Writing pedagogy in the early years: A study of teacher beliefs, classroom practices and influences

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WRITING PEDAGOGY IN THE EARLY YEARS:  
A STUDY OF TEACHER BELIEFS, CLASSROOM  
PRACTICES AND INFLUENCES

Submitted by  
Marlo Anne Graham  
M.Ed., B.Ed., Dip T

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the  
degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Faculty of Education and Arts

Australian Catholic University

Research Services Locked Bag 4115 Fitzroy, Victoria 3065 Australia

July, 2019
STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP AND SOURCES

The work presented in this thesis is to the best of my knowledge and belief, original, except as acknowledged in the text of the thesis.

No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgment in the text of the thesis.

This thesis has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, for any academic award at this or any other tertiary educational institution.

All research procedures reported in this thesis received the approval of the Human Research Ethics Committee (Appendix A).

Signed: ___________________________  Date:  July, 2019

Marlo Graham
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank those who have contributed to my learning journey...

My first memory of a narrative story was listening to my father read *The Elephant and the Bad Baby*, written by Elfrida Vipont (1969) and illustrated by Raymond Briggs. This began a lifelong love of books, reading and writing, that has given and continues to give me much comfort and joy.

To my mother Kathryn Graham, for teaching me to read and write, such treasured gifts for which I am truly grateful.

To my friend Sue, thank you for your strength, which inspired me to undertake this doctoral research.

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Thank you to my family and friends who offered support throughout my doctoral studies. A special thank you to Joanne and Kellie, for acting as personal secretaries for many years. Also, to my son Josh, thank you for ongoing technical support. My heartfelt thanks to my children Laura and Josh and our little fox Jacky, for your patience during all the times I was writing instead of spending time with you.

Finally, to all my students that I have had the pleasure and privilege of teaching over the past 25 years, thank you for a rewarding journey.
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<td>ACARA</td>
<td>Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority</td>
</tr>
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<td>ACECQA</td>
<td>Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AITSL</td>
<td>The Australia Institute for Teaching and School Leadership</td>
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<td>AQFC</td>
<td>The Australian Qualifications Framework Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>BCE</td>
<td>Brisbane Catholic Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCA</td>
<td>Constant Comparative Analysis</td>
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<td>CEC</td>
<td>Catholic Education Council</td>
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<td>CLaSS</td>
<td>The Children’s Literacy Success Strategy</td>
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<td>DEET</td>
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<td>ELIC</td>
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<td>English as a second Language</td>
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<td>EQ</td>
<td>Education Queensland</td>
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<tr>
<td>MCEETYA</td>
<td>The Ministerial Council of Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs</td>
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<td>NAPLAN</td>
<td>The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy</td>
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<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
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<td>SPSS</td>
<td>Statistical Package for the Social Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THRASS</td>
<td>Teaching Handwriting, Reading and Spelling Skills</td>
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</table>
EXPLANATION OF TERMS

Early Years
Throughout this thesis the term early years is often used. This refers to the early years of schooling. The early years of schooling encompasses development and learning from Prep to Year Three.

Epistemology
Epistemology is the study of knowledge and beliefs about Knowledge (Olafson & Schraw, 2010).

Explicit Instruction
A structured and systematic approach to teaching including direct instruction, support and scaffolding to guide students through the learning process. The purpose of learning is made clear, skills are demonstrated, examples are given, language used is clear and concise and students are guided and supported through explicit instruction (Archer & Hughes, 2011).

Functional Grammar
Grammar teaching that emphasises the intent of the language user, encompassing what people want to do with language and the meanings they want to express (Derewianka & Jones, 2010).

Genre and Text Types
A genre is a type of text defined in terms of its social purpose (Kress, 1994) whereas a text type is defined by its linguistic and language features.

Ontological World View
A set of beliefs or theory about reality or being (Olafson & Schraw, 2010).

Pedagogy
The function or work and the art or science of teaching, encompassing both method and practice (DEEWR, 2009).

Product
Text is interpreted as an object with a part/whole structure reflecting what has been accomplished overall, in context (Kress, 1994).

Process
Text is interpreted as unfolding in real time with choices at one-point influencing those to come (Kress, 1994).
Quality Literature
The body of writing encompassing interesting, imaginative and artistic qualities, that aims to give reading pleasure and help the reader understand the world (Luken, Smith & Coffel, 2012).

Struggling Writers
The participants in this study defined struggling writers as achieving below the expected standard and taking longer to develop writing skills and strategies than their peers.

Sydney School
The term, Sydney School, was coined by B. Green and Lee, (1994) to refer to Systemic Functional Linguistics. This genre-based pedagogy originated in the Department of Linguistics at the University of Sydney in the 1980s (Rose & Martin, 2012).

Systemic Functional Grammar
Grammar teaching that has an equal emphasis on grammatical forms, and the functions they perform/ meanings they make (Derewianka & Jones, 2010).

The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)
NAPLAN tests are conducted annually for all students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. Students are assessed on the same test items and the literacy components include reading, writing and language conventions including spelling, grammar and punctuation. Results are reported nationally providing education systems, schools and parents with information about literacy achievements rated on a scale of bands representing skills and understandings.

Traditional Grammar
Grammar teaching that encompasses the learning of structure and rules (Derewianka & Jones, 2010).

Traditional Spelling
Traditional spelling involves memorising unconnected words (B. Schlagal, 2002).

Visual Literacy
Visual literacy is the ability to interpret and make meaning from images and illustrations as part of interpreting and expanding text (Stafford, 2010).

Word Study
Word Study is based on learning word patterns sequentially, based on the stage of spelling development each student is at (Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton, & Johnston, 2012).
ABSTRACT

The research problem underpinning this study concerns the paucity of research examining teacher beliefs about the teaching of writing and associated classroom practices. Consequently, the evidence is elusive concerning what contributes to the enactment of teaching writing and how teachers engage students and foster writing development. This research explores writing pedagogy with a focused exploration of teacher beliefs, practices and influences relating to the teaching of writing in the early years of schooling.

Three contributing research questions focus the conduct of the study:

1. What do teachers believe about the teaching of writing in the early years of schooling?
2. What practices do teachers employ in the teaching of writing in the early years of schooling?
3. What influences teacher writing pedagogy in the early years of schooling?

This doctoral research is significant because:

- It contributes to the limited research in the domain of writing by documenting teacher beliefs and practices, providing important insight into what happens at the micro-level of the classroom;
- It contributes to the quantum of knowledge about writing practices from the perception of the classroom teacher;
- It contributes to the pedagogical understandings about what promotes students’ writing development; and
- It contributes to an understanding of what influences teachers’ writing pedagogy.

An epistemological framework of constructionism underpins this study, as it explores teacher beliefs and practices about the teaching of writing in a context in which teachers reflected on their own understandings and the meanings they constructed (Crotty, 1998). An interpretivist design is adopted to interpret and understand both how the teachers construct their practice and the meanings they attach to their actions in the teaching of writing (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Symbolic interactionism is adopted, allowing the research to be conceptualised within these contexts, to comprehend how teachers
understand their writing pedagogy within their worlds (Charon, 2007). Case study (Miles & Huberman, 1994) is the methodology chosen to orchestrate the data gathering strategies of teacher interviews; participant observation including writing lesson observations, field notes and teacher interviews; and teacher artefacts.

Participants in this study included primary school teachers from Catholic primary schools in the archdiocese of Brisbane who were teaching early years classes during the time of this study. Purposive selection (Patton, 1990) was employed to select teachers purposively for their specialist knowledge and experience concerning writing pedagogy in the early years of schooling. Therefore, a number of purposive processes were adopted in order to engage with informed participants.

Constant comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was employed to examine the data. Further, Approaches to Writing Pedagogy: A Conceptual Lens (Graham, 2009), was utilised in further analysis and synthesis of the data within this study. The conceptual lens identifies four approaches that inform teachers’ writing pedagogy, including pragmatic, eclectic, philosophical and epistemological approaches. The conceptual lens and subsequent discussion about the six teacher participants’ approaches are presented in this thesis, illuminating important influences on teachers’ writing pedagogy.

This research generates conclusions that contribute new knowledge and understandings about the teaching of writing in the early years. This study concludes that:

1. there are a multiplicity of beliefs underpinning an individual teacher’s writing pedagogy. These beliefs are informed by teachers’ own education, teaching experience and their understandings about how children learn to write and how children learn more generally;

2. teachers believe students are the primary influence on their writing pedagogy and differentiate writing instruction to respond to the needs, interests and abilities of their students;

3. there are multiple influences informing teachers’ writing pedagogy. These influences include personal beliefs, knowledge of theory, systemic influences, their personal journey, students, and personal approaches;

4. similar influences inform teachers’ pedagogical choices, but they do so differently;

5. teachers are influenced by their own individual approaches to teaching writing and these approaches are underpinned by a complex dynamic of personal beliefs, knowledge, self-knowledge and vision. Teachers may be categorised according to
their approach using *Approaches to Writing Pedagogy: A Conceptual Lens* (Graham, 2009). The teachers in this study identify as being pragmatic, eclectic, philosophical or visionary in their approaches to teaching writing; and teachers make sophisticated pedagogical choices which include engaging in multiple practices that they believe are fundamental for teaching writing in the early years of schooling. Teachers:

- cater for individual differences by offering children opportunities to write at their developmental levels and considering varying abilities when teaching writing;
- engage children in writing as a social practice;
- employ the learning environment creatively to foster writing development;
- teach writing as an integral part of literacy;
- teach explicitly the skills and strategies needed to write;
- employ a functional approach to teach grammar;
- employ a multifaceted and functional approach to teach spelling; and
- teach children to write digitally alongside print literacy through engagement with new technologies and new literacies.

The collective orchestration of each of these practices increases student motivation, fosters writing development and contributes to students being successful writers.
CHAPTER ONE
THE RESEARCH PROBLEM IDENTIFIED

This thesis is an exploration of teacher beliefs, practices and influences that contribute to the enactment of teaching writing in the early years of schooling. The early years of schooling encompasses development and learning from Prep to Year 3. The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the research and offer an overview which identifies the research problem. Consequently, personal and professional contexts are explained, and the research design is introduced. Also, a descriptive overview of the chapters within the thesis is presented.

1.1 Introduction to the Research

Learning to write is an important part of learning for life (Mackenzie, 2014). In Australia, being literate is highly valued and universal and should be a right not a privilege. “Schools are quintessentially literate institutions that have a virtual monopoly over the teaching of the skills of reading and writing” (Olson, 2008 p. 283) and all children need to be readers and writers for full and active participation in society (Olson, 2008). This educational research project was conducted within primary education in Australia, where literacy is considered a priority (Australian Curriculum, Assessment Reporting Authority [ACARA], 2013; Mackenzie, 2014; Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs [MCEETYA], 2008).

There is a general acceptance among educators that literacy learning begins soon after birth (Teale & Sulzby, 1986). Literacy learning does not just involve cognitive skills, but is also a social practice (Beach, Newell, & VanDerHeide, 2016). In the first few years of life, children learn about literacy in authentic contexts through engagement with family, friends and carers (Raban, 2012). The socio-economic climate, health, education, culture, and family literacies all influence literacy learning (Raban, 2012). Young children develop their literacy skills through talking, singing, playing, listening to stories and responding to environmental print around them (Department of Education and Children’s Services [DECS], 2007). As children engage with literacy, they become enculturated in the literacy practices of others around them (Raban, 2012).

The purpose of writing is to make meaning (Mackenzie, 2017b) and communicate with others (Bromley, 2007) through a dialogic process (Jesson et al., 2013). Further, the writing process is complex cognitively, socio-culturally and linguistically (Myhill & R.
Fisher, 2010). Young children begin their journey with writing by observing the writing of others (Mackenzie, 2014). They also engage with writing tools including pens, pencils, crayons and electronic devices in an exploratory way (Edwards-Groves, 2012; Mackenzie, 2014). Early writing includes scribbling, drawing and making marks on a page, often in response to the observed writing of others (Raban, 2012). Young children write in play contexts (Dyson, 2009; Roskos & Christie, 2011) and begin to understand the purpose and function of writing through observing the writing practices of family and friends (Raban, 2012). They begin to understand that writing is valuable (Raban, 2012).

Children come to school with varying literacy skills and knowledge from their varying early literacy experiences (S. Hill & Diamond, 2013; Mackenzie, 2014). “How educators respond to children’s learning should be based upon shared understandings of the writing process and the learning journeys of each child” (Mackenzie & Petriwskj, 2017). Indeed, children learn literacy practices in a range of different contexts including family celebrations, hobbies, social and community life, parental work, childcare, preschool and school (K. Roberts, 2013). Literacy learning is supported and fostered when primary school teachers build home and school partnerships that recognise and value these contexts and build on the literacy practices that children have in and out of school (Edwards, Paratore, & Roser, 2009).

The teaching of writing in Australia today is situated within a broader definition of literacy and this definition has expanded in the twenty-first century beyond traditional texts to include new literacies from new communication technologies (ACARA, 2013; G. Barton, Arnold & Trimble-Roles, 2015; MCEETYA, 2008). Children are engaging with multimedia and multimodal texts and are learning to use language in digital contexts (G. Barton et al., 2015). Also, Australia is an expansive multicultural society, in which both cultural and linguistic diversity are present in schools (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015; Edwards-Groves, 2012). Teachers experience challenges when teaching writing because:

Different teaching methods have been applied to teaching of writing, reflecting changes in theoretical understandings and expectations of the community. The teaching of writing in Australian schools is possibly more complex in the current era than at any other time. Teachers are torn between their understandings of contemporary literacies, their own engagement with technologies (which varies greatly), their personal beliefs about how to teach writing and a “back to basics” cry from the community in response to tests such as the National Assessment Program–Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN; Mackenzie, 2017a, p. 251).
This provides a context in which the teaching of writing in the early years is situated. At the micro-level of the classroom, teachers are responsible for students’ writing instruction. Early years classroom teachers’ individual writing pedagogy is conducted here, and this is the phenomenon being studied. This research explores teacher beliefs, practices and influences that contribute to the enactment of writing pedagogy in the early years of schooling.

1.2 Personal Context

My work in primary education in Australia spans 25 years. My teaching journey began in a small school situated in a low socio-economic area in rural Victoria, which at the time experienced the highest unemployment in the state. I quickly learned that student welfare and literacy were priorities for educators. As my career continued, I taught in large and small schools, in low and mid socio-economic areas, country schools and suburban schools, and found that no matter what the diversity, the priorities of student welfare and literacy remained. From the onset of my career I have been passionate about catering for diversity and promoting literacy learning.

My professional life has been dedicated to early years education, where my teaching experience has predominantly involved teaching students in the first three formal years of schooling. My literacy pedagogy has involved reading, professional development, working with colleagues, completing Bachelor of Education and Master of Education degrees specialising in English Education and reflecting continually on my beliefs about literacy learning and my teaching practice to promote literacy learning.

I have taught and participated in many programs and used many methods and approaches that were developed and implemented to enhance the teaching and learning of writing in Australian schools. Some of the methods and approaches implemented were:

- the whole language approach (Cambourne, 1988; Goodman, 1986);
- the genre movement (Miller, 1984); and
- the process approach (Graves, 1972).

I have also taught the state-mandated strategy called the Children’s Literacy Success Strategy (Crevola & P. Hill, 1998b). My personal experience was that no single approach appeared to be most effective in teaching writing. Despite this, I observed primary schools in Victoria focussing on single approaches to teach writing.
Interest in this study originated from my belief that it is important for classroom teachers to have opportunities to move beyond the boundaries of mandated programs and to adopt research-validated, sound practice for writing instruction to promote students’ writing development. I was interested that the state of Queensland did not have a mandated program for writing pedagogy. I was also particularly interested in Queensland initiatives in literacy education, especially relevancy for writing (Brisbane Catholic Education [BCE], 2002a; Queensland Studies Authority [QSA], 2004), explicit teaching of literacy, and catering for diverse student needs (BCE, 2001; QSA, 2005). Consequently, my teaching journey led me to Queensland to engage in this doctoral research.

1.3 Research Context

The context of this research is the individual classrooms where early years teachers enact their individual writing pedagogy. Broadly, these classrooms are situated in primary schools in Queensland, Australia. More specifically this research is situated within Catholic primary schools within the archdiocese of Brisbane. The participants are primary school teachers, and the study explores the teaching of writing in the early years. The early years encompasses development and learning from Prep to Year 3.

1.3.1 Catholic primary schools in the archdiocese of Brisbane.

The Brisbane archdiocese includes a large geographical area including much of south-east Queensland, metropolitan Brisbane, the Gold and Sunshine Coasts, west through Ipswich and north to Childers, as shown in Figure 1.1. The BCE is a learning community, composed of 137 schools (117 of these schools are primary schools) within the archdiocese of Brisbane.

Figure 1.1. Map of Australia highlighting the archdiocese of Brisbane. Adapted from www.bne.catholic.edu.au Catholic Education, Archdiocese of Brisbane.
A map of the archdiocese of Brisbane is shown in Figure 1.2.

![Map of the archdiocese of Brisbane](image)

**Figure 1.2.** Map of the archdiocese of Brisbane. Adapted from www.bne.catholic.edu.au Catholic Education, Archdiocese of Brisbane.

### 1.3.2 Contexts for teaching writing.

In early years classrooms today, teachers are working within a framework of contexts. Global contexts for the teaching of writing include technological advancements including an increased use of multimodal texts and visual literacy (G. Barton et al., 2015; Edwards-Groves, 2012). Australian contexts for the teaching of writing include ever-increasing cultural and linguistic diversity and use of new literacies in and out of school (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations [DEEWR], 2008; Lipscombe, Kervin & Mantei, 2015; K. Mills & Dreamson, 2015) and align with the *Melbourne Declaration on Goals for Young Australians* (MCEETYA, 2008) which supports cultural diversity and prioritises literacy learning in schools.

In Catholic schools in Brisbane, primary school teachers are working within the context of the BCE early years and literacy initiatives. The *Policy Statement: Early Years* (Catholic Education Council [CEC], 2001), the BCE *Literacy & Numeracy Plan* (1998-2000), the BCE *Literacy and Numeracy Framework* (2002–2005), and the BCE’s *Literacy and numeracy: A position for catholic schools in the archdiocese of Brisbane* (2006) each prioritises the explicit and systematic teaching of literacy. Further, the *English Syllabus*
(QSA, 2003) which was implemented in the case participants’ schools at the time of this research, and more recently the *Australian Curriculum* (ACARA, 2013) provide a curriculum framework for the teaching of literacy, of which writing is integral.

The teaching of writing is also situated within the context of school communities. Individual school literacy policies and programs influence teachers’ writing pedagogy. Moreover, central to this research are individual teachers and how they enact the pedagogy of writing in their early years’ classrooms. The context of the study is shown in Figure 1.3.

![Figure 1.3. Context of the study.](image-url)

**1.3.3 Enacting the pedagogy of writing.**

There is considerable variation in how teachers enact writing instruction and “this variability is influenced by their epistemologies and beliefs, experiences as teachers and writers and teaching context” (Troia, Lin, Cohen, & Munroe, 2011 p. 156). Various influences also inform writing pedagogy in Australia. Writing instruction may be linked to many different theoretical orientations, such as those that have historically influenced writing pedagogy. Many methods and approaches have been developed and used to
enhance the teaching and learning of writing in Australian primary schools in the last twenty years and such methods and approaches have included the whole language approach (Cambourne, 1988; Goodman, 1986), the genre movement (C. Miller, 1984) and the process approach (Graves, 1983).

Technological advancement and increased cultural diversity have led to multiliteracy pedagogy (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015; Healy, 2000) as educators attempt to cater for the increased social and cultural diversity in Australian schools. Also, critical literacy (Anstey & Bull, 2004; Fajardo, 2015) is another influence on writing pedagogy. Further, writing as a social practice (Ivanic, 2004, Beach et al., 2016) influences writing pedagogy in Australian primary schools. Research is needed to explore influences relating to the teaching of writing and what teachers believe constitutes effective writing pedagogy in the early years. Moreover, research is needed to explore how teacher beliefs and other influences contribute to pedagogical choices.

1.4 Identification of the Research Problem

Learning to write is an important part of learning for life and essential for success at school and in life generally (Mackenzie, 2014). Many skills associated with learning to write develop during the early years of schooling and “at the point of practice, what happens in the classroom is in the hands of the classroom teacher” (Lee & Ginsberg, 2007). Teachers (Mackenzie, 2017b; Pressley, Mohan, Fingeret, Refitt & Raphael-Bogaert, 2007) and students (Coker, 2007) experience challenges in teaching and learning how to write. Surprisingly, there is a paucity of research examining teacher beliefs about writing and associated classroom practices (Hammond & Macken-Horarik, 2001; Harris, Turbill, Kervin, Harden-Thew, 2010). Consequently, the evidence is elusive concerning what contributes to the enactment of teaching writing, and also how teachers engage students and foster writing development. This is the research problem underpinning this thesis and will be explored further in Chapter Two.

1.4.1 The purpose of the research.

The purpose of this research is to explore teacher beliefs, classroom practices and influences relating to writing pedagogy in the early years of schooling. The explanation and justification of the purpose of this research is presented in Chapter Two.
1.4.2 The contributing questions.

From the literature review (Chapter Three), three contributing research questions were generated. These questions focus the conduct of the research design.

1. What do teachers believe about the teaching of writing in the early years of schooling?
2. What practices do teachers employ in the teaching of writing in the early years of schooling?
3. What influences teachers writing pedagogy in the early years of schooling?

1.5 Significance of the Research

This research study and its understandings are significant because they contribute to the limited research about teacher beliefs and practices in the domain of writing (Troia, et al. 2011).

Further, they are significant because teachers of young children assist their students to establish foundational literacy skills upon which children build their understandings of literacy (Edwards et al., 2009). Teacher beliefs are socially and culturally constructed. Likewise, they are resistant to change and are catalytic to what teachers think and do (Rivalland, 2007). Local research had confirmed these conclusions. In Literate Futures: Report of the Literacy Review for Queensland State Schools (Luke, Freebody, & Land, 2000), the importance of featuring examples of effective practice by teachers within the broader contexts of literacy learning is asserted. Consequently, this doctoral research is significant because it gives teachers a documented voice. It is important to document teacher beliefs and practices as it provides important insight into the happenings at the micro-level of the classroom. This study is also important because it contributes to the quantum of knowledge about literacy practices from the understandings of the classroom teacher.

Also, research regarding the teaching of literacy in the early years is important because early literacy development has a direct influence on future academic achievement (Louden et al., 2005). Teacher beliefs and practices in the teaching of writing are significant because “what teachers attend to (or neglect) in relation to literacy learning generally, and writing specifically, will influence what knowledge children construct about literacy and writing” (Mackenzie, Hemming & Kay, 2011 p. 2). It has been argued that “where there is clarity of resonance between teacher-articulated beliefs and practices, informed by educational theory, children’s literacy progress through their first year of
school may well be enhanced" (Bassey, Scull, Nolan, Raban, & Deans, 2012, p. 325).
This study is significant because it will contribute to the pedagogical understandings about
what promotes students' writing development from the perspective of classroom teachers.
In addition, this research also investigates how the teaching of writing at the macro-level
of system documentation impacts in the micro-level of the classroom. This is important
because it will contribute to an understanding of what influences teachers' writing
pedagogy.

Finally, the implications from this study may affect policy and practice relating to the
teaching and learning of writing in the early years of schooling.

1.6 The Research Design
The design of this research study is informed by the researcher's epistemology,
thoretical perspective and consequential methodology. The research design is
summarised in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1
Summary of the Research Design

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<th>THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK</th>
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<td><strong>Epistemology</strong></td>
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1.6.1 Epistemology: Constructionism.
Constructionism explains the generation of knowledge and seeks to offer understanding
of reality from the participants' perspective (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).
Constructionism is considered an appropriate epistemological lens to underpin this
research because the study explores teacher beliefs and practices about the teaching of
writing in a context in which teachers reflected on their own understandings and the meanings they constructed (Crotty, 1998).

1.6.2 Theoretical perspective: Interpretivism.

Interpretivism relates to how people interpret their worlds and the meanings that inform their realities (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Interpretivism is adopted as an appropriate theoretical perspective for the design to interpret and understand how the teachers construct their practice and the meanings they attach to their actions in the teaching of writing (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

1.6.2.1 Symbolic interactionism.

Symbolic Interactionism is adopted as a particular theoretical perspective of Interpretivism. Moreover, symbolic interactionism acknowledges that meaning is derived from social interaction (Charon, 2007, 2010), that language shapes interaction and interpretations, and that contexts influence how individuals construct meaning (Bassey, 1999). Symbolic interactionism allows the researcher to understanding teachers’ writing pedagogy within the teachers’ worlds (Charon, 2007).

1.6.3 Methodology: Case study.

Case study methodology is adopted and explores participants’ understandings in real-life settings (Yin, 2006). Six individual case studies exploring the writing pedagogy of six early years classroom teachers were conducted. Case study methodology allows for a variety of data gathering strategies to facilitate exploration of a phenomenon (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2006). Data gathering strategies adopted included: a survey, semi-structured interviews, writing lesson observations and an examination of teacher artefacts.

1.6.4 Participants.

Purposive selection was employed in this research study to enable the researcher to intentionally select people and sites for their knowledge concerning the research phenomenon (Creswell, 2012; Draper & Swift, 2010). Teachers from Catholic primary schools in the archdiocese of Brisbane were invited to participate in the study for their knowledge and experience concerning writing pedagogy in the early years of schooling. This resulted in 99 teachers participating in the survey. Six of these teachers then became the focus of the individual case studies.
1.6.5 Data gathering strategies.

Multiple data gathering strategies are adopted for this research to facilitate the exploration of teachers’ writing pedagogy and include:

- A survey (n= 99 participants); and
- Individual case studies (n = 6 participants) including
  - Sem-structured interviews;
  - Participant observation including writing lesson observations, researcher field notes and second interviews to discuss observations; and
  - Physical artefacts.

1.7 Outline of the Thesis

The thesis is presented in eight chapters. Following is an outline of the structure of the chapters.

1.7.1 Chapter one: The research problem identified.

In chapter one, an introduction to the research is presented. This includes an explanation of teacher beliefs, practices and influences that contribute to the enactment of the teaching of writing in the early years of schooling. Personal and research contexts are introduced, and the research problem is identified. The research design, the significance of the research and a descriptive overview of the chapters are presented.

1.7.2 Chapter two: Defining the research problem.

In chapter two, an explanation of the research context and a rationale for the explanation of the research problem are explained. The research problem that underpins this thesis concerns the elusive evidence concerning what contributes to the enactment of teaching writing, and also how teachers engage students and foster writing development. Further, this chapter explains how the purpose of the research and the overarching research question that provide a framework for the study are justified.

1.7.3 Chapter three: Review of the literature.

In chapter three, a review of the literature that underpins the research purpose is presented. An exploration of historical influences on the teaching of writing in the early years in Australia are explored. Theoretical models influencing the teaching of writing including emergent theory, psycholinguistic theory, socio-cultural theory and critical theory are discussed. Approaches influencing the teaching of writing including the process approach, the whole language approach and the genre movement are also discussed.
Contemporary influences on the teaching of writing are then explored and include literacy as social practice, writing as developmental and new literacy pedagogy in contemporary writing classrooms. In addition, the review explores pedagogical practices for the teaching of writing. Pedagogical practices are synthesised into four areas for subsequent discussion, including learning environments for writing, writing as social practice, writing as an integral part of literacy and explicit writing instruction. Finally, teacher beliefs about teaching writing and the relationship between beliefs and practices are addressed. The contributing research questions which focus the conduct of the research were generated from aspects of the literature review.

1.7.4 Chapter four: Research design.

In chapter four, the research design that focused the conduct of this research related to teachers’ writing pedagogy in the early years is explained and justified. Constructionism is the selected epistemology and an interpretivist theoretical perspective is described. Symbolic interactionism is adopted as a particular theoretical perspective of interpretivism. The methodology of case study is employed. Data gathering strategies adopted include the use of a survey instrument, semi-structured interviews, participant observation and physical artefacts. Data analysis includes descriptive statistical analysis and cross-case analysis employing the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

1.7.5 Chapter five: Interpretative case narratives.

In chapter five, interpretative case narratives concerning the writing pedagogy of six primary school teachers who are teaching writing in their early years’ classes, are presented.

1.7.6 Chapter six: Comparison of cases.

In chapter six, the understandings generated from a cross-case analysis examining the writing pedagogy of six primary school teachers are explained. A cross-case analysis was achieved through the employment of constant comparative analysis (CCA, Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This allowed for an examination, comparison and explanation of themes, differences and relationships that emerged from the data from the six case studies.

1.7.7 Chapter seven: Discussion of the new understandings.

In chapter seven, the new understandings generated from a cross-case analysis are discussed. A synthesis of the understandings identified four issues. These include:

- Exemplary practices for teaching writing in the early years of schooling;
- A multiplicity of beliefs underpinning individual teacher writing pedagogy;
- Intrinsic and extrinsic influences informing teacher writing pedagogy; and
• Preferred individual approaches to writing pedagogy.

These issues provided a structure for the discussion of the new understandings, discussed in this chapter. The new understandings are also discussed in the context of other research.

1.7.8 Chapter eight: Conclusions and recommendations.

In chapter eight, conclusions drawn from the new understandings are reported. How this study contributes to scholarship through new knowledge, policy, and practice are explained. An exploration of implications and recommendations for the teaching of writing in the early years are reported. Finally, recommendations for further research are made.
CHAPTER TWO
DEFINING THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to justify the research problem that is explored within this study. The research problem is conceptualised within the broader context in which teachers teach writing in the early years of schooling in Catholic primary schools in Brisbane.

2.2 Conceptualising the Research Problem

The key influences pertinent to defining the research problem within the broader context, include an overview of writing pedagogy. Further, the context includes primary education in Queensland, Australia, including the foundations of early years schooling. Moreover, theoretical approaches influencing writing pedagogy and policy initiatives are drawn upon to define the research problem. The conceptualisation of the research problem is displayed in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1. The research problem conceptualised.
2.3 Influences on Writing Pedagogy

Teachers experience challenges with teaching writing and students experience challenges learning how to write (Bazerman et al., 2017; Coker, 2007; Mackenzie, 2017b; Pressley, Mohan, Fingeret, Reffitt, & Raphael-Bogaert, 2007). In Australia, ever-increasing cultural and linguistic diversity and a multicultural society mean that teachers are working with children with varying cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015; Kinloch & Burkhard, 2016). Moreover, many students have English as an additional language. According to the 2016 census, there were 300 different languages spoken in Australian homes (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS], 2017b). Moreover, 12% of people in Queensland spoke a language other than English (ABS, 2017a).

Catering for students’ cultural and linguistic diversity in Australian early years classrooms influences writing pedagogy (MCEETYA, 2008; K. Mills & Dreamson, 2015).

Technological advancements, including an increasing use of multimodal texts and visual literacy also influence writing pedagogy (G. Barton et al., 2015; MacArthur, 2006; Merchant, 2009). Indeed, the increasing use of computers and interactive whiteboards, new literacies and the use of multiliteracy pedagogy in early years classrooms influence writing pedagogy (Edwards-Groves, 2012).

There are a number of official responses in the form of national declarations, policies and curriculum that influence the teaching of writing in primary schools. *Literacy for All: The Challenge for Australian Schools* (DEETYA, 1998) prioritises literacy learning in the early years of schooling. Further, the *National Statement for Languages Education in Australian Schools 2005–2008* (MCEETYA, 2005) and the *Melbourne Declaration of Educational Goals for Young Australians* (MCEETYA, 2008) support cultural diversity and prioritise literacy learning in schools.

In Brisbane Catholic primary schools, teachers are working within the context of Brisbane Catholic Education (BCE) early years and literacy initiatives. The Catholic Education Council’s *Policy Statement: Early Years* (Catholic Education Council [CEC], 2001), the *Literacy and Numeracy: A Position for Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Brisbane.* (BCE, 2006), *Years 1–10 English Syllabus* (QCAA, 2005) and more recently, the *Australian Curriculum* (ACARA, 2013, 2014) prioritise the explicit and systematic teaching of literacy. Understanding the level of influence of systemic influences on individual classroom teachers’ writing pedagogy underpins an appreciation of the research problem.

2.3.1 Primary education in Australia.

The teaching of writing in the early years occurs within the broader context of primary
education in Australia, where literacy is considered a priority (Australian Curriculum and Assessment Reporting Authority [ACARA], 2013; Mackenzie, 2014; Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs [MCEETYA], 2008). The Australian government has developed policy that aims to provide a basis for the supposed best educational outcomes for students. These outcomes are underpinned by The Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-first Century (MCEETYA, 1999) and are supported by the National Report on Schooling in Australia (MCEETYA, 2004), which identifies the national responsibilities for Australian schooling. In addition, The Future of Schooling in Australia (Council for the Australian Federation [CAF], 2007) provides a twelve-point plan for quality education. More recently, the Melbourne Declaration on Goals for Young Australians (MCEETYA, 2008) offers a framework and goals for primary aged children that include promoting "equity and excellence, and for all young Australians to become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active informed citizens" (p. 7), including prioritising the teaching and learning of writing (MCEETYA, 2008).

In 2008, Australian governments committed to working together to strengthen education in Australia. Their collaborative work resulted in the Melbourne Declaration of Educational Goals for Young Australians (MCEETYA, 2008). In 2009, Belonging, Being & Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (DEEWR, 2009) provided a vision to foster children’s learning from birth to five and then through the transition to school (DEEWR, 2009) and “initiated a shift in the expectations of early years educators, particularly in terms of early literacy and intentional teaching” (Mackenzie, 2016, p. 177). Later, the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership [AITSL], 2011) were established to support the goals in the Melbourne Declaration and aim to provide a model for professional accountability (AITSL, 2011). This was followed by the Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures (AITSL, 2015, 2018) which provides standards and procedures that for purposes of accreditation must be met in initial teacher education programs (AITSL, 2015, 2018). The purpose is to ensure high quality teachers (AITSL, 2015, 2018). Moreover, the first Australian national curriculum (ACARA, 2013, 2014) was employed, aiming for a consistent, high quality, national curriculum. The national curriculum prioritises the teaching of writing (ACARA, 2013, 2014).

2.3.2 Schooling in Queensland.

Education Queensland delivers government education to approximately 70% of Queensland students (Queensland. Department of Education and Training [DET], 2018).
Independent schools cater for approximately 15% of students (Independent Schools Queensland [ISQ], 2017). Catholic schools cater for 18.33% of students in Queensland (QCEC, 2017). This doctoral research was conducted in Catholic primary schools in Queensland. Moreover, primary school teachers are responsible for teaching young children to write.

2.3.2.1 Foundations for early years schooling in Queensland.

In Australia, children commence school anywhere from four-and-a-half years of age to six-and-a-half (Mackenzie, 2017b). This means that children may vary in age by more than 18 months when they start school (Mackenzie, 2017b). The varying literacy development of children commencing school presents challenges for teachers of writing.

The Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline ([QKLG], QSA, 2010) which is based on Belonging, Being & Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (DEEWR, 2009) aims to offer continuity in learning. Moreover, in order to assist teachers in enhancing student literacy, the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA, 2014–2018) has developed Curriculum Connections: English. This initiative is a professional learning resource for teachers designed to ensure continuity from Kindergarten English to Prep English by identifying English connections from QKLG (QSA, 2010) to Foundation Year Australian Curriculum: English (ACARA, 2013). Consequently, teachers build on literacy learning of students who attend Kindergarten.

However, kindergarten programs offered prior to the first formal year of schooling are not compulsory (Queensland, DET, 2018). This also presents challenges to teachers of writing due to the varying writing experiences children have had prior to commencing formal schooling.

Since 2007, Queensland primary education offers a full-time preparatory year (Prep) prior to Year 1 which became compulsory in 2017 as the first formal year of schooling. The Early Years’ Curriculum Guidelines (QCAA, 2006) were developed at the time of the introduction of the prep year to offer a framework for learning from Prep to Year 3.

Learning experiences are integrated across the curriculum in purposefully constructed learning environments which are organised to allow children to work on real-life activities (QCAA, 2006). Within these learning environments, teachers create meaningful contexts for learning including play, real-life situations, investigations, routines, transitions and focused learning and teaching (QCAA, 2006). Play is used as one context for learning in early years classrooms and may influence writing pedagogy. The learning environment is employed in early years classrooms to enhance the teaching and learning of writing in multiple ways. Print-rich environments to support literacy learning (Roskos & Christie,
2011) are utilised in early years classrooms and the use of the learning environment to create meaningful contexts for learning is also employed. Such contexts may influence writing pedagogy.

2.3.3 Schooling in the archdiocese of Brisbane.

Brisbane Catholic Education is responsible for Catholic schools in the archdiocese of Brisbane. Catholic schools commenced a voluntary full-time Prep from 2007 which became compulsory in 2017 and it encourages a philosophy of developmentally appropriate practices in Prep–Year 3 early years classrooms (BCE, 2006). Like other schools, Catholic schools implement curricula in line with ACARA (2013, 2014) and QSA (2006). This is implemented with the adoption of the BCE Learning and Teaching Framework (BCE, 2012) and the Strategic Renewal Framework (BCE, 2006). These guidelines have their own specific learning goals and aims for Catholic education. The Literacy and Numeracy Framework (BCE, 2002, 2006) was developed by the BCE in response to Literate Futures (Luke et al., 2000), a literacy review of Queensland state schools. This was followed by BCE’s Literacy and Numeracy: A position for Catholic schools in the archdiocese of Brisbane, 2006–2009 (BCE, 2006), which aimed to assist Catholic schools in developing a whole school approach to teaching literacy. Then more recently, the BCE’s Delivering Excellent Learning and Teaching 2014–2016 Strategy (2014) was produced, aiming to maximise student engagement and achievement in Catholic schools. These policies may influence how teachers engage in teaching writing in the early years. However, as there are no mandated programs for writing instruction in the state of Queensland, teachers also have the opportunity to adopt their preferred practices for writing instruction. Consequently, exploring why teachers choose particular practices for writing instruction assists in appreciating the research problem.

2.3.4 Theoretical models and approaches influencing writing pedagogy.

Since the 1970s, a number of theoretical models have influenced the teaching of writing in the early years. These include Psycholinguistic Theory (Goodman, 1967), Emergent Theory (Clay, 1966; Teale & Sulzby, 1986), Sociocultural Theory (Harste, Woodward, & Burke, 1984; Vygotsky, 1978) and Critical Theory (Freire, 1970, 1993; Solsken, 1993). Many methods and approaches have also been developed and used to enhance the teaching and learning of writing including The Whole Language Approach (Cambourne, 1988; Goodman, 1986), The Writing Process Approach (Graves, 1972, 1983) and The Genre Movement (C. Miller, 1984). Historical theoretical models and approaches continue to influence current literacy approaches and how literacy is understood and taught (Farrar & Al-Qatawneh, 2010; Derewianka, 2015; Kervin & Mantei, 2015). The advantage of
these innovations is that many contemporary approaches compel teachers to reflect upon their practices, especially in teaching literacy (Trioa et al., 2011). Understanding how theoretical models and approaches have influenced the teaching of writing historically also assists in appreciating the research problem.

**2.3.5 Transitioning to school communities.**

Writing transitions occur within the broader context of becoming literate and are influenced by the varying knowledge of literacy children have when they start school (S. Hill & Diamond, 2013; Mackenzie, 2017b; Raban, 2012). Children learn literacy practices in a range of different contexts including family celebrations, hobbies, social and community life, childcare and preschool before commencing primary school (S. Hill & Diamond, 2013; K. Roberts, 2013). Further, in Australia, children may start school anywhere from four-and-a-half to six-and-a-half, resulting in varying development when children start school (Mackenzie, 2017b). Also, children have varying family literacy practices and cultural backgrounds resulting in each child’s having unique early literacy experiences (Edwards et al., 2009; Kinloch & Burkhead, 2015). Understanding how teachers support students’ writing development as they commence formal schooling assists in appreciating the research problem.

**2.3.6 School contexts.**

Schools have their own literacy priorities. Moreover, school literacy practices are shaped by a myriad of influences. Mandated testing (ACARA, 2008), government agendas (MCEETYA, 2008) and the national curriculum (ACARA, 2013, 2014) influence writing pedagogy in primary schools. Further, schools have their own beliefs and values about literacy learning which are reflected in school policies and programs. These may also influence teachers’ writing pedagogy, as might colleagues in their school community. The cultural and linguistic practices in the school community may also influence literacy pedagogy (D. Barton, 2007). As well, an individual teacher’s beliefs may influence writing pedagogy (D. Barton, 2007; Troia et al., 2011). Knowledge of the influences on the writing pedagogy of individual teachers within school communities assists in appreciating the research problem.

**2.3.7 Classroom contexts.**

Within this macro-level of contexts is situated the micro-level of the classroom. “At the point of practice, what happens in the classroom is in the hands of the classroom teacher” (Lee & Ginsburg, 2007). Here, individual teachers enact the pedagogy of writing. This phenomenon is studied in this research project and is fundamental to the appreciation of
the research problem.

2.4 Beliefs Underpinning Writing Pedagogy

There is considerable variability in how teachers enact writing instruction and “this variability is influenced by their epistemologies and beliefs, experiences as teachers and writers and teaching context” (Troia et al., 2011, p. 156). Writing instruction may be related to many different theoretical orientations (Troia et al., 2011). Despite the need for teacher beliefs about writing to be researched, there is a paucity of research documenting teacher beliefs about writing and associated classroom practices (Boscolo, 2008; Hammond & Macken-Horarik, 2001; Harris et al., 2010; Troia et al., 2011). In addition, where there is resonance between teacher beliefs and practices, students’ progress is enhanced (Brown et al., 2012). “Further research on how teachers’ histories and experiences with writing affect their beliefs about writing instruction and practices may help teachers better articulate and navigate their instructional discourses” (McCarthey, Woodard, & Kang, 2014, p. 86). Understanding teacher beliefs about teaching writing and the relationship between beliefs and classroom practices assists in appreciating the research problem.

2.5 Practices for Writing Pedagogy

This study is situated within the broader context of national literacy policy in Australia (DEETYA, 1998) because implementing literacy policy may influence writing pedagogy in the early years. Individual school programs and a current approach encompassing writing as social practice (Barratt-Pugh, 2000; Beach et al., 2016) may also influence writing pedagogy. In Australia, an individual teacher’s beliefs and myriad other influences may also contribute to teacher pedagogical choices (Olafson & Schraw, 2010). Understanding the connection between teacher beliefs, practices and influences assists in appreciating the research problem.

2.5.1 National literacy policy in Australia.

In the late 1990s, Australia began to prioritise literacy learning in the early years. Literacy for All: The Challenge for Australian Schools (DEETYA, 1998) outlined the importance of literacy developments in the early years and aimed to give students foundation skills for success in reading and writing. Following this, the National Inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy (DEST, 2005) recommended that:

- teachers be equipped with evidence-based teaching strategies;
• phonics be taught explicitly;
• the needs of children from diverse backgrounds be met;
• the language children learn at home be built on;
• literacy planning be done across the whole school; and
• teachers be provided with professional development (DEST, 2005).

However, the focus of this inquiry was predominately the teaching of reading. Writing was made a better balanced priority more recently by the development of a national curriculum in Australia. *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: English* (ACARA, 2009) is based on language, literacy and literature. It is underpinned by the goals outlined in the *Melbourne Declaration on Goals for Young Australians* (MCEETYA, 2008) and aims for a consistent national approach to literacy learning in Australia. National and state policy for literacy education may influence individual school policies and programs for literacy instruction and how teachers teach writing in the early years.

### 2.5.2 The national curriculum: English.

The national English curriculum (ACARA, 2013, 2014) mandates the explicit teaching of language, literacy and literature. The language strand aims at teaching students about the English language and how it works. In addition, the literature strand aims at giving students the ability to understand, appreciate and respond to literature. Also, the literacy strand aims at teaching students how to use the English language for a range of purposes and audiences. Each teacher participant in this study is required to teach writing within the framework of the national English curriculum (ACARA, 2013, 2014). Understanding how this documentation influences their writing pedagogy assists in appreciating the research problem.

### 2.5.3 National literacy benchmarks.

The *National Assessment Program* (ACARA, 2008) replaced the Queensland Years 3, 5, and 7 Literacy and Numeracy tests (QSA, 2005b) and in May 2008, students in Year 3 in all states and territories undertook the same literacy tests.

### 2.5.4 The national assessment program: Literacy and numeracy (NAPLAN).

NAPLAN tests (ACARA, 2008) are conducted in May each year for all students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 and the literacy components have been updated in 2013 and 2015. Students are assessed on the same test items and the literacy components are reading, writing and language conventions including spelling, grammar and punctuation. Results are reported nationally, providing education systems, schools and parents with information about literacy achievements rated on a scale of bands which represent skills and
understandings. Understanding the level of influence of mandated testing on individual classroom teachers’ writing pedagogy underpins an appreciation of the research problem.

2.5.5 Literacy developments in Queensland.

In the early 1990s, following the *Australian Language and Literacy Policy* (Department of Employment, Education and Training [DEET] 1991), Queensland educators began to adopt a more serious approach to literacy policy. *Shaping the Future: Report of the Review of Queensland School Curriculum* (Wiltshire, 1994) included recommendations that led to the monitoring of literacy using the *Year 2 Diagnostic Net* (Department of Education, Queensland [DET], 1998) which continues to be used today. In addition, literacy continua adopted from Western Australia’s *First Steps* (Education Department of Western Australia [EDWA], 1994, 1995) is employed in Queensland to map reading and writing progress.

Literacy Continua [EDWA], 1994, 1995) and the *Year 2 Diagnostic Net* (Department of Education, Queensland [DET], 1998) both involve acknowledging the developmental pattern of individual students and mapping students’ progress, as one way of building a portfolio of children’s literacy development. In addition, the Net evaluation allows for accountability and provides wide scale general information about literacy standards, which in turn identify students at risk in reading and writing so intervention can be provided to target their literacy needs. As each teacher participant was employing literacy continua and the year 2 teacher participants were working with the *Year 2 Diagnostic Net* (Department of Education, Queensland [DET], 1998) during this research project, this assists in appreciating the research project.

*Preschool Curriculum Guidelines* (Queensland School Curriculum Council [QSCC], 1998) were developed, outlining the importance of literacy developments in the early years and in line with the *National Literacy Policy, Literacy for All: The Challenge for Australian Schools* (DEETYA, 1998). Further, *Literate Futures* (Luke et al., 2000) aimed to provide a literacy strategy for Queensland, providing a framework to guide the development of a whole school approach to literacy. Then in 2005, Queensland adopted a draft syllabus for all curricula providing outcomes-based education (QSA, 2005). The English syllabus included the strands speaking and listening, writing and shaping, and reading and viewing, and it provided a rationale for the integration of the three strands. This was followed by *Early Years Curriculum Guidelines* (QCAA, 2006) which focused on P–3 learning through real-life contexts and play. The guidelines promote purposefully constructed learning environments, meaningful contexts for learning and focused teaching.
and learning (QCAA, 2006).

Since 2007, QSA established essential learnings for each key learning area, including English, to be achieved by the end of Year 3. *Queensland Comparative Assessment Tasks–QCATS* (QCAA, 2009a) were developed and implemented to assess students’ knowledge of the essential learnings in key learning areas, including English, from 2009–2012. While these tests were last administered in 2012, the essential learnings continue to provide a guideline for teaching in Queensland schools.

How literacy developments in Queensland may influence individual school policy and programs assists in appreciating the research problem. Also, how mandated national testing influences the planning and teaching of writing including the *Year Two Diagnostic Net* (Queensland, DET, 1998) assessment for Year 2 teachers assists in appreciating the research problem.

**2.5.6 Writing as social practice.**

Writing as a social practice is valued in Australian primary schools (Anstey & Bull, 2003). The social practices discourse for teaching writing stems from the belief that students learn to write best when writing is real, and in a social context (D. Barton, 2007). In life, people write for real purposes in real-life contexts (D. Barton, 2007; Beach et al., 2016) and this supports writing for real purposes in schools (D. Barton, 2007). Teachers often begin with a real context and a real purpose for writing, where there also is a real audience. Teachers may employ a functional approach (Christie & Derewianka, 2008; Derewianka, 2015) and explicit teaching (S. Hill, 2012) within this context. Moreover, students are also assessed on the effectiveness of achieving their purpose (Ivanic, 2004).

In Queensland, the BCE’s policies reflect the values of the writing as a social practice approach to literacy learning. Indeed, the BCE’s *Literacy and Numeracy Framework* (BCE, 2004) documents the importance of a whole school approach that “draws on information about the socio-cultural and community backgrounds of the students, the changing world of communities, work places and cultures, and home and community literacy practices” (p. 6). Understanding how a social practices discourse for teaching writing influences the writing practices of individual teachers participating in this research study, is appropriate for the appreciation of the research problem.

**2.6 Defining the Research Problem**

Learning to write is an important part of learning for life and is essential for success at school and in life generally (Mackenzie, 2014). Many skills associated with learning to
write develop during the early years of schooling and “at the point of practice, what happens in the classroom is in the hands of the classroom teacher” (Lee & Ginsburg, 2007). Children come to school with varying experiences of writing, and children in any given early years’ class will have a range of skills as writers. Some of the challenges that children face as writers include:

- Understanding how we use writing to communicate;
- Understanding the conventions or concepts about print;
- Discovering the alphabet is used to represent speech sounds;
- Writing by hand or digitally well enough to express ideas fluently; and
- Developing text genres (Coker, 2007, p. 102).

Teachers also experience challenges teaching writing (Mackenzie, 2017b; Pressley et al., 2007). Indeed, “the teaching of writing in Australian schools is possibly more complex in the current era than any other time” (Mackenzie, 2017a, p. 251). “To support children in the challenging task of learning to write, it is important for teachers to create a classroom culture in which children see writing as purposeful and worthwhile and see themselves as writers” (Nicolazzo & Mackenzie, 2017, p. 189). Teachers need not only to have the skills and knowledge about how to teach young children to write and be aware of the challenges that young writers face, but also to know and understand children’s skills and begin by working with students and scaffolding their learning to address individual learning needs (Pressley et al., 2007). Further, to cater for twenty-first century learners, literacy pedagogy involves navigating new literacies and advancements in technology which change the way we engage with and create texts (G. Barton et al., 2015). Teachers also need to navigate social and cultural contexts and cater for ever-increasing cultural diversity in the writing classroom (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015; Edwards-Groves, 2012). Teachers’ own beliefs about how to teach writing may compete with systemic demands (Mackenzie, 2017a). Despite these priorities, however, print literacy continues to be valued in schools (ACARA, 2014). Therefore, teachers must teach children print literacy while concurrently teaching digital literacy in twenty-first century learning environments. Finding the balance for these competing priorities is a complex and ongoing challenge for teachers of writing (Lipscombe et al., 2015; Mackenzie, 2017a).

Surprisingly, there is a paucity of research examining teacher beliefs about teaching writing and associated classroom practices (Hammond & Macken-Horarik, 2001; Harris et al., 2010). Research regarding “teachers’ theoretical orientations and teaching self-efficacy for writing instruction is quite limited” and how researchers have interpreted the “extant literature on writing instruction practices” (Troia et al., 2011 p. 158) is that a
narrow view of instruction is taken. Research has also found that there is “great variation in teachers' writing instruction practices and limited research on the connections between teacher beliefs and their instructional practices in the domain of writing” (Troia et al., 2011, p. 179). Furthermore, in considering this limited documented evidence:

Research studies have been overlooked, that document the daily realities and complexities of teachers and students' literacy work and practices across diverse settings and acknowledge the importance of teachers informed professional judgements and ignoring such research has meant that teachers’ perspectives are under-represented in policy initiatives” (Harris et al., 2010).

Indeed, researchers and theorists in literacy education report extensively in the current literature about how to support young children's development; however, how teachers enact this pedagogy has not been well-examined (Boscolo, 2008; Rowe, 2008). Consequently, the evidence concerning what contributes to the enactment of teaching writing and also how teachers engage students and foster writing development is elusive. This is the research problem underpinning this thesis.

2.7 The Research Purpose
The purpose of this research, therefore, is to explore teacher beliefs, classroom practices, and influences relating to writing pedagogy in the early years of schooling.

2.8 The Overarching Research Question
The overarching research question for this study is: How do teacher beliefs about learning to write influence the teaching of writing in the early years of schooling?

2.9 Conclusion
In summation, this research explores teacher beliefs, classroom practices, and influences relating to writing pedagogy in the early years of schooling. It is important for teachers to be given more opportunity to have their beliefs about and practices in teaching writing in the early years documented. This documentation will allow for an appreciation of how these beliefs and practices contribute to the enactment of teaching writing and also how teachers engage students and foster their writing development. The opportunity to work closely with teachers, hear their voices and learn more about the teaching of writing in the early years provides an opportunity to gain new insights about this educational practice. A review of the literature that underpins the research purpose is presented in Chapter 3.
CHAPTER THREE
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

3.1 Introduction to the Review

The purpose of this research is to explore teacher beliefs, classroom practices and influences relating to writing pedagogy in the early years of schooling. A review of the literature that identifies and illuminates the issues that underpin the research purpose is presented in this chapter.

3.1.1 Conceptual framework.

An analysis and synthesis process of the literature generated the following three themes:

- Influences informing writing pedagogy in the early years;
- Pedagogical practices for writing in the early years; and
- Teacher beliefs underpinning writing pedagogy in the early years.

The three themes underpinning this review are interrelated.

Figure 3.1. Interrelated themes emerging from analysis of the literature.
Figure 3.2 illustrates the interrelation of each of the themes. Teacher beliefs underpin pedagogical practices for teaching writing. Further, intrinsic and extrinsic influences inform writing pedagogy. Each of the three themes contributes to writing pedagogy in the early years.

**Literacy as Social Practice**

- A complex dynamic between teacher beliefs and classroom practices

**Writing Development**

- Teachers personal epistemology
- Teacher beliefs about learning to write and teaching writing
- Paucity of research exploring teacher beliefs about writing pedagogy

**Technological Advancement and New Literacies**

- Writing development and writing as an integral part of literacy
- Writing as Social Practice
- Learning Environments for Writing
- Explicit Writing Instruction

**Pedagogical Practices for Writing**

- Writing development and writing as an integral part of Literacy
- Writing as Social Practice
- Learning Environments for Writing
- Explicit Writing Instruction

**Cultural & Linguistic Diversity in the Writing Classroom**

CONSTRUCTIONIST APPROACH

Figure 3.2. Conceptual framework: writing pedagogy in the early years.
3.1.1.1 **Theme one: Influences informing writing pedagogy in the early years.**

The teaching of writing in the early years is influenced by historical theoretical models and approaches (Farrar & Al-Qatawneh, 2010; Turbill, Barton, & Brock, 2015) as well as contemporary influences (Troia et al., 2011). Changing theory also affects teachers’ practice (Farrar & Al-Qatawneh, 2010; Turbill et al., 2015). Influences on the teaching of writing in the early years in contemporary Australia include:

- writing as social practice (Bazerman, 2016; Beach et al., 2016; Derewianka & Jones, 2013; Derewianka, 2015);
- adoption of functional grammar (Derewianka & Jones, 2010; Myhill & Watson, 2014);
- acknowledgement that learning to write is developmental and that early years’ teachers are working with emergent writers (Tolchinsky, 2016);
- ever-increasing cultural and linguistic diversity and more individual differences for teachers to address within the writing program than ever before (Kinloch & Burkhard, 2016; McIntyre & Turner, 2013); and
- influence of digital technologies and new literacies on writing pedagogy (Leu et al., 2016; Merchant, 2009; Walsh, 2010), and their redefining of the definition of literacy (Edwards-Groves, 2012).

Contemporary approaches lead teachers both to reflect on their teaching of writing and influence pedagogical practices.

3.1.1.2 **Theme two: Pedagogical practices for writing in the early years.**

Exemplary practices within comprehensive writing pedagogy in the early years include:

- writing as social practice (Beach et al., 2016; Derewianka & Jones, 2016; Dyson 2009; Morrow, Gambrell, & Pressley, 2003);
- generating of learning environments that support the teaching and learning of writing (Brodova & Leong, 2006; Graham, Harris & Chambers, 2016; Roskos & Neuman 2011; Tolchinsky, 2006);
- writing development and writing as an integral part of literacy (Dyson 2005, 2006; Myhill & Jones, 2009; Rose, 2011; Shanahan, 2006, 2016); and
- explicit writing instruction (Coker, 2007; Nicolazzo & Mackenzie, 2017; Pressley et al., 2007).

The literature related to writing practices presented in this review has been synthesised into the four conceptualisations for subsequent discussion.
3.1.1.3 **Theme three: Teacher beliefs underpinning writing pedagogy in the early years.**

Writing pedagogy in the early years is influenced by teacher beliefs (Olafson & Schraw, 2010; Padgham & Topfer, 2015). Moreover, teacher beliefs emanate from their epistemological worldviews (Olafson & Schraw, 2010). Furthermore, teacher beliefs about writing pedagogy are related to their beliefs about writing, beliefs about learning to write and beliefs about teaching writing. These beliefs are interrelated and complex as illustrated in Figure 3.3.

![Figure 3.3. Teachers' interrelated beliefs.](image)

Moreover, there is a relationship between teachers whose beliefs guide their practices and improved student outcomes (Makin, Diaz & McLachlan, 2007; Troia et al., 2011). This review explores the importance of teacher beliefs and their relationship to practices.
3.1.1.4 Sequence and design of the literature review.

The sequence and design of the literature review is presented in Figure 3.4.

**Figure 3.4.** Sequence and design of the literature review: writing pedagogy in the early years.
3.2 Historical Influences Informing Writing Pedagogy in the Early Years

The contemporary teaching of writing has a defensible theoretical basis (Turbill et al., 2015). Consequently, appreciating the history of writing pedagogy explains how historical theoretical models and approaches have influenced the teaching of writing. Moreover, it illustrates how theory continues to inform professional thinking and, in turn, pedagogical choices (Turbill et al., 2015).

Prior to the late 1960s, reading and writing were not understood as an integrated concept (Langer & Flihan, 2000). Little research into teacher beliefs and practices concerning the teaching of writing was conducted (de Lemos and ACER, 2002). Indeed, in the 1930s and 1940s, theories on a maturationist view of development based on studies by Morphett and Washburne (1931) and Gesell (1940) asserted that children’s reading development depends on maturation and learning to read was believed to commence at school age (Saracho, 2017). Consequently, research into the teaching of reading was confined to the formal years of schooling. These traditions focused primarily on the teaching of reading (Langer & Flihan, 2000) and assumed reading readiness (Saracho, 2017).

Reading readiness presumes reading is a separate skill, as opposed to being integral with oral language, and writing and was best learned through systematic instruction (Crawford, 1995). This perspective assumed children needed to be taught how to be literate. Moreover, a period of preparation was believed to be necessary before formal reading instruction could begin (Crawford, 1995). Research recommended a “beginning code – emphasis program” (Chall, 1967, p. 309) for beginning readers be employed because beginning readers needed instruction that was different from that needed for more mature readers. Indeed, explicit instruction in code emphasis generates “better results in terms of reading for meaning” (Chall, 1967, p. 307). By the 1960s, Australian policy and practice embraced this approach of reading readiness (Crawford, 1995). This view assumed children learned to read, and then learning to write followed (Langer & Flihan, 2000).

By the late 1960s, other researchers challenged the reading readiness theory (Saracho, 2017). In contrast to reading readiness, Durkin’s (1966) study concluded “that children were reading earlier than first grade and that the reading readiness paradigm was theoretically and rationally inappropriate” (Saracho, 2017). Similarly, Clay’s research (1966) opposed reading readiness theory, and proposed the theory of emergent literacy (1966). Further, from the 1970s there were groundbreaking studies conducted on the teaching and learning of writing (Langer & Flihan, 2000). Indeed, the teaching of writing in the early years today continues to be influenced by historical theoretical models and approaches (Farrar & Al-Qatawneh, 2010; MacArthur, Graham & Fitzgerald, 2016).
### 3.2.1 Historical Theoretical Models Influencing the Teaching of Writing.

From the 1970s, there was an increased focus on writing research (Langer & Flihan, 2000). One area of interest was in writing processes (Britton, 1978; Graves, 1972, 1975, 1983; Murray, 1972, 1978). Further, research identified other influences on writing and these included contexts for writing and writing for specific social purposes (Langer & Flihan, 2000). Theoretical models that have influenced the teaching of writing in the early years from the 1970s include psycholinguistic theory, emergent theory, socio-cultural theory and critical theory (Crawford, 1995). An overview of varying influencing theories is summarised in Table 3.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literacy Theoretical Perspectives</th>
<th>Emergent theory</th>
<th>Psycholinguistic theory</th>
<th>Socio-Cultural theory</th>
<th>Critical theory</th>
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<tr>
<td>Central Research Paradigms</td>
<td>Symbolic</td>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>Symbolic</td>
<td>Critical</td>
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<td>Purpose</td>
<td>Support &amp; scaffold students through a cognitive construction of literacy</td>
<td>Support &amp; scaffold students through a cognitive &amp; linguistic construction of literacy</td>
<td>Support &amp; scaffold students through a social construction of literacy</td>
<td>Support &amp; scaffold children through a socio-political construction of literacy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Major Theorists</td>
<td>Piaget</td>
<td>Chomsky</td>
<td>Vygotsky</td>
<td>Freire</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2.1.1 Emergent theory.

Since the 1960s, research concluded that “children begin to learn about writing and reading simultaneously in their everyday experiences” (Rowe, 2008, p. 401). Indeed, research concluded that young children came to school with substantial knowledge about reading and writing and were able to use this knowledge meaningfully (Clay, 1966). This research is significant because prior to this, little research had been conducted about the reading and writing knowledge that young children brought to school. Clay’s (1966) research questioned the reading readiness theory. She described young children’s literacy learning as being emergent. Young children do not begin literacy at a particular age, but rather ‘they are in the process of becoming literate’ and this understanding is the basis for emergent literacy (Teale & Sulzby, 1986 p. xix). Emergent literacy asserts that a writer develops over time rather than by mastering specific skills. Moreover, children demonstrate knowledge and behaviours about reading and writing long before they commence school “rather than when they start school and are ready for reading as the term reading readiness suggests” (Teale & Sulzby, 1986 p. xix).

Since the 1970s, research into literacy incorporated a learning to write agenda (Teale & Sulzby, 1986). Researchers began to understand that they need to orchestrate reading and writing together, in order to appreciate written language development comprehensively in young children (Teale & Sulzby, 1986). Moreover, learning to read and write are two processes, which developed concurrently rather than sequentially (Bissex, 1980). The concept of literacy expanded to incorporate children’s growth as readers, writers and users of oral language (Crawford, 1995).

From the early 1980s, engagement with emergent literacy recommended that children become involved in both reading and writing from the first day of school. Consequently, a print-rich environment was generated by teachers and this initiative encouraged making written language a deliberate dynamic in the classroom (Teale, 1995). Teale also drew on Vygotsky’s work, asserting that children work within sociocultural contexts (Teale, 1982). In addition, using writing in play was encouraged (Teale, 1995). Until the 1980s, cognition was the basis for literacy instruction and the teaching of phonics the predominant approach for beginning reading (Teale & Yokota, 2000). In summary, in contemporary Australia, the developmental nature of writing remains widely accepted (Tolchinsky, 2016).
3.2.1.2 Psycholinguistic theory.

Similarly, psycholinguistic theory has a cognitive base. However, in contrast, Chomsky’s research in the 1950s and 1960s in psycholinguistics argued that the structure of all languages is the same and that mastery of it is genetically determined and not learned (Chomsky, 1953, 1955, 1957). Chomsky’s (1965) psycholinguistic theory which asserted that language and thought are interactive was further developed by Goodman (1967) who described reading as a “psycholinguistic guessing game” where a reader uses multiple cues to makes guesses based on “the sum total of his experience and his language and thought development” (p. 5).

In the 1970s, psycholinguists began to explore writing as multidimensional and complex. Psycholinguistic theories supported the view that a writer “uses cognitive functions of focus, engagement and motivation in acting on and interacting with print in an effort to make sense of a text” (Farrar & Al-Qatawneh, 2010, p. 58). Moreover, language was acquired not only through acquisition but also through interaction with others (Farrar & Al-Qatawneh, 2010). The knowledge about literacy that children bring to school was considered important. Moreover, psycholinguists argued “that curriculum, instruction and assessment should consider the influence of prior knowledge in language processing” (Farrar & Al-Qatawneh, 2010, p. 58). In summary, teachers in contemporary Australia appreciate that students have already acquired varying degrees of literacy knowledge prior to formal schooling and that it is important to build on this knowledge (S. Hill & Diamond, 2013).

3.2.1.3 Sociocultural theory.

In the 1920s and 1930s Vygotsky’s research examined the relationship between thought and language, exploring language as sociocultural. Indeed, sociocultural theory developed from the work of Vygotsky in the early 1900s, although his work was not published in English until the 1960s. He argued (Vygotsky, 1978) “individual developmental change” as stemming from “society and culture” (p. 7). Further, that sign systems such as language and writing “are created by societies over the course of human history and change with the form of society and the level of its cultural development” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 7).

Moreover, Vygotsky explored the role that writing played in children’s cultural development (Vygotsky, 1962; 1978). He proposed that children needed to discover “that one can draw not only things but speech” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 115). In addition, children’s
written language development should shift from drawing things to include drawing words (Vygotsky, 1978). Writing should be “something the child needs...relevant to life and meaningful for children” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 118). His research influenced the teaching of writing in schools; indeed, it became foundational premise for the contemporary teaching of writing in Australia.

Assumptions of socio-cultural theorists include language and literacies being socially constructed and culturally specific, literacy being based on social events, and young writers engaging in the same types of literacy processes as adults (Harste, Woodward, & Burke, 1984; Vygotsky, 1978). In contrast to emergent theorists’ views, where children’s literacy learning develops through a series of stages, sociocultural theorists propose that children’s literacy learning originates from active engagement in social and cultural contexts (D. Taylor, 1991; Vygotsky, 1978). Sociocultural theorists assert that the “writing behaviours of very young children are reflective of their culture and are characterised by both purposefulness and intentionality” (Crawford, 1995).

In addition, Harste, Woodward and Burke (1984) challenged psycholinguistic theory and emphasised social cultural theory. They asserted that written language is a “social process” (p. 230) in “which children make their own language discoveries” (Harste et al., 1984, p. 230). Further, they argued that “socio-linguistic activities are associated with successful written language use and learning” (Harste et al., 1984, p. 230). Sociocultural theory is ever-present within current literacy approaches, as writing as social practice is foundational for writing pedagogy in the early years, in Australia. (Fellowes, 2008; R. Fisher, 2010; Hidi & Boscolo, 2006).

3.2.1.4 Critical theory.

Similarly, critical theorists also support language and literacy learnings being taught within a social context. However, this theory highlights the importance of values, as well as cultural beliefs (Crawford, 1995). Critical theorists encourage children in their learning to think and write critically within a socio-political context. Change and social action are also embedded in this literacy theory (Crawford, 1995). Critical theorist, Paulo Freire, (1970, 1993) proposed that every person is capable of engaging critically with the world through conversation with others. Further, he asserted that such conversations were a means by which people educate one another. Within this perspective, literacy is defined as “an orientation towards the knowledge and use of written language that positions individuals and groups within hierarchies of social relations” (Solsken, 1993, p. 8). In a critical perspective of early literacy, literacy learning extends beyond reading and writing to
become a powerful source of identity (Solsken, 1993). Consequently, both cognitive and social theories continue to inform the contemporary teaching of writing (Bazerman, 2016; MacArthur & Graham, 2016). Writing as a socio-critical practice also influences current writing pedagogy (Janks, 2009).

### 3.2.2 Historical approaches influencing the teaching of writing.

In addition to theoretical models, many approaches have influenced the teaching of writing in the early years in Australia. These contrasting approaches include the process approach, the whole language approach and the genre movement. An overview of Approaches and Historical Influences on the Teaching of Writing (M. A. Graham, 2012) are presented in Table 3.2.

**Table 3.2**

**Approaches and Historical Influences on the Teaching of Writing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Historical approaches influencing the teaching of writing in Australia</th>
<th>Process Approach</th>
<th>Whole Language Approach</th>
<th>Genre Movement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commencement of time of influence on practice in Australia</td>
<td>1980s</td>
<td>Mid-1980s</td>
<td>1990s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major theorists</td>
<td>Graves</td>
<td>Goodman</td>
<td>Miller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>Cognitive &amp; Integral</td>
<td>Social &amp; Cognitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Process of multiple drafts &amp; conferencing. Audience &amp; purpose important.</td>
<td>Holistic, meaning centred, integrated approach to literacy</td>
<td>Writing a variety of genres for different social purposes with a core focus on text types</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Approaches and Historical Influences on the Teaching of Writing by M. A. Graham, (2012), Unpublished manuscript.*
3.2.2.1 The process approach.

In the 1980s, a process approach to teaching writing was adopted widely in Australia (Graves, 1972). Graves examined how real writers crafted their writing. He argued writers were primarily concerned with meaning, purpose and audience and attended to grammar, punctuation, spelling and handwriting later during the writing process. This insight encouraged teachers to adopt these processes with students. The process approach to teaching writing assumed children could write as they began school (Anstey & Bull, 2003, 2004). Research concluded that 90% of children believed they could write when they started school, while only 15% thought they could read (Anstey & Bull, 2003, 2004). Conferencing with children became a significant component of the process approach. Graves believed that the core of the conference was the teacher asking the student about their writing subject. This offered the student a writer’s voice (Walshe, 1981a). Graves proposed that by discussing their writing, children would then become ready to re-write drafts that would bring the writing to life. He outlined that a first draft often failed to communicate adequately. Moreover, he asserted that children needed to be encouraged to generate multiple drafts in order to develop each written text (Walshe, 1981a).

The process approach also focused on the importance of meaning and purpose. The approach predisposed children had not only an audience, but also control over the topics for their writing. This premise encouraged children to think about themselves as real writers and to write for an actual audience—not just teachers (Walshe, 1981b). The process approach to teaching writing prioritised the importance of meaning. The disadvantages of this approach are the possible danger of an absence of explicit teaching and an over-emphasis on processes to the exclusion of the deliberate acquiring of skills and knowledge (Anstey & Bull, 2004). An over-reliance on child-centred teaching is also reported (Anstey & Bull, 2004).

The process approach to teaching writing is not a predominant discourse in contemporary Australia. However, writing as a process is valued (Walshe, 2015). Children need to learn both skills and process to be successful writers (S. Graham et al., 2016). Walshe (2015) asserts that writing as a process is a concept rather than an approach and that audience and purpose for writing remain important in literacy teaching in contemporary Australia.

3.2.2.2 The whole language approach.

In contrast, the whole language approach emerged in the 1980s when literature-based reading was adopted in American elementary schools. Whole language is generated from
psycholinguistic theory. Theorists believed that “cognitive and linguistic development are
totally interdependent – thought depends on language and language depends on thought”
(Goodman, 1986, p. 26). The whole language approach is a holistic, meaning-centred and
integrated approach to teaching literacy and the instruction is rich in content and
children’s interests are paramount for literacy learning. The most important aspect of
reading was making meaning. Contexts for learning is important in the whole language
approach; phonics is taught in context rather than in isolation (Teale & Yokota, 2000).
Reading and writing workshops with holistic activities designed to promote social
interaction are also an important conceptual premise of the approach (Morrow, 2002). The
process approach to writing (Graves, 1972) with its focus on meaning and authenticity
reflects this holistic philosophy (Teale, 1995).

A whole language approach was adopted in Australia (Cambourne, 1988; Goodman,
1986). Many teachers based their literacy instruction on Goodman's (1986) strategies and
Cambourne's (1988) Conditions of Learning. Cambourne proposed that learning should
include “demonstrations of wholes of language” and “all linguistic and socio-linguistic
systems and sub-systems need to be present” in language learning (Cambourne, 1988, p.
204). The whole language approach was challenged in the 1990s because of its lack of
explicit teaching (Adams, 1994), especially of phonics and spelling (Adams, 1994).

Explicit instruction is highly valued in contemporary Australia (S. Hill, 2012).
Consequently, a whole language approach is much less likely to inform teachers’ current
thinking. However, the value of an integral approach to literacy learning in the early years
remains important (Cambourne, 2015).

3.2.2.3 The genre movement.

In contrast, in the early 1990s, the genre movement in Australia became popular in
schools (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993). Miller (1984) describes genre as social action and
proposes that text types should be meaningful and purposeful. Further, the genre
movement includes teaching writing within social and cultural contexts (C. Miller, 1984).
Genre theorists propose that language be used for a range of purposes, and this purpose
is determined by the text types (Newman & Walshe, 1990). Cope and Kalantzis (1993),
define genre as “a term used in literacy pedagogy to connect the different forms texts take
with variations in social purpose” (p. 7). The genre approach is concerned not only with
“how texts work”, but also “the social reality of texts in use” (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993 p. 7).

Research into genre in Australia in the 1990s was undertaken by systemic functional
linguists from the University of Sydney. Known as the Sydney School of functional
linguistics, genre was theorised as “staged, goal orientated social processes” (Martin & Rose, 2008, p. 6). Text types were identified and named based on the kinds of meaning involved. Genres were defined as “recurrent configuration of meanings enacting the social practices of a given culture” (Martin & Rose, 2008, p. 6). Consequently, theorists considered how genres were related to one another. Martin and Rose (2008) posit the relationship between genres as:

- Genres that instruct (e.g., procedures and protocols);
- Genres that inform things (e.g., descriptions and reports); and
- Genres that inform events (e.g., observations, recounts and narratives, pp. 6–7).

Practitioners of the Sydney School identify and propose genres that primary students should learn to write. Their approach concerns the relationship between language, social context and semiotic systems. Consequently, they view genres as social practice (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993; Martin, 1993; Martin, 2005; Martin & Rose, 2008).

There was considerable debate in Australia in the 1990s between whole language theorists and genre theorists, often related to the importance of explicit teaching (Newman & Walshe, 1990). In 1994, the Queensland English Syllabus emphasised explicit teaching of text types across the primary years and, in Australia today, explicit teaching is highly valued in primary schools (ACARA, 2009; S. Hill, 2012). Further, a social practices discourse is the predominant discourse favoured in Australian primary schools (Derewianka & Jones, 2013; S. Hill, 2012; S. Hill & Diamond, 2013), and genre theory and teaching genres are still highly valued (Derewianka, 2015; Rose, 2016).

### 3.2.2.4 Grammar pedagogy.

Reviewing historical influences on grammar pedagogy assists in appreciating what influences grammar pedagogy in today’s writing classrooms. Firstly, there has been considerable debate about the teaching of grammar over the past fifty years (Kamler, 1995; Locke, 2005). A continuum of approaches placed traditional, or formal, grammar (Chomsky, 1953, 1955, 1957) at one end of the continuum and functional grammar at the other (Derewianka & Jones, 2010). Traditional grammar emphasises the learning of structures and rules (Chomsky, 1953, 1955, 1957). In contrast, functional grammar is meaning-orientated and emphasises the intent of the language user (Derewianka & Jones, 2010). Noam Chomsky advocates formal grammar which values structure (Chomsky, 1953, 1955, 1957). In contrast, Michael Halliday honours a functional approach to grammar (Halliday, 1971, 1978, 1985a).
Halliday later coined the term, systemic functional grammar (SFG). Derewianka and Jones (2010) propose that SFG is situated in the middle of this continuum. Further, they define SFG as “mapping systemically and in detail the relationship between grammatical classes and the functions they perform” (p. 7). While SFG is a functional approach to teaching grammar, “the emphasis is placed equally on grammatical forms and on the meaning they make” (Derewianka & Jones, 2010, p. 7). Figure 3.5 illustrates a continuum of approaches to teaching grammar.

![Figure 3.5. Approaches to teaching grammar. Adapted from “From Traditional Grammar to Functional Grammar: Bridging the Divide,” by B. Derewianka & P. Jones, 2010, *NALDIC Quarterly*, 8(1), pp. 6–17.](image)

In 1966, The Dartmouth Conference in the U.S.A addressed educational professionals’ concerns that a skills-based approach to teaching grammar with isolated exercises had little relevance to language development. At the time, the consensus was that grammar teaching was “a waste of time” (Muller, 1967). Consequently, “the USA, the UK, Australia, New Zealand and Canada moved to exclude formal grammar teaching from the English curriculum” (Myhill & Watson, 2014, p. 2). As a result, this left individual teachers to decide whether to include the teaching of grammar as part of their writing pedagogy. It was not until the late 1990s that there began to be an “emerging trend to reintroduce grammar in the teaching of English, particularly in England, the USA and Australia” (Myhill & Watson, 2014, p. 2). In contemporary Australia, there has been a shift towards a functional approach to teaching grammar (Derewianka & Jones, 2010; Myhill & Watson, 2014).

### 3.3.2.5 Spelling pedagogy.

Reviewing historical influences on spelling pedagogy assists in appreciating what influences spelling pedagogy in contemporary writing classrooms. In the 1930s, educators
began to organise spelling lists around words most frequently used in reading and writing (Rinsland, 1945). In the 1930s and 1940s, memory-based strategies were employed for word learning (Hanna, Hodges, & Hanna, 1971). This included the study method in which students:

- Look at a word;
- Pronounce the word;
- Close their eyes and visualise the word;
- Open their eyes and write the word;
- Check the spelling; and
- Repeat the steps if necessary (B. Schlagal, 2002, p. 5).

Also, “a test-study-test versus a study-test approach led to the regular use of a pretest prior to study in spelling practice” (B. Schlagl, 2002, p. 4).

In the 1960s, researchers investigated phoneme-grapheme correspondence in English spelling (Hanna, Hodges, & Hanna, 1966) and the morphophonemic character of English spelling (Venezky, 1967). By the 1980s, researchers shifted focus to explore how learners acquire orthographic knowledge (Nelson, 1989). There was considerable research documenting and describing orthographic knowledge (Henderson, 1990; R. Schlagal, 1982, 1992; Templeton & Bear, 1992). This included developmental plans for the systemic teaching of orthography (Ganske, 2000).

By the 1990s, there was considerable controversy regarding appropriate research-based strategies to teach spelling (B. Schlagal, 2002). Educators expressed varying beliefs about spelling instruction. Some believed traditional spelling books should be abandoned. Others believed that spelling should be integrated and taught in context (B. Schlagal, 2002). A third perspective advocated teaching spelling systemically through word study sequences designed to address students’ varying developmental levels (B. Schlagal, 2002). Figure 3.6 illustrates the three major positions regarding spelling instruction as described by B. Schlagal, 2002.
In contrast to the range of major historical positions for teaching spelling, the teaching of spelling in contemporary Australia focuses on word study. This is achieved within a functional approach (Daffern, Mackenzie, & Hemmings, 2017; Herrington & Macken-Horarik, 2015; S. Hill, 2012). Moreover, multiple strategies are employed to teach young children to spell (Christie, 2005; Herrington & Macken-Horarik, 2015).

Historical influences on writing pedagogy, such as theoretical models and approaches, continue to influence writing pedagogy (MacArthur, Graham, & Fitzgerald, 2016). Consequently, they assist teachers’ professional thinking about how writing should be taught (Turbill et al., 2015). Moreover, teachers’ professional thinking about learning to write and teaching writing in turn influences their pedagogical choices (Turbill et al., 2015).

### 3.3 Contemporary Influences on Writing Pedagogy in the Early Years

This review addresses contemporary influences framing writing pedagogy from 2004 to the present day. The theory and pedagogy of teaching writing have a sound theoretical basis (Turbill et al., 2015). In particular, a writing process approach (Walshe, 2015), a genre approach (Derewianka, 2015; Rose, 2016), emergent theory (Tolchinksy, 2016), and sociocultural theory (Beach et al., 2016; Derewianka & Jones 2013) each continues to contribute to the informing of professional thinking and associated classroom practices (Turbill et al., 2015). Further, the relationship between reading and writing (Cambourne, 2015; Shanahan, 2016), and the relationship between oral language and writing (Kervin & Mantei, 2015) contribute to the informing of professional thinking and associated classroom practices (Turbill et al., 2015).
In addition, an increase in cultural and linguistic diversity exists due to Australia’s ever-increasing multicultural society, and this influences current writing pedagogy (Kinloch & Burkhard, 2016; K. Mills & Dreamson, 2015). Also, ever-increasing technological advancement has generated new literacies that influence current writing pedagogy (G. Barton et al., 2015; Leu et al., 2016; & Lipscombe, et al., 2015). Finally, writing as a socio-critical practice influences current writing pedagogy (Janks, 2009).

3.3.1 Approaches to writing pedagogy.

A range of writing discourses have originated from historical theoretical orientations and approaches (Turbill et al., 2015). Ivanic (2004) presents a meta-analysis of theory and research about writing pedagogy, proposing six discourses that underpin beliefs and practices about writing pedagogy that lead to situated action. Ivanic (2004) defines discourses of writing as “constellations of beliefs about writing, beliefs about learning to write, ways of talking about writing and approaches to teaching associated with these beliefs (Ivanic, 2004, p. 224). The proposed discourses include: skills, creativity, process, genre, social practices and sociopolitical discourses (Ivanic, 2004; p. 225).

A skills discourse focuses on linguistic skills including explicit teaching of spelling, punctuation, grammar and sentence structure (Ivanic, 2004). In contrast, a creative writing discourse is underpinned by a belief that children learn to write by engaging in writing with no function other than to entertain. This approach adopts strategies including exposure to exemplar models of writing, ample opportunities to write and the provision of feedback on writing. However, Ivanic acknowledges that this approach has been criticised by policymakers because of its lack of explicit teaching (Ivanic, 2004). In Australia the teaching of skills and process are both valued (Walshe, 2015) and explicit teaching is also valued (S. Hill, 2012, Nicolazzo & Mackenzie, 2017).

Ivanic proposes that the process discourse is underpinned by the belief that “learning to write should include learning the process and procedures for composing a text” (Ivanic, 2004, p. 231). Moreover, the process of planning, drafting and revising is more important than the product. In Australia, scholarly thought has evolved to conclude that process, when applied to writing, is a concept about how writing happens, rather than a method for teaching writing (Walshe, 2015).

Ivanic proposes three social discourses. These discourses have a theoretical underpinning from socio-cultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978). A genre discourse involves teaching the linguistic characteristics and purpose and social contexts of text types (Ivanic, 2004). Similarly, a social practices discourse has a functional approach
encompassing explicit teaching within context, teaching the purpose of texts and construction of linguistic texts. In Australia, writing as a social practice is valued (Beach et al., 2016; R. Fisher, 2010).

Finally, a sociopolitical discourse is underpinned by a belief that writing is influenced by social forces, relations of power and critical awareness. This approach involves "explicitly identifying linguistic and semiotic choices of writers in terms of their views of the world, social roles and social relations" (Ivanic, 2004, p. 238). Indeed, to write critically, children need opportunities when they write to make meanings that matter to them, (Freire, 1972; Janks, 2009). Moreover, they "need a critical social consciousness to produce texts that make a difference to the ways in which they name, act and understand the world" (Janks, 2009, p. 128). This requires access to dominant language, and to dominant genres and involves positioning, identity and knowledge of design (Janks, 2009), as illustrated in Figure 3.7.

Figure 3.7. Writing as a socio-critical practice.

While a sociopolitical discourse is not dominant in Australia, there is evidence of critical literacy practices within literacy teaching in Australian schools (Luke, Comber & Grant, 2003; Luke et al., 2009).

While there are tensions and contradictions among the six proposed discourses, “comprehensive writing pedagogy might integrate teaching approaches from all six” (Ivanic, 2004, p. 220). Research from the United States (McCarthey & Ro, 2011) and Canada (S. Peterson, 2012), confirm this assertion. Researchers in Canada investigated writing approaches at curricular level across all provinces and territories (S. Peterson, 2012). The research examined Grade 6 mandated writing curriculum documents in order to discover evidence of Ivanic’s (2004) six discourses of writing and learning to write. The study concludes:

- A process discourse predominates in all writing curricula in Canada;
- Skills, creative and genre discourses are present with varying emphasis; and,

Similarly, researchers in the United States also investigated writing approaches, but at the micro-level of the classroom (McCarthey & Ro, 2011). Twenty-nine 3rd and 4th grade teachers from four United States participated in interviews and were observed to investigate their approaches to teaching writing and influences informing their approaches. This study concludes:

- Fourteen teachers employed a genre approach to teaching writing which included emphasis on explicit instruction;
- Six teachers employed a skills approach where basic skills mastery was a priority;
- Five teachers employed a process approach; and
- Four teachers employed a combination of approaches with no evident dominant approach (McCarthey & Ro, 2011).

In Australia, like Canada and the United States, a range of discourses originating from historical theoretical models and approaches are present to varying degrees in the primary classroom (Derewianka, 2015; Walshe, 2015). However, in contrast to Canada which has minimal evidence of a social practice discourse, contemporary Australia is predominantly influenced by a social practice discourse (Beach et al., 2016; Derewinaka & Jones, 2013). Moreover, defining literacy in Australia today is grounded on literacy as
social and cultural practice (Derewianka, 2015). Consequently, this goes far beyond a set of skills and the ability to read and write. Literacy and literacy practices in this context equip students to analyse and reflect upon the text and literate practices in relevant contexts (Beach et al., 2016). The importance of teaching language in context (Derewianka & Jones, 2013) and the contribution of genre theory to writing pedagogy (Rose, 2016) is “constantly evolving as theory interacts with practice and as research reveals new insights into the language of schooling” (Derewianka, 2015, p. 79).

3.3.2 The developmental nature of writing.

In contemporary Australia, there is a wide acceptance that learning to write is developmental and that early years’ teachers are working with emergent writers (Edwards et al., 2009; Tolchinsky, 2006, 2016; Winch, Johnson, Holliday, Ljungdahl, & March, 2004). These beliefs have a theoretical underpinning originating from emergent theory (Clay 1966; Teale & Sulzby, 1986). Indeed, language development begins at birth and by eighteen months of age or earlier, if a child is given a writing tool and a surface, they produce graphic marks (Tolchinsky, 2006, 2016). Consequently, early years teachers build on children’s literacy experiences at school by providing an environment that nurtures each child’s continuing literacy development (Tolchinsky, 2006, 2016). Further, teachers consider the developmental nature of writing when making choices relating to planning, teaching and assessing writing in the early years (Tolchinsky, 2016).

3.3.3 A functional approach to teaching grammar.

Australia is moving from a traditional approach of teaching grammar towards a more functional approach (Derewianka & Jones, 2010; Myhill & Watson, 2014). A functional approach to teaching grammar is not a new theory. Halliday (1978) explored language as a meaning-making system and language as a communication resource in which choices are made (Halliday, 1978). Moreover, Halliday has theorised a functional approach to grammar (Halliday, 1993; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). While functional, his theory aligns more closely with systemic functional grammar. Systemic functional linguists from the Sydney School and followers of Halliday assert that grammar is meaning-orientated and concerned with the relationship between text and context and how language works or functions (Christie & Unsworth, 2006; Halliday, 2004; Hasan, 2002).

In Australia, the necessity of grammar is acknowledged in the first national curriculum (ACARA, 2009). Moreover, Derewianka & Jones assert that “the national English curriculum for students in years 1 to 10 adopts a SFG approach” (2010, p.10) that articulates the need for:
• explicit grammatical knowledge;
• an understanding of how language works; and
• support for learners to facilitate their knowing which grammatical and textual practices are appropriate in context (ACARA, 2009).

There is, however, some contention among researchers about the intentions of grammar inclusions in the National Curriculum (Derewianka & Jones, 2010; Exley, Kervin & Mantei, 2016). Interestingly, it has also been identified and carefully documented that both elements of traditional grammar and SFG are “woven together” in the Australian Curriculum (Exley, 2016, p.84). In contrast to Derewianka, & Jones (2010) who assert the national curriculum “adopts” a SFG, Exley, Kervin & Mantei (2016) assert the national curriculum “draws on” SFG because “the knowledge about language that is covered in the national curriculum does not adopt SFL in its complete form” (Exley et al., 2016, p. 101).

How grammar pedagogy is implemented is the individual teacher’s responsibility. Therefore, teachers need to navigate the teaching of grammar as outlined in the Australian Curriculum with its competing priorities and interpret the curriculum documents themselves.

In it not surprising therefore that currently, SFG is a challenging theory for teachers to understand and implement (Derewianka, & Jones, 2010) and “still requires shaping for pedagogical applications” (Derewianka, & Jones, 2010, p.15). Much work needs to be done by teachers to develop their understanding of SFG, if the intention of policy-makers is for teachers to employ SFG as an approach. Despite this, SFG aligns with both a social practice discourse for writing pedagogy currently being employed in primary schools (R. Fisher, 2010). Further, SFG is consistent with explicit teaching outlined in the national English curriculum (ACARA 2009, 2013). While contemporary Australia values functional grammar teaching and the explicit teaching of skills in context (Derewianka & Jones, 2010; Locke, 2009; Myhill & Watson, 2014), grammar teaching in the primary classroom in Australia is multifaceted and varied (Derewianka, & Jones, 2010).

3.3.4 Cultural diversity in the writing classroom.

Writing in the early years is influenced by cultural diversity in the writing classroom (K. Mills & Dreamson, 2015). Australia’s cultural diversity is expanding, and early years teachers of writing are obliged to address increasing individual difference within their writing programs (Kinloch & Burkhard, 2016; McIntyre & Turner, 2013; K. Mills & Dreamson, 2015). Such responses are based on instructional principles to make literacy instruction culturally responsive. Research by McIntyre and Turner (2013) reveals that these principles include:
• connecting curriculum to students’ backgrounds;
• providing many opportunities for students to engage in conversation;
• maintaining a rigorous curriculum that involves students in meaningful work;
• building on students’ home languages or dialects while also teaching academic English, and attending to wait time, turn-taking and questioning; and
• being explicit about what teachers are teaching (McIntyre & Turner, 2013, p.146).

Such principles offer a theoretical framework to ensure that literacy instruction is culturally inclusive. More specifically, these principles are beneficial for the teaching of writing in the early years. Further, they identify strategies to address cultural diversity in the writing classroom.

3.3.5 Technological advancement and new literacies.

The contemporary teaching of writing is influenced increasingly by advancements in technology (G. Barton, et al., 2015). Moreover, an increase in digital technology and new literacies (Leu et. al., 2016; Merchant, 2009; Walsh, 2010) have redefined the definition of literacy (Edwards-Groves, 2012). In 2008, the Australian government launched a national initiative as part of the federal government’s education reform program known as the Digital Education Revolution (DEEWR, 2008). This aimed to “contribute sustainable and meaningful change to teaching and learning in Australian schools, that will prepare students for further education, training, and to live and work in a digital world” (DEEWR, 2008).

Electronic technologies are changing how people communicate and understand the world (G. Barton et al., 2015; MacArthur, 2006; Merchant, 2009). Teachers are teaching writing explicitly within digital contexts (Edwards-Groves, 2012) and in early years classes, teachers teach many new digital text forms. Digital text construction includes a variety of digital texts such as word documents, email, text in presentation programs such as PowerPoint and note taking from internet searches. Also, interactive whiteboards are employed in classrooms as a teaching tool. Increasing technological advancement continues to change the nature of literacy practices and the skills needed to be literate (MacArthur, 2006). As a result, children are learning to write print text and are learning to construct text digitally alongside print text, as a new medium. Also, research demonstrates employing technology to teach writing engages and motivates students to write (G. Barton et al., 2015; L. Fox, 2014).

In 2010, case study research examined the influence of multimodal literacy on classroom practice in Sydney. The research concluded that teachers were able to combine print -
based literacy and digital literacies effectively in their practices (Walsh, 2010). Moreover, literacy needs to be redefined due to the changes in social communication practices because of technological advancement and new literacies (Walsh, 2010). Differences occur not only in modes but also in the interaction between students. Also, this study concludes that it is important for teachers to ensure that while they are expanding and incorporating technoliteracy into the teaching of writing, they also continue to teach explicitly the “basic aspects of reading, writing, language learning, grammar, spelling and punctuation” (Walsh, 2010, p. 227). Further research regarding teacher practices with technoliteracy for the teaching of writing in the early years is needed, in order to examine what is happening at the micro-level of the classroom and how technoliteracy influences learning outcomes.

3.3.6 Systemic influences on the teaching of writing.

Mandated curriculum and assessment, state government policies and programs, and school policies and programs all influence teachers’ writing pedagogy. In Queensland, external agendas, including conflicts between state and federal governments and possible changes to governments after a four-year cycle when a longer-term outlook on education policy is required, also influence teachers’ writing pedagogy (M. Mills & McGregor, 2016). Further, curriculum documentation at state and national levels influences the teaching of writing in Australian primary schools. Indeed, Australia has adopted a national curriculum (ACARA, 2009) which prioritises the explicit teaching of literacy in Australian primary schools.

Since 2000, there has been increased accountability for literacy standards in education systems (Woods, Mountain, & Griffin, 2015). Consequently, systemic testing such as NAPLAN (ACARA, 2008) in Australia, No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2002) in the US, and National Curriculum Assessment in the UK (SATs, DfE, 2002) have been implemented to identify gaps in literacy learning (Polesel, Dulfer, & Turnbull, 2012; Woods, 2015). In Australia, the aim of mandated literacy testing is to provide supports to students identified as needing assistance with literacy, to improve overall standards of literacy. This goal is in contrast to No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2002), which had threatened school closures (Polesel, Dulfer, & Turnbull, 2012) if schools didn’t take responsibility to improve standards. Mandated testing is not without its flaws. SATs for 7- and 11-year-old children in the U.K names and shames schools where deficits are identified. Similarly, in Australia since 2010, NAPLAN results are published publicly on the My School website (Polesel, Dulfer, & Turnbull, 2012).
High stakes testing was introduced in Australia in 2008 with the implementation of the NAPLAN (Klenowski & Wyatt-Smith, 2012). This program includes all students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 and involves their completing mandated testing in reading, writing, spelling and grammar. While this process is driven by public accountability for standards in schools, researchers assert that “it provides limited data for diagnostic use to inform teaching and pedagogical interventions for the improvement of learning” (Klenowski, & Wyatt-Smith, 2012, p. 12). Consequently, there is a need for “a richer and comprehensive set of achievement indicators for student learning” (Klenowski, & Wyatt-Smith, 2012, p. 12).

How NAPLAN tests attribute to excellence is debatable. Research in Western Australia where teachers were surveyed about NAPLAN concluded that:

- NAPLAN caused teachers to teach to the test;
- teachers spent less time on other curricular areas not being tested; and
- there was a negative impact on student engagement (Thompson & Harbaugh, 2013, p. 301).

In addition, Australian primary principals have identified further problems including:

- a negative impact on student wellbeing;
- increased stress on teachers; and
- decisions by some parents to keep children at home on testing day, influencing the validity of scores (Wyn, Turnbull & Grimshaw, 2014).

It is important to appreciate the influence of mandated testing as it has multiple influences on teachers’ pedagogical choices at the micro-level of the classroom.

### 3.3.7 Conclusion and contributing research question.

Understanding how theoretical models and approaches have influenced the teaching of writing historically, assists in explaining the research problem underpinning this study. There have been changes to the teaching of writing since the 1970s (Farrar & Al-Qatawneh, 2010). Historical theoretical models and approaches continue to influence current literacy approaches and knowledge of how literacy is understood and taught (Turbill et al., 2015). Moreover, teachers’ knowledge, understanding and experience of theoretical models and approaches influence their practice (Farrar & Al-Qatawneh, 2010). Indeed, current knowledge of “writing is informed by numerous disciplines and our theories of these processes are now explained as a rich and varied interplay of linguistic, cognitive, psychological, social, and critical functions that support the meaning making
processes” (Farrar & Al-Qatawneh, 2010, p. 64).

Further, changes in the theory of language and how language is used have implications for language education (Farrar & Al-Qatawneh, 2010). Contemporary approaches invite teachers to reflect on their practices (Trioa, Lin, Cohen & Monroe, 2011; Leu et al., 2016). In addition, mandated curriculum and assessment also influence writing pedagogy in the early years. Understanding how these systemic demands influence teachers' pedagogical choices at the micro-level of the classroom also assists in explaining the research problem presented in this study.

This study aims to offer new understandings about what teachers identify as influencing writing pedagogy. It is from an understanding of these issues that contributing research question 3 is generated:

- **Contributing Qu 3** What influences teachers in the teaching of writing in the early years of schooling?
3.4 Pedagogical Practices for Writing in the Early Years

In Australia, writing pedagogy in the early years is situated within a social practice discourse (Beach et al., 2016; R. Fisher, 2010). Also, writing is understood to be developmental (Tolchinsky, 2016) and an integral part of literacy (Cambourne, 2015; Dyson, 2005, 2006; Rose, 2011). Further, learning environments are generated to support the teaching and learning of writing in twenty-first century learning spaces (S. Graham et al., 2016; Roskos & Christie, 2011; Roskos & Neuman, 2011). In addition, explicit writing instruction is fundamental to writing pedagogy in the early years (S. Hill, 2012; Nicolazzo & Mackenzie, 2017). Critical analysis and synthesis of scholarly literature regarding writing pedagogy in the early years has generated these four areas for subsequent discussion. Figure 3.8 illustrates the organisation of pedagogical practices for teaching writing.

![Figure 3.8. Organisation of pedagogical practices for teaching writing in the early years.](image_url)

The pedagogical practices being addressed are summarised in figure 3.9.
### Writing as Social Practice

- Research supports a need for relevant contexts, cultural contexts and purposeful and meaningful writing experiences as catalysts for young children learning to write;
- Purposeful and meaningful writing experiences enhance student engagement;
- Relevant contexts for writing increase motivation and interest;
- Understanding family literacies and building on the literacy knowledge students come to school with fosters home and school partnerships, is culturally responsive and is optimal for literacy learning; and
- Play as an important context for teaching writing, providing meaningful opportunity for children to explore learning and transfer learning from one situation to another (Beach et al., 2016; R. Fisher, 2010).

### Writing Development and Writing as an Integral part of Literacy

- The language skills of viewing, reading, writing, speaking and listening are interrelated and enhance each other;
- Writing language is an emergent process;
- Reading integrated with writing enhances writing performance;
- Reading quality literature enables children to enter ‘visual worlds’;
- Reading exemplar models of quality literature and other exemplary texts types prior to writing are beneficial for writing development;
- Oral language and many opportunities to talk are foundational for learning to write;
- Writing and thinking are inextricably linked;
- The relationship between drawing, oral language and writing is important to students’ writing development (Cambourne, 2015; Dyson, 2005, 2006; Luken, Smith & Coffel, 2012; Rose, 2011, Tolchinsky, 2016).

### Generating Learning Environments to Support the Teaching & Learning of Writing

- Teachers generate 21st century learning environments that foster writing development while engaging with new technologies, innovative multimodal texts and teaching new literacies;
- Organised materials for writing, enhances student performance;
- Print-rich environments facilitate emergent literacy development;
- The learning environment may be manipulated to support literacy learning with the physical arrangement, resources, social interaction and play;
- The classroom environment influences students’ behaviour; and
- Providing a supportive environment where students feel comfortable to take risks when writing, enhances writing development (S. Graham et al., 2016; Roskos & Christie, 2011; Roskos & Neuman, 2011).

### Explicit Writing Instruction

- Providing daily opportunity to write is beneficial to students’ writing development;
- Encouraging all attempts to write is optimal;
- Explicitly teaching the process of writing and skills - e.g., spelling, grammar, concepts of print, text types, and features of text is important;
- Employing a range of explicit instructional strategies such as visual literacy, modelled, shared, guided and independent writing provides a scaffold towards independent text construction;
- Exposing students to quality literature so they can appreciate what good writing looks like is beneficial;
- Balancing process and product by teaching skills, and also when to use them is ideal;
- Ensuring students understand the purpose and audience of texts and how to use writing to communicate is exemplary; and
- Ensuring writing assessment is relevant and authentic, engages students (S. Graham et al., 2016; S. Hill, 2012; Nicolazzo & Mackenzie, 2017; Walshe, 2015).

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*Figure 3.9. Pedagogical practices for writing in the early years.*

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3.4.1 Towards a social practice discourse for teaching writing.

A social practice discourse for the teaching of writing is currently valued in primary education in Australia (Beach et al., 2016; R. Fisher, 2010). Indeed, research supports relevant contexts, cultural contexts and purposeful and meaningful writing experiences as catalysts for young children learning to write (Beach et al., 2016; Fellowes, 2008; R. Fisher, 2010; Hidi & Boscolo, 2006; Jesson, Parr & Mc Naughton, 2013). Nevertheless, teachers’ writing pedagogy encompasses many components of historical theoretical perspectives. Moreover, comprehensive writing pedagogy in primary education integrates teaching components from skills, genre, process and sociopolitical discourses. This practice is consistent with Ivanic’s writing pedagogy which offers “an integrated view of the nature of writing and learning to write, which has the capacity to generate a writing pedagogy that combines elements” from multiple approaches to the teaching of writing (Ivanic, 2004, p. 221). However, it is appropriate to review social practice discourse because it is currently the dominant discourse in primary schools in Australia (Beach et al., 2016; R. Fisher, 2010).

3.4.1.1 Socio-cultural contexts for literacy learning.

Socio-cultural context for learning is not a new concept. Vygotsky’s (1978, 1987) socio-cultural theory for learning and development is based on children’s development within social and cultural environments in the promotion of writing (Vygotsky 1978, 1987). Similarly, Barratt-Pugh (2000) asserts that “literacy knowledge and competence differs according to the social and cultural context in which they are learned” (Barratt-Pugh, 2000, p. 4). Specifically, Barratt-Pugh (2000) identifies six elements of a socio-cultural view of literacy. These include:

- children learning about literacies through participation in literacy activities at home, school and in community contexts;
- literacy practices being situated within cultural contexts;
- children having varying understandings of literacy and how to engage with literacy;
- literacy practices being carried out in specific ways for particular purposes;
- patterns of literacy learning differing between children; and
- literacy practices being valued differently, in different social and educational contexts (Barratt-Pugh, 2000, p. 5).
3.4.1.2 Culturally responsive pedagogy.

Literacy learning occurs within social and cultural contexts, as “people have different literacies, different cultures and different literacy practices ...situated in broader social relations” (D. Barton, 2007, pp.37–40). Culturally responsive pedagogy from a socio-cultural perspective values the different language and literacy practices different students have (D. Barton, 2007). Further, culturally responsive pedagogy involves adapting practices in culturally responsive ways (Jesson et al., 2013). Therefore, learning might be constrained when literacy learning is not socially and culturally responsive (Jesson et al., 2013). However, it may be “enhanced when students’ repertoires of practice are built upon” (Jesson et al., 2013, p. 216).

When teachers acknowledge and understand their culturally and socially diverse students and their different literacy practices, they may then apply “the idea of the social nature of learning to writing instruction” (Jesson et al., 2013, p. 219). Researchers assert that writing is dialogic (Jesson et al., 2013), “that is, it is a process of building on the voices of others to position one’s self within an ongoing dialogue” (Jesson et al., 2013, p. 221). If teachers consider writing as dialogic and “build on the intertextual history of the writer across school, home and social settings, they can reframe writing instruction to make it more linguistically and culturally responsive” (Jesson et al., 2013, p. 222).

3.4.1.3 Writing as social practice.

Writing is a social practice by which a writer generates thoughts in written form to communicate with others. “In a literate culture the preparations for literacy begin at birth, embedded in the oral language and social interaction of the child’s surroundings” (D. Barton, 2007, p. 131). Specifically, early writing involves observing and copying the literacy practices of adults’ purposeful writing (D. Barton, 2007). When children commence school, they are taught explicitly and learn about meaningful purposes for writing (Hidi & Boscolo, 2006).

Writing as social practice is not only about context but also about intention. Indeed, “competence in writing involves making unique meaning relevant and effective within the particulars of situations, and this competence develops as an individual gains experience with a history of situations and forms” (Bazerman et al., 2017, p. 353). Moreover, writers have social intentions when they engage in communicating with other writers (Graham, 2017), as conceptualised in Figure 3.10. Writers employ their knowledge and skills of form, to write and communicate with others (Clay, 1977; Tolchinsky, 2016). Further, writers make meaning and then convey this meaning to others in written form (Dyson,
In addition, writers employ genre knowledge to be able to write for specific purposes and audiences in relevant social contexts (Derewianka, 2015; Rose, 2016; Vygotsky, 1978). Also, writers analyse and critique the writing of others and engage critically with other writers through writing (Freire, 1970, 1993; Jesson et al., 2013).

Figure 3.10. The intentions of the social writer.

Note. Intentions of the Social Writer by M. A. Graham, (2017), Unpublished manuscript.

3.4.1.4 Relevant contexts and socially and culturally responsive writing practices.

Hidi and Boscolo (2006) conclude that writing is meaningful for students when it is related to classroom activities and personal experiences and the social constructivist approach to literacy and literacy learning offers opportunities for writing to be meaningful. Reading and
writing are related to the social and cultural contexts in which they are practised. Such contexts include school, home and communities (Hidi & Boscolo, 2006). Further, research concludes writing experiences that are meaningful may be motivating for students (Fellowes, 2008; Hidi & Boscolo 2006).

Social practice influences the writing that students produce (Bintz & Dillard, 2004). Bintz and Dillard (2004) critiqued writing as social practice from an early years’ teacher’s perspective as a reflective practitioner. One such teacher is Jill, whose experiences of teaching writing across different contexts taught her that “social practices really matter when learning to write” (Bintz & Dillard, 2004, p. 114). Her action research taught her that different social practices that she adopted as a teacher influenced the writing her Year Three students produced. “Different kinds of social practices send different kinds of messages to students about what it means to be literate and what it means to write” (Bintz & Dillard, 2004, p. 115).

Similarly, other studies also report that students grow as writers in social contexts:

- where teachers are supported to teach writing well;
- where both students and teachers are given the opportunity to reflect on teaching and learning;
- where conversation is viewed as integral to both teachers and students learning; and
- where students write about topics of interest (Bazerman, 2016; Beach et al., 2016; Bintz & Dillard, 2004; Fielding-Barnsley & Hay, 2012; R. Fisher, 2010; Haas- Dyson, 1992, 1993).

Research explored how teachers contribute to the social context and how teachers’ actions influence students’ writing (Harris et al., 2004). The researcher adopted the role as participant observer in a Grade One classroom of six-year-old students. This ethnographic study included observations of students’ writing, audiotaping of students’ interactions during writing lessons and field notes documenting students’ engagement in writing. The purpose of the research was to observe students’ writing to explore how social practices are undertaken in contexts of situation and culture at school (Harris et al., 2004). Analysis included examining and coding social content and the employment of a social model of writing based on Luke and Freebody’s model of reading (1999) to map writing as social practice (Harris et al., 2004).

More specifically, Harris et al., (2004) examined the writing choices of six-year-old Charlie and the influences on his writing choices. Findings of the study indicated that Charlie
made choices as a writer. He used text encoder practices to write. Charlie drew a picture which added meaning to his writing. His purpose was defined by his teacher and her purpose for the writing task. Charlie’s text analyst practices reflected his negative views about Pat Hutchins narratives (Harris et al., 2004). In addition, Charlie’s writing was influenced by his physical setting where he undertook his writing. Charlie’s writing was further influenced by the materials he was provided with to write as well as the narrative texts on display in his environment (Harris et al., 2004).

Charlie’s audience for his writing was his teacher. Charlie’s cultural context also influenced his writing. Interviews indicated Charlie enjoyed watching factual documentaries with his family and had interests in factual books, animals and in particular – paleontology. While narratives were given a high priority in his classroom, Charlie preferred factual texts (Harris et al., 2004). This study concluded that “the situation in which a child writes influences a child’s writing” and “the broader context of the classroom shapes what a child does as a writer” (Harris et al., 2004, p. 43). Further, this study concluded that teachers are part of the context, when a child writes. Moreover, “teachers need to consider how their pedagogical practices shape how children function as writers and in turn how contexts for writing influence student writing performance” (Harris et al., 2004, p. 43).

Similarly, Kinloch and Burkhard (2015) concluded that culturally responsive practices for teaching writing are important for engaging students. A longitudinal study examining the writing practices of young people investigated the degree to which literacy practices were culturally responsive (Kinloch & Burkhard, 2015). The observations of one student revealed “the environment in which he is asked to write, the language he is invited to use and the identities he feels comfortable revealing all influence how, why, what, when and whether he writes at all” (Kinloch & Burkhard, 2015, p. 379). Further, this study concluded that:

- the contexts where students write and the contextual factors they encounter, influence the teaching and learning of writing;
- students’ identities and cultures influence their writing practices; and
- instructional strategies and teaching approaches that address cultural diversity and teach writing within social contexts are exemplary for student engagement (Kinloch & Burkhard, 2015, p. 379).

The role of dramatic play is also important in early years education (Piaget, 1962; Vygotsky, 1978). Play as a context helps children write more successfully, as “play enables children to make sense of their worlds” (Dyson, 2009, p. 244). Moreover, play
contexts provide meaningful opportunities for young children to learn (QSA, 2006). Teachers arrange their classrooms by grouping literacy materials appropriately to encourage children to use them in their play (Roskos & Christie, 2011). Consequently, students practise and master learning and take risks in a safe environment through supported play (Roskos & Christie, 2011). Play may also offer children the opportunity to extend their oral language capabilities, which is foundational to learning to write (QSA, 2006). Further, young children who play the roles of a reader and a writer through play experience them as beneficial for literacy learning (QSA, 2006).

Dyson & Dewayani (2013) concluded that writing is a communicative process. Moreover, student participants Ezekial and Abi used “their communicative resources including talking, drawing and writing to participate in local instance of valued practice” (Dyson & Dewayani, 2013, p. 261). Further, writing is an everyday event and the students “infused their writing practice with their own everyday worlds” (Dyson & Dewayani, 2013, p. 262). This ethnographic study examined the writing practices of two six-year-olds in respective projects (Dyson & Dewayani, 2013). Ezekial was a Mexican-American student in his first year of schooling. In contrast, Abi was an Indonesian student attending an early learning centre which was operating in the street. Both students had different languages, religions and cultures (Dyson & Dewayani, 2013).

Ezekial’s writing included a personal narrative about an upcoming event involving his friend Joshua coming to his house to play video games (Dyson & Dewayani, 2013). The context explains that Joshua is also writing with Ezekial about a similar event. It further explains that Joshua is homeless and Ezekial’s brothers dominate the video games in his house. In summary, Ezekial’s writing is imagined, rather than real (Dyson & Dewayani, 2013). In contrast, Abi is participating in an emergent writing lesson where the students are encouraged to draw their thoughts (Dyson & Dewayani, 2013). Abi draws his house which shows the house with windows, a triangular roof and a long twisting pathway to the door. The context explains that Abi actually lives in one rented room with no windows (Dyson & Dewayani, 2013). Like Ezekial, Abi imagines the dwelling he would like to live in and draws this. His teacher further participates in the play by asking him to draw her in his picture, visiting him at his house (Dyson & Dewayani, 2013). “The boys’ composing of an official ‘life story’ is a form of play…built in the space between children’s material realities and their shared desires to control their worlds” (Dyson & Dewayani, 2013, p. 259).

This research concludes that children engage in writing as a social and cultural practice. Moreover, children have diverse experiences and commence school with “social, semiotic and textual resources that enable them to represent stories and help them to generate
contexts for and pathways to, school literacy” (Dyson & Dewayani, 2013, p. 270). Further, these resources ought to be valued by teachers as such contexts engage students in writing (Dyson & Dewayani, 2013).

Teaching children to be critical about literacy is valued because it involves students in their literacy learning (Tolchinsky, 2006). Teachers provide students with a sense of ownership of their thoughts and work which helps to make literacy experiences meaningful (Tolchinsky, 2006). Teaching young children to be critical about texts and to understand the purpose of their own writing and the writing of others offers meaning and relevance to a child’s writing (M. Fox, 2001; Tolchinsky, 2006).

Having a relevant purpose for writing is motivating for students and influences the quality of students’ writing positively (Freebody, 2005; Gerde, Bingham & Wasik, 2012). The research project, In Teachers’ Hands: Effective Literacy Practices in the Early Years of Schooling (Louden et al., 2005), concludes that effective teachers of literacy ensure that students understood the purpose of literacy tasks explicitly (Freebody, 2005, p. 189). Such initiatives combined with research-based structures offer guidelines to “implement meaningful classroom writing practices” in the early years (Gerde et al., 2012, p. 3). The twelve guidelines for best writing practice include:

- daily opportunity to write;
- acceptance of all forms of writing;
- explicit modelling of writing;
- scaffolding of children’s writing;
- encouraging children to read their own writing;
- encouraging invented spelling;
- providing meaningful purposes for writing;
- having available writing materials;
- displaying writing in the learning environment;
- engaging students in group writing;
- using writing to support home and school partnerships; and
- encouraging students to use technology in writing (Gerde, et al., 2012).

Finally, integrating literacy learning with other curriculum areas “is increasingly viewed as central to literacy, because reading, writing and talk are shaped in part by texts and contexts in which they are situated” (Cervetti, 2013 p. 371). Also, it is appropriate to integrate literacy learning, because literacy skills are needed in every subject area.
Consequently, in the early years, literacy is increasingly being integrated with science (Cervetti, 2013), the arts (D. Fisher, McDonald, & Frey, 2013), mathematics (Fogelberg, Satz, & Skalinder, 2013) and social studies (Halvorsen, Alleman, & Brugar, 2013).

3.4.1.5 Family literacies and socially and culturally responsive writing practices.

Children learn literacy practices in a range of different contexts (D. Barton, 2007; Cairney, 2016; K. Roberts, 2013). These contexts include family celebrations, hobbies, social and community life, parental work, childcare, preschool or kindergarten and school (K. Roberts, 2013). To foster home and school partnerships and enhance children’s literacy development, teachers should recognise and value the different contexts in which young children learn and build on the literacy practices in which children engage, in and out of school (D. Barton, 2007; Cairney, 2016; K. Roberts, 2013). Further, teachers bridging literacy between home and school may also foster parent involvement (K. Roberts, 2013).

Parent involvement in literacy learning may include:

- book sharing with children;
- learning to navigate a library;
- understanding and encouraging emergent writing;
- helping with literacy learning in the classroom;
- modeling literacy through everyday activities;
- creating home literacy centres; and
- teaching letters and sounds through games, stories and songs (K. Roberts, 2013).

Such practices are beneficial for assisting children to improve their literacy in both the home and school (K. Roberts, 2013).

Teachers of writing in the early years need to acknowledge the critical role that families play in children’s literacy development (D. Barton, 2007; S. Hill & Diamond, 2013). Researchers (Edwards et al., 2009) report that children come to school from a range of culturally and linguistically diverse families and having experienced written language in different ways. Moreover, S. Hill and Diamond (2013) conclude that children have varying opportunities to engage with text prior to coming to school and this may influence literacy learning in school. Similarly, Edwards et al., (2009) indicate that teachers need to respect and acknowledge the diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds of their students and use students’ real-life experiences as a context for literacy learning. Moreover, when “teachers, parents and children exchange and build on information about home and
school literacy routines and practices, children’s opportunities for literacy learning are enriched and expanded both at home and at school” (Edwards et al., 2009, p. 87).

Parent practices to support home and school partnerships may lead to optimal literacy learning (Barbarin & Aikens, 2009). Barbarin & Aikens (2009) describe environment-focused practices such as communication between home and school and parents helping in the classroom. Moreover, they assert that any activities that foster home and school partnerships improve “children’s competence, motivation and engagement in school” (Barbarin & Aikens, 2009, p.379). Furthermore, they report specific practices which aim to improve literacy skills in children, including:

- reading and exposure to books;
- conversing and storytelling;
- intention teaching such as teaching letters, sounds and how to write words; and
- enrichment activities such as excursions where children are engaging in 'social literacy practices' (Barbarin & Aikens, 2009, pp. 378–394).

These practices have a direct influence on enhancing literacy, language and academic skills. Moreover, they prepare children for school and provide a partnership between home and school once children are at school (Barbarin & Aikens, 2009). In addition, families contribute to literacy development through “literacy practices in the home and collaboration between home and school” (Barbarin & Aikens, 2009, p. 383).

Similarly, research identifies that family and community contexts and practices are critical for literacy success (Cairney, 2016). Moreover, understanding family literacy is important. Research concludes that “families have varying literacy resources, bring unique cultural resources and experiences, having varying schooling experiences, and are capable of supporting their children’s literacy learning” (Cairney, 2016, p. 248). In response to these research conclusions, Cairney offers foundations for teachers to build home and school relationships effectively, including:

- getting to know students and their families to appreciate the resources they bring to school;
- observing students engaging in literacy practices;
- creating opportunities for parents to participate in literacy learning in the classroom;
- providing resources to support reading and writing;
- fostering an ongoing and open dialogue with parents; and,
• encouraging parents to support literacy learning with their own valuable skills and knowledge (Cairney, 2016, pp. 249–251).

Such practices highlight the benefits to literacy learning when home and school partnerships are fostered (Cairney, 2016).

Home and school partnerships may support literacy learning in myriad ways (S. Hill & Diamond, 2013). An Australian study investigating family literacy over a two-year period aimed “to support children’s early literacy development and reconnect parents with reading, learning and schools in positive ways around their young children’s literacy experiences” (S. Hill & Diamond, 2013 p. 1). The action research project investigated the success of three programs in supporting both home and school partnerships and early literacy development. The programs included:

1. children from birth to three years in a public library setting;
2. three- to five-year-old children and fathers in out-of-school contexts; and

The investigation of the Parents as Partners’ Program occurred in Australian primary school settings, with the teachers as action researchers. The school setting included students from culturally and linguistically diverse communities and predominantly low-income families (S. Hill & Diamond, 2013). The school-based program included “an oral language, play-based program and workshops on the school’s approach to teaching reading” (S. Hill & Diamond, 2013, p. 5). Further, it “promoted children’s oral retellings of the cultural history of their families through stories” (S. Hill & Diamond, 2013, p. 5). The study concluded that shared book reading, language play and discussion of topics of interest each contributed to bridging home and school partnerships for literacy learning (S. Hill & Diamond, 2013). Further, involving fathers in literacy practices also contributed to fostering home and school partnerships (S. Hill & Diamond, 2013). In addition, the study concluded that “the home learning stories and the Dads’ program adopted social and cultural resources in the community and in doing so these family-school partnerships became both a socially and academically significant practice (S. Hill & Diamond, 2013, p. 6). More research is needed to investigate how the teaching of writing can be fostered through home and school partnerships.

Understanding a social practices discourse assists in appreciating contexts that are valued in teaching writing in the early years in contemporary Australia. Research concludes that when writing is situated in social and cultural contexts (Bazerman, 2016; Beach et al., 2016) and writing experiences are meaningful and purposeful (Tolchinsky,
2006), students are more likely to be engaged. Further, fostering home and school partnerships to support the teaching of writing also increases student engagement (D. Barton, 2007; S. Hill & Diamond, 2013). Moreover, writing as social practice provides optimal conditions for literacy learning (D. Barton, 2007; Gerde et al., 2012).

3.4.2 Writing development and writing as an integral part of literacy.

3.4.2.1 The emergence of written language.

It is widely accepted in contemporary Australia that learning to write is developmental and an emergent process (Clay, 1977; Tolchinsky, 2016). These beliefs have a theoretical underpinning originating from emergent theory (Clay 1966; Teale & Sulzby, 1986). Indeed, “writing is embedded in everyday practices and draws upon similar forms of learning as speaking and reading” (D. Barton, 2007, p.154). Children’s writing develops gradually as one component of their language and literacy development (D. Barton, 2007). Indeed, children as young as three understand that writing tools leave marks. Further, they enjoy making marks when provided with materials to practise early writing (Clay, 1977; Tolchinsky, 2016). By preschool age, children have an awareness of writing in their environment (Clay, 1977; Tolchinsky, 2016). Moreover, children learn that the purpose of writing is to communicate, and they observe writers engaging in writing, both digitally and in print in their home and preschool environments (S. Hill, 2012). Pictures often accompany marks in early writing, enabling young children to communicate their messages (Ashton-Warner, 1963; Mackenzie, 2011). Marks later develop to letters and then words, through observation, practice and also through informal and formal teaching (Ashton-Warner, 1963; Clay, 1977). Young children also begin to connect thoughts with writing and understand that they can write their thoughts on paper (Clay, 1977; Tolchinsky, 2016).

The emergent nature of writing language means that children come to school with knowledge and experience as writers (Clay, 1977). Consequently, the aim of early years teachers is to foster this emerging writing development formally. Teachers pursue this aim by adopting many strategies. These strategies include modeling writing regularly and encouraging students to copy the writing practices of the teacher (S. Hill, 2012). Further, they include reading exemplar models of writing, drawing, oral language activities, and practising writing and invented spelling (S. Hill, 2012). Moreover, being emerged in print-rich environments and teaching young children to write letters and words are employed (S. Hill, 2012).
Clay studied children learning to write in their first year of schooling in New Zealand (Clay, 1977). Clay observed that children:

- drew pictures and the teacher wrote their dictated captions;
- traced over the teacher’s script;
- copied underneath the teacher’s captions;
- copied words and captions from around the room;
- remembered some word forms and wrote them independently;
- invented word forms, often correctly; and

Early years teachers in contemporary Australia employ Clay’s strategies regularly to foster emergent writing (S. Hill, 2012).

### 3.4.2.2 Writing as an integral part of literacy.

As well as being a developmental process, writing is an integral part of literacy (Cambourne, 2015; Duke & Watanabe, 2013; Rose, 2011; Shanahan, 2016; Wolfe, 2012). Indeed, it is beneficial before writing to engage in speaking, listening and reading (Cambourne, 2015; Duke & Watanabe, 2013; Rose, 2011; Shanahan, 2016; Wolfe, 2012). Further, what precedes the writing process is an important prerequisite to teaching writing and may influence students’ writing performance (Shanahan, 2016).

Consequently, teachers engage in practices that teach writing as an integral part of literacy. Such practices include assisting young children to share thoughts before writing, encouraging young children to draw pictures to accompany writing, and ensuring writing lessons are emerged in oral language (S. Hill, 2012; Kervin & Mantei, 2015).

At the national level in Australia, the integration of all aspects of literacy is important (ACARA, 2009). Reading and writing are expected to be integral with speaking, listening, viewing and critical thinking. Literacy is defined by the Australian Curriculum as including reading, writing, speaking, viewing and listening in a wide range of contexts (ACARA, 2009). These components, however, are organised in separate modes and while they are integral, they are often taught separately.

### 3.4.2.3 The relationship between drawing, oral language and writing for emergent writers.

Since the 1960s, researchers have been examining the benefits of drawing, oral language and writing (Ashton-Warner, 1963). Children in the first years of schooling employ talk,
drawing and words to communicate while using written language (Clay, 1977). Indeed, drawing, oral language and writing together are important for children to develop as emergent writers (Clay, 1977). Children begin to make purposeful marks on paper as early as three years of age, as they scribble and attempt to write letters (Clay, 1977). Often, this writing is accompanied by pictures (Clay, 1977). This writing as an unfamiliar code that does not convey a particular message, but rather “the child seems to say ‘I hope I have said something important. You must be able to understand what I have said. What did I write?’” (Clay, 1977, p. 334). Consequently, from this early stage, children are trying to communicate with others through writing.

Drawing pictures to accompany writing and convey meaning is an important part of emerging writing. The language experience approach (LEA) commenced in the 1920s. It was then more formally described for literacy learning in the 1960s by Ashton-Warner (1963) and Van Allen (1976). Children’s own experiences involving talking, reading, writing and drawing are used to assist the child to record ideas when writing (Ashton-Warner, 1963). LEA is employed widely in contemporary Australia, especially in the first two years of formal schooling (S. Hill, 2012). The written component of this approach combines drawing and writing. While the approach is often described for enhancing the teaching of reading, it has become a formal strategy to foster emerging writing (S. Hill, 2012).

There are benefits for learning to write when drawing and writing are combined. An Australian early years’ study with students in the first six months of schooling investigated the relationship between drawing and writing (Mackenzie, 2011). This research challenged 10 teachers in classrooms in New South Wales to make drawing central to their writing program. The teachers explained to the children that they could draw a picture to accompany their writing or write a story first and then draw a picture. The study concluded that “when drawing was integral to a writing session, children enjoyed writing, took more risks when writing and were more motivated and engaged” (Mackenzie, 2011, p. 322). Further, the study concluded that “when teachers encourage emergent writers to see drawing and writing as a unified system for making meaning, children create texts which are more complex than those they can create with words alone” (Mackenzie, 2011 p. 322). After analysing writing samples, the study also concludes that “where the drawings and writing were combined the complexity of text was vastly increased” (Mackenzie, 2011 p. 337).

In addition, talk and drawing foster emergent writing (Kervin & Mantei, 2015). Indeed, research (Kervin & Mantei, 2015) exploring the contributions of drawing and talk during
writing with 5-year-old Australian students concluded that:

- talk and drawing are part of emergent writing;
- talk allows children to design their stories as they are reminded of details, events and interesting information they may include in their writing; and
- because young children can draw and talk more proficiently than they write, talk and drawing while writing contributes to writing development (Kervin & Mantei, 2015, pp. 99–101).

3.4.2.4 The relationship between oral language and writing.

Oral vocabulary and considerable opportunities to talk are foundational for learning to write, as writing systems are generated from spoken language (Juel, 2006). Further, language and thinking are also inextricably linked (Janks, 2009). Indeed, all four language processes of speaking, listening, reading and writing enhance each other (Cambourne, 2015; Shanahan, 2006). Moreover, each language process benefits development in other areas. Consequently, they should not be understood as separate from one another (Shanahan, 2006). Further, Dyson (2000) proposes that “our written voices are quite literally linked to the oral voices of others” (p. 60). Consequently, it is appropriate in writing lessons to encourage singing, reciting poems, drawing pictures, reading stories and talking (Dyson, 2000) Moreover, critical dialogue engages students, helping them to “understand the literary, social and political ramifications of their chosen genres, plots, characters and words” (Dyson, 2000, p. 62). Therefore, it is beneficial to encourage talk in and around writing in early years classrooms.

Research investigated the use of oral language to support the teaching of writing of writing (Myhill & Jones, 2009). This study examined writing lessons in six classes of early years students aged 5–7 years. The study encompassed three elements of talk to text including:

- the role of oral generation of ideas in supporting writing (idea generation);
- the role of reading composed texts aloud in supporting writing (oral rehearsal); and
- the role of talk in developing children’s ability to reflect upon their writing (reflection, Myhill & Jones, 2009, p. 275).

The research team and classroom teachers developed oral activities focusing on these three elements. The study concluded that oral rehearsal was a useful teaching strategy for the teaching of writing in the early years. More specifically, oral rehearsal had a positive influence on text creation, allowing students “to vocalize text, practise shaping sentences, support the process of composing texts and co-construct texts (Myhill &
Jones, 2009, p. 276). Further, the study concluded that “young writers are able to use talk successfully to rehearse unwritten text” which in turn had positive influences on their writing (Myhill & Jones, 2009, p.280).

As well, fostering discussion during writing about language allows students to develop their metalinguistic understanding about writing (Myhill, Jones & Wilson, 2016). Research involving 53 lesson observations with 10- and 11-year-old primary school writers in Canada examined metalinguistic discussion about textual choices (Myhill, Jones & Wilson, 2016). The study concluded that “metalinguistic talk supports young writers’ understanding of how to shape meaning in texts and the decision-making choices available to them” (Myhill, Jones & Wilson, 2016, p. 23). Moreover, the study concluded that “dialogic classroom talk allows students to develop knowledge about language and take ownership of metalinguistic decision-making when writing” (Myhill, Jones & Wilson, 2016, p. 23).

Similarly, an Australian study researched teacher and students’ meta-reflections and associated writing choices (Love & Sandiford, 2016). This case study involved explored primary teachers’ and students’ understandings of functional grammar and how students learned about grammar and made writing choices through a dialogic process with their linguistically informed teachers (Love & Sandiford, 2016). The study concluded that “well-designed meta-talk creates a dialogic space for learning about writing and becoming a writer” (Love & Sandiford, 2016, p. 214). Moreover, teachers with an explicit meta-language fostered conversation which resulted in students talking reflectively about their writing and language knowledge and making informed grammatical choices when writing (Love & Sandiford, 2016).

**3.4.2.5 The relationship between reading and writing.**

When writing, children draw on their cultural life experiences and what they read (Pantaleo, 2006). Moreover, reading enriches writing experiences (Cambourne, 2015; Olness, 2005; Pantaleo, 2006). Indeed, children who are read to frequently have an advantage when learning to write over children who are not (Hoff, 2006). Also, children's experiences with reading and listening to stories helps them become familiar with the styles of written language. They may then transfer this knowledge into their own writing (Hoff, 2006; Olness, 2005). Reading also assists with broadening children’s vocabulary and offering words to use in their own writing (Hoff, 2006; Olness, 2005).

Quality children’s literature may also be employed to enhance writing instruction
(McElveen, Anderson, Dierking & Campbell, 2001; Paquette, 2007; Zbaracki, 2015a). Firstly, exposing children to good literature provides exemplar models of writing (Hoff, 2006; Troia, 2013; Zbaracki, 2015a). Also, “children benefit in many ways from actively engaging in high quality children’s literature and picture books provide a natural avenue to motivate and encourage students’ writing” (Paquette, 2007, p. 155). Further, engaging children with children’s literature provides the opportunity for teachers to teach young writers about a number of traits that ‘characterise effective writing’ (Olness, 2005). These traits include how to develop ideas and organise text. Also, they include teaching children about voice, word choice, fluency and conventions (Olness, 2005). Engaging with quality literature is an important prewriting strategy (Cambourne, 2015; Olness, 2005; Pantaleo, 2006) because “children’s abilities to utilise characteristics of good writing in their own written work will be reinforced and broadened by exposure to a plethora of children’s literature selections” (Paquette, 2007, p. 155).

There has been considerable research on the intertextual connections by readers and writers (Pantaleo, 2006). One conclusion that has repeatedly emerged, is that reading and writing are dependent upon common cognitive abilities (Shanahan, 2006, 2016). These include visual, phonological and semantic systems (Shanahan, 2006, 2016). Teaching that improves these abilities influences both reading and writing development (Shanahan, 2006, 2016).

One study concluded that children should be encouraged to read what they write, as this allows children to both celebrate the writing process and make the connections between reading and writing (Gerde et al., 2012). Similarly, a review of research (Troia, 2013) concluded that integrating writing instruction with reading instruction and other content area instruction is one of the ten essential attributes of exemplary writing instruction (Troia, 2013).

Moreover, research concluded that literacy programs which integrated reading and writing instruction improved student’s writing performance (S. Graham et al., 2017). Indeed, a meta-analysis of 47 literacy studies, involving students from preschool through to year 12, each including literacy programs where reading and writing were integrated. The study concluded that reading and writing may “be taught together and learned together effectively” (S. Graham et al., 2017, p. 300).

Similarly, another meta-analysis review involving students in preschool through to year 12 concluded that teaching reading positively influences student writing performance (S. Graham et al., 2018). Moreover, the study concluded that teaching students to read
“resulted in meaningful improvements of writing quality, spelling and writing output” (S. Graham et al., 2018, p. 268). More specifically, the study concluded that “reading and increasing students’ interactions with words and text by observing others read” improves writing quality (Graham et al., 2018, p. 268). Further, “phonological awareness, phonics and reading comprehension instruction strengthen students' writing performance” (S. Graham et al., 2018, p.268). In addition, meaningful improvements in writing occurs “when students were directed to interact with text or observe others doing so” (S. Graham et al., 2018, p 269). Consequently, the study recommended that “reading can and should be part of our instructional efforts to improve students' writing” (S. Graham et al., 2018, p. 274). Also, the researchers of the study “located less than 100 studies after reviewing 17,000 abstracts and reviewing 700 papers, that examined the effects of reading on writing performance” (S. Graham et al., 2018, p. 272). Consequently, further research is needed “to make writing assessments a key feature of reading intervention research” (S. Graham et al., 2018, p. 274).

3.4.2.6 The relationship between visual literacy and writing.

Visual literacy has long been an important component of writing in the early years of schooling (Stafford, 2010) because young children engage with many texts containing visuals and create texts including visual elements. Indeed, the employment of the language experience approach was formally described for literacy learning in the 1960s, giving young children the opportunity to use drawing to assist in recording ideas when writing (Ashton-Warner, 1963). In addition, teachers may offer children the opportunity to create picture plans as a prewriting strategy. This involves young children drawing their ideas and then using this drawing as a prompt to write. Further, photographs and posters are employed to instigate discussion prior to writing, and also to provide a visual prompt to aid writing. Also, picture books and other multimodal texts, allow children to engage with exemplar models of different genres and then apply the knowledge and understanding gained from these genres as a model for their own writing (Coker, 2007; Donovan & Smolkin, 2006).

Moreover, there has been increasing employment of images to tell stories in children's literature over time (Zbaracki, 2015b). Indeed, “literature for children can provide visual worlds to enter into” (Luken, Smith & Coffel, 2012, p. 7). The expansion and sophisticated use of images in picture books has enabled students in the early years to both interpret images found in text (Zbaracki, 2015b) and understand the importance of illustrations to accompany their own writing and the writing of others as part of the making meaning
process. Author and Illustrator Graeme Base provides an example of mastering the employment of illustrations as well as text to convey meaning in his picture books for children. Moreover, Animalia (Base, 1986), The Eleventh Hour (Base, 1988) and Uno’s Garden (Base, 2006) each provide the opportunity for children to enter visual worlds (Luken, Smith & Coffel, 2012). Interestingly, the term “blended narratives” (Zbaracki & Geringer, 2014, p. 284) has recently been employed to describe such picture books where text and images both contribute to storytelling and comprehension (Zbaracki & Geringer, 2014). This innovative work by Zbaracki and Geringer (2014) provides an expanding perspective and has important implications for the teaching of writing, as engaging with ‘blended narratives’ is useful to teach early writers about the way in which images can extend and enhance text (Zbaracki & Geringer, 2014). This knowledge and understanding may then be applied by children to their writing. For example, a young child may purposefully employ illustrations when creating a narrative to assist with conveying meaning.

In addition, advancements in technology has resulted in many new literacies and the increased employment of visual literacy in the early years classroom (Cope & Kalantzis 2000, 2005; Kress, 2003; Stafford, 2010; Serafini, 2011). By the mid-2000s the teaching and learning of writing as a multimodal practice has seen many teachers employing various digital resources such as Interactive whiteboards, PowerPoint and web pages to assist children to engage with and create a variety of digital texts (Cope & Kalantzis 2005, Kress, 2003). Each of these multimodal resources involve innovative use of visuals to accompany students writing, which contribute to meaning making for both the writer/creator and reader/viewer. In 2009, viewing and creating were included in the Australian English curriculum (ACARA, 2009), formalising the importance of students engaging with visual literacy and creating their own multimodal texts.

Moreover, as students engage with multimedia multimodal resources writing practices are evolving (Scully, 2008). This means children are engaging with and creating more sophisticated forms of text. And must therefore “revamp their use of meaning making” (Scully, 2008, p. 45). For example, an early years’ student might create a PowerPoint presentation about seals including a factual report, photographs, a food chain with images and words, and charts or diagrams with accompanying text and images. The images and text are both employed to enable the writer to make meaning, with the purpose of allowing the viewer to also gain meaning from visuals as well as text (as illustrated in figure 3.11).
This illustrates the increasing importance of visual literacy for the teaching and learning of writing in the early years.

A recent innovation to employ visual literacy to improve writing skills is the PIE model (Tan et al., 2012) which includes instruction in “perception, interpretation and expression that aims to improve writing skills by practising visual literacy skills” (Barbot et al., 2013, p. 167). More specifically, “the PIE model integrates research evidence that:

- visual literacy capitalises on the dominance of visual as a form of perception;
- mental imagery activates a viewers’ imagination and may facilitate writing description; and
- viewing, reading and drawing support the creation of writing” (Barbot et al., 2013, p. 167).

Research exploring the effect of the PIE model (Tan et al., 2012) on the writing performance of first and second grade students identifies the benefits of visual literacy for writing development (Barbot et al., 2013). The study examines children’s observations and discussion of paintings prior to writing. Further, interviews explore children’s thinking during the writing exercise (Barbot et al., 2013). Interestingly, the study identifies that “viewing and discussing visuals were important steps to proceed writing to both generate ideas and improve expressive writing” (Barbot et al., 2013, p. 170). Moreover, the study concludes that “visual literacy practices may facilitate children’s development of writing
skills with regard to vocabulary, narrative structure and originality, through a better sense of observation and increased inferential thinking” (Barbot et al., 2013, p. 167).

The expansion and sophistication of visual literacy as a component of writing pedagogy in the early years is shown in Figure 3.12.

Figure 3.12. The expansion and sophistication of visual literacy as a component of writing pedagogy in the early years.
The increasing complexity and yet the simplicity of writing as an integral part of literacy is being explored in a deeper and broader way today than ever before. Rose (2011), reports that “literacy learning cannot be isolated from learning language in general, any more than it can be isolated from the social contexts in which literacy is practiced” (p. 81). Further, writing should be an integral part of literacy but also, literacy should be an integral part of schooling and all other curriculum areas. Moreover, integrating writing and literacy leads to increased success for students (Rose, 2011). Rose describes a reading to learn methodology as one possible framework for educators to employ through schooling. Ideally, this framework should commence in the early years and include writing as an integral part of literacy. More specifically, he describes integrating the teaching of writing with reading to enable students to use what they learn from reading to benefit their writing (Rose, 2011).

Understanding both the developmental and integral nature of writing assists in appreciating exemplary practices that teachers employ to foster emergent writing. Research concludes that it is beneficial to engage in viewing, drawing, reading and oral language prior to and surrounding writing (Cambourne, 2015; Duke & Watanabe, 2013; Rose, 2011; Shanahan, 2016; Wolfe, 2012; Serafini, 2011; Stafford, 2010). Moreover, research concludes that such practices contribute positively to writing development (Kervin & Mantei, 2015; Mackenzie, 2011; Stafford, 2010).

3.4.3 Generating learning environments that support the teaching and learning of writing.

Creating a positive and literate classroom environment is an ongoing pedagogical challenge for teachers of early years students in contemporary Australia, due to increasing cultural and linguistic diversity and twenty-first century learning challenges (Roskos & Christie, 2011; Roskos & Neuman, 2011). “The environment informs and documents the social interactions and learning that will occur” (Roskos & Neuman, 2011 p. 110). In addition, “it shapes how teachers and students will feel, think and behave” (p. 110). Consequently, teachers adopt a range of practices to mould the learning environment so as to support children in learning to write. Such practices generate environments that foster writing development, teach new literacies and employ the latest technology (Roskos & Neuman, 2011). Further, such practices generate environments that cater for social, cultural and linguistic diversity and provide meaningful learning experiences (Jesson et al., 2013).

In twenty-first century learning spaces, literacy teaching and learning has expanded to include new technologies (Leu et al., 2016). Moreover, electronic environments are a
component of today’s classrooms and literacy learning (Ball, 2006; Barton et al., 2015; Edwards-Groves, 2012; Leu et al., 2016; MacArthur, 2006, Merchant, 2009). Technology is the catalyst for the use of additional mediums such as interactive whiteboards and electronic information resources. Consequently, students engage in literate practices with such resources within their learning environment (Barton et al., 2015). In addition, these resources promote communication exchanges with audiences outside the classroom (Levy, Yamada-Rice & Marsh, 2013).

Further, twenty-first century learning spaces include the explicit teaching of new literacies (Leu et al., 2016). In contemporary early years classrooms, teachers teach digital text construction explicitly in the learning environment alongside print literacy (Edwards-Groves, 2012). Therefore, students engage in both print and digital text construction, using both according to their needs and goals in the learning context (Edwards-Groves, 2012). Further, new literacies due to technological advancement include learning to write a range of digital text types. Examples of digital text types include email, blogs, PowerPoint presentations and webpages.

In addition, environmental print has substantial influence on children’s emergent literacy (Clay, 1991; Neumann, Hood, Ford, & Neumann, 2011). Indeed, environmental print that has a real-life function enhances literacy learning (Neumann, et al., 2011). Young children are surrounded by environmental print and are engaging with print in the environment long before they commence formal schooling (Clay, 1991). Moreover, parents and teachers may capitalise on the use of environmental print to promote literacy development (Neumann et al., 2011). Research concludes, that “interactions with the child’s sociocultural context can develop their logographic reading skills, which in turn promotes emergent literacy skills” (Neumann et al., 2011, p. 231). More specifically, environmental print is useful for scaffolding children’s early writing (Roskos & Neuman, 2011). Classroom walls which display children’s writing and other artefacts enhance writing episodes. Word lists, for example, encourage students to use words in their environment in their writing (Roskos & Neuman, 2011). Moreover, literacy learning is enhanced when a classroom is filled with print that students are invited to read and use in their writing (Neumann et al., 2011).

Further, providing an environment that is supportive, so students feel comfortable taking risks in their writing, provides optimal conditions for learning to write (S. Graham et al., 2016). Teachers may encourage risk-taking by praising children’s efforts to write and by providing positive feedback. When students and teacher work cooperatively as author, editor and audience, a publishing house atmosphere is nurtured in the classroom (R.
Roberts et al., 2001). Further, when students feel comfortable using new words and attempt to write extended sentences, such risks foster students’ writing development (S. Graham et al., 2016).

Moreover, meaningful learning experiences with purposefully organised materials engage children in writing (S. Graham, Harris, & Chambers, 2016; Roskos & Neuman, 2011). Learning centres offer opportunities for reading, writing and talk, integrated within an activity. In addition, strategies such as interactions, play, individualised tasks and meaningful follow-up to whole group instruction enhance the development of a positive learning environment (Tompkins & Tway, 2003). Language and print awareness are enhanced when materials are appropriately grouped for children to explore (Roskos, & Neuman, 2011). Further, materials that encourage whole experiences that are relevant and life-like, such as a grocery shop with writing materials, motivate young children to engage in writing (Roskos & Neuman, 2011).

The national Australian research project In Teachers Hands: Effective Literacy Instruction in the Early Years of Schooling (Louden et al., 2005) aimed to identify teaching practices, to improve literacy outcomes, and to identify effective literacy teachers by exploring how children’s literacy learning improved in their first two years of schooling. This research was conducted in 200 classes over a school year and was followed in the next school year by intensive classroom observations of the identified effective teachers of literacy. The research concluded that effective teachers “provided a literate environment for children in their classes and made substantial use of the environment in their teaching” (Freebody, 2005, p. 175). Further, these teachers have classrooms filled with books, dictionaries, word lists, environmental print and other resources “to guide children’s personal writing” (Freebody, 2005, p. 175). In addition, these teachers organised materials in the environment to enhance lessons (Freebody, 2005).

Early years classroom environments are “increasingly being viewed as communities of learners” (Tompkins, & Tway 2003, p. 501). Literacy learning environments help children engage in extensive talk, reading and writing (Roskos & Neuman, 2011). Moreover, children who experience these environments are more successful with reading and writing, compared with children who do not (Roskos & Neuman, 2011). Further, “researchers are interested in how teachers and students develop the classroom culture and how the social context affects learning” (Tompkins & Tway 2003, p. 501). Research by Roskos and Neuman (2011) concludes that:

- the physical arrangements,
the resources,
the community of teachers and students,
the social interaction, and
the context

each contribute to the richness and complexity of the learning environment and support and promote literacy learning (Roskos, & Neuman, 2011, pp. 100–114). Further, literacy learning is enhanced when the environmental space accommodates individual, pair, small group and whole class writing instruction and provides space where children can talk, listen, read, think, write, play and learn (Roskos & Neuman, 2011).

Moreover, the environment may be negotiated to address the needs of diverse learners when teaching writing (Kinloch & Burkhard, 2016; K. Mills & Dreamson, 2015). Indeed, a well-designed classroom environment has been shown to undergird the success or failure of the language arts classroom" (Reutzel, Morrow & Casey, 2009, p. 267). Individual children, their varying learning needs, language backgrounds, and abilities, are important considerations when organising the learning environment for the teaching of writing. For example, “differentiated instruction in small groups has shown to be effective especially for diverse learners” (Reutzel et al., 2009, p. 265). Further, students who are grouped for writing instruction based on need or ability, are more positive and more successful in completing tasks (Reutzel et al., 2009). Moreover, teachers who organise and manage diverse students within the classroom space considering both individual differences and curricular demands increase the likelihood also of fostering literacy achievement and engagement (Reutzel et al., 2009).

Understanding how to generate twenty-first century learning environments assists in appreciating this research. Research concludes that early years teachers organise the learning environment to teach writing (Roskos & Neuman, 2011). Strategies that achieve this goal include providing print-rich environments, organising materials to encourage writing, providing play contexts to motivate students to write, and ensuring safe and supportive spaces where children are encouraged to take risks with writing (S. Graham et al., 2016; Neumann et al., 2011). Despite this, there are ongoing challenges for teachers. Play in preschool is decreasing because the changes occurring with technological advancement are making its role in the classroom uncertain (Roskos & Christie, 2011). The use of play needs to be adapted in order to include “the 21st century idea of virtual playgrounds, which is particularly relevant to preschool education because new digital technologies are quickly changing what it means to be literate” (Roskos & Christie, 2011, p. 76).
Moreover, generating appropriate learning environments for literacy learning has also become more complex in the twenty-first century because of the challenges of multiliteracies (Leu et al., 2016). “Perhaps the biggest challenge for the literacy strategy is to support Queensland students and teachers, schools and communities manage the gradual and unprecedented transition from industrial to information-based cultures and economies” (Queensland, DET, 2000, p. 8). Further, the widening cultural diversity in Australia has changed the dynamics within classroom learning environments (Kinloch & Burkhard, 2016; K. Mills & Dreamson, 2015). In addition, learning environments for the teaching of writing in the early years have changed, because advancements in technology and new literacies are changing how teachers and students engage with texts in twenty-first century learning spaces (Leu et al., 2016; Roskos & Christie, 2011). Therefore, more research is needed to examine how teachers create literacy learning environments that “extend the idea and scope of literacy pedagogy to account for the context of our culturally and linguistically diverse and increasingly globalised societies” (New London Group 2000, p. 9). Further, there is a need for research to “account for the burgeoning variety of text forms associated with information and multi-media technologies” (New London Group 2000, p. 9).

3.4.4 Explicit writing instruction.

In contemporary Australia, comprehensive writing pedagogy in the early years includes explicit writing instruction (S. Hill, 2012, Mackenzie & Scull, 2017). Moreover, it includes explicit and systematic teaching of skills and the equipping of young children with the knowledge of how to use these skills to write effectively (Edwards-Groves, 2012; S. Graham et al., 2016; Mackenzie & Scull, 2017). Specifically, knowledge and skills about genre, spelling, grammar, concepts of print, the alphabet, and sounds are essential elements for writing instruction in the early years (Coker, 2007). In addition, young children also need to be taught the process of writing explicitly (Walshe, 2015). Further, it is important for children to understand the function of writing as a tool to communicate (Tolchinsky, 2006, 2016). Understanding the purpose and audiences of texts is also valued (Tolchinsky, 2006; Mackenzie & Scull, 2017). Further, offering children in the early years the opportunity to write daily and encouraging all children’s initiatives to write are also important (S. Graham, Harris & Chambers, 2016; Pressley et al, 2007).

3.4.4.1 Defining explicit instruction.

Explicit instruction is valued in contemporary Australia (S. Hill, 2012; Walshe, 2015) and it encompasses a structured, systematic and effective methodology for teaching skills (Archer & Hughes, 2011) that includes:
• explicit statements about purpose;
• explicit explanations and demonstrations; and
• supported practice with explicit feedback to guide students through the learning process until independent mastery is achieved (Archer & Hughes, 2011, p. 1).

Further, explicit instruction is direct and instructional and uses clear and concise language (Archer & Hughes, 2011). It also builds on students’ prior skills and knowledge and promotes success (Archer & Hughes, 2011).

3.4.4.2 The challenges experienced by young writers.

To support young children as writers, teachers first need to understand the challenges that young writers experience (Tolchinsky, 2016). “Writing is a complex social and cognitive process that requires shared understanding with readers about purpose and forms, knowledge of content, proficiency in language, and a range of skills and strategies” (MacArthur et al., 2016). Young children experience multiple challenges, including:

- understanding how we use writing to communicate;
- understanding concepts about print;
- discovering the alphabet represents speech sounds;
- developing knowledge of text genres; and
- writing by hand and digitally proficiently enough to express ideas fluently (Coker, 2007, p. 102).

Children come to school with varying experiences of writing and “learning to write draws on meaning making experiences gained through prior language experiences” (Bazerman et al., 2017). Further, because learning to write is developmental (Tolchinsky, 2016), children in the early years have a range of skills as writers (Tolchinsky, 2016). Therefore, understanding children’s skills is important, so teachers can begin by working with students and scaffold their learning to address individual learning needs (Bazerman et al., 2017; Pressley et al., 2007). Teachers need to have the skill and knowledge about how to teach young children to write (Bazerman et al., 2017; Coker, 2007; Mackenzie & Scull, 2017) because competency in writing requires time, opportunity to write and quality instruction (MacArthur et al., 2016). Understanding the challenges writers experience, assists in appreciating the research problem presented in this study.

3.4.4.3 Optimal conditions for learning to write in the early years.

As young children experience challenges as writers, it is important to consider appropriate
conditions for learning to write. Moreover, optimal conditions for learning to write in the early years leads to higher literacy achievement for students (S. Graham et al., 2016; Pressley et al., 2007). Research reported by Pressley, Mohan, Fingeret, Reffitt, and Raphael-Bogaert (2007) compared early years writing instruction in Grade One classes. The study concluded that in classes where particular conditions and strategies were employed, more effective literacy achievement was produced (Pressley et al., 2007). Specifically, the optimal conditions and strategies included:

- high engagement in literacy activities;
- explicit teaching of writing including teachers explaining and modeling writing;
- balancing teaching of skills with opportunity to apply these skills;
- scaffolded support from teachers;
- positive environments where students were motivated;
- classroom environments overflowing with writing materials, good literature and tools for literacy learning and instruction;
- classroom libraries stocked with quality children's literature;
- writing centres set up to contribute to student learning;
- students doing meaningful reading and writing and receiving instruction about how to read and write;
- children's writing samples displayed on the walls;
- a variety of writing instructional strategies that encompasses planning, drafting and revising processes complemented by systematic skill instruction;
- daily writing lessons; and
- teaching of lower order skills such as spelling and handwriting (Pressley et al., 2007, pp. 13–27).

Similarly, a meta-analysis of writing instruction for primary students concluded that explicit teaching and scaffolding processes enhance student writing performance (Graham, McKeown, Kuihara & Harris, 2012). This included the examination of 115 studies. The study concluded that explicit instruction has a positive influence on the generation of quality writing (Graham, McKeown, Kuihara & Harris, 2012). More specifically, explicitly teaching students:

- strategies for planning, drafting and revising text;
- procedures for regulating writing strategies taught such as goal setting and self-assessment;
- creativity, such as the process of applying visual imagery to enhance writing;
- text types;
• spelling;
• handwriting; and
• digital text construction,

each improve the quality of young students writing (Graham, McKeown, Kuihara & Harris, 2012, p. 892).

Further, the study concluded scaffolding processes assisted students to improve their writing. Moreover, this can be achieved by:
• providing opportunities for students to work together through the writing process;
• setting clear and specific goals for students to work towards;
• engaging students in activities prior to writing such as planning for writing; and
• assessing students writing formatively and providing feedback (Graham, McKeown, Kuihara & Harris, 2012, p. 892).

3.4.4.4 Writing instruction in primary schools in Australia.

Explicit writing instruction is important in the early years of schooling in Australia. Explicit teaching of text types and how to compose and conference texts are employed by teachers in the early years (P. Hill, 2012; Martin & Rose, 2013; Zbaracki, 2015a). Further, children are taught how to be critical about texts (S. Hill, 2012) and that writing needs to be purposeful and have a real audience. Moreover, “it is the teacher’s responsibility to understand the nature of written language that children will be expected to master and to employ a range of teaching strategies, offering appropriate levels of support, to enable children to write effectively” (Mackenzie & Scull, 2017, p. 212). This is achieved with the employment of a range of instructional strategies offering varying levels of support (S. Hill, 2012; Mackenzie & Scull, 2017) involving the gradual release of responsibility towards independent text construction (Duke & Pearson, 2002). Teaching strategies include modelled, shared, interactive, guided and independent writing (S. Hill, 2012; Mackenzie & Scull, 2017).

In contemporary Australia, a functional approach to the teaching of spelling, grammar and punctuation is widely employed (Derewianka, 2012; S. Hill, 2012). The use of multiple strategies to teach spelling is also a commonly adopted strategy (S. Hill, 2012). Literature is one of three strands in the national curriculum (ACARA, 2009) and exposing children to literature is important in order for children to appreciate quality writing (Nettles, 2006; Ewing, Manuel & Mortimer, 2015; Zbaracki, 2015a). Relevant assessment of writing in the early years is also an essential component of comprehensive writing pedagogy (Fleet & Torr, 2007).
The national Australian research project *In Teachers Hands: Effective Literacy Instruction in the Early Years of Schooling* (Louden, 2005) researched “an evidential link between children’s growth in English literacy in the early years and their teachers' classroom practices” (Freebody, 2005, pp. 181‒182). The aim was to identify teaching practices that lead to improved literacy outcomes. This study concludes that effective teachers:

- scaffold children’s literacy learning to help them reach their potential;
- provide focused feedback that challenges children to achieve at high levels;
- provide clear explanations of word level concepts and skills, and work explicitly at text level; and
- exploit opportunities to reinforce knowledge, concepts and skills (Freebody, 2005, p. 176).

This research project provides evidence that explicit instruction influences literacy outcomes positively.

**3.4.4.5 Writing for communication.**

Children learn from a very young age that the purpose of writing is to share ideas and communicate (Coker, 2007; Tolchinsky, 2016). Further, “children who see adults in their lives using writing in a variety of ways to express their ideas and communicate may come to appreciate the utility of writing faster and better” (Coker, 2007, p. 104). Therefore, it is essential that teachers create many opportunities to enhance this awareness (Coker, 2007). Teachers may provide instructional practices that assist children to learn that writing is to communicate. In primary education in contemporary Australia where a social practice discourse is highly valued, such practices may align with communicating for social purposes (Derewianka, 2015; Rose, 2016). More specifically, strategies may include teaching children that writing is a dialogic process, that there are intentions for writing and that a writer may engage critically with others through writing (Jesson et al., 2013).

**3.4.4.6 Concepts about print.**

Teaching concepts about print is an important part of teaching writing in the early years (Coker, 2007; Tolchinsky, 2016). Indeed, by interacting with text, children learn about the concepts of print. Moreover, “children benefit from specific activities designed to expose them to print and familiarise them with the rules of text” (Coker, 2007, p. 105). In contemporary Australia, teaching concepts about print occurs in the early years (S. Hill, 2012). Teachers can foster children’s development and knowledge about concepts of print by employing a range of instructional practices. Examples of teaching strategies to
teach concepts of print include modelled reading with big books where directionality, spaces between words, and the relationship between words and the story can be modelled by the teacher (Coker, 2007). This happens also in shared reading where children have their own individual texts to follow, to handle books, and track print themselves (Coker, 2007). Engaging children in such writing behaviours leads to children understanding the conventions of written language (Coker, 2007).

3.4.4.7 The writing system: Making connections between letters, sounds and words.

Comprehensive writing pedagogy includes teaching young children the letters of the alphabet and the sounds each letter makes. Knowing the names of letters provides children with important information about oral language and the alphabet (Coker, 2007). Further, teaching children to make connections between letters, sounds and words and to understand that print represents the sounds of language, is essential to learning to write (Coker, 2007). Frequently, children begin to learn their first letters from their names, as their names are meaningful and familiar (Clay, 1975). When children practise writing and spelling their names, they gain experience matching letters to sounds which provides them with key insight into how writing works (Coker, 2007). Teachers may then assist children to make connections between initial sounds and other words through the employment of instructional strategies (Tolchinsky, 2016). Such strategies include alphabet and sound games and songs, explicit teaching in context during book reading; and explicit teaching during modelled or shared writing (Tolchinsky, 2016). In addition, invented spelling, which gives students the opportunity to practise spelling during independent writing improves spelling development by allowing children to test how the writing system represents sounds (Tolchinsky, 2016). In contemporary Australia, a functional approach is valued in the early years and consequently, concepts about print and teaching letters, sounds and words are enacted within authentic contexts (Christie, 2005; Herrington & Macken-Horarik, 2015).

3.4.4.8 Writing as process.

In the 1980s, a process approach was widely adopted in Australia (Walshe, 1981) and throughout many parts of the English-speaking world (Calkins, 1986). By the 1990s literacy experts were placing more emphasis on the importance of meaning making during the writing process (Calkins, 1994) and over time this has led to a shift in ‘writing as process’. While Australia has moved on from a process approach to teaching writing, teaching children both skills and process to be successful writers is still valued (Walshe, 2015). There has been a shift in thinking around this discourse in schooling in Australia.
Moreover, experts assert that process applied to writing is a concept about how writing happens, rather than a method for teaching writing (Walshe, 2015).

Teaching children to plan, draft, revise, publish and receive feedback, as illustrated in the writing process model in figure 3.13, are each considered important for writing development (Graves & Walshe, 1981; Walshe, 1981, 2015).

![Writing Process Model](image)

*Figure 3.13. The writing process model. Adapted from “Writing as Process,” by R. D. Walshe, 2015, *Teaching Writing in Today’s Classrooms: Looking Back to Look Forward*, p.13, Norwood, Australia: Australian Literacy Educators Association.*

However, these concepts are not to be taken as stages as “real writing does not happen as a mechanical set of stages” (Walshe, 2015, p. 14) and many pieces of writing completed by students “will not pass through a full or extended process” (Walshe, 2015, p. 14). While understanding the writing process and experiencing the full writing process is important for every student, a piece of writing may involve “instances of process” (Walshe, 2015, p.14). For example, while writing a letter to a newspaper may involve drafting, revising and proofreading, a field observation for a science excursion may only involve note taking (Walshe, 2015).

When children are asked to write in different genres, the process depends on the context, purpose and audience (Walshe, 1981, 2015). Therefore, teaching children which processes to employ for any given writing task is also important (Graves & Walshe, 1981; Walshe, 1981, 2015). Moreover, “to teach writing effectively involves being sensitively aware of the nature of the writing process, in order to be able to support students at any point as well as provide them with a great variety of writing contexts (Walshe, 2015, p. 15). In summation, children in early years classrooms in Australia are currently taught both the skills and process to be successful writers (Walshe, 2015). This occurs within a social practice discourse where relevant contexts and meaningful writing experiences are valued (Derewianka, 2015; Rose, 2016) and part of the writing process involves ‘a process of growing meaning’ (Calkins, 1994).
3.4.4.9 Genre knowledge: Teaching text types, features and purpose within a social context.

Since the 1990s, when the genre movement became popular in schools (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993), teaching genre knowledge including teaching texts types, features and purpose have been valued in primary education in Australia (Derewianka, 2015; Rose, 2016; Zbaracki, 2015a). Moreover, “part of the mission of schooling is to teach children what to expect from, how to read and how to write the specific genres of text that are valued in school settings” (Duke & Watanabe, 2013, p. 347). Indeed, “discourse knowledge is an important element in early writing development” (Olinghouse & Graham, 2009, p. 37) because this knowledge is integral to writing mastery. Consequently, the explicit teaching of genres is an important component of comprehensive writing pedagogy in the early years of schooling (Duke & Watanabe, 2013; Zbaracki, 2015a).

Further, a social practices discourse is valued in contemporary primary education in Australia. Within this discourse, genre knowledge is taught in context. This practice aligns with a functional approach, which focuses on the context in which the text is situated (Christie & Derewianka, 2008; Derewianka, 2015). “Systemic functional linguists theorise language in terms of the relationship between the meanings being made in a particular context and the linguistic resources which have evolved to realise these meanings” (Christie & Derewianka, 2008, p. 6.). This presents a challenge for early years students of writing, because as learners move from home contexts to school contexts “they need to expand their linguistic resources, in order to represent the kinds of experiences encountered in these contexts” (Christie & Derewianka, 2008, p. 8).

Early and continued experience with different genres builds foundations of knowledge about those genres, from which children draw when reading and writing (Donovan & Smolkin, 2006; Rose, 2016). Therefore, it is beneficial to introduce children to meaningful experiences with reading and writing in different genres (Donovan & Smolkin, 2006). Teachers in classrooms that are resourced with a range of books of varying text types, promote opportunities to read and be read to (Coker 2007, p. 111). Further, reading aloud to young children regularly “supports children’s engagement with texts as well as their ability to write about specific topics” (Coker, 2007, p. 111). Moreover, it is beneficial for children to a range of different text types because these become models for the type of writing children may later generate (Donovan & Smolkin, 2006).
3.4.4.10 Digital literacy instruction.

Comprehensive writing pedagogy in contemporary Australia encompasses the teaching and learning of writing as a multimodal practice (G. Barton et al., 2015; Kervin & Mantei, 2017). Moreover, technology is employed as a learning tool to engage students in multimodal practices (G. Barton et al., 2015; Kervin & Mantei, 2017). Indeed, the increasing employment of technologies to teach writing is changing the way students engage with and create texts (G. Barton et al., 2015; Kervin & Mantei, 2017).

A case study at a primary school in Brisbane investigated a “transmedia approach” (G. Barton et al., 2015, p. 246) to digital literacy. Students were encouraged to take ownership of their digital literacy through collaborative engagement with technology. This involved learning from each other and supporting each other through the learning process. The skills valued for digital literacy include “collaboration, knowledge construction, self-regulation, problem solving and innovation, and use of ICT for learning and communicating” (G. Barton et al., 2015, pp. 246–247). Writing included planning, drafting, editing and publishing. This study concluded these practices enable students to:

- build on the digital literacy skills children bring to school;
- be responsible, self-regulated learners;
- guide and direct the writing process in independent ways; and
- utilise technology in ways that are engaging and extend their skills and knowledge (G. Barton et al., 2015, p. 256).

In addition, technology enhances literacy learning (Kervin & Mantei, 2017). Three research projects in Australia each explored young children’s use of digital technologies to plan, create and share stories across home, school and digital environments (Kervin & Mantei, 2017). The first project involved the creation of digital stories by students transitioning to school in New South Wales. This study involved children taking photos of activities they enjoyed at preschool, discussing the photos with researchers and then working to edit photos and the children’s stories related to their images into multimedia presentations (Kervin & Mantei, 2017). This study indicated that “images served as valuable prompts for storytelling as children orally annotate their images” (Kervin & Mantei, 2017, p. 218). The second project involved children in their first year of formal schooling in New South Wales. Children worked in pairs to create a bird’s eye map of their school and then photographed their maps and imported them into the Puppet Pals Director’s Cut app (Kervin & Mantei, 2017). This was followed by recording stories to accompany their maps and creating a digital puppet play. The children had the opportunity to create characters, develop stories and sequence their narratives for their
Puppet Pals story (Kervin & Mantei, 2017). This study identified that talking and drawing facilitated the construction of multimodal text (Kervin & Mantei, 2017). The third project involved an 8-year-old child in Australia writing a story using an Ipad as a tool in his home environment (Kervin & Mantei, 2017). Minecraft added a visual dimension to Adam’s story as he used Minecraft characters and tools. This study identified that “interest and expertise with apps used in the home environment can be used for a powerful stimulus for the construction of text in the classroom” (Kervin & Mantei, 2017, p. 223). The reflection by researchers on all three projects concluded that technology offered a medium for children to create and share multimodal stories. Moreover, technology encouraged talk, nurtured language and literacy learning and fostered digital literacy learning (Kervin & Mantei, 2017).

3.4.4.11 Teaching spelling and grammar.

Further, teaching spelling and grammar are important skills for writing in primary education (Daffern et al., 2017). Research explored the relationship between spelling, writing and grammar as measured by the NAPLAN writing test (ACARA, 2013) from 819 Australian primary schools. This research concluded that “spelling, grammar and punctuation jointly predict written composition achievement with spelling as the main predictor” (Daffern et al., 2017, p. 84). While a range of strategies and programs are used throughout Australia in the early years to assist with teaching spelling and grammar, a functional approach is considered especially important (Daffern et al., 2017; Herrington & Macken-Horarik, 2015; S. Hill, 2012; Luke & Freebody, 2003). The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: English (ACARA, 2009) encompasses three interrelated strands, language, literature and literacy. Teachers are expected to teach spelling, grammar and handwriting within these interrelated strands.

3.4.4.11.1 Spelling pedagogy.

The accurate use of spelling is important to children’s literacy development (S. Graham & Santangelo, 2014); however, there is debate about how to teach spelling (S. Graham & Santangelo, 2014). Teachers may adopt an informal or formal approach. An informal approach includes:

- modelling correct spelling within writing lessons;
- providing opportunities to practise spelling though writing and then attend to errors before sharing and displaying writing; and
In contrast, a formal approach includes:

- providing explicit instruction in how to spell specific words;
- providing explicit instruction in how to use skills, rules and strategies to spell unknown words; and
- teaching systematic word study activities (S. Graham & Santangelo, 2014, p. 1705).

Nevertheless, there is still debate about which approach is more conducive to improved writing performance (Graham & Santangelo, 2014). A review of 53 studies in schools in America explored the benefits of formal spelling instruction. Of interest is this study’s conclusion that “while formal spelling instruction did result in more correctly spelt words when writing”, it “did not statistically enhance students’ writing performance (S. Graham & Santangelo, 2014, pp. 1732–1734).

In contrast, Australian spelling pedagogy favours word study. Word study includes the alphabetic, pattern and meaning layers of English orthography (Bear et al., 2012). The goals of word study are to teach children that:

- there are systematic relationships between letters and sounds;
- written words are composed of letter patterns representing the sounds of the spoken word;
- recognising words quickly and accurately is a way of obtaining meaning from them; and
- it is beneficial to blend sounds, to read words and to segment words into sounds to spell (Vaughn & Linan-Thompson, 2004).

In Australia, word study is achieved through a functional approach (Daffern et al., 2017; Herrington & Macken-Horarik, 2015; S. Hill, 2012).

Within a functional approach, multiple strategies are employed in Australia to teach young children to spell (Christie, 2005; Herrington & Macken-Horarik, 2015). Strategies include memorisation, phonics instruction, invented spelling in writing and the use of developmental stages. The employment of a range of instructional strategies is necessary to teach spelling (Herrington & Macken-Horarik, 2015). Good spellers use a range of strategies, relying on graphemic and phonemic awareness and other spelling knowledge, patterns and rules (Christie, 2005; Herrington & Macken-Horarik, 2015).

An Australian case study explored spelling pedagogy and the possible benefits on Year Four students’ learning (Daffern et al., 2016). The study concluded that modelling the use
of multiple linguistic strategies and using sophisticated metalanguage influenced student learning positively. Further, integrating spelling instruction with authentic writing and reading experiences engaged students (Daffern et al., 2016, p. 430). The conclusions affirmed the benefits of adopting a systemic functional approach to spelling pedagogy (Daffern et al., 2016).

Further, in Australia, it is acknowledged that spelling should be taught as an integral part of literacy (Christie, 2005). This occurs usually within reading and writing lessons (Christie, 2005). The Australian Curriculum (ACARA, 2009) outlines the content regarding spelling, and individual schools are responsible for the programs and strategies they employ. Figure 3.14 provides an overview of current spelling instruction in the early years in Australian primary schools.

Figure 3.14. An overview of spelling instruction in the early years in Australian schools.

Understanding how spelling is taught in the early years in contemporary Australia assists in appreciating the research problem presented in this study.

3.4.4.11.2 Grammar pedagogy.

Traditionally, in Australia, grammar was often taught in primary schools through isolated activities from textbooks or with worksheets. In contrast, a contemporary learning model focuses more on a functional approach, allowing meaning-making through purposeful, meaningful, relevant learning experiences in context (Derewianka, 2012). *The Shape of*
the Australian Curriculum: English (ACARA, 2009) prescribes that grammar is to be taught in each year level (ACARA, 2009). The language strand of The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: English (ACARA, 2009) provides an opportunity for students to learn about the use of grammar. This knowledge may then be applied in the literacy and literature strands.

Further, there is opportunity for grammar to be taught functionally because “the language strand of The Australian Curriculum: English (ACARA, 2009) is informed by an approach that sees language as a system of resources for meaning making” (Derewianka, 2012, p. 139). Such a model allows for a “contemporary approach to grammar that addresses how language functions in context to meet the needs of students” (Derewianka, 2012 p. 139). The language strand of The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: English (ACARA, 2009) “offers a sound theoretically coherent foundation that teachers and students can draw on as the basis for lively exploration of language and how it works” (Derewianka, 2012, p.144). The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: English (ACARA, 2009) outlines what knowledge about grammar needs to be taught by teachers. It suggests opportunities for a functional approach to teaching grammar. However, Individual schools are responsible for the programs and strategies they employ. Understanding how grammar is taught in the early years in contemporary Australia assists in appreciating the research problem presented in this study.

3.4.4.11.3 Assessing writing in the early years.

Assessment is integral to the teaching of writing and is embedded into how teachers plan, teach and support student learning (Scull, 2017). Moreover, this involves a cyclic process of assessment, planning and targeted teaching (Scull, 2017). This process allows teachers to assess student learning and then build on prior learning through a gradual release of responsibility (D. Fisher & Frey, 2008; Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). For example, teachers can assess student readiness and scaffold student learning through modelled, shared and guided writing, leading finally towards independent writing (S. Hill, 2012). To achieve this, teachers need to be aware of each student’s writing development and then use assessment data to improve student learning through targeted teaching (Goss & Hunter, 2015; Klenowski, & Wyatt-Smith, 2012). Therefore, the assessment of writing is an integral, iterative and responsive process, as illustrated in Figure 3.15.
Also, the developmental nature of writing is a major influence on assessment in the early years. Assessment tools developed by Clay (1993a, 1993b) are used widely across Australia to assess children’s emerging reading and writing development. This data is then used for planning purposes. Acknowledging the developmental pattern of individual students and providing for them accordingly influences teaching practice and approaches to assessment (Goss & Hunter, 2015).

In Queensland, the use of a literacy continua and the Year Two Diagnostic Net are examples of developmental assessment tools employed in schools to assess student writing development. Primary schools employ literacy continua to map writing development throughout the early years of schooling. In addition, Reading Recovery (Clay, 1993b) is implemented in many schools. This program targets children who after one year of school are experiencing difficulties with reading and writing. Literacy testing using Observational Survey Testing (Clay, 1993a), is also used biannually to track reading, writing and oral language development of students in the majority of early years classes. This information allows teachers to group students appropriately in the writing classroom and also to provide individual support for students based on their individual writing development.

Figure 3.15. Assessing writing in the early years: an integral, iterative and responsive process.
The use of portfolios is another way to assess writing in the early years in a way that considers children’s development as writers over time. This allows children to complete a range of pieces of writing, receive feedback, revise chosen pieces of writing and have opportunities to draft, revise and reflect (Hout & Perry, 2009), thus allowing children to work towards outcomes over time as they develop as writers (Hout & Perry, 2009).

If writing is a social practice, assessing writing in the early years should occur within relevant contexts for particular audiences and purposes (Johnston & Costello, 2005; Scull, 2017). This aligns with a social practice discourse currently valued in primary education in Australia (Jesson et al., 2013). Moreover, literacy assessment currently occurs within a sociocultural framework (Fleet, Patterson, & Robertson, 2006; Fleet & Torr, 2007). Assessment considers the social context of the classroom, home and community in which the child is situated (Fleet & Torr, 2007). “The focus is on social construction of knowledge and the sense that children make of experience” (Fleet & Torr, 2007, p. 186). Moreover, if literacy learning is relevant and meaningful, assessment should also be so. Authentic literacy assessment “is based on observation and analysis of literacy-based experiences grounded in real life” (Fleet & Torr, 2007, p. 187). When planning for assessment in early years, teachers should consider the following questions:

- Is the assessment reliable? - Will it reflect accurately what the child knows about literacy?
- Is the assessment appropriate? - Is this assessment embedded in the literacy practices of the child’s social and cultural context?
- Is the assessment relevant? - Will this assessment provide information relating specifically to the child’s ongoing literacy development? (Fleet & Torr, 2007, p. 185).

Further, to assess writing, teachers require an understanding of the skills and knowledge employed by writers. Moreover, “the analysis of children’s written texts requires teachers to understand how children learn to write, have knowledge of achievement patterns and have an awareness of evidence that signals competence” (Scull, 2017, p. 166). Writers employ a range of language, literacy and linguistic skills to write (Clay, 1977; Tolchinsky, 2016). Teachers may assess written forms such as text structure, sentence structure, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation and text legibility (Scull, 2017). In addition, writers convey meaning in written form (Dyson, 2010; Vygotsky, 1978, 1987). Teachers may assess whether students are successful at making meaning and conveying that meaning through the written word. Also, writers employ genre knowledge to write for specific purposes and audiences in relevant social contexts (Derewianka, 2015; Rose, 2016;
Vygotsky, 1978). Teachers may assess genre knowledge. Finally, writers analyse and critique the writing of others and engage critically with other writers through writing (Freire, 1970, 1993; Jesson et al., 2013). Teachers may assess whether students can engage in a dialogic process with other writers. When working with young writers, teachers usually select specific foci to assess. Students are made aware of the foci before writing independently. Teachers then provide children with feedback. Teacher feedback fosters writing development “when it provides information about correct rather than incorrect responses and recognises, builds on previous attempts and engages the learner in the process of learning” (Scull, 2017, p. 166). Figure 3.16 illustrates what teachers may assess.

**Figure 3.16.** Assessing writing in the early years of schooling. Adapted from the unpublished manuscript, *Intentions of the Social Writer* by M. A. Graham, 2017.

Conferencing with students about their written texts is an important part of assessment and evaluation and the responsive teachers of writing will be “genuine readers of students writing…. Not just a proofreader, must less a faultfinder, but readers, interested first in the student’s message” (Walshe, 2015, p. 25). Good teachers of writing look for what the
child can do and value the message and the skills of the writer over any weaknesses (Walshe, 2015). Such practices foster children’s writing development as young children need acceptance and support as writers (Walshe, 2015). Indeed, it is the teacher’s responsibility to generate a learning environment that encourages students to take risks when writing, feel comfortable to make errors, and appreciate that the teacher is interested in their writing and their development as a writer (Walshe, 2015). A good teacher also encourages students to be active participants in editing and revising their own writing (Walshe, 2015). The writing process model allows for conferencing and reviewing of writing drafts to support and assess writers formatively through the process (Walshe, 2015) in a way that is integral, iterative and responsive (Scull, 2017).

A research study from the US also confirms the benefits of formative assessment to enhance student writing performance (S. Graham, Hebert & Harris, 2015). The meta-analysis examined studies involving students from Kindergarten to year 8. Specifically, the study concluded that classroom based formative assessment that provided students with feedback on their written products or their progress in learning writing skills, resulted in positive gains in children’s writing” (S. Graham, Hebert & Harris, 2015, p. 542).

Mandated testing also occurs in the early years. In Australia, the National Assessment Program, NAPLAN, (ACARA, 2008) replaced the Queensland Years 3, 5 and 7 Literacy and Numeracy tests. All students in Year 3 in all states and territories undertake the same literacy tests. In terms of writing development, this benchmark aims to establish one form of teacher accountability for assessment purposes. Other national assessment in the early years includes NAPLAN tests which are conducted in May each year for all students in Year 3. Students are assessed on the same test items. The literacy components include reading, writing and language conventions such as spelling, grammar and punctuation. Assessment results may then be used by teachers for planning purposes, and to scaffold the learning of individual students. In the early years’ classroom, teachers also employ a range of formative and summative assessments to track students' literacy learning (ACARA, 2008).

While the purpose of mandated assessment is for accountability, “the way in which this has been implemented as high-stakes testing has been shown to have a great many flaws which must be recognised and addressed by governments” (Sainsbury, 2009, p. 557) if they are to achieve the desired outcomes. Currently in Australia, such testing can impact negatively on students and teachers (Klenowski & Wyatt-Smith, 2012). Also, while research informs systemic demands on writing pedagogy and government agendas (Klenowski & Wyatt-Smith, 2012; M. Mills & McGregor, 2016), there is a paucity of
research exploring how such demands influence pedagogical choices concerning the teaching of writing. The research asserts “the work of teachers occurs within competing policy contexts over which they have no control” (M. Mills & McGregor, 2016, p. 123). Indeed, understanding how writing is assessed in the early years in contemporary Australia assists in appreciating the research problem presented in this study.

3.4.5 Conclusion and contributing research question.

In conclusion, it is appropriate to summarise best practices for writing instruction in the early years in order to appreciate research conclusions about what constitutes effective teaching of writing. Table 3.4 provides a summary of best practices for writing instruction in the early years.

Table 3.3

*Research Conclusions: Best Practices for Writing Instruction in the Early Years*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Studies</th>
<th>Best Practices for Writing Instruction in the Early Years</th>
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</table>
| Evidence-based Practices and Writing Instruction: A Review of Reviews, Graham, Harris & Chambers, 2016 | • Offer regular opportunity to write, and write for a variety of purposes;  
• Create a supportive environment;  
• Teach skills, process and knowledge explicitly;  
• Employ a variety of strategies to teach writing;  
• Endeavour to motivate and engage students;  
• Provide feedback to support students to improve their writing; and  
• Employ 21st century writing tools (Graham, Harris & Chambers, 2016, pp. 211—226). |
| Teaching Writing in Today’s Classrooms: Looking Back to Look Forward, Turbill, Barton & Brock (Eds.), 2015 | • Teach children the process of writing explicitly;  
• Teach writing as an integral part of language and literacy;  
• Employ drawing and talk as part of emergent writing;  
• Teach genres explicitly;  
• Expose children to good literature;  
• Encourage creativity;  
• Teach children to be digitally literate and to engage with multimodal texts and multiliteracy pedagogy in 21st century learning contexts;  
• Teach children subject-specific literacies explicitly;  
• Teach writing within relevant cultural contexts; and  
• Teach English explicitly to EAL/D learners in 21st century learning spaces (Turbill, Barton & Brock, 2015). |
| Writing in Early Childhood Classrooms: Guidance for Best Practices, Gerde, Bingham & Wasik, 2012 | • Allow opportunity to write daily;  
• Accept all forms of writing;  
• Model writing explicitly;  
• Provide scaffolding during the writing process;  
• Encourage children to read what they write;  
• Make writing opportunities meaningful and a way to connect with families;  
• Encourage invented spelling; and  
• Have words, materials and technological tools available in the learning environment to support the teaching of writing (Gerde, Bingham & Wasik, 2012, pp 351‒259). |
| --- | --- |
| Effective Writing Instruction in the 21st Century, Troia, 2013 | • Provide meaningful writing experiences and authentic tasks;  
• Offer predictable routines in a comfortable environment;  
• Teach skills and process explicitly;  
• Employ a common language for expectations and feedback;  
• Offer a sense of community which encourages risk-taking and ownership of writing;  
• Integrate reading and writing instruction; and  
• Expose children to exemplar models of writing, including quality literature (Troia, 2013, pp. 298‒334). |
| Effective Literacy Teaching in the Early Years of Schooling: A Review of Evidence, Hall, 2013 | • Integrate skills with authentic literacy experiences;  
• Write for meaningful purposes;  
• Integrate reading and writing;  
• Teach and scaffold explicitly;  
• Emphasise self-regulation and pupil independence;  
• Employ incidental teaching; and  
• Build on children’s cultural backgrounds explicitly (Hall, 2013, p. 315‒325). |

Understanding how teachers enact the pedagogy of writing assists in understanding the research problem presented in this study. Critical analysis of research generated a synthesis of best practices for teaching writing in the early years. This synthesis highlights the importance of:

- engaging students in meaningful, purposeful, authentic writing tasks in relevant social and cultural contexts (Turbill et al., 2015; Gerde et al., 2012; S. Graham et al., 2016; Hall, 2013; & Troia, 2013);
- teaching writing as an integral part of literacy (Turbill, Barton, & Brock, 2015; Gerde et al., 2012; S. Graham et al., 2016; Hall, 2013; Troia, 2013);
- exposing and engaging children with quality children’s literature and a range of exemplar text types (Turbill, Barton, & Brock, 2015; Gerde et al., 2012; &Troia,
• providing explicit writing instruction that includes the explicit teaching of skills, knowledge and process, and the employment of multiple strategies as well as providing feedback (Gerde et al., 2012; S. Graham et al., 2016; Hall, 2013; Troia, 2013; & Walshe, 2015), and
• generating learning environments that support students to take risks, include relevant resources and include twenty-first century writing tools to support the teaching and learning of writing in twenty-first century learning spaces (Turbill, Barton, & Brock, 2015; Gerde et al., 2012; S. Graham et al., 2016; Hall, 2013; & Troia, 2013).

These themes have been addressed in this review and the practices they encompass are exemplary in primary education in contemporary Australia.

Further, this conclusion confirms research (Wyatt-Smith & Castleton, 2004) which explored teachers’ beliefs about factors that affect students’ writing achievement. This two-year Australian study included 37 teachers from 21 primary schools. The study mapped teacher beliefs about child factors, pedagogical factors and textual factors that affected the writing performance of Year Five students in Queensland. The pedagogy-centred factors affecting writing achievement based on the beliefs of the teacher participants encompassed:
• explicit teaching;
• the learning environment;
• a purposeful and meaningful context;
• writing supported by reading and oral language; and
• relevant assessment (Wyatt-Smith & Castleton, 2004).

The study concluded that teachers believed these practices are important when teaching writing in the primary school (Wyatt-Smith & Castleton, 2004).

While there is a considerable body of theoretical discussion about exemplary classroom practices for teaching writing, and some research in early years classrooms, more research on understanding teachers’ practices is required. Therefore, the second contributing question of this study is:

Question 2 What practices do teachers employ in the teaching of writing in the early years of schooling?

Consequently, this research aims to offer participants the opportunity to reflect on and share their pedagogical practices for teaching writing.
3.5 Teachers’ Beliefs Underpinning Writing Pedagogy in the Early Years

Teachers’ writing pedagogy is challenged by historical and contemporary influences (Makin, Diaz & McLachlan, 2007). Some influences are intrinsic, such as teacher beliefs which are foundational to writing pedagogy, since beliefs are catalytic to practice (Fives & Buehl, 2010). Moreover, “beliefs form part of the process of understanding how teachers shape their work, which is significant to the comprehending of their teaching methods and decisions in the classroom” (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2017, p. 78). Indeed, teachers’ beliefs influence their classroom principles, their attitudes, the strategies they adopt and their learners’ beliefs (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2017).

3.5.1 Defining beliefs.

Beliefs are personal ideas based on observation, careful thought, judgements and evaluation that teachers form about teaching and learning (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2017; Khader, 2012). Moreover, teachers’ beliefs are influenced by teaching abilities, teaching experience, teachers’ knowledge, research findings, personality, culture and their students’ experiences as language learners (Brownlee, 2004; Flowerday & Schraw, 2000; Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2017). Indeed, while “teachers’ beliefs and teachers’ knowledge have added greatly to our understanding of teaching and learning, the lack of overlap between these fields is surprising” (Fives & Buehl, 2010, p. 471). Research by Fives and Buehl (2010) concludes that:

- teachers hold beliefs that guide and influence their practice;
- teachers may be explicitly aware of their beliefs or hold them implicitly;
- teacher beliefs are complex and varied; and
- teachers hold multiple beliefs, some of which may be contradictory (Fives & Buehl, 2010).

Clearly, further research is needed to examine beliefs and knowledge in relation to experience and classroom practice (Fives & Buehl, 2013).

3.5.2 Teachers’ experience and attitudes about teaching writing.

Research investigated the relationship between teachers’ attitudes towards the learning and teaching of writing and teaching experience (Mackenzie et al., 2011). The study included 228 primary school teachers who were teaching students in their first formal year of schooling in New South Wales and Victoria. Each teacher completed a survey with statements about early years writing from a variety of perspectives. The research concluded that there was a consistent set of attitudes related to a Vygotskian approach to the learning and teaching of writing (Mackenzie et al., 2011). The research also
concluded that there was no significant relationship between teachers’ experience and attitudes (Mackenzie et al., 2011). This conclusion generates the question: what informs teacher beliefs?

3.5.3 Influences on teacher beliefs about writing pedagogy.

What literacy teachers believe and how they teach literacy is influenced by their theoretical orientations (S. Graham, Fink, Harris, & MacArthur, 2001). Specifically, theoretical orientations may be influenced by their teacher training, studies, reading, their own learning, teaching experience, mentors or colleagues. The complexity of teacher beliefs and practices "likely reflects the confluence of their knowledge of child development, writing skills acquisition, diverse pedagogical strategies, values associated with literacy shaped by personal experience and influential others" (Troia et al., 2011, p. 158). Furthermore, "contextual variables including student abilities and available resources" may also influence teacher beliefs and practices (Troia et al., 2011, p. 158).

3.5.4 The importance of teacher beliefs and the relationship to practice.

Teachers’ beliefs influence their practices (Brown et al., 2012; Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2017; Makin, Diaz & McLachlan, 2007; Padgham & Topfer, 2015). Further, there is a relationship between teachers who have clear beliefs that guide their practices and improved student learning outcomes (Makin et al., 2007). Theories of education, national, state and school policies, standards, programs and assessment procedures all influence teachers' thinking and inform their practice (Makin et al., 2007). Also, teachers’ own beliefs, education, experience and professional development likewise influence their thinking and inform their practice (Makin et al., 2007). “Pedagogical work develops from teachers’ specific professional knowledge about literacy, theories of learning, development, teaching strategies and sociological knowledge of communities and cultures” (Makin et al., 2007, p. 51). Furthermore, teachers’ practices affect student performance when teachers design curriculum, organise learning environments and reflect on how their practices influence student learning (Makin et al., 2007).

It is important, therefore, to offer teachers opportunities to express their beliefs and reflect on their teaching practices. As teachers talk about their work, they reflect about what they know and believe, as well what they do not know (Padgham & Topfer, 2015). Such knowledge empowers teachers to be responsive (Padgham & Topfer, 2015). Moreover, reflection on teaching practice enables teachers to reflect not only on their teaching but also on their students' learning. Teachers often change their practice because of how their students experience learning (McDougall, 2010). “When we reflect on what we do and think, we start to become aware of how assumptions that do not come from our
experience nonetheless shape how we work” (Brookfield, 1995, p. 43). For teachers, these assumptions may come from influences experienced at the class/school level or at state level with government policy. Indeed, teachers have their own unique journeys.

3.5.5 Research about teacher beliefs and the relationship to practice.

Epistemological beliefs of practising teachers were explored by a study which further described the relationship between these beliefs and instructional practices (Olafson & Schraw, 2010). The study implemented a scale which was developed to allow teachers the opportunity to situate their epistemological and ontological world views. The 24 teacher participants also described their ratings in writing and were involved in in-depth interviews. The study concluded that:

- epistemological and ontological beliefs impacted on teachers’ curricular and instructional choices;
- teachers with more sophisticated epistemological beliefs and worldviews were more likely to endorse student-centred instructional practices that emphasised critical reasoning; and,
- teachers with less sophisticated beliefs focused on traditional curriculum, student testing and mastery of basic concepts (Olafson & Schraw, 2010, p. 536).

The study also concluded that teachers experienced conflicts between beliefs and practices because of external pressures that influenced their practices. External pressures include:

- administration;
- structured programs;
- accountability for practice;
- funding;
- testing;
- time;
- school contexts; and

Similarly, research examined the relationship between teachers' beliefs and classroom practices (Cortese, 2003). The study included four elementary teachers who were teaching in urban schools in the United States. A case study methodology which included teacher interviews, classroom observations and the collection of student writing samples was employed. The study concluded that teachers who held progressive beliefs were more likely to engage in functional and progressive processes (Cortese, 2003). It also concluded that this level of engagement was strongly influenced by school and district
influences (Cortese, 2003). Furthermore, those teachers whose orientations were functional or cultural tended to be less progressive and critical in instruction (Cortese, 2003).

Further, there is a relationship between beliefs and practices linked to teaching students to write in the first four years of school (Gaitas & Martins, 2014). One study involved 255 teachers completing a questionnaire to evaluate their beliefs in relation to writing instruction. Factor analysis and correlation analysis were employed to analyse the data. The researchers acknowledge that “despite the importance of teachers’ beliefs, there are few studies that have tried to describe teachers’ beliefs and the relation between beliefs and specific writing teaching practices” (Gaitas & Martins, 2014, p. 495). The research concluded that teacher beliefs are multidimensional constructs (Gaitas & Martins, 2014). Moreover, teachers believe that both code-based practices such as the explicit teaching of skills and meaning-based practices such as holistic reading and writing activities are valuable (Gaitas & Martins, 2014). Consequently, teachers employ a combined approach, balancing both the explicit and systematic teaching of skills with holistic reading and writing activities (Gaitas & Martins, 2014). The study acknowledges the limitations of a questionnaire and asserts that classroom observations would better characterise the relationship between teacher beliefs about writing and associated classroom practices (Gaitas & Martins, 2014).

Further, research concerning teachers’ self-reported beliefs about literacy teaching and learning and associated classroom practices, concluded that there is a relationship between teachers’ theoretical orientations about literacy and their approaches to teaching literacy (Armstead-Flowers, 2015). The study also concluded that teachers’ self-reported beliefs did not always align with self-reported practices (Armstead-Flowers, 2015). As with the study by Gaitas & Martin (2014), the researcher recommends that case study research would allow for further investigation into the relationship between teachers’ beliefs about literacy and their classroom practices (Armstead-Flowers, 2015).

### 3.5.6 Research examining the influence on student outcomes when teacher beliefs about teaching writing translate into practice.

In 2006, the Australian Department of Education, Science and Training published a report entitled *Making Connections to Promote Early Literacy* (McKenzie, 2006). The report summarised the findings of research in a kindergarten setting in Perth. The aim of the report was to document the principles and practices that promote children's early literacy development. Further, the study employed an action learning methodology. The study
concluded that early literacy learning is promoted when childhood educators reflect on their own learning and make connections between their beliefs and practices about literacy learning (McKenzie, 2006).

Further, the *Young Learners Project* (Brown et al., 2012), a longitudinal Australian study, was conducted from 2007–2012. The study investigated the beliefs and theoretical constructs and literacy practices of 25 preschool teachers and how these beliefs translated into practices. Case study methodology “through both micro-individual case studies and macro- cross-case analysis” (Brown et al., 2012, pp. 325) allowed teacher beliefs and practices to be mapped. The design included a teacher survey of theoretical orientations, observed lessons, and interviews based on the recorded practices. Similarly, the research concluded that self-reported beliefs and theories about literacy development were reflected in teachers’ practice (Brown et al., 2012). The research also concluded that “where there is clarity of resonance between teacher-articulated beliefs and practices, informed by educational theory, children’s progress through their first year of school may well be enhanced” (Brown et al., 2012, p. 325).

In addition, there is a relationship between teacher self-efficacy and classroom practices (S. Graham et al., 2001). A study examined teacher efficacy in writing (S. Graham et al., 2001). The study employed three writing scales to survey 153 first to third grade elementary teachers in the United States. The study investigated teacher efficacy in writing, teacher beliefs about writing instruction and the effect of efficacy on classroom practice. Factor analyses were employed to analyse data. The study concluded that “efficacy in teaching writing was related to reports of teachers’ instructional activities during writing and their beliefs about how to teach the subject” (S. Graham et al., 2001 p. 199). Further, the study concluded that theoretical orientations are important to understand effective writing instruction (S. Graham et al., 2001). Also, the study concluded that ‘teachers’ beliefs and theories about writing instruction are related to their reported teaching practices” (Graham et al., 2001 p. 163).

Similarly, a research project (Tschannen-Moran, & Johnson, 2011) examined literacy teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs where 648 teacher participants from 20 elementary and six middle schools in the United States completed a survey instrument designed “to measure teachers’ sense of efficacy for literacy instruction” (Tschannen-Moran, & Johnson, 2011, p. 754). In addition, the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale was used to measure teacher efficacy beliefs for more general aspects of teaching. Data analysis included the use of factor analysis to analyse the survey responses. Correlation analysis and regression were also employed. The research concluded that “teachers with stronger self-efficacy for
instructional strategies, student engagement and classroom management also tend to feel more capable of delivering literacy instruction” (Tschannen-Moran & Johnson, 2011, p. 760). The research also concluded that teachers’ sense of efficacy leads to increased teacher motivation and improved student literacy outcomes (Tschannen-Moran & Johnson, 2011).

Further, research by Troia et al., (2011) confirmed a relationship between teachers’ beliefs about writing instruction, associated practices and, in turn, student outcomes. Researchers explored the beliefs and practices of six early years teachers of writing over a 12-month period. These teachers also received intensive professional development in writing instruction. The research design employed a case study approach including a collection of both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data included a survey and rating scales and qualitative data included teacher interviews, classroom observations and the collection of physical artefacts. The data permitted the employment of a “pre-post case-study approach in tandem with grounded theory to induce a theoretical model of how teachers’ epistemologies and beliefs are connected to their instructional practices” (Troia et al., 2011, p. 162). The research concluded that teachers with “higher levels of perceived teaching competence contributed to increased student engagement and wider use of instructional strategies for teaching writing than teachers with lower levels of teaching efficacy” (Troia et al., p. 163). The research also concluded that teachers with robust self-efficacy were more likely to adapt their writing instructional strategies for struggling writers than those with lower levels of efficacy (Troia et al., 2011).

The relationship between early years teachers’ instructional practices, theoretical orientations and students’ growth in writing was investigated (Ritchey, Coker & Jackson, 2015). Twenty-eight first to third grade teachers participated in two surveys including:

- The Teacher Writing Orientation Scale (Graham et.al., 2002), to assess teachers’ theoretical orientations to writing instruction; and
- The Instructional Practices Scale (Cutler & Graham, 2008), to assess teachers’ instructional practices (Ritchey et al., 2015, p. 1339).

This was then compared with student data including:

- writing samples to assess students’ ability to write a word, phrase or sentence in response to a picture or verbal prompt; and
- Picture Story (Ritchey & Coker, 2013) which measures students’ ability to write a short narrative based on a picture-sequenced prompt.
Factor analysis and correlational analysis were employed to explore possible relationships. The Teacher Writing Orientation Scale (Graham et al., 2002) includes the explicit instruction orientation, the natural learning orientation and the correct writing orientation. The research concluded that “teachers take a balanced or poly-theoretical stance towards writing instruction” (Ritchey et al., 2015, p. 1349).

In addition, when the study examined the relationship between orientations and instructional practices the results were divergent. As a result, it was concluded that teacher beliefs need to be better contextualised to account for the diversity of influences (Ritchey et al., 2015). Furthermore, the study did not identify an alignment between writing practices and theoretical orientations in ways that were anticipated. Neither did it indicate an alignment contributing towards student writing performance. The study suggested that “it could be that teachers’ poly-theoretical approaches are overlapping in such a way that they do not contribute uniquely towards writing performance and growth in early elementary grades” (Ritchey et al., 2015, p. 1351). The researchers acknowledge a small sample and a lack of classroom observations and interviews. The research concludes that the relationships between theoretical orientations, instructional practices and student outcomes are multifaceted and complex (Ritchey et al., 2015). Moreover, the research confirms that teachers are one of many influences that contribute to students’ writing success (Ritchey et al., 2015).

3.5.7 Paucity of research exploring teacher beliefs and writing pedagogy.

Despite these studies, there is a paucity of research exploring teacher beliefs about writing and associated classroom practices (Boscolo, 2008; Hammond & Maken-Horarik, 2001; Harris et al., 2010; Troia et al., 2011). Research exploring “the connections between teacher beliefs and instruction practices in the domain of writing, including an examination of the links between instruction and other variables such as teacher efficacy” (Troia et al., 2011, p. 179) is needed. Furthermore, while research has examined the effects of beliefs on teaching and learning in general, there is “little research into teacher self-efficacy beliefs for literacy instruction” (Tschannen-Moran & Johnson, 2010, p.751). Moreover, “despite the apparent importance of teachers’ theoretical orientations, little is currently known about the beliefs and assumptions that teachers hold about the teaching of writing” (S. Graham et al., 2002 p. 148). More specifically, there is limited case study research examining teachers’ writing pedagogy in the early years of schooling (Armstead-Flowers, 2015; Gaitas & Martin, 2015). The research questions for this study have been generated to address this need for additional research.
3.5.8 Conclusion and contributing research question.

Understanding teacher beliefs about teaching writing and the relationship between beliefs and classroom practices is important in addressing the research problem presented in this study. Indeed, when there is a congruence between teacher beliefs and practices, student progress is enhanced (Brown et al., 2012). “Further research on how teachers’ histories and experiences with writing affect their beliefs about writing instruction and practices may help teachers better articulate and navigate their instructional discourses” (McCarthey et al., 2014 p. 40). This research aims to offer participants an opportunity to express their beliefs about the teaching of writing in the early years and reflect on both their practices and, in turn the influence of practices on student learning. In addition, by documenting this descriptively, the study aims to contribute to the scarcity of documented evidence of teacher beliefs about teaching writing and associated classroom practices. It is from an understanding of these issues that contributing question 1 is generated:

- Question 1 What do teachers believe about the teaching of writing in the early years of schooling?

3.6 Conclusion

Prior to the 1970s, there was little research about how young children constructed meaning through writing (de Lemos, 2002). There was also limited research into teacher beliefs and practices concerning the teaching of writing (de Lemos, 2002). Currently, research on the teaching of writing in the early years in Australia originates from different theoretical orientations and different definitions of literacy (Turbill et al., 2015). Further, current knowledge of “writing is informed by numerous disciplines and our theories of these processes are now explained as a rich and varied interplay of linguistic, cognitive, psychological, social, and critical functions that support the meaning-making processes” (Farrar & Al-Qatawneh, 2010, p. 64).

This review identifies the need for additional research in order to document teacher beliefs and practices about the teaching of writing at the micro-level of the classroom. Furthermore, research is needed to address what influences these beliefs and practices. Therefore, the literature review generated the following research questions that focused the conduct of the research design.
The overarching research question is:

- How do teacher beliefs about learning to write influence their teaching of writing in the early years of schooling?

The questions that contribute to the exploration of the research question are:

1. What do teachers believe about the teaching of writing in the early years of schooling?
2. What practices do teachers employ in the teaching of writing in the early years of schooling?
3. What influences teachers’ writing pedagogy in the early years of schooling?

An interpretivist paradigm has been successfully employed in research projects to explore practices related to teaching and learning of writing in the early years of schooling (Dyson & Dewanyi, 2013; Harris et al., 2004; Kervin & Mantei, 2017; Mackenzie, 2011; Mackenzie, Scull & Bowles, 2015; Walshe, 2010). Such employment was aimed to allow for an increased understanding of “how children in the 21st century learn to write and how teachers in their worlds support this process” (Mackenzie, 2016, p. 260). The design of the research, including the adoption of interpretivism, is outlined and justified in chapter four.
CHAPTER FOUR
RESEARCH DESIGN

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research is to explore teacher beliefs, classroom practices and influences relating to writing pedagogy in the early years of schooling. The research design that focused the conduct of this research is explained and justified in this chapter. The theoretical underpinnings of the research design are illustrated in Figure 4.1.

**Figure 4.1. The theoretical underpinning of the research design.**

The following three contributing questions focus the conduct of the research design:

1. What do teachers believe about the teaching of writing in the early years of schooling?
2. What practices do teachers employ in the teaching of writing in the early years of schooling?
3. What influences teachers’ writing pedagogy in the early years of schooling?
4.2 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework offers a philosophical foundation for the research design. Constructionism is an appropriate epistemological lens to underpin this research because teachers’ generation of knowledge is appreciated as a personal, shared and evolving process (Crotty, 1998). Interpretivism is the adopted theoretical perspective because it considers that meaning is a process that is negotiated with context and person (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Teachers negotiate meanings they attach to their actions in the teaching of writing. Symbolic interactionism is adopted as a theoretical perspective of interpretivism (Charon, 2007; 2010). Case study (Miles & Huberman, 1994) is the methodology that is adopted to explain and justify the use of data gathering strategies. Table 4.1 outlines the theoretical framework for the study.

Table 4.1

<table>
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<tr>
<th>THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK</th>
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<tr>
<td>Epistemology</td>
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<td>Theoretical Perspective</td>
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<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
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<td>Data Gathering Strategies</td>
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Note. Often the terms, constructionism and constructivism, are used interchangeably. Crotty (1998, p. 43) offers clarification. Constructionism: Meaning is constructed by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting and agree at least temporarily on what is constructed. Constructivism: meaning is constructed by an individual irrespective of what others construct: meaning making of the individual mind. In other words, constructionism is another term for social constructivism.

4.3 Epistemology: Constructionism

Epistemology is a theoretical premise, underpinning research designs. In particular, it is “the study of knowledge and beliefs about knowledge” (Olafson & Schraw, 2010, p. 519). The epistemology appropriate for this study is constructionism. Constructionism seeks to
offer understandings of reality from participants’ perspectives (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). The aim of this inquiry is to explore teacher beliefs and practices about the teaching of writing, and what influences their writing pedagogy. Consequently, a constructionist epistemology is appropriate because, “constructionism considers the impact which engagement with the research exerts meaning, so that knowledge is not regarded as a fixed concept but rather as individually constructed” (Crotty, 1998, p. 43).

4.3.1 Theoretical perspective: Interpretivism.

A theoretical perspective explains how human beings understand the world and construct meaning (Crotty, 1998, 2003). This study adopts an interpretivist theoretical perspective within the epistemology of constructionism. Interpretivism asserts that “the reality we know is socially constructed” (Willis, 2007, p. 97). Further, interpretivism “relates to both how people methodically construct their experiences and their worlds and the contextual configurations of meaning and institutional life that inform and shape reality” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 342). Interpretivism is appropriate in this design because the research aim is to interpret and understand teachers’ reasons for their beliefs and how they construct their practices and the meanings they attach to them. Further, it aims to interpret how teachers understand their professional contexts.

4.3.1.1 Symbolic interactionism.

Symbolic interactionism is adopted as a particular theoretical perspective of interpretivism. Symbolic interactionism theorises that meaning-making is generated through the use of symbols as humans interact with one another (Charon, 2007; 2010). The symbolic interactionist approach allows for learning to be understood as “an unfolding process in which individuals interpret their environment and take action based on that interpretation” (Morrison, 2002, p. 18). Symbolic interaction encourages researchers “to interact with the actors, observe, partake in their activities, construct interviews and try to reconstruct their realities” (Charon, 2007, p. 193).

Symbolic interactionism is underpinned by three interrelated understandings about how meaning is generated. The first is the understanding that meaning is assigned to phenomena and action is based on generated meanings. The second understanding is that meaning is derived from social interaction with other members of society. The third understanding is that meaning is negotiated and modified through an interpretative process that individuals negotiate when they interact with others (Dimmock & O’Donoghue, 1997; O’Donoghue, 2007, p. 19).
Language is a symbolic system of interaction (Bassey, 1999) shared between humans (Crotty, 1998). Moreover, it employs a dialogic process which allows humans to “become aware of the perceptions, feelings and attitudes of others and interpret their meanings and intent” (Crotty, 1998, pp. 75‒76). This study examines the teaching and learning of writing. The purpose of writing is to communicate with others (Vygotsky, 1978). Moreover, writing is both a social practice (Derewianka, 2015; Rose, 2016; Vygotsky, 1978, 1987) and a dialogic process (Jesson, Parr & McNaughton, 2013). Language shapes the interaction and interpretations guiding the methodology.

While meanings generated are personal and unique, they are not developed in isolation but are socially constructed with the actors involved (Dimmock & O'Donoghue, 1997). Symbolic interactionism acknowledges that contexts influence how individuals construct meaning (Bassey, 1999). In this study the teachers do not teach writing in isolation, but rather within many social contexts. These include social contexts of classrooms in which teachers interact with students as well as the social context of schools in which teachers interact with teaching partners. In addition, within the context of the school community teachers interact with parents. Also, there are systemic contexts such as Brisbane Catholic Education. Symbolic interactionism allows the research to be conceptualised within these contexts, allowing the researcher to comprehend how teachers understand their writing pedagogy within their worlds (Charon, 2007).

Further, this study explores teacher beliefs. These beliefs emanate from teachers’ epistemological worldviews (Olafson & Schraw, 2010). They are not generated in isolation, but rather through interacting with others. This study seeks to understand teacher beliefs about learning to write and teaching writing. Further, it seeks to understand how teacher beliefs influence their practices. How these interpretations and shared meanings are constructed for teachers concerning their writing pedagogy is pivotal to this study.

4.4 Research Methodology: Case Study

The research methodology offers a justification for the selection and orchestration of data-gathering strategies. Case study is the methodology adopted for this research. Case study facilitates exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The phenomenon is teacher beliefs, classroom practices and influences relating to writing pedagogy in the early years of schooling. This
phenomenon occurs within the bounded context (Miles & Huberman, 1994) of six individual cases within the archdiocese of Brisbane.

The distinguishing feature of case study is the belief that human systems develop a characteristic wholeness or integrity to explain why things happen as they do. Moreover, case study invites an in-depth investigation of the interdependencies of parts and of emerging patterns (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Since the whole picture is foundational to this study, a holistic methodological approach is appropriate to employ. Indeed, “an interpretation based on evidence from several cases can be more compelling to a reader than the results from a single case and [having] multiple cases, allows for greater opportunity to generalise across several cases” (Borman, Clarke, Cofner, & Lee, 2006). Consequently, this study incorporates a multiple case study design, which allowed for analysis within and across cases.

Case study also has a respected history of use in literacy research (Barone, 2004). Case study research allows researchers the opportunity to explore teachers’ pedagogy and how students learn to read and write. It has been successfully adopted to explore teacher writing pedagogy and how practice supports the writing development of early years students (Schutz, 2012). In addition, cross-case analysis has been successfully employed in a detailed exploration of patterns (Schutz, 2012). In this study, the individual cases explore how teachers teach writing through investigating teacher beliefs, practices and influences relating to the teaching of writing in the early years.

Cross-case analysis enables researchers to address the combination of influences that may contribute to a sensitised understanding of a case (Khan & Vanwynsberghe, 2008). Moreover, it allows the exploration and construction as to why cases may be similar and/or different (Khan & Vanwynsberghe, 2008). Also, it allows researchers to understand and explain relationships that may exist between cases (Khan & Vanwynsberghe, 2008). This may be achieved through individual case narratives, a comparative analysis and the employment of categorisation.

Clearly then, case study methodology is appropriate for this research problem because among other things it “allows the use of a variety of research methods in order to capture the complex reality under scrutiny” (Denscombe, 2010, p. 62). Case study research uses multiple data sources, “with each source contributing to the researcher’s understanding of the whole phenomenon and promoting a greater understanding of the case” (Baxter & Jack, 2008 p. 554). Consequently, this study employed the use of multiple data sources thus allowing for a greater understanding of teacher writing pedagogy. Table 4.2 outlines
how a case study methodology is designed and employed.

Table 4.2
Case Study Methodology: Study Design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Study Methodology</th>
<th>Context of bounded case: Individual classrooms where early years teachers enact their individual writing pedagogy, situated within Catholic primary schools within the archdiocese of Brisbane</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Case Study Design</td>
<td>Analysis within and across cases • Explores similarities &amp; differences across cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Multiple Data Sources</td>
<td>Case studies: Semi-structured interviews; • Participant observation: Including lesson observations, field notes &amp; 2nd interviews to discuss observations; • Physical artefacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method of Data Analysis</td>
<td>CCA (Glaser &amp; Strauss, 1967)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting a Case Study</td>
<td>Interpretative case narratives • Comparison of cases • Discussion of new understandings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthiness in Case Study</td>
<td>Triangulation • Member checks • Peer examination • Clarifying researcher bias • Use of thick rich description to reflect the complexity of the data • Researcher journal &amp; data analysis records for the audit trail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baxter and Jack, 2008</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

4.5 Participants

The research sites selected are primary schools in the archdiocese of Brisbane. Participants are teachers who teach early years classes within these schools. The primary strategy for inviting participants to engage in this research is purposive selection (Patton, 1990). Participants are purposively selected for their specialist knowledge and experience concerning writing pedagogy in the early years of schooling. This strategy ensures access to in-depth, highly informed knowledge with “high quality detailed descriptions and important shared patterns” (Patton, 1990, p. 172). Purposive processes that were adopted
in order to engage with informed participants are shown in Figure 4.2.

**Figure 4.2.** Obtaining informed participants through purposive selection.

### 4.5.1 Selection of individual case participants.

Each case participant initially completed the questionnaire (See Appendix B) about writing pedagogy and then expressed an interest to participate further in the study. Additional processes were adopted to select informed participants from those who volunteered. These included:

- a telephone meeting with each teacher to clarify criteria for participation and to confirm a demonstrable interest to participate in research concerning writing pedagogy;
- a face-to-face meeting with each teacher to discuss their interest in writing pedagogy in more detail and to inform each teacher of the planned experiences involved in their possible participation; and,
- confirming participants' principals are supportive of their teachers' participation in the study and that the teachers are considered by them to be exemplary early years teachers.

The teachers who expressed an interest to further participate in the individual case studies and who also met the selection criteria and purposive processes for participation were invited to participate in the individual case studies. Six participants were selected for the individual case studies. Relevant information about each case participant is illustrated in Table 4.3.
### Table 4.3

**Teacher Participants: Individual Case Studies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Years of Teaching Experience</th>
<th>School Location in Archdiocese of Brisbane</th>
<th>Grade Level in 2005</th>
<th>Years Teaching an Early Years Class</th>
<th>Highest Academic Qualifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cara</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4-yr. trained (Current MEd studies).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanya</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4-yr. trained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chazz</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4-yr. trained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackie</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>&gt;20</td>
<td>Coastal</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>&gt;10</td>
<td>MEd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andy</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>&gt;20</td>
<td>Suburban (Close to CBD)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4-yr. trained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dolly</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Suburban (Close to CBD)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4-yr. trained</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All teachers were reflective practitioners, enthusiastic and intrinsically motivated to reflect on writing pedagogy and offer valuable insight into the research phenomenon. A description of each teacher is outlined.

**Cara** has six years’ primary teaching experience and was teaching a Year two class at the time of the study. She is currently studying a Master of Education degree in English Education. Cara volunteered to participate in this research project because she is passionate about literacy teaching and learning.

**Tanya** studied a Bachelor of Early Childhood Education and describes herself as an enthusiastic and dedicated teacher with a positive outlook. Tanya has been teaching early years students for three years and believes that reading and writing should be integrated in the early years. Tanya taught a Year 3 class during the period of the study.

**Chazz** has been teaching early years classes for five years and was teaching a Year 3 class during this research project. Chazz discussed completing various professional development courses in literacy education and engaging in professional readings to further develop her literacy pedagogy.
Jackie is an experienced and dedicated teacher with more than 20 years teaching experience. Jackie has spent the last ten years teaching early years classes. She describes constantly reviewing her practice for the benefit of her students. Jackie has a Master of Education degree and credits postgraduate studies with influencing her practice. During this research project, Jackie was teaching a Year 3 class.

Andy is an experienced primary teacher with over twenty years' teaching experience. He has been teaching early years classes for nine years and taught a Year 2 class during this research project. Andy's teaching of writing is directed by the children's needs.

Dolly is a mature age graduate teacher. Although Dolly is new to the profession, she was recommended by staff at the Australian Catholic University (ACU) as an exemplary student in her undergraduate studies. Further, she is a mature age student with considerable experience working in early childhood settings. Dolly was teaching a Year 2 class during this research project. Dolly is an enthusiastic teacher who has high expectations of herself as an educator.

4.5.2 Individual case participant protocols.

Prior to the commencement of the individual case studies, teachers were provided with information letters about the study and consent forms (See Appendix C). Further, pseudonyms were employed to de-identify the six participating teachers for confidentiality. The processes involved in both selecting participants and collecting data from participants for the case studies is outlined in Table 4.4.
Suitable participants to best understand the phenomenon being studied:
- Individual early years teachers were purposefully selected based on their knowledge of the research phenomenon, as shown in how they met specific selection criteria and with a number of purposive processes to ensure suitability for the individual case studies

Permission obtained from Brisbane Catholic Education and school principals:
- To access schools and interview and observe teacher participants

Employment of multiple data gathering strategies to answer the research questions and obtain the views of the participants, including:
- Semi-structured interviews;
- Participant observation including: lesson observations, field notes, and second interviews to discuss lesson observations; and
- Physical artefacts

Careful recording and checking of information provided by participants, including:
- Taping and transcribing of interviews;
- Detailed note taking during observations;
- Collection of physical artefacts chosen by participants;
- Checking by participants of interview transcripts and observations; and
- Explanation by participants of their interpretations of observed lessons and their use of artefacts

Measures to protect the well-being of participants, including:
- Participants being informed at every stage of the process and able to withdraw at any time;
- Consent to participate in writing;
- Consent from parents to collect student writing samples;
- Pseudonyms used for teacher participants to ensure privacy and anonymity;
- Student writing samples de-identified to protect participants’ privacy and for anonymity

### 4.6 Data Gathering Strategies

As this research is interpretivist in design, multiple data gathering strategies facilitated the exploration of teacher writing pedagogy in the early years of schooling and allowed for participants to share their understandings adequately (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Moreover, a variety of strategies supported the provision of an information rich narrative (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). The data gathering strategies chosen for this research are represented in Figure 4.3.
4.6.1 Stage one - inspection: The individual case studies.

The data gathering strategies adopted for the six individual case studies included:

- a semi-structured interview with each participant about their beliefs and practices related to writing pedagogy in the early years;
- participant observation including observation of each participant teaching writing on two occasions, researcher field notes, a second interview with each participant to discuss the lesson observations and artefacts; and
- collection of physical artefacts that each teacher considered relevant to their writing pedagogy.

4.6.1.1 The role of the researcher in data gathering.

The role of the researcher is to collect data from the participants while respecting the interpretative research design (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Consequently, the researcher adopted an interpretative lens of inquiry. In interpretative research, the researcher is embedded within the social context of the study and is considered an instrument of data gathering (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Specific roles of the researcher in this study included interviewer and participant observer (Creswell, 2012). The researcher developed trust with the participants and observed participants in their natural setting, the classroom (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Further, the researcher employed personal insight, knowledge and experience of teaching writing in the early years, to interview and observe and interpret the research phenomenon accurately (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003).
4.6.1.2 Individual, in-depth, semi-structured interviews.

The researcher interviewed teachers to explore their meanings related to their teaching of writing. “Researchers collect stories in interviews about myriad aspects of social life then the stories are transcribed and analyzed for the way they construct what they are about” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 349). In case studies, interviews are one data gathering strategy that help the researcher gather information that will contribute to the writing of a narrative for each case. “Combined with observation, interviews allow the researcher to understand the meanings that everyday activities hold for people” (C. Marshall & Rossmann, 2006, p.102).

Semi-structured interviews are most appropriate within an interpretivist approach as they offer a less formal and less structured format to account for the unique ways in which the teacher participants interpret the world (Merriam, 1998). They employ specific questions to be addressed while also encouraging the “interviewee to develop ideas and speak more widely on the issues raised by the researcher” (Denscombe, 2010 p. 175). Further, they offer opportunities for participants to share the contexts for their understandings (Merriam, 1998). The open-ended questions and concurrent sub-questions aim to invite participants to respond by sharing their perspectives and experiences and by allowing further probing to obtain additional information and clarify viewpoints (Creswell, 2012; See Appendix D).

The first semi-structured interviews enabled the researcher to understand teacher beliefs and practices about the teaching of writing and aimed to represent the authentic voice of the teacher participants (Brenner, 2006; See Appendix E). The interview questions were informed by the themes that emerged from the analysed survey data. Also, an interview guide was developed to ensure that the same interpretative lens of inquiry was utilised for each of the six teacher participants (See Appendix C).

The second semi-structured interviews were informed by classroom observations. “In practice, most research interviewers rely on audio recordings backed up by written field notes” (Denscombe, 2010 p. 187). However, this process allowed the researcher to interrogate the participants concerning their practices and offered teacher participants the opportunity to explain both how they planned for the teaching of writing and how the artefacts they provided are relevant to their teaching. Further, after interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed, all transcripts were then checked by participants, offering participants the opportunity to read and clarify meaning (Creswell, 2012). Interview transcripts were then analysed (See Appendix F).
4.6.1.3 *Participant observation.*

Participant observation (Denscombe, 2010; Patton, 2002) is adopted in this study. “Observation is the process of gathering open-ended firsthand information by observing people and places” (Creswell, 2012). The advantage of observation is that it offers opportunities to study individuals and record information as it arises in a setting (Creswell, 2012). In this study, the setting was the classrooms of the early years' teacher participants and the teaching of writing was observed. Participant observation includes both observation and interviewing (Delamont, 2004). “In the field, the researcher’s aim is to understand what their people believe... by watching people being studied... and talking to the actors to check their emerging interpretations” (Delamont, 2004, p. 218). The researcher immersed herself in the setting to observe what was happening in each classroom during the teaching of writing. The participant observation also allowed the researcher to plan and conduct the second interviews. The data sources that contributed to the process of participant observation are illustrated in Figure 4.4.

![Figure 4.4. Process of participant observation.](image)

Descriptive field notes, which record a description of events, activities and people (Creswell, 2012) are recorded under the following pre-planned subheadings:

- The physical setting;
- The participants;
- Activities and interactions;
- Classroom organisation;
- Student direction;
- Motivation;
- Teaching strategies;
- Dialogue;
- Resources;
- Explicit instruction;
• Use of the learning environment; and
• Purpose (See Appendix G).

When conducting participant observation, the researcher engaged with participants in a manner which respected ownership of the data and privacy of participants (Bassey, 1999, Denscombe, 2010). Ethical considerations are honoured in this study. These included using codes on field notes, de-identifying physical artefacts and the researcher’s acting as an observer only and being careful not to influence the lesson. The process of observing is outlined in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5

The Process of Observing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THE PROCESS OF OBSERVING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Site</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ensuring participants are at ease</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Observations</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Design for recording field notes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Remaining unobtrusive</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respecting the ownership of the data &amp; the privacy of participants</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Checking of observations by participants</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.6.1.4 **Physical artefacts.**

The collection of physical artefacts is another data gathering strategy adopted in this study. Physical artefacts “can be a valuable source of information to help researchers understand central phenomena in qualitative studies” (Creswell, 2012, p. 223), providing text data that does not require transcription and is ready for analysis (Creswell, 2012). While documents may be difficult to obtain (Creswell, 2012), in this study the teacher participants collected and provided artefacts which they believed influenced their planning, teaching and assessing of writing in the early years. These included:

- work programs;
- literacy planners;
- assessment tools;
- policies and programs;
- teaching planning documents;
- student work samples from the observed lessons; and
- other relevant student work samples.

Each teacher was provided with a divided folder with subheadings to assist with organising artefacts (See Appendix H).

In addition, each teacher completed a class profile form which aimed to collect information about the following issues:

- class size;
- time spent teaching writing;
- assistance in the classroom with teaching writing;
- specific language, literacy and learning information of the students, for example, the number of ESL students;
- students with learning difficulties related to literacy learning; and,
- the social and cultural aspects of each school (See Appendix I).

During the second interviews, teachers explained how each artefact influenced their writing pedagogy. Artefacts were then de-identified and coded. Written permission to use writing samples from each student was sought from parents. These artefacts were used to complement interviews, lesson observations and researcher field notes for each individual case study.
4.6.2 Stage two: Final analysis, synthesis and story writing.

Final analysis and synthesis are then completed from the analytical process of CCA (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). A descriptive narrative is then generated.

4.7 Data Analysis

Data analysis allows meaning to be made from the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The interpretivist orientation underpinning this research informs how data are gathered and analysed. Constant comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was employed to manage the data. CCA is appropriate as it invites an interpretative lens of inquiry. The processes adopted in analysing data are illustrated in Figure 4.5.

![Figure 4.5. Processes adopted in analysing data.](image)

4.7.1 Stages of the data analysis.

Two stages of data analysis were employed in this study as shown in Figure 4.6.

![Figure 4.6. Stages of the data analysis.](image)

Stage One involves an inspection of the research phenomenon through the employment of six in-depth case studies. Constant comparative analysis for the individual case studies was applied. The second stage included final analysis and synthesis and story writing.
This final stage led to the generation of a descriptive narrative. The data analytical processes are illustrated in Figure 4.7.

**Data Analytic Processes**

**INTERPRETATIVE**

![Diagram of data analytic processes]

*Figure 4.7. Data analytic processes.*

### 4.7.2 Analysis and management of individual case data.

#### 4.7.2.1 Constant comparative analysis.

Constant comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was employed to analyse and manage the individual case data, allowing for reflective and interpretative analysis. It employs a simultaneous and iterative process through constant comparison of data from multiple sources (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Collective analysis of the data generates themes and patterns, allowing for a story to be interpreted and a descriptive narrative to be generated. The process of CCA employed in this study is illustrated in Figure 4.8.
4.7.2.2 Inductive category coding.

Coding is an important component of interpretative data analysis to assist in the management and organisation of data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). A code is a name employed by the researcher to label text data that contains specific ideas or information (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, coding enabled the research to ascertain categories by which similar information, differences and emerging patterns could be revealed. (Thomas, 2006). Further, the interpretive process of coding allowed the data to be reduced.

Specifically, inductive category coding (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) was employed, enabling the researcher to develop a set of categories by which to reconstruct tentative interpretations from the CCA process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Reflective reading of transcripts and field notes enabled categories to be identified (Thomas, 2006). Following this, themes were generated by engaging repeatedly with transcripts and field notes and considering possible meanings (M. Marshall, 1999).

4.7.3 Process of data analysis: Inspection: Individual case studies.

4.7.3.1 Data collection.

Data were generated from semi-structured interviews, field notes from participant observation and collection of physical artefacts.
4.7.3.2 Data display.

Each of the interviews was transcribed. The researcher’s field notes were collated and organised. The teacher participants were provided with a labelled, sectioned file folder to collect and organise their own physical artefacts relating to their writing pedagogy.

4.7.3.3 Data reflection, data coding, data reduction and generation of themes.

The data were displayed and reflected upon by the researcher. Codes were employed to label segments of information which were then organised into themes. Colour coding was employed to highlight emerging themes. Each individual case study was treated separately and then compared with the other case studies through a cross-case analysis. Data were then re-examined to identify emerging similarities, differences and relationships. More details and examples of these processes are illustrated in Chapter 7.

4.7.3.4 Inductive category coding: Interviews and field notes.

Interview transcripts and field notes from observed lessons were:

- displayed and examined through the employment of CCA;
- coded with the case number, the interview or field notes number and the line of the interview or field notes, so direct referencing of data could occur;
- highlighted under categories;
- organised through mapping; and
- summarised using emerging themes (See Appendix J).

4.7.3.5 Physical artefacts.

Data collected from physical artefacts were organised initially into five categories to manage the data (See Appendix J). Information was summarised for each case using the five categories and this enabled the cross-case analysis to be completed. (See Appendix K).

4.7.3.6 Collation of reduced data.

Further summaries were made to organise, reduce and collate the data. This was achieved by incorporating reduced data from interviews, field notes and physical artefacts for each individual case. (See Appendix L). Tables were created to summarise and display the themes that emerged through the data. (See Appendix M).
4.7.3.7 Deriving major themes, differences and relationships from the data.

Through the employment of CCA, major themes, differences and relationships were derived from the data. The iterative process involved visiting and revisiting the data to generate understandings progressively (Srivastava, 2009), as illustrated in Figure 4.9.

THE PROCESS OF ITERATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Iteration</th>
<th>Story Interpretation</th>
<th>Descriptive Narrative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Iteration</td>
<td>Constantly compare each data type within each individual case. Organise and reduce data into themes. Employ themes to write narrative stories.</td>
<td>Individual case Narratives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Iteration</td>
<td>Constantly compare all data across cases for relationships between beliefs, practices, and influences. Extract and map emerging relationships</td>
<td>Comparison of cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Iteration</td>
<td>Constantly compare data and highlight beliefs, practices and influences into issue clusters. Reduce issues clusters into major themes.</td>
<td>Discussion of issues generated from new understandings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Iteration</td>
<td>Derive and display data under themes. Constantly compare all data not highlighted under a theme to examine for differences. Extract and map emerging differences.</td>
<td>Presentation of Conceptual Lens for Teachers of Writing &amp; Categorisation of Teachers using the Conceptual lens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th Iteration</td>
<td>Constantly compare the data within each individual case to examine the approaches influencing individual teacher writing pedagogy. Consequent development of Approaches to Writing Pedagogy: A Conceptual Lens, (Graham, 2009). Subsequent categorisation of teachers using the conceptual lens.</td>
<td>Discussion of individual approaches</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.9. The process of iteration.

4.7.4 Process of data analysis: Final analysis and synthesis and story writing.

4.7.4.1 Final analysis and synthesis and generating a descriptive narrative.

Final analysis and synthesis of the data through the employment of CCA (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) occurred in stage three. This included both interpretative and descriptive processes to manage the data. The researcher endeavored to understand the lived experiences of the participant from the participant’s perspective and then communicate this interpretation descriptively (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012). Rich, thick description
(Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) was employed to discuss the new understandings. Finally, a critical synthesis of interpretations generated a descriptive narrative. This is presented through individual case narratives, a comparison of cases and a discussion of issues generated from the new understandings.

4.7.4.2 Conclusions and contributions.

Conclusions were generated and reported and, finally, contributions were identified and reported. The case studies data analysis framework is illustrated in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6

Case Studies Data Analysis Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages of Data Analysis</th>
<th>Case Studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection</td>
<td>First interviews, Observation of participants, including lesson observations, field notes and second interviews, Collection of physical artefacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Display</td>
<td>Organisation of field notes, Transcription of interviews, Organisation of physical artefacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflections on Data</td>
<td>Reading of the data, Identification of tentative Issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Coding</td>
<td>Employment of inductive category coding (Lincoln &amp; Guba, 1985), Establishment of categories, Coding of the data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Reduction and Generation of Themes</td>
<td>Employment of an iterative process, Analysis of individual cases, Cross-case analysis using CCA (Glaser &amp; Strauss, 1967), Abstracting of themes, Abstracting of differences, Examination of Relationships, Development of Approaches to Writing Pedagogy: A Conceptual Lens (Graham, 2009) and subsequent categorisation using the conceptual lens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Analysis &amp; Synthesis and Story Writing</td>
<td>Final analysis and synthesis using CCA (Glaser &amp; Strauss, 1967), Writing about understandings using thick, rich description (Denzin &amp; Lincoln, 1994), Individual case narratives, Comparison of cases, Discussion of issues generated from new understandings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions and Contributions</td>
<td>Generation and reporting of conclusions, Identification and reporting of contributions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.8 Verification

“Research is concerned with producing valid and reliable information in an ethical manner”, (Merriam, 1998, p. 198). The verification of case study research is concerned with trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998). Credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability are adopted collectively to establish the trustworthiness of this research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Strategies that ensure trustworthiness were adopted in this research’s data collection, analysis and interpretation, as shown in Figure 4.10.

Figure 4.10. Overview of trustworthiness by applying Lincoln and Guba’s four criteria for trustworthiness. Adapted from Naturalistic Inquiry by Y. Lincoln and E. Guba (Eds.), 1985, Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

4.8.1 Credibility.

Credibility refers to being confident in the trustworthiness of the generated understandings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, credibility is achieved by the use of multiple processes to ensure the trustworthiness of the researcher’s interpretations. Firstly, the process of triangulation was adopted in order to demonstrate the trustworthiness of the
research design (Denzin, 1997). In particular, the employment of multiple data gathering strategies, as shown in section 4.6, demonstrates the trustworthiness of the research as illustrated in Figure 4.11.


In addition, multiple participants, as shown in section 4.5, are involved in the research to ensure trustworthiness as illustrated in Figure 4.12.

Collectively, the multiple participants and multiple data gathering strategies contributed to the trustworthiness of the research.

Also, peer examination was employed to strengthen the credibility of this study. Peer examination involves engaging with expert colleagues to critique the appropriateness of the research design as well as the emerging tentative understandings (Merriam, 1998, 2009). A critical friend with expertise in early years literacy education critiqued data analysis and interpretation periodically. This strategy aimed to demonstrate the credibility of the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

In addition, in-depth engagement and observation allows for rich and accurate data gathering (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher spent from February 2005 to November 2006 engaging with participants. The researcher engaged with participants in meetings and in interviews and observed their writing lessons in their classrooms. Such strategies allowed the researcher to develop respectful relationships with participants and to immerse herself in the culture of the case study sites, thus enhancing the trustworthiness of the research.

Further, throughout the research, participants shared in the interpretative process (Denscombe, 2010). The participants reviewed the interview transcripts to ensure accuracy. Also, the researcher observed participating teachers teach writing lessons on two occasions. To ensure accuracy, the participants read the researcher’s field notes taken during the observed lessons. Second interviews were conducted after the observed lessons and, as a strategy to ensure trustworthiness in the second interviews, the participants discussed the researchers’ interpretations of these observed writing lessons to ensure accurate interpretation. Further, during the second interviews, participants explained how their collected artefacts influence their writing pedagogy. This process ensured an accurate interpretation of how artefacts are employed. Finally, participants read new understandings to authenticate the analysed data (Denscombe, 2010).

### 4.8.2 Transferability.

In case study research, understandings may not be generalised (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Moreover, transferability is achieved when understandings may be applied to other contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In order for this to occur rich, thick description was employed. The intent was to provide the reader ample and insightful information about the research phenomenon (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Merriam, 1995) so the reader may apply the researcher's understandings to their contexts.
4.8.3 Dependability.
Dependability involves demonstrating that the research is trustworthy through the implementation of a defensible audit trail that records the processes adopted in the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The audit trail was established through maintaining a researcher journal (Merriam, 2009) and a chronological record of analytical processes throughout data collection and analysis, including the coding process. Both the researcher journal and records demonstrate researcher reflections on the progress of the study. The audit trail includes the processes used with CCA (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), including inductive category coding (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), as shown in section 4.7. The iterative process involves visiting and revisiting the data to lead progressively to refined focus and understandings, as shown in Figure 4.9 and section 7.2. This process of recording de-contextualised and then re-contextualised data contributes to the dependability of this study (Srivastava, 2009).

4.8.4 Confirmability.
Confirmability involves ensuring the understandings of the study are confirmed by the participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher aimed to minimise bias by considering carefully the interpretative nature of the research throughout the data collection and analysis (Billups, 2014). Further, the researcher ensured that participants checked the researcher’s interpretations throughout the study (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009). Firstly, the participants were informed at the onset of the research project that the aim was to record their interpretations accurately and that they were part of this process. This occurred in the initial telephone meetings and face-to-face meetings and in writing (See Appendix C). Also, throughout the data collection and analysis, participants were actively involved through participation in a number of interpretative processes to ensure accurate interpretations. These processes included reviewing interview transcripts and field notes, discussing researcher’s interpretations of observed lessons, discussing the influence of artefacts and reading new understandings. These processes authenticated the analysed data, ensuring a rigorous study (Billups, 2014). Further, this study included an audit trail through a research journal and chronological data analysis records that may be followed, demonstrating confirmability (Billups, 2014, Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

4.9 Limitations
Firstly, it is acknowledged that case study research understandings may not be generalised. However, transferability is achieved when understandings may be applied to other contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In order for this to occur rich, thick description was
employed. The intent was to provide the reader ample and insightful information about the research phenomenon (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Merriam, 1995) so the reader may apply the researcher's understandings to their contexts.

Also, it is acknowledged that researcher bias is a possible limitation in any research. Triangulation of data sources and participants (Denscombe, 2010), participants sharing in the interpretative process (Denscombe, 2010), peer examination (Merriam, 2009) and in-depth engagement and observation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) were employed in order to minimise researcher influence (Merriam, 2009) and ensure credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

4.10 Ethical Considerations

Ethics in research relate to acceptable conduct for research (Shamoo & Resnik, 2015). The ethical principles underpinning this research include: respect for democracy, respect for truth and respect for persons (Bassey, 1999). These principles were honoured by ensuring that this research study was conducted in accordance with the requirements of the ACU Research Projects Ethics Committee (See Appendix A). Also, research approval was obtained from Brisbane Catholic Education, (See Appendix N). In addition, the following ethical procedures were adopted in this study:

- Participants were informed about the study prior to their voluntary participation;
- Participants could choose to withdraw from the research project at any time;
- An information letter for participants outlined the research objectives, the phenomenon under examination, the types of data to be collected and details of how this data was to be utilised and reported upon (See Appendix F);
- Procedures for the maintenance of confidentiality were clearly delineated in writing, as were protocols for ensuring anonymity (See Appendix F);
- Signed consent was obtained prior to the commencement of data collection (See Appendix F);
- Data were carefully collected using an interpretative lens of inquiry;
- Data were de-identified to ensure privacy and anonymity;
- Data are stored securely and safely, in accordance with ACU protocols and ethical guidelines;
- Copies of their own interview transcripts are available to all participants;
- Participants were encouraged to read interview transcripts and make notes to clarify meaning or elaborate or provide any further information;
• Field notes were checked by participants to ensure accuracy;
• Data were carefully analysed using the process of CCA;
• Participants read and checked new understandings for accuracy and were consulted regarding the publication of data; and
• The researcher strived to avoid error and acknowledge and address bias.

Each of these procedures contributed to an ethical design, data gathering strategies, analysis and narrative.

4.11 Summation and Overview of the Research Design

This research is interpretative in design, consistent with the aim of the research—to explore writing pedagogy in the early years of schooling. Moreover, the construction of meaning is interpreted and understood within the social contexts in which writing is taught. Case study methodology enables the research to be bound to Catholic primary schools within the archdiocese of Brisbane. Further, multiple data gathering strategies allow participants to share their understandings. Finally, verification processes and ethical procedures contribute to an ethical and trustworthy design. An overview of the research design is outlined in Table 4.7.
Table 4.7

Overview of the Research Design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESEARCH QUESTIONS</th>
<th>STAGES OF RESEARCH</th>
<th>DATA GATHERING STRATEGY</th>
<th>SOURCES OF DATA AND ANALYSIS</th>
<th>TIMELINE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overarching Question:</strong> How do teacher beliefs about writing pedagogy influence their teaching of writing in the early years of schooling?</td>
<td><strong>Stage One:</strong> Inspection: Case Studies</td>
<td>Individual Case Studies (n=6)</td>
<td>1st Interview qn’s informed by literature review &amp; survey trends. Observing each teacher teaching writing on two occasions each &amp; taking extensive field notes. Providing each teacher with a folder to collect relevant artefacts. 2nd Interviews to discuss artefacts &amp; researcher field notes. Employment of CCA inductive category coding to analyse &amp; code data. Displaying data, reflecting, coding, reducing data, generating themes. Triangulation &amp; verification. Participant data checking and sharing in the interpretative process</td>
<td>Data Collection Stage Two: April–Nov 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contributing Question 1:</strong> What do teachers believe about the teaching of writing in the early years of schooling?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Semi-structured 1st interviews</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Writing lesson observations &amp; field notes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Collection of physical artefacts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Semi-structured 2nd interviews</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contributing Question 2:</strong> What practices do teachers employ in the teaching of writing in the early years of schooling?</td>
<td><strong>Stage Two:</strong> Final Analysis, Synthesis &amp; Story Writing</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Story interpretation: Completion of analysis and synthesis using CCA. Generating a descriptive narrative through discussion of similarities, differences and relationships. Verification. Participant checking of new understandings.</td>
<td>Final Analysis, Synthesis &amp; Story Writing Jan–Nov 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contributing Question 3:</strong> What influences teachers in the teaching of writing in the early years of schooling?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The interpretative case narratives are presented in chapter 5.
CHAPTER FIVE
INTERPRETATIVE CASE NARRATIVES

5.1 Introduction
The purpose of this research is to explore teacher beliefs, classroom practices and influences relating to writing pedagogy in the early years of schooling. The narratives of the six teacher participants selected as interpretative cases for this thesis are presented in this chapter.

5.2 Individual Case Narratives
The narratives share six primary school teachers' lived experiences of writing pedagogy in the context of their current early years' classes. The data gathering strategies employed include semi-structured interviews (See Appendices E & F), collection of physical artefacts (See Appendix H) and researcher field notes from participant observation (See Appendix G).

5.3 Constant Comparative Analysis (CCA)
The data from interviews, field notes and physical artefacts were used in CCA, which employs an iterative process of comparing data from different sources.

5.3.1 First iteration: Generating themes.
Data were then organised, and themes were generated, as shown in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1
How Data were Analysed and Themes Generated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question One</th>
<th>Research Question Two</th>
<th>Research Question 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs</td>
<td>Practices</td>
<td>Influences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Types</td>
<td>Data Types</td>
<td>Data Types</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Field notes from lesson observations</td>
<td>Artefacts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- The Teacher
- The School
- The Class
- Teacher beliefs
- Planning for Teaching Writing
- Teaching Practices
- Assessing Writing
- Influences on Writing Pedagogy
These themes were then employed to structure the generation of the case narratives.

### 5.3.2 Second Iteration: Examining and mapping relationships.

The first interview transcripts were re-examined along with lesson observations and interview transcripts. The purpose of this process was to explore possible relationships, as shown in Figure 5.1.

![Mapping Relationships](image)

*Figure 5.1. Mapping relationships.*

### 5.4 Individual Case Participants

A summary of relevant information regarding the six case participants is outlined in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2

*Teacher Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Years Teaching Experience</th>
<th>School Location</th>
<th>Grade Level in 2005</th>
<th>Years Teaching an Early Years Class</th>
<th>Highest Academic Qualifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cara</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4-year trained (Current MEd studies).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanya</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4-year trained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chazz</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4-year trained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackie</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>&gt;25</td>
<td>Coastal</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>&gt;10</td>
<td>M Ed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andy</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>&gt;20</td>
<td>Suburban (Close to CBD)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4-year trained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dolly</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Suburban (Close to CBD)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4-year trained</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.5 Cara's Narrative

5.5.1 The teacher.

Cara has been teaching for six years, three of which have been in early years classes. She commenced her teaching career in New South Wales, and then moved to regional Queensland. Cara is impressed by the First Steps program (Education Department of Western Australia [EDWA], 1994, 1995) because it works with phases of development and consequently aligns with her belief about the developmental nature of writing. Cara is currently completing her Master of Education degree. Moreover, she participates in regular professional development. She volunteered to participate in this study because she is passionate about literacy teaching and learning. Further, she reflects on and adjusts her teaching to meet the needs of her students (C1I1L6–7).

5.5.2 The school.

Cara's school is situated in regional Queensland within the Catholic archdiocese of Brisbane. The school caters for many students from low socio-economic backgrounds. Cara is concerned about the standard of literacy of primary students. “In the early years in our school we have a number of children with literacy difficulties and the children's language is really affecting the way they write” (C1II1L3–5). Catering for individual needs of her students is important to Cara.

5.5.3 The class.

Cara teaches a Year 2 class of 26 students, including 15 girls and 11 boys. Cara spends approximately ten hours a week teaching literacy and three hours of this time she dedicates to writing. Cara believes about 50% of the students in her class have reading difficulties, and 40% have writing difficulties. The class includes one student of Filipino background who had English as an additional language (EAL). This student experiences difficulty using appropriate grammar and sequencing sentences. Assistance with writing is given to students whose Year 2 Diagnostic Net (QSA, 1996, 1997) evaluations identified them as below the benchmark standard. A learning support teacher works with EAL students to support Cara. Parent helpers also assist with literacy groups for reading and writing (C1A1CPF).

5.5.4 Teacher beliefs.

Cara is influenced by emergent theory (Teale & Sulzby, 1986). Consequently, she believes the developmental nature of writing should be considered for planning, teaching and assessment purposes. “We all learn at different paces and develop at different rates
and writing needs to be structured accordingly” (C1I1L227–230). Personal beliefs about the developmental nature of writing and catering for individual learning preferences influence how Cara teaches writing. Cara’s writing pedagogy is influenced by her understanding of Blooms Taxonomy (Bloom, Krathwohl & Masia, 1956). Consequently, Cara groups her students purposefully “to create learning opportunities for different learning styles in the classroom” (C1I1L226–227).

Much of what Cara teaches in her writing program originates from her belief in working from the children’s developmental level. Consequently, she addresses sentence structure, word study, and oracy as part of writing, with less time spent on individual text types. Cara believes in the importance of her oracy program as it is foundational for teaching writing in the early years. Further, she believes in focusing on children’s developmental levels. With this as a basis, she employs appropriate scaffolding processes (C1I1L10–11). “Teaching writing is important and skills in the early years include: learning what a word is, what a letter is, the one-to-one type correspondence and learning to write a sentence before we can start teaching text types” (C1I1L16–20).

### 5.5.5 Planning for teaching writing.

Cara incorporates systemic documentation, school policy and programs, personal beliefs and the needs of the children into her writing pedagogy. The school in which Cara teaches has adopted a basic Scope and Sequence for English and English Guidelines which she follows. She also implements the English outcomes from the English Syllabus (QSA, 2005), and adapts her program to the needs of the students (C1I1L102–109).

A lot of what we teach is policy-led. We have started to develop our own early years curriculum guidelines for early literacy and numeracy. We are trying to develop a scope and sequence [document] of what text types we will be looking at, or what type of grammatical aspects need to be covered for a year. We also use the draft syllabus (C1I1L231–239).

Cara plans with her teaching partner to teach across the key learning areas, specifically for units of work and text types. She then decides which strategies to employ to teach writing (C1I1L111–116).

### 5.5.6 Teaching practices.

Cara integrates her planning and teaching of writing to address outcomes through integrated units of work (C1I2L43–45). One example includes writing within a unit, Healthy Living (C1I2L39–41). Within this context, Cara’s writing program originates from
students’ developmental needs. She differentiates writing instruction to cater for a variety of learning preferences and ensures her teaching of writing addresses student deficiencies in the writing continuum. The Year Two Net indicators (QSA, 1997) identify strengths, which also illuminates areas that need improvement (C1I2L23–24). Cara designs her program to ensure all children experience success at a level that is appropriate for them. Cara explains the strategies she employs to teach writing change from year to year, depending on the needs of her students (C1I1L38-39).

Many students in Cara’s class are visual learners, so visual literacy is a priority (C1I1L145–168). Words such as those from Magic 100 Words: Learning Centres Resource (Reiter, 2003) are displayed around the classroom. (C1I1L21–23). Board work with the children and modelled writing on the floor with a whiteboard are also employed (C1I1L128). The children also work in groups with the support of the teacher and an aide (C1I1L131–132). There are different ability groups in the classroom, so small group work is productive (C1I1L134–138).

Writing is taught as an integral part of literacy within relevant units of work. Cara describes a learning episode encompassing viewing, reading, oral language, drawing and writing:

We went on an excursion to see and experience different environments and animals. Since I have many different learners, we needed to see it and experience it, for example, what does it sound like, what does it feel like, what does it smell like. Then we started to write descriptions of photos we had taken. We created a diorama to start our writing process. Students created a picture of their animal and then we started to describe and write a story description. Then the students were given a proforma for an information report. The children highlighted the different information to construct their sentences. For example, we might have highlighted “lived in bushland”. The children might write, “The Koala lives in the bush”, and then we expand on that. Then we went through our draft process to circle misspelt words and edit the text. Students then typed their reports (second drafts) and read those to a partner (C1I1L145–168).

Cara believes viewing, reading, oral language, drawing prior to and surrounding writing assist in scaffolding appropriate learning experiences for those “struggling” with writing. She also believes the process caters for varying learning preferences (C1I1L141–148).

Cara teaches different text types, as outlined in her school guidelines (C1I1L87–88). A new strategy Cara employs is having children record their stories orally on tape and later
she scribes them. Cara explains this is useful strategy for students with occupational therapy issues (C111L97–99). Cara employs many pedagogical strategies including modelled writing, some joint construction, and independent construction of stories.

Cara encourages drawing prior to writing as a strategy to help children write their thoughts on paper and help convey meaning. “The children draw a picture first and then describe what happened in words and I might scribe” (C111L55–60). Further, she encourages decision-making as part of the writing process. She believes her students enjoy having choices about what they write. They particularly enjoy writing about themselves. “Students enjoy having choice. Early years’ students are very self-centred and like to write about themselves” (C111L206–207).

Cara employs multiple strategies and programs to teach spelling and word study as part of her writing program. “We do a lot of word identification, and conferences on spelling. A struggling reader needs to see a word 500–1000 times before they are able to use it. So that is something that I implement in writing time” (C111L44–47). The Early Literacy Foundations (ELF) program (Barrett, Allison, Copley, & Morgan, 2007) is one program that Cara has implemented in her classroom (C111L24–26). “The students spell out words and jump out sentences. It is especially beneficial for strugglers” (C111L26–27). THRASS (Ritchie, 1998) is another program Cara uses in her Year 2 class. This follows on from Jolly Phonics (Lloyd, Wernham, & Jolly, 1998) employed in Year 1 in her school (C112L53–55).

5.5.7 Assessing writing.

Cara believes the developmental nature of writing should be considered for assessment purposes. Consequently, she employs developmental checklists to assess children. Also, she employs relevant criteria sheets to assess writing skills which have been taught, such as text types (C111). Cara and her teacher partner write a criteria sheet with continuum outcomes as part of the Year 2 Diagnostic Net (QSA, 1996, 1997) which is mandated in Queensland, as well as English outcomes. “Our main writing assessment in Year 2 is the diagnostic net continuum” (C111L280–281). This involves completing a checklist of where children are at in their writing development according to the phases of writing development. (C111L290–296). An example of a criteria sheet Cara employed to assess a recount includes the children’s ability to:

- Understand the purpose of a recount;
- recount an event in a sequence;
• describe the text orally (e.g., when it is, where it is, who it is, what happened, time order);
• use correct tense;
• use capital letters and full stops in correct places

and notes their frequently used words. Cara also explains that some of these criteria come from the English outcomes (C1I1L284–288).

5.5.8 Influences on writing pedagogy.

Cara is influenced by emergent theory (Teale & Sulzby, 1986) and writing as social practice (Vygotsky, 1978; Hidi & Boscolo, 2006). Her beliefs about the developmental nature of writing also influences her planning and teaching of writing. Cara’s beliefs about Bloom’s Taxonomy (Bloom, Krathwohl & Masia, 1956) and children’s varying learning preferences influence her planning and teaching of writing. This includes how she groups children and plans activities (C1I1L225–239).

Cara also identifies school policy and programs, her teaching experience, her current Master of Education studies, professional development and the Year Two Diagnostic Net (Department of Education, Queensland [DET], 1998) as influencing her writing pedagogy. Further, Cara explains that her students are the primary influence on her writing pedagogy:

I think writing changes from year to year, teaching style, depending on your students. I think change is important because if you are teaching students that can’t read and write as well as the ones you have taught in previous years you have to adjust your units. The units from one year may not cater for the students you have the next year (C1I1L299–303).
5.5.9 Summation of Cara’s narrative.

An analysis of Cara’s case identified the importance of relationships between Cara’s beliefs about teaching writing and the practices she employs. In addition, Cara identified many influences informing her writing pedagogy. Examples of these relationships are presented in Figure 5.2.

**Table 5.2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example 1</th>
<th>Example 2</th>
<th>Example 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Belief</strong></td>
<td><strong>Belief</strong></td>
<td><strong>Belief</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing as developmental</td>
<td>Catering for individual differences</td>
<td>Blooms Taxonomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice</td>
<td>Practice</td>
<td>Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach letters, words, sentences, text types</td>
<td>Adapts strategies according to needs</td>
<td>Groups chn according to learning preferences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 5.2. Cluster map showing Case one, Cara: the relationships between teacher beliefs, practices and influences for the teaching of writing in the early years. An examination of these relationships has identified the macro- and micro-influences underpinning Cara’s writing pedagogy, as summarised in Figure 5.3.*
5.5.10 Case one: Cara.

Figure 5.3. Influences informing writing pedagogy: Case one, Cara.
5.6 Tanya’s Narrative

5.6.1 The teacher.
Tanya completed a Bachelor of Early Childhood Education and has been teaching early years students for three years. She participated in this study in order to reflect on her teaching of literacy. Further, she aims to improve the literacy standards among her students (C2I1L2–6). Tanya believes learning should be relevant for children and she teaches writing within relevant contexts.

5.6.2 The school.
Tanya’s school is situated in a low socio-economic area in regional Queensland, within the archdiocese of Brisbane. Tanya believes this environment and how children spend their time out of school influences their literacy learning. Consequently, Tanya aims to teach writing through meaningful classroom experiences (C2I1L2–6). Tanya advocates the importance of home and school partnerships and works to include the parents of her students in their literacy learning. One initiative she adopts to achieve this is through her class newsletter:

Each term we write a class digital newsletter. We try to come up with catchy headings to catch the reader’s attention. Each child produces an article. We include photos. Often the students write about what they have learned and things that have happened during the term. This newsletter is then distributed to parents (C2I2L74–81).

5.6.3 The class.
Tanya teaches a Year 3 class of 25 students. The class includes students who had literacy learning difficulties, although no EAL learners are identified. She identifies “twelve children who are at least six months to two years behind the chronological age in reading”, which accounts for nearly half the class. Tanya also explains that these students have writing difficulties (C2A1CPF). A learning support teacher assists Tanya during literacy lessons (C2A1CPF).

5.6.4 Teacher beliefs.
Writing as social practice (Vygotsky, 1978; Hidi & Boscolo, 2006) provides a context for Tanya’s writing pedagogy. Personal beliefs about writing being relevant, purposeful and surrounded by oral language influence Tanya’s writing pedagogy. Tanya explains the importance of meaningful writing:
Students can’t just write for the sake of writing. I find I have better results if students … write for a purpose, with something that is real and meaningful to them. If we change what we do it has to have a purpose behind it, and then you are setting the children up for success. If students are given a choice and have a purpose for writing it positively influences their attitude towards writing (C2i1L12–18).

Tanya includes oral activities as part of her writing lessons. She explains, “I believe that the children need a good oral base to start, because they need to orally communicate ideas before they can write. They need a lot of oral work before they start to work on any written tasks” that oral language should surround writing (C2i1L9–11). Further, Tanya believes it is important to foster home and school partnerships to support the teaching of writing (I1L172–182; I2L74–81). Tanya also believes writing is developmental. Consequently, she works with the developmental needs of individual children (I1L281–310).

5.6.5 Planning for teaching writing.

Personal beliefs about the importance of relevance, school programs and the needs of the children influence Tanya’s planning (C2i2). Tanya's planning begins with organising learning experiences that are generated from class themes or happenings in the school or local community (C2A8PW1.5). Tanya employs Outlook Express, integrated with Microsoft Internet Explorer 6, to plan, and works with her teaching partner (C2i2L16–17). The school English Scope and Sequence Chart (C2A12PW1.5) and school spelling guidelines are also employed (C2A11PW1.5). Further, Tanya employs the use of individualised spelling plans based on words children have misspelled in their writing (C2A10PW1.5).

5.6.6 Teaching practices.

Tanya motivates her students by providing relevant contexts for writing. “All writing lessons are linked to whatever we are doing at the time” (C2i1L30). The students' interests are also considered for planning purposes. Tanya explained how visual literacy and capitalising on children’s interests motivate her students to write:

The children watched the movie Finding Nemo and constructed narratives. We did this in stages, watching half an hour of the movie at a time and then writing. They began by writing an introduction. We talked about exciting beginnings and attracting the reader’s attention. Then we watched more of the movie and the children answered a series of questions about the story viewed so far. In the next
lesson we inserted another adventure. The children had to make up their own adventure for Nemo to have and add it to their story about the movie. The children were so motivated viewing the movie—they wanted to move on, and we had to do our writing as we were going—so everyone was writing and writing and writing, because they wanted to move on to the next part of the movie. I had one little boy who had never written more than a few sentences on his own. The work with the DVD was something that interested him and related to Wonderful Water [class unit of work]. He completed a whole A4 page of writing on Nemo. So, that shows the power of visual media technology—quite incredible to see (C2I1L73–84).

Tanya employs many strategies to teach writing. She explained that modelled writing is always demonstrated prior to students’ writing independently. “I do lots of modelling first before student construct” (C2I1L20–22). Tanya also employs drawing as a planning tool prior to writing. “I find pictorial first at this age is a good way to start, because they never lose track of what it is, they are writing about. They may change direction, but the main ideas remain constant with that drawing” (C2I1L58–60). Another strategy Tanya employs, is brainstorming. Tanya explained:

The children begin with a plan, such as a diagram with keywords, or a keyword in the middle and then a brainstorm around it. Sometimes we brainstorm on the whiteboard, so the children have time to think and get their ideas down. The children then draw from other people’s ideas also, because children at this age often find it difficult to find a starting point (C2I1L45–50).

Tanya advocates a print-rich classroom and employs vocabulary building activities. There are word lists and the Magic 100 Words (Reiter, 2003) around the classroom for the children to see, and the children are encouraged to use these in their writing (C2I1L97). Integrating reading and viewing with writing is also a regular occurrence in Tanya’s class and she describes an example of the experience thus:

We watched a video and found information about the moon and read quite a few books on Neil Armstrong landing on the moon, and what he discovered and described. Then to reinforce what we had learnt, we wrote a postcard home to earth pretending we were astronauts that had landed on the moon and were sending back facts about what the moon was like. It had to have facts about the moon. Once these were edited the children made them into postcards and mailed them to their parents (C2I2L143–155).

Tanya explains how she responds positively to her students’ efforts to write:
I tick off the key words that students have spelt correctly, which sets them up for success - it gives them much more confidence, and that is important. I put a huge effort into any achievement. I never use any negativity in writing lessons. I say to students ‘I am helping you towards writing like a Year 4 student’ and see changes as positive (C2I1L107–113).

5.6.7 Assessing writing.

To assess writing in her early years class Tanya considers the developmental nature of writing for each child. She achieves this through employing relevant criteria sheets based on individual needs (C2I1). Tanya assesses her students developmentally, by assessing individual capabilities and encouraging improvements. She employs assessment sheets, which are individualised and based on individual capabilities (C2I1L282–283). Tanya describes the process as:

When assessing writing I consider: Are they confident? Are they able to get something down on the page? Does it look like a basic sentence? Have they got the content? We do a lot of sentence work. Does it flow? Does it make sense? Have they got some form of spelling there? It may be that the majority are phonetically spelled. I also look at the physical structure as well – How is it physically laid out on the page. For the more advanced ones – Did it follow the genre structure?” (C2I1L284–291). Not all children are expected to meet all criteria—it’s needs based. Some children know I will only focus on the first few criteria (C2I1L307).

5.6.8 Influences on writing pedagogy.

Tanya is influenced by a social practices discourse (Vygotsky, 1978; Hidi & Boscolo, 2006) for teaching writing. Consequently, she teaches writing lessons within relevant units of work. Tanya is also influenced by her belief in the developmental nature of writing. Consequently, she employs individualised learning tasks and assessment (I1L281–310). Tanya identifies the children as the primary influence on her practice. She plans, teaches and assesses writing based on the needs and abilities of individuals in any class grouping in any given year. “The way I teach is guided particularly by the class. That will impact the way I do things; that has a huge impact. I am guided by what is going on around me” (C2I1L275–278). Other influences Tanya identified include sharing ideas with other teachers, attending professional development, and professional readings (C2I1L269–274). Tanya is also influenced by her school’s English and spelling guidelines, as well as the systemic Year 3 Benchmarks testing (ACARA, 2008; C2I2).
Tanya believes oral language is important for teaching writing. Consequently, she employs discussion prior to writing to help children to organise their thoughts (C2I1L9–11). Tanya also believes writing should be taught explicitly. Consequently, she models writing regularly, using exemplar models of what she expects the children to produce later (C2I1L20–22).

5.6.9 Summation of Tanya’s narrative.

An analysis of Tanya’s case identified the importance of relationships between Tanya’s beliefs about teaching writing and the practices she employs. In addition, Tanya identified many influences informing her writing pedagogy. Examples of these relationships are presented in Figure 5.4.

**Example 1**
- **Belief**: Home & School Partnerships to support writing
- **Practice**: Class newsletter to share writing at home

**Example 2**
- **Belief**: Writing is Developmental
- **Practice**: Assesses using criteria based on individual development

**Example 3**
- **Belief**: Writing should be relevant & meaningful
- **Practice**: Teaches writing within relevant units of work

*Figure 5.4. Cluster map showing Case two, Tanya: the relationships between teacher beliefs, practices and influences for the teaching of writing in the early years.*

An examination of these relationships has identified the macro- and micro-influences underpinning Tanya’s writing pedagogy, as summarised in Figure 5.5.
5.6.10 Case two: Tanya.

Figure 5.5. Influences informing writing pedagogy: Case two, Tanya.
5.7 Chazz’s Narrative

5.7.1 The teacher.

Chazz has been teaching early years classes for five years and currently teaches a Year 3 class. Chazz volunteered to participate in this study to reflect on her teaching of writing. She aims to be a reflective teacher to improve her pedagogy (C3I1L2–4). Chazz believes her writing pedagogy is influenced primarily by systemic influences, including mandated testing and the *English Syllabus* (QSA, 2003; C3I1L79–81), as well as school policy and programs (C3I1L92–97).

5.7.2 The school.

Chazz’s school is a Catholic primary school situated within a low socio-economic area in regional Queensland, within the archdiocese of Brisbane. The school implements an English program which Chazz identified as a major influence on her writing pedagogy (C3I178–79). The mandated Year 3 testing (ACARA, 2008) also influences her practice significantly as she aims to prepare students for these tests (C3I1L79–81).

5.7.3 The class.

Chazz teaches a Year 3 class of 27 students. The literacy standards in her class influence how she teaches writing. She said:

> The literacy standards in my class are quite low and therefore, teaching needs to be more guided, more modelled and more structured for students because they don't have the skills to just go and write. We need to go step by step, and that would be at least 50 per cent of the class (C3I1L73–77).

Chazz stated that her class includes 11 students with writing difficulties. She has support from the Learning Enhancement teacher, and also from a teacher aide (C3A1CPF). Chazz tries to schedule her writing lessons when she has assistance from support staff, as she prefers assistance when conferencing with the children about their writing (C3I1L212). Parent assistance during reading lessons is regular, but there is no parent assistance during writing lessons (C3A1CPF).

5.7.4 Teacher beliefs.

Chazz believes writing is a social practice. Consequently, she teaches writing lessons within relevant units of work, as she asserts:

> It must be relevant to the students and it must come from what the students have experienced and from their lives. It must be a real experience. You can't just write
about African animals if you haven’t studied African animals (C3I1L7–10).

Moreover, Chazz believes students are more interested and more motivated to write if they relate writing to experiences that interest them (C3I1L19). Further, she also believes that writing in a range of genres is very important (C3I1L7). This belief influences how Chazz teaches writing in her class. Chazz also believes mandated testing is important. Consequently, preparing children for tests is a priority (C3I1L78-81).

5.7.5 Planning for teaching writing.

Chazz employs the *English Syllabus* (QCAA, 2005) as well as her school Scope and Sequence Chart when planning writing lessons (C3I2L6–8). She selects a unit of work first and then ensures the unit addresses the English outcomes from the syllabus (C3I2L10–13). Chazz employs school spelling guidelines for planning purposes (C3A7PW1.5). In addition, THRASS (Ritchie, 1998) and *Magic 100 words: Learning Centres Resource* (Reiter, 2003) are also used as spelling resources for words in writing (C3A11PW1.5). The mandated testing also influences her planning, as she states:

> I have the English program, which is a very broad document. I have the Year 3, 5 and 7 testing – it is a big focus on my instruction. I have to prepare students for a test situation. It guides a lot of the work I do (C3I1L78-81).

Chazz also teaches the genres that are required in her school English program (C3I1L92–97).

5.7.6 Teaching practices.

Chazz teaches a range of genres. She gives examples of narratives, recounts of the children’s experiences of camp, journal writing, and procedural writing (C3I1L112–147). All genres are taught in relevant contexts originating from the children’s interests and experiences (C3I1L162–163). Chazz does not integrate reading and writing lessons. She explains the school is in the process of establishing a literacy block, in which both reading and writing will be integrated. This initiative is currently in the planning stages (C3I1L149–160).

Chazz employs many strategies to teach writing including scaffolding students’ learning through writing tasks, modelled writing and guided writing (C3I1L21–22) and these strategies are implemented in response to the needs of her students. She encourages her students to edit their own writing and incorporates regular conferencing into her writing lessons. Support staff assist with conferencing. Chazz describes her method as follows:
I try to have two teachers in the room during structured writing lessons to assist with the editing process. This provides the opportunity for one teacher or aide to roam and assist with scaffolding learning and one to sit for children to come to as they finish writing. (C3I1L51-58).

Editing includes working on sentence structure, improving vocabulary, extending sentences and adding additional sentences to enhance a story. (C3I1L51–58).

Chazz employs a range of strategies to stimulate students to write. Writing sessions usually begin with talking (C3I1L30). Chazz also uses sentence starters, or sometimes the class may write the first paragraph together (C3I1L36–38). Such initiatives include the visual use of pictures or posters to stimulate the children to think and then write. One example she gave included the use of photographs from a class camp as a stimulus for writing. Chazz believes it is important to encourage children to view, think and talk before they write (C3I1L68–74).

5.7.7 Assessing writing.

Chazz employs criteria sheets to assess writing, relevant to any given topic or genre she is teaching. Some children may have fewer criteria to cover than others to cater for their individual needs. Further, Chazz conferences with individual students and uses this process to assess writing (C3A10AW1.6) Children are tested with the Magic 100 Words (Reiter, 2003) at the beginning of the year, and again at the end of the year as one form of spelling assessment (C3A13AW1.6). Children also participate in the school’s writing competition, which is also assessed (C3A10AW1.6). Chazz identifies the Year 3 mandated testing is an important part of her assessment (C3I1L78-81).

5.7.8 Influences on writing pedagogy.

Chazz believes the needs and abilities of the students are important influences on the writing pedagogy she adopts. Further, she is influenced primarily by system demands. Mandated testing such as the Year Three Benchmarks (QSA, 2005) testing also guides her practice (C3I1L165–170) and preparing children for tests is a priority (C3I1L78–81). Chazz’s school’s English program also influences her planning. In addition, Chazz believes writing should be relevant and originate from the children’s experiences (C3I1L7–19). Consequently, she employs relevant topics for writing in her early years class. Also, Chazz believes writing should be taught explicitly. Consequently, she employs explicit strategies including modelled instruction, guided instruction and scaffolding of learning to teach writing (C3I1L21–25). Other teachers and the internet are helpful resources for her ideas (C3I1L224–225).
5.7.9 Summation of Chazz's narrative.

An analysis of Chazz's case identified the importance of relationships between Chazz's beliefs about teaching writing and the practices she employs. In addition, Chazz identified many influences informing her writing pedagogy. Examples of these relationships are presented in Figure 5.6.

Example 1

Example 2

Example 3

*Figure 5.6* Cluster map showing Case three, Chazz: the relationships between teacher beliefs, practices and influences for the teaching of writing in the early years.

An examination of these relationships has identified the macro- and micro-influences underpinning Chazz's writing pedagogy, as summarised in Figure 5.7.
5.7.10 Case three: Chazz.

Micro-influences informing writing pedagogy

Key Beliefs
Writing should be relevant and come from real experiences

Planning
Plans from school English Program & Year 3 testing

Key Practices
Individual conferencing is used regularly & parent helpers & support staff assist

Key Beliefs
Preparing children for mandated testing is important

Key Practices
Teaches genres within relevant units of work

Central
Needs, interests and abilities of the children

Key Practices
using visuals and talk to encourage thinking prior to writing & for motivation

Figure 5.7. Influences informing writing pedagogy: Case three, Chazz.
5.8 Jackie’s Narrative

5.8.1 The teacher.
Jackie is a dedicated teacher with more than twenty-five years’ teaching experience. She has spent the last ten years teaching early years classes and is constantly reviewing her practice for the benefit of her students. Jackie participated in this study in order to reflect on her literacy teaching and learning (C4I1L4). Further, Jackie has a Master of Education degree and attributes the improvement of her pedagogy to postgraduate studies.

5.8.2 The school.
Jackie’s school is a Catholic primary school situated on the Sunshine Coast, approximately two hours north from Brisbane. The school is located within a low socio-economic demographic. Jackie values home and school partnerships so she communicates regularly with parents, informing them of the happenings in the classroom. This may include distributing a newsletter explaining to parents how they may assist their children with reading (C4I1L200–206).

5.8.3 The class.
Jackie teaches a class of 26 Year 3 students. She spends at least eight hours a week teaching literacy, including 40–60 minutes a day dedicated to the teaching of writing. Jackie identifies seven students with reading difficulties and four with writing difficulties (C4A1CPF). Further, she has one EAL student whom she supports with substantial oral language work and grammar activities. A learning support teacher assists during literacy lessons twice a week. Parent helpers also assist students with revising drafts and publishing writing (C4A1CPF).

5.8.4 Teacher beliefs.
Jackie’s beliefs influence how she plans, teaches and assesses writing. She developed teaching and learning priorities which guide her practice and include:

- pastoral care of students as foundational;
- honouring of lifelong learning so that writing is taught within a matrix of multiple experiences;
- literacy as the primary goal in her classroom;
- the employment of technologies to assist digital literacy learning; and
- desirability of connected learning experiences (C4I1L3–6).

Within this context, the principal aim influencing Jackie's pedagogy is immersion. This response originates from Cambourne’s Conditions of Learning (Cambourne, 1988). This
theory guides her practice (C4I1L28).

Also, Jackie believes writing is therapeutic and encourages students to write about how they feel (C4I1L210–229). This belief originates from her pastoral care studies. In addition, Jackie believes in using relevant contexts (C4I1L22). Writing activities are home-based rather than school-based because she believes this direction is more relevant for children (C4I1L80). Jackie views both the playground and the children's homes as learning environments (C4I1L79–80).

Further, Jackie believes in the importance of speaking prior to writing and employs this strategy regularly to teach writing. She says:

> Speaking helps students to air their sentences and express themselves. Other students learn by listening. This enables students to get the ideas clear in their heads before they commit themselves to the task of writing. This is beneficial before any writing (C4I1L17–20).

Jackie also believes that writing is a thinking skill. Consequently, she encourages thinking out loud prior to writing in order to clarify ideas. She thinks that “the students have all this [sic] prior knowledge and understandings that you need to tap into, before you can connect them with other texts” (C4I1L21–23).

### 5.8.5 Planning for teaching writing.

Jackie’s personal beliefs are foundational considerations when planning for teaching writing. Systemic documentation and school policy and programs are secondary sources for planning purposes. Planning begins with Jackie's yearly overview. Her finer planning originates from the children's talk (C4I1L13). She then chooses units of work that are relevant to the children because learning occurs in “real-life rather than life-like contexts”. Genres are then selected within relevant units of work (C4I1L129–131). Writing always has a clear purpose for the children (C4I1L155–158).

The children are encouraged to be personally responsible for their learning by encouraging their participation in selecting and developing topics. She claims that “the children have their input into any unit we do (C4I1L15–16). If the children have a handle on the decision-making it becomes a lot more powerful unit” (C4I1L46–47). In addition, Jackie covers outcomes in the *English Syllabus* (QSA, 2005, C4I1L8–9).

### 5.8.6 Teaching practices.
Jackie describes her yearly overview as “framing her practice” (C4I1L3–6). Further, addressing the needs of the children are a high priority. Inclusive practices are important as they influence her planning and teaching of writing and how she interacts with parents.

I implement inclusive practices. I believe everyone is entitled to the same amount of information and knowledge that is available, but it has to be couched in a language that is suitable—a common everyday language, and you have that responsibility, which is a part of my practice (C4I1L).

Jackie employs negotiated learning. She identifies 26 different needs in her classroom. Consequently, the children are offered many opportunities for negotiated learning. “My students are now in the process of negotiating homework depending on the literacy level of the students” (C4I1L9–10).

The print in Jackie’s classroom is relevant because she generates print herself or uses the children’s print. Jackie explains:

I always have a print filled classroom - but I use print that comes from the children. I never use commercial print. I write everything up myself, so the children are exposed to lots of demonstrations of writing. Everything around the room is basically either their writing or my writing. So, they get the demonstrations all the time. They are immersed, and they are expected to write (C4I1L22–28).

Jackie employs multiple strategies to teach writing and she teaches genres within relevant units of work. Topics originate from the children’s talk and their interests. Also, Jackie encourages her students to write for themselves rather than writing for a teacher. She employs modelled writing, joint construction, demonstrations, and co-operative group work (C4I1L134–153). Jackie also employs group construction of texts regularly (C4A26ETF). In addition, she encourages risk-taking in her writing lessons (C4I1L29).

5.8.7 Assessing writing.

Jackie values relevant and negotiated assessment (C4A15AW1.6). Consequently, she negotiates criteria to be assessed with the children. This process ensures children know what is expected of them in their writing, its assessment and the editing process (C4A15AW1.6). For example:

The children wrote a diagram for a castle. After constructing the castles, we discussed criteria that we were going to assess. The children decided what would be covered. The only ones I helped them with was explaining the parts of a
diagram (C4I2L88–93). The criteria for this task included:

- writing shared with a group or partner;
- suitable words for parts of castle selected;
- writing to make sense;
- several words checked for correct spelling;
- parts of the diagram explained;
- use of capital letters checked;
- clear floor plan;
- clear side view (C4A16AW1.6).

The relevant and negotiated criteria established the expectations for this writing task.

5.8.8 Influences on writing pedagogy.

Jackie is influenced by the whole language approach (Goodman, 1967) and Cambourne’s Conditions of Learning (Cambourne, 1988). Further, she believes that writing is therapeutic and should be situated in relevant contexts. Jackie believes the children are the primary influences on her practice. She hopes to empower her students and is acutely aware of their varying needs (C4I1L160–164). Jackie believes her students think differently. Her responsibility is to encourage children to write down their ideas (C4I1L166–168). Students at risk of failure are a concern for Jackie and she believes “it is not the kids that are failing; it’s the teachers that are failing, because they are not teaching what students need”. She aims to cater for individual differences (C4I1L170–173).

Jackie’s beliefs influence how she plans, teaches and assesses writing; systemic influences are secondary to these. This belief is illustrated by her personal overview for teaching writing (C4I1L3–6). She also prioritises literacy in her early years class, and consequently, all learning activities have a literacy component (C4I1L155–156). Jackie refers to the syllabus as the last reference point for her planning. The textbook program is her greatest constraint. “The children will do some great words, and then they have to turn around and do a unit in spelling because their parents have paid all this money for the books. I find that is an enormous constraint” (C4I1L233). Jackie is also influenced by her postgraduate pastoral care studies (C4I1L210–229).
5.8.9 Summation of Jackie’s narrative.

An analysis of Jackie’s case identified relationships between Jackie’s beliefs about teaching writing and the practices she employs. In addition, Jackie identified many influences informing her writing pedagogy. Examples of these relationships are presented in Figure 5.8.

**Example 1**
Belief In Her own Overview
Practice Teaches writing within the context of her own overview

**Example 2**
Belief Cambournes Conditions for Literacy
Practice Uses Cambournes conditions

**Example 3**
Belief Writing should be relevant
Practice Uses real life contexts to teach writing

*Figure 5.8. Cluster map showing Case four, Jackie: the relationships between teacher beliefs, practices and influences for the teaching of writing in the early years.*

An examination of these relationships has identified the macro- and micro-influences underpinning Jackie’s writing pedagogy, as summarised in Figure 5.9.
5.8.10 Case four: Jackie.

*Figure 5.9. Influences informing writing pedagogy: Case four, Jackie.*
5.9 Andy’s Narrative

5.9.1 The teacher.

Andy is a primary school teacher with over twenty years’ teaching experience (C5I1L67). He has been teaching early years classes for nine years. Andy participated in this study to evaluate his current writing pedagogy (C5I1L2–4). A dedicated teacher, Andy enjoys learning from his colleagues and is guided by the children’s needs when teaching writing.

5.9.2 The school.

Andy’s school is a Catholic primary school situated in suburban Brisbane within close proximity to the CBD. The school is located in a high socio-economic area. There are high literacy levels in this school, with only a small percentage of students considered to be at risk for literacy learning. Andy’s school values home and school partnerships and therefore, these relationships are fostered throughout the school. In addition, a whole school approach to planning is implemented (C5I1L85-89).

5.9.3 The class.

Andy teaches a Year 2 class of 24 children. Both Year 2 teachers plan and teach collaboratively. Consequently, all Year 2 students are engaged with similar learning experiences and content. Andy spends ten hours a week teaching literacy. He has five students with reading difficulties and three students with writing difficulties. There is also one EAL student in his class. In addition to the class program, this student receives additional assistance from a teacher aide (C5A1CPF). The school also provides early reading and writing support for students with a need identified within the Year 2 Diagnostic Net (QSA, 1996, 1997) processes (C5A1CPF).

5.9.4 Teacher beliefs.

Andy believes a genre approach (C. Miller, 1984) to writing is important. This belief was formed during the genre movement that was popular with teachers in the early 1990s. It was at this time that his practice shifted from a focus on the process of writing towards a genre approach to teaching writing. His school also employs a genre approach (C. Miller, 1984) which reinforces Andy’s belief that this is a sound approach. In more recent years, he has valued writing as social practice (Vygotsky, 1978; Hidi & Boscolo, 2006). Consequently, he is guided by developing relevant learning experiences for his students (C5I1 &I2). His personal beliefs include taking direction from the children when teaching, a view that thinking and writing are interrelated and a belief that writing is an integral part of literacy. Each of these beliefs, influences Andy’s writing pedagogy.
Andy believes relevant topics through which children are encouraged to offer direction for their learning are valuable. The children’s interests are employed to direct classroom learning, as he says:

The approach that I use ensures that whatever we are doing has to relate to what students know and what they want to know. I use a lot of what has come from the children and then I work with that (C5I1L11–14).

Andy’s class discusses regularly the purpose of writing and what they want to learn. Children take direction from a topic when they are motivated when he says, “I think the key to any success in writing is getting the kids motivated and wanting to be a part of it. It is all about ownership” (C5I1L243–245).

Further, Andy believes thinking precedes writing, as:

What children write has to be an extension of what they are thinking and feeling. It is largely a reflection of them [sic] being able to express in words on paper what they are thinking (5I1L6-11).

Consequently, Andy plans thinking time prior to writing. Andy also contends that reading and viewing surround writing and contribute to students’ expressing their thoughts in words and he also believes reading and viewing support the teaching of writing, because:

At this age to see reading as a part of everything we do, particularly writing, is utterly important. There is so much in this room that the children are reading. There is also so much visually that they are seeing and taking in. And then to be able to use that as their own written expression of ideas and feelings – it’s great (C5I1L172–179).

5.9.5 Planning for teaching writing.

School policy and programs and a whole school genre approach (C. Miller, 1984) to teaching writing provide the structure for Andy’s planning. The school in which Andy teaches has an English overview which outlines expectations for Year 2 students in the teaching of writing. He uses this as a guide throughout the year (C5I1L81–82). The school takes a whole school approach to planning the teaching of writing and this includes a meeting per term with a curriculum cocordinator to ensure that there is minimal repetition of content taught across year levels (C5I1L86–90). In addition, Andy works collaboratively with his teaching partner to generate relevant units of work. Genres that are congruent with relevant units of work are then selected (C5I1L91–94). The school also has an English policy, with a Scope and Sequence Chart and this process identifies grammar
and graphophonics to be taught in any given year. Consequently, Andy also includes explicit teaching of grammar and graphophonics in context (C5I2L19–21). Some planning also originates from the mandated *Year Two Diagnostic Net* (QSA, 1996, 1997) topics (C5I2L12).

### 5.9.6 Teaching practices.

Andy’s writing pedagogy is a balance between a school genre approach (C. Miller, 1984) to teaching writing (C5I1L91–94) and the interests and needs of the students (C5I1L217–240). Writing is integrated with reading and talk (C5I1L21–24) and Andy describes the process as “a lot of the writing that we do is closely tied with reading. If we read a text they will write about it, or if we talk about something we will write about it” (C5I1L21–23). Andy teaches the generic structure of texts, spelling, grammar and punctuation explicitly (C5A226EFT). He employs modelled writing, shared writing, editing and scaffolding regularly (C5A226EFT).

A genre approach (C. Miller, 1984) to teaching writing includes teaching children to write in a range of relevant text types. When teaching a given genre, Andy models writing and constructs jointly with the children before they write independently (C5I1L45–46). The purpose of writing is also made explicit (C5I1L47–48) and Andy explains how he teaches each genre explicitly through carefully scaffolded steps:

> When learning how to write a report, we would do it together first. I would model it, we would talk about the special features of a text, we would structure it. So, I would try to get them to work out what the questions are that they want to find out about, then we would go about answering them. Then we would write together. Then I would give students the opportunity to write something independently (C5I1L14–19).

Andy adopts specific strategies in teaching the report writing genre to his Year 2 class:

> We started out by asking -What do we want to find out about our parent’s jobs? We discussed what they wanted to find out, and what they already knew, and we formulated a series of questions. Those questions were then made into an interview sheet which was sent home to parents. The parents filled that out in print. Then that came back to school and we used that information to start creating sentences. From there we created a report which the children then came and read with me. We conferenced the writing, for example, what makes sense, spelling (at this stage we do capital letters and full stops – they are own main focus) for example, ‘Have you used all your capital letters properly?’ and ‘Have you got full
stops in the right place?’ After editing with me, the children learned how to use the computer and a writing program, and we typed up our report (C5I1L109–137).

Further, Andy employs a functional approach (Martin, 1993; Christie & Derewianka, 2008) to teaching grammar. “I teach grammar and punctuation every day within whatever we are doing”. Andy teaches grammar and punctuation within reading activities or in the context of a book being studied or during journal writing. He also employs vocabulary activities to increase the children's vocabulary (C5I1L38–39).

5.9.7 Assessing writing.

Andy adopts an individual approach to assessment. This encompasses considering the developmental nature of writing for assessment purposes. He employs a developmental continuum to assess the children's writing (C5I2L15–17). This is recorded using a checklist to indicate the children's developmental attainments using Writing: Developmental Continuum (EDWA, 1995). Further, Andy employs mandated assessment strategies related to the Year Two Diagnostic Net (QSA, 1996, 1997; C5I2L18). These have indicators on a checklist to record student achievement (C5A13AW1.6).

In addition, Andy employs observation throughout the writing process as a strategy for assessment. He also conferences with children, offering one-on-one time to talk to children about their writing, while also assessing their writing. He remarked:

I think the fact that you see every child's writing when they are bringing it to you to conference and talking to them gives you a much better picture than just letting them hand you something and saying I'm finished because it is often not really a reflection of what is going on at all. You don't want to assess just what you see. It is very important to get them to talk about their writing as well (C5I1L208–214).

5.9.8 Influences on writing pedagogy.

Andy's writing pedagogy is influenced by the genre movement (C. Miller, 1984) and, more recently, by writing as social practice (Vygotsky, 1978; Hidi & Boscolo, 2006, C5I1&I2). The children's needs are the primary influence on his practice because they motivate children to achieve when their ideas learning contribute to learning episodes (C5I1L217–240). Further, he is influenced by teaching experience (C5I1L192) and the ideas of colleagues (C5I1L183–189). Andy also describes professional development courses related to literacy, such as Enhancing Literacy in Classrooms (ELIC), as influencing his writing pedagogy (C5I1L191).

Andy believes writing is an integral part of literacy. Consequently, he employs viewing,
reading and talk prior to writing (C5I1L172–180). In addition, Andy believes learning to write is developmental and, consequently, he employs *Writing: Developmental Continuum* to assess student writing individually (C5I2L15–18). His practice is also influenced by his school’s English Scope and Sequence document which outlines specific genres, phonics, spelling and grammar to be taught (C5I1L79–94). In addition, the mandated *Year 2 Diagnostic Net* (QSA, 1996, 1997) testing influences Andy's practice (C5L1, C5L2).

**5.9.9 Summation of Andy’s narrative.**

An analysis of Andy’s case identified the importance of relationships between Andy’s beliefs about teaching writing and the practices he employs. In addition, Andy identified many influences informing his writing pedagogy. Examples of these relationships are presented in Figure 5.10.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example 1</th>
<th>Example 2</th>
<th>Example 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belief: Writing should be relevant</td>
<td>Belief: Writing &amp; thinking are connected</td>
<td>Influence: School English Scope &amp; Sequence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice: Teaches writing within relevant units of work</td>
<td>Practice: Encourages children to air thoughts and write them down</td>
<td>Practice: Teaches grammar, genres, grapho-phonics in school docs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 5.10. Cluster map showing Case five, Andy: the relationships between teacher beliefs, practices and influences for the teaching of writing in the early years.*

An examination of these relationships has identified the macro- and micro-influences underpinning Andy's writing pedagogy, as summarised in Figure 5.11.
5.9.10 Case five: Andy.

Figure 5.11. Influences informing writing pedagogy: Case five, Andy.
5.10 Dolly’s Narrative

5.10.1 The teacher.

Dolly is a graduate teacher who completed her teaching degree as a mature age student. She has ten years of experience working in early childhood settings. She volunteered to participate in this study in order to continue learning while implementing writing strategies she learnt during her university studies (C6I1L3–4). Dolly is an enthusiastic teacher who has high expectations of herself as an educator. She aims to ensure each student in her class meets their potential.

5.10.2 The school.

Dolly’s school is situated in suburban Brisbane in close proximity to the CBD. Her school is in a high socio-economic area. The school implements a whole school approach to planning and curriculum implementation, and consequently, Dolly works within this framework. Further, the school fosters home and school partnerships which Dolly also believes to be important. She works closely with her teaching partner.

5.10.3 The class.

Dolly teaches a class of 24 Year 2 students. She spends ten hours a week teaching literacy and five to seven hours of this time is dedicated to the teaching of writing. Dolly’s class has six students with reading difficulties and six students with writing difficulties. In addition, Dolly has five EAL students with competent spoken English, although they experience reading and writing challenges associated with having English as an additional language. A teacher aide provides support for these students with writing and phonics twice a week. Further, EAL students have weekly half hour sessions out of the classroom with a specialist educator (C6A1CPF).

5.10.4 Teacher beliefs.

Dolly believes writing is a social practice (Vygotsky, 1978; Hidi & Boscolo, 2006). Consequently, she provides relevant topics for writing about to motivate students to write (C6I1L36). Moreover, Dolly asserts that “children are motivated to write when they have a purpose” (C6I1L222–223). Further, Dolly believes in giving children ample time to write, so they can experience success (C6I1L246–252). Explicit instruction is also important to Dolly, as:

It is very important, especially in the early years. It is imperative to model writing using explicit teaching, and then allow students to experiment and experience. The students need a firm base on which to experience and practice skills.
5.10.5 Planning for teaching writing.

Dolly’s planning begins with relevant topics, the Year 2 net topics and her school’s English program (C6I1L122–130). Dolly employs the school English program to ensure she covers the genres she is required to teach. The genres are taught in context (C6I1L126–130). Moreover, Dolly integrates the teaching of writing with reading and within integrated units of work (C6I2L15).

5.10.6 Teaching practices.

Dolly’s teaching of writing is balanced between a school genre approach (C. Miller, 1984) to teaching writing (C6I2L15) and how she structures learning episodes to ensure students experience success (C6I1L246–247). Moreover, writing is generated by engaging with relevant topics (C6I1L34–48) as Dolly “believe[s] in making writing real for students, bringing everything into the real world (“C6I1L216–217). Also, Dolly teaches punctuation, spelling, grammar and the structure of different text types explicitly (C6A26ETF). Regular strategies include modelled writing, joint constructions (C6I1L22–24) and scaffolding the teaching of writing in order for children “to build on their knowledge step by step allowing them to experience success” (C6A26EFT).

Dolly values writing as an integral part of literacy and engaging children with quality literature. She achieves this is by integrating reading, viewing, and writing whenever possible (C6I1L12).

If we don’t write first then we will have nothing to read, so you have to write to be able to read. You also have to read to be able to write. We learn to write by reading what other people have written (C6I1L153–155).

In addition, Dolly encourages talk before writing, describing the process as “we discuss before we write what we are going to write. The children air ideas and learn from each other through talk” (C6I1L80–88). Further, Dolly encourages and provides the opportunity for students to read their writing to an audience (C6I1L80–88).

Dolly engages creatively with the learning environment to teach writing.

We have lots of words around the room. We have got our blends caterpillars that we created. I display spelling words so students can use those in their writing. Any unit-related resources that I can find will be in the room (C6I1L141–144).

The children are encouraged to use resources they see around them to assist in their writing and learn from each other through viewing, talking reading and sharing resources.
The children quite often, if they are writing, will go and get a book. A lot of them will go to the information books to assist them in their writing, and I encourage that. We talk about it. If someone comes up to me and says 'oh Mrs – I am writing a story about a kangaroo and looked the word up,' I will point out to the whole class, ‘Look, Johnny found a word’. So, they can all look– and it's amazing how they all learn from each other. I think it’s really important to have words and books around the room (C6I1L246–252).

Also, Dolly employs Strategic Spelling (Wheatley, 2005) to assist with teaching sounds and blends (C6I1L50–57):

With strategic spelling the students learn to make the words with writing, make them with the hands, listen, and complete tasks that involve listening skills. The program also involves activities that are linked to those words. (C6I1L57–62).

5.10.7 Assessing writing.
Dolly employs a range of assessment tools including relevant criteria sheets (C6I1L195), mandated assessment related to the Year 2 Diagnostic Net (QSA, 1996, 1997) and the Developmental Continuum (EDWA Australia, 1995). Criteria for a Monster story includes:

- Legible draft,
- Imaginative sentences,  
- Simple sentences,  
- Ability to read draft to the teacher,  
- Correct use of full stops and capital letters,  
- Use of conjunctions,  
- Correct spelling of sight words, and  
- Phonetic spelling of words (C6I2L29–35).

Dolly expects students to complete two drafts for each piece of writing. Students are encouraged to write their ideas and then edit their writing focusing on given criteria. How students meet criteria then forms part of her assessment (C6I1L208–210).

5.10.8 Influences on writing pedagogy.
Planning for student success influences Dolly’s writing pedagogy. In addition, Dolly is influenced by her belief that writing needs to be relevant. Dolly ensures topics address the needs and desires of the students and that students understand what they are doing and why (C6I1L216–221). Dolly believes writing should be taught explicitly. Consequently, she teaches explicitly a range of text types, grammar, punctuation and spelling (C6I1L6–10).
Also, Dolly believes the learning environment may be employed to assist with teaching writing. Consequently, she organises the environment creatively, including words, books and resources to assist children when they are writing (C6L1L141–150). Further, Dolly is influenced by her university studies (C6L1L215). She is also influenced by whole school planning for literacy, embraces a genre approach (Miller, 1984) and the mandated Year 2 Diagnostic Net (QSA, 1996, 1997) (C6L1, C6L2).

5.10.9 Summation of Dolly’s narrative.

An analysis of Dolly’s case identified the importance of relationships between Dolly’s beliefs about teaching writing and the practices she employs. In addition, Dolly identified many influences informing her writing pedagogy. Examples of these relationships are presented in Figure 5.12.

![Cluster map showing Case six, Dolly: the relationships between teacher beliefs, practices and influences for the teaching of writing in the early years.](image)

An examination of these relationships has identified the macro- and micro-influences underpinning Dolly’s writing pedagogy, as summarised in Figure 5.13.
5.10.10 Case six: Dolly.

Figure 5.13. Influences informing writing pedagogy: Case six: Dolly.

5.11 Summary of the Findings from the Six Cases

The contributing research questions have been addressed throughout the teachers’ narratives. Table 5.3 presents a summary of findings from the six interpretative educational cases under the contributing research questions.
### Table 5.3

**Writing Pedagogy: Summary of Guiding Influences, Beliefs and Practices**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influences</th>
<th>Beliefs</th>
<th>Practices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contributing Research Questions</strong></td>
<td><strong>What influences teacher’s writing pedagogy in the early years of schooling?</strong></td>
<td><strong>What do teachers believe about the teaching of writing in the early years of schooling?</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **CARA** | - Catering for individual differences  
- Emergent theory  
- Writing as social practice | - Blooms taxonomy  
- Catering for different learning styles  
- The developmental nature of writing should be considered for planning, teaching and assessment purposes | - Plans from school documents  
- Groups according to learning styles  
- Adapts strategies according to needs  
- Scaffolds learning  
- Teaches writing explicitly  
- Organises the learning environment creatively to teach writing  
- Teaches writing as an integral part of literacy (reading, viewing and oral language) and engages children with quality literature |
| **TANYA** | - Guided by what is relevant to students  
- Writing as social practice | - Writing should be relevant, meaningful and purposeful  
- Learning to write is developmental  
- Home and school partnerships support the teaching of writing | - Generates writing from relevant units of work  
- Integrates reading, viewing writing and oral language  
- Encourages talk, drawing and planning prior to writing  
- Teaches writing explicitly  
- Provides print rich environment  
- Scaffolds learning  
- Considers the developmental nature of writing for assessment purposes |
| **CHAZZ** | - Needs and Abilities of students  
- School and systemic influences  
- Writing as social practice | - Preparing students for mandated testing is important  
- Covering content in school and systemic policy and programs is important  
- Writing should be relevant | - Prepares children for Year 3 mandated testing  
- Teaches from school policy and programs  
- Teaches genres within relevant units of work  
- Employs visuals e.g: pictures, posters, photographs to stimulate and motivate students to write  
- Employs conferencing  
- Approaches assessment individually |
| **JACKIE** | • Empowering students  
• Negotiated learning  
• Whole language  
• Real life contexts  
• Her own overview | • Cambourne’s Conditions for literacy learning  
• Immersion  
• Learning should be negotiated  
• Writing is a thinking skill  
• Writing is therapeutic | • Employs learning environments to teach, including the playground and home  
• Fosters home and school partnerships to support the teaching of writing  
• Provides print-filled classroom  
• Generates writing from the students’ talk  
• Negotiates learning  
• Manages cooperative group work  
• Demonstrates writing  
• Organises speaking prior to writing  
• Negotiates assessment |
|---|---|---|---|
| **ANDY** | • Directed by what students know or want to know  
• Genre movement  
• Writing as social practice | • Reading and writing are closely connected  
• Writing is an integral part of literacy  
• Teaching genres is important  
• The developmental nature of writing should be considered for assessment purposes | • Teaches genres within relevant units of work  
• Teaches genres, spelling and functional grammar explicitly  
• Employs modelled, guided and independent writing  
• Integrates reading, viewing and writing  
• Organises learning environment creative to teach writing  
• Employs conferencing  
• Scaffolds learning  
• Assesses individually based on development |
| **DOLLY** | • To set students up for success  
• Writing as social practice | • Writing should be relevant and purposeful  
• Time to write is important | • Employs whole-school planning  
• Implements relevant topics  
• Teaches writing as an integral part of literacy (reading, viewing, oral language) and engages children with quality literature  
• Organises learning environment creatively to teach writing  
• Teaches teaches text types, spelling, punctuation, grammar explicitly  
• Employs a drafting process  
• Employs relevant criteria to assess writing |
5.12 Conclusion

In this chapter, the narratives which offer the first stage for the interpretive cases for this research project have been presented. These case studies offer a more in-depth interrogation of six teachers' writing pedagogy. Figure 5.14 illustrates the concurrent stages involving the data collection, analysis and new understandings of the six interpretative educational cases.

*Figure 5.14. Concurrent stages of data collection and analysis involving individual case participants.*

Following the construction of the individual narratives, further analysis of the data of the case participants using CCA produced a cross-case analysis of the writing pedagogy of the six teachers. Understandings generated from cross case analysis are presented in Chapter 6.
CHAPTER SIX
COMPARISON OF CASES

6.1 Introduction
The purpose of this research is to explore teacher beliefs, classroom practices and influences relating to writing pedagogy in the early years of schooling. A cross-case analysis was undertaken, enabling the researcher to compare and explain similarities and differences across cases and identify and explain the relationships between and within cases (Khan & Vanwynsberghe, 2008). This was achieved through the employment of constant comparative analysis (CCA, Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Rather than being found, the interpretative analytical processes (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011) allowed understandings to be generated by the researcher engaging critically with the participants’ varied understandings of the research phenomenon. Research understandings generated from cross-case analysis are presented in this chapter.

6.2 The Iterative Process

6.2.1 Third iteration: Reducing issues into themes.
Data across the six cases were examined using CCA. Data from the field notes were organised into categories under the subheadings used to take the field notes and this process identified similarities. Major themes generated from these categories are colour-coded, as shown in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1
Reducing Categories from Field Notes into Major Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lesson topics</td>
<td>Classroom Organisation</td>
<td>Talk before writing</td>
<td>Teaching strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student direction</td>
<td>Use of learning environment</td>
<td>Steps taken before writing</td>
<td>Explicit instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>Physical setting</td>
<td>Writing taught as an integral part of literacy</td>
<td>Activities &amp; interactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>The participants</td>
<td>Conversation</td>
<td>Steps taken before writing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Theme 1
Writing as social practice

Theme 2
The Learning Environment

Theme 3
Writing as an integral part of literacy

Theme 4
Explicit Writing Instruction
Three new themes emerged from the interviews and discussion about artefacts and were also colour-coded. How categories are reduced from interviews and artefacts into major themes is shown in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2.  
Reducing Categories into Major Themes from Interviews and Artefacts  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Connection Between Field Notes from Observed Lessons and 1st Interviews</th>
<th>Physical Artefacts</th>
<th>2nd Interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs about teaching writing</td>
<td>Reduced themes from lesson observations were examined in the 1st Interview transcripts to identify relationships between what the teachers did and what they said they did. Some major themes were derived in the interview transcripts that were also derived from the observed lessons.</td>
<td>Three new themes emerged from the interviews and artefacts.</td>
<td>Colour-coding was used consistently across data types.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies used</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning for writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of the learning environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing as an integral part of literacy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples of teaching writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influences on teaching writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Major Themes already generated from Field Notes:  
Theme 1 Writing as Social Practice  
Theme 2 The Learning Environment  
Theme 3 Writing as an Integral Part of Literacy  
Theme 4 Explicit Writing Instruction  
Three New Major Themes generated from Interviews & Artefacts  
Theme 5 Developmental nature of Writing and children working at different literacy levels  
Theme 6 Children as the primary influence on practice  
Theme 7 Digital Literacy  

Major themes generated from data analysis are displayed as shown in Table 6.3.
Table 6.3
Thematic Table: Case 5, Theme 3

**Example from Case Five Andy: Theme 3 Writing as an Integral Part of Literacy**

**Interviews**
- Writing must be an extension of what the children are thinking
- Andy wants to teach his students to express their thoughts on paper
- Reading, viewing, writing and talking are closely linked
- Andy always uses lots of talk prior to writing – to connect – writing thoughts down
- Reading supports writing, so some integration is vital.

**Observed Lesson One**
- Lots of talk before writing – discussion about bees, discussion about proper sentences, discussion about the information to include in their reports.
- Children asked each other questions & shared ideas which helped them with their writing.
- The list of words was talked about and listed together.
- Throughout the writing process the teacher constantly talked to the whole group at point of need e.g., to help children write good descriptive sentences (C5L11.3P7).
- Reading a factual text about bees was what started this lesson and motivated the discussion.
- Talk was guided by the teacher, but the children also asked lots of questions which directed the discussion (C5L11.3P9).

**Observed Lesson Two**
- Lots of talk prior to writing – discussion about ants, brainstorming of ant facts, discussion about ant jobs while labelling colony, vocab. about ants.
- Talk in groups while ordering factual sentences about ants to make a report on ants.
- Reading of sentences aloud to each other when report is ordered.
- Discussion about what information to include in ant reports and what order to write in.
- During writing, teacher addresses the whole class with reminders about what to include in reports (C5L21.3P4).
- There were lots of reading, viewing and talk prior to writing to prepare children for writing.
- Also, the teacher came back to the brainstorm after writing in a different colour and children added facts about ants (C5L21.3P6).
- Conversation was guided by the teacher.
- During group work children were reminded to take turns and not be bossy – to keep conversation on task and be cooperative (C5L21.3P16).
6.2.2 Fourth iteration: Examining, extracting and mapping differences.

Constant comparative analysis was adopted to identify differences. Differences derived from the data are shown in Table 6.4.

Table 6.4
Differences Derived from the Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Differences Derived from the Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Varying beliefs that influence writing pedagogy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Different ways teachers plan for teaching writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Different strategies used to teach writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Different ways teachers stimulate and motivate children to write</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Different ways teachers set students up for success when writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Different ways teachers encourage students to take ownership when teaching writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Different strategies to teach spelling and grammar as part of the writing program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Different strategies to assess writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Varying influences on writing pedagogy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reduced to significant major differences

**Contributing Qu 1**

What do teachers believe about the teaching of writing in the early years of schooling?

• Varying beliefs underpinning writing pedagogy

**Contributing Qu 2**

What practices do teachers employ in the teaching of writing in the early years of schooling?

• A multifaceted and functional approach to teach spelling, grammar & phonics

**Contributing Qu 3**

What influences teachers in the teaching of writing in the early years of schooling?

• Varying influences on writing pedagogy
6.2.3 Fifth iteration: Approaches to writing pedagogy; consequent development of conceptual lens to illuminate different approaches to writing pedagogy; subsequent categorisation of teachers using the instrument.

The interviews concluded that in addition to holding multiple beliefs about writing pedagogy, these teachers’ approaches to teaching writing were underpinned by a multiplicity of influences. This led to the development of a conceptual lens, *Approaches to Writing Pedagogy: A Conceptual Lens* (Graham, 2009), as part of the data analysis process (See Appendix O). Subsequent categorisation of teachers using the instrument was then employed. The process is illustrated in Table 6.5.

Table 6.5

*Process for Categorisation: Approaches to Writing Pedagogy: A Conceptual Lens*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examination of Approaches to Writing Pedagogy</th>
<th>Development of a Conceptual Lens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Each teacher has a multiplicity of influences underpinning their approach to teaching writing.</td>
<td><em>Approaches to Writing Pedagogy: A Conceptual Lens</em> (Graham, 2009) which arose from further analysis and synthesis of the data within this study, identifies four categories of approaches to teaching writing. These four categories include:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• a Pragmatic Approach;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• an Eclectic Approach;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• a Philosophical Approach; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• a Visionary Approach.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Categorisation of Teachers

Analysis focusing on the multiplicity of influences underpinning teachers preferred approaches to teaching of writing enabled the researcher to categorise each teacher using *Approaches to Writing Pedagogy: A Conceptual Lens* (Graham, 2009).

6.3 Major Themes and Concepts from Data Analysis

Table 6.6 presents the major themes and concepts that were generated from the data analysis.
### Table 6.6
**Major Themes and Concepts Generated from Data Analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>BELIEFS</strong></th>
<th><strong>PRACTICES</strong></th>
<th><strong>INFLUENCES</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contributing Qn 1:</strong> What do teachers believe about the teaching of writing in the early years of schooling?</td>
<td><strong>Contributing Qn 2:</strong> What practices do teachers employ in the teaching of writing in the early years of schooling?</td>
<td><strong>Contributing Qn 3</strong> What influences teachers in the teaching of writing in the early years of schooling?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing is developmental</strong></td>
<td><strong>Writing as social practice</strong></td>
<td><strong>Children as the primary influence on writing pedagogy</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Considering the developmental nature of writing for planning, teaching and assessment purposes</td>
<td>• Relevant, meaningful purposeful writing experiences</td>
<td>• Learning needs of young writers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Multiple beliefs about writing pedagogy</strong></td>
<td>• Home and school partnerships</td>
<td>• Learning needs of struggling writers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teachers hold multiple beliefs about writing, learning to write, and teaching writing and these beliefs influence writing pedagogy</td>
<td><strong>The learning environment</strong></td>
<td>• Interests of the children &amp; engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Print-rich environment</td>
<td><strong>A Multiplicity of Influences on writing pedagogy</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Relevant &amp; purposefully organised resources</td>
<td>• A social practice discourse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Purposeful grouping</td>
<td>• Theoretical models and approaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Writing as an integral part of literacy</strong></td>
<td>• Extrinsic and intrinsic influences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Writing and talk</td>
<td><strong>Approaches to Writing Pedagogy</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Connection of reading, viewing and writing</td>
<td>• Teachers have preferred approaches to writing pedagogy that are informed by a multiplicity of influences and underpinned by a multiplicity of beliefs and consequently inform pedagogical choices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Exposing and engaging children with quality literature</td>
<td>• Teachers may be categorised according to their approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Explicit writing instruction</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Explicit teaching prior to writing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Explicit teaching of skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Explicit instructional strategies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Explicit teaching of the writing process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Digital literacy</strong></td>
<td><strong>Teaching of spelling, phonics and grammar as part of writing</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learning to write digitally</td>
<td>• A functional approach</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Engaging with new technologies and new literacies</td>
<td>• A multifaceted approach</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Multiplicity of Influences</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The themes and concepts are organised under each question from which they were generated. They are presented in the following sequence in this chapter:

- 6.4 Practices (Contributing Question 2);
- 6.5 Beliefs (Contributing Question 1);
- 6.6 Influences (Contributing Question 3);

6.4 Practices

Contributing Research Question 2: What practices do teachers employ in the teaching of writing in the early years of schooling?

6.4.1 Writing as social practice.

Writing as social practice influences writing pedagogy in the early years. Relevant contexts and purposeful and meaningful writing experiences are beneficial for engagement. In addition, fostering home and school partnerships is valued (C1–6 I1; C1–6 L1 & 2).

6.4.1.1 Relevant, purposeful, meaningful writing experiences.

Having a clear purpose for writing is foundational to engaging children. This understanding is appropriately illustrated by Tanya “Children can’t just write for the sake of writing. I find I have better results with the children if they are writing for a purpose, with something that is real and meaningful for them” (C2I1L12–15); by Jackie, “It is important the children understand they are not writing for the teacher, they write for a particular purpose” (C4I1L41–42); and by Andy, “We talk about the purpose of the writing, and why we are trying to learn” (C5I1L47–48). Explicitly communicating the purpose of writing to the children is catalytic for their developmental growth (C1L1, C1L2; C2L1, C2L2; C3L1, C3L2; C4L1, C4L2; C5L1, C5L2; C6L1, C6L2).

Ensuring writing experiences are relevant and meaningful stimulates children’s enthusiasm (C1-6I1&2). Strategies that have been employed are:

- Incorporating writing into units of work, thus achieving relevance (Cara C1I1L173);
- Relating writing lessons to what the class is currently studying (Tanya C2I1L130–148);
- Using real-life rather than life-like contexts (Jackie C4I1L22);
- Using relevant and meaningful writing experiences from students’ own experiences and lives (Chazz C3I1L8–10);
• Choosing topics for writing that are relevant and meaningful leading to children's creativity and motivation being better (Dolly C6I1L32–41); and
• Allowing children to direct writing lessons leading to increased motivation (Andy C5I1L220–245).

6.4.1.2 Home and school partnerships to support the teaching of writing.

Home and school partnerships to support the teaching of writing are valued and are fostered in a variety of ways (C1I1; C2I2; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1). Parent helpers are employed during writing lessons to assist with the editing process and act as an audience for whom children can read their writing (C3I1L51–58; L204–210). In addition, teachers consider how students’ out-of-school literacy practices influence learning. Moreover, they employ strategies to support students writing development in their home environments. Cara offers this understanding:

One of my boys thinks anything to do with writing or literacy is a girl's activity. He doesn't have that male role model because Dad doesn't read and doesn't write himself; he's illiterate. He thinks, “Why should I do it, because Dad doesn't do it?” And we are kind of having a bit of a battle with a few families like that because they just don't see the importance of reading and writing at home. I suppose another thing is, these kids are at before- and after-school care from 7 in the morning until 6 at night. So, they are not having that oral language with an adult. So, we have restructured our homework to include playing a board game, to get them talking. When you are aware of children's backgrounds you can structure appropriate homework to meet these students’ needs in their home environments (C1I1L265–276).

Home and school relationships are also fostered by sharing writing created by students with parents, such as promoting a class newsletter digitally constructed by children. This communication with parents via the child builds home and school partnerships effectively (C2I2L74-81) while also teaching children to construct a multimodal newsletter as shown in Figure 6.1.
Home and school partnerships are also fostered through the employment of a common everyday language when communicating with parents (C4I1L61-67). This is accomplished through the provision of reading sheets for parents to explain topics and theories.
underpinning the children’s projects (C4I1L200-206). In contrast, home and school partnerships are fostered through shared writing tasks between parents and children. One example includes children interviewing their parents about their occupations and then together completing an interview sheet. Children use this information sheet to write a report at school about their parents’ occupations (C6I1L226-231).

In summary, teachers engage in many practices to ensure writing experiences are situated within relevant contexts and are purposeful and meaningful to students. Further, home and school partnerships are fostered in a variety of ways. These practices are underpinned by a belief that writing as social practice is exemplary for student engagement.

The research understanding is that writing pedagogy is guided by teachers’ understanding that relevant contexts for writing, purposeful and meaningful writing experiences, and fostering home and school partnerships are exemplary for student engagement.

6.4.2 The learning environment.

An engaging learning environment is generated by teachers committed to teaching writing. This is exemplified when they teach their Years 2 and 3 students in bright, large comfortable spaces. Further, children are encouraged to take risks and share ideas when writing. Organisation of the learning environment includes quality children’s literature, words and other visual resources displayed around the room, organisation of seating, and places to model writing (C1–6 I1; C1-6 L1 & 2). Further, resources are available, including desks, whiteboards, computers, books and dictionaries for children to access during writing lessons (C1L11.2; C2L11.2; C3L11.2; C4L11.2; C5L11.2; C6L11.2). A visual and print-filled classroom supports the teaching of writing, as Tanya explains:

I have words around the room – our THRASS chart, the Magic 100 Words, and our pictures go up of our writing plans. I try to have as much print and images as I can and lots of books around that the children can go and access at any time. Children know where the dictionaries are, so they have got access to them if they want to. I also put a lot of words up on the board (Tanya C2I1L156–165).

Dolly offers this understanding:

We have lots of words all around the room. We have got our blend caterpillars that we created the other day. We display all our spelling words, so children can use those in their writing. Any unit-based resources will be in the room. A lot of them
will go to the information books to assist them in their writing, and I encourage that. We talk about it. I think it’s important to have words around the room (Dolly C6I1L141–150).

Classroom learning environments are organised creatively to meet the children’s needs as they construct texts (C1L1, C1L2; C2L1, C2L2; C3L1, C3L2; C4L1, C4L2; C5L1, C5L2; C6L1, C6L2). This is achieved in a variety of ways including grouping students purposefully in small groups during writing lessons to cater for varying writing abilities and diverse student needs (Cara C1L1L134–138). Also, children are seated purposefully, without their knowledge, in order to assist them during writing time (Chazz C3I1). Fostering “real-life rather than life-like contexts” (Jackie C4I1L22–24) is achieved by displaying print that originates from the children, rather than commercial print. Further, the learning environment is employed to model writing (Jackie C4I1L23–28).

Andy offers this understanding of how he employs the learning environment:

I try and use a lot of books. We read from books, we use the computer. I try to get the children involved in using the Internet to do research tasks which is beneficial for writing. I also foster practising sight words and learning sounds in the games we play. I use the whiteboard to do demonstrations of writing. I use a smaller whiteboard for joint constructions of texts. I use the floor to get students to share writing in groups or as a whole class on the floor. I also use the floor to read big books as exemplar models of writing (Andy C5I1L96–106).

In addition to the dynamics of the classroom, the playground is also an engaging visual and interactive learning environment to stimulate writing opportunities (Jackie C4I1L78–81).

In summary, teachers employ the learning environment creatively when teaching writing. Indeed, students benefit from a visual and print-rich environment, quality children’s literature, needs-based groupings, a space that supports risk-taking when writing, and purposefully employed resources. Clearly then, the learning environment may be organised creatively to foster student writing development.

The research understanding is that writing pedagogy is influenced by teachers’ understanding that the learning environment may be organised creatively to foster writing development.
6.4.3 Writing as an integral part of literacy.

Teachers believe writing is an integral part of literacy and consequently situate their teaching of writing in the context of acquiring literacy. Some teachers taught separate reading lessons, however, each teacher engaged in writing lessons embedded with both reading, viewing and talk. This includes engagement with quality literature (C1L1, C1L2; C2L1, C2L2; C3L1, C3L2; C4L1, C4L2; C5L1, C5L2; C6L1, C6L2). None of the schools where these teachers taught had a set structure for teaching literacy or writing specifically. Individual teachers structured their own teaching of literacy (C1I2; C2I2; C3I2; C4I2; C5I2; C6I2).

6.4.3.1 Integrating writing, viewing and talk.

Talk, viewing and reading are catalytic to teaching writing. Tanya offers this understanding, “I believe children need a good oral base to start, because they need to orally communicate before they can write. They need to do a lot of oral work before they start on any written work” (Tanya C2I1L9–11). Moreover, talk prior to and surrounding writing fosters writing development. Talk allows students to improve their sentence structure by reading their writing aloud and discovering their own errors through this process. Dolly shares this understanding: “We discuss before we write and can learn from each other through the talk. Also, what I really like to do is get the children, once they have finished, to read their writing to me” (Dolly C6I1L80–88).

Further, talk offers the opportunity for students to organise their thoughts. Andy believes writing is expressing thoughts on paper. He follows a process where children are encouraged to think, then express their thoughts orally. This may be followed by scribing the children’s ideas as a shared writing task or by the children writing independently (Andy C5I1L6–19). Jackie also believes thinking and expressing thoughts orally is an important part of the writing process. She shares this understanding:

Speaking helps children to ‘air’ their sentences. If you can teach them good sentence skills and to express themselves, then prepare the rest of the class to receive the speaking, then that is beneficial for any writing. Then they get their ideas clear in their heads before they commit themselves to the task of writing (Jackie C4I1L17–20).

Pictures, posters and photographs are also employed by teachers to teach visual literacy and stimulate talk prior to writing. This is considered beneficial for student engagement and helps students to order their thoughts. This understanding is illustrated by the employment of photographs, employed to stimulate discussion prior to writing about
experiences on camp (Chazz C3I1L68–74).

6.4.3.2 Integrating reading and writing.

Children are engaged with a variety of texts including quality literature and reading is incorporated regularly into writing lessons. This strategy is illustrated appropriately by Jackie who integrates reading and writing into all areas of the curriculum and employs her own literacy framework which includes a reading, writing and speaking component (Jackie C4I1L155–156). Andy further amplifies the legitimacy of such strategies:

I think reading itself and what we read and the tools we can use to support writing come so strongly from things we read. Reading is such a huge part of every one’s lives. At this age to see reading as a part of everything we do, particularly writing – I think it is just utterly important. I just think we read. There is so much in this room the children are reading. There is so much visually they are seeing and taking in. And then to be able to use that as their own expression of ideas and feelings–its great–to see what happens. And I think it gives them a sense of accomplishment as well (Andy C5I1L172–180).

There are multiple benefits from integrating reading and writing experiences for learning to write. This may be achieved through encouraging children to read a text and then respond in writing (Tanya C2I1L227–255). Children also learn to write by reading what other authors have written (Dolly C6I1L169). Dolly explains this strategy:

If we don’t write first then we will have nothing to read, so you have to write to be able to read. You also have to read to be able to write. They go together. We learn to write by reading what other people have written (Dolly C6I1L153–155).

Further, encouraging students to read and view prior to writing motivates students to write (C6I1L113–115). Both text and illustrations contribute to this motivation. Also, reading different text types as exemplar models of the types of writing one then expects the children to produce provides a scaffold that fosters children’s efforts to write in a given genre (C3I1L153–160).

Reading and viewing surrounding writing is an important experience that offers children scaffolding to undertake writing tasks. Cara offers this understanding:

One recount was the Little Red Hen. We read the story as a class. Then we used the story for our reading groups. We had different versions of the Little Red Hen, including a basic version for the struggling readers with more illustrations and less text, and a more extended story for the others. We compared texts as a whole
group. Then, as a whole class, we brainstormed ideas of what was similar in each story. We discussed that stories have to have a beginning, middle and an end. We brainstormed all the ideas that happened at the beginning, ideas that happened in the middle and ideas at the end. Then we started to write a recount in different groups. Each group had the teacher, an aide or a parent to assist. We also have space outside the classroom for groups to work. It was a joint construction with adult assistance. We then shared our joint constructions with the whole class. The students were then given the opportunity to write their own recount of the story individually (Cara C1I1L176–197).

In summary, teachers believe that writing is an integral part of literacy in the early years. Each teacher offers their understanding of the importance and benefits of reading quality literature and talk prior to and surrounding writing. Reading, viewing and talk enriches writing lessons and nurtures children towards the production of quality products.

The research understanding is that writing pedagogy is guided by teachers’ understanding that writing is as an integral part of Literacy.

6.4.4 Explicit writing instruction.

Explicit writing instruction is valued by teachers and contributes to student success. Consequently, writing is taught explicitly. Explicit writing instruction includes the skills, strategies and knowledge required to write. Figure 6.2 offers an overview of explicit writing instruction in the early years.

![Figure 6.2. Explicit writing instruction in the early years.](image-url)
6.4.4.1 Explicit teaching prior to writing.

A range of explicit practices prior to children’s writing independently is employed. This includes planning, reading about topics, discussion about topics and brainstorming of vocabulary and ideas (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1). Further, teachers teach children explicitly how to plan before writing. This process is important in helping students produce a quality product (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1). Strategies employed include:

- sentences starters and key words (C3I1L68–74);
- planning on the whiteboard of main ideas for each paragraph (C3I1L68–74);
- group discussion to encourage sharing of ideas before writing (C6I1L80–102);
- picture plans which provide a visual aid (C1I1L55–71); and
- brainstorming (C5I1L52–64).

Cara explains how she uses visual pre-writing strategies:

Quite often students draw a picture first and then describe what happened in words and I might scribe it for them. Some students are not up to understanding where their sentence comes from until they have drawn the picture (C1I1L55–71).

An example of a picture plan for a narrative text and a student writing sample developed from such a plan is illustrated in Appendix P.

Andy further amplifies the importance of planning:

I always use brainstorming, always using planning. The children are never writing unless they have got some sort of plan. This might be a diagram with key words, or a key word in the middle and then a brainstorm around it. This gives the children time to think and get their ideas down and draw from other people’s ideas because children at this age often find it difficult to find a starting point. I also ensure resources are ready in planning time for example, THRASS charts, our word walls, magic words. Often, I have the laptop set up and the children can type words in and do a spell check. I also often use picture plans. I just find that pictorial stimuli first at this age is a good way to start, because they never lose track of what they are writing about. They may change direction, but the main ideas remain constant because of that drawing (C5I1L52–64).

Further, this demonstrates the importance of visuals such as images and picture plans to accompany writing in the early years.
6.4.4.2 Explicit teaching of skills and employment of instructional strategies.

The explicit teaching of skills is an important component of writing in the early years. Examples of skills taught include spelling, grammar, punctuation, text types and digital literacy (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1). Moreover, skills are taught functionally through the use of a range of instructional strategies including:

- teaching text types including reading exemplar models that children are later expected to emulate;
- scaffolding;
- modelling writing;
- joint constructions, and
- providing opportunities for independent writing (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1).

Jackie explains some of the strategies she employs:

I write everything up myself, so the children are exposed to lots of demonstrations of writing. Children take a lot of risks. I give them opportunities for risk-taking. They have the responsibility for learning. I am demonstrating writing all the time, and all kinds of writing, all kind of print – not just the school print. I do lots of modeling. Sometimes I do reciprocal teaching. I have an expectation that everyone writes (C4I1L22–42).

Andy adopts similar processes, including the employment of modelled and joint constructions prior to independent writing (C5I1L45–49). An example of vocabulary brainstormed as a class and modelled writing from an observed lesson from Case 5 are shown in Figure 6.3.

Transcript: Brainstormed Vocabulary & Modelled Writing from Observed Lesson C5A9PW1.5

Brainstormed Vocabulary
Queen ant Worker ants Nurse ants Soldier ants Eggs Larvae Tunnels

Modelled Writing
Ants are social insects. They live together in nests or colonies. Ants have three main body parts, the head, thorax and abdomen. Ants use antennae to feel and smell. Ants have six legs. Ants eat dead insects and crumbs. Each ant has a job in the nest. The queen is the largest ant and she lays eggs. Nurse ants care for the eggs and feed the young. Worker ants go in search of food and make the tunnels for the nest. Solider ants protect the nest from enemies.

Figure 6.3. Transcript of brainstormed vocabulary and modelled writing from observed lesson in Andy’s classroom.
This lesson concluded with Andy’s students constructing a factual report on Ants, independently. A writing sample is shown in Figure 6.4.

Figure 6.4. Factual report, Ants, by a student in Andy’s class.
Tanya explains how she scaffolds students towards constructing texts independently:

I model first, before children construct. I get the children to represent their story, so it may be that they draw a picture first. Then students talk to a friend in the class and tell the story orally before we start any construction. I scaffold students based on need - so we may write sections at a time. So, we might do the introduction together. We might talk about ideas that the children are being exposed to, and what other people are writing. If we are writing a recount, then the children will do it themselves, but we always discuss it first. If there is a common topic that we are doing, then we will brainstorm key words together (C2I1L20–27, 33-41).

Andy employs multiple strategies to scaffold students, writing through the writing process. These include:

• modelled reading of texts like those that students are later expected to produce;
• discussion of the special features of text;
• discussion of writing topics;
• planning;
• drafting;
• editing; and
• conferencing to scaffold students towards the completion of a text type (Andy C5A26ETF). A transcript of the steps Andy adopted in a lesson he taught during this research project is shown in Figure 6.5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transcript: Bee Colonies: Lesson Steps as Written by Teacher C5A10PW1.5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Read Story Honey Bees by Christine Butterworth (Factual Big Book – Modelled reading and discussion)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Discuss Honey Bee Reporting Sheet to label parts of the Honey Bee and organise information</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Refer to Lady Beetle Report to work out questions to answer about Honey Bees (Previously written factual report – shared writing)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Students answer questions individually on reporting sheet</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Students use their writing folders to edit information</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conference with teacher when finished editing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Second edit after conferencing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Write factual report about Bees (using reporting sheet as a plan)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 6.5. Transcript: Lesson steps as written by teacher for bee colonies lesson.*

Andy implemented the use of a reporting sheet to scaffold students towards writing a factual report. The scaffolding process assisted students to organise key information to include in their factual reports about bees, as shown in Figure 6.6.
Dolly also employs instructional strategies when teaching writing. She models writing and reads exemplar models of writing like those that children are later expected to produce.
Moreover, she believes models are important to offer a sequential scaffolding process (C6I1 L75-77). Dolly offers this explanation:

> When I taught narrative genre, we wrote magic stories. We did a lot of reading of exemplar models. Then we did the character study. Then I demonstrated how to write a story—beginning, middle and end. We did a joint construction. I had lots of big books that I had made in the past. I read those to students, and we discussed the special features of a narrative text. I have taught my students processes to plan. They are expected to have a go themselves. They know they won’t be completely correct and will have the opportunity to do a second draft. That must be taught. I allow plenty of time to write. Now, I am teaching the children how to edit (C4I1L134–153).

**6.4.4.3 Explicit teaching of the writing process.**

Each teacher teaches components in the writing process explicitly. These components include planning, drafting, editing, conferencing and publishing (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1). Jackie addresses this process by encouraging students to read their writing aloud and conference with each other to improve drafts. This includes editing spelling and punctuation (C2I2L78–86). Dolly explains her editing process:

> Once children have finished writing, they read it back to me. I think that is important, that writing is comprehensible and can be read aloud. Sometimes students realise they need to work on their sentence structure when reading their writing aloud and will make changes through this process. I will correct spelling. I first encourage the use of a dictionary and ask students to circle a word if they are not sure. They do some proofreading themselves. Children have strategies to check their spelling. I also usually have set criteria I select for children to focus on during the editing process (C6I1L83–99).

An example of criteria Dolly identified for a factual report is shown in Figure 6.7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria for Editing:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital letters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full stops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factual Sentences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 6.7. Editing criteria for a factual report about ants: Case Six, Dolly.*
A first draft of a student writing sample for Dolly's lesson is shown in Figure 6.8. The draft indicates how the student has read over the text and edited the writing using the criteria explained by the teacher.

Figure 6.8. Sample of student writing about ants self-edited according to the editing criteria supplied by the teacher.

Cara also offers opportunities for her students to reflect on and improve writing. The emphasis is initially on ensuring clarity of meaning. Later, editing of spelling, sentence structure and grammar is addressed. Cara encourages her students to:

- read over their writing;
- circle spelling errors;
- improve sentence structure;
- add more adjectives; and
- add additional relevant information to add meaning to a piece of writing (C111L163–168).

Andy explains his editing process:

We discuss making sure students have checked their punctuation and ensured
their sentences make sense. I may prompt students with ‘Does this sound right?’ or ‘How do you think it should sound?’ I encourage students to read their writing aloud and ensure it makes sense. And if it doesn’t, ‘What can they do about it?’ I find that a lot of what we do needs to be supported by—not just sight words, but by going through a lot of vocab—jointly—where they might talk about a particular theme and they might come up with words and ideas related to a given topic (C5I1L33–43).

Tanya encourages her students to appreciate that the editing process is necessary and positive. Tanya offers this explanation:

We go through the Magic 100 Words because without them we are struggling to put anything down. I tick off the key words that students have spelt correctly, so that sets them up for success and gives confidence, which is important. I praise writing efforts. I never use any negativity in writing. It depends on the level the child is at, what I write. I say to them, ‘I am helping you towards writing like a Year 4 student’ and see changes as positive (C2I1L106–115).

In summary, teachers consider that explicit writing instruction contributes to students’ becoming successful writers. Consequently, teachers teach children explicitly both the skills and strategies needed to write and how to apply these strategies in a functional way. The research understanding is that writing instruction is guided by teachers’ understanding that explicit teaching contributes to student success.

6.4.5 Digital literacy.

Teaching children to write digitally through engagement with new technologies and new literacies is important (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1). Consequently, a range of technological tools are employed to assist teachers in teaching children to become digitally literate. Examples of these tools include audio recorders, computers, computer programs, interactive whiteboards and iPads (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1). Further, a variety of strategies are employed to foster children to become digitally literate. Examples include:

- visual literacy, including watching readings of quality literary texts as exemplar models (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1);
- constructing a digital newsletter, which includes articles constructed digitally by each child (C2I1L138–148);
- employing a spell check program where children are encouraged to check their
spelling digitally (C4L1.1.2P2);

- encouraging students to research using the internet, involving reading and writing (C5I1L96–107);
- selecting appropriate digital tasks for the children’s age and development;
- writing text types digitally (C5I1L135–137), (C6I1L240–241);
- employing interactive whiteboards to enhance the teaching of writing (C1L1&2; C2L1&2; C3L1&2); and
- employing audio recorders to assist students with special needs to verbalise their stories and then construct texts digitally with teacher assistance (C1I1L97–97; C2I1L27–31).

Cara shares an example of a lesson resulting in the creation of a web page:

We made dioramas of animal habitats. Each child then took a photograph of their habitat. The children constructed an information report about each animal digitally to accompany their habitats. We then used these reports to create a whole class web page, including the photos and reports (C1I1L82–84).

Computer programs are also used to enhance the teaching of writing (C1I1, C1A4, C1L1; C2I1; C3I2; C4L1; C5I1, C6I1). A computer program called *Storyroom* was employed during an observed lesson. The aim was to teach students explicitly about the features of the narrative genre. An interactive Powerpoint presentation enabled the children to engage in a shared digital text construction as a whole class and was achieved using an interactive whiteboard. This process invites the children to select images of characters, setting, time and place. Further, the process involves the digital construction of a plot including both problems and resolutions. Each of these processes leads to the creation of a digitally constructed narrative text (C1L11.4P15.P16) as shown in Appendix Q. Chazz employs *Storyroom* also, but in a different way. Chazz uses the program to enable children to create a story visually, using pictures on the program. These picture plans are then employed to assist students with writing a story. Chazz believes this program “inspires” children to write (C3I2L44–51).

Technology is also employed as a motivational tool to encourage children to write. Tanya employs DVDs to motivate her students and she described a lesson where she allowed students to view a movie in sections on an interactive whiteboard. She stopped the movie regularly to allow children to summarise the story throughout this process. The visual and interactive nature of such a writing episode motivates children to write as Tanya explained: “The power of literacy media is incredible! The children are very motivated to watch a movie and they write and write because they want to move onto the next part”
In summary, teachers employ a variety of technological tools and strategies in teaching children to write digitally. This is underpinned by a belief that digital literacy is an important component of learning to write.

The research understanding is that writing pedagogy is influenced by teachers’ understanding that becoming digitally literate is an important component of learning to write in the early years.

6.4.6 A functional and multifaceted approach to teaching spelling, grammar and phonics.

A variety of strategies and programs are employed to teach spelling and to build vocabulary. Examples of programs employed include the THRASS spelling program (Ritchie, 1998), the ELF program (Barrett et al., trialled 1999–2002) (C1I1L25–27), (C2I2L35–36), (C3I2L4–5) and Strategic Spelling (Wheatley, 2005), (C6I1L50–61). In addition, having a classroom displaying multiple print resources fosters spelling development and vocabulary building (C5–L1–1.2P12I, C6I1L141–143, C2I1L156–169, C4I1L22–24). The goals of this strategy are assisted by the employment of:

- dictionaries (C5I1L29–37);
- computer spellcheck programs (C4L1 1.4 P4);
- lists of words on the board in context (C2I1L156–169);
- magic words charts. e.g., Magic 100 Words (Reiter, 2003) on children's desks (C1I1L125–127); and
- word walls (C2I1L50–54) which are employed to foster learning to spell.

Tanya explains how she makes visual resources available to assist students with spelling when writing:

We always make sure we have everything we need ready—we have THRASS charts, our word walls, and magic words that are difficult to spell available to the children. We will have the laptop set up and the children can type words in that are difficult to spell (C2I1L50–54).

Further, teachers employ brainstorming to build vocabulary around given topics and offer students words to assist them in their writing. An example of brainstormed vocabulary from an observed lesson is shown in Figure 6.9.
Transcript: Shared Writing - Brainstormed Vocabulary from Observed Lesson

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Space</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planets</td>
<td>Sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neptune</td>
<td>Constellations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moon</td>
<td>Comets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jupiter</td>
<td>No gravity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pluto</td>
<td>Dust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercury</td>
<td>Gas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uranus</td>
<td>Milky way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mars</td>
<td>Atmosphere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earth</td>
<td>Oxygen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venus</td>
<td>Astronauts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturn</td>
<td>Scientists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asteroids</td>
<td>Cosmonauts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meteors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6.9. Example from an observed lesson of brainstormed vocabulary using shared writing.

Grammar and parts of text are also taught explicitly. Examples include:

- teaching what a word is, what a letter is and how to write a sentence in the early years (C1I1L18–20);
- media employed as a tool to help teach students how to sequence their ideas in their writing (C2I1L63–87);
- explicit teaching of how to write a paragraph (C3I1L36–38) and how to extend sentences (C3I1L56–58);
- teaching students how to write and answer questions (C5I1L11–19); and
- teaching punctuation and sentence structure in context (C2I1L299–303, C5I1L126–130).

Moreover, students are encouraged and assisted to improve their spelling, grammar and punctuation in a functional way during the writing process. This is achieved through scaffolding, positivity, having differing expectations according to individual development and teaching strategies to engage with unknown words, within relevant contexts (C2I1L107–110).

A variety of strategies to teach spelling and grammar are employed. Common practices include:

- language rotation activities and spelling activities (C1I1L44–47);
- encouragement of students as part of the editing process to circle words they think are correctly spelt (C1I1L167–168);
- word identification and employment of conferences on spelling in writing time (C1I1L44–47);
• assessment of “correct tense, capital letters in correct places, full stops and correct spelling of frequently used words” (C1I1L286–287) and conferencing with children including having children circling spelling mistakes, capital letters and full stops (C5I1L126–130), (C3I2L72);
• written words on the board at the children’s request (C2I1L156–169);
• explicit teaching of sentence structure, capitals, full stops and paragraphing in context (C2I1L299–303), (C3I2L15);
• provision of a paragraph on the board in which children may add the punctuation (C3I2L26–29);
• encouragement of students to use small whiteboards to practise writing words; and
• provision of words to learn to spell for homework and regular testing of these words (C6I1L61–62).

In summary, teachers employ a range of programs and strategies to teach spelling, grammar and phonics within the writing program. Visual resources are considered important to teach spelling. A functional approach (Martin, 1993; Christie & Martin, 1997; Christie & Derewianka, 2008) to teaching spelling, phonics and grammar is also preferred.

The research understanding is that writing pedagogy is guided by teachers’ understanding that teaching phonics, spelling and grammar are important elements of writing pedagogy and that implementing a variety of different strategies and programs within a functional approach contribute to exemplary practice.
6.5 Beliefs

Contributing Research Question 1: What do teachers believe about the teaching of writing in the early years of schooling?

6.5.1 Learning to write is developmental.

Teachers believe learning to write is developmental. Consequently, the developmental nature of learning to write is a consideration for planning, teaching and assessment. Moreover, assessing developmentally and offering appropriate writing tasks based on this knowledge is considered exemplary practice (C1I1, C1I2; C2I1, C2I2; C3I2; C4I1; C5I2; C6I2, C6L1).

In planning and teaching, Cara considers the developmental needs and literacy levels of her students (C1I1L15–16). She shares her understanding that "students develop at different rates and writing needs to be structured accordingly" (C1I1L227–230). Writing: Developmental Continuum (EDWA, 1994) is employed for both planning and assessment purposes. Also, teaching strategies change to respond to student needs (C1I1L38–39). Cara shares this understanding "That is the basis of where my teacher partner and I base our writing activities from—is where the gaps are on our writing continuum" (EDWA, 1994, 1995; C1I2L23–25).

Tanya also believes strategies for teaching writing should respond to the developmental needs and literacy levels of her students. She achieves this by:

- using open-ended questions to encourage students to write responses after reading a text (C2I1L232–235);
- individualising spelling to cater for developmental needs (C2I2L44–46); and
- assessing individual writing development by employing individualised criteria sheets (C2I1L280–311).

Jackie describes having “twenty-six different needs” in her class of twenty-six (C4I1L74). She employs negotiated learning and negotiates students’ homework depending on literacy levels (C4I1L73–74). Jackie also compares early pieces of writing to drafts written later to assess children’s development over time (C3I2L21; C6I2L127–128). Further, her expectations differ according to individual development (C3I2L82–85).

Dolly also considers the developmental needs of her students. In an observed lesson Dolly encouraged children to either work on a joint construction with her or continue independently (C6L11.1P3). She explains this strategy as “When I observe some children are developmentally ready to continue to write independently and others need assistance, I supports these options” (C6I2L88–89). Andy also believes learning to write is
developmental and adapts his practice accordingly. He achieves this by:

- considering the stage most students are working at, when selecting text types (C5I2L41–43);
- having expectations for text construction based on individual development (C5I2L41–43); and
- employing a writing developmental continuum (EDWA, 1994, 1995) to assess each student's individual writing development (C5I2L15–17; See Appendix R).

In summary, teachers consider the developmental nature of writing for planning, teaching and assessment purposes. This allows teachers to scaffold student learning experiences from their individual literacy levels towards new learning. These practices are underpinned by a belief that learning to write is developmental and students in the early years are working at a range of different literacy levels.

The research understanding is that planning, teaching and assessing writing are guided by teachers’ belief that writing is developmental and students in the early years are working at a range of different literacy levels.

6.5.2 Multiple beliefs about writing pedagogy.

Teachers hold multiple beliefs related to writing pedagogy and these beliefs influence their practice.

6.5.2.1 Multiplicity of beliefs.

Teachers hold many beliefs and how they form these beliefs is complex. Moreover, teachers hold beliefs about learning to write, teaching writing, and teaching and learning more generally. In addition, teachers also have beliefs that underpin their approaches to teaching writing. Further, teacher beliefs influence their pedagogical choices, such as the methods and strategies they employ. Figures 6.10–6.15 illustrate the multiplicity of beliefs influencing teachers’ writing pedagogies.
BELIEFS UNDERPINNING CARA’S APPROACH TO TEACHING WRITING

CARA’S BELIEFS ABOUT TEACHING AND LEARNING MORE GENERALLY THAT INFLUENCE WRITING PEDAGOGY

CARA’S BELIEFS ABOUT TEACHING WRITING

CARA’S BELIEFS ABOUT LEARNING TO WRITE

Philosophical approach to writing pedagogy

Blooms Taxonomy and catering for individual learning styles is important. Grouping children according to learning styles is good practice.

The developmental nature of writing should be considered for planning, teaching and assessment purposes. Fostering home & school partnerships promotes writing development.

Learning to write is developmental. Oral language is an important foundation for teaching writing.

TEACHER BELIEFS INFLUENCE PEDAGOGICAL CHOICES

The needs, interests and the abilities of the children are the primary influence on methods, strategies, and techniques.

Figure 6.10. Multiplicity of beliefs: Cara.
Learning to write is developmental

A social practices discourse is important for teaching writing. The developmental nature of writing should be considered for planning, teaching and assessment purposes. Fostering home & school partnerships promotes writing development.

Relevant contexts are optimal for student engagement. Positivity fosters new learning.

Philosophical approach to writing pedagogy

Teacher beliefs influence pedagogical choices

The needs, interests and the abilities of the children are the primary influence on methods, strategies, and techniques.

Figure 6.11. Multiplicity of beliefs: Tanya.
BELIEFS UNDERPINNING CHAZZ’S APPROACH TO TEACHING WRITING

CHAZZ’S BELIEFS ABOUT TEACHING AND LEARNING MORE GENERALLY THAT INFLUENCE WRITING PEDAGOGY

CHAZZ’S BELIEFS ABOUT TEACHING WRITING

CHAZZ’S BELIEFS ABOUT LEARNING TO WRITE

Pragmatic approach to writing pedagogy

Covering what is in the syllabus and what is set out in school policy and programs is important.

Teaching genres is important. Preparing children for mandated testing is important. Relevant writing tasks engage children.

Learning to write is developmental

TEACHER BELIEFS INFLUENCE PEDAGOGICAL CHOICES

The needs, interests and the abilities of the children are the primary influence on methods, strategies, and techniques.

Figure 6.12. Multiplicity of beliefs: Chazz.
Figure 6.13. Multiplicity of beliefs: Jackie.
Figure 6.14. Multiplicity of beliefs: Andy.

- Eclectic approach to writing pedagogy
- Encouraging children to take ownership of their learning motivates and engages children
- A genre approach is important. Reading should surround writing. A social practices discourse is important.
- Writing is an integral part of literacy. Thinking comes before writing.

**TEACHER BELIEFS INFLUENCE PEDAGOGICAL CHOICES**

The needs, interests and the abilities of the children are the primary influence on methods, strategies, and techniques.
Teacher beliefs influence how teachers plan, teach and assess writing. Jackie has a personal overview and specific learning priorities that guide her writing practice (C4I1, C4I2). In addition, she adopts negotiated learning and Cambourne’s Conditions of Learning (Cambourne, 1988). She describes immersion as the principal aim (C4I1L33) in
her classroom. As part of this philosophy Jackie employs modelled writing, reciprocal writing and expects that everyone writes. The children are encouraged to take risks and be responsible for their writing (C4I1L33–39). Jackie believes there is a relationship between thinking and writing: “I think writing is actually a thinking skill which enables children to plan and express what they believe before they meet up with another member of the learning community” (C4I1L16). This belief is reflected in Jackie's practice. In an observed lesson to write signs to label previously constructed castles, Jackie had the children work in cooperative groups talking, thinking and problem-solving prior to writing signs (C4–L1–1.3– P7,1.4–P8,1.3–P9).

In contrast, Chazz’s commences with mandated testing because she believes children need to be prepared for such tests. Consequently, much of her writing pedagogy is centred on topics to ensure students pass the mandated testing Year Three Benchmarks (QSA, 2005). Further, Chazz also believes writing should originate from personal experiences (C3I1, C3I2). Consequently, writing in her early years class is generated from topics within relevant units of work. She offers this understanding: “Children are interested and motivated to write when writing is related to something they have done” (C3I1L7–19).

Some beliefs are held more strongly than others. Cara and Tanya are influenced by their belief about the developmental nature of writing for planning, teaching and assessment purposes. While this is a central belief for Cara and guides her practice (C1I1, C1I2), Tanya believes writing is predominantly a social practice (Vygotsky, 1978; Hidi & Boscolo, 2006). Consequently, Tanya is guided not only by her belief that writing needs to be relevant, meaningful and purposeful, but also by the need to foster home and school partnerships for literacy learning where the cultural and family literacy practices of children are incorporated into writing tasks (C2I1, C2I2). She explains that “everything I do in writing I try to link to something relevant to the children” (C2I1L130–133).

Similarly, Andy believes writing should originate from personal experiences. Consequently, he encourages children to take ownership and direct writing tasks. Andy offers this understanding: “What I am trying to do more and more when I am teaching writing is ensure that it comes from the kids. That they are phrasing the questions and writing about what they wanted to find out” (C5I1L220–223).

Andy also believes in a genre approach (C. Miller, 1984) to teaching writing. Consequently, he teaches relevant genres within relevant units of work (C5I1 &I2). Dolly also advocates relevant writing experiences: “I have got a real thing about making it real for them. Bringing everything into the real world,” she explains (C6I1L216–218). Consequently, Dolly ensures her students have relevant purposes for writing (C6I1L216–
In summary, teachers hold varying beliefs that influence their writing pedagogy. Some beliefs are held more strongly than others and consequently are more influential to their writing pedagogy. There are also demonstrable relationships between teacher beliefs and writing practices.

The research understanding is that teachers hold multiple beliefs about writing, learning to write, and teaching writing and these beliefs influence writing pedagogy.

6.6 Influences

Contributing Research Question 3: What influences teachers in the teaching of writing in the early years of schooling?

6.6.1 Children as the primary influence on writing pedagogy.

Children are the primary influence on teachers and how they plan and deliver writing pedagogy. Moreover, teachers change their practices regularly. Not surprisingly, the motivation for such change is the needs, interests and abilities of their students. As Cara explains, “the teaching of writing changes from year to year depending on the needs and abilities of my students” (C1I1L299–303). Chazz also confirms “the ability of the children” are the primary influence on her writing pedagogy (C3I1L161–165). Tanya offers this understanding of how children influence her writing pedagogy:

I am guided through particularly by the class—that will impact on the way I do things; that has a huge impact” (C2I1L275–278). Writing is based on the interests and needs of students, such as planning writing around a show in the local community that the children are interested in (C2i1L130–L131).

Consequently, practices are adapted to cater for students.

Further, Jackie believes her personal philosophy is to empower students. Examples of how Jackie achieves this include:

- considering children’s capabilities (C4I1L160–164);
- building on children’s prior knowledge and understandings of texts when planning for teaching writing (C4I1L7–L9);
- planning “from the children’s talk”; and
- responding to individual differences (C4I1L).
Andy believes writing should be centred on the needs of the children. He explains that “writing must be an extension of what children are thinking and feeling” (C5I1L6–11). Moreover, lessons should be directed by what the children know and want to know” (C5I1L12–L14).

Dolly also identifies children as the primary influence on her writing pedagogy. She explains that writing lessons should aim to set students up to experience success by allowing time and many opportunities to write (C6I1L6). Further, talking prior to writing encourages children to use their ideas and knowledge for writing tasks (C5I1L78–L92) and ensures writing is relevant and meaningful for children (C5I1L216–L221).

### 6.6.1.1 Responding to the learning needs of young writers.

Young writers are motivated and engaged when writing activities are related to their lives at school, at home and in their communities (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1). Moreover, the purposeful use of participating in writing as a dialogic process in broader contexts than the classroom allows students to learn about the purpose of writing and be active writers in society (C6I1L215-221; C3I1L7-19). Furthermore, the students enjoy being social writers (C5I1L220-240; C6I1L215-221; C3I1L7-19). Consequently, teaching writing as social practice is valued (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1).

Providing a comfortable, visual and well-resourced classroom environment, encourages young writers to take risks when writing and employ resources to assist them with writing tasks (C4I1L17-26). Moreover, students discuss their writing with their peers, employ words around the room and read relevant quality literary texts provided, thus promoting independence and allowing students to support themselves in their independent writing time (C6I1L141-150). Consequently, employing the learning environment creatively is important (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1).

Young writers enjoy engaging in talk prior to writing and this opportunity assists them to organise thoughts which contributes to communicating more effectively (C2I1L9-11). Also, reading and viewing quality literature provides exemplar models of text types giving insight to students about how a text is constructed. In addition, the process motivates children to attempt to model exemplar texts (C5I1L21-29). Consequently, teaching writing as an integral part of literacy is valued (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1).

Considering each students’ individual development allows work to be appropriately scaffolded in order to address students’ individual learning needs (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1). This practice encourages new learning. Moreover, when students experience success they grow in confidence and are more likely to take risks when writing (C2I1L20-211).
Consequently, considering the developmental nature of writing for planning, teaching and assessment purposes is important (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1).

Explicit instruction fosters student writing development and contributes to the quality of students writing by providing the skills, strategies and knowledge required to write, and the understand of how to apply that knowledge in a functional way (C1I1L171-197). Students respond positively to explicit instruction, attempting to write what the teacher has modelled or what the class has constructed for shared writing (C2I1L43-60). The gradual release of responsibility from the teacher writing, to shared writing tasks and then to independent writing is a process that assists students to become successful writers (C1I1L171-197; C2I1L43-60). Consequently, explicit writing instruction is important (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1).

Young writers appreciate having a purpose for the grammar and spelling skills they are being taught. Moreover, encouraging students to employ skills functionally teaches them to be language users, which fosters writing development (C6I2L96-119; C5I2L86-99). Consequently, a functional approach to teaching spelling and grammar are preferred (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1).

Young writers enjoy new technologies and are engaged by digital writing activities that include colour, interactivity, multimodal and visual elements (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1). Such experiences enhance student digital literacy learning (C2I1L63-84). Also, digital writing activities engage writers that struggle with print literacy (C1I1L91-100). Consequently, providing digital literacy instruction is valued (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1).

Reflective teachers understand the different learning preferences of individual children and differentiate instruction to respond appropriately (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1). Cara explains she has five different groups of writers with different levels of literacy and different learning styles. Consequently, she adapts her pedagogy to respond to these different learning preferences (C1I1L5-7; &15-16). Similarly, Tanya adapts her expectations for different students during the writing process to respond to different literacy levels and students' capabilities C2I1L119-128).

6.6.1.2 Responding to the learning needs of struggling writers.

Responding to the needs, interests and abilities of struggling writers who experience challenges learning to write is important. (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1). The
participant teachers defined struggling writers as achieving below the expected standard and taking longer to develop writing skills and strategies than their peers (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1). Consequently, a range of strategies are employed to respond to these needs (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1).

Engaging struggling writers is often more difficult than engaging more competent writers. Teachers believe that these writers are motivated and engaged when writing activities are connected to their lives at school, at home and in their communities. Consequently, relevant and meaningful learning episodes increase their interest and engagement (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1). In addition, digital activities are stimulating and engaging especially because of the visual and interactive components which engage struggling writers. Tanya describes a struggling writer in her class responding positively to viewing the DVD Finding Nemo (Stanton, Unkrich, & Walters, 2003). Indeed, the visual and interactive resource assisted Tanya’s struggling writer to write a summary of the story, including more quality text than he had ever constructed previously (C2I1L63-87). At times when a student is not managing writing in print, visual aids and constructing text digitally provides them with the motivation to persevere with writing. In addition, Cara believes digital tools are an assistive technology for students with motor difficulties that make print literacy challenging (C1I1L95-100).

Further, struggling writers may feel overwhelmed. Teachers address this by providing a support environment that encourages risk taking, talk, and collaborative learning (C2I1L9-12; C4I1). In addition, a visual, print rich environment offers words for children to use in their writing (C4I1L17-26). Further, a range of resources are provided such as word lists, books, dictionaries and digital tools and resources for struggling writers (C6I1L141-150).

Also, writing words on paper is a common problem for struggling young writers. Teachers employ pre-writing activities such as talk prior to writing, graphic organisers and sentence starters assist struggling writers to get started (C2I1L20-41). In addition, reading exemplar models of texts helps struggling writers to understand what is expected of them when they write (C5I1L21-25). Brainstorming of key words, and ideas is another strategy teachers’ employ to assist struggling writers. This enables students to think about their writing, offers visual prompts to remind students what they are writing about and provides words and ideas to be employed in their writing (C2I1L20-41).

In addition, learning new skills and strategies may also be a challenge for struggling writers. This study identifies that knowing individual students and differentiating writing instruction based on individual writing development, encourages struggling writers to be
successful (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1). Moreover, scaffolding processes such as one on one teacher-student support, targeted at students’ developmental level are employed. Explicit instruction is especially important for struggling writers (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1). Consequently, targeting teaching in small like-ability groups (mini lessons) are regularly provided to explicitly teach writing skills, strategies and process. Also, demonstrations of writing are regularly employed for struggling young writers (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1). Moreover, the gradual release of responsibility through modelled, shared, interactive and guided writing, towards independent writing is employed for struggling writers (C3I1L173-177; C2I1L43-45). Struggling writers often need extra time to think about what to write and to complete writing tasks. Consequently, extra time is provided, so students have the opportunity to move further through the writing process, complete writing tasks and experience success (C6I1L245-252; C2I1L43-60).

Finally, while many of the strategies teachers employ for struggling writers also benefit all students, teachers explain they provide a range of additional supports to struggling writers, that are not necessarily needed by all students. Supports include learning support teacher assistance based on individual needs for children indicated as needing literacy support from testing (C2I1L38-43; C3I1L212-217) and parent helpers to assist with additional editing and conferencing of texts (C3L204-210). Also, special skills-based programs that students are removed from the classroom to participate in, such as the ELF program to teach phonics, are provided. Tanya identifies she has six struggling writers currently participating in the program, to strengthen their phoneme and grapheme knowledge (C2I1L-38; C3I1L215-217).

In summary, teachers consider the needs, interests and abilities of individual students for planning and teaching purposes. These practices are underpinned by a belief that by knowing each student and their learning needs, abilities and interests, teachers may then plan relevant and appropriate writing experiences to engage students and foster their writing development.

The research understanding is that writing pedagogy is guided by teachers’ understanding that children are the primary influence on their planning, teaching and assessment.

6.6.2 A multiplicity of influences on writing pedagogy.

There is a multiplicity of influences on individual teacher writing pedagogy. Moreover, whole school policy and programs, mandated testing, studies, professional learning, teacher beliefs, and theoretical models and approaches influences writing pedagogy.
Figure 6.16 displays the influences on writing pedagogy for each teacher.
Figure 6.16. Influences on writing pedagogy: Case study teacher participants.
6.6.2.1 The influence of writing as social practice.

Writing as social practice (Vygotsky, 1978; Hidi & Boscolo, 2006) influences teacher writing pedagogy. This study confirmed the importance of relevant contexts and purposeful and meaningful writing experiences. In addition, teachers value home and school partnerships and view the school and local communities as offering important contexts to situate the teaching of writing. (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1).

6.6.2.2 The influence of historical theoretical models and approaches.

Different theoretical models and approaches also influence teacher writing pedagogy. Cara is influenced by emergent theory (Teale & Sulzby, 1986). Consequently, she assesses children developmentally. Cara began teaching in Western Australia where the First Steps Literacy program was introduced in 1994 and its developmental continua (EDWA, 1995) for assessing individual growth and development were employed. She established her belief about the developmental nature of writing in this context. Further, Cara considers literacy learning, as well as the abilities of the children and their learning preferences, when planning learning experiences (C1I1 &I2).

In contrast, Andy’s writing pedagogy is influenced by the genre movement (C. Miller, 1984) and he explained that his writing pedagogy has evolved over many years. Andy’s school also employs a genre approach to teaching writing which Andy believes is sound practice. Moreover, Andy believes that in later years he has added to his practice of teaching text types while emphasising writing as social practice (Vygotsky, 1978; Hidi & Boscolo, 2006) (C5I1&I2).

Jackie is influenced by the whole language approach (Goodman, 1986 which is a holistic, meaning-centred, integrated approach to teaching literacy. Jackie begins with the interests of the children. Further, she considers Cambourne’s Conditions of Learning (Cambourne, 1988) as being influential (C4l1&I2).

6.6.2.3 Intrinsic and extrinsic influences.

Teachers have a range of intrinsic and extrinsic influences informing their writing pedagogy. Cara is influenced by school policy. She explains that her school is in the process of developing its own curriculum guidelines for early literacy and numeracy and states that “a lot of what I teach is policy-led” (C1I1L231–239). In contrast, Tanya is influenced by professional reading, professional learning and sharing ideas with colleagues (C2I1L267–278). Colleagues also influence Andy’s practice. Andy offers this understanding about the benefits he receives from talking with colleagues: “I have learned
many great ideas just talking to different teachers in the same year levels at different schools. They might have similar ideas in what they want to teach, but just the way they do it is amazing” (C5I1L183-189).

Jackie’s postgraduate studies influence her writing pedagogy. Her studies in pastoral care have led to an understanding that writing is therapeutic. Consequently, she encourages children to write about their thoughts and feelings (C4I1L6–14). Also, Jackie identifies “the constraints of the textbook program” as being an influence she would rather not have in her practice. Parents pay for class sets of books on the booklist and Jackie would prefer not to use these purchased texts chosen by her school (C4I1L233).

The mandated Year Two Diagnostic Net (QSA, 1996, 1997) influences Dolly and Andy’s current practice (C5I1L138–149, C6I1L122-124). Both were completing Year Two Diagnostic Net topics during this study (C5L1 & L2. C6L1 &L2). University studies and life experiences are other influences on Dolly’s practice. (C6I1L215–216). In contrast, the Year 3 component of the mandated 3/5/7 Benchmarks Testing (QSA, 2005) is a guiding influence on Chazz’s practice. Chazz believes she needs to provide the children with experiences that may help them to complete the tests (C3I1L165–170).

In summary, each teacher identifies multiple influences on their individual writing pedagogy. Some influences are stronger than others. Also, influences may change over time. Influences are both intrinsic and extrinsic.

The research understanding is that an individual teacher’s writing pedagogy is influenced by a multiplicity of influences.

6.6.3 Approaches to teaching writing.

Teachers have a multiplicity of influences informing their preferred approaches to writing pedagogy. Moreover, this study revealed pragmatic, eclectic, philosophical and visionary approaches to teaching writing. Approaches to Writing Pedagogy: A Conceptual Lens (Graham, 2009) was generated from analysing the data from this study. As shown in Table 6.7, this conceptual lens explains the different approaches to teaching writing revealed in this study.
**Table 6.7**

**Approaches to Writing Pedagogy: A Conceptual Lens**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approaches to Writing Pedagogy: A Conceptual Lens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Pragmatic Approach:</strong> Pragmatic teachers’ approach to writing pedagogy in the early years is influenced primarily by extrinsic influences. These teachers are guided primarily by practical considerations such as school policy and programs, syllabus documentation and assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EXTRINSIC INFLUENCES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>An Eclectic Approach:</strong> Eclectic teachers’ approach to writing pedagogy in the early years is influenced by a more equal combination of intrinsic and extrinsic influences. Extrinsic influences include school policy and programs, syllabus documents, and mandated documentation and assessment. Intrinsic influences include personal beliefs and knowledge about writing pedagogy and teaching and learning more generally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COMBINED: EXTRINSIC &amp; INTRINSIC INFLUENCES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Philosophical Approach:</strong> Philosophical teachers’ approach to writing pedagogy in the early years is influenced primarily by intrinsic influences. These teachers are guided primarily by a range of personal beliefs and knowledge about writing pedagogy and teaching and learning more generally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INTRINSIC INFLUENCES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Visionary Approach:</strong> Visionary teachers’ approach to writing pedagogy is influenced primarily by a vision constructed from personal knowledge about how writing should be taught in the early years. Their personal beliefs and knowledge about writing and teaching and learning more generally contribute to their vision. Consequently, they prioritise personal outcomes that align with their vision before school requirements. Also, they resist extrinsic influences contrary to their vision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INTRINSIC INFLUENCES &amp; RESISTANT TO EXTRINSIC INFLUENCES</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* This table illustrates the conceptual lens constructed by M. Graham (2009) as part of the research process, which explains the different approaches to the teaching of writing revealed in this study.

How each teacher was categorised using the conceptual lens is shown in Table 6.8.
Table 6.8
*Categorising Teacher Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approaches to Teaching Writing: A Conceptual Lens</th>
<th>Categorising Teacher Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Pragmatic Approach:</strong> Pragmatic teachers’ approach to writing pedagogy in the early years is influenced primarily by extrinsic influences. These teachers are guided primarily by practical considerations such as school policy and programs, syllabus documentation and assessment.</td>
<td>Chazz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>An Eclectic Approach:</strong> Eclectic teachers’ approach to writing pedagogy in the early years is influenced by a more equal combination of intrinsic and extrinsic influences. Extrinsic influences include school policy and programs, syllabus documents, and mandated documentation and assessment. Intrinsic influences include personal beliefs and knowledge about writing pedagogy and teaching and learning more generally.</td>
<td>Andy Dolly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Philosophical Approach:</strong> Philosophical teachers’ approach to writing pedagogy in the early years is influenced primarily by intrinsic influences. These teachers are guided primarily by a range of personal beliefs and knowledge about writing pedagogy and teaching and learning more generally.</td>
<td>Cara Tanya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Visionary Approach:</strong> Visionary teachers’ approach to writing pedagogy is influenced primarily by a vision constructed from personal knowledge about how writing should be taught in the early years. Their personal beliefs and knowledge about writing and teaching and learning more generally contribute to their vision. Consequently, they seek personal outcomes beyond school requirements that align with their vision. Also, they resist external influences contrary to their vision.</td>
<td>Jackie</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following understanding relates to influences informing approaches to teaching writing.

### 6.6.3.1 A pragmatic approach: Case three, Chazz.

A pragmatic approach to writing pedagogy in the early years portrays teachers as influenced primarily by extrinsic influences. These teachers are guided primarily by practical considerations such as school policy and programs, syllabus documentation and assessment. Chazz is categorised as pragmatic according to Approaches to Writing Pedagogy: A Conceptual Lens (Graham, 2009).

Chazz is pragmatic in her approach to planning teaching and assessing writing. She is guided by her school English program and explains that the Year Three Benchmarks Testing (QSA, 2005) is an important influence on her teaching. Chazz prepares children to pass this test by distributing previous years’ tests for students to complete, and structuring writing lessons around the content of these tests (C3 I1 L 78–91). In addition, she teaches genres as listed in her school English program. Chazz explains that testing is a major influence on her practice:

> We have the English program, which is a very broad document. We also have the Year 3, 5 and 7 testing. And the 3, 5 and 7 testing is a big focus of our instruction to prepare students for a test situation. It guides a lot of what we do. I suppose the Net has a big influence in that we have to get the children to pass the Net, but the biggest influence is the Year 3, 5 and 7 testing (C3 I1 L 78-81; 167–170).

Chazz also identifies other influences on her writing pedagogy. These include writing being relevant, using pictures to stimulate writing, and the needs of the children (C3I1; C3I2). However, she is influenced primarily by a pragmatic approach to teaching writing. Therefore, her planning teaching and assessment of writing are influenced primarily by extrinsic influences on her practice. She believes that school policy and programs, English Syllabus documents (QSA, 2005) and mandated documentation and assessment are important to planning, teaching and assessing writing. In summation, extrinsic influences generate a pragmatic approach to the teaching of writing for Chazz as shown in Figure 6.17.
An eclectic approach to writing pedagogy in the early years portrays teachers as influenced by a more balanced combination of intrinsic and extrinsic influences. Extrinsic influences include school policy and programs, syllabus documents and mandated documentation and assessment. Intrinsic influences include personal beliefs and knowledge about writing pedagogy and teaching and learning more generally. Andy and Dolly are categorised as eclectic according to Approaches to Writing Pedagogy: A Conceptual Lens (Graham, 2009).

Andy is eclectic in his approach to teaching writing, being influenced by both personal beliefs about writing pedagogy and practical considerations such as a whole school approach to planning. He ensures he teaches the genres, grammar, phonics and spelling as prescribed by the school’s English policy (C5I1 L86–90). He is also practical in the way he describes planning for the teaching of writing. In addition, Andy is guided by personal beliefs that influence his writing pedagogy, some of which include a genre approach (C. Miller, 1984) for teaching writing and writing being directed by the needs and interests of his students (C5I1L217–240). He believes learning should be relevant to children, so consequently, he teaches genres within relevant units of work (C5 I1 L91–94). In addition, Andy believes there is a close relationship between reading and writing. Therefore, he ensures reading is integrated in his writing lessons (C5I1L21–23).

Andy is also eclectic in his approach to assessing writing, being influenced by both personal beliefs related to the developmental nature of writing and mandated assessment. Andy believes writing is developmental and therefore uses a developmental
continuum (EDWA, 1994, 1995) to assess the children's writing development (C5I2L15–17). In addition, he employs mandated assessment, using *The Year Two Diagnostic Net* (QSA, 1996, 1997) indicators to assess student achievement (C5A13AW1.6). Some of Andy’s planning also originates from mandated Year Two Diagnostic Net topics (C5I2L12). In summation, a balance of intrinsic and extrinsic influences generates an eclectic approach to teaching writing for Andy as shown in Figure 6.18.

![Figure 6.18. Intrinsic and extrinsic influences on writing practices, Andy.](image)

Dolly is also eclectic in her approach to teaching writing, being influenced by both personal beliefs and extrinsic influences. She believes real-life contexts for learning are important for student engagement (C6I1L215–221). Therefore, she teaches writing within relevant units of work (C6I1L118–121). Further, Dolly believes children should be given the right conditions to experience success, so allows ample time for children to write (C6I1). Dolly also believes the learning environment may be employed to teach writing. Consequently, she organises the classroom learning environment creatively to foster writing development (C6I1L141–144). In addition, Dolly has extrinsic influences on her writing pedagogy. Her school English program, *The Year Two Diagnostic Net* topics (QSA, 1996, 1997) and whole school planning each influence Dolly’s writing pedagogy (C6I1L122–130).

Dolly is guided by both personal beliefs and extrinsic influences related to assessment for writing. She believes that writing is developmental and therefore considers the developmental nature of writing for assessment purposes. In addition, Dolly completes mandated testing and school assessment requirements and believes that this is also important (C6I1L195). In summation, intrinsic and extrinsic influences generate an
eclectic approach to teaching writing for Dolly as shown in Figure 6.19.

**Figure 6.19.** Intrinsic and extrinsic influences on writing practices, Dolly.

### 6.6.3.3 A philosophical approach: Case one, Cara and Case two, Tanya.

A philosophical approach to writing pedagogy in the early years portrays teachers as influenced primarily by intrinsic influences. These teachers are guided by a range of personal beliefs and knowledge about writing pedagogy and teaching and learning more generally. Cara and Tanya are categorised as philosophical according to *Approaches to Writing Pedagogy: A Conceptual Lens* (Graham, 2009).

Cara is philosophical when considering the teaching of writing in the early years and a range of beliefs informs her practice. Cara believes considering the needs and abilities of the students is important. Therefore, she addresses individual differences by adopting strategies consistent with her beliefs. Moreover, she organises writing groups to address different learning styles, consistent with her beliefs about *Bloom’s Taxonomy* (Bloom, Krathwohl & Masia, 1956) and the need to consider the developmental levels of students (C6I1L225–230). Cara believes the children are the primary influence on her practice. These intrinsic beliefs primarily inform Cara’s approach (C1I1; C1I2).

Cara also employs her school English program and plans with her teaching partner using a scope and sequence document and the school English Guidelines. She admits some of what she teaches is policy-led (C6I1L231–235). However, these extrinsic influences are secondary compared to her personal beliefs. Cara asserts that the individual needs of her students are the primary influence when planning for teaching writing in her early years class (C6I1L3–7). In summation, personal beliefs generate a philosophical approach to
the teaching of writing for Cara as shown in Figure 6.20.

**Figure 6.20.** Intrinsic and extrinsic influences on writing practices, Cara.

Tanya, like Cara, may be categorised as philosophical when considering her approach to teaching writing in the early years. Tanya has passionately held beliefs which influence her writing pedagogy (C2I1; C2I2). She assesses writing developmentally, having specific criteria for different developmental stages. This originates from her belief about the developmental nature of writing (C2I1L304–311). Tanya always starts teaching writing with a clear purpose because she believes this provides a relevant structure to writing and motivates and stimulates children to write (C2I1L12–18). Tanya chooses the students’ experiences to generate authentic learning experiences (C2I1L130–133). Consequently, she integrates reading and writing regularly in her relevant units of work (C2–L1&2). Tanya identifies the children as the primary influence on her practice and therefore is guided by student needs (C2I1L276–278). She also believes that oral language is important for teaching writing, and so ensures oral language is the matrix for writing (C2I1L9–11).

Tanya works in a team, employing the English syllabus (QSA, 2005). She also identifies professional development as influencing her writing pedagogy (C2I2L67–71). However, extrinsic influences are secondary to her personal beliefs about teaching writing. In summation, personal beliefs generate a philosophical approach to the teaching of writing for Tanya as shown in Figure 6.21.
6.6.3.4 A visionary approach: Case four, Jackie.

A visionary approach to writing pedagogy in the early years portrays teachers as influenced primarily by a vision constructed from personal knowledge about how writing should be taught. Their personal beliefs and knowledge about teaching writing and teaching and learning more generally contribute to their vision. Consequently, they seek personal outcomes beyond school requirements that align with their vision. Moreover, they resist external influences contrary to their vision. Jackie was categorised as visionary according to Approaches to Writing Pedagogy: A Conceptual Lens (Graham, 2009).

The influences informing writing pedagogy originate from Jackie’s personal vision. Her vision is constructed from personal knowledge about how writing should be taught in the early years and is her primary consideration for the teaching of writing. Moreover, her vision is informed by her personal beliefs and knowledge about writing and teaching and learning more generally. Jackie shares this understanding of how her vision informs her practice:

I start with my own overview for the year, which is what my priorities are. First is my pastoral care. Second is lifelong learning, also a literacy priority, a technology priority and connected learning—so writing is situated through that (C4I2L3–6).

Further, Jackie situates writing within real-life contexts (C4I1L155–156). She works under the premise that students are not writing for the teacher, but rather for each other, or for a particular purpose (C4I1L41–42).
Jackie’s planning for the teaching of writing is also influenced by her vision. Moreover, the syllabus (QSA, 2005) is the last priority in her planning and teaching of writing:

I haven’t been one for following the syllabus. I never have followed the syllabus religiously. I’ve always based my planning on contextual analysis within the classes I have had. Probably late on in the year I will look at the syllabus and the school program to see what I have covered. But I find them to be very constraining. I use a sound approach (C4I1L50-54).

Consistent with her vision, the children’s interests influence Jackie’s decision-making process when planning writing lessons. Jackie offers this understanding:

Basically, it comes out of the children’s talk. My units of work—I call it gentle planning because I have found over the years that teachers become too tight in their planning and the outcomes-based assessment controlled that a lot. So, I have a basic framework and I consider if we are going to do this unit then the other grade threes are going to need this sort of lesson on this kind of thing. Then I have a column where I am following through the needs of the kids (C4I1L113–118).

In addition, Jackie believes writing is a thinking dynamic:

I find it is very good as a thinking tool to help children to plan and express what they believe before they meet up with another member of the learning community. It’s very basic to write. It’s the production tool for the work force. In any job, there is always writing (C4I1L11–14).

Jackie employs Cambourne’s Conditions of Learning (Cambourne, 1988) as part of her writing pedagogy. She offers this understanding:

I use Cambourne’s process. The children take a lot of risks. I give them opportunities for risks. They have the responsibility for learning. I am demonstrating writing all the time, and all kinds of writing, all kind of print—not just the school print. That is the principal aim in my classroom. Do lots of modelling and reciprocal teaching. I have an expectation that everyone writes (C4I1L33-40).

Further, Jackie identifies empowering students as her the primary influence on her practice:

I think empowering students has been my philosophy for a long time. A teacher can’t—it was very humbling when I realised that a teacher can’t—really teach at a pace the world will like. You cannot anticipate what the children are going to need, so that must widen your practice and think about globally what you want children
to be able to do. You want them to think about their writing (C411L160–164).

In summation, a vision informed by personal beliefs and knowledge about writing and teaching and learning more generally generates a visionary approach to the teaching of writing for Jackie as shown in Figure 6.22.

![Intrinsic and Extrinsic Influences](image)

**Figure 6.22.** Intrinsic and extrinsic influences on writing practices: Jackie.

In summary, *Approaches to Writing Pedagogy: A Conceptual Lens* (Graham, 2009) provides a conceptual lens that informs a categorisation process, illuminating a range of approaches to writing pedagogy.

The research understanding is that teachers have preferred approaches to writing pedagogy. These approaches are informed by multiple influences and underpinned by a multiplicity of beliefs.

The approaches identified in this study include:

- A pragmatic approach,
- An eclectic approach,
- A philosophical approach, and
- A visionary approach.
6.7 Research Understandings

A cross-case analysis generated the following research understandings in relation to teacher practices, beliefs and influences:

6.7.1 Practices.

- Writing pedagogy is guided by teachers’ understanding that relevant contexts for writing are exemplary for student engagement;
- Writing pedagogy is influenced by teachers’ understanding that the learning environment may be organised creatively to foster writing development;
- Writing pedagogy is guided by teachers’ understanding that writing is an integral part of literacy;
- Writing instruction is guided by teachers’ understanding that explicit teaching contributes to student success;
- Writing pedagogy is influenced by teachers’ understanding that becoming digitally literate is important for learning to write in the early years; and
- Writing pedagogy is guided by teachers’ understanding that teaching phonics, spelling and grammar are essential elements of writing pedagogy and that implementing different strategies within a functional approach contributes to exemplary practice.

6.7.2 Beliefs.

- Planning, teaching and assessing writing are guided by teachers’ understanding that writing is developmental and students in the early years are working at different literacy levels; and
- Teachers hold multiple beliefs about learning to write and teaching writing, and these beliefs influence writing pedagogy.

6.7.3 Influences.

- Writing pedagogy is guided by teachers’ understanding that children are the primary influence on their planning, teaching and assessment;
- An individual teacher’s writing pedagogy is influenced by a multiplicity of influences;
- Teachers have preferred approaches to writing pedagogy. These approaches are informed by multiple influences and underpinned by a multiplicity of beliefs.
- Teachers’ pedagogies may be categorised according to their approach. The
approaches identified in this study include:
- a pragmatic approach,
- an eclectic approach,
- a philosophical approach, and
- a visionary approach.

6.8 Conceptualising Research Understandings

A conceptual view of research understandings generated from a cross-case analysis of teacher beliefs, practices and influences relating to writing pedagogy and associated relationships, are illustrated in Table 6.2
The issues synthesised from the research understandings are discussed in Chapter 7.
CHAPTER SEVEN
DISCUSSION OF THE NEW UNDERSTANDINGS

7.1 Introduction
The purpose of this research is to explore teacher beliefs, classroom practices and influences relating to writing pedagogy in the early years of schooling. The research understandings generated from cross-case analysis have been synthesised to provide issues inviting discussion. The issues are:

- Exemplary practices for teaching writing in the early years of schooling;
- A multiplicity of beliefs underpinning an individual teacher’s writing pedagogy;
- Intrinsic and extrinsic influences informing an individual teacher’s writing pedagogy; and
- Preferred individual approaches to writing pedagogy.

These issues are discussed in this chapter. The relationship between the research understandings and issues that structure this chapter are shown in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1
Research Understandings and Issues for Discussion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Understandings</th>
<th>Issues for Discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing pedagogy is guided by teachers’ understanding that: • relevant contexts motivate student engagement and foster writing development; • the learning environment may be organised creatively to foster writing development; • writing is an integral part of literacy; • explicit writing instruction contributes to student success; • becoming digitally literate is an important component of learning to write; and • phonics, spelling &amp; grammar are integrated using a functional approach. Each of these practices is orchestrated through teacher beliefs about what fosters student writing development, and responsive teaching where the needs, interests and abilities of the students are at the heart of pedagogical choices.</td>
<td>Exemplary practices for teaching writing in the early years of schooling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A multiplicity of beliefs about writing, learning to write, and teaching writing influences individual writing pedagogy.</td>
<td>A multiplicity of beliefs underpinning individual teacher writing pedagogy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An individual teacher’s writing pedagogy is guided by intrinsic influences. An individual teacher’s writing pedagogy is guided by extrinsic influences.</td>
<td>Intrinsic and extrinsic influences informing individual teacher writing pedagogy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers have preferred individual approaches to writing pedagogy. These preferred approaches are informed by a complex dynamic of teacher beliefs, knowledge and associated practices. These approaches are identified as: pragmatic; eclectic; philosophical; and visionary.</td>
<td>Preferred individual approaches to writing pedagogy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7.2 offers a diagrammatic structure for a discussion of these issues.

Table 7.2
Structure for Discussion of Issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7.2 Exemplary Practices for Teaching Writing in the Early Years of Schooling</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.2.1 Exemplary practices for teaching writing. Writing pedagogy is guided by teachers’ understanding that:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• relevant contexts motivate student engagement and foster writing development;</td>
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<tr>
<td>• the learning environment may be organised creatively to foster writing development;</td>
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<tr>
<td>• writing is as an integral part of literacy;</td>
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<tr>
<td>• explicit writing instruction contributes to student success;</td>
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<tr>
<td>• becoming digitally literate is an important component of learning to write; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• phonics, spelling &amp; grammar are integrated using a functional approach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2.2 Conclusion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.3 A Multiplicity of Beliefs Underpinning Individual Teacher Writing Pedagogy

7.3.1 Beliefs underpinning writing pedagogy.
• The complexity of forming beliefs |
• The relationship between teacher beliefs and classroom practices |
• Teacher beliefs about learning to write |
• Teacher beliefs about teaching writing |
• Teacher beliefs about teaching and learning |
7.3.2 Conclusion.

7.4 Intrinsic and Extrinsic Influences Informing Individual Teacher Writing Pedagogy

7.4.1 Intrinsic influences informing writing pedagogy.
• Personal journey |
• Theoretical models and approaches |
7.4.2 Extrinsic influences informing writing pedagogy.
• Students as the primary influence on writing pedagogy |
• Systemic influences |
7.4.3 Conclusion.

7.5 Approaches to Writing Pedagogy

7.5.1 Influences informing approaches to writing pedagogy.
• Theoretical models and approaches |
• A complex dynamic of teacher beliefs, knowledge & associated practices |
• Self-knowledge |
7.5.2 Preferred individual approaches to writing pedagogy.
• Categorising teacher participants |
7.5.3 Conclusion.

7.6 Contributions
7.2 Exemplary Practices for Teaching Writing in the Early Years of Schooling

The first issue that invites discussion concerns exemplary practices for teaching writing in the early years of schooling.

7.2.1 Exemplary practices for teaching writing.

This discussion includes each of the teaching practices which the teacher participants believe to be fundamental for teaching writing in the early years of schooling. These practices include:

- teaching writing as social practice;
- employing the learning environment creatively to foster writing development;
- teaching writing as an integral part of literacy;
- providing explicit writing instruction;
- teaching spelling and grammar functionally; and
- providing digital literacy instruction (C1–6L1&2; C1–6 L1&L2).

While each of these practices is identified singularly in the research literature as beneficial for teaching writing (Bazerman, 2008, 2016; Cambourne, 2015; Derewianka & Jones, 2010; Edwards-Groves, 2012; Myhill & Jones, 2009; Roskos & Neuman, 2011), teachers understood that the collective orchestration of each of these practices contributes to exemplary writing pedagogy in the early years.

The understandings of this study demonstrate that teachers make sophisticated pedagogical choices to select exemplary writing practices to employ when teaching writing. Indeed, teachers’ writing pedagogy is responsive to students’ needs and the needs, interests and abilities of students are foundational to responsive writing pedagogy. Teachers consider students’ needs and interests through a range of relevant contexts. Further, the needs and abilities of students, as well as teacher beliefs about practices that foster student writing development provide the rationale for selected writing practices. Figure 7.1 illustrates the interrelated process through which teachers make sophisticated pedagogical choices.
This invites further discussion.

7.2.1.1 Teaching writing as social practice.

Research has been conducted exploring how writing as social practice influences teachers' writing pedagogy (Bazerman, 2016; Derewinaka, 2015; Dyson & Dewayani, 2013). However, further research is needed to identify how a social practices discourse is implemented in Australia primary schools (Derewinaka, 2015). Research at the micro level of the classroom regarding how teachers teach writing as a social practice is limited. This study builds on previous research by confirming teachers, when teaching writing, consider students' needs and interests through a range of relevant contexts. This occurs because writing is valued as a social practice (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1).

Writing as a social practice as well as genre theory became popular in Australia in the 1980s and continue to influence teachers' writing pedagogy (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1). In the 1980s, genre theorists in Australia were concerned with the social purposes of language (Martin, 1984). Moreover, the genre approach to teaching writing originated from a functional model of language in context (Halliday, 1985a) and sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978). The genre approach (C. Miller, 1984) advocates the incorporation of social contexts. Consequently, the purpose for writing becomes relevant to students because the teaching of writing is explicit and functional. Consequently, relevant contexts, social contexts, cultural contexts and purposeful and meaningful writing experiences in the early years are valued as “writers write to participate in social situations” (Bazerman, 2016, p. 11).
The understandings of this study demonstrate that teachers value writing as a social practice and assert such practices promote student writing development. Teachers work with the literacy skills and knowledge children have when they come to school, which has a positive effect on literacy learning (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1). Moreover, home and school partnerships are fostered to make relevant connections for literacy learning between home and school, which is a pre-requisite for the children’s becoming literate (Barbarin & Aikens, 2009; S. Hill & Diamond, 2013). Indeed, teachers are particularly sensitive to addressing the socioeconomic, cultural and language needs of their students (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1).

In addition, individual student literacy needs within a class are considered within relevant classroom contexts, such as topics that interest students. Relevant contexts are particularly important for struggling writers who are often more difficult to engage than those who are more competent writers (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1). Also, literacy learning is connected more broadly to relevant school and community events (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1). Indeed, “teachers can foster writing development through activities that include students’ shared metacognition on how they recontextualise their writing through transfer of practices across different contexts” (Beach et al., 2016, p. 93). In summation, teacher participants value writing as a social practice because it leads to increased motivation and contributes to students’ being successful writers.

### 7.2.1.2 Learning environments and writing pedagogy.

Writing pedagogy is influenced by teachers’ understanding that the learning environment may be organised creatively to foster writing development (C1–6I1&2; C1–6L1&L2). Such pedagogical considerations for teaching writing in the early years are important (Beach et al., 2016; Graham, Harris & Chambers, 2016; Roskos & Neuman, 2011) because literacy learning occurs in learning environments that are different from those which young people experienced a generation ago (G. Barton, Arnold, & Trimbled-Roles, 2015). Increasing technologies, new literacies, and student-centred learning have influenced teaching and how students share, interact, communicate and learn (G. Barton et al., 2015). Moreover, new technologies and new literacies “influence the ways in which people engage with and create text” (G. Barton et al., 2015, p. 241).

Specifically, teachers utilise learning environments to address the children’s needs as they construct texts (C1L11.2; C2L11.2; C3L11.2; C4L11.2; C5L11.2; C6L11.2). This is achieved by organising materials such as quality literature, organising the space for whole teaching and small group writing instruction and providing a comfortable space where children are encouraged to take risks when writing (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1).
This is also achieved by providing opportunities for students to share, interact and learn to write adopting a student-centred approach (C1L11.2; C2L11.2; C3L11.2; C4L11.2; C5L11.2; C6L11.2). Struggling writers especially benefit from environments that encourages risk taking, talk, and collaborative learning. In addition, visual, print rich environments, writing resources and digital tools also enhance their learning (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1). In summation, employing the learning environment creatively encourages students to take risks when writing, to utilise a range of resources to assist with writing and sharing of ideas, and to interact while learning to write, each of which contributes to the fostering of writing development.

7.2.1.3 Writing is as an integral part of literacy.

The overarching purpose of writing is to communicate. Moreover, reading, viewing, writing and using oral language are integral processes that each contribute to effective communication (Shanahan, 2016). Moreover, research reports the benefits of integrating writing (Cambourne, 2015; Juel, 2006; Myhill & Jones, 2009; Pantaleo, 2006; Tolchinsky, 2016) with other areas of literacy. Nevertheless, research concerning the considered practices teachers engage in to promote writing development by explicitly including reading and oral language at the micro-level of the classroom is sparse. Indeed, researchers assert writing research is limited examining the effects of reading on writing performance (S. Graham et al., 2018). Consequently, this study aspires to build on previous research examining writing as an integral part of literacy. The understandings of this study demonstrate that writing pedagogy is guided by teachers’ understanding that writing is an integral part of literacy (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1).

Reading and writing are integral to speaking, listening, viewing and critical thinking. Literacy is defined in the Australian national curriculum as including reading, writing, speaking, viewing and listening in a wide range of contexts (ACARA, 2009). These components, however, are organised in separate modes. Moreover, while they are accepted as integral, they are often taught separately. This occurs despite research validating the benefits of teaching writing as an integral part of literacy (Juel, 2006; Myhill & Jones, 2009; Tolchinsky, 2016). The understandings of this study demonstrate that oral vocabulary and appropriate opportunities to talk are foundational for learning to write (Juel, 2006) because they generate ideas to support writing (Myhill & Jones, 2009).

Each school where the teachers taught had no set structure for literacy teaching. Consequently, each teacher decided how to structure the teaching of literacy. While some teachers taught separate reading lessons, all writing lessons were embedded with reading and talk (C1L1, C1L2; C2L1, C2L2; C3L1, C3L2; C4L1, C4L2; C5L1, C5L2;
Further, teachers believe integrating writing increases student success (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1) and purposefully engage in intentional practices to integrate writing with other areas of language and literacy (C1L1, C1L2; C2L1, C2L2; C3L1, C3L2; C4L1, C4L2; C5L1, C5L2; C6L1, C6L2). In addition, each teacher asserts that talk prior to writing assists students to organise their thoughts, which contributes to the success of students’ communicating effectively in writing (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1).

In addition, reading and viewing embedded in writing lessons contributes to students’ being successful writers (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1). Teachers assert that reading and viewing are important experiences when teaching writing, so teachers incorporate reading and viewing regularly into writing lessons. This is achieved when teachers employ reading quality literature as exemplar models of what children are later expected to produce and this occurs often in a big book format. Also, books related to writing topics are made available to students (C6I2). Further, teachers describe having texts for students to read in order to learn about the special features of texts (C1I1).

Moreover, viewing, reading and oral language embedded in the writing process, contributes to the writing success of struggling writers. Specifically, reading prior to writing and reading exemplar models of texts are especially beneficial for struggling writers (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1). Also, children especially value opportunities to talk to order and share ideas before and during the writing process. Indeed, prewriting dialogic opportunities enhance the quality of struggling writers (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1). In summation, writing as an integral part of literacy fosters writing development and contributes to students’ being successful writers.

### 7.2.1.4 Explicit writing instruction.

Explicit teaching of literacy is described as a cornerstone in *The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (MCEETYA, 2008) and is outlined as important in the national curriculum (ACARA, 2009). Further, in Queensland, BCE policy (BCE, 2006) promotes explicit literacy instruction. Research supports the benefits of explicit instruction for young writers and also struggling young writers (Burns; Kidd & Gennaro, 2010; Graham & Harris, 2005; Harris, Graham & Mason, 2006) However, further research exploring the kind of explicit instruction teachers employ that promotes student writing development is needed and this study contributes to this deficit. The understandings of this study demonstrate that writing instruction is guided by teachers’ understanding that explicit teaching contributes to student success (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1); (C1L1, C1L2; C2L1, C2L2; C3L1, C3L2; C4L1, C4L2; C5L1, C5L2;
Moreover, teachers believe explicit instruction should encompass the skills, strategies and knowledge required to write, and how to apply that knowledge in a functional way (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1); (C1L1, C1L2; C2L1, C2L2; C3L1, C3L2; C4L1, C4L2; C5L1, C5L2; C6L1, C6L2). Therefore, children are taught explicitly how to plan their writing prior to writing. Also, teachers teach text types explicitly. This includes reading exemplar models of good literature as a model for children, modelling writing, engaging children in joint constructions and offering children opportunities for independent writing. Further, when teaching writing, teachers carefully scaffold children through sequenced steps (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1); (C1L1, C1L2; C2L1, C2L2; C3L1, C3L2; C4L1, C4L2; C5L1, C5L2; C6L1, C6L2). Moreover, learning new skills and strategies are often a challenge for struggling writers, and explicit teaching and scaffolding processes greatly assist them (C1I1&I2; C2I1&I2; C3I1&I2; C4I1&I2; C5I1&I2; C6I1&I2).

Teachers also explicitly teach spelling, grammar, punctuation and sentence structure. The writing process, including planning, drafting, editing and conferencing are also employed (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1); (C1L1, C1L2; C2L1, C2L2; C3L1, C3L2; C4L1, C4L2; C5L1, C5L2; C6L1, C6L2). In addition, teachers also consider individual writing development and differentiate writing instruction accordingly, to allow all young writers to experience success (C1I1&I2; C2I1&I2; C3I1&I2; C4I1&I2; C5I1&I2; C6I1&I2). In summation, explicit teaching of writing, including skills, strategies and process is valued in early years classrooms because this practice fosters student writing development and contributes to students’ becoming successful writers (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1); (C1L1, C1L2; C2L1, C2L2; C3L1, C3L2; C4L1, C4L2; C5L1, C5L2; C6L1, C6L2).

### 7.2.1.5 Digital literacy instruction.

With the ever-increasing range of global technologies and new literacies, children’s becoming digitally literate is highly valued in schools (Leu, Slomp, Zawilinski, & Corrigan, 2016). Children learn to write within digital environments both inside and outside the classroom. Indeed, writing pedagogy is influenced by teachers’ understanding that becoming digitally literate in the early years is an important component of learning to write (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1).

Children in the early years are learning print literacy, while also concurrently learning to write digitally (Edwards-Groves, 2012; Lipscombe et al., 2015; MacArthur, 2006). This is achieved through engagement with new technologies and new literacies and the ever increasing use of visual literacy with colourful and interactive resources. Further, “new literacies and new tools for writing require additional social practices, skills and strategies”
(Leu et al., 2016, p. 41). Research asserts that educators adopt a “new literacies lens” as “new technologies redefine what it means to be a writer” (Leu et al., 2016, p. 42).

Further, there is a need for “more integrated theories of writing, writing development, writing pedagogies and writing assessment practices within new literacies practices” (Leu et al., 2016, p. 50). The documenting of research regarding teacher practices around technoliteracy in the teaching of writing in the early years is an appropriate initiative to reveal what is happening at the micro-level of the classroom. As well, there is a need to examine the influence of the use of modern technologies on learning outcomes. How this is practised in the early years’ classroom has been identified by this study.

Teachers, through engagement with new technologies and new literacies, teach digital text construction. This practice is underpinned by a belief that, for twenty-first century writers, digital literacy is an important component of learning to write (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1). Moreover, teachers employ varying forms of technology to support student writing development (C1L1, C1L2; C2L1, C2L2; C3L1, C3L2; C4L1, C4L2; C5L1, C5L2; C6L1, C6L2). This includes the employment of interactive whiteboards to scaffold children through writing tasks (C1L1, C1L2; C2L1, C2L2; C3L1, C3L2) and the utilisation of various digital games, programs and apps (C1I1, C1A4, C1L1; C2I1; C3I2; C4L1; C5I1, C6I1). Further, children engage regularly with computers, and iPads and in three classrooms interactive whiteboards are employed to construct text. Technology is also employed by teachers as a motivational tool for writing. (C2I1L84–87). As well as engaging young children generally, struggling writers’ interest and engagement is also enhanced by digital activities. Further, digital tools may also assist students with motor difficulties that make print literacy challenging (C1I1&I2; C2I1&I2; C3I1&I2; C4I1&I2; C5I1&I2; C6I1&I2).

Moreover, children are taught digital literacy in tandem with print literacy in the early years (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1). This involves students making use of digital literacy knowledge as well as language, literacy and linguistic knowledge. It also requires students to navigate digital tools and resources and to engage with and create a variety of digital text types. This complex interactive process is illustrated in Figure 7.2.
In summation, teaching children to write digitally increases student motivation, fosters writing development and contributes to students’ being successful twenty-first century writers.

7.2.1.6 A Multifaceted and functional approach to teaching phonics, spelling and grammar.

Since the 1970s, there has been considerable debate about the appropriateness of teaching grammar when teaching writing (Locke, 2005). Approaches have included traditional grammar (Chomsky, 1953; 1955; 1957) which emphasises learning structure and rules. In contrast, some teachers advocate the teaching of functional grammar which, by emphasising the intent of the language user, is meaning-orientated (Derewianka & Jones, 2010). Systemic functional grammar (SFG; Halliday 1971, 1978, 1993) is also employed by teachers; this approach uses strategies from the previous two approaches, by honouring a balance of skills and function (Derewianka & Jones, 2010). Grammar pedagogy in Australia has transitioned from a traditional approach to a systemic functional approach (Christie, 2005; Derewianka & Jones, 2010; Derewianka, 2012; S. Hill, 2012) and this is valued by teachers (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1); (C1L1, C1L2; C2L1, C2L2; C3L1, C3L2; C4L1, C4L2; C5L1, C5L2; C6L1, C6L2).

The teaching of grammar is incorporated in the first national curriculum, with the “SFG approach being adopted for the national English Curriculum for Students in Years 1 to 10” (Derewianka & Jones, 2010, p. 10; ACARA, 2009). How this is implemented is left up to the discretion of individual teachers. Australian research investigating how teachers in the early years teach grammar is sparse. Indeed, teachers in this study did not refer to the
use of SFG, despite its inclusion in the national English curriculum. This lack of knowledge about SFG has also been noted in previous research (Derewianka & Jones, 2010). The understandings of this study demonstrate grammar teaching is taught functionally (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1); (C1L1, C1L2; C2L1, C2L2; C3L1, C3L2; C4L1, C4L2; C5L1, C5L2; C6L1, C6L2).

In addition, the teaching of spelling and phonics, including letters, sounds, words, spelling and vocabulary-building within a functional approach, is also preferred. However, implementation varies, with teachers describing the employment of a variety of different strategies and programs (C1L1, C1L2; C2L1, C2L2; C3L1, C3L2; C4L1, C4L2; C5L1, C5L2; C6L1, C6L2). In summation, teaching spelling and grammar functionally is motivating to young children as they appreciate a purpose for the skills they are being taught within a meaning-orientated approach. Allowing students to employ skills functionally also teaches them to be language users, which fosters writing development.

7.2.2 Conclusion.

Appreciating and engaging in exemplary practices for teachers' writing pedagogy in the early years is important. Indeed, teachers make sophisticated pedagogical choices which include engaging in a number of practices that they believe are fundamental for teaching writing in the early years of schooling. Moreover, teaching writing as social practice, employing the learning environment creatively to foster writing development, and teaching writing as an integral part of literacy contribute to exemplary writing pedagogy. Further, providing explicit writing instruction, teaching spelling and grammar functionally and providing digital literacy instruction also contribute to exemplary writing pedagogy. These practices are underpinned by teachers' beliefs about what fosters student writing development. Also, teachers engage in responsive teaching where the needs, interests and abilities of the students are considered and writing instruction is differentiated. The collective orchestration of each of these practices increases student motivation, fosters writing development and contributes to students' being successful writers, as shown in Figure 7.3.
Figure 7.3. Exemplary writing practices in the early years of schooling.

7.3 A Multiplicity of Beliefs Underpinning Individual Teacher Writing Pedagogy

The second issue that invites discussion concerns the multiplicity of beliefs underpinning individual teacher writing pedagogy.

7.3.1 Beliefs underpinning writing pedagogy.

Writing pedagogy in the early years is influenced by teacher beliefs (Olafson & Schraw, 2010; Padgham & Topfer, 2015). Moreover, teacher beliefs emanate from their epistemological worldviews (Olafson & Schraw, 2010). Furthermore, teacher beliefs about writing pedagogy are related to their beliefs about writing, beliefs about learning to write, and beliefs about teaching writing. These beliefs are interrelated and complex, as illustrated in Figure 7.4.

Figure 7.4. Interrelated teacher beliefs about writing pedagogy.
However, there is a lack of research about teachers' personal epistemologies and how they generate pedagogy (Hofer, 2010), so, consequently, exploring teacher beliefs underpinning writing pedagogy is important. The beliefs underpinning writing pedagogy have been identified in this study.

### 7.3.1.1 The complexity of forming beliefs.

How teachers form their many beliefs is complex (Fives & Buehl, 2010; Mackenzie, Hemmings, & Kay, 2011). The understandings of this study demonstrate that teachers’ own education, their knowledge about writing and writing pedagogy, their teacher training, postgraduate studies, teaching experience, as well as society, culture and nature each inform their beliefs (C1I1&I2; C2I1&I2; C3I1&I2; C4I1&I2; C5I1&I2; C6I1&I2). Further, teachers reflect on their beliefs in relation to student outcomes and this experience sometimes leads to a change in beliefs. New knowledge generated from learning about new strategies and approaches also contributes to teachers’ reflecting on their beliefs about writing pedagogy. These in turn may become catalysts for change (C1I1&I2; C2I1&I2; C3I1&I2; C4I1&I2; C5I1&I2; C6I1&I2). Moreover, teacher beliefs are aligned with their understandings about how children learn to write and how children learn more generally (C1I1&I2; C2I1&I2; C3I1&I2; C4I1&I2; C5I1&I2; C6I1&I2). Figure 7.5 illustrates a complex web of influences on teacher beliefs about writing pedagogy.

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**Figure 7.5.** Forming teacher beliefs about writing pedagogy.

### 7.3.1.2 The relationship between teacher beliefs and classroom practices.

This research amplifies research concerning “epistemological beliefs that impact teachers’ curricular and instructional choices” (Olafson & Schraw, 2010, p. 536). Interrogating this
phenomenon generates explanations about how teacher beliefs about writing pedagogy influence their pedagogical choices (C1I1&I2; C2I1&I2; C3I1&I2; C4I1&I2; C5I1&I2; C6I1&I2). In this study, the teachers’ narratives linked beliefs to practices. Indeed, school experiences of learning to write contribute to beliefs about writing pedagogy (C3I1&I2). Also, society’s expectations of literacy standards and contrasting parent perspectives on the importance of literacy learning in the school community encouraged parent reflection and in turn influenced practices (C2I1&I2). Teachers also described tertiary studies as influencing their beliefs about writing pedagogy (C2I1&I2). For example, studies in pastoral care led to a belief that writing is therapeutic (C4I1&I2).

Also, the understandings of this study demonstrate that beliefs about teaching writing and associated practices may change over time. One teacher described how engaging with different approaches and strategies over a number of years and reflecting on student outcomes had changed his beliefs (C5I1&I2). Indeed, teachers hold a multiplicity of different types of beliefs that each contribute to their writing pedagogy.

7.3.1.3 Teacher beliefs about learning to write.

The beliefs of teachers play an influential role in their pedagogy. Indeed, teachers reflect on how students learn to write, and their reflections contribute to their beliefs. In turn, these beliefs then inform the strategies they employ to teach writing. For example, teachers believe learning to write is developmental and students in the early years are working at a range of different literacy levels. Consequently, the developmental nature of writing is considered for planning, teaching and assessment purposes (C1I1&I2; C2I1&I2; C3I1&I2; C4I1&I2; C5I1&I2; C6I1&I2). Moreover, teachers address individual differences by offering children opportunities to write at their developmental levels by involving the children in activities that are developmentally appropriate (C1I1&I2; C2I1&I2; C3I1&I2; C4I1&I2; C5I1&I2; C6I1&I2). This occurs when teachers engage with the writing developmental continuum (EDWA, 1994, 1995) as useful tools for evaluating student writing development (C1I1&I2; C2I1&I2; C3I1&I2; C4I1&I2; C5I1&I2; C6I1&I2). This decision is consistent with assessment tools widely implemented in the early years in Australian schools, such as those developed by Clay (1993) which assess children’s emergent writing development. Further, teachers believe writing is an integral part of literacy. Consequently, teachers ensure writing lessons are surrounded by reading and talking experiences (C1L1, C1L2; C2L1, C2L2; C3L1, C3L2; C4L1, C4L2; C5L1, C5L2; C6L1, C6L2). The understandings of this study demonstrate teachers hold beliefs about learning to write and these beliefs influence their pedagogy.
7.3.1.4 **Teacher beliefs about teaching writing.**

Teacher beliefs about how writing should be taught, also plays an influential role in pedagogy. Indeed, this begins from the planning stage of writing pedagogy, where the direction taken for writing lessons originates from teacher beliefs. For example, Jackie has a personal overview and learning priorities that provide a starting point for her writing pedagogy. In contrast, Chazz believes writing should originate from personal experiences and that mandated testing of writing is important. Consequently, she ensures writing is generated from relevant units of work. Also, many of her writing lessons are centred on preparing children to pass mandated tests, due to her belief in the importance of such testing (C3I1 & C3I2). Further, Tanya believes writing lessons should motivate and engage students, so she ensures writing is situated within relevant units of work (C2I1 & C2I2). In summation, personal beliefs about teaching writing are instrumental in guiding pedagogical choices.

7.3.1.5 **Teacher beliefs about teaching and learning.**

Teachers also consider their beliefs about teaching and learning more generally, when planning, teaching and assessing writing. Cara’s beliefs about Blooms Taxonomy (Bloom et al., 1956) influence her writing pedagogy as she groups children for writing lessons according to their learning preferences (C1I1 & C1I2). In contrast, Jackie believes empowering students is important, so she encourages students to take ownership for their learning and asserts that this motivates and engages students. This belief in turn informs Jackie’s process for planning writing lessons that are student-centred (C4I1, C4I2). All teachers differentiate writing instruction to cater for the needs, interests and abilities of students. Indeed, teacher beliefs about teaching and learning more generally influence writing pedagogy because teachers value learning (C1I1&I2; C2I1&I2; C3I1&I2; C4I1&I2; C5I1&I2; C6I1&I2).

The understandings of this study demonstrate that some beliefs are held more strongly than others and therefore these are more influential than others (C1I1&I2; C2I1&I2; C3I1&I2; C4I1&I2; C5I1&I2; C6I1&I2). Tanya and Cara both describe being influenced by their belief about the developmental nature of writing. However, while this is a central belief for Cara and guides her practice (C1I1 & C1I2), Tanya prioritises writing as a social practice (Vygotsky, 1978; Hidi & Boscolo, 2006; C2I1L130–133). This demonstrates the complexity of the beliefs underpinning teacher practice.
7.3.2 Conclusion.

Appreciating how teacher beliefs about writing influence their teaching of writing is important. This research elaborates on previous research (Brownlee, Schraw & Berthelsen, 2011) by identifying complex dynamics of beliefs underpinning teachers’ writing pedagogy (C1I1&I2; C2I1&I2; C3I1&I2; C4I1&I2; C5I1&I2; C6I1&I2) as illustrated in Figure 8.6. Indeed, teacher beliefs are informed by their own education, their experience of teaching writing over time, and their understandings about how children learn to write. Personal beliefs influence how teachers plan, teach and assess writing and the strategies and methods they employ (C1I1&I2; C2I1&I2; C3I1&I2; C4I1&I2; C5I1&I2; C6I1&I2). Some beliefs are held more strongly than others and are therefore more influential than others. In addition, teacher beliefs about teaching writing are also influenced by their beliefs about literacy learning and learning more generally (S. Graham et al., 2001).
Figure 7.6. Multiplicity of beliefs influencing writing pedagogy.
7.4 Intrinsic and Extrinsic Influences Informing Teacher Writing Pedagogy

The third issue that invites discussion concerns intrinsic and extrinsic influences informing teacher writing pedagogy.

The understandings from this study demonstrate that an individual teacher’s writing pedagogy is informed by a range of intrinsic and extrinsic influences, as shown in Figure 7.7.

\[\text{Figure 7.7. A range of extrinsic and intrinsic influences informing teacher writing pedagogy.}\]

Indeed, the understandings from this study demonstrate that this balance of intrinsic and extrinsic influences is unique to each individual.
7.4.1 Intrinsic influences on writing pedagogy.

Each teacher participant has a range of intrinsic influences informing their individual writing pedagogy. These influences include:

- personal beliefs about learning to write and teaching writing;
- personal journey including teaching experience and studies;
- theoretical models and approaches they personally value; and
- preferred individual approaches to writing pedagogy.

These invite discussion.

7.4.1.1 Personal journey.

Each teacher describes a personal journey with writing pedagogy (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1). Moreover, these journeys are influenced by professional engagement in studies and reading, personal beliefs about learning to write and their pedagogical experiences teaching writing. These observations confirm prior research which concludes that “pedagogical work develops from teachers’ specific professional knowledge about literacy, theories of learning, development, teaching strategies and sociological knowledge of communities and cultures” (Makin et al., 2007, p. 51). Further, this research generates new insights regarding intrinsic and extrinsic influences that explain how individual teachers journey with teaching writing. (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1) as shown in Figure 7.8.

![Figure 7.8. Intrinsic and extrinsic influences on teacher writing pedagogy.](image-url)
Teachers appear to be guided by similar intrinsic and extrinsic influences, but in different ways. Jackie is an experienced teacher who has developed deeply entrenched personal beliefs about the teaching of writing. Her beliefs inform her practice (C4I1&I2). Cara and Tanya are also guided primarily by their personal beliefs and knowledge (C1I1&I2; C2I1&I2). Whereas, Andy and Dolly are guided by a balance of extrinsic and intrinsic influences (C5I1&I2; C6I1&I2). In contrast, Chazz allows extrinsic influences to inform her pedagogical choices (C3I1&I2). Indeed, teachers of writing undertake a learning journey about their use of pedagogy. This personal journey has its basis in intrinsic and extrinsic influences underpinned by deeply held beliefs concerning the teaching of writing.

7.4.1.2 Theoretical models and approaches.

Since the 1970s, theoretical models have influenced the teaching of writing in the early years. These include psycholinguistic theory (Chomsky 1965), socio-cultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978), critical theory (Freire, 1970) and emergent theory (Teale & Sulzby, 1986). Also, there are approaches which influence the teaching of writing in the early years. These include the process approach (Graves, 1972), the whole language approach (Cambourne, 1988; Goodman, 1986) and the genre movement (C. Miller, 1984). The understandings of this study demonstrate teachers are influenced by various theoretical models and approaches (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1). Indeed, teachers' “current knowledge of writing is informed by numerous disciplines and our theories of these processes are now explained as a rich and varied interplay of linguistic, cognitive, psychological, social and critical functions that support the meaning making processes” (Farrar & Al-Qatawneh, 2010).

Each teacher is influenced by writing as social practice (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1) confirming other research valuing a social practice discourse in Australia (Derewianka, 2015; Freebody, 2005; S. Hill & Diamond, 2013; Rose, 2011). Further, teachers are influenced by a range of theoretical models and approaches such as the whole language approach (Cambourne, 1988; Goodman, 1967, 1986) (C4I1&2), emergent theory (Clay, 1966; Teale & Sulzby, 1986) (C1I1&2) and the genre movement (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993; C. Miller, 1984) (C5I1&2). Indeed, deeply held beliefs inform teachers' writing pedagogy, including the specific theoretical models and approaches which teachers' value.

7.4.2 Extrinsic influences on writing pedagogy.

The understandings of this study demonstrate that teachers have a range of extrinsic influences informing their individual writing pedagogy. These include:
• the needs, interests and abilities of students; and
• systemic influences such as the national curriculum, mandated assessment and school policy and programs.

These invite discussion.

7.4.2.1 Students as the primary influence on writing pedagogy.

According to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), “Good instruction is not just determined by teachers, background, beliefs and attitudes; it should also be responsive to students’ needs and various student classroom and school background factors” (OECD, 2009, p. 4). Indeed, “teachers must respond to the broadening array of cultures, languages, experiences, economics and interests represented in most contemporary classrooms” (Tomlinson, 2015, p. 203). The understandings of this study demonstrate that teachers consider students as the primary influence on teacher writing pedagogy (C1I1; C2I1; C3I1; C4I1; C5I1; C6I1). Moreover, this study confirms that teachers “adjust the amount of whole class and small group literacy instruction they provide to meet lesson objectives and student needs effectively” (B. Taylor, 2013, p. 75). This is achieved by engaging in responsive writing pedagogy (Shea, 2015) based on the needs, interests and abilities of their students (C1I1L299–303); (C2I1L275–278); (C3I1L161–165); (C4I1L160–164); (C6I1L6); (C5I1L6–11).

Meeting the needs, interests and abilities of students is a challenge, as Australia’s cultural diversity is ever-increasing, and this means that early years teachers of writing need to address the range of individual differences within their writing programs more than ever before (Kinloch & Burkhard, 2016; McIntyre & Turner, 2013). Teachers meet this challenge by differentiating instruction (Tomlinson, 2000; Shea, 2015). Indeed, differentiated instruction meets curricula standards while offering students appropriate resources and instruction to support learning needs (Tomlinson, 2000; Shea, 2015). This is achieved by “being aware of each students’ readiness, to promote academic growth, being aware of students interests, to enhance motivation to learn and understanding what promotes student learning, for efficiency of learning” (Tomlinson, 2009, p.31). Moreover, teachers engage children by generating meaning from students’ prior experiences (McIntyre & Turner, 2013). Also, it is important to note that there is little research that documents how teachers consider the needs, interests and abilities of students in the writing classroom.
The understandings of this study demonstrate that teachers employ multiple strategies to address student needs, including:

- Assessing children’s individual development and then planning appropriate writing episodes to respond to literacy levels;
- Engaging in a cycle of formative assessment, guided practice and responsive pedagogy to ensure individual growth in confidence and writing competence;
- Grouping children for particular purposes according to their literacy needs and abilities;
- Being aware of special needs and individual differences among students and responding for such needs through planning and teaching;
- Working with literacy specialists and aides to provide additional support to address the needs of children with learning disabilities as well as those who have lower levels of literacy and those who have English as an additional language;
- Providing one-on-one support to individual students or small groups of students;
- Ensuring relevant contexts for learning to engage students, foster community engagement, and consider social, cultural and language needs;
- Considering learning preferences of students and responding to the different ways in which students learn, through purposeful planning and targeted instruction;
- Allowing children choice about writing activities and units of work in which writing is situated, to cater for interests and promote ownership;
- Fostering home and school partnerships for literacy learning to promote connectedness and supportive environments for student learning (C111&I2; C211&I2; C311&12; C411&12' C511&12' C611&12).

Teachers reflect on and shared the writing needs, interests and abilities of their students, enabling the researcher to hear the voices of students through the teachers’ understandings. Indeed, teachers engage in a number of responsive writing practices to support the learning needs of young writers, as outlined in figure 7.9.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>TEACHING</th>
<th>LEARNING</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The needs, interests and abilities of students are at the heart of</strong></td>
<td>Teachers reflect on how students learn to write. Moreover, these reflections contribute to their beliefs and inform the strategies they employ to teach writing.</td>
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<td><strong>responsive writing pedagogy</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching writing as social practice;</td>
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<td>Employing the learning environment creatively;</td>
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<td>Teaching writing as an integral part of literacy;</td>
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<td>Considering the developmental nature of writing for planning,</td>
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<td>teaching and assessment purposes;</td>
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<td>Providing explicit writing instruction;</td>
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<td>Teaching spelling and grammar functionally;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Providing digital literacy instruction</td>
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Students respond positively to opportunities to talk prior to and during writing and this assists students to organise their thoughts and share ideas with others which contributes to students’ communicating effectively in writing. Also, students appreciate, reading and viewing embedded in writing lessons and this contributes to students’ being successful writers.

Students grow in confidence when writing tasks are achievable and developmentally appropriate. Such consideration fosters new learning.

Students respond positively to explicit teaching of skills, strategy and process, which fosters writing development and contributes to students’ becoming successful writers.

A functional approach is motivating, as young children appreciate having a purpose for the skills they are being taught. Allowing students to employ skills functionally also teaches them to be language users, which fosters writing development.

Students find visual, colourful and interactive digital activities engaging. Such engagement contributes positively to students’ digital literacy learning.

**Figure 7.9.** Responsive practices to support the learning needs of young writers.

Moreover, these practices are also beneficial for struggling writers (C1I1&I2; C2I1&I2; C3I1&I2; C4I1&I2; C5I1&I2; C6I1&I2).

The understandings of this study demonstrate that children are the primary influence on teachers’ writing pedagogy (C1I1&I2; C2I1&I2; C3I1&I2; C4I1&I2; C5I1&I2; C6I1&I2). Moreover, teachers engage in a reflective and responsive process of addressing the needs, interests and abilities of their students as a rationale for generating writing pedagogy. Indeed, by reflecting on the rationales underpinning their own initiatives and the children’s responses to them, teachers increasingly learn about how to authentically promote their students’ writing development. The teachers shared understandings provide important insight into what promotes young children’s writing development (C1I1&I2; C2I1&I2; C3I1&I2; C4I1&I2; C5I1&I2; C6I1&I2).
7.4.2.2 Systemic influences.

Writing pedagogy is influenced by systemic demands of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment (C1I1&I2; C2I1&I2; C3I1&I2; C4I1&I2; C5I1&I2; C6I1&I2). In Queensland specifically, mandated assessment, state government policies and programs, and school policies and programs contribute to teachers’ pedagogy (M. Mills & McGregor, 2016). However, while research informs systemic demands on writing pedagogy and government agendas (Klenowski & Wyatt-Smith, 2012; M. Mills & McGregor, 2016), there is a paucity of research exploring how such demands influence teachers’ pedagogical choices in teaching writing.

Although some researchers have asserted that “the work of teachers occurs within competing policy contexts over which they have no control” (e.g., M. Mills & McGregor, 2016, p. 123), the understandings of this study demonstrate that teachers do indeed have some control over systemic demands. Moreover, systemic demands informed pedagogical choices differently. This is because teachers’ personal beliefs and preferred approaches determine how much influence systemic demands inform individual writing pedagogy (C1I1&I2; C2I1&I2; C3I1&I2; C4I1&I2; C5I1&I2; C6I1&I2). For example, high stakes testing was introduced in Australia in 2008 with the implementation of NAPLAN (Klenowski & Wyatt-Smith, 2012). This encompasses students in Years 3, 5, 7, and 9 who complete mandated testing in reading, writing, spelling, grammar and numeracy. The Year 2 teachers in this study noted that NAPLAN testing influenced their practice. Further, the Year 2 teachers acknowledged that the Year 2 Diagnostic Net testing and curriculum topics (QSA, 1996, 1997) also influenced their writing pedagogy. However, the manner by which this occurred varied (C1I1&I2; C2I1&I2; C3I1&I2; C4I1&I2; C5I1&I2; C6I1&I2).

Moreover, some teachers value such testing more than others. Chazz believes school policy and programs, syllabus documents and mandated documentation (QSA, 2005) and assessment are very important in planning, teaching and assessing writing. She asserts that preparing children for mandated testing “guides a lot of what we do”. Further, she explains she is guided by her school English program and asserts that systemic demands are of great importance (C3I1&I2). In contrast, Andy is practical about meeting mandated testing requirements and acknowledges being guided by whole school planning. However, he is equally informed by intrinsic influences on his practice such as personal beliefs and teaching experience (C5I2L12; C5I1&I2). Dolly also identifies being guided by the Year Two Diagnostic Net testing and topics (QSA, 1996, 1997) as well as grammar and spelling guidelines developed by her school (C6I1). Despite this, Dolly’s practice is
equally informed by intrinsic influences such as her personal beliefs (C6I1&I2).

It is not surprising that teachers’ writing pedagogy is influenced by systemic demands of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment (C1I1&I2; C2I1&I2; C3I1&I2; C4I1&I2; C5I1&I2; C6I1&I2). However, new insights reveal that the level of influence is dependent on a complex range of teachers’ priorities unique to each individual. For example, Cara states that some of her planning is “policy-led” (C1I1), explaining she covers what is outlined in her schools’ policies and programs. However, her personal beliefs and knowledge are of greater importance and guide her pedagogical choices first and foremost. Similarly, Jackie has deeply entrenched personal beliefs which guide her practice markedly. In contrast, Jackie identifies being resistant to external influences. She describes text books purchased by her school as “a constraint” on her writing pedagogy. Further, she confirms syllabus documents are a “last step” in her planning (C4I1L50–54). In summation, these priorities are informed by deeply held teacher beliefs (C1I1&I2; C2I1&I2; C3I1&I2; C4I1&I2; C5I1&I2; C6I1&I2).

7.4.3 Conclusion
Figure 7.10 provides a synthesis of new understandings about influences on teachers’ writing pedagogy.
Appreciating what influences teachers’ writing pedagogy is important. The understandings of this study demonstrate that there are multiple influences on teachers’ writing pedagogy and these influences include personal beliefs, knowledge of theory, systemic policies and assessment requirements, personal journey, and students’ and personal approaches. These understandings confirm previous research conclusions (Klenowski & Wyatt-Smith, 2012; Makin et al., 2007; M. Mills & McGregor, 2016) and advance scholarship by addressing the paucity of research about influences on teachers’ writing pedagogy by exploring how influences inform pedagogy.
Indeed, similar influences inform teachers’ pedagogical choices, but they do so differently. Some teachers are informed mainly by extrinsic influences, while for others, intrinsic influences are dominant. In addition, students are the primary influence on teachers’ writing pedagogy. Therefore, student needs inform how teachers select multiple strategies in teaching writing (C1I1&I2; C2I1&I2; C3I1&I2; C4I1&I2; C5I1&I2; C6I1&I2).

Further, the understandings of this study demonstrate that there are complex relationships operating within the matrix of influences which guide teachers’ pedagogical choices. How teachers form beliefs is complex. Often, they are influenced by their own education and teaching journey. Also, while other studies confirm systemic demands on teachers’ writing pedagogy (Klenowski & Wyatt-Smith, 2012; M. Mills & McGregor, 2016). Moreover, this study identifies that personal beliefs and approaches guide the extent to which systemic demands inform individual writing pedagogy. Finally, teachers’ personal journeys and knowledge of theory inform personal approaches to writing pedagogy. A discussion concerning preferred individual approaches to writing pedagogy follows.

7.5 Approaches to Writing Pedagogy

The fourth issue that invites discussion concerns preferred individual approaches to writing pedagogy.

7.5.1 Influences informing approaches to writing pedagogy.

There is a paucity of research regarding teachers’ approaches to writing pedagogy. Indeed, “examining how teachers know, understand and approach the teaching of writing...is especially valuable in a time when teachers’ knowledge, methods, theories and practices are hyperscrutinized, grossly misunderstood, if taken into account at all” (Juzwik & Cushman, 2014, p.89). The current study is an initiative to address this deficit. Research has investigated how theoretical models and approaches influence curricula and teachers’ writing pedagogy (McCarthey & Ro, 2011; S. Peterson, 2012). This study expands on this research by also identifying other influences that inform teachers’ individual approaches and concludes that teachers have preferred individual approaches to writing pedagogy. Moreover, these approaches are informed by theoretical models and approaches and a complex dynamic of teacher beliefs, teachers’ knowledge and practices (C1I1&I2; C2I1&I2; C3I1&I2; C4I1&I2; C5I1&I2; C6I1&I2). This invites discussion.

7.5.1.1 Theoretical models and approaches.

Each teachers approach is influenced by multiple theoretical models and approaches (C1I1&I2; C2I1&I2; C3I1&I2; C4I1&I2; C5I1&I2; C6I1&I2). However, some theoretical
models or approaches are more influential than others (C1I1&I2; C2I1&I2; C3I1&I2; C4I1&I2; C5I1&I2; C6I1&I2). While, other research has also indicated that teachers are informed by multiple theoretical approaches to writing instruction (Farrah & Al-Qatawneh, 2010; Cutler & Graham, 2008; Ritchey et al., 2015), this research elaborates on these research conclusions by exploring how teachers’ personal beliefs and self-knowledge also inform their unique approaches to writing pedagogy. Figure 7.11 illustrates informing teachers’ individual approaches to writing pedagogy.

![Influences informing teachers’ individual approaches to writing pedagogy.](image)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>CARA</th>
<th>TANYA</th>
<th>CHAZZ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Influential Theoretical Models &amp; Approaches</strong></td>
<td><strong>Influential Theoretical Models &amp; Approaches</strong></td>
<td><strong>Influential Theoretical Models &amp; Approaches</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preferred Individual Approach</strong></td>
<td><strong>Preferred Individual Approach</strong></td>
<td><strong>Preferred Individual Approach</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cara’s approach is influenced primarily by her personal beliefs and knowledge, indicating a philosophical approach (C1I1&amp;I2).</td>
<td>Tanya’s approach is influenced primarily by her personal beliefs and knowledge, indicating a philosophical approach (C2I1&amp;I2).</td>
<td>Basic skills mastery is a priority. Chazz is pragmatic in her approach (C3I1&amp;I2).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JACKY</td>
<td>ANDY</td>
<td>DOLLY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Influential Theoretical Models &amp; Approaches</strong></td>
<td><strong>Influential Theoretical Models &amp; Approaches</strong></td>
<td><strong>Influential Theoretical Models &amp; Approaches</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preferred Individual Approach</strong></td>
<td><strong>Preferred Individual Approach</strong></td>
<td><strong>Preferred Individual Approach</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackie’s approach is influenced primarily by her personal beliefs and knowledge indicating a visionary approach (C4I1&amp;I2).</td>
<td>There is no evident dominant discourse. Andy is eclectic in his approach (C5I1&amp;I2).</td>
<td>There is no evident dominant discourse. Dolly is eclectic in her approach. (C6I1&amp;I2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 7.11. Influences informing teachers’ individual approaches to writing pedagogy.*
7.5.1.2 A complex dynamic of teacher beliefs, knowledge and associated practices.

Teachers have a complex dynamic of interrelated knowledge, beliefs and associated pedagogical preferences informing their approaches (C1I1&I2; C2I1&I2; C3I1&I2; C4I1&I2; C5I1&I2; C6I1&I2). Moreover, understanding teachers’ epistemic beliefs and how they construct knowledge “are relevant to understanding preferred educational strategies of teachers” (H. Green & Hood, 2013, p. 168). Moreover, “teachers’ knowledge and beliefs provide a framework for pedagogy and guide the teachers’ actions in practice” (Carrington et al., 2010, p. 2). Indeed, teachers’ knowledge and beliefs about how students learn, about writing curriculum, and about children learn to write, is employed to responsive to student needs and inform practice. Figure 7.12 illustrates the complex dynamic of interrelated knowledge, beliefs and associated pedagogical preferences explored in this study.

Fairbanks defines self-knowledge as:

- awareness of one’s beliefs and theories about teaching and learning;
- a vision to guide practice;

Figure 7.12. Complex dynamic of interrelated knowledge, beliefs and associated practices.

7.5.1.3 Self-knowledge.

Further, teacher beliefs and pedagogy are informed by self-knowledge (C1I1&I2; C2I1&I2; C3I1&I2; C4I1&I2; C5I1&I2; C6I1&I2). This understanding confirms other research (Fairbanks et. al., 2010) which concludes that “teacher beliefs influence their perceptions and judgments and in turn influence behaviour” (Fairbanks et. al., 2010, p. 161).
• a sense of belonging to and a stake in professional community; and
• ways of imagining and enacting identities consistent with the visions and beliefs
  they have enacted through knowledge and experience (Fairbanks et. al., 2010, p. 161).

The understandings of this study demonstrate that this definition of self-knowledge is
consistent with what teachers expressed in their interviews, confirming teachers have
personal beliefs and these beliefs are informed by theories of writing pedagogy and
teaching and learning more generally (C1I1&I2; C2I1&I2; C3I1&I2; C4I1&I2; C5I1&I2;
C6I1&I2). Further, these beliefs and knowledge inform pedagogical choices within the
broader contexts of an individual teacher’s class of learners, their school communities and
their local communities (C1I1&I2; C2I1&I2; C3I1&I2; C4I1&I2; C5I1&I2; C6I1&I2).

In addition, while teachers shared similar beliefs, they also entertained different beliefs.
These different beliefs are the rationales explaining different pedagogical choices
(C1I1&I2; C2I1&I2; C3I1&I2; C4I1&I2; C5I1&I2; C6I1&I2). Also, these beliefs inform
preferred approaches (C1I1&I2; C2I1&I2; C3I1&I2; C4I1&I2; C5I1&I2; C6I1&I2). For
example, Chazz is pragmatic in her approach and is influenced primarily by mastery of
skills, curriculum (QCAA, 2005) and mandated testing (QSA, 2005). In contrast, Jackie is
visionary in her approach and is influenced primarily by personal beliefs and self-
knowledge. These differences motivate their contrasting pedagogical choices. Similarly,
Olafson and Schraw (2010) concluded:

> Teachers with more sophisticated epistemological beliefs and world views were
more likely to endorse student centred instructional practices that emphasise
critical reasoning. While teachers with less sophisticated beliefs focused on
traditional curriculum, student testing and mastery of basic concepts (Olafson &

This observation has also been recognised in this study in the contrasting approaches of
Chazz and Jackie.

7.5.2 Preferred individual approaches to writing pedagogy.

The researcher listened to teacher participants during interviews, observed teacher
participants teaching writing, and discussed these observations subsequently with
teachers. These experiences generated understandings of the beliefs and knowledge that
inform teachers’ approaches to writing pedagogy. A more detailed appreciation of the
teaching of writing for these teachers was then able to be represented by the researcher
employing Approaches to Writing Pedagogy: A Conceptual Lens (Graham, 2009), as
shown in Table 7.3. This conceptual lens originates from analytical processes, allowing teachers’ pedagogies to be categorised according to their approach. The approaches identified in this study included a pragmatic approach, an eclectic approach, a philosophical approach, and a visionary approach.

Table 7.3
Approaches to Writing Pedagogy: A Conceptual Lens

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approaches to Writing Pedagogy: A Conceptual Lens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Pragmatic Approach:</strong> Pragmatic teachers’ approach to writing pedagogy in the early years is shaped primarily by extrinsic influences. These teachers are guided by practical considerations such as school policy and programs, syllabus documentation and assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EXTRINSIC INFLUENCES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>An Eclectic Approach:</strong> Eclectic teachers’ approach to writing pedagogy in the early years is shaped by a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic influences. Extrinsic influences include school policy and programs, syllabus documents, and mandated documentation and assessment. Intrinsic influences include personal beliefs and knowledge about writing pedagogy, teaching and learning more generally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COMBINED EXTRINSIC &amp; INTRINSIC INFLUENCES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Philosophical Approach:</strong> Philosophical teachers’ approach to writing pedagogy in the early years is shaped primarily by intrinsic influences. These teachers are guided by personal beliefs and knowledge about writing pedagogy, teaching and learning more generally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INTRINSIC INFLUENCES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Visionary Approach:</strong> Visionary teachers’ approach to writing pedagogy is shaped primarily by a vision constructed from personal knowledge about how writing should be taught in the early years. Their personal beliefs and knowledge about writing, teaching and learning more generally contribute to their vision. Consequently, they prioritise personal outcomes that align with their vision before school requirements. Also, they resist extrinsic influences contrary to their vision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INTRINSIC INFLUENCES &amp; RESISTANT TO EXTRINSIC INFLUENCES</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* This table illustrates the conceptual lens constructed by M. Graham (2009) as part of the research process, which explains the different approaches to the teaching of writing revealed in this study.
A range of influences inform teachers preferred approaches to teaching writing. Some influences are more influential than others and teachers adopt approaches that align with their beliefs about writing pedagogy, teaching and learning more generally. Moreover, teacher beliefs, knowledge and experience contribute to how they teach writing and these approaches to teaching writing are different. Some teachers are motivated by more extrinsic influences in their approach to teaching writing, while others are motivated by more intrinsic influences. Figure 7.13 illustrates the approaches identified in this study as intrinsic, extrinsic or eclectic.

![Diagram: Intrinsic and extrinsic approaches to writing pedagogy](image)

**Figure 7.13. Intrinsic and extrinsic approaches to writing pedagogy.**

### 7.5.2.1 Categorising teacher participants.

The purpose of categorising the teachers’ pedagogies according to their approach was to explore the differences in approaches to writing pedagogy in the early years. How each teacher’s pedagogies were categorised according to their approach is shown in Table 7.4.
Table 7.4
Categorising Teacher Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approaches to Teaching Writing: A Conceptual Lens</th>
<th>Categorising Teacher Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Pragmatic Approach:</strong> Pragmatic teachers’ approach to writing pedagogy in the early years is shaped primarily by extrinsic influences. These teachers are guided primarily by practical considerations such as school policy and programs, syllabus documentation and assessment.</td>
<td>Chazz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>An Eclectic Approach:</strong> Eclectic teachers’ approach to writing pedagogy in the early years is shaped by a more equal combination of intrinsic and extrinsic influences. Extrinsic influences include school policy and programs, syllabus documents, and mandated documentation and assessment. Intrinsic influences include personal beliefs and knowledge about writing pedagogy, teaching and learning more generally.</td>
<td>Andy Dolly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Philosophical Approach:</strong> Philosophical teachers’ approach to writing pedagogy in the early years is shaped primarily by intrinsic influences. These teachers are guided primarily by personal beliefs and knowledge about writing pedagogy, teaching and learning more generally.</td>
<td>Cara Tanya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Visionary Approach:</strong> Visionary teachers approach to writing pedagogy is influenced primarily by a vision constructed from personal knowledge about how writing should be taught in the early years. Their personal beliefs and knowledge about writing, teaching and learning more generally contribute to their vision. Consequently, they prioritise personal outcomes that align with their vision before school requirements. Also, they resist extrinsic influences contrary to their vision.</td>
<td>Jackie</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The understandings of this study demonstrate that Chazz is pragmatic in her approach to teaching writing. Chazz believes school policy and programs, syllabus documents (QSCC, 2005) and mandated documentation and assessment (QSA, 2005) are particularly important to planning, teaching and assessing writing. She asserts that preparing children for mandated testing “guides a lot of what we do”. Moreover, she is guided by her school English program (C3I1&I2). While Chazz highlights some influence from a process approach (Graves, 1972; 1984), a genre approach (C. Miller, 1984) and a social practices discourse (Vygotsky, 1978; Hidi & Boscolo, 2006), basic skills mastery is a priority for Chazz. This concurs with research that asserts “teachers with less sophisticated beliefs focused on traditional curriculum, student testing and mastery of basic concepts” (Olafson & Schraw, 2010, p. 536). In summation, Chazz is guided primarily by extrinsic influences on her practice.

Further, Andy and Dolly are eclectic in their approach to teaching writing. Andy is guided by personal beliefs including relevant contexts for writing, a genre approach (C. Miller, 1984) to teaching writing, and writing being directed by the needs and interests of his students (C5I1L217–240). In addition, Andy is also practical about employing a whole school approach to writing and meeting mandated testing requirements (C5I2L12). Dolly is also informed by personal beliefs, including believing that writing is an integral part of literacy and having relevant topics for writing. In addition, she is guided by many extrinsic influences including her school’s English program, the Year Two Diagnostic Net (QSA, 1996, 1997) testing and topics and grammar and spelling guidelines developed by her school (C6I1). Both Andy and Dolly are influenced by varying theoretical models and approaches. This elaborates research that investigates how theoretical models and approaches influence teacher writing pedagogy (McCarthey & Ro, 2011; S. Peterson, 2012) by also identifying other influences that inform teachers’ individual approaches. In summation, Andy and Dolly are influenced by both personal beliefs and practical considerations.

In addition, Tanya and Cara are philosophical in their approach to teaching writing. Cara’s beliefs about the importance of responding to individual differences, considering the developmental nature of writing for planning, teaching and assessment purposes and her beliefs as articulated in Blooms Taxonomy (Bloom et al., 1956) inform her approach (C1I1 & I2). In contrast, Tanya’s beliefs about writing as social practice—that oral language should surround writing and that learning to write is developmental and children are working at different literacy levels—inform her approach (C2I1 & I2). Cara and Tanya have many beliefs about teaching writing and adapt their strategies to reflect their beliefs. Any extrinsic influences are secondary considerations compared to personal beliefs. While
Cara and Tanya are influenced by varying theoretical models and approaches, their personal beliefs and knowledge guide which theoretical models and approaches inform their approaches. This amplifies research asserting “teachers' knowledge and beliefs provide a framework for pedagogy and guide the teachers' actions in practice” (Carrington et al., 2010, p. 2). In summation, Cara and Tanya are influenced primarily by their personal beliefs and knowledge about writing pedagogy and learning and teaching more generally.

Finally, Jackie is visionary in her approach to teaching writing. Her personal beliefs and knowledge about writing and teaching and learning more generally contribute to her vision. This elaborates research asserting that teachers’ self-knowledge includes “ways of imagining and enacting identities consistent with the visions and beliefs they have enacted through knowledge and experience” (Fairbanks et al., 2010, p. 161). Jackie’s personal overview includes priorities related to pastoral care, lifelong learning, literacy, technology and connected learning (C4i1L41–42). Indeed, her teaching of writing originates from her vision about teaching and learning and what she considers to be valuable. She is also reflective. Jackie is resistant to external influences that are not consistent with her vision, such as the use of some text books purchased by her school and syllabus documents (C4i1L50–54). Jackie is influenced by a whole language approach (Goodman, 1986) and to a lesser extent a social practices discourse (Vygotsky, 1978; Hidi & Boscolo, 2006). These influences are embedded in her visionary approach. In summation, Jackie is influenced primarily by a vision constructed from personal knowledge about how writing should be taught in the early years.

7.5.3 Conclusion.

Appreciating teachers' approaches to writing pedagogy and how approaches contribute to their teaching of writing is important. Indeed, each teacher is influenced by preferred individual approaches to teaching writing. Moreover, these approaches are underpinned by a complex dynamic of personal beliefs, knowledge, self-knowledge, and vision. Further, a range of intrinsic and extrinsic influences inform teachers’ approaches in a way that is unique to each individual. This understanding is innovative and advances existing scholarship that concludes teachers’ approaches are influenced by theoretical models and approaches (McCarthey & Ro, 2011; S. Peterson, 2012). Indeed, theoretical models and approaches are just one contributing influence in a complex dynamic of influences informing teachers’ individual preferred approaches to writing pedagogy, as illustrated in Figure 7.14.
7.6 Contributions

There are a number of conclusions generated from this research that contribute to new knowledge and practice.

7.6.1 Contributions to new knowledge.

This study concludes that:

- a multiplicity of beliefs underpin individual teachers’ writing pedagogy. These beliefs are informed by teachers’ own education, teaching experience and their understandings about how children learn to write and how children learn more generally;
- teachers’ beliefs have a direct influence on pedagogical choices;
- teachers consider students as the primary influence on their pedagogy and differentiate writing instruction to address the needs of students;
- an individual teacher’s writing pedagogy is guided by a range of intrinsic and extrinsic influences, the balance of which is unique to each individual;

*Figure 7.14.* The complex dynamic which informs teachers’ individual preferred approaches to writing pedagogy.
• these influences include personal beliefs, personal journeys, theory, systemic influences, students, and personal approaches;
• there are complex relationships operating within a matrix of influences which guide teachers’ pedagogical choices and, while similar influences inform pedagogical choices, they do so differently;
• teachers are influenced by their own individual approaches to teaching writing. These approaches are underpinned by a complex dynamic of teacher beliefs, knowledge and personal vision. Some teachers are more intrinsically motivated in their approach while others are more extrinsically motivated; and
• teachers may be categorised according to their approach using Approaches to Writing Pedagogy: A Conceptual Lens (Graham, 2009) and the teachers in this study identify as being pragmatic, eclectic, philosophical or visionary in their approaches to teaching writing.

7.6.2 Contributions to practice.
This study concludes that teachers make sophisticated pedagogical choices which include engaging in a number of practices that they believe are fundamental for teaching writing in the early years of schooling. Teachers:
  o cater for individual differences by offering children opportunities to write at their developmental levels and consider varying abilities when teaching writing;
  o value writing as social practice and engage children in writing as a social practice;
  o employ the learning environment creatively to foster writing development;
  o engage children with quality literature to foster writing development;
  o believe the integration of writing with other areas of literacy is foundational for learning to write and therefore teach writing as an integral part of literacy;
  o believe explicit writing instruction is exemplary practice for student engagement and therefore teach explicitly the skills and strategies needed to write;
  o employ a functional approach to teach grammar;
  o employ a multifaceted and functional approach to teach spelling; and
  o believe the development of digital literacy is an important component of learning to write. Therefore, they teach children to write digitally alongside print literacy through engagement with new technologies and new literacies.

The collective orchestration of each of these practices increases student motivation, fosters writing development and contributes to students’ being successful writers.

Conclusions and recommendations are reported in Chapter 8.
CHAPTER EIGHT
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Introduction
The purpose of this chapter is to report the conclusions from this research which explores
teacher beliefs, classroom practices and influences related to writing pedagogy in the
eyears of schooling. How this research contributes to scholarship is also
demonstrated in this chapter.

8.2 Research Design
The following contributing research questions focus the conduct of the research:
1. What do teachers believe about the teaching of writing in the early years of
   schooling?
2. What practices do teachers employ in the teaching of writing in the early years of
   schooling?
3. What influences teachers in the teaching of writing in the early years of schooling?

Since this study explores teacher beliefs, an interpretive approach is adopted as an
appropriate framework for the research design (Crotty, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).
This approach is underpinned by an epistemology of constructionism because teachers’
generation of knowledge is appreciated as a personal, shared and evolving process
(Crotty, 1998). Case study is the adopted methodology that justified the selection and
orchestration of the data gathering strategies which include:

- semi-structured interviews (6 participants);
- participant observation including lesson observations, field notes and second
  interviews to discuss observations (6 participants); and
- physical artefacts (6 participants).

This research project is conducted in accordance with the requirements of the ACU
Research Projects Ethics Committee (See Appendix A) and Brisbane Catholic Education
(See Appendix N). Limitations of the study are explained in the research design chapter
(See 4.9).
8.3 New Understandings Concerning Each of the Research Questions

This section addresses each of the contributing research questions which focus the conduct of this research.

8.3.1 Contributing research question one.

The first contributing research question is:

What do teachers believe about the teaching of writing in the early years of schooling?

This research generates three new understandings.

The first new understanding is that teachers have beliefs that underpin their writing pedagogy and how teachers form beliefs is complex.

Teachers have beliefs about writing that underpin their writing pedagogy. Moreover, how teachers form beliefs is complex (Fives & Buehl, 2010; Mackenzie et al., 2011). Indeed, teachers’ own education, their knowledge about writing and writing pedagogy, their teacher training, postgraduate studies, teaching experience, as well as society, culture and nature each inform their beliefs (C1I1&I2; C2I1&I2; C3I1&I2; C4I1&I2; C5I1&I2; C6I1&I2). Further, teachers reflect on their beliefs in relation to student outcomes. This experience sometimes contributes to a change in beliefs. New knowledge generated from learning about new strategies and approaches also contributes to teachers’ reflecting on their beliefs about writing pedagogy. These in turn may become catalysts for change (C1I1&I2; C2I1&I2; C3I1&I2; C4I1&I2; C5I1&I2; C6I1&I2). This understanding contributes to further knowledge about writing pedagogy and associated classroom practices (Boscolo, 2008; Hammond & Maken-Horarik, 2001; Harris et al., 2010; Troia et al., 2011), allowing an appreciation of teacher beliefs. Further, teachers are reflecting constantly on their beliefs and honing their practice, identifying that such reflection and responsive practice enhances quality teaching.

The second new understanding is that teachers have multiple beliefs about writing, learning to write and teaching writing, and these beliefs influence writing pedagogy.

Teachers’ beliefs about writing pedagogy are related to their beliefs about writing, beliefs about learning to write and beliefs about teaching writing (C1I1&I2; C2I1&I2; C3I1&I2; C4I1&I2; C5I1&I2; C6I1&I2). Indeed, teachers reflect on how students learn to write. Moreover, their reflections influence their beliefs. In turn, these beliefs then inform their pedagogy, such as planning for teaching writing (C1I1&I2; C2I1&I2; C3I1&I2; C4I1&I2;
There, the rationale for writing lessons originates from teacher beliefs. Also, teachers consider teaching and learning more generally, when planning, teaching and assessing writing (C1I1&I2; C2I1&I2; C3I1&I2; C4I1&I2; C5I1&I2; C6I1&I2). This understanding contributes to further knowledge to appreciate the complexity of teacher beliefs and where they emanate from (Olafson & Schraw, 2010; Padgham & Topfer, 2015). Further, it demonstrates that teacher beliefs about writing are interrelated and underpin writing pedagogy.

The third new understanding is that planning, teaching and assessing writing are guided by teachers’ belief that writing is developmental and students in the early years are working at different literacy levels.

The developmental nature of writing is a major influence for planning, teaching and assessment purposes (C1I1&I2; C2I1&I2; C3I1&I2; C4I1&I2; C5I1&I2; C6I1&I2). Consequently, children are grouped in class according to their developmental levels. They work on activities that are developmentally appropriate and assessed using developmental continua and individual criteria for different developmental levels. These responses enable teachers to scaffold appropriate student learning experiences based on evidence derived from their individual literacy levels (C1L1, C1L2; C2L1, C2L2; C3L1, C3L2; C4L1, C4L2; C5L1, C5L2; C6L1, C6L2). These practices are underpinned by beliefs that learning to write is developmental. This understanding contributes to the scholarship about how teachers foster the developmental nature of writing for planning, teaching and assessment purposes at the micro-level of the classroom (Clay, 1966; Rowe, 2008; Teale & Sulzby, 1986).

8.3.2 Contributing research question two.

The second contributing research question is:

What practices do teachers employ in the teaching of writing in the early years of schooling?

This research generates six new understandings addressing contributing research question two.

The first new understanding is that writing pedagogy is guided by teachers’ understanding that relevant contexts are exemplary for student engagement and foster writing development.
Relevant contexts and purposeful writing experiences are considered beneficial for encouraging student engagement (C1I1&I2; C2I1&I2; C3I1&I2; C4I1&I2; C5I1&I2; C6I1&I2). Consequently, teachers ensure writing experiences are relevant to children’s interests. Further, they communicate the purpose of writing explicitly to children. Also, teachers’ encouragement of children to share their ideas during writing lessons leads to increased motivation. Home and school partnerships to support the teaching of writing are also fostered in a variety of ways. These are achieved through communicating with parents, engaging parents as helpers during literacy lessons, and writing tasks shared between parents and children. This understanding contributes to the current scholarship concerning writing as social practice (Bazerman, 2016; Beach et al., 2016) by confirming that when writers are given an opportunity to write meaningfully across a range of relevant social and cultural contexts, this contributes to students’ being successful writers.

The second new understanding is that writing pedagogy is influenced by teachers’ understanding that the learning environment may be organised creatively to foster writing development.

An engaging learning environment is generated by teachers as foundational for learning to write (C1I1&I2; C2I1&I2; C3I1&I2; C4I1&I2; C5I1&I2; C6I1&I2). Moreover, since learning environments are utilised by teachers to address the needs of students as they construct texts, teachers consequently engage in purposeful practices with the environment to support the teaching of writing. A visual and print-rich environment, quality literature and organised materials support writing development. Further, children have access to new technologies and new literacies in contemporary learning spaces. Also, practising their writing through play is encouraged and classrooms are arranged to be bright and comfortable spaces where children are encouraged to take risks and share ideas when writing (C1L1, C1L2; C2L1, C2L2; C3L1, C3L2; C4L1, C4L2; C5L1, C5L2; C6L1, C6L2). This understanding contributes to current scholarship concerning the employment of learning environments to foster writing development and includes providing play contexts (Dyson, 2009), as well as promoting literacy development through the employment of environment print (Neumann et al., 2011) and teaching writing through the employment of new technologies (Roskos & Neuman, 2011).

The third new understanding is that writing pedagogy is guided by teachers’ understanding that writing is an integral part of literacy.
Writing is considered an integral part of literacy. Moreover, talk, viewing and reading are considered foundational and catalytic to teaching writing. Consequently, meaningful viewing, reading and talk are integrated into writing instruction (C1I1&I2; C2I1&I2; C3I1&I2; C4I1&I2; C5I1&I2; C6I1&I2). Reading quality literature is incorporated regularly into writing lessons, for example, the reading of exemplar models of texts including text types that children are later expected to produce (C1L1, C1L2; C2L1, C2L2; C3L1, C3L2; C4L1, C4L2; C5L1, C5L2; C6L1, C6L2). Indeed, reading prior to writing motivates children to want to write and quality literature engages children. Viewing also motivates children to write, as they are engaged by colour, interactivity, multimodal and visual elements of technology and illustrations in picture books (C1I1&I2; C2I1&I2; C3I1&I2; C4I1&I2; C5I1&I2; C6I1&I2). Talk is also employed prior to and during writing to help children organise their thoughts, discuss topics and generate ideas for writing (C1L1, C1L2; C2L1, C2L2; C3L1, C3L2; C4L1, C4L2; C5L1, C5L2; C6L1, C6L2). This understanding contributes to current scholarship concerning the benefits of integrating writing with other areas of language and literacy (Cambourne, 2015; Juel, 2006; Myhill & Jones, 2009; Pantaleo, 2006) by amplifying that teaching writing as an integral part of literacy fosters writing development and contributes to students’ being successful writers. Further, it contributes to addressing the lacuna about how teachers operate at the micro-level of the classroom.

The fourth new understanding is that writing instruction is guided by teachers’ understanding that explicit teaching contributes to student success.

Explicit writing instruction is valued by teachers and considered exemplary practice in the early years. Therefore, teaching skills explicitly and employing a range of explicit instructional strategies is purposefully employed (C1I1&I2; C2I1&I2; C3I1&I2; C4I1&I2; C5I1&I2; C6I1&I2). Explicit teaching of text types, the conventions of written language, the purpose and structure of text types, spelling, grammar and punctuation contributes to the writing program. Teaching students explicitly how to plan prior to writing and providing many opportunities for independent writing are also employed. Further, teachers engage students with the writing process because explicit understanding of that process helps students to generate a quality product. This understanding contributes to existing scholarship concerning the benefits of explicit writing instruction (S. Graham et al., 2016; S. Hill, 2012) by demonstrating that explicit instruction fosters student writing development. Further, this study contributes to the relatively insubstantial body of research about exemplary writing practices in the early years of schooling.
The fifth new understanding is that writing pedagogy is guided by teachers’ understanding that phonics, spelling and grammar are essential elements of writing pedagogy and that implementing a variety of different strategies and programs within a functional approach contributes to exemplary practice.

Spelling and grammar are taught explicitly using a functional approach. In addition, various strategies and programs to teach phonics, spelling and grammar are employed (C1I1&I2; C2I1&I2; C3I1&I2; C4I1&I2; C5I1&I2; C6I1&I2). Commonalities include explicit teaching, a visual, print-rich environment including word charts and sight words, a functional approach to spelling, grammar and conferencing. Differences include the employment of a variety of different programs to teach spelling. This new understanding confirms previous research that identifies the benefits of a functional approach to teaching spelling and grammar (Christie, 2005, Derewianka, 2012, S. Hill, 2012 and contrasts with the national curriculum which adopts a systemic functional approach for teaching grammar for students in Years 1‒10 (ACARA, 2013). Finally, this study contributes to scholarship by identifying that offering students’ opportunities to use skills functionally promotes writing development.

The sixth new understanding is that writing pedagogy is influenced by teachers’ understanding that becoming digitally literate is an important component of teaching writing in the early years.

Digital literacy is valued and implemented in writing programs and children are taught to write digitally through engagement with new technologies and new literacies while learning print literacy concurrently (C1I1&I2; C2I1&I2; C3I1&I2; C4I1&I2; C5I1&I2; C6I1&I2). A range of technological tools such as computers, interactive whiteboards and iPads are employed to construct text. Computer programs and apps are also employed to enhance the teaching of writing (C1L1, C1L2; C2L1, C2L2; C3L1, C3L2; C4L1, C4L2; C5L1, C5L2; C6L1, C6L2). This understanding confirms research that digital literacy is important and is nurtured through engagement with new technologies and new literacies (Edwards-Groves, 2012; Leu et al., 2016; Lipscombe et al., 2015; MacArthur, 2006). Further, this demonstrates that technology is a motivational tool and that teaching children to write digitally fosters writing development and contributes to students being successful twenty-first century writers.
8.3.3 Contributing research question three.

The third contributing research question is:

What influences teachers in the teaching of writing in the early years of schooling?

This research generates three new understandings addressing contributing research question three.

The first new understanding is that writing pedagogy is guided by teachers’ understanding that children are the primary influence on their planning teaching and assessment.

Students are the primary influence for planning, teaching and assessment purposes. Consequently, teachers differentiate writing instruction based on the needs and abilities of their students (C1I1&I2; C2I1&I2; C3I1&I2; C4I1&I2; C5I1&I2; C6I1&I2). This study contributes to research by identifying multiple strategies that teachers employ to achieve this, including being aware of student needs and individual differences and considering these needs and differences when planning and teaching writing, for example, responding to students' social, cultural and language needs. Teachers believe also that the developmental needs of students are important and therefore, students are grouped during writing lessons according to their literacy levels. In addition, learning preferences of students are also considered and addressed through purposeful planning and teaching. Also important is the provision of additional support to students such as those with learning disabilities, for whom English is an additional language, who have lower levels of literacy, and so on. This is achieved with purposeful planning, through the implementation of individual learning plans and by working with literacy specialists and aides to provide additional targeted support. This understanding amplifies research concerning how teachers consider the needs, interests and abilities of students in the writing classroom (McIntryre & Turner, 2013; OECD, 2009; Tomlinson, 2009).

The second new understanding is that an individual teacher’s writing pedagogy is influenced by intrinsic and extrinsic influences.

Extrinsic and intrinsic influences inform teachers’ writing pedagogy (C1I1&I2; C2I1&I2; C3I1&I2; C4I1&I2; C5I1&I2; C6I1&I2). Teachers are influenced by a range of theoretical models and approaches (Farrar & Al-Qatawneh, 2010). Also, teachers identify multiple systemic influences contributing to their pedagogical choices. These include policy, programs and mandated assessment. Teachers describe their personal journeys with writing pedagogy. Indeed, teaching experience, professional learning, academic qualifications, mentors, personal beliefs about learning to write and teachers’ pedagogical
experiences with teaching writing contribute to these journeys and influence writing pedagogy. Data from this study demonstrates that the balance of intrinsic and extrinsic influences is unique to each teacher and underpinned by deeply held beliefs concerning the teaching of writing. This understanding contributes to research not only by appreciating what influences teachers’ writing pedagogy (Farrar & Al-Qatawneh, 2010; Klenowski & Wyatt-Smith, 2012; Makin et al., 2007; M. Mills & McGregor, 2016) but also by offering explanations of how extrinsic and intrinsic influences inform pedagogy.

The third new understanding is that teachers have preferred individual approaches to writing pedagogy.

There is a complex dynamic between teacher beliefs and practices. Further, a unique balance of intrinsic and extrinsic influences, inform individual teacher’s writing pedagogy. Moreover, these influences are underpinned by deeply held beliefs. In addition, teachers have preferred individual approaches to writing pedagogy and that these approaches influence their thinking, planning, priorities and pedagogical choices (C1I1&I2; C2I1&I2; C3I1&I2; C4I1&I2; C5I1&I2; C6I1&I2). The conceptual lens, *Approaches to Writing Pedagogy: A Conceptual Lens* (Graham, 2009), originating from analytical processes, allows teachers’ pedagogies to be categorised according to their approach. Through the employment of this lens, it is demonstrated that teachers in this study identified as pragmatic, eclectic, philosophical or visionary in their approaches to teaching writing, as illustrated in Figure 8.1.

**Figure 8.1.** Approaches to writing pedagogy identified in this study.
These approaches are informed by a complex dynamic of interrelated knowledge, beliefs and associated practices as illustrated in Figure 8.2.

Indeed, it is concluded that teachers’ epistemological world views—encompassing their knowledge, self-knowledge and beliefs—inform their preferred individual approaches to writing pedagogy. First, writing pedagogy is guided by teachers’ knowledge about their students and how they learn, their knowledge about writing curriculum and strategies and their knowledge about how children learn to write. In addition, self-knowledge informs approaches. Moreover, self-knowledge includes “an awareness of one’s beliefs, a vision to guide practice and ways of imaging and enacting identities consistent with the vision and beliefs they have enacted through knowledge and experience” (Fairbanks et al., 2010, p. 161). Finally, teacher beliefs are the rationales explaining different pedagogical choices.

This research contributes to scholarship by expanding on research investigating how theoretical models and approaches influence writing pedagogy (McCarth ey & Ro, 2011; S. Peterson, 2012) to identify the preferred approaches to writing pedagogy to which individual teachers aspire. Further, this study explains how influences inform these approaches (Farrah & Al-Qatawneh, 2010; Cutler & Graham, 2008; Ritchey et al., 2015). Indeed, approaches are informed by a complex dynamic of teacher beliefs, knowledge, self-knowledge and associated pedagogical preferences (C1I1&I2; C2I1&I2; C3I1&I2; C4I1&I2; C5I1&I2; C6I1&I2).
8.4 Conclusions of the Study

There are several conclusions generated from this research that contribute to new knowledge, policy and practice.

8.4.1. Contributions to new knowledge.

The following conclusions, generated from this research, contribute to new knowledge.

8.4.1.1 Beliefs underpinning writing pedagogy.

This study contributes to new knowledge by offering novel perspectives into the complex dynamics of beliefs underpinning writing pedagogy.

**Conclusion 1:** This research concludes, there are a multiplicity of beliefs underpinning an individual teachers' writing pedagogy. This contributes to new knowledge because, while there is research related to the relationships between teacher beliefs and teachers' practices (McDougall, 2010; Makin et al., 2007) and the relationships between teacher beliefs and teachers' practices for literacy (Brown et al., 2012) there is little research concerning teacher beliefs related to teaching writing in the early years and how these beliefs influence practices. Teacher beliefs underpinning writing pedagogy are informed by teachers' own education, teaching experience and their understandings about how children learn to write and how children learn more generally. Further, nature, culture, society, knowledge and self-knowledge contribute to the complexity of how teachers form beliefs about writing pedagogy. Some beliefs are held more emphatically than others and therefore are more influential than others. Moreover, personal beliefs may be more influential than external demands. Therefore, this understanding suggests there are demonstrable relationships between teacher beliefs about writing and practices for teaching writing. These relationships are complex, intricate and multifaceted. In addition, this research enhances previous research (Brownlee et al., 2011) by identifying complex dynamics of beliefs underpinning teachers' writing pedagogy.

8.4.1.2 Students as the primary influence on writing pedagogy.

This study contributes new knowledge by offering explanations as to how teachers are responsive to student needs, interests and abilities when teaching writing.

**Conclusion 2:** This research concludes, students are the primary influence on teacher writing pedagogy. Moreover, teachers change their practices and differentiate writing instruction based on how teachers perceive the needs, interests and abilities of their students. This understanding concludes that children are the primary consideration for teaching writing. These insights contribute new knowledge. While there is some research
concluding that teachers address individual differences when teaching literacy (D. Peterson, 2013; B. Taylor, 2013) there is scant research about how teachers consider the needs, interests and abilities of students in the writing classroom. This study contributes new knowledge by offering explanations about the multiple strategies teachers employ and the ways in which teachers differentiate writing instruction to address student needs. This encompasses planning for individual needs, grouping students purposefully, providing individual support, catering for a range of learning preferences, catering for varying interests, liaising with support staff, and considering different cultural, social and language needs.

8.4.1.3 Influences informing writing pedagogy.

This study contributes new knowledge by offering understanding of the complex relationships operating within the matrix of influences which guide teachers’ pedagogical choices.

Conclusion 3: This research concludes, there are multiple influences informing teachers’ writing pedagogy. These influences include personal beliefs, knowledge of theory, systemic policies and assessment requirements, personal journeys, students’ and personal approaches. These understandings confirm previous research (Klenowski & Wyatt-Smith, 2012; Makin et al., 2007; M. Mills & McGregor, 2016) as well as contribute new knowledge about how influences inform pedagogy. Indeed, similar influences inform teachers’ pedagogical choices, but they do so differently. Some teachers are especially informed by extrinsic influences, while others by intrinsic influences. Also, since students are the primary influence on teachers’ writing pedagogy, student needs inform how teachers select multiple strategies in teaching writing. Further, this study offers new insights into the complex relationships operating within the matrix of influences which guide teachers’ pedagogical choices. How teachers form beliefs is complex. Often, they are influenced by their own education and teaching journeys. Interestingly, while other studies confirm systemic demands on teachers’ writing pedagogy (Klenowski & Wyatt-Smith, 2012; Mills & McGregor, 2016), this study explains how personal beliefs and approaches interpret systemic demands to inform individual writing pedagogy.

8.4.1.4 Individual approaches to teaching writing.

This study contributes new knowledge by offering new insights about preferred individual approaches to writing pedagogy.

Conclusion 4: This research concludes, teachers are influenced by preferred individual approaches to teaching writing. Moreover, these approaches are underpinned by a complex dynamic of personal beliefs, knowledge, self-knowledge and vision. Further, this
study offers new insights into intrinsic and extrinsic influences that inform teachers’ approaches in a way that is unique to each individual. This conclusion is innovative and advances existing scholarship which concludes that teachers’ approaches are influenced by theoretical models and approaches (McCarthely & Ro, 2011; S. Peterson, 2012). Indeed, theoretical models and approaches are just one contributing influence in a complex dynamic of influences informing teachers’ individual preferred approaches to writing pedagogy.

8.4.1.5 Categorising teachers according to their preferred approaches.

This study contributes new knowledge by offering a conceptual lens that allows for an appreciation of teachers’ approaches to writing pedagogy. Through the employment of Approaches to Writing Pedagogy: A Conceptual Lens (Graham, 2009), teachers were categorised according to the different approaches informing their writing pedagogy. Conclusion 5: Data from this study demonstrates that teachers may be pragmatic, eclectic, philosophical or visionary in their approaches to teaching writing. Moreover, it is concluded that philosophical and visionary teachers are more intrinsically motivated in their approach, while pragmatic teachers are more extrinsically motivated. Also, eclectic teachers are informed by both intrinsic and extrinsic influences. This conclusion is innovative and advances existing scholarship by providing an appreciation of how intrinsic and extrinsic influences inform an individual teacher’s approaches uniquely. These novel perspectives contribute new knowledge about teachers’ approaches and allow for an enhanced understanding of teachers’ writing pedagogy. Moreover, Approaches to Writing Pedagogy: A Conceptual Lens (Graham, 2009) offers a tool in researching teachers’ approaches to writing pedagogy.

8.4.2 Contributions to practice.

The following conclusions, generated from this research, contribute to practice.

8.4.2.1 Exemplary practices for teaching writing in the early years of schooling.

This study contributes to practice by offering pedagogical understandings about the promotion of writing development and the generation of exemplary practices for teaching writing in the early years of schooling.

Conclusion 6: This research concludes, teachers make sophisticated pedagogical choices which include engaging in multiple practices that they believe are fundamental for teaching writing in the early years of schooling. First, teachers value writing as social
practice. Therefore, teachers provide relevant contexts for writing, teach relevant and purposeful writing lessons and foster home and school partnerships to support the teaching of writing. Teachers believe that these practices are motivating and improve the quality of children’s writing. Also, teachers employ the learning environment creatively to foster writing development. This is achieved through providing quality literature, writing resources, organising materials, creating a visual and print-rich environment, and meeting the needs of students as they construct texts. Further, teachers believe integrating writing with other areas of literacy are foundational for learning to write. Consequently, writing lessons are surrounded and supported by viewing, reading and talk. Also, teachers believe explicit writing instruction contributes to students’ becoming successful writers. Consequently, teachers explain explicitly to children not only the skills and strategies needed to write but also how to apply these strategies in a functional way.

In addition, teachers adopt a functional approach to teach spelling and grammar. This understanding implies that a multifaceted and functional approach to teaching phonics, spelling and grammar is preferred by teachers. Finally, teachers believe the development of digital literacy is an important component of learning to write. Consequently, teachers teach children to write digitally alongside print literacy through engagement with new technologies and new literacies. Each of these practices is identified singularly in the research literature as beneficial for teaching writing (Bazerman, 2008, 2016; Cambourne, 2015; Derewianka & Jones, 2010; Edwards-Groves, 2012; Myhill & Jones, 2009; Roskos & Neuman, 2011). However, this study advances existing scholarship by addressing the lacuna about writing pedagogy in the early years and providing explanations about teachers’ writing practices. It is concluded that the collective orchestration of each of these practices increases student motivation, fosters writing development and contributes to students’ being successful writers.

8.5 Recommendations

The following are recommendations that may enhance the quality of writing pedagogy in the early years.

8.5.1 Policy.

The recommendations for policy are:

That preservice teacher education programs include a dedicated focus on:

- the developmental nature of writing for planning, teaching and assessment purposes;
- teaching writing as an integral part of literacy;
- explicit writing instruction;
- digital literacy instruction; and
- writing as social practice.

This recommendation is in response to the conclusion that these practices are exemplary to engage students and foster writing development.

Also, that preservice teacher education programs include instruction in systemic functional grammar (SFG). This recommendation is in response to SFG’s being mandated in the Australian Curriculum (ACARA, 2013) and also because this study identifies a lack of knowledge of SFG among teacher participants.

**8.5.2 Practice.**

The recommendations for practice are:

That professional learning be offered to classroom teachers, including a dedicated focus on:

- the developmental nature of writing for planning, teaching and assessment purposes;
- teaching writing as an integral part of literacy;
- explicit writing instruction;
- digital literacy instruction; and
- writing as social practice.

This recommendation is in response to the conclusion that these practices are exemplary to engage students and foster writing development.

Also, that professional learning be offered to classroom teachers to include instruction in systemic functional grammar (SFG). This recommendation is in response to SFG’s being mandated in the Australian Curriculum (ACARA, 2013) and also because this study identifies a lack of knowledge of SFG among teacher participants.

Further, that primary schools are resourced with materials to support the teaching and learning of writing. This recommendation is in response to this study’s conclusion that relevant resources and the creative use of resources in learning spaces fosters writing development.

In addition, that early years teachers and the primary school community encourage home and school partnerships to support the teaching of writing in the early years. This
recommendation is in response to this study’s conclusion that encouraging home and school partnerships is exemplary practice for student engagement and fosters writing development.

8.5.3 Further research.

There are four recommendations for further research.

There is a paucity of research relating to teacher beliefs about writing pedagogy and associated classroom practices (Harris et al., 2010). Consequently, further research exploring teacher beliefs about learning to write, teaching writing, and how these beliefs inform pedagogical choices is beneficial. While this research addresses this paucity of research, further research is recommended as beliefs generate practices (Fives & Buehl, 2013).

Also, this research concludes that teachers have preferred individual approaches to writing pedagogy. However, research regarding teachers’ approaches to writing pedagogy is sparse (Harris et al., 2010). Exploration of preferred approaches to writing pedagogy and the influences which inform these approaches is beneficial as teachers’ approaches have a primary influence on their writing pedagogy (Olafson & Schraw, 2010).

Further, the contemporary teaching of writing is influenced increasingly by visual literacy (Stafford, 2010; Serafini, 2011). Moreover, this research identifies visual literacy aids both mainstream and struggling early years writers. Consequently, further exploration about how visual literacy contributes to writing pedagogy in the early years and also how visual literacy promotes student writing development for diverse learners in twenty-first century learning environments, is beneficial. Ideally, this initiative contributes to research-validated evidence to inform teachers and policy makers of visual literacy practices that may better promote student writing development (Stafford, 2010; Serafini, 2011).

Finally, the contemporary teaching of writing is influenced increasingly by advancements in technology and new literacies (G. Barton et al., 2015). Consequently, an exploration of how those in the digital generation approach digital writing instruction in the early years using new technologies and new literacies, and how they foster children to become digitally literate, is beneficial. Ideally, this initiative contributes to research-validated evidence to inform teachers and policymakers of practices for writing instruction that may better promote student writing development in twenty-first century learning environments.
8.6 Conclusion

Learning to write is highly valued in educational settings because being literate is necessary for meaningful engagement within society (Vygotsky, 1978). Indeed, “if people cannot write well, they cannot think well and if they cannot think well, others will do their thinking for them” (Attributed to George Orwell, by J. H Bunsel, as cited in Schlafly, 1977, p. 151). The writing journey begins where children observe and imitate the writing behaviours of others, before the commencement of formal schooling (Mackenzie, 2014). These early writing experiences are then fostered by teachers who are responsible for teaching children to write. This study demonstrates that there is a compelling case for researchers and policymakers to better understand how teachers teach writing in the early years of schooling.

How the teaching of writing occurs in twenty-first century learning environments is evolving, as students engage with ever-increasing new technologies and new literacies that are changing the ways people communicate, engage with text and create text (G. Barton et al., 2015). “For educators, this means the careful weaving of classroom pedagogies associated with what we know from foundational writing research, what is emerging from new lines of study associated with digital text construction” (Lipscombe et al., 2015, p. 296) and ever-increasing cultural and linguistic diversity in Australian schools (K. Mills & Dreamson, 2015).

This research confirms that there is a multiplicity of beliefs underpinning teachers’ writing pedagogy. Also, it confirms that an individual teacher’s writing pedagogy is informed by a range of intrinsic and extrinsic influences, the balance of which is unique to each individual. Further, it confirms that teachers are influenced by preferred individual approaches to writing pedagogy, underpinned by a complex dynamic of personal beliefs, knowledge and self-knowledge. Finally, it offers pedagogical understandings about what promotes students’ writing development and confirms exemplary practices for teaching writing in the early years. These research contributions generate what constitutes effective writing pedagogy in the early years of schooling.
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Human Research Ethics Committee
Committee Approval Form

Principal Investigator/Supervisor: Dr. Janelle Young  Brisbane Campus
Co-Investigators:  
Student Researcher: Ms. Marlo Graham  Brisbane Campus

Ethics approval has been granted for the following project:
Writing in the Early Years: A Study of Teacher Beliefs and Classroom Practices
for the period: 24th January 2005 - 30th November 2005
Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) Register Number: Q2004.05-17

The following standard conditions as stipulated in the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans (1999) apply:

(i) that Principal Investigators / Supervisors provide, on the form supplied by the Human Research Ethics Committee, annual reports on matters such as:
   - security of records
   - compliance with approved consent procedures and documentation
   - compliance with special conditions, and

(ii) that researchers report to the HREC immediately any matter that might affect the ethical acceptability of the protocol, such as:
   - proposed changes to the protocol
   - unforeseen circumstances or events
   - adverse effects on participants

The HREC will conduct an audit each year of all projects deemed to be of more than minimum risk. There will also be random audits of a sample of projects considered to be of minimum risk on all campuses each year.

Within one month of the conclusion of the project, researchers are required to complete a Final Report Form and submit it to the local Research Services Officer.

If the project continues for more than one year, researchers are required to complete an Annual Progress Report Form and submit it to the local Research Services Officer within one month of the anniversary date of the ethics approval.

Signed: ___________________________ Date: ______________
(Research Services Officer, McAuley Campus)
Appendix B
Questionnaire: Instrument, Processes and Analysis

Writing in the Early Years of Schooling: A Questionnaire

There are 8 sections in this questionnaire. Sections 1, 2, 3 & 4 include statements to be considered in terms of your beliefs about the teaching of writing in the early years. **Indicate your response by circling one of the following for each statement on the table below:**

SD if you strongly disagree with the statement;
D if you disagree with the statement;
N if you neither agree nor disagree with the statement or are not sure;
A if you agree with the statement;
SA if you strongly agree with the statement.
If you change your mind about a response, cross out the first response and circle the new choice.

Section 1: Statements on Writing in the Early Years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 It is important to teach children to write within relevant lessons/units of work.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.2 A good writing program in the early years includes speaking, listening, and reading as a part of teaching writing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.3 Students need to learn to write different text types that are appropriate for different social purposes and contexts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.4 Students in the early years should have at least one opportunity daily for independent writing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.5 Learning to write is developmental.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 A good writing program exposes students to multiple text types (eg: print texts/digital texts).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7 One focus of a good writing program is teaching the correct use of Standard Australian English.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

326
1.8 Explicit and systematic teaching of the structure and use of text types (genres) is important.

1.9 Explicit and systematic teaching of the conventions of written language (eg: punctuation, spelling & grammar) is important.

1.10 Students should be encouraged to invent spelling when drafting their writing.

Section 2: The Learning Environment and Writing in the Early Years

2.1 A print-rich environment supports children’s writing development.

2.2 Providing students with appropriately organised materials in the learning environment (eg: paper, crayons) encourages students to practise writing in informal learning situations.

2.3 Giving students the opportunity to practise their writing through play (eg: making a shopping list in a game) promotes writing development.

2.4 Providing an environment where students feel comfortable to take risks when writing, supports writing development.

2.5 Allowing children to choose topics for writing assists with their writing development.

Section 3: Writing as an Integral part of Literacy in the Early Years

3.1 Reading and writing should be integrated in the early years of schooling (eg: a 2 hour literacy block instead of one hour on reading & one hour on writing).
Section 4: Assessment of Writing in the Early Years

4.1 The developmental nature of writing should be considered when assessing writing in the early years.

4.2 A literacy continuum is a useful assessment tool for gauging students’ writing development.

4.3 Assessing with the Year Two Diagnostic Net is useful for gauging achievement in Writing.

List other useful ways you assess writing in the early years

Section 5: Strategies Used in Writing in the Early Years

Section 5 presents questions about the frequency of strategies you currently use when teaching writing.

Indicate your response by circling one of the following for each question on the table below:

N never  
S seldom  
H about half the time  
O often  
A always
If you change your mind about a response, cross out the old answer and circle the new choice.

**In your class – how often do you…**

<p>| | | | | | |</p>
<table>
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<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Teach children to be critical about texts?</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 Explicitly teach about the structure and use of text types (genres)?</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3 Use dictionaries with students when teaching writing?</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4 Explicitly teach grammar (eg: sentence structure, parts of speech)?</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5 Explicitly teach the rules of spelling and punctuation?</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6 Conference with children about their written texts?</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.7 Use work sheets (or books) for teaching grammar?</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.8 Model writing for children?</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.9 Jointly construct different texts types with children?</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.10 Teach phonics to assist childrens’ spelling development?</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.11 Spend teaching writing per week?  
(Please print response opposite).
Section 6: The kinds of knowledge about language that help students in their writing development.

Section 6 presents statements relating to your beliefs about the kinds of knowledge about language that students need to help themselves in their writing development.

Indicate your answer by circling one of the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Importance:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EI</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you change your mind about a response, cross out the old answer and circle the new choice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6.1 Knowing the letters of the alphabet.</th>
<th>NI</th>
<th>LI</th>
<th>RI</th>
<th>VI</th>
<th>EI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.2 Using correct letter formation.</td>
<td>NI</td>
<td>LI</td>
<td>RI</td>
<td>VI</td>
<td>EI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3 Knowing sound/symbol relationships.</td>
<td>NI</td>
<td>LI</td>
<td>RI</td>
<td>VI</td>
<td>EI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4 Understanding features of digital text (visual, auditory, print).</td>
<td>NI</td>
<td>LI</td>
<td>RI</td>
<td>VI</td>
<td>EI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5 Knowing the generic structure of different texts.</td>
<td>NI</td>
<td>LI</td>
<td>RI</td>
<td>VI</td>
<td>EI</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section 7: Influences on teacher practices and beliefs about the teaching of writing

Section 7 presents statements in the context of what influences your beliefs and practices about the teaching of writing.

**Indicate your response by circling one of the following for each statement on the table below:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Importance:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EI</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NI not at all important  
LI of little importance  
RI reasonably important  
VI very important  
EI extremely important

If you change your mind about a response, cross out the old answer and circle the new choice.

7.1 Initial teacher training (eg: Dip T, B Ed).  
7.2 Further post graduate studies in education.  
7.3 Teaching experience.  
7.4 Literacy mentors (eg: school literacy co-ordinator).  
7.5 Professional development.  
7.6 Individual school policies/programs.  
7.7 Team planning (eg: working with other teachers).  
7.8 Government Policy/Program (eg: Draft English Syllabus Documents).  
7.9 Literacy assessment (eg: Developmental Continuas, Yr 2 Diagnostic Net, Yr 3 Literacy Benchmarks Testing).  
7.10 Other influences: Please print on the lines provided in the opposite box and over leaf if necessary

Section 8: About You. Please print or circle in blue or black pen below.

8.1 Highest level of academic qualifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>2yr trained</th>
<th>3yr trained</th>
<th>4yr trained</th>
<th>M Ed Level</th>
<th>Ed D/Ph D Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2yr trained</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3yr trained</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4yr trained</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M Ed Level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ed D/Ph D Level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8.2 Years of primary teaching experience

1-3  4-6  7-9  >10

8.3 Years teaching early years classes

1-3  4-6  7-9  >10

8.4 Current teaching role in 2005
(eg: Year 1; Year 2/3)

(This survey has been adapted in part from Hammond & Maken-Horarik, 2001).

VOLUNTEERS WANTED
I am interested in collecting further information from teachers about the teaching of writing in the early years. If you are interested and would like to continue to be involved in this study, please complete your name and contact details below. I look forward to talking to you in the near future.

Name:   Phone:   Email:
Questionnaire Processes

Selection of Questionnaire Participants

The purpose of the questionnaire is to collect information from early years’ teachers regarding their beliefs, practices and influences related to the teaching of writing in the early years of schooling. To obtain access to informed participants, inclusion criteria for participation to participate in the questionnaire included:

• Teaching an early year’s (P-3) class;
• Completed a minimum of four-year teacher training qualification;
• Being a current employee of a Catholic primary school in the Archdiocese of Brisbane.

Further, the questionnaire was purposefully directed to teachers who:

• were recommended by principals as exemplary early years teachers (After permission was obtained Principals were asked to pass the survey onto exemplary teachers in their schools);
• were BCE scholarship holders undertaking post graduate studies in early years education (After permission was obtained, the survey was offered directly to post graduate students studying at ACU); and
• were post graduate Masters’ and Doctoral students with expertise in English Education (After permission was obtained, the survey was offered directly to Masters’ and Doctoral students studying at ACU).

Participation Protocols

The protocols adopted in conducting the questionnaire included a cover letter concerning the purpose of the study, research transparency and protections for participants including confidentiality (Creswell, 2012). This letter was sent to all Principals in Catholic primary schools in the Archdiocese of Brisbane requesting their authorisation for the questionnaire to be sent to schools (See Appendix S). Once permission was obtained from Principals for their teachers to participate, packages were sent to each school. Each package contained an information letter, consent forms and copies of the questionnaire (See Appendix C). Principals were requested to give questionnaires to interested, exemplary early years teachers. In addition, two cohorts of relevant post graduate students currently working in BCE schools were directly offered the questionnaire at ACU.

Ninety-nine teachers from approximately one third of BCE primary schools responded to
the questionnaire. Each year two and three teacher who participated in the questionnaire were also invited to express interest in further participating in the individual case studies. Numerical data regarding questionnaire participation are displayed below.

Questionnaire Participation: Numerical Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early Years Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approximate Number of Early Years Teachers in the Archdiocese of Brisbane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximate Number of Early Years Teachers in the 43 participating schools during the study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Early Years Teachers that completed the Questionnaire</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Development of the Questionnaire

A questionnaire *Writing in Early Years: A Survey* (Graham, 2004) was employed. A five-point Likert scale (Likert, 1932) was employed. Likert Scale was designed to measure attitudes in a reliable and valid manner (Likert, 1932). “An attitude can be defined as preferential ways of behaving/reacting in a specific circumstance rooted in relatively enduring organisation of beliefs and ideas acquired through social interactions” (Joshi et al., 2015, p.397.). The questionnaire asked teachers to provide information about their beliefs and practices about teaching writing in the early years. The survey instrument was adapted from another survey instrument (Hammond & Maken-Horarik, 2001), which reported data about teacher beliefs and practices relating to literacy learning. In addition, an expression of interest was sought from participants to take part in the case studies.

Feedback from the expertise of critical friends from Schools of Education in Australian universities, were employed for further refinement of the instrument. This included literacy education experts and quantitative research experts. The critical friends were employed to read the trial questionnaire and offer suggestions for improvement of the instrument including the language and the content of the questions.

Following this, as part of the development of the questionnaire a pilot study was conducted with primary trained teachers in Australia who were not in the data collection cohort. The purpose of the pilot study was to “determine that the individuals in the sample are capable of completing the questionnaire and that they can understand the questions” (Creswell, 2012, p. 390). This led to further refinement of the instrument, including adjustments to the layout and language used for the questions.
The Advantages of the Questionnaire

A survey allows for a sample of data from a large population of people to describe beliefs, opinions, and behaviours of a population (Creswell, 2012). This questionnaire provides a snap shot of approximately 100 teachers’ beliefs, practices and influences relating to writing pedagogy in the early years of schooling (Patton, 1990). Further, a survey instrument should be user friendly in terms of layout and time for completion (Creswell, 2012). The questions were presented in a consistent manner, which aimed to make the instrument user friendly. Moreover, the time required to complete the questionnaire was short which aimed to encourage teacher participation and ensure the instrument was user friendly. Finally, the anonymity of respondents aimed to allow participants to feel comfortable to express their own beliefs, with the purpose of collecting more accurate data.

The Limitations of the Questionnaire

It is acknowledged that a survey only provides broad information and cannot explain “cause and affect” (Creswell, 2012, p. 376). In this study, the questionnaire was part of the process of finding participants for case studies. This limitation has therefore been addressed with the inclusion of in-depth case studies.

Analysis and Management of Questionnaire Data

Surveys identify important beliefs and attitudes of individuals (Creswell, 2012). In this study, the survey, Writing in Early Years: A Survey (Graham, 2004) aimed to investigate teachers’ beliefs, classroom practices and influences relating to writing pedagogy in the early years. The construction of the survey addressed issues underpinning the contributing research questions. The participants for the survey are early years’ (P-3) teachers within the Archdiocese of Brisbane. 99 teachers completed the survey.

Process of Data Analysis: Questionnaire

The survey was specifically designed for a particular cohort of teachers and employed a Likert Scale. Scores were collated and displayed using Excel (Microsoft Excel 2003, Version 11). Data were then read and reflected on by the researcher and a code record was established. Survey data were coded, then transferred to SPSS (SPSS Inc, 2003) for Descriptive Analysis (Creswell, 2012). The Descriptive Analysis involved using statistics to calculate values based on numbers (Creswell, 2012) (See Appendix T). After the data was presented, frequencies were then summarised and descriptive comments made and reported. The process of survey data analysis follows.
The questionnaire is adapted from a professionally constructed survey instrument employed by literacy experts (Hammond & Macken-Horarik, 2001). Further, the researcher employed teachers to participate in a pilot trialing of the instrument. Moreover, a qualified critical friend with expertise in survey construction, assisted with refining the questionnaire using feedback generated from the pilot trial.

**Description of the Final Instrument**

The instrument was conceptualised in eight sections. A five-point Likert scale was employed.

Teachers responded to:
- Section 1: statements about writing;
- Section 2: statements about the learning environment and writing in the early years of schooling;
- Section 3: perceptions about writing being an integral part of literacy;
- Section 4: assessment of writing in the early years;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages of Data Analysis</th>
<th>Survey Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data Display</td>
<td>Collating questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Displaying data using Excel &amp; SPSS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflections on Data</td>
<td>Reading the data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Looking for significant patterns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Coding</td>
<td>Coding data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Establishing code record</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Descriptive Analysis</td>
<td>Conducting a Descriptive Analysis (Creswell, 2012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Examining descriptive data including frequencies, standard deviation and mean results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presenting the Data</td>
<td>Provide survey results in tables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Representing survey results in statements of results: summarise frequencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion of survey findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions and</td>
<td>Conclusions employing a synthesis of the survey findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributions</td>
<td>Illumination of themes to support the formulation of the questions for the semi structured interviews in the second stage of the study</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Section 5: the frequency of use for particular teaching strategies;
- Section 6: the level of importance relating to knowledge of language;
- Section 7: the level of importance regarding influences on practices and beliefs for the teaching of writing; and
- Section 8: demographic information about their academic qualifications, years of teaching experience, years of teaching in the early years and their current role.

### Information about the Respondents

Section 8 of the survey provided information about respondents. Results are presented in Table 5.2 of the thesis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information about the Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Qualifications</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Four year trained – 81.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Three year trained – 13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Masters degrees – 5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Teaching Experience</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 1-3 years – 18.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 4-6 years – 18.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 7-9 years – 14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 10 or more years - 49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Early Years Teaching Experience</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 1-3 years - 26.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 4-6 years - 21.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 7-9 years - 15.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 10 or more years - 36.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current Teaching Role</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teaching Prep - 7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teaching Year 1 - 30.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teaching Year 1/2 - 4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teaching Year 2 - 19.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teaching Year 2/3 - 4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teaching Year 3 - 17.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teaching Year 1/2/3 – 7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teaching Preschool - 10.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Most respondents were 4 year trained with some undertaking Master’s studies. 49% had taught for 10 years or longer. Less than 20% had three years or less teaching experience. More than a third had 10 years teaching experience or longer in the early years of schooling.

**Questionnaire Findings: Teacher beliefs about the Teaching of Writing**

**Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6** provided information about teachers’ beliefs for the teaching of writing in the early years of schooling and contribute to the exploration of contributing research Question 1: What do teachers believe about the teaching of writing in the early years of schooling?

For Sections 1-4 on the questionnaire, teachers showed their level of agreement with statements about writing, the learning environment, writing as an integral part of literacy and assessment of writing by choosing one of five responses on a Likert scale. Possible responses ranged from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

**Section 1** of the questionnaire asked teachers their beliefs about a number of statements about writing. Responses received for Section 1 are shown below in Table B1 and summarised in Table 5.3 of the thesis.
Table B1
Percentage Responses for Statements on Writing in the Early Years from Section 1 of the Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>St</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>Miss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 It is important to teach children to write within relevant lessons/units of work.</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 A good writing program in the early years includes speaking, listening, and reading as a part of teaching writing.</td>
<td>4.85</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>85.9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Students need to learn to write different text types that are appropriate for different social purposes and contexts.</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.10 Students in the early years should have at least one opportunity daily for independent writing.</td>
<td>4.45</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.11 Learning to write is developmental.</td>
<td>4.54</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>61.6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.12 A good writing program exposes students to multiple text types (e.g., print texts/digital texts).</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7 One focus of a good writing program is teaching the correct use of Standard Australian English.</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8 Explicit and systematic teaching of the structure and use of text types (genres) is important.</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>50.5</td>
<td>39.4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.9 Explicit and systematic teaching of the conventions of written language (e.g., punctuation, spelling &amp; grammar) is important.</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.10 Students should be encouraged to invent spelling when drafting their writing.</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>51.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Over 90% of participants believed in the importance of a good writing program including speaking, listening and reading as part of teaching writing, the opportunity to write daily and writing lessons occurring within a relevant context or unit of work. In addition, over 90% of participants supported the use of explicit teaching of text types including the...
purpose and structure of text types, and the explicit teaching of spelling, grammar and punctuation as essential for writing in the early years. Over 90% believed invented spelling should be encouraged in the early years. Further, over 95% of participants indicated that learning to write is developmental in the early years. 80% either agreed or strongly agreed the correct use of Standard Australian English was important.

Section 2 of the questionnaire asked teachers their beliefs about the learning environment for supporting the teaching of writing in the early years. Responses received for Section 2 are shown in Table B2.

Table B2
Percentage Responses for Statements about the Learning Environment and Writing in the Early Years from Section 2 of the Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>St Dis</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>Miss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1 A print-rich environment supports children’s writing development.</td>
<td>4.78</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>81.8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Providing students with appropriately organized materials in the learning environment (e.g., paper, crayons) encourages students to practice writing in informal learning situations.</td>
<td>4.62</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>67.7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Giving students the opportunity to practise their writing through play (e.g., making a shopping list in a game) promotes writing development.</td>
<td>4.78</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>78.8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 Providing an environment where students feel comfortable to take risks when writing, supports writing development.</td>
<td>4.85</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>85.9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 Allowing children to choose topics for writing assists with their writing development.</td>
<td>4.45</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>51.5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There was strong support for using the environment to foster writing development. 97% of participants believe a print rich environment supports the teaching of writing. 100% of participants indicated their belief in giving students the opportunity to practise their writing through play and for providing an environment where students feel comfortable to take risks when writing. 6% of participants indicated they were unsure whether students choosing
their own topics supported writing development, indicating some uncertainty surrounding topic choice for writing in the early years. In addition, 5% of participants indicated they were unsure about the benefit of organised materials in the learning environment to encourage writing in informal learning situations.

**Section 3** explored teachers’ beliefs about writing as an integral part of literacy. Responses received for Section 3 are shown in Table B3

**Table B3**

*Percentage Responses for Writing as an Integral Part of Literacy in the Early Years from Section 3 of the Survey*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>St Dis</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>Miss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Reading and writing should be integrated in the early years of</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>schooling (e.g., a 2-hour literacy block instead of one hour on reading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&amp; one hour on writing).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Writing can be successfully taught, separately from reading.</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 The language skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening are</td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>64.6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>closely linked.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 A good writing program has a balanced interaction of talking and</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>51.5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>writing.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 Talking helps young children organize their thoughts.</td>
<td>4.65</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>68.7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6 Talking about their completed writing gives students the opportunity</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>71.7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to share the meaning of their writing.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

98% of participants believe talk is essential to the teaching of writing. Examples include: a balance of talk and writing, using talk to help student organise their thoughts surrounding writing, and using talk for sharing writing. Despite this, responses to question 3.1 indicate varying opinions about whether reading and writing should be integrated in the early years of schooling. Question 3.2 also indicated varying opinions about whether writing can be successfully taught, separately from reading. These results may be explained by referring to BCE policies for teaching reading and writing in Queensland. Moreover, BCE schools
employ a variety of approaches to teach writing.

**Section 4** of the survey explored teacher beliefs about assessing writing in the early years. Responses received for Section 4 are shown in Table B4.

Table B4

*Percentage Responses for Assessment of Writing in the Early Years from Section 4 of the Survey*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>St Dis</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>Miss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1 The developmental nature of writing should be considered when assessing writing in the early years.</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>53.5</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 A literacy continuum is a useful assessment tool for gauging students’ writing development.</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 Assessing with the Year Two Diagnostic Net is useful for gauging achievement in Writing.</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>41.4</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

98% of participants believe the developmental nature of writing should be considered for assessment purposes. In addition, 85% of teachers believe literacy continuums are useful assessment tools for evaluating students writing development. Results for question 4.3 indicated 33.3% of teachers were unsure about the usefulness of the year 2 net as an assessment tool.

The responses of year 2 teachers are shown in Table B5.

Table B5

*Percentage Responses for Year Two Teachers*

- Strongly disagree = 0.0%
- Disagree = 20.0%
- Neither agree nor disagree = 16.7%
- agree = 50.0%
- strongly agree = 13.3%
- Missing Data = 0.0

The results of both analyses indicated only 50 – 65% of both year two teachers and the
whole cohort of teacher participants either agreed or strongly agreed, that the year 2 net (which has a mandated assessment component) was useful in evaluating achievement in writing. Results may indicate that teachers believe other forms of assessment are more useful in evaluating individual achievement in writing. The strong support for literacy continuums as an assessment tool for writing in the early years would suggest that this is preferable to the participating teachers.

Section 6 of the questionnaire asked teachers about the kinds of knowledge about language that might assist students in their writing development. A five-point Likert scale was used to gauge teachers’ perceptions of knowledge about language that might assist students in their writing development. Responses received for Section 6 are shown in Table B6.

Table B6

*Percentage Responses for Kinds of Knowledge about Language that help students in their writing development from Section 6 of the Survey*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>NI</th>
<th>LI</th>
<th>RI</th>
<th>VI</th>
<th>EI</th>
<th>Miss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.1 Knowing the letters of the alphabet.</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>71.7</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2 Using correct letter formation.</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3 Knowing sound/symbol relationships.</td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>69.7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4 Understanding features of digital text (visual, auditory, print).</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5 Knowing the generic structure of different texts.</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.6 Understanding the relationship between social purpose and text types.</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.7 Knowing the rules of traditional grammar.</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.8 Using grammar functionally</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.9 Understanding about how texts work at the critical level.</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

90% of participants believe knowing the letters of the alphabet and knowing sound/symbol
relationships are very important for helping students’ writing development. Questions 6.2, 6.5 and 6.7 indicated a 50/50 split in teacher beliefs about the importance of correct letter formation, structure of text types and rules of traditional grammar. Half agreeing these were reasonably important and half indicating they were of little importance. Questions 6.4, 6.6 and 6.8 indicated approximately two thirds of teachers agreed about the importance of the features of digital text, the relationship between social purpose and text types and using grammar functionally, while approximately one third indicated they were of little importance.

Question 6.9 indicated one third of teachers agree how texts work at the critical level is important, while two thirds indicated this was of little importance. The response to question 6.9 is consistent with the slow uptake of multiliteracy pedagogy and critical literacy in BCE primary schools.

5.5.2 Questionnaire Findings: Teaching Practices in the Teaching of Writing

Section 5 of the survey provided information about strategies used to teach writing in the early years of schooling and contributes to the exploration of contributing research question 2. What practices do teachers employ in the teaching of writing in the early years of schooling?

A five-point Likert scale was used to gauge teachers’ perceptions of the amount of time spent for the strategies listed in the first ten questions within section 5. The eleventh and final question in this section of the survey 5.11 asked teachers to indicate the amount of time they spent teaching writing with a blank space left for them to indicate their response. As a result of the different coding for this question, the results for this question are listed below and separately from the other questions in this section. Responses received for Section 5 are shown in Table 7.
### Table B7

**Percentage Responses for Strategies used to Teach Writing in the Early Years from Section 5 of the Survey**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>O</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>Miss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Teach children to be critical about texts?</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 Explicitly teach about the structure and use of text types (genres)?</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3 Use dictionaries with students when teaching writing?</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4 Explicitly teach grammar (e.g., sentence structure, parts of speech)?</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>37.4</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5 Explicitly teach the rules of spelling and punctuation?</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6 Conference with children about their written texts?</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>41.4</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.7 Use work sheets (or books) for teaching grammar?</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.8 Model writing for children?</td>
<td>4.65</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>70.7</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.9 Jointly construct different texts types with children?</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.10 Teach phonics to assist children’s spelling development?</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>68.7</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

84% of participants often or always modelled writing for children, jointly constructed different text types with children, taught phonics to assist children's spelling development and regularly conferenced with children about their written texts. In addition, 70% of participants often or always explicitly taught their students about the structure and use of text types and explicitly taught the rules of spelling and punctuation.

Question 5.4 asked participants to indicate how often they explicitly taught grammar. 60% of teachers explicitly taught grammar often or always. Approximately 20% used this strategy about half the time and the final 20% seldom or never explicitly taught grammar as a strategy for teaching writing in the early years. Question 5.7 asked about the use of work
sheets or books to teach grammar. 50% of teachers used work sheets or books at times and 50% did not. The results to question 5.7 could be explained by individual preference.

40% of participants indicated they used dictionaries with students when teaching writing often or always. 20% said they used dictionaries about half the time and the remaining 40% indicated that they seldom or never used dictionaries with students when teaching writing. Widespread results could be attributed to the differing early years year levels as teachers of Prep and Year One students would likely be using dictionaries less to teach writing than teachers of year two and three students.

The questionnaire results for Question 5.1 asked participants to indicate how often they taught children to be critical about texts. 33% of teachers taught children to be critical about texts often, 33% using this strategy about half the time and around 25% seldom or never using this strategy. Widespread results are consistent with the slow uptake of critical literacy in primary schools.

Question 5.11 asked teachers to indicate the amount of time they spent teaching writing with a blank space left for them to indicate their response rather than the Likert scale. The results for this question are indicated separately from the other questions in this section. Responses received for question 5.11 are shown in Table B8.

Table B8

*Percentage Responses for Question 5.11*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time per week</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-2 hours</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4 hours</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6 hours</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-8 hours</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 8 hours</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing data</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

40% of participants did not respond to this question. This would suggest teachers found this question difficult to answer. Some participants advised me they found it hard to identify the time spent as they integrated some of their teaching of writing with other parts of literacy and with other subject areas. 60% had widespread results.
Questionnaire Findings: Influences on Teacher Writing Pedagogy

Section 7 of the questionnaire, provided information about influences on teacher writing pedagogy in the early years of schooling and contributes to the exploration of contributing research question 3: What influences teachers in the teaching of writing in the early years of schooling?

A five-point Likert scale was used to gauge teachers’ perceptions of influences on their beliefs and practices for the teaching of writing in the early years.

Responses received for Section 7 are shown in Table B9.

Table B9

Percentage Responses for Influences on Teacher Practices and Beliefs about the Teaching of Writing from Section 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>NI</th>
<th>LI</th>
<th>RI</th>
<th>VI</th>
<th>EI</th>
<th>Missing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.1 Initial teacher training (e.g., Dip T, B Ed).</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2 Further postgraduate studies in education.</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>37.4</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3 Teaching experience.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4 Literacy mentors (e.g., school literacy Co-coordinator).</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>39.4</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5 Professional development.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>37.4</td>
<td>50.5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.6 Individual school policies/programs.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.7 Team planning (e.g., working with other teachers).</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>57.6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.8 Government Policy/ Program (e.g., Draft English Syllabus Documents)</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>39.4</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.9 Literacy assessment (e.g., Developmental Continuas, Yr. 2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

90–97% of participants identified teaching experience, team planning and professional development as very important or extremely important influences on their beliefs and practices in the teaching of writing in the early years. These three influences were the most significant influences on the teaching of writing from the research cohort. In addition, 70-
75% of teachers identified that literacy mentors and individual school policy and programs were very important or extremely important influences on their teaching of writing.

The questionnaire results showed varying opinions from teachers about the influence of study on the teaching of writing in the early years. 50% of participants indicated that initial teacher training was a very important or extremely important influence, while 50% indicated that it was only reasonably important or of little importance. In addition, 40% of teacher participants indicated that postgraduate studies were a very important or extremely important influence on their beliefs and practices in the teaching of writing. A further 40% indicated postgraduate studies were a reasonably important influence, while 20% indicated that postgraduate studies were of little or no importance in terms of influencing their beliefs and practices. It is probable that the 20% have not completed postgraduate studies so this is not an influence on their teaching.

50% of teachers indicated Government mandated policy, programs and assessment related to the teaching of writing as a very important or extremely important influence on their beliefs and practices in the teaching of writing, and 50% indicated reasonable or little importance. It is not surprising the cohort is divided by influences from mandated policy and programs on their teaching, as influences on teacher writing pedagogy are multifaceted and varied.

**Summation**

The questionnaire illuminated some fundamental themes relevant to writing pedagogy in the early years of schooling. Some similarities were highlighted, including:

- Explicit writing instruction;
- Writing as social practice;
- Learning to write as developmental;
- Writing as an integral part of literacy; and
- Manipulating the learning environment to foster writing development.

Finally, differences were highlighted, including:

- Varying influences on teacher writing pedagogy.

These themes are further explored in the case studies.
INFORMATION LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS (INTERVIEWS)

TITLE OF PROJECT: Writing in the Early Years: A Study of Teacher Beliefs and Classroom Practices.

PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR: Dr Janelle Young

STUDENT INVESTIGATOR: Ms Marlo Anne Graham

NAME OF PROGRAMME IN WHICH ENROLLED: Doctor of Education
Australian Catholic University
(McAuley Campus at Banyo).

Dear Participant,

I am writing to invite you to participate in a research project, which will explore teacher beliefs and practices relating the teaching of writing in the early years. This research project will be conducted as part of my studies in the Doctor of Education at ACU.

The first part of the project involves using a survey instrument to gather data about teacher beliefs and practices relating to the teaching of writing in the early years. This survey will be sent to all Catholic Primary Schools in the Archdiocese of Brisbane for teachers that are teaching an early years class (P-3) to complete.

The second phase of the project involves eight individual Case Studies, with eight teacher volunteers from Catholic Primary Schools in the Archdiocese of Brisbane.

I am seeking volunteers teaching a class containing year 2 and or year 3 students for the 2005 school year. If you would like to consider volunteering, your participation would be greatly appreciated.

Participant volunteers for the individual Case Studies will be interviewed once, individually, about their beliefs and practices relating to the teaching of writing in the early years. The next step will involve the researcher observing the participants while they are teaching writing on two separate occasions in their early year’s class, at a time convenient to the participant. (Please note: this is to observe teaching practices relating to the teaching of writing only. I hope to be unobtrusive during observations and have the best intentions of writing up the observations from teachers perceptions). The participants will then be interviewed a second time to discuss these observations. The participants will also be asked to provide relevant written documents to the project, such as literacy planners, school literacy policy, sections of work programs, and student writing samples. All the information gathered will be used to write up individual stories.
about how teachers in Catholic Primary Schools in Brisbane teach writing in the early years of schooling.

To participate in the project, it is envisaged that the first interviews will take approximately one hour, the observations one hour each maximum, the second interviews approximately forty minutes, and the survey approximately 20 minutes to complete. The participants will complete the survey and collect relevant written documents at a personally convenient time. The interviews will take place, at the participant's school at a location chosen by the participant. The observations will take place, in the participant's classroom at times chosen by the participant.

This project has many potential benefits. It will give teachers a documented voice. It is of vital importance to document teacher beliefs and practices as it gives us important insight into the happenings in the classroom. The findings from the study will be shared with the participants and their whole school community. The study will also contribute to the body of knowledge about literacy practices from the perception of the classroom teacher. It will also contribute to the pedagogical understandings about what promotes student writing development. The study also has the potential to affect policy and practice relating to the teaching and learning of writing in the early years of schooling.

This study does not pose any significant risk or discomfort for participants. Should you agree to participate in this project, you have the right to withdraw from the project at any time and do not have to provide reasons for that decision. Participants will have the opportunity to read what is written following both interviews and observations, and may suggest any changes to ensure the accuracy of their story. Copies of interview tapes can be provided on request.

Confidentiality in this project will be ensured through the use of pseudonyms in any reported data. Results from this study will be reported in my doctoral thesis and may be summarised and appear in publications and conference presentations in a form that does not identify the participants in any way. The research project requires personal data from participants. Data gathered from this research project will be stored in Dr Janelle Young's office Assistant Head, School of Education, Australian Catholic University (McAuley Campus at Banyo) to ensure the confidentiality of participants is upheld. All primary data will be retained by the university for five years following publication or completion of the project. After this period, data will be disposed of in accordance with the university’s Retention and Disposal Schedule.

Questions regarding this project should be directed to the Research Supervisor, Dr Janelle Young.

Assistant Head
School of Education
Australian Catholic University
McAuley Campus at Banyo
P.O Box 456
VIRGINIA   QLD   4014

Phone: (07) 3623 7160
Fax: (07) 3623 7247
Email: j.young@mcauley.acu.edu.au

On the conclusion of the research project, results will be provided for the participants.

This study has been approved by both the Human Research Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University and the Executive Director of Brisbane Catholic Education.

In the event that you have any complaint or concern about the way you have been treated during the study, or you have any query that the Supervisor has not been able to satisfy, you may write to the Chair of the Human Research Ethics Committee.

Address:   Chair, Human Research Ethics Committee
           C/O Research Services
           Australian Catholic University

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Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. The participant will be informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this project, would you please complete your name and contact details in the last section of the survey. Please sign both copies of the Consent Form, retain one copy for your records and return the other copy to myself as student researcher. Would you please return your completed survey and consent form in the enclosed envelope labelled “Research Project – Marlo Graham”. The envelope is addressed to the School Administration Office and these will be forwarded to the student researcher.

Yours sincerely

Ms Marlo Anne Graham  
Dr Janelle Young
CONSENT FORM
PARTICIPANT’S COPY

TITLE OF PROJECT:  Writing in the Early Years: A Study of Teacher Beliefs and Classroom Practices.

NAME OF PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR:  Dr Janelle Young

NAME OF STUDENT INVESTIGATOR:  Ms Marlo Anne Graham

I ................................................... (the participant) have read and understood the information provided in the Letter to Participants. I agree to participate in the following:

• To complete a survey relating to the Teaching of Writing.
• To be interviewed twice during the data collection period (I understand that the interviews will be audio taped and later transcribed).
• To be observed by the researcher teaching writing on two occasions during the data collection period.
• To provide copies of relevant written documents to the project, such as literacy planners, sections of work programs and student writing samples.

Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this activity, realising that I can withdraw at any time. I agree that data collected may be published or may be provided to other researchers in a form that does not identify me in any way.

NAME OF PARTICIPANT:  

SIGNATURE  ........................................................  DATE  ..............................................

SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR:

DATE: ........................................................

SIGNATURE OF STUDENT INVESTIGATOR: ..............................................

DATE: ........................................................
CONSENT FORM
RESEARCHER’S COPY

TITLE OF PROJECT: Writing in the Early Years: A Study of Teacher Beliefs and Classroom Practices.

NAME OF PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR: Dr Janelle Young

NAME OF STUDENT INVESTIGATOR: Ms Marlo Anne Graham

I ................................................... (the participant) have read and understood the information provided in the Letter to Participants. I agree to participate in the following:

• To complete a survey relating to the Teaching of Writing.
• To be interviewed twice during the data collection period (I understand that the interviews will be audio taped and later transcribed).
• To be observed by the researcher teaching writing on two occasions during the data collection period.
• To provide copies of relevant written documents to the project, such as literacy planners, sections of work programs and student writing samples.

Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this activity, realising that I can withdraw at any time.

I agree that data collected may be published or may be provided to other researchers in a form that does not identify me in any way.

NAME OF PARTICIPANT: (block letters)

SIGNATURE ........................................................ DATE ........................................

SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR:

DATE: ........................................

SIGNATURE OF STUDENT INVESTIGATOR: ........................................

DATE: ........................................
PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF PROJECT: Writing in the Early Years: A Study of Teacher Beliefs and Classroom Practices.

NAME OF PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR: Dr Janelle Young

NAME OF STUDENT INVESTIGATOR: Ms Marlo Anne Graham

I ................................................... (the parent/guardian) have read and understood the information provided in the Letter to Participants. Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree that my child, nominated below, may be observed on two occasions during class time. I agree that de identified samples of my child’s writing may be copied and used as data. I realise that I can withdraw my consent at any time. I agree that research data collected for the study may be published or may be provided to other researchers in a form that does not identify my child in any way.

NAME OF PARENT/GUARDIAN: (block letters)

SIGNATURE .............................. DATE ..................................

NAME OF CHILD:……………………………………………………………………….

(block letters)

SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR:

DATE:.................................

SIGNATURE OF STUDENT INVESTIGATOR:.................................

Appendix D
Interview Guides and List of Guide Questions for Semi-structured Interviews

Teaching Writing in the Early Years: Interview 1 Guide
Marlo Graham
Australian Catholic University

Why did you volunteer to be part of this study?

Your beliefs about teaching writing
Classroom practices for teaching writing
Influences on writing pedagogy

Strategies for teaching writing
Influences on your planning for writing
How do you use the learning Environment to teach writing?
Provide details of how you have taught writing this year
Explain the developmental nature of learning to write

Practices you have always used
Provide details of how you have assessed writing this year
List of Guide Questions: Semi-structured Interview One

What are your beliefs about teaching writing?

What strategies do you use to teach writing in the early years?

What do you think are the best practices to enhance student writing development?

How do your beliefs about the teaching of writing influence your practices?

How have your beliefs and practices about teaching writing developed over time?

Have any of your beliefs and practices about teaching writing in the early years changed? strategies you have always used/strategies you use now, but did not in past years

How do you use the learning environment in your early year’s classroom when teaching writing?

What importance do you place on students having a purpose for writing?

Can you explain explicit teaching from your perspective – what explicit writing instruction do you provide?

What importance do you place on relevant contexts for teaching writing in the early years?

Do you think reading and writing should be integrated in the early years of schooling?

How important do you think speaking, listening and reading are, when teaching writing?

Can you explain your understanding of the developmental nature of learning to write?

What influences your beliefs and practices about the teaching of writing in the early years?

How do you assess writing development in the early years?
There are no set questions for the second interviews. The second interviews are part of the process of participant observation process and are informed by classroom observations.

Discussion of observed lessons and researcher field notes taken during observed lessons.

Teachers explain how they plan for the teaching of writing and how selected artefacts are relevant to their teaching.
Appendix E
Transcription of Interview One: Case Four Jackie

**Researcher: Qu 1: What are you hoping to get out of this study?**

**Jackie:** Well I think it is for my own benefit, because having been away from teaching for 12 months and also come down in levels to the early years, I would like to do a re-check of my thinking in literacy.

**Researcher: Qu 2: What are your beliefs about teaching writing?**

**Jackie:** I think writing is actually a thinking skill. I find that over the years I have concentrated on speaking first with literacy in the year levels then I go into writing before I actually get to reading. I think the kids have prior knowledge and understandings that you need to get out, before you connect them with other texts. So that is how I usually plan my program. So writing is therapeutic. I use writing in my pastoral care program. I find that it is very good as a thinking tool so it helps children to plan and express what they believe before they meet up with another member of the learning community. And then just – it’s very basic to write. It’s the production tool for the work force. In any job there is always writing.

**Researcher: You mention that you always do speaking before writing. What do you see are the benefits for the children to talk before writing?**

**Jackie:** The speaking helps them to air their sentences. So if you can teach them good sentence skills and to express themselves. Then you have to prepare the rest of the class to receive the speaking. And then that is beneficial for any writing. Then they get the ideas clear in their heads until they commit themselves to the task of writing.

**Researcher: Qu 3 What strategies do you use to teach writing?**

**Jackie:** Well - I use real life contexts rather than life like. We always have a print filled classroom but I use print that comes from the children. I never do use commercial print. I write everything up myself so the children are exposed to lots of demonstrations of writing. This morning when we did writing I could have typed it up on the computer, but the children wrote it so everything around the room is basically either their writing or my writing. So they get the demonstrations all the time. They are immersed and they are expected to write. I use Cambourne’s process (sic) a lot. The children take a lot of risks. I give them opportunities for risks. They have the responsibility for learning. I am demonstrating writing all the time, and all kinds of writing, all kind of print – not just the school print.

**Researcher: Can you explain what Cambourne’s Process is?**
Jackie: That is immersion. So that is the principal aim in the classroom. We do lots of modelling. Sometimes - I do a lot of reciprocal teaching. I have an expectation that everyone writes. Approximations are the risk taking in the Cambourne’s process. They might be down in the playground and they come back and they are all hyped up about something that happened down in the playground. Then we write about it. This is the therapeutic side of it. And the engagement side is that we are responsible for our own writing. Then there is the response –we might sit in a circle reading out our writing to the class, or sharing with a partner. Another understanding we use is you are not writing for the teacher, you write for each other or for a particular purpose.

Researcher Qu 4: Are they any strategies that you have always used to teach writing?
Jackie: Well I think I have used those practices over the years, but when Cambourne’s and the whole Language idea came out; it gave me a little bit of theory. And I think that is why I am clearer now on what my practices are. I feel that I have always done that, I have always had instructional writing. So I have had learning centres. I had an early idea of learning centres which I called interest corners. And that has become more sophisticated. Including multiple intelligences. But there has always been a writing component. It might be captions or something like that. I haven’t been one for following the syllabus. I never have followed the syllabus religiously. I’ve always based my planning on contextual analysis within the classes I have had. Probably late on in the year I will look at the syllabus and the school program to see what I have covered. But I find them to be very constraining. I use a sound approach. Spelling was always a part of writing so I always use that as a component. I teach to what I call the slowest common denominator. I can also remember making the decision that all children were entitled to these strategies, not just the gifted and talented. So I use the same strategies – but I drop them down to the level of the slowest denominator.

Researcher: So is the goal behind that, that everyone is achieving something?
Jackie: Yes. That’s right. And I think very early in the piece I held that idea about learning. Inclusive practices – I use a lot. I do not know where it came from but when I was thinking about it. I decided that everyone is entitled to the same about of information and knowledge that’s available, but it has to be couched in a language that is suitable. So if you are explaining to parents what the current literature says you talk in a language that is suitable – a common everyday language and you have that responsibility, which is a part of my practice.

Researcher: Qu 5 Are there any strategies that you use now that you didn’t in the past?
Jackie: Yes. I have gone into this year with some negotiating. I was previously teaching year four and when I was posted here and given year three I said to the Principal – now look my practices are quite different to what you have experienced because my goal is to run a three way negotiation - negotiate learning with the students. My students are now in the process of negotiating homework depending on the literacy level of the students. It is like have twenty six different needs. But I think that is pretty important, and my classroom now is always open. The parents can see how their child is learning in the context of the classroom. So I would say that my classroom now is more open than it was five years ago.

Researcher: Qu 6 How do you use the learning environment when teaching writing? Jackie: I use everywhere. The playground is a learning environment and I treat home as a learning environment. My activities are home based not school based. I find some enormous constraints to that – the book list. The number of text books the children have to get. The children will do some great words and then they have to turn around and do a unit in spelling, because their parents have paid all this money for the books. And I find that that is an enormous constraint.

Researcher: Qu 7 Can you provide details of how you have taught writing this year? Jackie: I have looked at – the immersion phase right at start of the year. And there was a set program in the school. We had to do a particular unit of work. I made my goals. My overall integrating device with the children was what does a good writer do? So we looked at all different types of writing, and different jobs. They did their autobiography where they had to talk about their parent’s jobs. And find out what kind of writing was in that. And I did nine multiple intelligences (I’ve been working on two more). So the kids are quite aufait with those. And then the second stage was what kind of writing (this was the negotiating phase) is there? So we brainstormed. Then we broke it up – we had stories – narratives, and then the information type stuff. So that is where we are headed at the moment. I checked on what their prior knowledge of what a story is, and their prior knowledge of the project. And we started to investigate characters from storybooks and the projects were really interesting. A week later we backtracked and went through all the lessons, so there is five pieces of writing in the making of the project. With the help of the learning support teacher and two aides. I am gradually developing literacy rotations. At the moment they are a bit scatty because they are finishing off some stuff and starting other stuff so there are basically four groups and we are working through that. They can switch groups the groups are not set. And that is another thing I have had to teach them about - working in groups.

Researcher: Are you integrating literacy there, or are you separating reading and
writing in those groups?

Jackie: Some days if the need is the writing component then I will pull that out. If it is the speaking component I'll pull that out too. So it would be very hard to say before I go into a lesson – oh I am going to concentrate on the writing – unless I have picked out a bit for assessment or something like that.

Researcher: Qu 8 How do you decide what writing to teach? What influences your planning?

Jackie: Basically it comes out of the children’s talk. My units of work – I call it gentle planning because I have found over the years that teachers become too tight in their planning and the outcomes based assessment controlled that a lot. So I have a basic framework and – if we are going to do this unit then the other grade threes are going to need this sort of lesson on this kind of thing. But then I have sort of like a separate column where I am following through the needs of the kids. So like when we are talking about story writing I might note – they didn’t have much an idea of the structure of a story so I’ll focus on that – and all the other procedural texts went by the board until we had got that done. To give me a topic. We were taking about insects and the children said that Chrysalis is so small – its like magic that is got to be so big and then so that stirred up a topic of the mystery and what could be scientifically proven, And that sent out a message to me that I better have look at scientific writing. So I did diagrams and that sort of thing, and we did magic stories and that led us into the characters.

Researcher: So you go with the topics that are relevant to the children and then find which genres fit the children’s relevant topics?

Jackie: Yes. And I usually finish up with something with outcomes in it. And I pull it within the KLAs. But I find I achieve more that way than putting a lid on it and saying – well I am just going to address these six outcomes and nothing else.

Researcher: Can you just go through the basic steps you use to teach a particular genre?

Jackie: Well I will go back to Cambourne’s. So if I am teaching the story-writing genre where we did the magic stories. I fished out all the books. We did a lot of reading of all that and we did running records and all that sort of thing to get their levels. Then we did the character study. So that was the emersion part of it. Which was the learning centre. And then I demonstrated how to write a story. So they know – beginning, middle and end. We did a joint construction. I had lots of big books that I had made in the past. So I pulled out some of those and it is all in my handwriting. And I have read those to them, and we
discussed the beginning, middle and end in each of those. I have given them processes to plan. So they do a plan that is actually a genre in itself. So I had to introduce the planning genre. They didn't know any of that.

Researcher: So after you have done the joint construction?
Jackie: They are expected to have a go themselves. They know that they won't be completely correct. So that's the resilient idea of Bernard's – that you have to go back and do a second draft. That actually got to be taught. And you can't put a time limit on it. You just have to let it run for the maximum effect. Then I give them plenty of opportunities. Like one activity we did in art was doing dioramas and using some of the characters and the idea was to retell a story with some of these characters in it. But a lot of them decided they would write their own out of the blue – another opportunity to write a story. And that has really stimulated the slowest students. And at the present time- I am teaching them how to edit.

Researcher: Qu 9 Do you integrate reading and writing and how?
Jackie: I have a literacy priority. So reading, writing and speaking. So everything we do has a reading writing and speaking component. I still find that I am teaching to the whole language. I know it is a no no. But I still find that I am teaching to that whole language framework. With lots of purpose.

Researcher: Qu 10 What influences your beliefs and practices?
Jackie: I think it is empowering students. That has been my philosophy for a long time. A teacher can’t – It was very humbling when I realised that a teacher can't really teach at a pace the world will like. You cannot anticipate what the children are going to need, so that has to widen your practice – and thing about globally what you want children to be able to do So you want them to think about their writing. To think about that piece of reading, not just reading a series of books. So nothing is truly sequential. And I think the biggest influence on my practice was when I studied regork and the random thinking. I find that I am very aware now of kids that are very random thinkers. And how do they get that out of their heads and onto paper. These are the kids that have been failing. Another influence are the days when we looked at students that are at risk – these students are at risk of failure – and my belief was – no its not the kids that are failing it's the teachers that are failing, because they are not teaching what they need. So basically I looked at this and work at the common slowest denominator and individual difference. There are different thinkers.

Researcher: Qu 11: How have you assessed writing this year?

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Jackie: Basically the children do have a say in what they are writing and how they are writing it. So I started off negotiating with them – and asked them the question: if I was going to assess this piece of work or mark this piece of work what would I be looking for? And they give me the criteria. So I type it up. Last time they decided that I would be looking for a plan, a good title, (this was for story writing), looking for capital letters and full stops, beginning, middle and end, chose good characters, and they needed some action. Some of them used some really good words, so I said what about spelling? Illustration of the story had to be done and then I added – who were they writing it for. So they decided they wanted their friends to read it in the classroom – so then they had an audience.

Researcher: So that relevance and purpose goes right through to assessment as well?
Jackie: Yes. If you have done the job properly teaching the genre, then all these things should come out. And this is also a bit of a test for yourself – did I do that? Then I give the children the criteria sheet and I attach it, and I conference with them – did they do that? etc. Then I said how I was going to point out the bits that they had to look for. So we decided on a box to go beside the criteria, which was like a signpost for them to know what to watch out for next time. Then I put it on the overview. And the overview puts out all the boxes they have to look for. So checking of spelling didn’t happen in this one. So I showed them this and said we have to have another couple of lessons of checking spelling, before I focus on this. I have probably used that sort of process, but with me making the criteria sheets up – for about 12 years. Parents can also see this. It helps them also to check their writing afterwards and this has come into the homework.

Researcher: Qu 12 Is there anything else about how you teach writing that will help me to tell your story?
Jackie: I have done a lot of work on parents. It is really necessary. And it has to become a regular way of life in teaching because if you are not keeping the parents up to date. I have done the readings this year. I have put in two reading sheets and on the back I am going to have a look at some of stuff to give parents an idea of what spelling is all about. I did one on projects. On all the theories behind a project. It also keeps a line of communication going – a common dialogue – they will come in and say well I don’t really understand this – so it helps quite a lot.

Researcher: You mentioned briefly during your interview that if the children have a problem in the playground, that when they come in you begin by getting them to write it down. Would you like to talk about that?
Jackie: That’s actually come from my studies in pastoral care. I found that when I investigated the teaching style of recount writing. So the children know that if they are upset the first thing I get them to do is get a blank sheet of paper and separate themselves. Then they all write their own recount of what has happened. And they are given as long as they need to do that, because if you don’t settle the problem in their head, there is no use going on with the intended lesson. So I give them the time. We have the space corner in the classroom, where they are allowed to go and do that. I set the rest of the class to work. Then I will work with that group. So the next thing they do is pair and share their story – usually with someone that is one their side. Then they have to go and re write that story. Then they come back and work with the people that are opposing them. Generally by that stage they are saying things like “I didn’t mean that” or no that’s not at all what happened”. So it actually pinpoints their experience about what happened and usually by the end of it they are dissolved in laughter or shaking hands and it’s resolved. I then find once that is done, they have this real sense of belonging. And that is the power of this I think. And then they use these same techniques back out in the playground. And so basically just writing down helps. I have some samples. The kids are split up for peer support in the school. Two grade six children take two grade threes two grade twos and two grade ones, and they follow a special program. So they are all over the school. When the kids come back I get them to write a recount. So it is basically a few sentences about it. I have found that that is very therapeutic for them. They are building up confidence. We have a general meeting as a whole class. The classroom doesn't actually look like a classroom. I prioritise a lot. The maths lesson has to go in there– so we do that in context. But I find the basic constraints are the text book program.
Interview was on 09.06.05

Researcher: Can you go through your artefacts and tell me what you have included and why, in particular how your artefacts relate to your teaching of writing?
Jackie: Well I probably need to start with my own overview for the year, which is what my priorities are. 1. is my pastoral care. 2. Is for lifelong learning. I look at what the school values: - a literacy priority, a technology priority and connected learning –so the writing is right through that, and then outcomes come in. I was on the consultative committee for the English – and making connections from the old syllabus to the new syllabus. So I have already dealt with a lot of the syllabus outcomes there.

I have included two timetables, as my timetable is flexible so changes from time to time. I tried to work my literacy groups in with two-hour blocks at the start of the school day, but everything sort of moved in on that. Everyone made demands on that two-hour time, so I do 4 1 and a half-hour blocks and I integrate literacy into other subject areas too. So I have addressed the time component that way. I do very random planning to start with. Then the children have there input into what is in any given unit we do.

I have included my planning from my diary. It is a little haphazard. And I find that constraints of whole school programs incringe onto it, and I have to make changes.

I have chosen this one –as this is something that has had a really big effect on my teaching of writing and reading. It is 2001. It was this way of literacy learners that gave me a major focus. I teach to the lowest common denominator, because these are three kids that have been deemed at risk. As they move out of the lower school – here early years ends at year two. I feel it should be extended another year to cover the next wave of literacy learners. As a teacher we are failing them if we don’t – as they have had all the formal intervention and are still not responding. So that is why I need to teach in grade three and four something different to help them either cope with their inabilities or to give them another direction to re enter literacy learning again.

Another powerful thing – was productive pedagogies – I find that is what I was really on about- was teaching those kinds of things. The top level structures, the meta cognitive
approaches, the learning communities – and writing is one of your very basic things with that – if you are not forming a learning community your speaking doesn’t improve and therefore you have nothing worthwhile to write about.

Researcher: For the tape – Successful Programs and Strategies for children with learning difficulties, is what Jackie has been talking about.

I have included the things that I spoke to the Principal about. I have a little fellow with a processing disorder - who can’t sit properly and can’t write, has no phonological awareness, which affects his reading and writing. So I have been gathering information on different disorders – what it might be. And I have picked up a couple of the suggestions from those things for these kids, and have been using them with the whole class – slowing things down, doing the mental imaging – all those suggestions are what I use and I try to incorporate them into all my literacy lessons.

I send home notes to the parents with all our literacy ideas – to inform parents of what I am doing – so they can do their bit to assist at home. I have included samples of these.

I use the rich task idea. That is where the show day has come from. I have been using this for many years. If the children have a handle on the decision making it becomes a much more powerful unit. And that has what has happened here. They made a decision to go into the castle making and were quite prepared to do the reading and writing and the speaking and the maths and technology associated with it. I thing that I probably don’t concentrating on the reading as much as – I do reading from writing more and this began with the whole language approach – many years ago that you have got to get the context first. And you run the two together.

I notice here in the school program there is a lot of special programs. I have included what I have used in those.

Researcher: Can you tell me what you did sequential in each of the two lessons I observed?

Jackie: The first lesson was partly a negotiated activity with the children, and it was not what I had planned. That is why there is no plan. I was going to do environment stuff. And the castles task took over because the children were producing more with that. There was a lot of talk, a lot of discussion and decision making, and um they were really very to work in groups. Our group work has been a bit pretend up to then. And because it was their own
chosen task and they had decided what they would do, I was hard pressed to keep up with
them to document it all. In every task there had to be some literacy. The children knew
reading writing and speaking had to be a part of it. They handled the speaking part O.K, but
getting around to the task – a lot of the writing up to this point is often slap dash, and they
had down very little on editing skills so this was the start of the lesson, and in every piece
of work they produced we went through the techniques to edit. So the reading aloud to
someone else – reading our writing out loud became a very big thing – so it was before that
we had a reading circle, working in partners and conferencing each other – that sort of
thing. Then the lesson you observed was a spare of the moment one – because prior to that
week they were enjoying writing on blackboards and I said to them if they wanted to write
on the boards they had to try and correct their spelling, which they agreed to. So that day I
thought I would let them keep doing this, and they ran with it. Everything we do is that
reciprocal teaching. Some of the children have never worked so well together for a piece of
writing as they did for this – they were so motivated by the castles. We put on the castles
the signs and this let to making a diagram.

What I did in between this lesson you observed and the next one was I photocopied their
first attempt at the diagram. And then they had to make the changes on the photocopy –
which meant that they couldn’t rub anything out – which was really good because
sometimes you forget what their first attempt is. So this actually also became my
assessment piece. The ones I have selected – some made a lot of changes – we talked
about what doesn’t belong in a diagram – so the flower pots went and the pictures on the
wall went and all that sort of thing. We talked about who uses a diagram? We had a little
boy whose Dad is an architect – so he said you don’t put furniture in – so that guided them.

And then the last lesson that you saw was when they had to protect that piece and make
the changes. To get the assessment criteria – I worked with the children- with another
learning community idea. They have to have something on that assessment sheet that they
know they were successful in, so we pulled out the things that we were going to look for.
The assessment sheet was designed as a class the day before – we talked about the criteria
and they decided what would on it. The only one I helped them with was explaining parts
of the diagram.

**Researcher: What were the criteria?**

Jackie: Shared writing with a partner or group
Selected suitable words for the parts of the castle (The children said put words on the
castle)
Did the writing make sense?
Checking words for the correct spelling (some children were harder on themselves than others)
Explain the parts of a diagram (I spoke to them about knowing what a part is used for)
Checking for Capital letters (We looked at a book of captions and the children noticed in the captions they all started with a capital letter – so they decided this had to be important)
We discussed how is a diagram different to a story? With the help of the little boys Dad who was an architect – they came up with the rest of the criteria (the criteria is included).
In the second lesson you observed some children were finishing of their good copies using this criteria checklist. The other children went on to setting up their tasks for show day. To make signs to show parents the things they had done. The castle display took center stage for quite a while, but they then moved on to their group approach to looking after the environment – (which was the show day theme for the school). Local Show followed this special display to parents.
Appendix G
Example of Field Notes from Participant Observation: Case 5 Ant

**Grade 2**  
**C5-L2**  
**Participant Observation 2**  
**C5-L2-1.1-P1**

**Date:** 12.05.05  
**Teacher:** Ant

**Number of Children:** 24  
**Topic:** Ants

*Why this topic?* Related to Minibeasts unit of work and requirement of the Year Two Diagnostic Net.

**Genre:** Report Writing

*Why this Genre?* Relevant to unit of work and one of the genres that needs to be covered in year 2 in Ants school.

**Lesson Time:** 9am – 10am

### Classroom Organisation  
**C5-L2-1.2-P2**

- Whole Group: reading and discussion on the carpet.
- Whole Group: labelling ant colony with ant words and discussion of ant jobs.
- Group of Five: Children break into groups to order sentences.
- Whole Group: A different part of the classroom floor is used for direct teaching about what information to include in their reports and how to order the parts of the report.
- Individual: Children work at their desks to individually construct their reports on ants.

### Student Direction  
**C5-L2-1.1-P3**

- Participate in discussion about ants.
- Label colony with flashcards (the children enjoyed doing this).
- Worked cooperatively in groups to order factual sentences about ants.
- Children asked the teacher questions during reading, discussion and small group work.
- Children worked well individually to construct their texts.

### Talk before Writing  
**C5-L2-1.3-P4**

- Brainstormed on the whiteboard what the children know about ants.
- Discussion about ants.
- Talk while labelling colony- vocab about ants/ discussion of ant jobs.
- Talk in groups while ordering factual sentences about ants to make a report about ants.
- Reading of sentences aloud to each other when report is ordered.
- Discussion about what information to include in ant reports and what order to write in.
- During writing teacher addresses the whole class with prompts about what to talk about in their reports (*T*: Don’t forget to tell me what jobs the ants do*).

### Steps Taken before children write  
**C5-L2-1.3-P5**

This section fits white & green
• Brainstormed ‘what we know’ about ants.
• Teacher read a factual text about ants to the children.
• A small amount of discussion about ants during reading.
• Teacher has a made poster with pictures only of an ant colony.
• Teacher picks children to label the poster with flash card words.
• There is discussion about ant jobs while this labelling takes place.
• Flashcard words include: eggs, queen ant, larvae, tunnels, worker ants, soldier ants, nurse ants.
• Then in small groups children order factual sentences about ants to construct report about ants. Children are explicitly told this is a report and are then given the opportunity to read the report.
• As a whole class again the teacher tells the children “we are going to write a factual report about ants” using the order –what it is, what it looks like, what it eats and ant jobs.

Writing taught as an integral part of literacy? C5-L2-1.3-P6
• There was lots of talk, discussion, reading and activities prior to and surrounding writing (eg: see steps taken before children write).
• The teacher added to the initial brainstorm after children were in the process of their individual writing, to add to the brainstorm with new information about ants with a different colour on the white board.

How motivated are the children? What motivates them? C5-L2-1.1-P7
• Children are interested in the topic.
• Children enjoyed having control labelling the colony.
• Children were very motivated in groups to discuss the text.
• Children wrote quietly and with focus because they did so many great tasks prior to writing that they were very eager to write by the time they got to put pencil to paper.

Teaching Strategies Used & Explicit Instruction C5-L2-1.4-P8
• Questioning – about ant jobs and facts about ants.
• Explicit teaching about ants.
• Reading – to convey information about the topic.
• Labelling a diagram – to scaffold children.
• Small group work where children had to problem solve and use prior knowledge to correctly order ant facts. Children needed to read, discuss and use their prior knowledge about ants to complete the task.
• Prompted to use punctuation and write neatly.
• Children explicitly taught the features of the report genre and what to include in the report and how to sequence the report and are prompted throughout to scaffold them through writing the parts of the report.
• Children received individual scaffolding during the independent, individual writing part of the lesson, including assistance with ideas for the text, punctuation, spelling and handwriting.
Use of the Learning Environment during the Lesson

- Carpet was used for reading and discussion.
- Factual text about ants was used.
- Pin wall was used to label poster – ant colony.
- Whiteboard was used to label what we know about ants.
- Different floor space was used to keep children’s interest.
- Desks were used for writing.
- Appropriate materials were available for the children to use including dictionaries to assist them in their writing.

Purpose for Writing? Is this Understood by the Children?

- The purpose was to scaffold children towards writing a factual report about ants.
- It was made very clear to the children what the purpose of the lesson was and they were very clear about what and why they were writing.

The Physical Setting

- The children are observed to be comfortable and happy in their classroom environment and relate well to the teacher.
- Lots of pictures, posters, colour and vocabulary can be seen around the classroom.
- Desks for this lesson were places individually for independent writing.
- Two large floor spaces where children can sit together were observed and both used for direct teaching during this lesson.
- A whiteboard, large posters, a factual text, flashcards and sentences on cards were used to complete activities around writing.

The Participants

- The participants include 24 grade 2 children and one experienced classroom teacher.
- The children were given control to lead their ordering of the text, label the colony and make decisions with the teacher facilitating. The children liked making decisions and were in control of their own learning at times in the episode.

Activities and Interaction

- Children asked questions and conversed freely.
- The teacher interacted with children on a ‘point of need’ basis while the children were writing.
- The teacher interacted with each group during group work, and guided them to order the text appropriately by prompting them with reminders about topics covered and the order to sequence a text.
- The teacher addressed the whole group to scaffold the children through the writing task.

Conversation
The conversation was relaxed and free. It was not controlled by the teacher or the children. It was guided by the teacher but students could also direct it with relevant discussion about ants.

During group work children were reminded not to be bossy, or take over but to work together. The children did this well- their conversation remained on task and cooperative.

Researcher Behaviour  C5-L2-P17

- My role as researcher was to observe and take notes within the classroom setting. This was mostly from a distance but was a little closer at times - walking around to observe happenings during group work and to observe individual writing a little closer.
- I was not part of the lesson in anyway just an observer.
- The children were not phased by my presence as this was not the first time I had observed in their classroom.

Other  C5-L2-1.14-P9

- Examples of sentences the children ordered:
  1. Ants are social insects.
  2. Ants have six legs.
  3. Nurse ants care for the eggs and feed the young.
  4. The queen ant is the largest ant and she lays eggs.
- Information the teacher got from the children during brainstorming: insect, six legs, queen ant lays eggs, antennae, honey ants are eatable, some ants bite/sting, social insect, colonies/nests, live underground, live together, tree trunks, queen has wings, ants eat crumbs, three body parts include head, thorax and abdomen.
Appendix H
Physical Artefacts: Guidelines for Collection

Notes

1. Please provide photocopies of physical artefacts that do not have to be returned.
2. If you do not have time to copy any artefacts, place a note on originals and the researcher will photocopy any originals and return the originals.
3. If you do not include any artefacts, place a note in the section saying why the artefact is not relevant to your teaching of writing.
4. Delete children’s names from any documentation.
5. Please place your physical artefacts in your provided folder in the following sections….

A  Class Profile Form

This form is in your document wallet. Please complete the form and place it in section A of your folder.

B  Teacher Documentation

Please include the following in section B of your folder:
7 Copy of Class Subject Timetable for Term One (Highlight time spend on literacy teaching)
8 Copy of Class subject Timetable for Term Two (Highlight time spend on literacy teaching).
9 Copy of any literacy or writing planning sheets for a term or a week (if weekly give 2-3 examples), (If this is integrated with other subject areas highlight the writing/literacy).
10 Copy of work program showing writing/literacy planning (pick examples from this year that show 3 or more examples of writing lessons).
11 Copies of any documents you use to plan or teach writing.
12 Any examples of written planning of the teaching of writing from this school year.
13 Any examples of writing activities/tasks you have given students as part of teaching writing.
14 Any written assessment you have of the teaching of writing (Either instruments eg: a test, or records of student progress eg: Writing Developmental Continuum).
15 Compile a list of any books or resources you have used to aid you in teaching writing this year.
16 Include any other documentation you think is relevant to your teaching of writing this year.

C  School Documentation

17 Copies of any School policies and or programs relating to the teaching of Writing (this can include the teaching of literacy in general). (Include a note saying how you use this to plan or how it influences your teaching – if you don’t use it, say that).
18 Include any other documentation that influences your planning, teaching, assessing or
evaluating of writing this year.

D  BCE Documentation

19 Include any BCE documentation that influences your planning, teaching, assessing and evaluating of writing.

E  Govt/ State Wide Documentation

20 Any Govt or State wide documentation that influences your planning, teaching, assessing or evaluating of writing (eg: Year 2 Net).

F  Student Work Samples

Collect Samples of student’s work from the Participant Observation lessons (these must have the students names removed, and be only from students whose parent returned the permission form).

G  Lesson Plans from the Observed Writing Lessons

Include a photocopy of the planning for the writing taught when you were observed for this study.

H  Other

Please include any physical artefacts that will help me to tell your story about how you teach writing in the early years.
Appendix I

Writing in the Early Years Research Project: Class Profile Form

Case Number: 

Case Study Name: 

Grade Level: 

Total Number of Children: 

If Composite write number in each grade level: 

Time Spent teaching Writing: per week: 
  per day: 

Time spent teaching Literacy: per week: 
  per day: 

Time spent teaching writing within other subject areas: 

Any Specialists who help with Literacy in the school? 

Any Specialist assistance in your class? Give details

Any specific assistance with the teaching of writing?

Any parent help with Literacy in your class, specific to the teaching of writing?
How do you plan writing and literacy teaching?

How much time do you spend planning for teaching writing? __________________

Have you had any in servicing or assistance with teaching writing/ literacy this year?

Number of ESL students in your class ____________

Brief Profile of ESL students Literacy Needs

Number of students with reading difficulties in your class? ______________

Number of Students with writing difficulties in your class? ______________

Any Special Needs in your class relating to literacy learning and more specifically to writing? If yes, how do you cater for this?

Please attach any additional information or notes to expand your class profile if necessary.
Appendix J

Categories for Interviews, Observed Lessons and Physical Artefacts

Categories for Interviews
1.1 Purposeful & meaningful writing experiences in relevant contexts
1.2 The learning environment and teaching writing in the early years.
1.3 Writing as an integral part of literacy in the early years.
1.4 Explicit teaching of literacy in the early years.
1.5 Planning for teaching writing in the early years.
1.6 Assessing writing in the early years.

2.0 Influences on beliefs and practices.

Categories for Observed Lessons

1.1 Purposeful and meaningful writing experiences in relevant contexts
   - Purpose for writing/ is this understood by the children?
   - Why this topic and genre?
   - How motivated are the children/ what motivates them?

1.2 Learning Environments
   - Classroom organisation
   - Use of the learning environment
   - Resources and use of in the lesson context
   - Part two notes all seem to fit here

1.3 Writing as an integral part of literacy
   - Talk before writing
   - Talk during writing
   - Steps taken before children write
   - Writing taught as an integral part of literacy

1.4 Explicit and Systematic teaching of Literacy
   - Explicit instruction
   - Steps taken before children write
   - Teaching strategies used

Categories for Physical Artefacts
1.5 Planning for Teaching Writing
1.6 Assessing Writing
2.0 Influences on Beliefs and Practices
3.0 Student Work Samples
## Appendix K
Coding for Line Numbering: Interviews, Observed Lessons, Physical Artefacts

### Coding for Line Numbering: Interviews
- **Case Number**
- **Interview Number**
- **Line Number**

Case 1, Interview 1, Line 1 = C1I1L1

### Coding for Line Numbering: Lessons
- **Case Number**
- **Lesson Number**
- **Line Number**

Case 1, Lesson 1, Line 1 = C1L1L1

Text is numbered per line only, not per page.

### Coding for Line Numbering: Physical Artefacts
- **CPF**: Class Profile Form
- **PW1.5**: Planning for Teaching Writing
- **AW1.6**: Assessing Writing
- **IBP2.0**: Influences on Beliefs and Practices
- **SWS3.0**: Student Work Samples
Appendix L

Case One, Cara: Summary of Contents in Each Category:
Interviews, Observed Lessons, Physical Artefacts

Purposeful and meaningful writing experiences in relevant contexts

Interviews
Writing is integrated into relevant units of work with other subject areas. Units of work are relevant and meaningful for the children

Observed Lesson One
- The purpose is to write an interesting story using describing words
- The purpose is clearly understood by the children and they are scaffolded step by step to achieve this purpose.
- The children are equally involved with the teacher in the lesson.
- Children choose ideas for their story writing.
- Children choose options in the game – lots of choice and control which helps motivate them
- Teacher acts as a facilitator and guide
- Interactive activities motivate children as they are colourful and interesting

C1L11.1P2,3,12.

Observed Lesson Two
- The purpose is to plan their own story using a story plan including the same components used in the modelled/ guided writing from lesson one. The children are very clear about this purpose. C1L21.1P6.
- The children are active participants in the discussion. Their ideas are listed by the teacher and recorded on the story plan.
- Children choose what to include in their plans and subsequent writing. Free topic choice.
- The children enjoy choosing their own story topics and drawing their plans. The plans give the children something to work with to start writing. C1L21.1P2
- Some children are further motivated by the plan to later record their stories on the computer (these are later made into a CD for fathers day presents. C1L21.1P10.

The Learning Environment

Interviews
- Magic 100 word charts on desks
- Modelled writing on the floor
• Words up around the room
• Lots of whiteboard work
• Group work in different parts of the room – some children at the white board, some at desks, some on the carpet

Observed Lesson One and Two
• 26 yr 2 children and 1 experienced classroom teacher.
• Large colourful classroom, well organised space
• Lots of print displayed for childrens use including sounds and alphabet.
• Lots of teaching and learning taking place. C1L21.2P13.
• Children at desks to work as a whole class through interactive activities and for independent drawing.
• Children are observed to be comfortable and happy
• They are comfortable to take risks and share ideas

Lesson One
• Whiteboard and pens used by teacher for modelled/guided writing and listing story ideas.
• Children use their daily pads and coloured pencils to draw a picture to describe the story created.
• Computer and interactive activities and sentence making, matching and going through story ideas are used. Children are very familiar with the technology.
• Lots of hands on games and resources in this room/ visually interesting teacher aids to capture the interest of the children.
C1L11.2P1,9,11,13,14.

Lesson Two
• Children are seated at their desks throughout this lesson. They work as a whole class for the intro and then independently after that. C1L21.2P1.
• Teacher uses whiteboard and overhead to show formulated story map from lesson one and list children’s ideas and parts of the story sequentially. C1L21.2P3.
• The teacher also lists spelling words that the children ask for. C1L21.2P3.
• Children use writing books and pencils to draw plans and write stories. C1L21.2P3.

Writing as an integral part of literacy

Interviews
• Lots of oral work as part of the writing program
• Cara says she tends to keep reading and writing separately – but the two examples discussed in detail of writing taught this year are both very much writing as an integral part of literacy.

**Observed Lesson One**

• Discussion prior to writing – describing words, what makes a good story, ideas for the story discussed, sentence forming
• Reading, speaking, listening are crucial to this lesson and surround writing
• During writing children offer ideas. Teacher guides writing carefully with a combined use of modelling and guided writing
• Teacher reads writing aloud when it is finished
• Conversation takes place throughout the lesson. It is lead and guided by the teacher and she does point of need teaching throughout. Children are involved in all the decision making.
• Story is edited as a whole class.

C1L11.3P6,8,16.

**Observed Lesson Two**

• Discussion about story plans.
• Complete plan orally whole class.
• Children draw a plan for their own stories in stages during this talk.
• Children talk among themselves sharing ideas during writing time.
• Teacher assists individual chn with ideas and list spelling words on the book at the children’s request. C1L21.3P7.
• Conversation takes place throughout the whole lesson about story maps and writing and all components of the lesson. C1L21.3P16.

**Explicit and Systematic teaching of writing**

**Interviews**

• Lots of modelled writing
• Some joint construction
• Small amounts of independent construction of ‘stories’
• Most children are still at the word recognition or even letter recognition stage – so they are working on what’s the letter? what’s the word? writing a sentence in the most part.
• Some text types – journal writing, narrative, some descriptive writing
• Spelling is a vital part of the writing program due to low literacy levels
• ELF phonics program
• Story maps are used prior to write – usually drawings
• Pictures are often drawn before writing as a strategy to motivate children to write from the picture this technique is used very frequently in this class

**Observed Lesson One**
• Teaching strategies used include – bright interactive activities, questioning, guiding, prompting, scaffolding, lots of short tasks (as these children have limited concentration).
• Explicitly teaches – what makes a good story, describing words and sentence building, explicitly organises children’s ideas
• Modelled writing on the whiteboard or guided writing as a whole class.
• Teacher carefully sequences activities to capture children’s imaginations and keep them on task.
• The steps taken before children write include – listening and watching an interactive story.
• Talking about what makes a story interesting
• Talking about describing words
• Made sentences using storyroom as a whole class.
• Teacher has prepared an interactive show with parts to create ideas for a story. C1L11.4P4,17,10,15.

**Observed Lesson Two**
• Teaching strategies used included prompting to keep children on task and help them to organise their ideas, questioning to recap lesson one and narrative genre, and scaffolding parts of the story, sequences of a story and ideas. C1L21.4P11.
• This class has low literacy levels and to lots of drawing prior to writing which is a strategy to ensure all students experience some success through carefully scaffolded steps. C1L21.4P12.
• Steps taken before children write include: teacher putting up overhead with a story plan and filling in the story done in the previously lesson as a recap.
• Then children are told they are going to write their own story. A plan is done as a whole class. With a narrative structure. The children draw their own story plans to write their stories from. C1L21.3P9.
• Teacher goes through the sequence of a story carefully to help children organise their ideas. C1L21.4P15.
Planning for teaching writing

Interview
- Scope and sequence
- Plans with other year 2 teacher
- Follows school English guidelines
- Plans with Yr 2 net indicators
- Covers English Syllabus outcomes
- Writing is often integrated into relevant units of work

Artefacts
- Timetable shows evidence of 10 hours of literacy teaching per week which includes a maximum of 3 hours of writing (C1A2, A3PW1.5).
- The yr 2 net is used to plan writing and the school English scope and sequence doc and syllabus (C1A1CPF).
- Some writing is taught as part of integrated units. (C1A8.A9PW1.5).
- Lesson plans for writing show lots of guided activities, lots of explicit teaching and carefully scaffolded steps. (C1A10-22PW1.5).
- Lots of use of computer and interactive whiteboard for interactive activities to aid the teaching of writing in this class. Teacher says this motivates the children. (C1A23PW1.5).
- School spelling guidelines are used to plan spelling from. (C1A26PW1.5).
- This teacher uses Classworks (literacy text) for planning the teaching of writing (1A27PW1.5).

Assessing writing in the early years

Interviews
- Criteria sheets with continuum outcomes and English outcomes
- Yr two net is the main writing assessment

Artefacts
- Children are assessed on syllabus writing/literacy outcomes and criteria formulated by the class teacher (C1A224PW1.6).
- Writing indicators in the developmental continuum are also used to plot student writing development. (C1A225PW1.6).

Influences on beliefs and practices
• The biggest influence on Cara’s practice is the children and their needs and abilities in any given year – this year low literacy levels is an influence
• Catering for individual learning styles is important to Cara. She also likes Blooms Taxonomy – these influence her practice.
Appendix M
Thematic Tables: Case Two, Tanya

**Case Two Tanya: Contexts for Writing**

**Case Two Tanya: The Learning Environment**

**Interviews**
- Words around the room, including movable words.
- Lots of environmental print.
- Books to access.
- 100 magic words charts on student’s desks.
- Access to dictionaries.

**Observed Lesson One**
- 28 year 3 children, 1 enthusiastic classroom teacher.
- Children are comfortable to participate and are actively involved in directing the lesson in terms of their ideas.
- One large floor space.
- Desks set up in front of the white board.
- Colourful room.
- Children’s work displayed.
- Lots of resources.
- Children are at their desks in this lesson C2L11.2P14.
- Worked as a whole class initially and then independently to write. C2L11.2P1.
- White board used for brainstorming and direct teaching.

**Observed Lesson Two**
- The class are seated at their desks for the lesson. They work as a whole class and then individually for writing. The children freely talk and discuss ideas with each other and the teacher moves around helping individuals. C2L21.2P2.
- There is a space display in the classroom C2L21.2P11.
- The white board is used to brainstorm and for spelling words.
- The children also use laminated word lists at their desks to assist them with words.
- Children are reminded to use dictionaries to check words and to self-correct. C2L21.2P14.
**Case Two Tanya: Writing as an Integral Part of Literacy**

**Interviews**
- Tanya does lots of talk/oral language all the time prior and during writing.
- Some integration of reading and writing occurs eg: How to eat fried worms unit and multicultural unit, but lots of reading and writing is also taught separately.
- Reading/books are used to look at exemplar models of writing.

**Observed Lesson One**
- This writing relates directly to a reading text being studied in this class. The children have been reading a chapter, doing some oral language to discuss and then writing. C2L11.3P8.
- Prior to writing the class has a discussion about Billy and brainstorms words to describe Billy.
- Eating worms is also discussed and describing words for that are listed.
- Children are reminded to describe how they feel as well as what they are doing. C2L11.3P6.
- The teacher prompts the children to get them thinking and keep them on task.
- The children's ideas to contribute towards writing are valued and listed. They are made to feel their ideas are worthwhile. C2L11.3P17.

**Observed Lesson Two**
- Before writing there is a discussion about the purpose for writing and who landed on the moon.
- The class brainstormed moon facts.
- Interesting starts for the postcards was discussed.
- Children are told they can send them to someone real as requested.
- Children discuss ideas together as they write.
- Teacher talks to the children as they write helping them with spelling strategies and helping them to organise their ideas and punctuation.
- Children are reminded to tell the person they are writing to facts about the moon. C2L21.3P7.
- The conversation is led by the teacher but directed by the children with their own ideas. C2L21.3P18.
**Case Two Tanya: Explicit and Systematic Teaching of Writing**

**Interviews**
- Scaffolding steps to follow
- Modeling
- Joint construction
- Independent construction
- Exemplar models
- Spelling and word study
- Picture plans
- Conferencing
- Drafts

**Observed Lesson One**
- The teacher teaches explicitly about describing words—what they are and how to use them in writing.
- The correct structure of a paragraph is also explicitly taught.
- Explicit teaching on describing feelings as well as action. C2L11.4P3.
- Teaching strategies used include questioning, discussion, brainstorming, reading allowed samples of children’s writing as good exemplars, reminders to use punctuation, prompting children to stay on task and use guidelines and individual scaffolding—point of need as children write. C2L11.4P10.
- The lesson is carefully sequenced to lead the children towards writing. C2L11.4P16.
- 25 minutes of direct teaching and discussion before writing. C2L11.3P7.

**Observed Lesson Two**
- The teacher explicitly teaches the children how to start a letter, how to set out a letter and giving the reader some information. (The children have done letter writing before). C2L21.4P10.
- The intro to the lesson includes a clear purpose and brainstorming moon facts. This class often brainstorms before writing. C2L21.4P17.
- Teaching strategies include: questioning, brainstorming—moon facts, micro scaffolding—of individuals spelling, punctuation, letter structure and organisation of ideas, positive reinforcement to keep children on task, reminders to look at posters on space displayed in the classroom, and assisting children to organise their thoughts with their writing. C2L21.4P5.
Appendix N
Letter from Brisbane Catholic Education: Permission to Conduct Research

243 Gladstone Road, Dutton Park,
GPO Box 1201 Brisbane 4001 Australia
Phone: (07) 3840 0400 – Fax: (07) 3844 5101
http://www.bne.catholic.edu.au

A11.071 L.E.
21 January 2005

Ms Marlo Graham
13 Danyo Crescent
Ferny Hills Qld 4055

Dear Ms Graham

Thank you for your letter regarding permission to approach Brisbane Catholic Education schools for your research on ‘Writing in the Early Years: A Study of Teacher Beliefs and Classroom Practices’. Permission is granted to approach primary schools and principals within the Archdiocese of Brisbane.

I would ask you to contact the principals of the respective primary schools seeking their involvement in the project.

Please note that participation in your study is at the discretion of each of the principals.

If you have any further queries, please contact me on (07) 3840 0427.

Yours sincerely

Lisa Eastment
Research Coordinator
Catholic Education
Archdiocese of Brisbane
Dear David,

I am currently enrolled in the Doctor of Education degree, Australian Catholic University (McAuley Campus at Banyo). I am conducting a research project, Writing in the Early Years: A Study of Teacher Beliefs and Classroom Practices. Specific details of the research project design and methodology are clearly outlined in the Information Letter to Participants and Consent Forms, attached for your perusal. A research application has been electronically lodged with the Human Research Ethics Committee (Australian Catholic University).

I am requesting permission to send a survey instrument to all Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Brisbane, directly to Principals, for Teachers teaching an Early Years Class in the 2005 school year to complete. In addition I am requesting permission to also send with the survey pack a request for teachers of early years classes in 2005 to volunteer to participate further in individual Case Studies related to my research project. In addition I am requesting to conduct my case study research with eight teacher volunteers in Catholic Primary Schools in the Archdiocese of Brisbane, within the schools of the eight teacher volunteers.

For your information, I have attached a copy of the letters (indicating the details of the research project) for the Principals and teacher Participants. I will forward these letters after written acknowledgment of your approval, for the conduct of educational research at Catholic Primary Schools in the Archdiocese of Brisbane, has been received by the Principal Supervisor – Dr Janelle Young.

Yours sincerely,

Ms Marlo Anne Graham

Mr David Hutton
Executive Director for Catholic Education
Archdiocese of Brisbane
P.O Box 1201
BRISBANE QLD 4001
## Approaches to Writing Pedagogy: A Conceptual Lens

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Pragmatic Approach:</strong></td>
<td>Pragmatic teachers approach to writing pedagogy in the early years is primarily influenced by extrinsic influences. These teachers are guided by practical considerations such as school policy and programs, syllabus documentation and assessment.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>EXTRINSIC INFLUENCES</strong></td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>An Eclectic Approach:</strong></td>
<td>Eclectic teachers approach to writing pedagogy in the early years is influenced by a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic influences. Extrinsic influences include school policy and programs, syllabus documents, and mandated documentation and assessment. Intrinsic influences include personal beliefs and knowledge about writing pedagogy and teaching and learning more generally.</td>
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<td><strong>COMBINED: EXTRINSIC &amp; INTRINSIC INFLUENCES</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>A Philosophical Approach:</strong></td>
<td>Philosophical teachers approach to writing pedagogy in the early years is primarily influenced by intrinsic influences. These teachers are guided by personal beliefs and knowledge about writing pedagogy and teaching and learning more generally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>INTRINSIC INFLUENCES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Visionary Approach:</strong></td>
<td>Visionary teachers approach to writing pedagogy is primarily influenced by a vision constructed from personal knowledge about how writing should be taught in the early years. Their personal beliefs and knowledge about writing and teaching and learning more generally contribute to their vision. Consequently, they prioritise personal outcomes that align with their vision before school requirements. Also, they resist extrinsic influences contrary to their vision.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>INTRINSIC INFLUENCES &amp; RESISTANT TO EXTRINSIC INFLUENCES</strong></td>
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Appendix P

Picture Plan and Student Writing Sample Written Using the Plan

A long time ago

? No

End

...
A long time ago there lived a beautiful princess named Rosemary. One day she asked the Queen if she could have a little walk in the forest. The Queen said "yes" so Rosemary went for a walk. While she was walking, an evil crocodile named Reves captured her and took her far far away.

Meanwhile back at the palace they were wondering where the princess was. They had waited and waited and waited but she had not come back. That night in another kingdom a prince bunny overheard the King and the Queen talking about
how the princess got captured. So the next day
the prince set off to find her. While he was walk
he came to the crocodile swamp. Just then
a evil crocodile jumped out "drew his sword and
said "if you guard" then as quick as a flash
the prince drew his sword then they stared
to fight.
Appendix Q
Storyroom: Digital Text Construction

WHAT MAKES A GOOD STORY?

What do we need in a story?

• Characters
• When did it happen?
• Where did it happen?
• What happened?
• What did it feel like?
• What happened in the end of the story?
CHARACTERS: cat, dog

NAME?

PERSONALITY?

NAME?

PERSONALITY?

WHEN DID IT HAPPEN?

A story must have a time when it happened –
You must be able to recount what has happened already.

Yesterday...

A few hours ago..

A long time ago..

Last year..

The other day..
WHERE DID IT HAPPEN?

- A story must have at least one place where it is set.

WHAT HAPPENED?

Did the cat try to help the cat escape from jail?

Did the dog and cat have a fight?

Did the dog and cat get lost in a forest?

What else could happen?
HOW DID THEY FEEL?

- scared
- angry
- In love
- happy
- afraid
- excited

WHAT HAPPENED AT THE END OF THE STORY?

Did they live happily ever after?

Did they get captured?

Did they die?

Did they get married?
## Developmental Continua: Developmental Assessment

### C5A12AW1.6

**Appendix R**

### Indicators For Writing Developmental Continuum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student's Name</th>
<th>L. D.</th>
<th>School</th>
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#### Phases

**Phase A: Role Play Writing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Phase</th>
<th>Indicators, Descriptions and Outcomes of Student Learning</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
<td>Students are developing a sense of self as writers and readers. They are learning to...</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speaking and Listening</strong></td>
<td>Students are learning to...</td>
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**Phase B: Experimental Writing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Phase</th>
<th>Indicators, Descriptions and Outcomes of Student Learning</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
<td>Students are developing a sense of self as writers and readers. They are learning to...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speaking and Listening</strong></td>
<td>Students are learning to...</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Phase C: Early Writing**

<table>
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<tr>
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<td>Students are learning to...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Developmental Continuum

- **Emergent**
- **Emerging**
- **Developing**
- **Proficient**
- **Advanced**

**Notes:**

- Additional strategies and observations are documented in the student's portfolio.
- Progress is monitored through regular assessments and conferences.
- The development of each student is unique and should be supported through differentiated instruction.

---

**Appendix R**

**Appendix R**

**Appendix R**

**Appendix R**
# Early Writing Indicators

**The Writer:**

| Content, Organisation and Contextual Understandings | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 |
| uses a small range of familiar text forms         | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| chooses topics that are personally significant   | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| uses basic sentence structures and varies sentence beginnings | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| can explain in context, some of the purposes of using writing, e.g. shopping list or telephone messages as a memory aid | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| uses a partial organisational framework, e.g. simple orientation and story development | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| often writes a simple recount of personal events or observations and comments | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| uses time order to sequence and organise writing | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| is beginning to use some narrative structure | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| is beginning to use some informational text structures, e.g. recipes, factual description | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| writes simple factual accounts with little elaboration | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| includes irrelevant detail in 'dawn-to-dusk' recounts | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| attempts to orient, or create a context for the reader, but may assume a shared context | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| rewrites known stories in sequence | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| includes detail in written recall | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| includes several items of information about a topic | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| is beginning to use 'book' language, e.g. 'By the fire sat a cat' | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| joins simple sentences often overusing the same connectors, e.g. 'and', 'then') | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| uses knowledge of rhyme, rhythm and repetition in writing | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| repeats familiar patterns, e.g. 'in the jungle I saw...' | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
Appendix S
Information Letter to Principals

Individual names and addresses of Principals will be placed here.

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am currently enrolled in the Doctor of Education degree, Australian Catholic University (McAuley Campus at Banyo). I am conducting a research project, Writing in the Early Years: A Study of Teacher Beliefs and Classroom Practices.

Specific details of the research project design and methodology are clearly outlined in the Information Letter to Participants and Consent Forms, attached for your perusal.

Ethical clearance with the Human Research Ethics Committee (Australian Catholic University) has been granted. Permission to conduct research in Catholic Primary Schools in the Archdiocese of Brisbane also has been granted.

I am requesting permission to send a survey instrument directly to you, for Teachers teaching an Early Years Class in the 2005 school year to complete. The survey pack will also contain a request for teachers of early years classes in 2005 to volunteer to participate in further in individual Case Studies related to my research project. I have been granted approval to conduct my case study research with eight teacher volunteers in Catholic Primary Schools in the Archdiocese of Brisbane, within the schools of the eight teacher volunteers. I would like your permission to do so in your school, in the event that any of your teachers volunteer to participate in the Case studies.

For your information, I have attached a copy of the survey instrument, and letter (indicating the details of the research project) to teacher participants, that would later be sent with your permission. I have also attached a copy of approval to conduct educational research at Catholic Primary Schools in the Archdiocese of Brisbane, and Ethical Clearance from the Australian Catholic University. If you have any further questions regarding the study, these can be directed to the Principal Supervisor – Dr Janelle Young.

Address: Dr Janelle Young
Assistant Head
School of Education
Australian Catholic University
McAuley Campus at Banyo
P.O Box 456
Virginia QLD 4014

Telephone: (07) 3623 7160 Fax (07) 3623 7247
Email: j.young@mcauley.acu.edu.au

Yours sincerely,
Ms Marlo Anne Graham
### Defining Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Descriptors</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| 1.1 – 1.10 | SD = 1  
D = 2  
N = 3  
A = 4  
SA = 5  
Missing = 99 |
| 2.1 – 4.3 | SD = 1  
D = 2  
N = 3  
A = 4  
SA = 5  
Missing = 99 |
| 5.1 -5.10 | N = 1  
S = 2  
H = 3  
O = 4  
A = 5  
Missing = 99 |
| 5.11 | Number of hours teaching writing  
1-2 hours = 1  
3-4 hours = 2  
5-6 hours = 3  
7-8 hours = 4  
>8 hours = 5 |
| 6.1 – 7.9 | NI = 1  
LI = 2  
RI = 3  
VI = 4  
EI = 5 |
| 8.1 | Highest level of qualification  
2 year trained = 1  
3 year trained = 2  
4 year trained = 3  
Masters = 4  
Doctoral = 5 |
| 8.2 | Years of primary teaching experience  
1-3 yrs = 1  
4-6 years = 2  
7-9 years = 3  
>10 = 4 |
| 8.3 | Years of teaching early years classes  
1-3 yrs = 1  
4-6 years = 2  
7-9 years = 3  
>10 = 4 |
| 8.4 | Current Teaching Role  
Prep = 1  
Year 1 = 2  
Year 1/2 = 3  
Year 2 = 4  
Year 2/3 = 5  
Year 3 = 6  
Years 1/2/3 = 7  
Year 3/4 = 8  
Preschool = 9 |