigm and dealt with what may be considered to be the infrastructure of research. I presented this myself. It was necessary to present both perspectives so that those willing to participate had an idea of my ontology and post-positivist approach. I focused on reading skills, writing strategies including assessment of writing and the use of computer mediation for feedback. At the end of my presentation, I explained that the reason for conducting the 13 practical sessions for staff was to generate data for my research. In return, those participating would be sensitised to academic writing skills and assessment, which would assist them with their own post-graduate supervision. Five staff members, four full-time and one part-time staff teaching at both under-and post-graduate levels agreed to participate in the research. The four full-time staff were also supervising post-graduate research.

By the end of 2004, eight staff members from two different faculties had participated in the practical sessions. Three different groups were interviewed. Group 1 and Group 2 from the Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology (EBIT) and Group 3 from the Faculty of Humanities (HUM). All three groups participated in the data generation over a series of 13
practical sessions. While a total of eight staff participated in the practical sessions, as indicated in Table 4.1, only seven attended both the first and the second interviews. The two sets of interviews with each group were conducted during and after their attendance at the practical sessions.

Table 4.1 Data collection with Group 1 and 2 (EBIT) and Group 3 (HUM)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUP 1</th>
<th>1st SET OF INTERVIEWS DURING PRACTICAL SESSION 9</th>
<th>2nd SET OF INTERVIEWS AFTER PRACTICAL SESSION 13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EBIT</td>
<td>INTERVIEWED ALL PARTICIPANTS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• P: full-time lecturer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• M: full-time lecturer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• L: full-time lecturer and M student</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUP 2</th>
<th>1st SET OF INTERVIEWS DURING PRACTICAL SESSION 9</th>
<th>1st SET OF INTERVIEWS AFTER PRACTICAL SESSION 13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EBIT</td>
<td>INTERVIEWED ALL PARTICIPANTS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• MO: full-time lecturer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• W: part-time lecturer and M student</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUP 3</th>
<th>1st SET OF INTERVIEWS DURING PRACTICAL SESSION 9</th>
<th>1st SET OF INTERVIEWS AFTER PRACTICAL SESSION 13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HUM</td>
<td>INTERVIEWED 2 PARTICIPANTS*</td>
<td>INTERVIEWED 2 PARTICIPANTS*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• R: full-time lecturer</td>
<td>• R: full-time lecturer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• K: part-time lecturer and M student</td>
<td>• N: full-time lecturer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*N attended the practicals but not the interview, so R and K attended.</td>
<td>*K resigned, could not attend the interview, so only R and N attended.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3 DATA COLLECTION

The interaction with the participants was conducted through 13 practical sessions over one month and repeated thrice, once for each group. Each of the sessions, intended to be 90 minutes in duration, was to sensitise the participants to some theory and practice of writing and associated skills. My own point of view was that academic writing is a holistic process. Therefore, the assessment of writing
should be regarded as part of writing rather than as an isolated skill. Hence, it was necessary to select the specific elements, namely, active reading and academic writing, that I believed, could assist novice researchers or supervisors in making an informed choice when assessing writing. This was achieved via the third element, computer mediation. Assessment and feedback via computer mediation was core to the workshops. The assessment instrument, ADaM, was introduced in the academic writing sessions, and was the instrument that offered criteria for assessment with appropriate feedback for writers of research. I also introduced a single session on mentorship, which I believed, might interest participants from the point of view of supervision. The whole process was demarcated into four stages of development.

As mentioned earlier, my primary data came from the interviews but in the process of implementing these practical sessions, I reflected on my own practice. This occurred at the end of each of the four stages. These reflections appear as notes after each description and had an impact on what I did. However, they may or may not surface in the interviews.

Figure 4.1  Facilitating academic writing assessment
4.3.1 STAGE 1 – Mentorship

• The Rationale
One popular view of the origin of the term ‘mentor’ is that it originated from Homer’s epic poem called *The Odyssey*. If one accepts this explanation then through the observations of the original character Mentor, according to Anderson and Shannon (1995, pp.25-26), one may deduce four processes that describe mentoring activities. Firstly, mentoring is a process that is intentional, secondly it is nurturing, thirdly it is insightful and lastly it tends to be a protective and a supportive process.

• The Objective
I have accepted Roberts’ (2000) succinct description of mentoring, namely, that it is a ‘complex social and psychological activity’. This allows a greater degree of freedom to understand mentoring as a complex process as opposed to having to subscribe to definitive characteristics. The conventional notion of mentoring is a sharing of knowledge, skills and experience between an experienced person, the mentor, and a less experienced person, the mentee. The objective of this first stage of the practical sessions was to allow participants to decide for themselves whether or not to subscribe to the notion of mentorship in higher education.

Table 4.2 Outline of Session 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MENTORSHIP</th>
<th>SESSION 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduce mentoring and coaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>METHOD: Group work using the jigsaw method for cooperative learning. <strong>END</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• **Session 1**

In order to establish some level of collaboration among the participants, the single workshop on mentorship was presented as a co-operative learning experience. Each of the group’s members was given a different set of readings on mentoring. These readings covered three areas, namely, (i) types of mentoring as well as distinguishing between mentoring, coaching and therapy, (ii) perspectives on mentoring and some contemporary applications in native American communities, especially amongst women and (iii) some approaches to applying mentoring in higher education. After participants had read and then interpreted their readings on their own, they took turns explaining to their colleagues what they had read. Naturally, in EBIT Group 2 where there were two participants, I became the third participant in order to balance the collaboration. The aim was for the group finally to see the bigger picture of mentoring.

4.3.2 **STAGE 2 – Active reading**

• **The Rationale**

There is greater emphasis on reading in order to write at primary and secondary school level rather than in HEIs. At HEI level, it would be reasonable to assume that the foundations of critical literacy and seeing the connection between the need to read and to write had already been laid at school. More importantly, and in the context of this research, the ability to read well has a direct bearing on the manner “in which information from a source text is not only understood on its own terms, but is transformed in the hands of the writer” (Flower, Stein, Ackerman, Kantz, McCormick & Peck, 1990, p.6). An inherent danger exists when there is a focus on reading only. Students begin to regard information as a commodity to be consumed rather than regarding reading as part of the development of a higher literacy. This is in contrast with what Flower *et al.* (1990) refer to as “reading-to-write”, where reading is an integral part of what one thinks and writes.
• The Objective
Active reading was deemed a necessary element in the second stage of the practical sessions leading to writing assessment. It was important to revisit the assumption made above regarding the ‘foundations of critical literacy’, as post-graduate students and academic staff alike should be skilled readers but might not be. For this reason a pre-test and a post-test was administered to all participants. I believed it was appropriate to introduce Active Reading before Academic Writing and to provide participants with personal benchmarks of their reading competence via the pre-test and the post-test.

Table 4.3 Outline of Sessions 2–5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SESSION 2</th>
<th>SESSION 3</th>
<th>SESSION 4</th>
<th>SESSION 5</th>
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</table>

• Session 2
The reading skills and strategies presented to participants during the active reading workshops were based on a series of worksheets developed between 1990 and 2002. There were four sessions in the active reading workshops.

After the pre-test they were introduced to Session 2. This session presented an overview of reading specifically as an information-gathering process and drew attention to deep and surface learning as important elements in reading.

The idea of manually retrieving and storing information was introduced in Session 2. We explored, briefly, some factors that contribute to the collecting of information, namely, short- and long-term memory, communication theory, note
taking and writing, as well as listening and hearing. Scanning was introduced via a number of worksheets that facilitated this practice.

- **Session 3**
  In Session 3, the idea of reading by skimming was introduced as a forerunner to serious or close reading. There was emphasis on the participants using themselves as a benchmark in order to improve their skills. This could be achieved by focusing on constant reflection on personal improvement. This presented an opportunity for participants to see how action research could be used in different contexts but always to improve one’s practice. There was also an attempt to link reading and writing through the frequently posed question: “If a good writer writes for a reader, then does a good reader become a good writer?”

  Skimming exercise material consisted of participants bringing their own material, specifically, a newspaper article and a journal article. The journal article would be one with which they were familiar. Their task was to identify main ideas of the first three paragraphs of their reading, possible sub ideas of each and then to reach consensus on their interpretations with their partner who had supplied the article. The exercise was repeated with their newspaper articles. A time limit was set for completion of the task. In EBIT Group 1, where there three people, I became the fourth participant in order to balance the exercise.

- **Session 4**
  For Session 4 participants were introduced to specific strategies when using speed-reading for the technique of reading-on-ahead in order to increase prediction time (Buzan, 1988, pp. 146-149). They also had to make brief notes to recall what had been read. They also explored predicting both the content and the title of articles after reading only the final page of the articles. Predicting titles were based on deductions being made from skimming whole articles and close reading of those last page.
• **Session 5**
In Session 5, they applied their newly acquired reading strategies, namely, skimming, scanning and close reading. The classified section of various newspapers was used to generate scanning exercises. A random selection of the last pages of articles was taken from the 2002 series of the South African Journal of Higher Education for participants to skim read and to predict titles and contents based on their reading. Once they had completed these exercises, the reading post-test was administered.

• **Notes on Stage 2**
The reading sessions were meant to draw attention to the general importance of reading as complementary to writing. This was to raise awareness of what Flower *et al.* (1990) see as reading being an integral part of what one thinks and writes. The use of journal articles allowed participants to apply their prediction skills in an appropriate context.

The pre- and the post-test of their reading competence was my attempt at applying Personal Theory 1, namely, encouraging learners to grow at their own pace and Personal Theory 2, nurturing affective variables by raising self-esteem. The data collected, such as their reading scores, is not directly relevant to the research or the research question but important to participants’ sensitisation to a holistic approach to writing.

### 4.3.3 STAGE 3 - Academic writing

• **The Rationale**
Frank Smith (1994) sees strong links between reading and writing and believes that our learning from being exposed to writing means that we learn to write from reading. This is particularly true if one considers his belief of a tripartite alliance “that written language makes possible: a writer, a reader, and a text” (Smith 1994, p.87). If we pursue that to its logical conclusion, then although writing
needs reading, it is also true that reading does not need writing. While practice is needed, Smith (1994, p.194) also states that writing “is not a simple matter of transcribing on paper the letters of words whose spellings we already know”.

In order to be able to write words fluently Smith believes writers need to be inventive with all the tools at their disposal. Whether examining spelling, punctuation, or how essays are composed, there is “both a necessity and evidence that inventiveness exists… [and is informed by] knowledge gained from reading” (Smith 1994, p.196).

• **The Objective**
That writing is not just ‘transcribing onto paper the letters of words’ is supported by Flower, *et al.* who introduce the notion of a critical literacy. They suggest that while literacy is often a “receptive literacy, with its emphasis on getting information” (1990, p.5) critical literacy includes a “questioning and testing emphasis” (ibid.) and encourages a reader to engage in a “transforming emphasis” (ibid.) where facts may be converted into concepts or a policy may develop out of a concept. Critical literacy facilitates readers’ reducing information, interpreting it and then writing it up as a transformed and repackaged piece of writing.

I hoped that introducing participants to under-and to post-graduate writing would allow participants’ understanding and practice of critical literacy to surface. While the action of assessment is an unavoidable part of being in academia, I believe the practice of assessing and the accompanying process are often ignored. Hence the need for Stage 3 where ADaM could be part of the process.
Table 4.4 Outline of Sessions 6–9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SESSION 6</th>
<th>SESSION 7</th>
<th>SESSION 8</th>
<th>SESSION 9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACADEMIC WRITING</td>
<td>Writing at micro level use group’s own material - critique each other’s work METHOD: without using criteria, identify essays. That are “acceptable”</td>
<td>Writing at macro level and present ADaM. METHOD: Group-work then individual application.</td>
<td>Introduce ADaM writing assessment METHOD: Identify essays that are “acceptable or unacceptable” using ADaM and its criteria.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **The Rationale**
  The academic writing workshops represented a natural progression from the skills explored during active reading workshops. The assessment of writing was in the foreground of academic writing strategies. Suggested criteria for assessment of writing were introduced via the ADaM instrument. ADaM is the acronym for an instrument by which a writer may assess writing according to a gradually narrowing focus spread over three levels of criteria. These would be (i) at macro level, the appropriacy of the Audience addressed in the writing. Then (ii) the strategies to be used in the Development of the writing and finally (iii) the micro level Mechanics to be used to improve coherence and language usage. Hence, ADaM draws attention to three levels of criteria by which writing may be improved.

- **Session 6**
  Practical session 6 was for research participants to assess a piece of writing they had brought for me to use. Each participant was given a research paper without knowing that it was supplied by research participants in their group. After they had all assessed their respective essays they provided critique as well as suggestions for improvement. Then, those participants who had brought the papers and also read them, responded to the critique that was offered. An important point here was that their critique was based on personal judgement, that is, a gut response, and not any external criteria.
Session 7

Participants were presented with criteria used in ADaM and each section, that is, Audience, Mechanics and Development, was described and explained.

Participants were asked to explain what they understood by the term Audience in the context of writing. Once there was an indication of consensus regarding the term, participants were given three essay excerpts. Participants applied the ADaM criteria regarding Audience to all three papers and then, verbally, shared their views. There were two interpretations of audience, these were subsequently aired in EBIT Group 1’s 1st Interview transcript, from cell section 5 to cell section 14.

Participants were asked to examine each essay in order to determine the Development of the writing regarding the respective topics and the writing’s relevance to the topic. Also they needed to be familiar with the notion of cohesion that existed between paragraphs in the writing. ADaM’s section on the Development of writing was meant to be a bridge between the macro-level relevance of the writing in the Audience and the micro-level relevance in Mechanics.

Finally, participants examined the Mechanics of each piece of writing, namely, individual paragraph structure for coherence and language usage. They needed to make the distinction between cohesion that was logical writing and connections between paragraphs under Development and coherence that was logical writing and connections within paragraphs under Mechanics. The success of the examination would be determined by the sentence structure, appropriate use of transition words, appropriate use of abbreviations and the amount of attention given to spelling. Each criterion, that is, Audience, Development and Mechanics of writing, could be scored on the equivalent of a yes-no scale that also appeared in the centre of the instrument (see Figure 2.7 in Chapter Two).
The focus of the session for participants to develop the notion of what was either acceptable or unacceptable in assessing writing based on the suggested criteria in the ADaM instrument.

- **Session 8**
  During practical session 8, participants were given the original ADaM writing assessment instrument (see Figure 2.7 in Chapter Two). This was supported by a further set of essays that were excerpts from 1st year, 3rd year and post-graduate writing as well as an excerpt of a conference paper on Writing Centres. They were asked to assess and to provide verbal feedback on the essays and the conference paper using the ADaM assessment instrument. This was followed by each participant presenting their understanding of the use of criteria when assessing writing. Participants were requested to compare their suggestions and attempt, verbally, to reach consensus.

At the end of this session, permission was sought from each participant for an audio recording to be made in session 9. There were no objections.

- **Session 9**
  In practical session 9, each participant was given a series of papers to assess. Participants were given two journal articles that, again, they had provided. Articles were sent to me electronically so suppliers of papers would not get what they sent to me. Their task was to use ADaM to determine whether or not the articles’ Audience, Development and Mechanics were appropriately constructed.

Once completed they were given the last page of two journal articles and asked to skim-read them. Their task was to speculate on the contents of the entire article and to predict, verbally, the article’s title. During each exercise, tasks were done individually and results presented to the group. Although this had been done previously the idea behind the repetition was to increase their time and improve their prediction ability.
This session was audio recorded, a request made during Session 8. The SONY cassette recorder (model TCM-4000DV) used, had a voice operated recording (VOR) facility. This would be activated when there was any sound, such as voice, within its range. This allowed me to leave the recorder activated in VOR mode, which would start recording and then pause automatically when there was silence without my hindering dialogue or distracting participants.

All transcriptions of the audio recordings done during Session 9 were referred to as emanating from the 1st set of Interviews and constitute the first set of data for this research.

- Notes on Stage 3

All three groups had become accustomed to my facilitation and approach and this appeared to have created the appropriate atmosphere for the 1st set of Interviews. As two of the three participants in EBIT Group 1 were the more experienced, they spent much time sharing classroom anecdotes with their junior colleague. Their anecdotes were, at times intimidating for the third participant but also provided a level of explanation from which lessons could be learnt. EBIT Group 2 and HUM Group 3 had a similar scenario where in each group one person was more confident than the other.

It is important to record that ADaM was amended by EBIT Group 1 and EBIT Group 2. EBIT Group 1 suggested that in the ADaM category of Development, I should add “Layout is appropriate and consistent”. I did so and added the other criterion under “Unacceptable”. After the 2nd set of interviews the same group recommended “No abbreviations – words written out in full” should be added to the category of Mechanics. EBIT Group 2 suggested the addition of “Referencing is consistent” under ADaM’s Development. This was another good suggestion. I added it as well the other criterion under “Unacceptable”.

85
The idea of ADaM not bearing any numerical value during the assessment process was because I wanted to tap into what I considered to be the academics’ internal template of assessment. However, in 2003, both EBIT Group 1 and Group 2 were unanimous in their view that a numerical value was a necessity as it was something with which all staff were familiar as assessors. Their rationale for a five-point scale was that they could estimate the degree to which students’ writing fell outside the category of the writing being ‘acceptable’. By the time I had reached HUM Group 3 in 2004, the ADaM instrument (Figure 2.7 in Chapter 2) had a scale in its centre.

The fact that EBIT staff were technology experts appeared to help them to function differently as they consistently seemed to apply the equivalent of lateral thinking to puzzle through the written exercises and to offer critique.

4.3.4 STAGE 4 – Computer mediation

- The Rationale
A growing number of studies indicate that there are significant differences in composing essays when using a word processor compared to conventional handwriting. Hartley, Howe and McKeachie (2001) suggest that the effect of computer-aided technology on the way we write is merely cosmetic. This is supported by Kellogg (1994, pp. 143-144) who suggests that while a word processor may reorganise the time and mental effort spent on writing, “it does not amplify performance…[because] it fails to affect knowledge use, writing quality, and fluency”.

- The Objective
A perspective of writing centres and subsidiary writing support facilities, such as online learning where there is exclusive use of word processors, is that it attempts to address two important needs. This would include those researchers or writers writing in English as Another Language. These needs are “(1) error
correction… and (2) conflict resolution through increased interactivity” (Rilling, 2005, p.359). I subscribe to both. The first need, ‘error correction’, is embedded in my Personal Theory 3. In the context of writing, the second need is also crucial as computer-aided technology can help students’ writing, especially when there is a need “to give and receive feedback on other students’ ideas” (Lindblom-Ylänne & Pihlajamäki, 2003, p.19). In my opinion, the need for feedback and critique from staff is appropriate and necessary whether students are in an online learning environment or in a conventional face-to-face teaching environment.

Table 4.5 Outline of Sessions 10→13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SESSION 10</th>
<th>SESSION 11</th>
<th>SESSION 12</th>
<th>SESSION 13</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMPUTER-MEDIATION</td>
<td>Computer mediation with MS Comment + reading and writing skills METHOD: Use the computer + ADaM to assess essays and to compare and contrast scores.</td>
<td>Computer mediation using MS Comment METHOD: Use the computer + ADaM to assess essays and to compare and contrast scores.</td>
<td>Computer mediation using MS Comment METHOD: Use the computer + ADaM to assess essays and to compare and contrast scores. END.</td>
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Session 10 to 13 on Computer-Mediation was a synthesis of all previous sessions, that is, sessions 2-5 on Active Reading and sessions 6-9 on Academic Writing. The intention was to provide participants with a holistic approach to elements of writing thereby increasing their confidence in the assessment of writing.

- **Session 10**
  Session 10 comprised a practical word-processing session where participants were asked to complete fundamental tasks. That procedure was to be followed by an introduction and structured drill and practice of a feature contained in the word-processing program. This feature, Microsoft Comment®, allows reviewers to review any pieces of written work and to offer comments to the respective
writers. These comments are displayed in what Microsoft® (MS) refers to as “balloons” in the right margin in MS Word 2003®. The length and type of reviewer response would depend on the extent of the error. I opted for the MS Comment® feature because it contains what are called “balloons”, inside which one writes comments.

Figure 4.2 Example of MS Comment® application

| Comment(R1): check the character spacing |
| Comment(R2): Suggest a brief description of Jam Alley be given |
| Comment(R3): Misplaced comma (unnecessary and should be omitted) |
| Comment(R4): Recheck referencing style - see Harvard referencing guide |
| Comment(R5): Cannot start a para with THUS - para not logically connected (Suggest begin with ‘Television…’) |

(It will) be good to know that (Jam Alley) has been a popular subject of discussion among youth(,) and the relating of those programmes to the everyday life of viewers that moves television into a further dimension from that which ends at the viewing moments. Indeed, talking about television programmes and what has happened in them in making a programme popular, and is part of the cultural capital of general discourses (op cit :167).

Thus, television programmes like “Jam Alley” are discussed in as much as the soaps such as “Generations” and “Isidingo”. According to Matabane in (Drummond et al., 1988:125), television has been described as a ‘cultural forum’ reflecting various

These “balloons”, the equivalent of miniature MS Word® text boxes on the right hand side of the page in Figure 4.2, provide reviewers reading MS Word® documents with the option of offering suggestions to authors. A reviewer could type brief suggestions into the balloons that range from comments on typographical to linguistic to research methodology variations as indicated above in Figure 4.2. In other words, “balloon” comments would comprise reviewer rationale for suggested changes to authors, compared to merely tracking changes already made, as is done, for instance, in MS Track Changes®.

Participants were given an electronic version, what may be referred to as a “soft copy” of a one-page handout of a fictitious course in Entrepreneurship (Appendix
A). I had written this document with superficial and consistent errors in spelling and in the grammar. Participants had to read the handout and assess it using common sense language and spelling rules. Participants needed to identify inconsistencies and errors and then to offer constructive critique for changes by typing their critique into MS Comment® balloons. An error-filled soft copy on ICT was also included (Appendix A). Again, participants were requested to compare suggestions and attempt to arrive at some consensus.

- **Session 11**

Participants were given soft copies of written work (Appendix B) and requested to continue with their simulation of the assessment of writing. This meant they had to identify what they, as reviewers, perceived to be examples of writer inconsistencies or errors in the soft copies. Then they were to use MS Comment® to record constructive critique as feedback to those writers, wherever and if it was deemed necessary. For these sessions, participants were requested to use ADaM as a guide to their essay assessment and to complete the task on a computer.

In addition they had to compare and contrast two versions of an essay called Worms, Words and other creatures (Appendix G) and then to choose the most acceptable version. Participants were also introduced to task words and their function. They were given examples of these words in hard copy and then shown some of the multitude of online writing laboratories (OWLs) overseas and the free soft copy resources that were available at these sites. Examples of resources were lists of task words and how and where they should be used. There were also numerous worksheets of common grammar and style errors, such as, sentence sprawl, faulty parallelism, incorrect pronoun case and pronoun references, commas and apostrophes.
• **Session 12**
The same procedure in the previous session was followed in both **Session 12** and Session 13. Soft copies of a paper were presented to participants and they were requested to simulate an assessment of writing by using MS Comment® to record constructive critique as electronic feedback to the author. The first three pages of a draft research paper on communication theory was used for participants as an exercise in assessment. Participants were required to apply the ADaM criteria to assess the levels of writing but also to wear their supervisor hats when assessing. The experience and understanding of supervision allowed participants to add value to this stage of the research.

• **Session 13**
The same procedure was followed as in the previous session. A soft copy of a paper was presented to participants and they were requested to simulate an assessment of writing verbally. They were to view the paper individually and then discuss their responses within the group. Again, participants needed to apply the ADaM criteria to assess the levels of writing as well as to wear their supervisor hats when assessing.

• **Notes on Stage 4**
Understandably, I spent only a few minutes introducing word-processing and the Comment feature with EBIT Groups 1 and 2, as they were more than competent. EBIT Group 1 came to each of the last stage, sessions 10 to 13, with their own laptops. I spent an hour with HUM Group 3 in a pre-booked laboratory so I could provide them with desktop computers and assist them. They were intimidated by the use of Comment but appeared to understand what was required.

In addition, the few soft copies of worksheets that are in the appendix were part of my establishing the context for this set of practical sessions. The purpose was not to assess how effectively they used Comment but for them to internalise the use of ADaM and the worksheets they were exposed to throughout the sessions.
I was not assessing their competence as assessors of writing. However, I was assessing their response to being sensitised to the writing process and their ability to reflect on that process. This is in keeping with my hunch that academics have a well developed internal template of what is acceptable and what is unacceptable in formal and structured writing.

Post Workshop 13: AUDIO RECORDING

• The Rationale
As participants had been introduced to the audio-recording process during session 9, it was assumed that the final recording session would be conducted in a more relaxed atmosphere. Again, the voice operated recording (VOR) facility allowed me to leave the recorder activated in VOR mode, starting the recording and then allowing the recorder itself to pause automatically during periods of silence without hindering dialogue or distracting any of the participants.

All transcriptions of the audio recordings done after Session 13 will be referred to in Chapter 6 as the 2nd Interview. This comprises the second set of data for this research.

While it is also important to have negotiated a specific time for this final recording to have taken place at participants’ convenience, such a recording needed to be held as soon as possible after the final workshop so that participants could reflect constructively on their experience.

4.4 METHOD OF ANALYSIS

The three types of coding mentioned in Chapter Three will be described in detail in relation to this research.
4.4.1 **Open Coding**

- **PROCEDURE**
  
  In order to facilitate the process I opted to start the analysis by placing each of the six transcripts in a table format of four columns alongside each other to initiate the open coding procedure. The first column contained the number of the row, the second column contained the original transcript, and the third column any words, phrases or sentences from the transcript that appeared significant. The fourth column contained memos written to myself regarding the data selected in the third column.

  As codes are likely to change within the parameters of theoretical comparisons, one has to remain aware of becoming “insensitive, or even defensive” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p.46) to questions that raised elements of doubt regarding any initial hypotheses. I needed to be open to all possibilities rather than seeing the data as converging on a hunch. This would encourage the formation of concepts, which Strauss and Corbin (1998, p.103) refer to as labeled phenomena, namely, events described in abstract form.

- **LABELING**
  
  As labeling allowed for events to be classified, labeled phenomena contain different classes of events. This system of classifying data into phenomena or into categories allowed for similar categories also to be consolidated into broader categories with similar properties. So, within any set of data, ongoing questioning or comparative analysis lead to the discovery of further phenomena.

  During the theoretical comparison phase, I first experienced coagulation of data, a clustering of labels under a subcategory, indicating a possible emergence of patterns of meaning. In the six interview transcripts, for instance, this process of constant comparison occurred within an interview but gradually started to become evident in similar data between transcripts. As similar categories emerged, I attempted to consolidate categories in a way that would further increase data diversity.
• MEMOING
Alongside and during this process of making theoretical comparisons, arising from the data interrogation, were my personal interpretations, referred to as memoing. A memo was written into column four of the table as a comment on significant text, namely, a word, a sentence or a paragraph in the transcript. Firstly, that significant text was extracted from the transcript in column two then placed in column three. Secondly, I would reflect on why that text was selected by writing a personal memo to myself into column four for later reflection. This process of memoing is another dimension of identifying evidence in the data, some of which could lead to constructive triangulation.

• SORTING
All memos underwent multiple sorting processes to determine whether or not they belong to one or another category. Naturally there could also be a number of subcategories with slightly different properties, yet linked to the initial category. In short, while coding allowed data to surface, memoing generated links that made visible the emerged categories and their subsequent relationships.

Categories and subcategories were created and subsequently renamed in the sorting process where constant comparison was implemented within each interview and subsequently between interviews. The constant comparison procedure of both initial interview data and that of the final interview data were kept apart until it appeared that a point of saturation had been reached. Only then were categories and subcategories compared and contrasted across all the initial and final interview data. This was to ensure that there was a foundation for later theoretical comparisons. This sorting was part of the iterative and dynamic procedure followed during open coding and felt like an action research process in fast-forward mode. This ended once it appeared that a saturation point in the coding had been reached. The final open coding list was used to feed into the axial coding procedure.
There are countless ways of initiating an open coding approach to coding data, but all methods should allow the researcher to arrive at a similar point. This would assist with the conceptualising process so that some form of grouping occurs within the categories, and their subsequent properties suggest possible and emerging links among them. In order to achieve rigor, these properties need to exhibit a range of dimensions thereby indicating some form of depth. An illustration of the notion of dimensional variation among properties is their range represented within a continuum.

4.4.2 Axial Coding
Strauss and Corbin (1998. p.124) suggest that the second stage, axial coding, is specifically to initiate the “process of reassembling data fractured during open coding”. Axial coding helps organise the data into categories and properties generated by the open coding process and, at a level of subcategories, seeks relationships and links. Such links should be found during the emergence of unearthed properties and their related dimensions. While some categories would have been generated during open coding, the actual relationships start to emerge during axial coding.

• PROCEDURE
The term ‘axial coding’ may be clarified within the following four procedures that I needed to undertake. Firstly, I had to unearth the properties of possible categories and find possible conditions under which these would occur. This was initiated during the open coding. Secondly, I needed to identify any characteristic conditions, actions and interactions and possible consequences linked to unearthed phenomena. An axial coding rationale is to examine the link between structure and process. Structure, or those conditions leading to why I needed to sensitise staff teaching post-graduates to reflect on writing, and process, namely the actions and interactions of staff and their departments or HEIs to the challenge of producing coherently written academic research. Both structure and process are linked. If I had isolated them, then structure would merely have
informed me why post graduate teaching staff appear to know or not know about the academic writing process and not how that had occurred. In similar vein, process on its own would have informed me how post-graduate teaching staff responded to the issue of writing in the past, but not necessarily why they done so. Hence the need to examine both the structure (why) and the process (how) in axial coding.

• CONDITIONS
Within the structure and process is the notion of conditions. It is those conditions, according to Strauss and Corbin (1998, p. 130) that lead to “create the situations, issues, and problems”. Such conditions result in people responding to situations either in one particular way or another. A causal condition may be regarded as the presence of post-graduate teaching staff in an HEI and the need for them to supervise research at postgraduate level. In the above example there could be a situation where such staff are working with novice researchers who are incompetent writers and thinkers. These would constitute intervening conditions that diminish the effect of the causal condition. How staff respond to such possibly routine situations is through their understanding of the casual and intervening conditions in the context of their resultant strategic actions/interactions. They may need to implement a strategic action as a result of students’ poor writing competence but as post-graduate teaching staff they may not have the strategies with which to initiate this strategic actions. In the above hypothetical illustration, staff could either respond negatively or positively. That would result in natural consequences regarding their strategic actions/interactions. For instance offering a writing course would be an intervention that would be a strategic action but a negative attitude of post-graduate students towards such an intervention would be an unforeseen consequence.

It must be noted that Strauss and Corbin (1998, p. 47) recommend that the coder should be wary as “it is not the researcher’s perception or perspective that
matters but rather how the research participants see events or happenings” (original underlined by authors). This would ensure that the analysis is based on what Strauss and Corbin (1998, p. 126) refer to as: “(a) the actual words used by respondents and (b) our conceptualization of these”.

4.4.3 Selective Coding

The practice of constant comparison is the comparison between data, in this case, the six interviews. The final stage was selective coding. Open coding would generate categories and consequent properties that allowed for finding systematic relationships between categories and properties. The resultant coagulation of categories and properties into a latticework of relationships is called selective coding. Here, during selective coding, Strauss and Corbin (1998, p.143) suggest that the “process of integrating and refining categories” leads to the emergence of theory.

The ongoing process of constantly comparing the data and refining categories generated growing levels of abstraction. During the selective coding it was important, if not likely, to see a central category emerging. Naturally, if such a central core category was aligned to the research then that would allow the theory to emerge.

4.5 CONCLUSION

The session on mentorship appeared to have been the dullest of all sessions. Initially, I was pleased that I had not spent too much time on that particular area. It appeared to be a personal issue as to whether or not they would be willing to be mentors or coaches in their respective departments.

Most of the reading session seemed also to be misplaced here and not all participants were as enthusiastic as I had hoped. I shortened the duration of
each reading session for EBIT Group 2 and that seemed to have improved their enthusiasm. The only useful part of these reading sessions appeared to have been the pre- and post-test comprehension administered at the start of session 2 and at the end of session 5. Each if the three groups enjoyed both the pre-and the post-tests and responded positively to them.

The writing sessions that revolved around ADaM stimulated the participants. Many things that I had started to take for granted, were novel strategies for them. One example was task word lists and accessing online writing laboratories for useful sources to assist with the mechanics of writing. Another example was the use of strategies to assist in the development of writing such as understanding the structure, namely main- sub- and supporting ideas.

Understanding the process of reflection-in-action was invaluable for me as a facilitator and practitioner since I was conscious that the recorded sessions were crucial for observing and for data gathering. There were also times when I was forced to be patient, for example, when groups were unable to keep their appointments to attend practical sessions. This happened a few times and only when I forced myself to reflect-on-action, that is, on my “demands” as opposed to the participants’ needs, was I able to come to terms with various realities.

Chapter Five will examine the analysis of the research, namely, an analysis of the transcript data using a grounded theory approach to facilitate a coding procedure.
5.1 INTRODUCTION

The research question from Chapter One is: Can a writing assessment instrument be used to sensitise staff teaching post-graduates to reflect on the complex nature of the production and the assessment of academic writing?

In order to answer this question it was necessary to interrogate the interview transcripts to see whether there was evidence with which to respond to the research question. The coding procedures of grounded theory will allow that question to be answered fully before the end of this chapter as systematic analysis is likely to unearth appropriate evidence. In this chapter, I will use grounded theory to construct an interpretation around the data. The analysis will present a series of relationships generated first by open coding, then axial coding and will conclude with selective coding. This will constitute the interpretation of the data represented by two sets of interviews with each of the three groups in the research.
These three different groups of staff teaching post-graduate students at HEI-5 generated data from the 13 practical sessions described in Chapter Four. In line with the notion of triangulation and interpretive validity there was a need for an outsider perspective. All six transcripts of the 1st set and the 2nd set of interviews of EBIT Group 1, EBIT Group 2 and HUM Group 3 were given to an independent coder for input.

The independent coder, a senior higher education practitioner, with the coded name ALD, was not an expert in the four areas of focus in the practical sessions but had the experience of having supervised a number of dissertations and theses and had also been an external examiner for some HEIs. ALD was given all six interviews in their open coding form. By focusing exclusively on the significant text extracted as part of the open coding process, she commented on its relevance to the research question. Extracts of her response (Appendix E) will also be included in this analysis. As a first stage of the analysis, the focus will be on my interpretation of the data (the transcripts) hence the following sub-section on open coding does not include comments from ADL. Her comments are used as a means of validation in the axial coding process.

5.2 OPEN CODING

The 1st and 2nd set of interview transcripts of EBIT Group 1, EBIT Group 2 and HUM Group 3 comprised 200 pages in coded tabular format. The transcript of the interviews is a separate addendum to this study. Transcripts were analysed using grounded theory consisting of open coding, then axial coding and finally selective coding.

The open coding procedure commenced with a microanalysis of the transcript data as explained in section 4.4.1 in Chapter Four. Hence, the analyses contained a number assigned to the utterance in column one, each participant’s
utterance was in the second column, the selected text was in the third column and the memo was in the fourth column. The fourth column memos became the basis for the analysis. The coded name of each participant appears at the start of each utterance as a letter, hence, EBIT Group 1 are “L”, “M”, “P”; EBIT Group 2 are “MO”, “W”, “K”, and HUM Group 3 are “N” and “R”. As interviewer I have been represented as “@”.

Table 5.1 Example of the open coding process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROW</th>
<th>UTTERANCE (line of transcript)</th>
<th>SELECTED TEXT</th>
<th>MEMO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>@: Or…?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>W: …or umm…this will sound silly…</td>
<td>• this will sound silly</td>
<td>Trial and error</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>@: No, no…go ahead…</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>W: Or someone different… someone wrote for them or…</td>
<td>• someone different… someone wrote</td>
<td>really perceptive - she’s hypothesising about it indicating she has a hunch about the writing!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next part of the procedure, after multiple readings of the interview transcripts, was to separate the memos from their respective utterance. This was achieved by cutting out over two hundred memos from the six interviews so I could start the sorting process. I would be looking for recurring themes in order to find out whether “certain bits of the data [had] something in common” (Denscombe, 2003, p. 119) and to see if they fitted into broader categories. According to Strauss and Corbin (1998, p.130), “categories stand for phenomena [where the analyst is] looking for repeated patterns of happenings, events or actions/ interactions” representing utterances or actions. Such ‘happenings, events or actions/ interactions’ would be participants’ response to situations in which they found themselves. Seeking phenomena would enable me to find common pools of data so I could start to specify concepts and seek relationships. According to Glaser and Strauss (1967) this is the first step towards building theory.

Each set of memos was kept apart and sorted into their respective 1st and 2nd set of interviews sections throughout the coding procedures. Firstly, the grouping
of the memos resulted in categories. There were 11 categories from the 70 memos. It was at this point that I started to introduce the third research paradigm, mixed methods research, as described in section 3.3 in Chapter Three. It was necessary to employ a specific data display in order to present a clear picture of the interview transcripts. This was done by incorporating a quantitative approach to depict the data, as presented in this chapter.

Table 5.2 below illustrates how emerged categories were placed in three broad areas of “Participant Opinion, “Reflection on Meta-learning” and “Reflection on sessions 1-9”. These are the descriptive headings for the categories that had emerged through sorting and accounted for the placement of all memos within the 1st set of interview data. Once I had reduced all of the 1st set of interview data to the least number of categories with subcategories or properties, I believed that I had reached saturation point in the data sorting process. Glaser and Strauss (1967, p.36) remind us that “both categories and properties are concepts indicated by the data (and not the data itself)”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTICIPANT OPINIONS</th>
<th>REFLECTION ON META-LEARNING</th>
<th>REFLECTION ON SESSIONS 1-9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supervision (2)</td>
<td>Critique (10)</td>
<td>Reading (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking a stance (3)</td>
<td>Writing (6)</td>
<td>ADaM (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Writer influence (1)</td>
<td>Assessing writing (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experience vs theory (7)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning approach - me (4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning approach-them (12)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL = 70 memos</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Saturation is that period after sorting and labeling when there is no more data to grow new properties into a category which is a “conceptual element of a category” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p.36). For instance, “Writing” is a conceptual
element or category in all tables in this chapter while “Assessment” and “Audience” which appear later, are its properties. I have regarded the two terms properties and subcategories as interchangeable. While the broad principles of grounded theory have been described in Chapter Four, it was necessary to present the detail here, at this point, so the reader would have a clear idea of procedure.

The three descriptive headings above arose once memos had been subjected to a process of constant comparison, also called theoretical comparison. The constant comparison, led to the discovery of phenomena from which emerged patterns of meaning. In this case, the first descriptive heading, “Participant Opinions”, contained interview memos representing what seemed to be personal opinion of the participants. These memos contained neither a theoretical basis nor a reference to experience and represented a relatively superficial point of view. The second descriptive heading, “Reflection on meta-learning”, contained memos based on the utterances in the context of experience and knowledge of meta-theory and had greater theoretical substance. The third descriptive heading, “Reflection on sessions 1→9” contained memos rooted in the context of the interviews held during the practical sessions.

As indicated in Chapter Four (section 4.4), the coding of personal feelings had to be excluded. The purpose of a grounded theory approach is to assist the researcher to gather data from which theory will be generated.

Table 5.3 below has been amended and all third columns, containing “Selected text” seen in the Table 5.1 example, have been omitted. This three column format will appear in all transcript excerpts in Chapter Five. For ease of reading, the memos in all transcript excerpts that will appear in column three, also will not be presented in their original bold format as in the appendices, but will be italicized.
In the third column in Table 5.2 above, there are 25 memos in the area of “Reflection on sessions 1→9”. During the sorting procedure, one memo was about MO, from EBIT Group 2, describing her student days and problems encountered when reading.

Table 5.3 Excerpt from EBIT Group 2, 1st set of Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROW</th>
<th>EXCERPT FROM TRANSCRIPT</th>
<th>MEMO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>191</td>
<td>MO: its hard to read – when we’re studying we’re also using the dictionary</td>
<td>this is the second time she has mentioned this as a “retarding factor in her reading”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Initially, this memo from EBIT Group 2’s 1st set of Interviews (ROW 191), belonged to the descriptive heading “Reflection on sessions 1→9” indicated in Table 5.4(a). I also had to re-categorise ADaM because, as an instrument, ADaM could not be classified as a category if a category represented “a conceptual element of theory” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p.36). The ADaM properties were subsumed under the “Assessing Writing” category. Table 5.4(a) contains a newer version of the open coding of the 1st set of interviews with 9 categories. Categories are bulleted in the table and the quantity of memos, represented as properties, are in brackets.

Table 5.4(a) OPEN CODING: 1st set of interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTICIPANT OPINIONS</th>
<th>REFLECTION ON META-LEARNING</th>
<th>REFLECTION ON SESSIONS 1→9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• SUPERVISION (2)</td>
<td>• PROCESS WRITING (4)</td>
<td>• READING (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• EXPERIENCE vs THEORY (7)</td>
<td>• ASSESSING WRITING (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• LEARNING APPROACH THEM (18)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• WRITER INFLUENCE (2)</td>
<td>• TOTAL = 70 memos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• LEARNING APPROACH IDEA (4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• CRITIQUE (8)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It became obvious from the various categories that there were still overlapping areas of commonality. Additional scrutiny resulted in creating an anchor phrase “Theory and Practice”. Under this anchor phrase three categories emerged
during the constant comparison of properties. These were “Reading”, “ADaM” and “Assessing writing”.

This constant comparison within and then across respective properties is important for the rigor for the final stage of theory generating during selective coding. The same procedure and subsequent reduction of categories occurred in the first two areas. Under descriptive heading “Participant Opinions”, it will be noticed that the category “Taking a stance” in Table 5.2 above was subsumed and does not appear in the revision. The refined version of the open coding analysis appears in Table 5.4 (b).

Table 5.4(b) OPEN CODING: 1\textsuperscript{st} set of interviews – refined version

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTICIPANT OPINIONS</th>
<th>REFLECTION ON META-LEARNING</th>
<th>REFLECTION ON SESSIONS 1\textsuperscript{st}</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PERSONAL OPINION</td>
<td>WRITING AS PRACTICE</td>
<td>THEORY and PRACTICE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUPERVISION (2)</td>
<td>PROCESS WRITING (4)</td>
<td>READING (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WRITER INFLUENCE (2)</td>
<td>ASSESSING WRITING (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LEARNING</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EXPERIENCE vs THEORY (7)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LEARNING APPROACH \rightarrow THEM (18)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LEARNING APPROACH \rightarrow ME (4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CRITIQUE (8)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL = 70 memos</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The sorting process was determined by my open coding statement: “if there is a common set of statements, then they must be linked conceptually and not just descriptively”. This helped the sorting and categorising of the 1\textsuperscript{st} set of interviews in Table 5.2, as well as in the refined version in Table 5.4 (b), and was applied to the 2\textsuperscript{nd} set of interview transcripts. Subsequently, coding became more complex. The initial version of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} set of interview data is indicated in Table 5.5.
In the 2\textsuperscript{nd} set of the interview sorting procedure, categories such as “Transformation” and “Professional Development” appeared. In the context of the interviews, these categories substantiated some participant frustration. An example can be seen from EBIT Group 2 in Table 5.6 regarding the power relations in the department between junior and senior staff and with the HUM Group 3 in Table 5.7 regarding management’s insensitivities in their department.

Table 5.6   Excerpt from EBIT Group 2, 2\textsuperscript{nd} set of Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROW</th>
<th>TRANSCRIPT</th>
<th>MEMO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>138.</td>
<td>MO: there was this student last year who came after the 2 weeks – the period in which we take enquiries – but we lost her papers – I know her and she was in my class – so she came to me for help – now I didn’t have powers – WL has powers – so I thought we could give her an oral or something</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>139.</td>
<td>@: mmm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>140.</td>
<td>MO: WL said: “I am not going to listen to this – just tell that student she has to fail and then write a supplementary…”</td>
<td><em>Now it becomes power play rather than their facilitating learning</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.7  Excerpt from HUM Group 3, 2nd Interview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROW</th>
<th>TRANSCRIPT</th>
<th>MEMO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>369.</td>
<td>N: actually what... actually what we...we took a deliberate decision that we'll engage dialogue differently ... you know ...we switch the conversation to things that we want...</td>
<td>They have decided to facilitate transformation by taking a stand in the context of engagement with their HOD. A very good first step...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>370.</td>
<td>@: things that matter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>371.</td>
<td>N: that matter - issues of ...diversity and... only then we noticed things began to change and our HOD realized what was being missed...we were called to come and address them - doing the mentoring - something for the department</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I was surprised at the volume of reflection on “Mentorship”, as noted in Table 5.5 where 24 properties emerged. It was unexpected as I had spent only one session on that area. There was muted interest by participants during those sessions but little or no discussion on it during the 1st set of interviews which was the first forum for participant reflection after they were exposed to concepts of Mentorship in practical session 1. Almost all reflection on “Mentorship” appeared during the 2nd set of interviews. Although “Mentorship” started as a category during open coding, further interrogation indicated the complexity of the memos resulting in four new categories with “Mentorship” as anchor phrase.

Structured development of property labels in the open coding was noticeable. This is illustrated in the refined version in Table 5.8 below. Again, an increasing level of abstractness was evident where, for instance, there were changes in the grouping of categories under the category “Mentorship”. A new anchor phrase “Writing Practice” was included.

Patterns began to appear as new categories emerged and faded during each re-sorting process. Each time memos were re-examined, new perspectives came to light as the piles of memos constantly shifted into new categories. The 12 categories in the original version of the 2nd set of interview data were finally re-sorted. They changed into 15 categories which could further be clustered together to form five anchor phrases, namely, “Personal Opinion”, “Writing
I believe that being able to experience this development was based on my having engaged in manual sorting rather than using computer technology to organise the whole process. This manual manipulation process also provided me with a vantage point from which to see data gradually coagulate.

A notable proportion of the 1st set of interview data in Table 5.4 (b) was reflection on “Assessing Writing” (16) using ADaM. Reflection on “Reading” (9 memos) was a relatively insignificant part of the total number of memos in the 1st set of interviews. Also noted in Table 5.4(b) and Table 5.8, was the emergent reflection on “Supervision” (2 memos) - and examples appear in Table 5.8(a) and 5.8 (b). The general issues related to “Learning” (37 memos) - an example appears in Table 5.8(c) - constituted more than 50% of the total of 70 memos.

Table 5.8 OPEN CODING: 2nd set of Interviews - refined version

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTICIPANT OPINIONS</th>
<th>REFECTION ON META-LEARNING</th>
<th>REFECTION ON SESSIONS 10→13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PERSONAL OPINION</td>
<td>WRITING PRACTICE</td>
<td>THEORY and PRACTICE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Taking a stance (7)</td>
<td>• Writing (4)</td>
<td>• Assessment (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MENTORSHIP</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Learning (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Approach (7)</td>
<td>• Beliefs (8)</td>
<td>• Computer Awareness(7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Types (7)</td>
<td>• Inspiration (2)</td>
<td>• Their reaction (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIGHER EDUCATION</td>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL = 117 MEMOS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Other (6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Transformation(6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Graduate/ supervision issues(12)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Interpersonal dynamics (9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Professional development (19)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the 2\textsuperscript{nd} set of interviews, there was significant participant reflection in the following categories:

- professional development (for instance, EBIT Group 1, 2\textsuperscript{nd} set of interview memos of ROWS 7, 12, 73, 79, 229);
- supervision (for instance, HUM Group 3, ROWS 7, 257, 261); and
- mentorship (for instance, EBIT Group 2, ROWS 79, 83, 85,142,146).
The above references to the evidence can be verified from the corresponding rows in the transcript. This mode of indicating the evidence is an attempt to consolidate the analysis.

The need for mentorship and the negative effects of power play (ROWS 180-150) in higher education were significant in the reflection of EBIT Group 2’s 2nd interview. HUM Group 3 reflected on the significance of computer mediation (ROWS 50-94 and 132-153).

The emergence of a category, “Higher Education”, will be examined later in this chapter.

In summary, the open coding process resulted in three descriptive headings common to both 1st and 2nd sets of interview data, namely, “Participant Opinions”, “Reflection on meta-learning” and “Reflection on sessions…”. Under these descriptive headings that I developed, were anchor phrases holding together categories and properties. For instance, in Table 5.8 under the anchor phrase “Mentorship” there are four categories. Bearing in mind that a “category stands by itself as a conceptual element of the theory” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p.36) then the category “Approach” under anchor phrase “Mentorship” had seven properties generated by the memos from interview data, and the category “Beliefs”, had eight properties.

5.2.1 Summary of the open coding procedure

The first part of this Chapter has been dedicated to unpacking and displaying the results of the open coding procedure using grounded theory. The refined versions of descriptive headings with anchor phrases containing categories and their properties in Tables 5.4(b) and 5.8 provide the depth I sought. From the 1st set of interview data there were 9 categories with associated properties presented in Table 5.4(b) while from the set of 2nd set of Interviews there were
15 categories with associated properties in Table 5.8. These two tables provide systematically structured pools of information from which to draw. The primary focus of a grounded theory approach to coding is to generate and not necessarily to verify theory. In this study, soon there will be a set of properties that will eventually spawn a core category from which will emerge theory. It is not possible to predict that theory but it should emerge by the end of this chapter.

There is already a total of 24 categories in Table 5.4(b) and Table 5.8 from which to draw in order to answer the research question. While the practical sessions focused on reading, writing and computer awareness, the analysis seemed to indicate that participants placed emphasis on “Assessing Writing” (16 memos), “Learning Approaches” (18 memos), from the 1st set of interviews. On the other hand, “Professional Development” (19) “Supervision” (12 memos) and categories in “Mentorship” (24 memos) were predominant in the 2nd set of interviews.

There should be sufficient evidence here to respond to the research question and its third sub-question: “What was the effect of the implementation process?” Thus far, it can be seen that the implementation of the practical sessions allowed concerns of the participants to surface, in the context of their being academics in higher education.

At this point it is necessary to present and to examine the second stage of the coding procedure, *axial coding*. 

110
5.3 AXIAL CODING

Following grounded theory procedure, this next stage was where concepts were to be integrated. As the procedure suggests, axial coding, is where “coding occurs around the axis of a category, linking categories at the level of properties and dimensions” (Strauss & Corbin 1998, p.123). Merely linking properties to categories would have created clusters of logically associated concepts but would not have addressed the presence of phenomena or assisted with their analysis or theory generating potential.

As part of the axial coding two aspects will be focused on. The first is the process or how the category came into being. That was compared to its structure and why it appeared in the memos. Firstly, the process sought to understand how the categories came into being, namely, the conditions in which research participants had found themselves in HEI-5. In this instance, process was embedded in the research itself, in the practical sessions, in their subsequent interviews and in the resultant interview transcripts. Strauss and Corbin (1998, p.127) note that process “denotes the action/interaction over time of persons…[in] response to certain problems and issues”.

The axial coding procedure will first focus on categories that align with the stages in the practical sessions, that is, Active Reading, Academic Writing and Computer Mediation before focusing on “Mentorship”.

Structure was cross-referenced with process to assist with the analysis of the data. This was supposed to facilitate the emergence of theory. An asterisk represents the evidence of a property generated by a category found in a memo. The dimensional range in the structure was based on three indicators, namely, evidence in the transcript, theoretical comparisons and independent coding.
It is important to note here the content of the memos provided the data for this research. Memos provided either CLEAR EVIDENCE or SOME EVIDENCE of participant reflection on the practical sessions. If there was a significant link between the participant’s comment and my memo, including the participant offering supporting evidence, then that constituted CLEAR EVIDENCE. If there was a significant link between the participant’s comment and my memo without any supporting evidence, then that constituted SOME EVIDENCE. As both forms of evidence are open to interpretation I shall indicate them separately for coding purposes but regard them as one body of evidence when presenting findings. The absence of a clear line between SOME EVIDENCE and CLEAR EVIDENCE in Table 5.9 is an indication of this approach.

In addition, any memo that could be corroborated with other memos, contained the same inferences and dealt with the same issues, would be treated as theoretical comparisons. Such theoretical comparisons would play a significant role in the coding tables. The significance of a category and its properties contributing to the research would be based on:

1. evidence of theoretical comparisons; plus
2. presence of either CLEAR and/or SOME EVIDENCE; plus
3. evidence provided by the independent coder.

5.3.1 Active Reading

- **Evidence**
  There was little evidence of reading being an issue during EBIT Group 1’s interviews. The following focus area is Active Reading, conducted as sessions 2, 3, 4 and 5. There were nine memos focusing on reading (Table 5.2). These have been split into columns showing evidence and theoretical comparison.
Evidence of reflection on the Reading category appears below. As may be observed from Table 5.10 participants had little to reflect on the Active Reading practical sessions. However, I was able to speculate about them.

I believed that the reading competence of the participants varied in terms of ability. MO (Group EBIT Group 2, 1st set of Interview), a novice lecturer, indicated in Table 5.10 that her reading had been problematic. This was evident in her reflection during EBIT Group 2’s 2nd set of interviews (ROWS 97 and 163). In addition, she may have been stimulated by the reading strategies sessions to reflect on another aspect of her reading in Table 5.11.

Table 5.10 Theoretical comparison (EBIT Group 2, 1st set of Interviews)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>30. MO: Well when I read I want to understand it - I do not want to go to the dictionary now and then.</th>
<th>Standard impatience displayed by many</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>@: OK that’s quite acceptable…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32.</td>
<td>MO: …or having to read the entire paragraph in order to understand the word…</td>
<td>Reader-friendliness in her context - which is ok or she wants to skim read more often but is frustrated by writers not writing for a reader</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.11 Theoretical comparison (EBIT Group 2, 2nd set of Interviews)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>20. MO: About that use of language it is not …reader-friendly…</th>
<th>Is this an influence of the active reading sessions?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>@: Not reader-friendly - that’s nice - I like that…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>MO: But as I went on I realized that is was not…It was only that part that was difficult – ‘cause I didn’t understand the words…</td>
<td>Perhaps MTI plus the added difficulty of interpreting English?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In my opinion the reading and language issues MO experienced could have been connected. Her reading English may have been hindered by typical difficulty levels encountered when reading academic texts. For instance, she may have been exposed to texts with readability indexes higher than that which are comfortable for readers to interpret competently. However, mother tongue interference could have exacerbated the academic English and slowed down her reading speed. This would have been in addition to the general difficulty of a non-native speaker of English, such as MO, attempting to interpret the everyday complexities of the English language, something with which native speakers themselves often struggle.

Participant MO from EBIT Group 2 shared many reflections with the group. Another issue was that readers needed to read skillfully and at speed to get through the numerous books and journals in higher education. Clearly, this was the case with K.

Table 5.12 Theoretical comparison (HUM Group 3, 1st set of Interviews)

| 47. | K: I…I…I…OK didn’t realize that …well I didn’t know that I needed to read fast - I just knew I could read but didn’t know there is a pace that is involved in reading… | more perceptive reflection on reading - my practical sessions on reading have perhaps reinforced this point |

At the other extreme was participant P from EBIT Group 1 who, during the 1st set of Interviews, had illustrated his understanding of the nature of reading and its link with writing. Implicit here, was the fact that the reading course had been far too elementary for him hence I assumed he was an expert reader. He had already acquired and polished the skills that I had presented during the practical sessions.
Table 5.13  Theoretical comparison (EBIT Group 1, 1st set of Interviews)

| 61. | P: I tell you something - I once read an amazing doctorate that was ...like a turning point in my life. OK, I personally think it is one of the best pieces I have read even if he says he can't write – it's not the concepts more than the way it's written. Also CS Lewis –one of the clearest writers I have read in a while – he has a way – he's magic with words... | Reflection on reading for input - Interpretation → comprehension → analysis → application → synthesis → evaluation (cf Bloom) |

The independent coder ALD, referred to in section 5.1 of this chapter, also noted in her memo that participants did “see the link between reading and writing...”. This was not evident with all participants but with some, particularly with those who had not been exposed to such sensitising in higher education before. Also, she noted that “second language writers/ speakers find it more difficult...” to cope with English language issues. On a positive note, Table 5.14 indicates that reading may have sensitised at least one person from EBIT.

Table 5.14  Theoretical comparison (EBIT Group 2, 1st set of Interview)

| 96. | MO: Looking at the articles where they are talking about having this - I don't know – maybe because these are articles and mine is a...dissertation...but they don't actually define the terms - what disability is - they are only saying we are looking at this kind of disability – not about technology helping disabled people - but they don't give terms... | now she has a critical perspective albeit on a minor issue. She's displaying some sensitivity towards critical reading |

- Reflection on Reading

There was little feedback or interest shown by any participants in their reflection on reading during both sets of interviews. It would appear that my enthusiasm, based on the success of facilitating other reading strategy courses in the past, was not shared by these participants.

It is likely that as post-graduate teaching staff some participants, such as the EBIT Group 1 and HUM Group 3, were au fait with reading strategies and others, such as EBIT Group 2, were not. Regarding participant MO in EBIT Group 2 and her reading problems, in my observations and analysis, I subscribed to two of my
Personal Theories described in Chapter Two. Firstly, there was some evidence of Personal Theory 1, where “students learn more successfully when encouraged to grow at their own pace and they blossom from the inside...”. Secondly, there was some evidence of Personal Theory 3, where “self-correction occurs more successfully with motivation and experience”.

It is possible that the reading skills to which participants were exposed in the practical sessions were too fundamental for some. This was the likely reason for polite disinterest by some and enthusiasm by others. Below are the findings of the data based on the reflection on Writing.

5.3.2 Academic Writing

- Evidence

More than half the participant reflection, that is, 37 out of the 70 memos (Table 5.4(b)), dealt with reflection on issues of learning and nearly half of the evidence, that is 52 out of 117 memos (Table 5.8), dealt with higher education issues. Only 6 out of the 70 memos dealt with writing. An overview of participant reflection on writing follows in Table 5.15.
As may be seen in Table 5.15, the practical sessions on writing drew more reflection during session 9 in the 1st set of interviews than during the 2nd set. It is interesting how participants’ approaches to writing varied. Participant P from EBIT Group 1 initiated writing through the conventional drafting approach, as indicated by the excerpts in Table 5.26.

Table 5.16 Theoretical comparison (EBIT Group 1, 1st set of Interviews)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>CLEAR EVIDENCE</th>
<th>SOME EVIDENCE</th>
<th>THEORETICAL COMPARISON</th>
<th>INDEPENDENT CODER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ADaM</td>
<td>****</td>
<td>********</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st INTERVIEW</td>
<td>As process</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>**</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Writer influence</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd INTERVIEW</td>
<td>ADaM</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>As process</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>*****</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.16 presents an appropriate picture for generating a process writing approach quite different to the reflection of EBIT Group 2. In Table 5.17 participants MO and W from EBIT Group 2 felt that when they had been students some departments had provided the impetus required to construct and write...
assignments. In retrospect, they now believed there were shortcomings in those departments’ approaches

Table 5.17 Theoretical comparison (EBIT Group 2, 1st set of Interviews)

| 230. | W: errr…research - we’re still doing it – they told us how to write references and complete stuff and – OK, they’re very good - but it’s just that they’re not taught how to write [research]. I mean I have learnt so much here that I didn’t know then – and… | More constructive reflection and some evidence of transfer of skills? |

EBIT Group 2 participants recall that as undergraduates they were given regular feedback on their writing. Growing class size might prohibit such assessment procedures with undergraduate students nowadays. However, at post-graduate level, staff provide feedback under pressure, as indicated by participants in Table 5.18. and Table 5.19.

Table 5.18 Theoretical comparison (EBIT Group 1, 1st set of Interviews)

| 83. | L: dit vat al jou tyd op… |
| 84. | M: Dit vat baie… |
| 85. | P: al die ouens is na ure nê? |
| 86. | M: jy sit hierso in die aande tot ses-uur hierso - en iets anders wat wou … | such a relationship should benefit both the mentor/supervisor and mentee/student |

Table 5.19 Theoretical comparison (HUM Group 3, 2nd set of Interviews)

| 51. | N: I…I basically realise that I am spending too much time with students…mmm…because my students…because I call them to my office… ummm…I give them feedback, I write… | Is she picking up on my earlier refs to P or does she genuinely feel this way? |

The idea of writing being a gradually unfolding process is an important principle for students to grasp and to practice at undergraduate level. It appears that an EBIT Group 2 participant in Table 5.20 understood this need.
Table 5.20  Theoretical comparison (EBIT Group 2, 2nd set of Interviews)

| 217. | W: I was looking at my first-year work – the first time it looked well done - there’s no quotes no nothing – and then later there was a course and we looked at this - no referencing no quoting – who said this was OK? There was a lot of resistance to structure and when I think about it I feel very sad … | Pivotal reflection in the product vs process debate in writing. 1st years need to know writing competence is critical! HEIs must have smaller classes |

This raises the issue of assessment of writing and the use of ADaM as an instrument to assist with reflection and sensitising around the areas of audience, development and mechanics of writing. HUM Group 3’s participant R appeared to be able to use it effectively as an instrument as indicated in Table 5.21.

Table 5.21  Theoretical comparison (HUM Group 3, 1st Interview)

| 256. | R: …it was not well written - and there was no flow - and content is nice and relevant - but there’s no logical flow and consistency - and then the Mechanism - ja the Mechanism - he had no sense of coherence - he just put words into those paragraphs - not necessarily having any specific meaning… | she has started internalising the assessing of writing “facilitated” by ADaM ☺ |

- Reflection on Academic Writing

I focused this theoretical comparison on the impact of ADaM on participants’ awareness of writing and of assessment as indicated in Table 5.15.

The varied approaches by faculties in response to the assessment of students’ written work may be based on their respective class sizes. While it was a cynical view, the EBIT Group 2 implied that the absence of nurturing writing at undergraduate level was an institutional shortcoming and would impact negatively on students in the long term, especially during their research phase. EBIT Group 1 did not identify specifically with the lack of nurturing writing but with the gradually increasing student numbers that prevented them from being effective academics. They, as well as EBIT Group 2 and HUM Group 3 participants all needed to spend more time after normal working hours attending to their postgraduate students. Ironically, it is the increased access to HEIs across the country post-1994 that has resulted in this pressure on all staff.
Students were forced to attend their own historically appropriate institutions in the past, something I alluded to in Chapter Two.

The independent coder noted a series of issues amongst the participants’ feedback regarding reflection on writing and on the ADaM assessment instrument. In EBIT Group 1’s 1st set of Interviews, participants were circumspect about writing *per se* but acknowledged it was difficult to write, it was difficult to assess and that such processes were more difficult for non-native speakers of English. EBIT Group 2 were more engaging and participants reflected on the dominance of English. They also aired their views on Chinese post-graduate students, who they regarded as being more severely challenged, if not “learning-impaired”, compared to students from Africa.

Both EBIT Group 2 and HUM Group 3 found it useful to engage with ADaM. According to the coder it became valuable and useful to differentiate between “good and poor writing”. EBIT Group 2 participants were convinced that academic writing skills should be developed early in the undergraduate period and that each faculty’s demands on writing were different. HUM Group 3 were mindful of structure in writing and that departments in higher education mistakenly assumed that academics can automatically supervise and assess post-graduate student writing. ALD also noted that Group 3 participants had reflected on the time consuming nature of supervision and that strategies, such as using MS Comment® would allow supervisors to be more precise in their feedback.

While there was a significant amount of discussion around the ADaM writing assessment tool and writing in the context of process, assessment and audience in the 1st set of interviews that was little mention of this phenomenon during the 2nd set of interviews. It may be fair to assume that consensus had been reached regarding issues of process, assessment and audience during the 1st set of interviews. As a result, there was no need to revisit these issues during the 2nd
set of interviews. Personally, I had begun to regard ADaM as capable of facilitating a user to reflect holistically on writing. It was not a tool that could measure writing, nor was it a tool that could tell writers exactly how they could improve on their writing.

It was interesting to see macro issues of writing, such as its impact on supervision and its place in mentorship, gain prominence during the latter interviews. This located writing institutionally, at a macro level, thereby shifting discussion away from the writer and writing at a micro level. It also presented writing as a holistic phenomenon rather than just a tool for recording thoughts and theories.

The final facet of the practical sessions described in Chapter Four, namely, computer mediation, will be examined next.

5.3.3 Computer Awareness

• Evidence
Ideally, the last four practical sessions were meant to provide a forum for the convergence of reading and writing skills in the context of computer awareness. Each of these computer awareness sessions yielded fruitful discussions and exercises. However, few participants were willing to submit their corrected electronic articles. The correction of documents using MS Comment® was done electronically during the practical sessions. Participants would engage in individual critique of articles on computers, and then orally share their findings with the group.
Table 5.22  Axial coding - Computer awareness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>CLEAR EVIDENCE</th>
<th>SOME EVIDENCE</th>
<th>THEORETICAL COMPARISON</th>
<th>INDEPENDENT CODER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Willingness to engage</td>
<td>2nd INTERV</td>
<td>*******</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td>*******</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Below is a sample of the findings of data based on the category Computer-awareness. As with the category Reading, there was little reflection on these four practical sessions. One of the two HUM participants was not intimidated by computer technology as is illustrated in Table 5.23.

Table 5.23  HUM Group 3, 2nd set of Interviews

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>72.</td>
<td>R: and even for feedback purposes, the student… when you come to reading - as the student - you’re focusing on that and you’re forced to look at that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R has cottoned onto what Comment is all about and her grasp of it (in the context of facilitating writing) is impressive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Besides R not being intimidated she was able to apply and synthesise applications very quickly. This was helped along by her good knowledge of English and the confidence she exuded.

Table 5.24  HUM Group 3, 2nd set of Interviews

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>83.</td>
<td>R: for me its like a thinking box - I mean when you review your own work you can go back and think, OK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Apt description</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R’s colleague N was relatively intimidated by Comment and took a long while before she attempted to use it. The following dialogue is an indication of this.

Table 5.25  HUM Group 3, 2nd set of Interviews

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>56.</td>
<td>@: are you using MS Comment®?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57.</td>
<td>N: I’m… I’m now I am starting…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58.</td>
<td>R: [laughs out loud]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59.</td>
<td>@: have you started to use it…Comment?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60.</td>
<td>N: now I have started to use it I am so… you know… happy you know…’cause I put this on e-mail… you know…</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In contrast with this part of the interview, once N had settled down it became evident that she was gaining confidence using Comment. I presented R and N with a query on Comment that required one to have practiced on the programme in order to answer the query. It was correctly answered. The issue of time was important for all staff and using Comment could save time.

Table 5.26 Theoretical comparison (HUM Group 3, 2nd set of Interviews)

| 54. | N: ja! Usually make a copy and give it to the student, so ummm...that's a lot of time I take and on top of that I sit with the student and now err...having been introduced to the PC...I | These are N's first tentative steps towards becoming computer aware in a writing, supervision, and guidance context. |

The independent coder offered a positive note on participants’ willingness to engage.

Table 5.27 Theoretical comparison (HUM Group 3, 2nd set of Interviews)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Willingness to engage in COMPUTER-MEDIATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. ALD: MEMO “Participants realised the value of Comment and expressed a willingness to use it”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. ALD: MEMO “But Supervisors need to empower students to use Comment”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both EBIT Groups 1 and 2 were competent with computer technology and as they were familiar with word-processing all I had to do was to explain the need for MS Comment® as an application. All participants were comfortable using the programme to do electronic feedback on the articles I had given them to assess. They were asked to use ADaM as a guide.

- **Reflection on Computer Awareness**

It was significant that levels of participants’ computer awareness seemed to determine the extent of participants’ need either to engage with this section or not. Both EBIT Group 1 and Group 2 were not asked to spend time on the fundamentals in the introductory part of this section as their careers had determined they should be competent computer users. Subsequently HUM
Group 3, the least computer aware of the three groups, found the application of this section a useful addition to their existing skills as supervisors of postgraduate students.

Only some participants complied with my request to send me soft copies of their completed assessments where they had used Comment. I assumed at the time that those participants were not comfortable engaging with micro issues in supervision, such as discussion on the use of MS Comment®, how they structured their feedback to post-graduates, what role their students played in reaching consensus regarding the criteria to be used in assessment, and so forth. They ignored my request because they preferred to keep their assessments private.

Two of the three HUM Group 3 participants, on the other hand, were intimidated by the use and application of Comment, yet they were more than willing to engage with the theory and practice of technology. In the 1st set of interviews, K was intimidated by the presence of the tape recorder but plucked up enough courage to say (HUM Group 3, 1st set of interviews, ROW 8): “like “judgement”, which threatens - like when you are putting on the thing [my audio tape recorder] - I felt threatened - and my level went down”. R’s experience as a writer surfaced when she shared the following (HUM Group 3, 1st set of interviews, ROW 197): “That’s the problem - you know the premise of this paper is …like the main idea is 1, 2, 3, 4 as it is - and then start elaborating on the sub-ideas and then giving critical examples…”.

During the 2nd set of interviews, N was reticent, R was able to quickly learn a skill and then present her own synthesis and evaluation of the product (HUM Group 3, 2nd set of Interviews, ROW 27), R: “for example the performance of students you keep on promising “I’ll get it back to you” - how do you measure their progress as …as part of the process of growth, in terms of thesis writing - that for me is quite important.” N, on the other hand was intimidated by any technology
so she hardly contributed to any computer talk in the interview, but in the 2nd set of Interviews there were three pages of dialogue with her regarding dictionaries (HUM Group 3, ROWS 171-182).

5.3.4 Mentorship

- Evidence

An anchor phrase such as “Mentorship” represented a phenomenon on which participants reflected during the 2nd set of interviews. They had been exposed to only a single session on mentorship during practical session 1, as it had not been my intention to place emphasis on this focus.

One of the categories was ‘Types’ of “Mentorship”. Besides representing a category, ‘Types’ responded to questions about “Mentorship”, such as how, what and when.

Strauss and Corbin (1998, p.127) note that structure “set the stage action/interaction over time, of persons…response to certain problems and issues”. The procedure of sorting and categorising the memos responded to structure and helped me to understand why there were specific types of evidence supporting the categorising of their ‘action/interaction’, for instance, to “Mentorship”. The frequency of the evidence was spread across a range of dimensions as illustrated in Table 5.28 below. This was regarded as the structure of the analysis. While the notions of structure and process are linked, they are separated as per the theoretical framework for axial coding suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1998).
In Table 5.28 there was corroborating evidence from the independent coder for the presence of participant reflection on ‘Types’ and ‘Beliefs’ of “Mentorship”. These two categories will be examined further.

There were instances where there was reflection on mentorship and coaching in EBIT Group 1 and Group 2’s 2nd set of Interviews. I have tried to separate the theoretical comparisons by placing those three reflecting ‘Types’ first in Tables 5.29, 5.30 and 5.31. Participant MO (ROWS 24-26) Table 5.31 refers to both ‘Types’ and ‘Beliefs’. M (ROW 86) Table 5.32, declared they were not satisfied with their practice of mentorship because of the lack of students’ reciprocation.

Table 5.29 Theoretical comparison (EBIT Group 2, 2nd set of Interviews)

| 39. | MO: he was saying in the townships you can’t get an exemption when you pass you have to go to the college to do this and this – then I coached my brother - I gave him support until he passed std 10. And I continued – even though he’s doing Engineering. | Is mentorship based on one’s (1) identifying a problem based on own experience, (2) comparing respective “struggles” against an inner checklist (tacit criteria?), (3) then saying : “this needs action”? |

Table 5.30 Theoretical comparison (EBIT Group 2, 2nd set of Interviews)

| 51. | W: one thing I learnt is that mentorship is like a norm – it’s alive right – whether or not ...if you are aware of it ...you know ...it’s something that... ...everyone does it - sub-consciously | Not completely ’sub-consciously’ I don’t think everyone can identify with the oppressed/ or the advantaged? …it may be conscious! |
Table 5.31 Theoretical comparison (EBIT Group 2, 2nd set of Interviews)

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>MO: so they can feel free to come and ask for anything – I also provide support for them – if they do come – if someone comes – I show them that I’m interested and I can support them – some people come to me – to me &amp; they tell me “We don’t like this department - or …</td>
<td>perfect example of social support leading to career support - cf my paper → SAJHE (1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>@: mmm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>MO: So…I don’t know whether that is Mentoring – is it mentoring?</td>
<td>Unsure about her role description -(in group 1, M was unsure about her practice of mentorship)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.32 Theoretical comparison (EBIT Group 1, 2nd set of Interviews)

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>86.</td>
<td>M: jy sit hierso in die aande tot ses-uur hierso - en iets anders wat wou gesê - ek begin nou ‘n verhouding te bou…met van my studente…dit het ook iets te doen met wat hulle besig hou - dis nie net ek nie - wat van…wat van die ander kant af kom? Dan is dit vir my lekker…</td>
<td>such a relationship should benefit both the mentor/supervisor and mentee/student</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The dilemma took another turn when EBIT Group 1 and EBIT Group 2 presented their respective insight into mentorship.

Table 5.33 Theoretical comparison - (EBIT Group 1, 2nd set of Interviews)

<p>| | | |</p>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>121.</td>
<td>L: hoekom my… dis regtig nogal – ek weet nie wat ek die spul moet noem ne - dis regtig ‘n vermoë wat ‘n mens het om te kan help – en dit sit nie in ons nie…volgens my</td>
<td>L believes that only certain people can be mentors - honest appraisal of her situation - esp. as she has not spoken much, since she’s…</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The question posed by L in EBIT Group 1 above (ROW 121) was alluded to by fellow participant M a few utterances later (ROW 124).

Table 5.34 Theoretical comparison (EBIT Group 1, 2nd set of Interviews)

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>124.</td>
<td>M: Ek wonder of dit in myne sit? Want in my kom ook nie – ek werk daaraan. Maar nou vat ek dit terug na Honeurs vlak – daai kinners die het geen ondervinding nie – hulle het net – hulle kom met niks. Dis blanko leë velletjies- en jy’t nie tyd om op die velletjies te skryf nie – dis hoe dit vir my voel en dit voel vir my…</td>
<td>M, the most senior and experienced lecturer, believes she might have the attributes of a mentor. But she indicates that she is working on it – either not to come across as being conceited or to be humble about her ability…</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Much later M provided evidence, in the context of colleagues P and L in EBIT Group 1, for her sensitised approach to the disadvantaged student. She had taught at one of the VISTA university campuses, which might account for her sensitivity to applying teaching, learning and assessment strategies. The term "agtergeblewende" in Table 5.35 below, is used in Afrikaans educational circles and refers to a disadvantaged, often black South African learner. A literal translation would be a ‘student who has been left behind by the educational system’ The excerpt also provides insight into M’s approach to sustaining good teaching and learning within her relatively small class of 20 students.

Table 5.35  Theoretical comparison (EBIT Group 1, 2nd set of Interviews)

| M: In VISTA – met agtergeblewende studente - het ek allerhande tegnieke gebruik – daars was 'n African American student wat daar kom swot – toe gebruik ek hom – en hy het gesê “Give them difficult problems sodat hulle trots kan bou”. Ek het dit met Wiskunde probeer en daar was 'n trotsheid – maar ek het 20 studente gehad… – ek kon heerlik speel. | supports her earlier belief that she is willing to be a mentor and to learn from experience |

M’s reflection is in contrast with that of Group 2’s W in Table 5.35, who regarded mentorship in a different light compared to the Group 1 participants. W’s colleague MO from Group 2, in Table 5.36, also regarded mentorship as something she did because of the value systems of which she had been made aware.

Table 5.36  Theoretical comparison (EBIT Group 2, 2nd set of Interviews)

| MO: I remember when we were doing computer science…and there was this girl she was also doing first year… everybody was scaring her [by saying] "...that one you won’t be able to pass - it’s difficult" and stuff like that. We used to go to class together – to study together – but then she passed her first semester – I heard people say she told them that if it weren’t for me she wasn’t going to make it. It’s like I was her role model – | Much retrospection leading to constructive reflection on mentoring . Also supports her previous claim of being a mentor |

MO from Group 2 sums up what appears to be the Group 2 approach to the notion of mentorship in Table 5.34. Essentially, MO disagrees with EBIT Group
1’s L regarding one’s ability to mentor and the evidence suggests that MO and L have quite different points of view.

Table 5.37 Theoretical comparison (EBIT Group 2, 2\textsuperscript{nd} set of Interviews)

| 79. | MO: so can it be in your personality to mentor people? | \textit{Exactly what group 1 alluded to - L & P felt that - M believed she was “the one”. Maybe everyone has the ability but not all harness it!} |

Comparing and contrasting the views of both EBIT groups regarding categories Approaches, Beliefs and Types of mentorship illustrates an emerging theoretical comparison. These comparisons may be made because of the generated conceptual categories, such as \textbf{Approaches} to “Mentorship” and its seven conceptual properties. Three of these conceptual properties are “A continual urge to find a cause or to mentor”, “Worthy cause scenarios! There’s an inner voice that says…” and “This supports M’s earlier rationale of her being a mentor/coach…”. The constant comparison lays an important grounded theory foundation. This lends itself to theoretical comparison where the above conceptual categories and properties become “elements of theory that are generated by comparative analysis” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p.35).

This is likely to be the rationale for Glaser and Strauss (1967, p.37) suggesting that researchers avoid drawing on literature too early, “in order to assure that the emergence of categories will not be contaminated”. Some literature was introduced in Chapter Three to support the research methodology. The following chapter, Chapter Six will draw on appropriate literature to support the emergent theory.

P, consistently, was in search of the ideal situation in his supervision. It was not just telling students what to do, as in coaching, but he understood that he needed to engage in capacity building. P supported this by stating (EBIT, Group 1 2nd set of Interviews, ROW 49): \textit{“dit moet meer wees as “Ons het ‘n thesis saamgedoen!” As hy daar uit is moes hy iets by jou geleer het”}. According to P,
normal academic duties militated against spending quality time with postgraduate students in order to build relationships. P (EBIT Group 1, 2nd set of Interviews, ROW 87) also remarked on what equated to growing competence in research among black students: "een swart meisie student daarso - en haar kop dink net anderste as die ander ouens…sy het haar hele - haar onderwerp -haar…totaal verander - en dit was vir my oulik…". My tongue-in-cheek memo in response to this (ROW 87) was "an epiphany may be a necessary part of the equation…". The ‘equation’ addressed the new South Africa and how barriers to access and admission in HE have been removed.

There appeared to be uncertainty between coaching and mentoring in the context of what I regarded as either solicited or unsolicited work (EBIT Group 2, 2nd set of Interviews, ROW 107). My understanding was that mentoring was often unsolicited, did not focus on specific tasks and often went unnoticed until acknowledged by someone other than the mentee. Coaching was solicited, had time frames and specific tasks that had to be accomplished in a particular context. My own approach to mentorship was alluded to (EBIT Group 1, 2nd interview, ROWS 18-23) when P remarked that as researcher, I had also been EBIT Group 1’s mentor: “jy weet ek was 'n bietjie stadig maar - ek kliek nou jy was 'n mentor vir ons!” P added that I was not forceful but offered support when it was needed: “Want jy was 'n mentor vir ons sonder om dit te gesê het - en sonder om heavy af te kom op ons met enigiets - jy't ons gently geleid in 'n rigting”. M from the same group (EBIT Group 1, 2nd set of Interviews, ROW 52) states that one needs to have specific characteristics to be a mentor. Although it was time consuming, it was doable and one could adapt: “dit voel vir my - want ek vra vir myself “maar doen ek dit? Dan is die antwoord ja of nee…en ek weet nie wat ek daaraan gedoen het nie. Dit neem nie vreeslik baie tyd om jou gewoontes te verander nie.”.

It would be reasonable to assume that personal theory, described in Chapter Two, had influenced my facilitation of sessions. My Personal Theory 1 states
that “Students learn more successfully when encouraged to grow at their own pace and they blossom from the inside rather than having values imposed from the outside”. It was possible that my approach to the facilitation of the practical sessions and the interview process allowed the group to reflect and to be introspective rather than, perhaps, to be defensive about their approaches to higher education practice. This was implicit in participant P’s comment that as researcher I had not imposed any values on them and allowed them to experience the sessions “sonder om heavy af te kom op ons met enigiets - jy’t ons gently geleli in ’n rigting”.

There have been differences of opinion surrounding the phenomenon of mentorship. In EBIT Group 1 (2nd set of interviews. ROWS 240-246), M spoke passionately about her experiences in teaching and learning. She had been sensitised to the background of the disadvantaged because of the black HEI where she had once worked. In contrast, MO believed that mentoring was part of her career and her personal development. If it were regarded as a process, where mentorship was initiated, developed and maintained, then there had to be an active relationship between mentor and mentee. A natural consequence of both solicited and unsolicited approaches to mentorship was that they should encourage reflective practice. Both MO (EBIT Group 2) and M (EBIT Group 1) appeared equally committed to their careers although they appeared to have vastly different backgrounds.

At the level of interpretive validity (Johnson, 1997), the observations of the independent coder ALD, added value to the analysis as well as presented an element of triangulation in the data. Two observations were made on Group 1’s 2nd set of interviews by independent coder ALD. Firstly, that participants appeared to support the notion of mentorship, empowering of students and capacity building but found this more difficult when there were large numbers of students; and secondly, they all expressed a need for support systems.
ALD noted that in their 2\textsuperscript{nd} set of interviews Group 2 had reflected on mentorship: There was a willingness to mentor students and to become a mentor for students. They acknowledged that it was difficult to be a mentor and emphasised three points: mentoring was not always intentional; not all students wanted to be mentored; and they had reflected on distinctions between a coach, a mentor and a role model. ALD observed that those Group 2 participants believed mentorship was energy-sapping.

ALD’s made clear observations on EBIT Group 1. The three members of Group 1 were not unanimous in their views. While they were generally in favour of academic support for students, part of their grouse was the growing number of students at postgraduate level who required research assistance.

This applied to the ALD summary of Group 2’s understanding of mentorship too. ALD’s astute observation of EBIT Group 2 was that “mentoring is not always intentional”. While the group acknowledged that to mentor was a difficult, energy-sapping task, there had been a willingness to engage with mentorship among all Group 2’s participants during the 2\textsuperscript{nd} set of Interviews.

- **Reflection on Mentorship**

Table 5.28 became important in the generation of possible theory. The comparison of data regarding beliefs, approaches and types of mentorship spanned two groups of data. Both groups were interviewed independently with interviews being conducted a few months apart from each other. Some of the conflicting responses regarding their reflection on mentorship was that it was either part of one’s personality (both EBIT Group 2 participants) or it was not (two of the three EBIT Group 1 participants). Also, while some are drawn to mentorship naturally (both EBIT Group 2 participants), **others believe they need to be inducted into mentorship** as they do not have the inherent ability (two of the three EBIT Group 1 participants).
The findings of the data based on Mentorship, presented as one solitary practical session, Session 1, are illuminating. There was an unexpected amount of discussion on the types and various approaches linked to mentorship, including what had inspired MO (EBIT Group 2) to be mentor and coach and what M (EBIT Group 1) believed was important in mentoring. There was pragmatic and muted discussion on mentorship by the rest of M’s colleagues in EBIT Group 1. It appeared that the group was wary of allowing itself to submit to such roles without official guidance or formal, documented instruction.

5.3.5 An outlier

During the data sorting process, besides the preceding groupings of categories under anchor phrases, there was a fifth group of data that did not fit anywhere. It was almost an “outlying case” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.159) exhibiting properties of categories, yet also transcending them. This anchor phrase, Higher Education, finally attracted five categories containing a total of 52 properties from the 2nd set of Interviews. It was sorted and is presented in Table 5.38.

While the anchor phrases of “Writing” and of “Mentorship” were a close fit for most categories, elements of doubt remained. For instance, the category Supervision was linked closely to Writing, but so were the categories Academic Development, Professional Development, Learning and Transformation. They were an uncomfortable fit, which meant I had not reached saturation point described earlier in section 5.2. The anchor phrase “Higher Education” emerged as the appropriate fit that I had been seeking.

Below is a sample of those confusing categories. Initially, I thought those belonged to anchor phrases “Mentorship”, “Writing” and “Computer-Mediation”. Subsequently, they migrated to a new anchor phrase, “Higher Education”. The bracketed comment at the end of each memo indicates where it should belong.
The letters CE indicate that the memo demonstrated CLEAR EVIDENCE of an appropriate reflection, as explained earlier in Section 5.3.

The process of arriving at categories, as in Table 5.8, was developmental and may be traced through a similar process indicated in Table 5.2, Table 5.4(a) and Table 5.4(b). Some instances of re-categorising appear below.

**Approaches to Mentorship (2nd set of Interviews)**

- (ROW 246 EBIT Group 1) *Such reflection indicates an HE sensitivity especially to nurturing those students who have been disadvantaged.* (= category Academic Development under Higher Education (HE))
- (ROW 95 EBIT Group 1) *Supervision is necessary so the students have guidance and advice regarding the direction to take* (= category Supervision under HE)
- (ROW 186 HUM Group 3) *As a group of black staff we can identify with such scenarios - the associations are embedded in a black SA ...* (= category Professional Development under HE)
- (ROW 331 HUM Group 3) *They value my judgement on a professional level* (= category Learning under HE)
- (ROW 123 EBIT Group 2) *Sad to hear this – this often occurs between junior and senior staff of colour in SA HEIs* (= category Race Relations under HE)
- (ROW 120 EBIT Group 2) *Such levels of intimidation by senior staff (sometimes by white-on-white/ white-on-black but often black-on-black)* (= category Race Relations under HE).

The following memos fitted into the anchor phrase Computer Awareness in the category Willingness to Engage. However, they also settled into one of the many categories within the new anchor phrase of Higher Education.

**Willingness to Engage in Computer-Mediation (2nd set of Interviews)**
• (ROW 257 HUM Group 3) *This is the first time I have heard of poor support and poor supervision via MS Comment®* (= category **Supervision** under HE)

• (ROW 261 HUM Group 3) *Sounds as if K is intimidated by the system. Also, has her supervisor explained how Comment works* (= category **Supervision** under HE).

Yet another group of memos appeared to belong to the anchor phrase “Writing” under the category **Process**. They finally generated various new categories within the new anchor phrase Higher Education.

**Process in WRITING (2nd set of Interviews)**

• (ROW 90 EBIT Group 1) *Supervision becomes an invisible part of your teaching, research and community service* (= category **Supervision** under HE)

• (ROW 156 EBIT Group 1) *HEI-5 and a Free State university doing post-graduate satisfaction ratings - trying to see where they can improve* (= category **Supervision** under HE)

• (ROW 169 EBIT Group 1) *The other pressure is that of throughput rates being linked to subsidies - and at post-grad level it is a substantial* (=category **Access** and **Admission** under HE).

Table 5.38  Axial coding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Higher Education</th>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>EVIDENCE</th>
<th>THEORETICAL COMPARISON</th>
<th>INDEPENDENT CODER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td>❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑</td>
<td>❑❑❑❑❑</td>
<td>❑❑❑❑❑</td>
<td>❑❑❑❑❑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervision</td>
<td>❑❑❑❑❑</td>
<td>❑❑❑❑❑</td>
<td>❑❑❑❑❑</td>
<td>❑❑❑❑❑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformation</td>
<td>❑❑❑</td>
<td>❑❑❑</td>
<td>❑❑❑</td>
<td>❑❑❑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Dynamics</td>
<td>❑❑❑❑❑</td>
<td>❑❑❑❑❑</td>
<td>❑❑❑❑❑</td>
<td>❑❑❑❑❑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>❑❑❑</td>
<td>❑❑❑</td>
<td>❑❑❑</td>
<td>❑❑❑</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table indicates a predominance of evidence in Professional Development, Supervision and Interpersonal Dynamics. While these three
categories under the anchor phrase “Higher Education”, Supervision and Interpersonal Dynamics are also closely related to aspects that may be developed around Mentorship. Many of the properties could have been interpreted and categorised another way. A political example would be the property “Sadly, while this may be a natural tendency, it isolates and builds exclusive citizenship. Exactly what the post-1994 era agitated against!” My choice of category here is Transformation. Someone with a different point of view and who approves of building exclusive citizenship, that is, encouraging exclusivity amongst cliques of staff of the same race and language group, is likely to place it in the category of Access. I believe that one’s ontological standpoint would have a bearing on these choices. Therefore, I have located the asterisks in a common column in Table 5.38 without separating them into separate evidences, as was the case previously. Also, if I were forced to attach a descriptor of either CLEAR EVIDENCE or SOME EVIDENCE I would have to compromise and choose SOME EVIDENCE to represent all asterisks under “Higher Education”.

It is now appropriate to examine the final stage of the analysis, selective coding. This section will be done in a purely qualitative manner.

### 5.4 SELECTIVE CODING

The emergence of a core area pivotal to the research is a critical point of the research. This is what Strauss and Corbin (1998, p.146) refer to as the emergence of a “central category” as evidence of yet further abstraction. The emergence of this category, needed to have evolved out of the existing core and the outlier categories. It needed descriptive power to be a natural home for all categories and subcategories in the research. Also, as Strauss and Corbin (1998, p.146) state, a central category will “form an explanatory whole”. The central category has emerged out of the following issues in the interview data:

- the effect of ADaM as an writing assessment instrument in HEI-5,
• the need for writing strategies at postgraduate level in HE; and
• mentorship as an element of teaching and research in HE.

The emergence of a central category for this research **Sensitisation to HE practice**, exhibited six specific characteristics and these are outlined below.

1. The description has been central to all categories in the research data as it related to key aspects of writing, namely, reading, language usage, computer-mediation and higher education (HE).

2. The whole term did not appear regularly in the data so there was no overt visible link between the central category and the memos. While this does not conform to the suggested criteria (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.147), it is significant and will be addressed in the concluding chapter.

3. This central category developed and appears to relate logically to all categories and properties without its presence being imposed on the data. Participants had been sensitised to their HE practice in the context of the research. That was also the reason why they volunteered to participate.

4. The central category described a broad process and straddled the abstract in its definition and the concrete in its implementation so “a practitioner applies knowledge skillfully with a view to improving practice” (Barber, 2006, p.24). Hence, as practice leans toward the abstract it may be applied to other areas and inform other general theories.

5. The integration of this concept into the elements of the practical sessions, namely, mentoring, reading, writing and computer-mediation, grew along with its analytic refinement, thereby increasing its depth.

6. Variations, such as contradictory elements or alternatives, were easily catered for in the concept, such as straddling the concrete and abstract, as well as integrating the notion of the more practical, namely, reading, writing and computer-mediation, with the more abstract, namely, mentorship.

The emergence of the central category should also be examined for what Strauss and Corbin (1998, p.156) refer to as “internal consistency and logic”. This will
facilitate the next phase of theory building. It would be simplistic only to indicate frequency of specific text used in the memos. Hence, a re-examination of properties and specific comparisons would be constructive. This would be especially significant in the presence of the central category against the backdrop of writing and mentorship in teaching and research in HE.

The following memos are significant as they support the generating of a potential theory. I have extracted only those memos that provide clear evidence (CE).

1st set of Interviews: WRITING

CE  M has taken ownership of audience, on interpretation we differ BUT she’s reached synthesis and is presenting me with an antithesis. M → AUDIENCE for her determines level of discourse – facilitates validation of your writing/ research.

Possible Personal theory 6 = knowledge of your AUDIENCE allows you to determine the language (style and pitch) to be used in writing.

2nd set of Interviews: ADaM

CE  As she was familiar with the checklist, using ADaM came easily.

2nd set of Interviews: MENTORSHIP

CE  With coaching, you are providing a solution to a problem thru practice ||| with mentorship you are facilitating mentees’ finding a solution to their problem/s.

CE  L is convinced that only certain people can be mentors - an honest appraisal of her situation - esp. as she has not spoken much, since she is the most junior.

CE  Exactly what Group 1 alluded to - L and P felt that they did not have the “stuff” to be mentors- M believed she was “the one”. Maybe everyone has the ability but not all harness it.
2nd set of Interviews: HE

CE Under-grad learning focus = product driven and assessment practice favours this post-grad learning focus = process.

CE Supervision becomes an invisible part of your teaching, research and community service.

A central category that emerges here is: Sensitisation to HE Practice. Practice describes a broad process and straddles the abstract in its definition and the concrete in its implementation; “a practitioner applies knowledge skillfully with a view to improving practice” (Barber, 2006, p.24); hence practice leans toward the abstract and may be applied to other areas and inform other general theories.

If we take a sample of these concepts as evidence from the main categories indicated earlier then these are from Mentorship and from Writing. When we view the evidence presented in these categories then there are concepts that appear to follow a logical path:

1. Knowledge of your AUDIENCE allows you to determine the language (style and pitch) to be used in writing (Possible Personal theory 6) ; so
2. …ADaM and its contents is a catalyst for generating dialogue around academic research writing; but
3. Departments always offer guidelines on the SUPERSTRUCTURE of research but seldom on the INFRASTRUCTURE; and
4. Not [everyone has] the “stuff” to be mentors… Maybe everyone has the ability but not all harness it; hence
5. With coaching you are providing a solution to a problem thru practice with mentorship you are facilitating mentees’ finding a solution to their problem/s.

In this research, writing and mentorship appear to be key factors that have an influence on postgraduate staff’s higher education practice of teaching, learning and assessment. Hence, this research indicates that their practice could be informed by increased competence in writing and mentorship.
While Higher Education is a major, albeit an outlying category, in the context of the practical sessions that generated the data for this research, this category presents factors that affect writing and mentorship at a macro level. Such factors influence the landscape within which such staff practice and emanate from Academic Development, Professional Development, Supervision, Transformation, Race Relations, Access and Admission and Learning.

The *selective coding* process was where the research’s emerging theory would be integrated and refined. If we take into consideration the central category as **Sensitisation to HE Practice**, then one possible theory emerges as indicated in Figure 5.1 below.

Figure 5.1 An emerging theory

**EMERGING THEORY**

CREATING AN AWARENESS OF WRITING ASSESSMENT SENSITISES ACADEMICS TO THEIR ROLES AS HE PRACTITIONERS, PARTICULARLY IN THE AREAS OF WRITING AND MENTORSHIP IN POST-GRADUATE SUPERVISION.

While the research question was limited to sensitising staff to the production and assessment of academic writing, the emergent theory has effectively expanded the focus to the HEI practitioner.

The substantive theory above will be drawn into Chapter Six and Chapter Seven. My Personal Theory 6 will not be a focal point in this study. However, it could form the basis for further study.
5.5 CONCLUSION

One reason that Glaser and Strauss (1967, 37) suggest that researchers avoid drawing too early on literature is “in order to assure that the emergence of categories will not be contaminated”. While some literature was introduced in Chapter Three to support the research methodology, the following chapter, Chapter Six, will explore some of the literature available that will support what has emerged through the grounded theory procedures.

There are indicators of evidence that staff teaching at post-graduate level had been sensitised to the complexity of writing as a micro issue as well as to other macro issues in the higher education environment. These indicators started to appear during the axial coding process.

In both the 1st and 2nd set of interviews, there is a prevalence of memos in the category of Writing (Table 6.7). This was corroborated by independent coder ALD’s observations at the open coding stage. There is an indication that participants’ awareness of writing had been raised. This is especially the case in the subcategories ADaM as well as Writing as Process. There is also evidence indicating that participants have become aware of the importance of audience in writing as well as the need for criteria for assessing writing.

Participants’ use of terms in the 1st set of interviews indicate they had become aware of the writing process and of ADaM. Some of the terms that appear are: “academic literacy”; “audience”; “join in the conversation”; “assessment criteria”; “a template for the assessor”; “evaluate well-written pieces”; ”acceptable”; “paragraphs”; “academic writing”; “process-product”; “sub-ideas”; “transition”; and “coherence”. The above is a representation of terms used by all three groups.

The use of specific terms by participants in the 2nd set of interviews also indicates they fore-grounded (Writing) as Process and ADaM to a greater extent.
than the other seven categories. While use is minimal, the presence of these terms in their dialogue is of significance. EBIT Group 2 found ADaM useful, as indicated by participant W (HUM Group 3, 2nd set of Interviews, ROW 299): “when you are finished with the final ADaM will you give me a copy?”. Others asked for ADaM outside of the interview sessions. HUM Group 3 addressed writing issues indirectly in the 2nd set of Interviews, such as, the use of text boxes for adding personal comments alongside one’s essays. HUM Group 3 also spent time reflecting on the feedback possibilities of MS Comment®, (HUM Group 3, 2nd set of Interviews, ROW 85) R: “it's like a thinking box when you review”. Another significant comment from R on Comment and computer technology was HUM Group 3, 2nd set of Interviews, ROW 192): “that for me was the stepping stone towards my state of writing”. The same participants spent time relating to the use of a dictionary (HUM Group 3, 2nd set of Interviews, ROWS 171-182). This spans the technology continuum regarding support for their writing, from using hard copies in the form of printed matter such as a dictionary to using soft copies in the form of electronic versions of essays on a word-processor.

EBIT Group 1 had little to reflect on writing per se but spent much of their 2nd set of Interviews reflecting on mentorship and HE issues. Both EBIT Group 1 and EBIT Group 2 were curious about issues that I would describe as being outside of their domain. This refers especially to areas of writing and supervision, a phenomenon close to the hearts of Group 1. A natural tendency in both EBIT Groups was to avoid any discussion on the use of technology, as they were experts in the field. However, they did not ignore the idea of using MS Comment® as a medium for supervision.

Another trend was for EBIT Group 1 to have very different ways of approaching the three HEI foci of teaching, research and community service as compared to EBIT Group 2 and HUM Group 3. This will be examined in Chapter Seven.
All three groups’ participants spent most of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} set of interviews reflecting on HEI issues. Of the nine issues with which they engaged most were the phenomenon Learning in Higher Education, Professional Development of teaching staff in Higher Education and Supervision in Higher Education. This reflection occupies a significant part of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} set of Interviews and will have a bearing on the concluding chapter of the research Chapter Seven.

In Chapter Six I will focus on the literature to support the data findings and the emerging theory. This is in line with the methodology of grounded theory.
Chapter Six

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, using grounded theory, I analysed the transcripts of six interviews to see whether this research had had any impact on staff awareness of the complexity of the writing process. The evidence indicated that while each of the three groups had reflected on different higher education issues, participants’ awareness of the complexity of writing has been raised, with a specific emphasis on components related to higher education.

In this chapter, by surveying the relevant literature, I will examine academic writing and some supplemental activities that have both a direct and an indirect bearing on reflecting on the writing process, especially at post-graduate level. Locating the literature survey in this particular chapter and after the data analysis is my response to Glaser and Strauss (1967). The authors (1967, p.37), suggest that in a grounded theory approach, the research should not draw on literature too early “in order to assure that the emergence of categories will not be contaminated”. While some literature to support the research methodology was
introduced in Chapter Three, literature in this chapter is presented to support the theories that have emerged through the grounded theory procedures.

Although this research is mainly qualitative with the part of the analysis, via tables, being quantitative, the dual foci has led me to take Glaser and Strauss’ (1967) notion of the “primacy of emphasis”, out of context and to apply it to this research. The grounded theory research procedures allowed me to generate one substantive theory and one personal theory. In addition, the research procedures have led to finding evidence supportive of and verifying the research question:

*Can a writing assessment instrument be used to sensitise staff teaching post-graduates to reflect on the complex nature of producing and assessing academic writing?*

The need for applying the primacy of emphasis was because I have generated theory and in this chapter I will attempt to verify that the research question may be answered. Hence, there is no tension of a ‘primacy of emphasis’ between the generation of qualitative data and the verification of quantitative data. The emergence of new theory, both substantive theory and personal theory, underscores the importance of the need for staff teaching post graduate students to be conscious of the complexity of the writing process. As a validation of the emergent theory, I will refer to related literature.

### 6.2 LITERATURE RELATED TO THE FIRST LEVEL FINDINGS

#### 6.2.1 Meaning making

The evidence in this study indicates that participants have to grapple with coming to an understanding of exactly what their roles were. Regarding the making of
meaning, Mezirow (1991) indicates two levels. Firstly, there are meaning schemes, where Mezirow (1991, p.2) suggests, meaning is governed by "if-then, cause-effect, and category relationships as well as even sequences". These would be determined by an element of expectation and subsequent prediction, such as expecting the cursor on a computer screen to be moved when the computer’s mouse is manipulated. All these constitute schemes or perspectives allowing one to make meaning of and to interpret events. It is this idea that was used in the coding procedure. Secondly, there are meaning perspectives, which Mezirow (1991, p.2) describes as “higher order schemata, theories, propositions, beliefs, prototypes, goal orientations and evaluations”. If one engages with meaning perspectives, then, for instance, in the process of new experience being incorporated into one’s existing or past experience, the act of interpretation leads to a restructuring of assumption. Although this form of meaning making is also influenced by habit and expectation, it is governed by one’s personal perceptions.

In this context, meaning perspectives allow for the creation of “criteria for making value judgements and for belief systems” (Mezirow, 1991, p.2). Although this suggests that, generally, one acquires such perspectives uncritically, it is likely that such initial uncriticality could be the foundation for a later critical perspective when engaging with other people, with ideologies or even with ideas. This is key when using grounded theory analysis and applying its approach to coding procedures. The act of sorting and categorising data during the open coding stage was a relatively uncritical action and was based on my understanding of the concepts and the grouping of the memos. The purpose of sorting data was underscored by what Mezirow refers to as an ‘if-then, cause-effect’ procedure. Only when initial sorting had taken place, where I had selected descriptive headings and identified anchor phrases, was it possible to seek ‘category relationships as well as even sequences’ during the second stage of axial coding. Both stages were reliant on gradually honing my skills of prediction within and across categories and properties of data. These stages implemented during the coding procedures are aligned to Mezirow’s (1991) meaning schemes.

146
Secondly, my initial predication that the emerging theory would deal exclusively with writing was completely out of kilter with what emerged. What emerged was that a variety of competences were required to ensure that those participants were better higher education practitioners. According to Mezirow (1991) if one engages with meaning perspectives, in the process of new experience being incorporated into past experience, the act of interpretation could lead to a restructuring of assumption as happened during this data analysis. While most meaning perspectives are assimilated through culture and can also be the result of intentional learning, Mezirow (1991) maintains they underlie most critical reflection.

Consistent with his views on meaning making, Mezirow (1991, p.5) believes that reflection amounts to one’s engagement with higher-order mental processes. This would include one’s “making inferences, generalizations, analogies, discriminations, and evaluations...feeling, remembering, and solving problems”. Although one may not regard it as such, even acts of interpreting, of engaging in discussion and of passing judgement are examples of reflection. Implementation of grounded theory is a combination of Mezirow’s meaning schemes during the open and the axial coding processes and meaning perspectives during the selective coding process.

6.2.2 Written communication

After being exposed to the practical sessions participants appeared to be more conscious of the audience, development and the mechanics of writing and associated strategies to become more competent writers. This is likely to have been a consequence of their working with the ADaM assessment instrument.

One way of describing the multifaceted nature of writing may be to view it as an engagement of the mind, the intangible, with the world, the tangible. Then one could view writing on a continuum of complexity regarding writers’ need and
ability. Such a continuum could range from a high intellectual end, where writing is required to be a complex, critical and multilayered task (Clark & Ivanič, 1992; Kellogg, 1994; Brown, 1991) of making meaning, to what I would describe as a low intellectual end. At the high intellectual end, writer ability could be gauged, for instance, by using the Dreyfus and Dreyfus model (2001) suggesting five levels of competence in the human learning process (Flyvbjerg, 2004, pp. 10-20).

Figure 6.1 Levels of competence (Dreyfus & Dreyfus model in Flyvbjerg, 2004)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEVELS OF COMPETENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. novice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. advanced beginner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. competent performer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. proficient performer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. expert</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These competences range from the first level of novice ability through to the fifth level of expert ability. At the high intellectual end of such a continuum, writers’ work would require substantiation by indicating multiple sources and familiarity with relevant discourses. Such work would include writing academic articles or essays with writers’ performance being relative to their competence and experience. Also, such essays or articles could be from one of two groups, namely, “those whose purpose is exposition, and those whose purpose is argument” (Rountree, 1997, p.90).

In the findings all participants understood and internalised the notion of their “Audience” in writing as presented by ADaM. One participant, M in EBIT Group
1, had a slightly different interpretation. My explanation of “Audience referred to the pitch and subsequent development of the writing, while hers was more practical and described audience as: “when I want to join in a conversation I must keep in mind who are the people talking…” (ROW 83).

The Dreyfus and Dreyfus model in Flyvbjerg (2004) would support my Personal Theory 6: “Knowledge of your audience allows you to determine the language (pitch and style) to be used in writing”. This may be linked to the notion that familiarity with relevant discourses is associated with writers’ understanding of their audience.

Figure 6.2 A writing continuum

At the opposite end of this continuum, where I have described the continuum’s low intellectual end, writing could be a simple task of making meaning. Writers present unsubstantiated reproduction of thoughts in the written task, requiring no external or academic sources. This would comprise writing an informal note or letter, compiling a grocery list, composing an informal note on e-mail or on a cellular telephone’s short message system. Although there is little intellectual input into such writing, there is some structure and some convention which is adhered to. Hence, I believe there are varying levels of required competence that higher education practitioners encounter along such a continuum.

One way of making sense of the world is through people constructing various models of their experiences. On the one hand, there is a time when scientists, academics and others are likely to construct formal models that exist in the public domain, where culture and society will have an effect on what is being conveyed and interpreted. On the other hand, there will be a time when scientists,
academics, non-academics and others will not be reliant on substantive or formal theories and are likely to construct informal personal models that remain undisclosed and private. Kellogg (1994) suggests that within these models there are two types of symbols that allow people to make meaning of their environments, namely, personal symbols and consensual symbols. This was evident in the transcripts of the interviews. This is illustrated in Table 5.8(c) and Table 5.14.

Drawing on the work of Kolers and Smythe (1984) in Kellogg (1994, pp. 6-7), Kellogg proposes that written communication requires one to decode from “one type of symbol - the personal and private - to another - the cultural and public” or the consensual symbol. While consensual symbols are maintained in the public domain there are different societies and cultures with their own language each with a different understanding of acceptable and shared meaning. In my interactions with the participants, examples within the South African context arose. One of these examples dealt with pictures. For instance, pictures of bare-breasted women would be acceptable, to Zulu readers of a Zulu newspaper but likely to offend English or Afrikaans readers in their English or Afrikaans newspapers. While pictures of micro-mini skirted women or women baring their thighs would be tolerable in most English or Afrikaans newspapers, such pictures would be offensive in Zulu publications. In both instances, the notion of culture may be described as a “notoriously ambiguous concept” (Hebdige, 1981, p.5). Seen in the context of Hebdige (1981), Spolsky (1989, p.131), in his own formulation of dozens of conditions for the acquisition of a language, believes that “language is primarily a social mechanism [as] languages are learned in social contexts”. Although the ‘social context’ has only an indirect effect on the learning of a language, it does effect learners’ “development of attitudes to learning” (Spolsky, 1989, p.132). This is illustrated in the 2nd set of interviews with HUM group 3 (ROWS 332-334).
It is in this domain of consensual symbols that one may locate written and spoken language. Kellogg (1994, p.7) states that the system of consensual symbols that is contained in all languages is essential and a basic necessity for the cognition of humans. Children learn to speak and then learn to read and write. Hence writing “is a consensual symbol system...that allows the sharing of meanings among members of the culture” (Kellogg, 1994, p.7). For instance, if the reader reading this page is a native-speaker of English, then, while reading, that reader would “construct personal symbols that map onto the consensual symbols of the written text”. So, it is not these typed words that make their way into our mental world. Table 5.3 (EBIT Group 2) is an illustration of this.

Kellogg (1994, p.8) states that it is the incredible memory system and perceptual faculty of the human brain that can process and then “generate the personal symbols of visual perceptions, images, associations and interpretations.” It is into this equation that we must also factor the natural influence of experience, culture, gender, age, formal and informal education, and hence, one’s prior knowledge. Readers’ experience of text, as public consensual symbols, generate an infinite number of interpretations, via each readers’ private and personal symbol system. However, when one focuses on systems, such as reading and writing, used in HEIs in South Africa to generate knowledge, cultural complexities can lead to greater variations on the writing continuum. This further supports what was illustrated in the 2nd set of interviews with HUM group 3 (ROWS 332-334).

In this research some of the so-called complications become hindrances in the practice of writing. Hindrances to be considered in the generation and interpretation of consensual symbols will be language acquisition, reading practice, academic writing, and academic staff perceptions in the context of South Africa’s apartheid past. These are also the hindrances likely to affect the way students perceive text and then convert that into private or personal symbols which in turn will be projected onto consensual symbols represented by written
text. An assumption to be made in this research is that translation of personal symbols into consensual symbol becomes problematic for post-graduate students, especially within the mental models they should be creating regarding their practice of writing. ADaM is an example of an instrument that could facilitate users converting their personal symbols into consensual symbols. Each group of participants in this study demonstrated varying levels of reflection on their competences as higher education practitioners. This could be interpreted as an underlying strength of ADaM as an instrument to facilitate reflection rather than function as a tool of measurement.

6.2.3 Language and associated activities

McDermott (1995. p.185), when describing language errors and resultant attitudes, draws attention to the terms “linguistic deficit” and “linguistic variability”... [because] of disparaging attitudes”. She questions why Americanese has become acceptable as an example of ‘linguistic variability’ while a variety of South African English is regarded as unacceptable and an example of ‘linguistic deficit’. An example from Afrikaans would be the use of “agtergeblewende” (ROW 240) as used in EBIT Group 2’s 2nd interview. Wood (1997) questions the intentions of those referring to the ‘language problem’ in higher education in South Africa and sees it as “recrimination and counter-recrimination among the mainstream academics and language support personnel”. Hence, language in education is far more complex and comprises numerous dimensions, some of which would be “language-related activities, such as reading, writing, speaking, listening and thinking” Wood (1997, p.41).

Regarding the suggested negativity above, such labeling of language users in South Africa, where there has been a history of racial injustice has another dimension if one adds Guiora’s notion of language and ego into the equation (Brown, 1987). Guiora suggests that one’s language ego develops in association with one’s mother tongue. So, as soon as one’s ego takes root in one’s language
it becomes impossible to separate. Attempting to learn another language during puberty, with added pressures of physical, emotional and cognitive change, makes it exceedingly complex where this “language ego clings to the security of the native language” (Brown, 1987, p.50). This is a mechanism to defend the brittle ego of the growing adult. Guiora declares that learning a third language may be less threatening in the life of a bilingual learner. This does not take into account that in South Africa, “the language of teaching was the proximate cause of the Soweto uprising which…heralded the end of apartheid as a political system” (Alexander, 1987, p.42).

Therefore, it appears that the process of a young black or white NNS learning to write English competently in higher education in South Africa’s multicultural and multilingual society could be a more complex process than just language teachers’ or linguists’ application of ESL or L2 theories. This process should be placed in the context of Wood’s “language-related activities” above, rather than developed amongst an exclusive group of specialists, such as “The Applied Linguistics Industry” described by Wood (1997, p.41). One explanation of the use of the collective term, according to Mackey (1966), was for applied linguists “wanting to be known as scientists and not humanists” (in van Els, Bongaerts, Extra, van Os & Janssen-van-Dieten, 1989, p.11).

The complex notion of language in education, some of its dimensions being reading, writing, and thinking, needs to be revisited as reading and writing appeared as categories in the analysis. The intention of this research is not to provide working definitions for each dimension but to regard these from the broad perspective of their being “language-related activities” (Wood, 1997, p.41). Within language related activities, especially in the context of meaning making, the role of reading should not be diminished.

While reading is often seen as a simple process, Smith (1985) observes that reading material can become unintelligible when the reader is anxious about
making mistakes. His broad strategies to improve his reading (Smith, 1985, pp. 13-35), such as understanding the notion of reading “from behind the eyes”, include a focus on one’s perceptions of the visual and the non-visual, how to process information successfully and the debilitating effects of “tunnel vision”. He also focuses on the importance of memory and of language and their contribution to learning and to reading. Smith (1985, p.81) believes they are critical in the context of that which “is implicit in our heads, [as] knowledge that cannot be put into words”. Here he alludes to Dewey’s (1938) understanding of learning and experience and to the notion of tacit knowledge espoused by Polanyi (1966). Table 5.10 presents an illustration of reading as an obstacle to learning which impacts on strategies that would make reading more effective.

A foil to Smith is Buzan (1988, p.8), who presents “theories on vocalising while reading, study methods, back-skipping and regression, finger pointing” and so forth. The Buzan theories may be described as propositional knowledge, as they are skills based. Eskey (1986) approaches reading strategies from the perspective of facilitation rather than instruction, stating “no-one can teach anyone how to read… [but] anyone can learn to read and to read more effectively” (Eskey, 1986, p.5). In South African higher education, there is another dimension to reading, namely, the importance of having learnt to read in one’s mother tongue.

Weideman and van Rensburg (2002, p.3), in their assessment of language proficiency among young South Africans at the University of Pretoria, observe that the low level of language proficiency “is not limited to second language speakers… [but such problems also affect] first language speakers of English and Afrikaans”. These researchers have noted a high correlation between language proficiency and academic performance and regard the ability to read as a critical factor. MO’s comments in Table 5.11 support this. The researchers are of the opinion that “reading ability, more than any other skill, is a critically important factor, especially for achieving success in academic work” (Weideman
& van Rensburg, 2002, p.9). This supposition is based on the need, initially, for one to have been a proficient reader in one’s first language prior to becoming a proficient reader either in another language or of academic texts in secondary and higher education. Such an opinion becomes a critical one in the light of the creation of categories of competence of native speakers and of non-native speakers of English, as it indicates that all students may have similar challenges with their written English. This would be based on reading ability rather than being directly influenced by mother tongue interference.

Reading played a significant role in my own practice in academic development. What I ignored was that while reading and writing are closely linked (Flower, 1990; Smith, 1994), my early practice had been aimed at students, who were novice readers and not at staff as expert readers. The disinterest of most participants was likely to have been for that reason. The only interested person was MO in EBIT Group 2 who had started as a challenged reader in the 1st interview and claimed to have improved by the 2nd interview. While the 1st set of interviews explored both reading and writing (Table 5.4(b)) in the 2nd set (Table 5.8) reading did not feature.

6.2.4 Academic writing and assessment

Morss and Murray (2001), examining research on academic writing, observe that there is hardly any literature on academic writing. The authors cite Blaxter, Hughes, and Tight (1998, p.290) who indicate that it is “widely assumed that, at the level of research, the nature and process of academic writing is understood… [and that] academics already know how to write”. Besides knowing ‘how to write’, there is also the perspective of the reason for writing, or what to write and why one is writing.

Essay writing allows teaching staff to engage with ideas and opinions of students, who then may gauge “the nature, language, culture, context and competencies
required for each distinctive discipline” (Spiller & Fraser, 1999, p.137). It becomes a platform for writers, themselves, “to attend to shaping ideas for self and audience” (Swayze & Wade, 1998, p.173). The notion of audience is noteworthy, as indicated in “Britton’s adolescent sample (Britton, et al., 1975) [which] valuably showed that most writing scrutinised was written for teachers in their role as examiners” (Swayze & Wade, 1998, p.173). The latter is an important notion because in the context of audience, one examines what one writes and for whom. While it may be true that students believe that writing is merely “compiling others thoughts and ideas without synthesizing the information” (Rocco, Parsons, Bernier & Batist, 2003, p.177), it does not mean that all student writing is unimaginative, uncritical and plagiarized. These were issues with which P, MO and K grappled in Tables 5.8 (a), (b) and (c) respectively, in Chapter 5.

Also, there is a difference between the processes of writing text as opposed to recording one’s thoughts or speech. Rocco et al. (2003, p.177), citing Purcell-Gates (1995, p.43) who described writing as not “simply oral language written down”, believe that the writing process plays an important role in the development of students or staff as reflective practitioners. Table 5.16 provides evidence of writing as a process. Writing should be regarded as a complex task that goes beyond “grammatical error or plagiarized paragraph, to the broader context of the essay [and that of] the writer” (Shay, Bond & Hughes 1994, p.19). Bar the reflection, according to Flower (1990, p.36), there is also “an extended interpretative process that weaves itself throughout composing” during the writing process.

Flower (1990, p.4), also has refined the relationship between reading and writing that is “goal-directed and context-specific” as a critical literacy. In higher education such a set of goals “often include the analysis, synthesis or original expression in written form (ibid.). Furthermore, Flower (1990, pp. 4-5) explains that such a written form does not merely demonstrate competence via the fluency
of writing, such as an endless stream of quotes. Critical literacy is required in order to sustain critical thinking via a demonstration of a “questioning and testing emphasis”, where one attempts to predict assumptions and to interpret objectives. This would be in contrast with a “transforming emphasis” (Flower, 1990, p.5) where the critically literate does not just question and test information but succeeds in transforming it so that the information can play a new role. Table 5.21 provides evidence of this in terms of R internalising the assessing of writing, facilitated by ADaM.

This issue is further complicated by the fact that when it comes to essay writing, there is an air of secrecy around what academic staff, as assessors, require from their students. There appears to be little transparency between assessors and students when it comes to the assessment of language, especially in the case of essays. Mowl and Pain (1995, p.325) believe that a “mystique is preserved around exactly what assessors require” regarding their criteria for assessment. A similar scenario exists when it comes to consensus with the wording of essay tasks. Use of task words such as ‘analyse’ or ‘discuss’ require clear consensus as these may “require knowledge of certain writing conventions with which students have little experience” (Shay, et al., 1994, p.20). In Table 5.4 (a) in Chapter 5, there were 16 references to (memos) assessing writing. This an indication of participants’ concern about the assessment processes with which they have to deal.

A useful option would be for students to monitor their writing themselves through peer evaluation and self-monitoring. This approach would be practical as in the medium term, it would motivate students to be reflective writers, but unrealistic if the class size is large. Cresswell (2000) suggests that it is useful, in a structured way, to facilitate students employing a self-monitoring technique when developing their writing competence. He observes that it leads to “increasing student autonomy and teacher responsiveness to individual needs” (Cresswell, 2000, p.243) when writers learn to reflect on their writing. It is possible that
ADaM could also assist students to reflect. In the interviews the need to consider the ‘student’ and the ‘teacher’ was highlighted. This went beyond the student-teacher situation to that of research writer and journal article writer. The participants extended the context to their own writing.

Essays allow for “a range of academic proficiencies to be tested” (Mowl & Pain, 1995, p.325) hence this approach is used widely in HEIs wherever class size permits. Since 1984 when the erstwhile South African government removed racial restrictions on acceptance policies at universities “so that traditionally white liberal universities could then take students from all backgrounds” (Donald & Rutherford, 1994, p.45) class sizes increased dramatically. Whether in the United States or in South Africa, at universities with a student enrolment of about 50,000, it is likely that many classes would have an average of 500 students. It becomes a daunting task, when faced with such large classes, to attempt to assess student knowledge via essays. This could be one reason why so many students reach post-graduate level without being competent essay writers. At the post-graduate level student numbers are drastically reduced. This provides an ideal period for such a perceived problem to be addressed. During their 2nd interview, EBIT Group 1 participants (ROWS 81-108) reflected on the negative impact that increased student numbers had had on their competence as higher education practitioners.

Table 5.15 in Chapter 5 indicates a major focus on ADaM. If this is correlated with the large number of memos in Table 5.4(b) in Chapter 5, on assessing writing, then it is reasonable to assume that a need to understand how to assess writing was important to the participants. For this reason, I would like to draw on Yancey’s stages of assessment, albeit from an American perspective. Yancey (1999, p.100) describes an American perspective of stages of assessment. Firstly, there was objective testing, consisting of multiple-choice tests, from 1950 till 1970, focusing on language usage, especially grammar and the choice of vocabulary. Many of these tests would have been diagnostic and used for the
placement of students. It is likely that this stage also attempted to validate a process and bring language “into line with testing theory” (Yancey, 1999, p.101). It is also likely that increasing student numbers shifted the focus to where students should be placed and what they should be taught. This would have led to a phase of unpredictability in HEIs in America as well as in South Africa. Historically, the objective assessment of writing may be seen as a tussle between the teacher as practitioner and the educational psychologist, with the “teacher-layperson (often successfully) challenging the (psychometric) expert” (Yancey, 1999, p.100).

Secondly, there was a more holistic approach to essay writing from the 1970s till 1986 followed by portfolio assessment, which is still being used. The first stage involved approaching assessment as an “indirect measure” (Yancey, 1999, p.102), testing superficial and purist language issues, such as correct punctuation, pronoun referencing, and so forth, as phenomena related to a form of behaviour. The next two stages involved greater focus on essay writing (1970 till mid-1980s) and portfolios (mid-1980s to date) were both subject to a shift in assessment. According to Yancey (1999, p.102), these forms of writing that required composing an essay, reflected a sample of student behaviour that needed a “direct measure” of assessment. However, it became evident that what while general writing might have been taught as a holistic process, it was often the specifics, such as grammar and the structure of sentences that were being assessed. Yancey is cynical about the evolving of the essay from a single essay to multiple drafts of that essay with additional commentary so that a “set of texts become the new portfolio assessment” (1999, p.103).

An obvious problem area is that of the assessors’ approach and their competence that make marking a relatively complex exercise. Yorke, Bridges and Woolf (2000, p.18) suggest that “[assessors] bring to the task of assessment various levels of experience and expertise” ranging through five levels of competence as illustrated by the five levels in the Dreyfus and Dreyfus model of
human learning. Bar these five levels, ranging from novice to expert, there is also the assessors’ own body of knowledge that would comprise their conceptual, technical, and practical knowledge. This combination of the model and the personal levels of knowledge would also explain why participants wanted the ADaM cross and tick changed. It is not coincidental that participants preferred a more comprehensive five-point scale for assessment as the 1 leans towards the novice and the 5 leans towards the expert.

While reading tests are reportedly more reliable predictors of educational success in secondary and higher education compared to essay writing (see Valentine, 1961), such diagnostic testing is indicative of students’ ability rather than their competence as writers. Kellogg (1994) observes that while one can reliably measure the number of words per minute in ones’ verbal fluency it is harder but possible to gauge written fluency if it is done on a word-processor. Although the process of writing requires much effort, a word-processor might lessen but cannot remove cognitive demands.

Kellogg (1994, p.64) claims the following: “A writer’s skill cannot be so great that the act of writing is as effortless as skilled typing”. In defence of his statement Kellogg refers, firstly, to the need to take into consideration the reader as audience when converting thoughts from personal symbols to consensual symbols. Secondly, Kellogg (1994, p.64) cites McCutchen (1988) who argues that “component processes such as planning, translating and reviewing must interact even for the skilled writer” as neither can operate separately. Finally, there are always content specific and rhetorical problems with which to cope each time one writes, regardless of the familiarity of the topic at hand. All of these activities make writing a complex task. However, engaging dialectically with different points of view and conscious reflection on a draft-revise-draft approach to writing can make the task less tedious.
Any constructive responses on student writing by teaching staff at HE level consumes much time (Somers 1984; Raimes 1991). Although it is often the case that lecturers have neither the time nor the ability to support learners’ writing, Table 5.19 in Chapter Five indicates the contrary. Rountree (1997) suggests that it is likely that lecturers will be more positive assessing written work of conscientious learners than that of learners who appear to be indolent. This is alluded to in Chapter Five in Table 5.13.

6.2.5 Experience and learning

Dewey (1938, p.19) believed that learning at school was not critical and dynamic enough, and that conventional learning meant the “acquisition of what was already incorporated in books and in the heads of elders”, a problem also encountered by Foucault in Ball (1990). Schön (1995, p.27) later called this scenario an institutional epistemology, where theories of knowledge are not “consciously espoused by individuals… [but rather] built into institutional structures and practices”.

In contrast with traditional education above, Dewey (1938) recommended a more progressive educational approach to be adopted, where freedom of the individual was encouraged, as opposed to the mere transmission of information from informed elders to uninformed pupils. Central to this progressive approach was learning from experience and engagement with authentic problem areas rather than learning from textbooks and through drill and practice. As a category in the open coding process, learning became an anchor phrase with 37 related memos some of which referred to experience. Dewey (1938) stated that the task of the educator was to provide an environment that nurtures responses so that the learner’s course may be directed. It is this type of learning that is likely to be aimed at, by the participants. While suggesting this new underpinning philosophy of engagement as an alternative approach, he was also wary of hastily making links between experience and education.
Dewey (1938, p.25) held that if an occurrence retarded the growth of further experience in that area, then such an occurrence could be negative and “mis-educative”. If so, then it would be important to reflect on the quality of an experience rather than to insist on drawing from any “educative” experience. According to Dewey, in order to consider a paradigm shift from traditional, static education to a progressive, dynamic education based on experience, it would be essential to engage with the principle of continuity. Using such a principle, one would actively “select the kind of present experiences that live fruitfully and creatively in subsequent experiences” (Dewey, 1938, p. 26) in order to progress.

One intention of my practical sessions was to simulate, over a relatively short period, the complex nature of the writing process. Participants were to reflect on the total experience of the active reading, academic writing, and then implementing the ADaM instrument to assess writing via computer mediation. After the period of analysis it is patently clear that the notion of Dewey’s ‘principle of continuity’ is relative to the person who selects those experiences. What I would consider useful might be useless for the participants.

An EBIT Group 2 participant, MO, who I described as a novice lecturer in Chapter Five, had had negative experiences with her reading. Reading plays a critical role in information gathering, and has a clear link to Smith’s (1985, pp. 13-35) notion of “reading from behind the eyes”. Poor reading strategies can persist when accessing text is hampered, for instance, in the case of a non-native speaker of English, by mother tongue interference. This could lead to a series of what Dewey (1938) refers to as negative and ‘mis-educative’ experiences. While use of a dictionary is a desirable element of informed and critical reading, it can also frustrate the reader, as was the case with the EBIT 2 participant.

Also within the context of ‘educative’ experiences is the expert reader such as the EBIT Group 1 participant, who is likely to have had many of Dewey’s (1938) ‘educative’ experiences. He had already experienced, positively, the principle of
continuity before participating in reading and writing phases of the practical sessions of this study. It is likely that he had also had positive experiences regarding his competence with teaching and supervising post-graduate students at HEI-5. However, the gradually increasing student numbers in classes for which EBIT Group 1 participants were responsible, had started to turn this group’s positive experiences into negative ones. An EBIT Group 1 participant, P, while able to draw on a wealth of experience, was displaying a low level of frustration as a result of increasing student numbers in his classes. It appeared that this was hindering his interaction and effectivity as a higher education practitioner. I sensed that all his positive experiences could become negative. His inability to effectively mentor post-graduate students appeared to be a sign of his lowered self-esteem as a higher education practitioner. Hence, both EBIT participants were trying to deal with ‘miseducative’ experiences.

Boud, Cohen and Walker (1993, pp. 8-16), who share ideas of Dewey, namely, that experience should be factored into a learning equation, especially when considering the generation of knowledge, offer five propositions listed below.

- Proposition 1: Experience is the foundation of, and the stimulus for, learning;
- Proposition 2: Learners actively construct their experiences;
- Proposition 3: Learning is a holistic process;
- Proposition 4: Learning is socially and culturally constructed; and
- Proposition 5: Learning is influenced by the socio-emotional context in which it occurs.

While Boud, et al. (1993) above, offer five propositional forms that, ostensibly, lead to the development of some theory from knowledge, they also claim they are not merely providing strategies to be used in certain situations. Their objective is to present ideas and some examples from practice to assist a reader with alternatives rather than offering specific solutions to specific problems regarding
the impact of experience on learning. Proposition 1, 3 and 5 seem to support the findings, hence, I will expand on them further.

Proposition 1: **Experience is the foundation of, and the stimulus for, learning.**

The authors believe that if new ideas and concepts are not linked in some way to experience, then those new ideas and concepts are meaningless and without context. They suggest that initiating learning “is the act of framing some aspect of experience from which we can learn” (Boud, *et al.*, 1993, p.8).

Earlier experiences that have had a negative effect on us, such as those that Dewey (1938, p.25) refers to as being “miseducative”, are avoided, while positive experiences yield positive reinforcement. Boud, *et al.* (1993), also suggest that learning is not the result of teaching but that learning is prompted by experiences created by teaching reflecting on one’s experience. In this way it is possible to transpose knowledge that is experiential and difficult to access, into knowledge that may be critically examined, such as propositional knowledge. It is within this first proposition that one may engage in reflection. For example, the single practical session on mentorship that I suspected had been an unproductive session, had a positive impact on the participants. It is reasonable to assume that the ADaM instrument, as an instrument to generate thoughts related to the assessment of writing, is able to achieve that because it is not a tool for measuring. The most recent version of ADaM contains a five-point scale, which was arrived at from the experiences of the participants. At a surface level, ADaM could be creating opportunities for its users to reflect, and through reflection, to create positive experiences for users to learn about how and why they have constructed their own assessment parameters. At another level, a dialogue with post-graduate students around their respective practices of writing, could establish an informal relationship between staff and their post-graduate students that could lead to a formal relationship built around mentorship.
Proposition 3: Learning is a holistic process. A number of areas of learning have been identified over the years, such as there being a cognitive, an affective, and psychomotor domain. It was Gardiner (1983) who advocated the theory of multiple intelligences rather than one measurable intelligence, a theory and an assumption generated by Binet during the early 20th century. Such perspectives seldom present learning as a seamless phenomenon, where “there is a large degree of continuity between our experiences even while we label them as different“ (Boud, et al., 1993, p.12). The authors suggest it is unrealistic to decontextualise learners as has been the convention especially with regard to learning and universal knowledge. There was a time, for instance, when it was simple to predict the stereotype entering the field of Natural Science and Social Science. This is not necessarily the case nowadays. If one speculates that writing is a holistic practice containing elements of reading, writing, computer mediation, and mentorship, then the Boud et al. (1993) proposition 3 supports my study.

As the third proposition states that one domain of learning could be active in the foreground while other domains are active in the background, it is possible that the 13 practical sessions drew attention to the complex nature of the writing process. This might have been achieved because most research participants saw ‘a degree of continuity between [their] experiences’. EBIT Group 1 participant M was not conscious of the different elements in the practical sessions. In the 2nd interview, M (ROW 39-41) apologised for being unaware of different sections in the practical sessions. However, that perception might be the result of the four elements, mentorship, reading, writing and computer-mediation being structured as a seamless learning event built around the assessment of writing.

Proposition 5: Learning is influenced by the socio-emotional context in which it occurs. The emotional side of our being appears to be the side least examined in educational institutions. This becomes a key issue if one accepts the following
statement: “Emotions and feelings are key pointers to both possibilities for and barriers to, learning” (Boud, et al., 1993, p.15). In this context, the authors draw attention to two factors that influence learning, that is, (i) one’s experience in the past and (ii) the supportive role of others in the present. One’s past creates expectations of the present and this leads to students having to bear both the positive and the negative experiences. However, the context of the present can be a catalyst that allows one to engage with the positive qualities of experience rather than being weighed down by the baggage of negative experience. It becomes equally necessary to have a person in a supportive role to assist with learners dealing with the positive context of the present. Such a support system could build confidence and assist with learners’ self-esteem, especially when it is important for learners to have positive learning experiences. Their self-esteem could also constitute the critical mass required for students to continue with tasks that appear too difficult. It encourages persistence, finding alternative solutions to tasks, as well as their challenging others’ assumptions regarding tasks.

Whether or not one works in a large group or with one partner, self-esteem will also determine how learners view themselves. Having the confidence in one’s ability to act, generally, will assist with learning and is pivotal to reflective and critical thinking, as “without this we are passive participants in the constructs of others” (Boud, et al., 1993, p.18). It is this confidence that needs to be developed in post-graduate supervision practices and hence in the production and the assessment of academic writing. The italicised proportion of the previous sentence comes directly from the research question.

EBIT Group 1 participants had spells of negativity (ROWS 126-138). It was initiated by their oblique conversation on mentorship (ROWS 1-70) leading to a serious reflection on supervision (ROWS 77-120). In their proceeding reflection they examined mentorship leading from supervision (ROWS 121-124) before presenting their thoughts on the critical literacy, especially writing, of their post-graduate students. These phases in their reflection could be an illustration of some of their negative experience. They appeared unable to reconcile their own
expertise with the expectations of postgraduate student competence as writers. I interpreted this as L, for instance, believing (ROWS 136-138) that her students should construct a ladder of competence to reach the post-graduate level at which they ought to be, as opposed to her supplying resources so that they could construct that ladder together. It would appear that ADaM created an opportunity for her to critically analyse post-graduate supervision. In the process L recognised what she disliked most about her higher education practice. This sentiment, shared by the EBIT Group 1 is captured at the end of their interview (ROW 250) P/M/L: “op ons veld moet ons ervaring het maar wat doen hulle? “

Proposition 5 hints at mentorship which will be discussed as a primary focus.

6.3 MENTORSHIP AS PRIMARY FOCUS

It is significant that on the one hand, usually, mentors are appointed to build capacity thereby nurturing mentees’ self-worth and talent. Kerka (1998, p.4) refers to this as instrumental or career mentoring. An example is Gottlob Neefe, who nurtured Beethoven’s musical talent as well as exposing him to works of then modern and ancient philosophies. Later, Neefe recommended that Beethoven be appointed official organist to the court of Franz, the Elector of Cologne, resulting in a significant growth in his circle of friends. On the other hand, mentors may be appointed for a different purpose, namely, to nurture self-worth thereby building capacity that leads to the nurturing of mentees’ abilities. Kerka refers to this as integrative or psychosocial mentoring (1998, p.4). In higher education integrative or psychosocial mentoring is more acceptable.

Further, it is noteworthy that the Medical Education for South African Blacks (MESAB) programme, started in South Africa in 1985, was established for integrative or psychosocial mentoring. According to De la Rose (1995, p.1). while "MESAB’s central purpose was to train non-white medical personnel,
underlying this work was the …belief that education was the key to the real dismantling of Apartheid”. However, it is critical that whichever mode in which one chooses to function, mentor selection has also been considered as it could destroy rather than build capacity of staff or students. Morton-Cooper and Palmer (2000) in Brockbank and McGill (2006, pp. 76-77) suggest that there is either classical mentoring, where mentors are chosen by natural selection so that there is a match between mentor and mentee, or artificial selection, where selection is random and the mentor-mentee match is forced.

After several years being a mentor and sampling two decades of literature on the subject, Roberts (2000, p.162) concludes: "Mentoring is a complex, social and psychological study…[where the] plethora of recent research and discussion has been hindered by a lack of consensus as to what constitutes mentoring”. Roberts challenges the popular belief that the term mentor originates from Homer’s *The Odyssey*, suggesting that the likely origin of the term is “in the little known *Les Adventures de Telemaque* by Fenelon (1699)” (Roberts, 2000, p.162).

Roberts’ (2000, p.151) phenomenological reduction\(^1\) inductively offers 8 essential attributes of mentorship to which I have added a brief explanation:

- a process form - a series of measures or actions;
- an active relationship - where circumstances mutually connect persons;
- a helping process - offering the mentee protection and guidance;
- a teaching-learning process - careful transmission of knowledge;
- a reflective practice - problematising practice for the learner;
- a career and personal development process - especially in formal mentoring;
- a formalised process - generally not serendipitous; and
- a role constructed by or for a mentor - in given contexts to act in specific ways.

\(^{1}\) This is when a researcher ‘brackets’ any suppositions and previously thought knowledge prior to explanation in order to arrive at its essence – so bracketing “lifts” an item under investigation from its meaning context so we don’t make use of the actuality of the Objective world (Husserl, 1917; Bentz, 1995).
Garvey and Alfred’s (2000) survey within higher education in the UK raised concerns about the nature of mentorship within HEIs. Their survey indicated, as did de la Rose’s research, that there was a lack of “UK-based source material available for more experiential approaches” (Garvey & Alfred, 2000, p.219). They concluded that their survey raised the consciousness of those who wanted to know more about mentorship whilst making the uniformed more wary of their ignorance.

English (1999, p.195) adopts an adult learning approach to mentorship in Canada and believes that there should be two “significant educational dimensions to mentorship: preparing mentors and mentees for mentorship and providing continuing professional education opportunities…” These two dimensions are in addition to “the formal teaching and learning relationship that constitutes the essence of mentorship” (ibid.), which supports one of Roberts’ essential attributes.

Kerka (1998, p.1) questions the process of first declaring one’s underlying philosophy, because formal mentoring programmes are becoming “a cost-effective way to upgrade skills, enhance recruitment and retention, and increase job satisfaction. Similarly, Feiman-Nemser (1996, p.56) suggests that mentoring creates “new career opportunities for veteran teachers”.

Following Roberts’ eight attributes of Mentorship, it is impossible not to consider some of the most significant people of our time who have been mentors too. For instance, Adolf Hitler, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, and so on. Although each was different all have been and many still are powerful role models for their followers.

In the same way HEIs have differing constituencies and accompanying organizational needs. Angelique, Kyle and Taylor (2002, p.195) question the omnipresence of universities and claim that although such organisations offer
employees “sanctuary from the demands of the real world...is often more dystopian than utopian for graduate assistants and faculty members”. Although this describes staff that do not have permanent status, namely non-tenured staff, especially tutors, Angelique et al. critically examine the notion of mentorship and interpersonal power bases in such work environments. Such an area transcends one’s conditions of employment. Angelique et al., (2002), concur with Mullen and Forbes (2000) regarding peer mentoring being a viable option. Mullen and Kelly (2000) customize the above by adopting a mentored academic writing approach for new teaching staff. They concluded that the “co-mentoring’ between mentors and new scholars...would happen naturally” and should not be structured.

While all the above focused on HE and mentorship outside of Africa, there are a few useful South African points of view. Büchner and Hay (1998) examine aspects ranging from institutional philosophies to formalizing and developing mentorship programmes.

Vakalisa (1998, p.67) is of the opinion that novice academics “need the support and assistance of established researchers to introduce them to the nuts and bolts of doing research”. This is further supported by Erasmus and Kapp (1998, p.112) who believe that mentoring programmes have “potential benefits for organisations, mentors and protégés”.

Based on Roberts’ attributes of mentorship, we may conclude that a graduate supervision process has elements of all eight attributes. However, graduates are seldom trained to be supervisors, mentors, role models or writing experts. A survey conducted by Naidoo and Tshivhase (2003) across 2 identical faculties at both the University of Pretoria and the University of South Africa concluded that a large majority of respondents, teaching staff who had already obtained Masters’ degrees in their fields, had had little or no exposure to how-to-supervise or to how-to-write courses prior to their being requested to supervise students at Honours and at Master’s level. While the survey drew on responses generated
by two specific institutions in Pretoria, this is likely to be a familiar scenario at
other HEIs in South Africa where little attention is paid to mentorship in
professional development programmes.

Implicit in the findings is evidence that was not predicted during the development
of the practical sessions. I placed mentorship in the background by allocating
only one session to it. During the 2nd interviews, there was significant reflection
on the need for mentorship to be foregrounded. Nearly 20% of participant
reflection was based on their reflecting on the notion of mentorship and
supervision issues in higher education.

6.4 HIGHER EDUCATION PRACTICE AS SUBSTANTIVE
THEORY

The purpose of higher education is based on three roles of “high level teaching
and learning, research and knowledge production, and community engagement”
(CHE, 2004, p.19). HE managers require their academic staff to juggle these
different dimensions within HE. The need for three areas of ‘teaching’, ‘research’
and ‘community engagement’ appear reasonable as the rationale and espoused
theory of a HE institution, but unreasonable in the actual practice of their
academic staff. This was clear in the findings of this study.

However, there may have been mitigating circumstances with Group 1. Their
response to the practical sessions and subsequent interviews indicated that they
were all confident practitioners but concerned about their supervision duties.
They related their feelings regarding two of their three HEI roles. They had
control over the impact of their teaching roles but not over their research duties
as supervisors. They were confident within their knowledge domain but not as
confident outside them. They believed that specialist staff should teach students
not competent as researchers or as writers (EBIT Group 1, 2\textsuperscript{nd} Interview, ROW 206).

HEIs may employ academic staff members who excel in either teaching the discipline or their field or research. Participants in this study were practicing predominantly in the area of teaching and learning. It is therefore assumed that they were employed for their expert knowledge in the particular discipline. While mentorship could increase the supervisory capacity of staff teaching postgraduate students, such as the EBIT Group 1 participants, this was nonexistent at HEI-5. The need for infrastructure was a challenge as effective mentoring required “training for everyone concerned, i.e. the mentor, mentee and line manager” (Brockbank & McGill, 2006, p.76). In addition, supervision had a psychosocial element with which one had to deal. In addition every “mentoring or coaching relationship has a political dimension” (Brockbank & McGill, 2006, p.18). In South Africa, a scenario of junior teaching staff being mentored by senior teaching staff and vice versa could deteriorate into a power struggle especially if colour was a variable.

EBIT Group 2 participants indicated that one of their challenges was with a senior colleague who was not as supportive as he could have been. Both participants also appeared to enjoy their teaching and their research, were registered for Master’s degrees. During the 2\textsuperscript{nd} EBIT Group 2 interview, power play was raised as an issue. While both Group 2 participants appeared to be comfortable with their teaching and mentoring roles, they were being frustrated by decisions of a senior male staff member. The result was that students were negatively affected by an unreasonable interpretation of rules. Also, the participants themselves were misrepresented by this senior colleague resulting in an awkward situation between a participant and her Head of Department. They might have been able to address the issues if they had a mentor with whom they could engage.
HUM Group 3 shared the opinion of power play except theirs was not based on gender but a lack of transformation. They were comfortable with their teaching and their mentorship roles within their department. However, the collegial support and opportunities for research offered to their colleagues were never offered to these two participants (2nd interview, ROW 332). As a result, their research output was low and they deliberately avoided departmental activities. Carefully chosen research mentors would have empowered them and built their research capacity. Ironically part of their jobs was to be knowledgeable on issues of mentoring, coaching and counseling. They had to take the first step in order to initiate change (ROWS 369-379).

All three groups were comfortable with their teaching. Although reading and writing as information storage and retrieval strategies and mentorship appear to be two disparate entities, they are linked to two of the three roles of staff in higher education, namely, ‘teaching and learning’ and ‘research’. Without the reading and writing it is difficult to learn about, to process and to share knowledge required for teaching and for research. Without the mentorship we are not providing teaching staff with those conditions required for them to work at their best and to be able to engage with their specialist and public communities off-campus.

6.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter focused on a review of literature that corresponded to some of the categories as well as anchor phrases related to the emergent theory developed in Chapter Five. This emergent theory referred to sensitising HE practitioners. Such academics are hired for their expertise in a particular discipline and often do not have either a teaching qualification or research experience. In the memos arising from the interviews, among the categories that emerged were learning, reading and assessment of writing. The pre-dominant anchor phrases that
enabled the clustering of categories were mentorship and higher education. The theory that exists in support of the categories and anchor phrases point to the fact that developing these skills would make the participants more confident in their positions as higher education practitioners.
Chapter Seven

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The sustained metaphor of painting, which is similar to the process of writing, was one way of presenting taking the reader from a blank canvas to a completed picture. Chapter One introduced the reader to the context and provided the intended direction of the research. By describing the development of my experiences in the area of writing, I painted the backdrop in Chapter Two. The research methodology in Chapter Three identified the paradigms and methodologies for this study. This is similar to mixing the colours in preparation for painting. The description of the data collection process in Chapter Four, provided the broad brushstrokes in the picture. The picture itself was painted through the data analysis in Chapter Five. By relating the literature to the emergent theory, a perspective was added to the picture in Chapter Six.

By refocusing on the research question in this chapter, an attempt is made to frame the picture. This is done by a synthesis of the analysis together with
deductions at which I have arrived. Emphasis is placed on the findings that lead to recommendations.

7.2 ANSWERING THE RESEARCH QUESTION

A focus in the form of a research question was presented in Chapter One: *Can a writing assessment instrument be used to sensitise staff teaching post-graduates to reflect on the complex nature of producing and assessing academic writing?*

The response to this question was divided into three sub-questions, that is:

- How did the instrument develop?
- How can the intervention be implemented?
- What was the effect of the implementation process?

The first sub-question regarding development of the instrument was presented in Chapter Two, as part of a description of my higher education career and the related development of five personal theories. The description of my experience can be seen as longitudinal action research where I attempted to improve my practice over the years. This culminated in the development of ADaM. Sub-question two queried how such an intervention could be implemented and this was described in Chapter Four, as part of the data collection process. The third sub-question examined the resultant effects as presented in Chapter Five where the data was examined and analysed and Chapter Six triangulated findings from Chapter Five.

This research started as a journey through a qualitative paradigm using a research question to fuel two modes of transport. Action research was the vehicle of choice for the first part of the journey on the road of reflection and experience. A remodeled grounded theory vessel was used to map a course through a sea of data, as it was unchartered territory. Within the analysis I had to
find a means of understanding the data. I turned to the quantitative paradigm to provide roadside stops for the journey through the qualitative paradigm.

It should be noted here that the use of a remodeled grounded theory allowed emergent theory to surface. This substantive theory caused a slight deviation from the original research question as the sensitisation of staff moved beyond the assessment of academic writing to include broader issues within higher education.

7.3 SYNTHESIS

As an overview of the analysis there were four stages of practical sessions that were significant. Stage 1 was meant to provide an environment for collaboration between participants by using the mentorship articles as a vehicle. Stage 2 was meant to introduce the participants to the process of reading and their importance in the information gathering phase of communication in general. In the 1st set of interviews conducted with all three groups, some participants found the material and reading exercises to be useful.

The grounded theory approach to analysing the data from the 1st set of interviews yielded areas of reflection directly related to the impact of the practical sessions. Nearly half the reflection was on the actual practical sessions’ reading and writing theory and practice while more than half the reflections were on issues of learning. There were also two personal opinions on supervision that were indirectly related to the practical sessions.

Stage 3 was to expose participants to the complexities of writing and to an instrument to be used to assess writing. It was hoped that use of such an instrument with criteria would assist them to do something similar with their students when writing research. It was meant to enable participants to empower their students to become more competent writers. The final stage, Stage 4,
exposed participants to a simulated situation where they assessed a range of academic texts. While participants reached consensus on their assessment exercises, their reflection in the 2nd set of interviews indicated something very different. Examining the process of writing, particularly its assessment, generated reflection on broader issues not present in any of the 4 stages of practical sessions. These were anchor phrase areas of Mentorship and Higher Education that comprised more than half the total reflections.

The analysis of the 2nd set of interviews yielded an even greater diversity of what I referred to as anchor phrases that housed categories and their properties. Again there were personal opinions, writing practice and reflection on the practical sessions that were to be expected. These directly related areas of reflection accounted for a third of the total amount of reflection while two thirds were on mentorship and higher education issues and indirectly related to the content of the practical sessions.

7.4 DEDUCTIONS

The fact that the participants volunteered means that they were motivated to take part in the research. As HE practitioners these participants took their role seriously. From their utterances it can be seen that they were keen to improve. This willingness to engage with strategies for improvement needs to be harnessed. If HEIs develop mechanisms for identifying such needs and offer support, then the research participants would be part of an ever increasing percentage of satisfied academic staff.

The core business of HE practitioners is teaching and research with supervision being the culmination of these two elements of HE practice. By focusing on research in post-graduate writing the participants assumed their roles as both ‘teachers and researchers’. The process involved assessing the writing of experienced writers as well as that of students so they integrated what was
presented in the practical sessions into their existing knowledge bases and ultimately their practice.

If the research had been done with a group of teachers or learners it is possible that the outcome could have revolved around sensitisation to the process of writing. In the case of these academics, competence in writing, for instance, encouraged increased productivity. By focusing on academic writing it was expected that they might improve their method of assessing their student work. ADaM’s focus on audience, encouraged them to critique the research writing of other academics. This newfound skill could stimulate them to start writing for their specific audiences and, hence, be motivated to produce research articles.

The results of ADaM are dependant on the context of the participants involved. Matza describes why the behaviour of people needs to be seen as appropriate within its respective context and “where the context includes how they see themselves and their environment” (Hammersley, 2000, pp. 394-395). This was particularly relevant when extracting data regarding the participants’ reflection of the practical sessions presented to them as part of this research.

Glaser and Strauss (1967, p.22), suggest that while comparative analysis is sometimes used to “debunk, disprove, or discount the work of colleagues”, in grounded theory this strategy is used to generate rather than to verify theory. Using comparative analysis Glaser and Strauss (1967, p.32) also draw attention to “theory as a process…not a perfected product”. In addition, establishing this dialogic approach to generating theory allows theory to be dynamic. While I have presented five personal theories in propositional form in Chapter Two, these should be seen as ‘theory as a process’ to achieving a product called ADaM.
7.5 FINDINGS

Practice may be regarded as a body of knowledge representing skills specifically shaped by the needs of its audience, learners or clients. Academic discourses are shaped and then nurtured both internally by an academic’s department and faculty as well externally by a professional body. For instance, EBIT participants’ discourses would also have been shaped and informed by their professional body the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA). With such nurturing there would always be growth in the area of reporting and writing shaped by the dominant discourses. However, if these are negative and rooted in power play and gender specificity, as would be included in a Foucauldian perspective, especially in HEIs, then writing becomes a burden and results in unproductive academics.

There appear to be some common guidelines regarding the participants’ teaching and their practice. However, while these guidelines differ from faculty to faculty they also differ within departments, depending on the race relations or power play that exist.

There are common guidelines governing writing within specific levels and qualifications, especially at post-graduate level. Faculties have guidelines for the superstructure of the production and administrative support relating to research but there are few guidelines regarding the infrastructure of actual writing, together with an absence of focused support.

There are espoused guidelines governing writing as part of academic practice especially at post-graduate level. Faculties have guidelines for the superstructure of the production and administrative support relating to research, but there are few guidelines regarding the infrastructure of actual writing and an absence of focused support at post-graduate level.
There are espoused guidelines governing mentorship and supervision in any HEI as research is their core business. However, this is often reliant on the presence of a tacit understanding of what it means to supervise or to mentor. From a teaching and learning perspective, approaches to the assessment of writing might vary but there are few consensual guidelines developed between the writers, namely, their students, and their mentors, namely, their lecturers or supervisors. Criteria are not always present to assist a supervisor and a novice researcher to learn about writing.

Practice describes a broad process and straddles the abstract in its definition and the concrete in its implementation according to Barber (2006). Hence, practice leans toward the abstract and may be applied to other areas and inform other general theories. The main finding of the research was that ADaM had the effect of sensitising HE practitioners. The variance between the research question and the emergent theory was that the notion of sensitising shifted beyond assessing academic writing to the notion of supervision and mentorship in the context of higher education practice.

Within the findings, the lessons learnt cover both surface or external and deep or internalised experiences and are as listed below.

- When using the ADaM experience one must take cognisance of the needs of the participants and adapt accordingly. If they are skilled readers then only one session of reading may be necessary to refocus their attention.
- If participants are confident assessors of writing, then focusing on mentorship could have a greater and positive impact on the business of knowledge generation.
- When groups of academics work together a high level of trust is required and must be earned.
• The South African HEI context plays a role in academic interaction so when issues of transformation surface, they should be addressed as honestly as possible.

7.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.6.1 Professional development
There is a need for professional development for the existing staff in addition to what may normally be provided for newly appointed staff. While newly appointed staff need professional development as part of a constructive orientation to the institution it is also useful as they discover first-hand the institutional requirements and culture. It helps them to work towards achieving the vision of the particular institution. In the case of existing staff, professional development, if carefully constructed, could provide them with new foci and act as an energiser. The existing staff would have matured to the level of being post-graduate supervisors so they would need to interrogate the concept of mentoring their students. This could take root by their mentoring more junior or inexperienced staff. Notwithstanding their experience, they would still need to acquire the skills of mentoring. Presenters of such courses need to be nurturers who, themselves, display the skills required of a mentor.

7.6.2 Research writing
Regarding research writing, institutions need to offer capacity development opportunities for novice researchers. Research capacity development must be seen as broader than the production of research but having an understanding of the associated processes that lead to producing the product. Again, those sessions need to be presented by staff who are practicing researchers and who have the respect of the academic community at their institution.
7.7 NEED FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

There are some of the areas that require further investigation:

1. The effects of having mentorship programmes to assist newly appointed academic staff;

2. The consequence of an instrument such as ADaM on the research output of staff within an academic unit; and

3. Does knowledge of AUDIENCE in research writing determine the language (style and pitch) to be used (Personal Theory 6)?

7.8 FINALE

The use of writing, either to copy and record thoughts or to generate knowledge, is an effective medium of communication. Whether it is in the hands and the minds of the literate few, or with the many others who are not so literate, it is always a powerful tool. The notion of a critical literacy, one that draws on reading and writing skills, appears to be an effective screening mechanism when embedded in prerequisites for a student's admission to an HEI. This is not necessarily the case for the appointment of teaching staff in HEIs.

Generally, academics are employed on the basis of a tacit understanding that their résumés and academic records provide sufficient evidence of their competences and accompanying critical literacy. There is a need for an instrument to assist lecturers at post-graduate level to achieve greater critical literacy. An instrument that facilitates the general assessment of writing can stimulate such post-graduate staff to greater productivity as writers. I believe that
this, in turn, could inspire their novice researchers to a point where they would want to emulate their lecturers and regard them as their mentors.

This study has increased my understanding of the complex nature of what higher education practitioners in two different faculties require. Programmes in mentorship, in post-graduate supervision and in writing, as well as increased awareness of learning within environments of transformation, will support such practitioners with their practice. Now all the elements are in place, this picture is complete and it may be framed.
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193


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The first of its kind in South Africa. A lectured masters degree in key aspects of entrepreneurship and small business management.

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The purpose of the degree is to provide entrepreneurs, consultants, managers and especially service providers in the small business-enabling environment and development sector with an advanced level of knowledge and competencies in all areas related to entrepreneurship and small business management.

COURSE .................&...................

Courses will be presented by a combination of limited contact and distance education over an 18-month period. Students will be required
to have access to the library and the Internet for research and self-study. Maximum of four years is allowed for completion of the degree (including the submission of the dissertation).

The estimated cost at this stage for the course is as follows:

1st year R8 800 (9 modules)
2nd year R4 140 (5 modules)
Disertation R8890
Adititional registration R2000

R150-00 must be paid immediately before application is recognized.

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In order to register for this degree a student must:

- Be in possession of any Bachelor’s degree or National Diploma, and
- Have completed a full year course in Business Management at undergraduate (first year) level, or
- Pass an oral and/or written examination in Business Management based on the syllabi of OBS 110, 120 within 12 months from commencing with the degree.

Students must have access to the Internet.

......................... OF SUBJECTS
1. Courses in Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management in B Com (Hons), B Tech or MBA level will be considered for partial or full credit depending on the syllabi of the particular institutions.
2. The accreditation of courses at reputable/recognised universities abroad will be pursued…
Making education flexible at ABC

ABC’s educational approach is based on a technology-enhanced flexible learning (telematic education) paradigm. This approach takes international trends in education innovation into account, while addressing the needs of a developing Southern Africa through appropriate technology-enhanced delivery systems.

Contact tuition form an important part of almost all ABC programmes. Within a technology-enhanced flexible learning environment, face-to-face contact sessions are enriched with e-learning opportunities. E-learning is provided through the appropriate integration of various information and communication technologies (ICTs) such as the worldwide web (WWW), interactive multimedia, computer-assisted assessment, interactive television and video-conferencing.

ABC’s educational approach incorporate the impact of technology and the flexible needs of learners, making the student the central focus in the design and development of learning opportunities. This model allows the student to study either full-time or part-time, through the innovative integration of contact tuition, electronic education and, in certain niche programmes in education, paper-based distance education.

Important to note:
• Part-time study depends on the availability of specific programmes (mostly postgraduate programmes) to be followed on a part-time basis.
• It should not be assumed that a programme that is available online, is a distance programme or available for part-time study. The ABC use the Internet and other ICTs within an electronic learning environment, to enhance our contact tuition. E-learning is not equal to distance learning.
• Although specific programmes can be followed on a part-time basis, periodic contact sessions are also provided in most of these programmes.

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**Education at ABC in new learning environments**

ABC has embraced the new information era and the use of technology for electronic learning in a holistic way. Its infrastructure is modern and sophisticated and it have developed substantial expertise in telematic learning and education innovation. The intention is to provide academic and administrative services to learners in all walks of life using optimal, innovative techniques in the full range of its academic programmes, and in its administration.

At one end of the spectrum, and for some learners, conventional contact tuition as the dominant mode of instruction will be maintained, while effective use is made of new information and communications technology to enhance teaching and learning. For other students, particularly mature students not able to be on campus full-time, the notion of lifelong learning compel us to provide a different mode of access to knowledge and opportunities for attaining tertiary qualifications. Flexible learning environments, enhanced with technology, using mixed delivery systems, forms part of the education model in the repertoire of a fully comprehensive institution.
ABC is convinced that high quality, efficient education should encompass optimal use of technology. Innovation and flexibility within a new learning environment are the way forward. Knowledge management and even the innovation of the learning process itself, are part of the new information age. The Web is increasingly being used by the ABC to provide technologically enhanced education, and to improve the flow and management of information between teacher and learner, within contact programmes. This does not make the programmes “distance”. There is also programmes that use a combination of ICT, are partly Web-based, and includes block teaching, for students who are not full-time on the campus. The block teaching provide contact time equivalent to that offered in conventional contact programmes.
CRIME

Crime is a highest problem facing lots of communities in South Africa. Everytime you turn on the radio or television or see the paper there will be something that is upsetting you. The government must see to it that this crimes are stopped.

The economy suffers in the meantime, because so many people are not having a job. People outside this country will not come and visit this country because they are afraid. They make a lot of money when they visit this country when they change money for this country but now they will stop. Maybe when the gangs stop the fights then the visitors will come back too.

It is also lowering the rate of Education. Children at school is offered drugs and guns to use them. Parents will not want his child to go to school, he is afraid for him getting hurt. In Cape there are too many children seeing gangs fight and they are fighting too and getting hurt like the girls getting rapped.

Teenage suicide is also a result, a student will feel that he has not enough of drugs and other thing and decides to end his life, it also results to teenage pregnancies, because girls will not worry about precaution she will be under the influence of drugs, and deseases like aids spreads easily.

The government has to create jobs for everyone to that people who are doing these can find the other way of making money.
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The qualities of a research scientist

Science covers a wide spectrum, from humans to plants to animals and the universe. This means that a person must be open minded and willing to learn when it comes to scientific research. In order to be a research scientist, a person must have three main qualities. They must have a scientific basis, be truthful and be disciplined.

Firstly the research essay must look at scientific basis and what that means. This will enable the scientist to have good judgement in critical investigations. It includes research in human sciences and in natural sciences. The scientific basis can be obtained in tertiary institutions, where information is added to the basis obtained in high school.

Secondly the person must be able to speak the truth at all times. This means that he or she must state all the facts clearly. No information must be omitted, even though it might be thought unimportant. It is also important to take care not to use misleading phrases. An example of this would be if a nurse were taking care of a patient. She must keep track of all the things being done or happening with the patient. She must also say what she really observes or the doctor might prescribe a wrong medication for the patient. This can lead to criticism.

The third and final quality that a research scientist needs to have is discipline, which means that a person must be organized. A research scientist must keep all the files and history of information, in order to make accurate and reasonable conclusions. An example of this would be when a doctor needs to treat a patient. The doctor has a history file of the patient’s health. So it is then easier to diagnose what the patient is now suffering from. If people obtain these qualities, they will be successful research scientists.
Qualities of a research scientist.

Science is a fun subject. I love doing it. I want to be a research scientist one day. Is it fun learning new things. In science class our teacher lets us mix acids and things together. These things cause reactions which are fun to see. Research scientists do not always have fun. You must work hard to learn everything there is to know about science and you must always tell the truth no matter what and you must also be able to organize your life.

I said in the beginning that you must learn everything there is to know about science and this is very true and your teachers at school must tell you everything and you must listen. If you don’t know these things then you can’t be a research scientist and your can’t go to university.

If a nurse watches a patient for doctor and lies to the doctor about what the patient is like and the doctor gives the patient wrong medicine and the patient dies it is a very bad thing. So u must not lie. You must always say about all the facts even if you think it is rubbish. Otherwise you can’t be a research scientist.

You must keep files where you can see the, and in order so if you are looking for information you can find it and it looks pretty in your office. Just like in a doctor’s office it looks neat with the book and files and he knows what is wrong with you from these files.

So like I said science is fun and you must be able to do all the things I have written to be a good research scientist.
WORMs, WORDS and other creatures...

The acronym WORM refer to Write Once, Read Many times. This acronym (ESKOM is an acronym SABC is not one), when used in the context of computer technology, refer to data storage where data are permanently stored and cannot be overwritten or changed. Such application have obvious uses, for instance, financial record-keeping in banks.

There are an interesting relationship between WORM and that of academic or structured writing. A draft document, once written, should be re-read many times in order to locate possible errors. A draft is a rough copy and ought to be one of a series of drafts until the creation of the ‘final’ document. If the final draft are a example of error-free writing then it will be Written Once and Read Many times – or so we would like to think!

Wordprocessing may be learnt with relative ease. The same apply to the mastery of subsequent levels of difficulty. For instance, graduating from WordPerfect v5.2 to v8.0 is an uphill climb but doable. Bear in mind, though, that the word-processor is merely a tool that generate the “written” word as a competent programme. Writing is a skill to be learnt – even for a Masters candidate – and English, as a borrower of tongues, are a complex language.

Successive generations of English language users is likely to see words in differing contexts. Look at the following words and think of the number of different meaning that may be assigned to each since 1962: cool, black, white, terror, drug, mobile, cell, compact, aids, chat, train, engine, file, and fly.

So when you think you have a final English draft, please source a live, native-speaker of English to assist you. Do not rely only on a spell checker – it are not safe anymore.
WORMs, WORDS and other creatures...

The acronym WORM refers to Write Once, Read Many times. This acronym (ESKOM is an acronym while SABC is not one, although it sometimes bears the signs of its oppressive past), when used in the context of computer technology, refers to data storage where data is permanently stored and cannot be overwritten or changed. The SABC, as the oldest broadcaster in South Africa and that originated in the dark days of apartheid, has a growing number of black viewers who are also becoming discerning viewers. Such applications have obvious uses, for instance, financial record-keeping in banks.

There is an interesting relationship between WORM and that of academic or structured writing. A draft document, once written, should be re-read many times in order to locate possible errors. A draft is a rough copy and ought to be one of a series of drafts until the creation of the ‘final’ document. If the final draft is an example of error-free writing then it will be Written Once and Read Many times – or so we would like to think! Structured academic writing should be something that one learns as a skill at school but, unfortunately, that does not happen. Teachers are far too busy attending workshops or collecting netball monies from their learners to worry about something like writing skills.

Wordprocessing may be learnt with relative ease. The same applies to the mastery of subsequent levels of difficulty. For instance, graduating from WordPerfect v5.2 to v8.0 is an uphill climb but doable. Of course one could also use the services of a typist. Here one has to bear in mind that a typist that works full-time from her house will be able to spend more time on your work at her own pace. A full-time secretary will have to sneak in your work part-time between her boss’ other duties. Also, remember that the word-processor is merely a tool that generates the “written” word as a competent programme. Writing is a skill to be learnt – even for a Masters candidate – and English, as a borrower of tongues, is a complex language.

Successive generations of English language users are likely to see words in differing contexts. Look at the following words and think of the number of different meanings that may be assigned to each since 1962: cool, black, white, terror, drug, mobile, cell, compact, aids, chat, train, engine, file, and fly.

While cool would have referred to “temperature” in 1960 it can mean something else when used by teenagers today. It is interesting how some of terms also have developed other connotations such as branch manager (that has nothing to do with a tree), being high (that has nothing to do with being in an aircraft), black comedy (that has nothing to do with South African Theatre), sick joke (that has nothing to do with one’s state of health), piece of cake (in America would not refer to something baked) and a walk in the park (in America would not refer to a stroll amongst trees and grass).

So when you think you have a final English draft, please source a live, native-speaker of English to assist you. Do not rely only on a spell checker – it is not safe anymore.
WORMs, WORDS and other creatures...

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There’s an interesting relationship between the notion of WORM and that of academic or structured writing. A draft document, once written, should be re-read many times in order to locate possible errors. A draft is a rough copy and ought to be one of a series of drafts until the creation of the ‘final’ document. If the final draft is an example of error-free writing then it will be Written Once and Read Many times – or so we would like to think!

Wordprocessing may be learnt with relative ease. The same applies to the mastery of subsequent levels of difficulty. For instance, graduating from *WordPerfect v5.2 to v8.0* is an uphill climb but possible. Bear in mind, though, that the word-processor is merely a tool that generates the “written” word as a competent abecedarian\(^2\). Writing is a skill to be learnt – even for a doctoral candidate – and English, as a borrower of tongues, is a complex language.

Successive generations of English language users are likely to see words in differing contexts. Look at the following words and think of the number of different meanings that may be assigned to each since 1962: cool, black, white, terror, drug, mobile, cell, compact, aids, chat, train, engine, file, fly.

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\(^2\) *abecedarian* (adj.) (a): of or relating to the alphabet and (b): alphabetically arranged. An example sentence: The children recited an abecedarian chant, beginning with "A is for apple" and ending with "Z is for zebra."
So when you think you have a final English draft, source a live, native-speaker of English to assist you. Do not rely only on a spell checker – it is not safe anymore – as I discovered at [www.pastornet.net.au/jmm/ahmr/index.htm](http://www.pastornet.net.au/jmm/ahmr/index.htm).

**SPELL CHECKER POEM**

Eye halve a spelling chequer  
Eat came with my pea sea  
It plainly marques four my revue  
Miss steaks eye kin knot sea.

Eye strike a key and type a word  
And weight four it two say  
Weather eye am wrong ore write  
Eat shows me strait a weigh.

Aye have run this poem throw it  
I am shore ewe are pleased to no  
Eats letter perfect awl the weigh  
My chequer told me sew.  

*Sauce Unknown*
Abstract
Writing conferences may be used to identify, develop and support the skills necessary for competency in writing. This is the mission of the Port Elizabeth Technikon’s writing centre, *The Write Place*, which engages in conferencing in order to facilitate higher order thinking skills in an academic environment. Such facilitation was the focus of a series of workshops where grade 11 students were presented with an assessment tool. After consciousness raising of the writing process, a range of essays was used to assess whether these learners had internalised this tool. All who attended, regardless of mother tongue or medium of instruction, showed similar tendencies indicating a transfer of skills. This paper will present the workshops’ ‘work in progress’ towards the development of a hypothesis on writing conferencing.

The purpose of this paper is to outline writing conferencing as a dimension of academic development at the Port Elizabeth Technikon. This context will be used to foreground alternative assessment skills through workshops establishing the Audience, Development, and Mechanics (*Adam*) of writing.
December 2007

Hi Ari

Attached my notes on the "themes" that according to my view, emerged from the participants’ responses during the unstructured interviews. I mostly focused on their responses in order to see whether there are indications that you have managed to sensitise them to understand the writing process and all the complexities involved.

I am no expert on interviews, but according to my interpretation of the interviews, you have managed to create a safe environment. The participants clearly had the confidence to vent, be honest about their own competences and needs as supervisors, but also as academics in HE during these times. They clearly expressed an eagerness to learn and to grow as supervisors. You responded in a sensitive and patient manner, but you also used the opportunity to mentor them during the interviews.

I hope this will be helpful. If I misunderstood your request, please don't hesitate to contact me again.

And thanks for involving me. I have learnt a lot, and if I may, would like to use that ADAM tool with my students, too.

And of course - the main claims in your SAALA paper resonated strongly with my ontological (?) values: conservative vs liberal; weakness vs potential...

Good luck…

ALD
INDEPENDENT CODER’S OBSERVATIONS

Group 1 (Initial)
Participants’ responses reveal an awareness of complexities involved in academic writing esp with regard to:
- The fact that it is difficulty to write
- The fact that it is difficult to assess writing
- The fact that second language writers / speakers find it more difficult.

Group 1 (Final)
- Participants seemed to have used the interview to vent their frustrations as supervisors about:
  - The large number of students they have to supervise
  - The quality of students (bokke en skape)
- They support the notion of mentoring, empowering of students, capacity building, but find it difficult with large numbers.
- They express a need for support systems.
- They see supervision as teaching / education.

Group 2 (Initial)
- The participants are aware of the importance / dominance of English as academic language.
- They regard non-English speakers (Chinese) as ‘learning impaired’.
  Supporting Asian students more problematic than African students.
- They engaged with the ADAM tool:
  - Audience-aware. The reader-friendliness of the written piece. Important to define concepts.
  - Mechanics: the layout also important.

Group 2 (Final)
- They reflected on the notion of mentorship:
  - There seems to be a willingness to mentor students / become a mentor for students
  - They acknowledge that it is difficult to be a mentor
  - Mentoring is not always intentional
  - Not all students want to be mentored
  - Reflected on the distinctions between coach / mentor / role model
  - This can be energy-draining.

- Awareness of power plays in HEI.

With regard to academic writing
The approach to academic writing differs between faculties (e.g. Psychology).
Due to complexities involved, the development of skill of academic writing should start as early as possible.
Due to large groups in undergrad programmes, it is difficult to develop the skills (e.g. conferencing?)

- They reflected on their own growth and development:
  - Attitude towards academic writing has changed.
  - They link academic writing to their own contexts.
  - They realized the value of Comment and express a willingness to use it.

Group 3 (Initial)
- Aware of the confidence-competence relationship
- That judgements need to be made wrt academic writing
- They see the value of a Writing Centre
- Identification of students requiring assistance can be problematic.
- See the link between reading and writing.
- Students’ expectations – to get the degree – vs development of writing skill.
- See the ADAM tool as valuable and useful, also to differentiate between good and poor writing.
- Awareness of importance of structure in written text.
- (Not sure why the dictionary aspect emerged)
- A willingness to apply their new insights.
- Reflecting on their personal writing styles.

Group 3 (Final)
- Awareness of the need to have insight into complexities involved in the writing process if you want to supervise students.
- The need for mentors for young / new supervisors.
- Wrong assumptions that academics can automatically supervise and assess students’ written work. (“How do you measure their progress as part of the process of growth?”)
- A general willingness to learn emerged.
- Aware of superstructure / infrastructure dichotomy.
- External factors (subsidy) often interfering with the process-aspect. (“Did they actually complete or did I write these papers?”)
- Supervision can be time-consuming
  - Often too much time spent on one student.
  - Time management thus important.
  - Thus awareness of value of Comment option
    - This forces the supervisor to be precise.
- Comment = Thinking box
- Can have an email dialogue with student
- But supervisor need to empower student to use Comment
- Process-oriented (“that will help with learning … in the process of the whole”. P. 12)
- Dictionary aspect discussed. Awareness of complexities of second-language writers?
- Spent some time sharing “tips” (text boxes, etc).
- Awareness that students have different learning styles and personality types, e.g. not structured in their personal lives. Supervisor needs to help.
- Awareness that race / diversity is issue in SA HEIs. Taking ownership of transformation (p. 32)
EXPLANATORY NOTES

◆ CE = CLEAR EVIDENCE If there was a significant link between the participant’s comment and my memo, including the participant offering supporting evidence, then that constituted

◆ SE = SOME EVIDENCE If there was a significant link between the participant’s comment and my memo without any supporting evidence,

◆ SUPERVISION

1. SE This is not an easy task as I am wandering into the supervisor domain.
2. SE As Masters teaching staff they are research supervisors BUT are there to guide rather than validate.

PARTICIPANT OPINIONS

SUPERVISION

1. SE This is not an easy task as I am wandering into the supervisor domain.
2. SE As Masters teaching staff they are research supervisors BUT are there to guide rather than validate

TAKING A STANCE

1. CE She (L) refuses to accept that they are not competent and checks with another colleague – in this case a third one.
2. CE She could empathise as a black South African in post-Apartheid South Africa.
3. CE Although M is the most senior she checks with P (male)
1. **SE** In her approach, W uses information to help with antithesis hence she’s ahead of MO.

2. **SE** Dialectic taking place between readers (lecturers) who are comparing & contrasting!!!

3. **CE** Adam has enabled the cross referencing of criteria for him – now he recognises the omission of layout.

4. **SE** Testing my personal theories of ADaM – language is indirectly related - so am I implying there’s tacit knowledge?

5. **SE** There’s a tacit understanding of what is acceptable and what unacceptable – he’s unsure of what but acknowledges there’s a problem in the writing.

6. **CE** M has taken ownership of audience, on interpretation we differ BUT she’s reached synthesis & is presenting me with an antithesis. M→AUD determines level of discourse – facilitates validation of your writing /research.

7. **SE** Now she has a critical perspective albeit on a minor issue – she’s displaying some sensitivity towards critical reading.

8. **SE** Similar to EBIT Group 1’s discussion – ADaM and its contents is a catalyst for generating dialogue around academic research writing.

9. **SE** R’s own experience is invaluable and likely to be true – even though her reference to “first-entry” may be conflated with first –entry MBAs – as indicated below. There is some confusion between her “you tell them…about their writing” and “they say…” where the “they” could be her. She’s either trying to impress me or she’s thinking in her mother-tongue and then trying to explain, fluently, in English.

10. **SE** The first time she’s disagreed with them

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**WRITING**

1. **SE** Reflection on Teaching Learning & Assessment paradigms.

2. **SE** MO is reflecting on her approach as being an oft used person/ mentor – she’s been exposed to good academic writing training somewhere.

3. **SE** Writing is a process.

4. **CE** Equivalent of the draft-revise-draft process.

5. **CE** Result would be similar to my previous suggestion – bit it is still too mechanistic - BUT maybe that is a realistic way of writing (cf 1990s research).

6. **CE** Good description of the maturation process when writing = confidence before competence (like the fluency/accuracy debate).
**WRITER INFLUENCE**

1. **SE** Consensus in the group regarding their speculation on influences on writers...esp. if the writer is a famous ex-SAAn.  
   ***The audience determines the CONTENT and the STYLE. M’s POV→ Audience is the reading audience of peers esp. at post-grad level used in writing. Personal theory 6 = AUD determines style and pitch of writing – allows you to determine consensus on meaning and interpretation.***

**EXPERIENCE VS THEORY**

1. **CE** She has knowledge of such an occurrence – first-hand – a powerful experience for MO.  
2. **SE** Experience kicks in – not what they say “in books” (Great Man Theory).  
3. **CE** The ESL issue is complex and not addressed to the extent that it should be. Group 2 has spent seven pages of this transcript discussing it (for obvious reasons) while Group 1 spent a few lines on it (M’s experience with a black American and local black students at VISTA).  
4. **CE** Again, useful info and truthful – she’s not claiming it’s her own knowledge – but “in books...”  
5. **SE** Unsure of the input’s significance but she’s exploring her own theory base and needs space to warm up.  
6. **SE** Good distinction to make esp. when she’s drawing attention to her knowledge base.  
7. **SE** W immediately latches onto the issues and expands on learning impairment (based on her experience!).

**LEARNING APPROACH → ME**

1. **SE** I should have been much clearer than this – I am assuming that they are with me...but how can they – there’s no consensus check.  
2. **SE** Either my scale is too complex or participants are genuinely unaware of the Likert scale.  
3. **SE** She has made the jump from her context to mine and now we have some consensus – nice!  
4. **SE** Observant and on the right track superficially – but do I expect her to grasp all...and if she hasn’t then what difference does that make?
LEARNING APPROACH ➔ THEM

1. **SE** She’s grasped the concept, internalized it and has an opinion.
2. **CE** This is the first time she’s not intimidated – her willingness to offer a guess indicates that.
3. **SE** They are unable to see connections in the graphics and reader friendliness issues as I can…they are trying to relate to text meaning and not text form…also K indicated she was intimidated earlier – this may still be the case so she’s unable to pick up the cues.
4. **SE** Interesting reflection for a young person – she is on a roll at the end – maybe I should have adopted a more focused Q&A approach?
5. **SE** Probably out of embarrassment for them she is quite right to ask – I have assumed that they know.”.
6. **SE** She has waited so long (nearly four pages) to offer an opinion.
7. **SE** Another AHA moment for her during the interview.
8. **SE** She is still trying to engage with the session.
9. **CE** I did not see the device (tape rec.) as a “threat” at all – a reality check for me AND she had the courage to confront me!
10. **CE** An unexpected rebuttal from M – being honest!
11. **CE** Interesting word choice – firstly an English word, secondly, one that reflects on the self in the context of others’ perceptions, thirdly, the excuse of the improved (speed reading test) score maybe based on her feeling “pressured” by her peers.
12. **CE** W is being consistently critical – it is not being obstructive – but she appears to have a sharper mind than MO.

REFLECTION ON SESSIONS 1➔9

**Reading**

1. **CE** This is the second time she has mentioned this as a retarding factor in her reading.
2. **SE** Is this an influence of the reading sessions?
3. **SE** Reader friendliness in her context – which is OK!
4. **SE** More perceptive reflection on reading – my practical sessions on reading has perhaps reinforced this point.
5. **CE** Reflection of reading for input: Interpret ➔ comprehension ➔ analysis ➔ application ➔ synthesis ➔ evaluation (Bloom).
6. **SE** Standard impatience displayed by many.
7. **SE** Reading was a challenge.
8. **SE** Perhaps MTI and the added difficulty of interpreting English
9. **CE** Now she has a critical perspective albeit on a minor issue - she’s displaying sensitivity towards critical reading.
ADaM

1. SE She appears to be referring to the notion of cohesion.
2. SE She too has started internalising the instrument (ADaM).
3. CE First point is good – second point is an application of ADaM
4. CE A useful but mechanistic approach to writing (formatting).
5. SE They are responding to what was introduced in ADaM
6. SE He has moved from language & content to the layout.
7. SE She too has moved from language & content to the layout but acknowledges there’s a problem with the writing.
8. CE He’s commenting on the level of incoherence
9. SE Discretionary use of template and already internalising the idea behind ADaM.
10. SE Not very coherent but that is to be expected – she is verbalizing her notion of assessment using specific criteria.
11. SE Exactly – like formative evaluation (missed a golden opportunity here to introduce AR).
12. SE Criteria for essay writing are useful

ASSESSING WRITING

1. CE Perceptive academic and research aligned question: the notion of assessment & criteria dawns on them WRT Reading & ADaM.
2. SE Group 1 also seemed to accept the presence of a template. Important notion of a hunch that “something’s missing” or is “unacceptable”.
3. CE Really perceptive she’s hypothesising about it indicating she has a hunch about writing.
4. CE Reflection on modeling of writing → compare & contrast is what I wanted them to do.
REFLECTION ON SESSIONS 10→13 APPENDIX G

<> 2nd set of INTERVIEWS <>
OPEN CODING <> SORTED CATEGORIES + PROPERTIES -
SEE TABLE 5.5

EXPLANATORY NOTES

◆ **CE= CLEAR EVIDENCE** If there was a significant link between the
participant’s comment and my memo, including the participant offering
supporting evidence, then that constituted

◆ **SE=SOME EVIDENCE** If there was a significant link between the
participant’s comment and my memo without any supporting evidence,

◆ **TAKING A STANCE** ↔ CATEGORY

1. **SE** More captive audience banter from me.
2. **SE** Sadly its just his incompetence as a member of the teaching staff

PARTICIPANT OPINIONS

**TAKING A STANCE**

1. **SE** More captive audience banter from me.
2. **SE** Sadly its just his incompetence as a member of the teaching staff.
3. **SE** A sensible comment in the context of understanding a students’
   learning style and assumed need
4. **SE** P (Group 1) never mentioned this approach to me (an assessment
   rubric) – maybe he did not want to share it, decided it was insignificant or
   just forgot.
5. **SE** Is she picking up on my earlier refs to Mr. P or does she genuinely feel
   this way?
6. **SE** Are they predicting my thoughts or are they in sync ☺?
7. **SE** Useful reflection for the research but how truthful is this? Are these
   mere platitudes?
8. **SE** The selection of a value can be subjective.
9. **CE** Such critical reflection is heartening as she now has an informed
   opinion!
10. **SE** Some gems of truth in her reflection on the action.
11. **SE** Not completely sub-consciously, based on my above reflection. Everyone: inherent quality of a group of oppressed/disadvantaged?

12. **CE** An overlap with an observation that P made in Group 1’s final interview.

13. **SE** Part of her critical nature- something refreshing that others may lack

14. **SE** My dream could become a reality – see the flowchart handed out during the first session (of the Honours group in the new year) - using specialist writing tutors as filters

15. **SE** Helps to academically cajole and provide some structure→ this could provide momentum for some students.

16. **SE** She (their HOD) is still being evaluated from all sides - the pressure of being a manager and retaining her integrity.

17. **CE** This is so refreshing – she gets it! She is starting to see the macro-view of writing…

18. **SE** There were four areas of practical work presented but she does not recall them as separate – both a good (seamless) sign and a bad (indistinct) sign.

19. **CE** She’s honest about not identifying the four elements of writing.

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**REFLECTION ON META-LEARNING**

**WRITING**

1. **CE** An amusing side to plagiarism.

2. **SE** Only possible if (a) class size permits & (b) the notion and importance of essay writing is built into assessment (rather than MCQs).

3. **SE** A pivotal reflection in the product VS process debate on writing. 1st years need to know writing competence is critical. HEIs must have smaller classes.

4. **SE** The right attitude and rationale – this would ensure that there’s constructive engagement with students’ writing in context.

5. **SE** This gets to the heart of writing and supervision assessed without criteria.

6. **CE** While this is a superficial response to writing it supports her previous critique of post-grad research.

**MENTORSHIP**

1. **SE** Is mentorship based on ones (1) identifying a problem based on own experience (2) comparing respective “struggles” against an inner checklist (tacit criteria) & (3) then saying: “this needs action.

2. **SE** Acknowledgement comes from outside. Confirmation of your worth comes from inside. So maybe L in Group 1 was right - she & P do not have the trait of being mentors (?).
3. **CE** Supports her earlier belief that she is willing to be a mentor and to learn from the experience.

4. **SE** Informal mentoring?

5. **SE** Interesting thought - the role our parents play - my father too was a helper - was he, in retrospect, a role model for me?

6. **SE** A continual urge to find a cause or to mentor.

7. **SE** Worthy cause scenarios! There’s an inner voice that says: “this person should be helped”! And that inner voice is based on either reflection or some instinct - is it a tacit understanding of ...

8. **SE** Also she recognises she has been encouraged by someone - me - but is not conscious of the difference between mentor and coach.

9. **SE** Unsure of her role description (in Group 1 M was unsure about her practice of mentorship).

10. **SE** This supports M’s earlier rationale of her being a mentor/ coach and being there for students ☺☺☺

11. **SE** Absolutely true - hence the need for mentors and support systems.

12. **SE** Such a relationship should benefit both the mentor/supervisor and mentee/ student.

13. **CE** L believes that only certain people can be mentors - an honest appraisal of her situation - esp. as she has not spoken much, since she is the most junior.

14. **SE** Mentoring is an element of the strategic support so they believe there should be more than just thesis support!

15. **SE** Perhaps easier at home with familiar people. Also a difference between social and career support.

16. **CE** Perfect example of social support leading to career support (cf @ at UDW→SAJHE paper, Naidoo, 1999).

17. **CE** M, the most senior and experienced lecturer in the group believes she might have the attributes of a mentor. But she indicates that she is working on it - either not to come across as being conceited or to be humble about her ability - hence she makes this claim.

18. **CE** Much retrospection leading to constructive reflection on mentoring. Also supports her previous claim of being a mentor.

19. **SE** Mentorship follows a similar process - need to respond to the mentee needs but the mentor also needs to build on what is or may be absent.

20. **SE** Time is an issue with any nurturing.

21. **SE** A pivotal part of her explanation is the “how to” vs the “why”. @ is a case in point . They were coached so no critical questions required.

22. **CE** Exactly what Group 1 alluded to - L & P felt that they did not have the “stuff” to be mentors- M believed she was “the one”. Maybe everyone has the ability but not all harness it!

23. **SE** A teacher in need of a mentor in HE?

24. **SE** What we should not encourage. But this is dependant on the level of coaching (solicited work) and subsequent own stuff (unsolicited work).
HEI Access

1. **CE** They had to solve problems themselves - now, for new generation students, problems are solved for them.
2. **CE** A hint of bitterness over their obstacles compared to how much easier it will be for the new generation students.
3. **CE** While streaming is realistic in SA it is likely to be politically offensive to many in certain HEIs.
4. **SE** Personal goals and admission criteria have an influence.
5. **SE** Professional development may have helped.
6. **SE** Such reflection indicates HE sensitivity especially to nurturing those students who have been disadvantaged.
7. **SE** The other pressure is that of throughput rates being linked to subsidies - and at post-grad level it is a substantial amount.

Graduate Supervision Issues

1. **CE** This is the first time I have heard of poor support and poor supervision via MS Comment ®?
2. **SE** She is starting to analyse the post-grad situation critically and through her reflection begins to see what she abhors.
3. **SE** Students believe they own their supervisor but supervisors have lives too.
4. **SE** These students are not competent to do research yet they are required to so.
5. **CE** Supervision is necessary so the students have guidance and advice regarding the direction to take.
6. **CE** Supervision becomes an invisible part of your teaching, research & community service.
7. **SE** It meant the philosophical was more important than the actual supervisory assistance with the research.
8. **SE** A strategic breakaway with their post-grads could facilitate a paradigm shift - they could see another POV.
9. **CE** Post-grad students believe they can write (1) without any guidance or (2) guidance at the last minute.
10. **CE** Ties up with my ideas on writing and post-grad supervision.

Learning Approach

1. **SE** She’s concerned about their progress and well-being! An AD approach.
**Transformation**

1. **SE** They need someone to facilitate their working together - they are competent but hesitant.
2. Both have relaxed to the extent that
   - **CE** they trust me
   - **SE** they value my judgement on a professional level
   - **SE** They value my judgement on a personal level
   - **SE** what has created this trust and allowed Group2 to chat and share like Group 1? ADaM?
3. **SE** Sadly while this may be a natural tendency, it isolates and builds exclusive citizenship. Exactly what the post -1994 era agitated against!
4. **SE** Perhaps they are referring to a historically Afrikaans University “typology” – the political makeup if such an HEI is governed by its history and cultural background that could become a political issue. Transformation is pertinent: are there conscious efforts to transform or mere change under the guise of transformation?
5. **CE** They have decided to facilitate transformation by taking a stand in the context of engaging with their HOD. This is similar to what I had to engage when I had to take on my own department’s management team over a language issue and minutes of meetings.
6. **CE** She needs to do so – encouraging that she wants to change.

**Interpersonal Dynamics**

1. **SE** Sad to hear this – this often occurs between junior and senior staff of colour.
2. **SE** Such levels of intimidation by senior staff (sometimes by white-on-white/ white-on-black but often black-on-black) is a problem I observed in 3 SA HEIs (HEI-2, HEI-4 & HEI-5).
3. **SE** Possibly a student who sought recourse by complaining to a prof about staff of colour.
4. **SE** Consequently, staff prefer not to say anything as it’s likely not to be corroborated or believed anyway.
5. **SE** Besides colour there’s also a gender issue here.
6. **SE** Is this a race issue or simple power-play?
7. **SE** Do they lack opportunity, courage or self-esteem to write research papers together or I am just naïve?
8. **SE** Now it becomes power play rather than their facilitating learning.
1. **SE** Deep down MO is perhaps a practitioner like I am? Are there similar characteristics here that encompass being a practitioner, e.g. über-reflection?

2. **CE** Group work gone horribly wrong- they may have been instrumentally motivated from under-grad level.

3. **SE** The peripheral stuff should help build one’s knowledge base and act as a foundation.

4. **CE** Peripheral knowledge was an integral part of their education as post-grad students with this prof R.

5. **SE** Mis directed teaching & learning.

6. **CE** Instruction not facilitation.

7. **SE** He facilitated learning and knowledge making through induction.

8. **CE** Low-esteem could =negativity.

9. **CE** Low esteem & good reflection with peers.

10. **SE** A reason for coming to HEI-5 is to empower students through teaching- he’s looking for professional development strategies to bolster his work 😊

11. **CE** Needs feedback for his efforts to be recognised .

12. **SE** No personal development.

13. **CE** Again they are placing the skills of an “educator ”above the specialist discipline in IT - a fascinating phenomenon.

14. **CE** Such an approach does nurture learning and all credit to him for sustaining this during his reflection.

15. **SE** Raising the bar so they are unable to cope - but will they ever be able to clear that bar?

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**REFLECTION ON SESSIONS 10-13**

**MY REACTION**

1. **CE** A subtle way of testing if they did or not (figure out how to edit or delete a Comment).

2. **SE** W’s remark may be related to a transfer of some writing strategies and theory.
3. **CE** Nice pick up and transfer of skills.
4. **CE** R is really a fast learner.
5. **SE** Proof of learning taking place?
6. **CE** These are N’s first tentative steps towards becoming computer aware in a writing, supervision, and guidance context.
7. **CE** Great transfer of skills.
8. **SE** Another dialogue – this time regarding the PDF story.
9. **CE** R has cottoned onto what Comment is all about and her grasp of it (in the context of facilitating writing) is impressive.
10. **SE** A willingness to learn more now than when they joined the practical sessions.
11. **SE** Document protection (in MS Word® or PDF) has little to do with our interview but everything to do with their knowing more.
12. **SE** Exactly what ADaM is trying to achieve.
13. **SE** As she was familiar with the checklist, using ADaM came easily.
14. **SE** Possible transfer of skills that has been “just-in-time”- a second confirmation.
15. **SE** Additional material is always useful; especially when students bring it in (as opposed to providing external, aimless stimulus such as their Prof R).

**THEIR REACTION**

1. **SE** Is this a form of reality that she is aware of and others not?
2. **SE** She’s now applying her synthesised knowledge - she sees the potential and possibilities at university.
3. **CE** N is slowly warming to the interview and her reflection.
4. **CE** First time they have initiated dialogue – also N is present (was absent from the initial interview to do counseling so just R & K in the initial interview – K has resigned so just R&N).
5. **CE** No more pretence – she’s ready to climb a learning curve! Her asking for assistance is such an important stage of the interview.

**TRANSCRIPT NOT FOR ANALYSIS**

in each of the three group’s interviews, Groups 1, 2 & 3, there were instances of confidential and personal information not suitable for scrutiny in this analysis.